Isn't change the only constant in life?
Exploring tourist perceptions, values and motivations in Last Chance Tourism

Master's Thesis

3rd June 2019

Laura Börjes (20172279)
Lena Graefe (20172281)
Nina Walter (20171418)

MA Tourism (specialization: Global Tourism Development)

Aalborg University Copenhagen

AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Supervisor: Helene Balslev Clausen

Characters incl. spaces: 210,006
Pages: 88

Abstract

Last Chance Tourism (LCT) describes a form of traveling in which tourists travel to a destination because of the belief that it is the last chance to do so. This 'last chance' may be due to disappearing or changing aspects of the destination, which tourists want to see now rather than later. LCT creates a paradox as tourists are taking part in this form of tourism to see that which is vanishing, which contributes to the pressure on the destination. However, LCT may also be a powerful tool to increase awareness about certain issues at tourism destinations. Research on LCT has thus far been limited to a selection of a few areas in the world, such as the polar regions, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and Venice in Italy. However, there is a lack of studies on the phenomenon of LCT on a more global level. There is a need for more studies on the motivations and values of tourists in this form of tourism. This thesis uncovers tourists' perceptions, values, and motivations in LCT. A mixed methods approach has been employed using a qualitative content analysis and a quantitative questionnaire. To add to the body of knowledge on tourist motivation in LCT, an online questionnaire with potential LCT tourists has been conducted. While it has previously found that tourism stakeholders are less inclined to use LCT as part of their marketing material, online media seems to play a bigger role in this (Lemieux et al., 2018). As LCT marketing connects directly to the human ego it is said to be very powerful (Salkin, 2007). Therefore, for this study, a content analysis of online media covering LCT has been conducted in order to find out how this influences the perceptions tourists have about LCT. It has been found that tourists are mostly motivated to participate in LCT because of a quest for authenticity, coupled with a feeling of nostalgia and fear of change. They also want to be at a certain destination before it becomes too touristy and impacted by overtourism. Moreover, they have the desire to fulfill personal values, while seeing traveling as a personal right that is not granted to others, and these values might often stand in a trade-off with other values. We have found that tourists seem to have a static and time-frozen idea of destinations with change being seen as something negative. All in all, this thesis challenges the idea of LCT and suggests a deconstruction and reframing of the notion of LCT which is more inclusive of socio-cultural aspects and moves more towards the understanding that destinations are dynamic.

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1. Introduction

The tourism industry is continuously growing year by year and, with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicting a continuous increase in international tourist arrivals of three to four percent also for 2019, there are no signs of this growth slowing down. Quite the contrary, in 2018, over 1.4 billion arrivals were reported internationally, which is an increase of six percent to the previous year. This makes 2018 the second strongest year since 2010 and means that these numbers have been met two years ahead of forecasts (UNWTO, 2019). However, this growth also means that the tourism industry is heavily contributing to issues such as global warming and climate change (Gössling & Hall, 2006) and, in some destinations, to inequality and unfair distribution of economic benefits received from tourism activities (Cole, 2006). As the UNWTO states, these numbers confirm "that the sector is today one of the most powerful drivers of economic growth and development" (UNWTO, 2019), bringing along with it the responsibility to manage tourism in a sustainable manner from which all actors involved can benefit (UNWTO, 2019).

In response to a growing awareness of climate change and its implications on destinations, coupled with the increase in tourism worldwide, more and more destinations are being marketed as so-called Last Chance Tourism (LCT) destinations. LCT, which has also been named 'doom tourism', 'disappearing tourism' and 'climate tourism' (Lemelin, Dawson, Stewart, Maher, & Lueck, 2010) was predicted to be one of the top travel trends in 2018 (Talty, 2017) and is widely talked about in tourism-related online media. LCT describes a phenomenon in which tourists travel to destinations out of the belief that it is their last chance to see it before the destination or some attribute of it changes or disappears. This can be, for example, due to climate change or increasing foreign influences on an authentic culture, making it 'too late' to visit it at another point in time. While LCT is usually talked about in relation to climate change and environmental degradation, globalization and an overall increase in tourism are creating opportunities for LCT based on socio-cultural degradation, as well (McCarthy, 2018). While in the early days of tourism, adventurous explorers went on often challenging trips to rough or exotic environments in order to be *the first* (Dawson et al., 2011), LCT follows a similar notion in which travelers are drawn by the growing appeal of being one of *the last* to see the world's remaining off-the-beaten-path destinations, experience unique and authentic cultures and see endangered wildlife and landscapes (Dawson et al., 2011; Lemelin et al., 2010). Examples of destinations that have been framed as LCT destinations are Antarctica (Lamers, Eijgelaar, & Amelung, 2011) and the Arctic (Hindley & Font, 2018), the Great Barrier Reef in Australia (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016) and Cuba (McCarthy, 2018).

Along with the general trend of tourists being increasingly concerned about sustainable and eco-friendly ways of traveling as well as a heightened interest in local experiences (Mittiga, Kow, Silva, Kutschera, & Wernet, 2019; Regiondo, n.d.), it is sometimes claimed that this form of tourism has a positive effect on tourists' climate change awareness, environmental attitude and pro-environmental behavior. But, it has also been argued that LCT creates a paradox and can be

seen as a 'double-edged sword' (Lemelin et al., 2010). As tourism is a significant contributor to global climate change (Gössling & Hall, 2006), encouraging and eventually engaging in tourism activities reinforces the original issue resulting in a vicious circle. Hence, while tourists want to see a destination before it is changing or disappearing, it may mean that they are, as Dawson et al. (2011) put it, "loving an already dying destination to an early death" (p. 255).

In existing literature, we have identified a need for further research on values and motivations of tourists in LCT (see Hindley & Font, 2018), as well as the need to study how widespread the phenomenon of LCT is, beyond the popularly studied destinations such as the polar regions. Furthermore, there seems to be a consensus that tourists are not aware of the impacts they themselves may have on LCT destinations, which is also something that requires further investigation (see Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016). Moreover, it has been argued that tourists are strongly influenced by media reports on LCT (Lemelin et al., 2010).

1.1. Research Objective, Research Question, and Aims

The underlying objective of this thesis is to deconstruct the notion of LCT and by doing so to also challenge the idea of LCT and its different components, such as the perception of change and development among tourists. In order to reach the research objective, the main research question that this thesis investigates is "What motivates tourists to participate in LCT?". A number of sub-questions and aims have been identified that are key to answering the main research question and research objective, namely:

- ➢ How does online media content about LCT influence tourists' perception?
  - ○ It may be assumed that tourists' perceptions, values, and motivations in LCT are influenced by what they read in online media. For this, a content analysis of media articles covering LCT has been conducted. The findings of this have been used to formulate some of the questions in the questionnaire. The theoretical side of this is elaborated on in Chapter 3 Methodology, which also includes the final content analysis.
- ➢ How do tourists perceive LCT destinations?
  - ○ Arguably, LCT is a very subjective matter and what one person perceives as LCT may not be perceived as LCT by someone else. In order to uncover, challenge, and eventually redefine the notion of LCT, it is vital to find out how tourists may be perceiving LCT and to compare this to findings of previous studies on LCT.
- ➢ What are tourists' values when traveling to (LCT) destinations?
  - ○ It is a key aim to find out whether there is a trade-off between tourists' personal values and other values such as ethics and sustainability-conscious behavior. For this, we also investigate tourists' level of awareness on issues associated with LCT as well as the role that they think they play themselves in the context of LCT.
- ➢ Is there a need to (re)define LCT?
  - ○ The majority of previous studies are focused on environmental sustainability and, thus, the common definition of LCT is rather environmentally-focused, as well. In

general, there seems to be a gap in the awareness and perceived importance of environmental sustainability compared to socio-cultural and economic sustainability, which we aim to shed more light on.

1.2. Contributions of Study

This thesis adds to the very relevant and contemporary topic of LCT and feeds into debates around tourism impacts on climate change, disappearance of local cultures and authenticity, as well as sustainable tourism development. In existing literature, LCT has mostly been researched in relation to climate change, and, while the link between LCT and socio-cultural impacts has been mentioned, there seems to be a lack of research in this area specifically. Therefore, this research adds to the body of knowledge on LCT and its implications by researching the socio-cultural aspect of it, rather than the purely environmental or climate change-related part. Moreover, this thesis stems from an interest in finding out what motivates tourists to take part in this form of tourism and whether tourists see themselves as contributing to the (potential) problem. By raising awareness on this key dilemma in sustainable tourism that comes about through the very act of participating in it, our research may eventually help tourists achieve the good intentions that they may have. This is because as previous literature has stated, LCT may be a suitable way for creating "climate change ambassadors" and that LCT tourists may be participating in LCT because they are concerned about climate change and environmental degradation (Lemieux et al., 2018).

Also, we find it of utmost importance to raise awareness about the negative aspects of tourism and to contribute to making the tourism industry more aware of these negative impacts. Informing tourists about the consequences of their actions and stimulating a change of thought directly in the target market is important, as tourism is an extremely demand-driven industry and tourists have a very high adaptive capacity (Scott, de Freitas, & Matzarakis, 2009). Overall, we believe that many actors can benefit from our research, namely the scientific community, local communities in LCT destinations as well as tourists themselves.

As mentioned above, Lemelin et al. (2010) found, that tourists are strongly influenced by media reports on LCT and Groulx, Lemieux, Dawson, Stewart, and Yudina (2016) include this urgency to see a place before it changes or disappears as mediated by media reports as a key component in their structural model on LCT (Groulx et al., 2016, p. 1533). In this model, mass media is included as an externality which may lead to the changing and potential degradation of a destination. Media, such as online blogs and newspapers are more involved in advertising LCT destinations than tourism stakeholders themselves (Lemieux et al., 2018). With the content analysis of media articles on LCT, we contribute to the existing body of knowledge on how media frames and talks about LCT. This thesis also adds to the understanding about how the framing of LCT destinations with certain attributes influences tourists' perception of urgency to visit a certain destination.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows: In Chapter 2, the Literature Review on Tourism Development, LCT and Tourist Motivations is provided. In Chapter 3, the Methodology is explained, which includes the Content Analysis. In Chapter 4, the results of the

survey are presented and in Chapter 5 the Analysis is provided, followed by the Discussion in Chapter 6 and Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Research in Chapter 7.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Tourism Development

2.1.1 Defining tourism.

The UNWTO defines tourism as

a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors . . . and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure. (UNWTO, 2008, p. 1)

Due to the variety of actors involved in tourism as well as the involvement of and consequences on the economy and natural and built environments, the UNWTO (2008) calls for a holistic and inclusive approach to tourism development. Other definitions of tourism focus more on the motivation of tourists than on the industry itself. According to Franklin (2003), tourism should be seen as a response to modernity. Nowadays, new technologies and transportation opportunities allow people to easily move around which has made traveling part of people's everyday life. Due to modernization and affordable and efficient transportation systems, modern tourism only became possible, which eventually led to the emergence of mass tourism (Williams & Lew, 2015). In Franklin's (2003) understanding, tourists do not only travel for experiencing the unusual nor are they in search of pure relaxation or pleasure, instead, tourism is also the "quintessential expression and performance of modern life" (p. 24) that operates in different social and political contexts.

2.1.2. Defining sustainable development.

In 1987, the Brundtland Commission published the report 'Our Common Future' in which sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 41). Still today this seems to be the most common and globally accepted definition of sustainable development (Cole, 2006). The Brundtland report was the trigger for a public debate about environmental issues (Jamison, 1996), with the result that environmentalism was then transformed into political ideology (Eber, 1996 in Cole, 2006). The aim of sustainable development is to foster economic growth by protecting the environment and ensuring social inclusion (United Nations, n.d.-b). This interconnectedness of natural, economic and social resources is crucial to sustainable development, since "sustainability is not just environmentalism" (University of Alberta, n.d., p. 1). Based on this understanding the Three-Pillar Model (Figure 1) emerged and established itself as the most common model of sustainability in literature today (Thatcher, 2014).
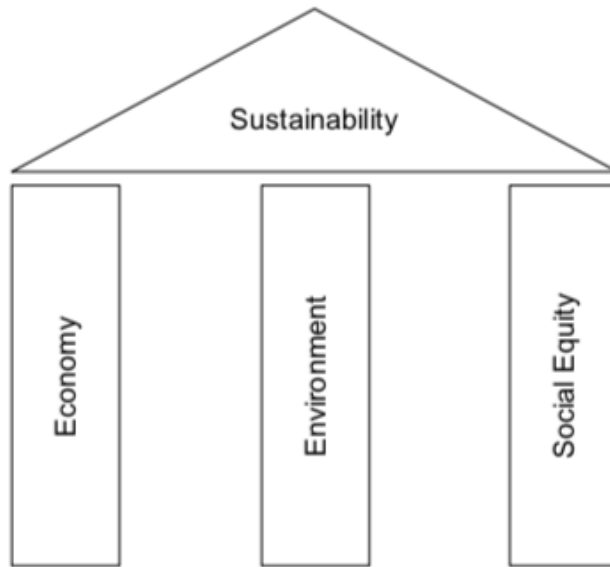
Figure 1. Three-Pillar Model (Spindler, 2013, p. 23)

The model is based on the idea that the three pillars 'Economy', 'Environment', and 'Social equity' are of equal importance when referring to sustainability (Spindler, 2013). The aim of economic sustainability is to accomplish economic activities that do not have any negative impacts on both the environment and human communities neither today nor in the future. Environmental sustainability means that humans are able to fulfill their needs by consuming natural resources while keeping a natural balance in the environment and its ecosystems (Morelli, 2011). Social equity or social sustainability ensures the quality of life for current and future generations as its aim is to create healthy and liveable communities (McKenzie, 2004). It is based on the understanding that basic human rights and needs should be accomplished on a universal level so that everyone feels protected from discrimination and everyone's rights are respected at all times (University of Alberta, n.d.). However, although the Three-Pillar Model is still widely spread and accepted in literature, it has also been criticized by some scholars. For example, Vogt (2009) implies that "from an ethical viewpoint the concept of an 'equality' of environment, economy and social affairs – as the three-pillar model is often interpreted – does not make sense because we are dealing with completely different systems, issues and tasks that cannot be directly compared and valued" (cited in Spindler, 2013, p. 23). Other authors criticize the model for assuming that 'Economy', 'Environment', and 'Social Equity' are independent constructs, but should rather be seen as interconnected constructs which are dependent on each other (Thatcher, 2014). But, as the World Bank (2012) argues, economic growth usually comes "at the expense of the environment" (p. 31).

In 2015, all Member States of the United Nations adopted 'The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' with which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) came into effect on 1 January 2016 (United Nations, n.d.-a). The SDGs lay out a roadmap to, among others, end poverty, fight inequality and minimize climate change impacts within the next 15 years (Verles

& Vellacott, 2018). Governments in both developed and developing countries are expected to set up own national strategies that foster sustainable development, however, the SDGs are not legally binding (UNWTO, 2015). In total there are 17 SDGs and 169 specific targets which address the world's most challenging and critical economic, environmental and social issues of recent years (Verles & Vellacott, 2018). Three of the 17 SDGs refer directly to tourism. In view of tourism, the aim of the SDGs is to: "preserve the natural and cultural heritage . . ., empower host communities, generate trade opportunities, and foster peace and intercultural understanding" (UNWTO & United Nations Development Programme, 2017, p. 10).

2.1.3. Defining sustainable tourism.

The UNWTO defines sustainable tourism as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (UNWTO, 2005). Thereby, sustainable tourism is based on the same principles as sustainable development, meaning economic, environmental and socio-cultural principles (Torres-Delgado & Saarinen, 2014). Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that tourism as a continuously growing industry contributes to environmental and socio-political problems and, thus, calls for strategies that boost sustainability (Moscardo, 2015). Jamal and Robinson (2009) point out that the tourism industry should not only focus on the visitors or tourists themselves but should consider the hosts and local communities of the same importance as tourists. Additionally, the imbalance of global tourism and its advantages for developed countries in comparison to its challenges for the developing world has to be taken into consideration when talking about tourism (Jamal & Robinson, 2009). Isaac and Hodge (2011) claim that sustainable tourism development should primarily "protect the interests of local cultures and societies" (p. 101). In fact, community involvement and participation are considered to be an indispensable part of sustainable tourism development.

Social sustainability in tourism relates to the wellbeing of local communities that are based in tourist destinations. In literature, community involvement is seen as vital to allow local communities to benefit from tourism (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2016). It is based on the idea to actively involve local communities in decision-making processes by considering their knowledge, thoughts, and ideas as highly relevant. In fact, it is sometimes recommended to give up most leadership to local communities in tourism development (Spindler, 2013) and, when carefully implemented, community involvement can "alleviate poverty, enhance community development and preserve the environment" (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2016, p. 164). Moscardo and Murphy (2016) stress the importance of focusing on the needs and aspirations of local communities as this preserves communities from becoming only "a resource for tourism" (p. 55).

Due to its various employment as well as financial opportunities, the UNWTO (2013) describes the tourism industry as extremely beneficial for members of local communities in tourist destinations. On the contrary, it is claimed that often economic opportunities and financial gains made in the industry are distributed unequally. Instead of supporting small local businesses or providing new job opportunities for community members, oftentimes, a big share of the income

made from tourism goes back to shareholders and 'experts' of rich countries (Mowforth, Charlton, & Munt, 2007). To avoid such, Tosun (1998) suggests that "government[s] should carefully introduce deliberate measures to enable indigenous people to take advantage of the opportunities brought by tourism if the intended objectives are to distribute benefits to the local communities" (p. 607). This is of great importance as tourism, when performed without any guidelines, is likely to contribute to the inequality of different social classes and regions and can thus enhance social problems, especially in developing countries (Tosun, 1998). Saarinen (2006) refers to globalization as a contributor for responsible thinking in tourism on both a local and global scale. However, the author also points out that "the consequences of ever-deeper interconnectedness and dependence between distant places and people may be local non-connectedness and non-dependence within increasingly tourism-dependent communities, leading to uneven practices of development in the global-local nexus" (Saarinen, 2006, p. 1133).

Another consequence which might arise out of a lack of proper governance and imbalanced distribution of benefits amongst stakeholders at the destination is 'overtourism' (Francis, n.d.). Overtourism is a modern definition of a vast and mostly negative change of a place due to rising numbers of tourists (Kock, Josiassen, & Assaf, 2016; MacCannell, 1999). Goodwin (2017) describes overtourism as the following:

> Overtourism describes destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably. It is the opposite of responsible tourism which is about using tourism to make better places to live in and better places to visit. (p. 1)

Today, overtourism is one of the tourism industry's mostly negatively outlaid terms. It is highly discussed in contemporary international media for various destinations such as Venice or Barcelona, which both suffer from a high level of dissatisfaction amongst local citizens and tourists. The more attractive a place appears to be, the more tourists find interest in going there. However, with increasing numbers of visitors, a destination risks getting too crowded which may lead to a decrease in quality of life or quality of the visitor experience to an unacceptable level (Goodwin, 2017; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). Fewer locals living in the area due to the emergence of international platforms as, for example, Airbnb and adjusting common practices to a level where they are only executed for tourism purposes are just a few issues which can evolve from overtourism (Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). According to Francis (n.d.), governments should improve planning in order to "create better places to live in as well as to visit . . . [and] to protect local people's quality of life and their natural and cultural heritage" (Francis, n.d.) in order to guarantee acceptable conditions for tourists, local communities and the destination itself.

2.2. Last Chance Tourism (LCT)
2.2.1. Defining LCT.

LCT is a form of tourism in which "tourists explicitly seek vanishing landscapes or seascapes, and/or disappearing natural and/or social heritage" (Lemelin et al., 2010, p. 478). This vanishing or disappearing of landscapes, natural and social heritage as well as entire ecosystems

and species – potentially resulting from climate change – is a reason for tourists to visit certain destinations before they are gone (Lemelin et al., 2010). However, as McCarthy (2018) writes for Lonely Planet, it is not only climate change that is a driver of LCT but "globalization and an increase in tourism worldwide is also changing indigenous cultures and there is a niche but strong market for exploring these before those changes fully take hold" (McCarthy, 2018). The following quote by Dawson et al. (2011) illustrates the underlying notion of the LCT trend and its attractiveness for today's travelers:

> The history of tourism is replete with 'firsts', as explorers and adventurers of the twentieth century sought challenges and fame in exotic and often harsh environments. . . . [Nowadays,] a similar trend in the 'conquering' of destinations is occurring. However, the emphasis is not on 'firsts' but rather on 'lasts'. . . . [LCT] plays on the same sense of rarity, pristineness, and elusiveness that is the foundation for the 'firsts' and draws on the elitism of peak or continent 'bagging' and the lure of authenticity in the exotic. (Dawson et al., 2011, pp. 250–251)

LCT is a relatively understudied phenomenon in current scholarly tourism literature and the few existing studies at present deal with LCT in Arctic regions and Canada (Hindley & Font, 2018; Groulx et al., 2016; Dawson, Stewart, Lemelin, & Scott, 2010; Lemelin et al., 2010), the Antarctic (Lamers, Eijgelaar, & Amelung, 2011; Eijgelaar, Thaper, & Peeters, 2010), the Great Barrier Reef in Australia (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016), and Venice in Italy (Hindley & Font, 2018). Other destinations that have been mentioned as having climate change-induced LCT potential include the Maldives, Mt. Kilimanjaro and the Galapagos Islands (Dawson et al., 2011).

In existing literature, LCT is almost always studied in relation to climate change and LCT occurring due to environmental degradation at a destination (see Groulx et al., 2016; Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016; Eijgelaar et al., 2010; Lemelin et al., 2010). There seems to be a lack of scholarly literature on destinations that may be characterized as LCT due to socio-cultural degradation. This may entail a loss of cultural traditions and perceived authenticity, which may encourage tourists to visit these destinations before the perceived authenticity is lost and the local communities, traditions, and way of life have changed or disappeared. Dawson et al. (2011) state that disappearing built environments and changing cultures can be examples of LCT, too. Lemelin et al. (2010) confirm this understanding and draw a linkage between LCT and dark tourism. The authors state that both forms of tourism are similar in the interest of tourists to visit disappearing landscapes and vanishing socio-cultural heritage. Additionally, LCT tourists and dark tourists are characterized by a similar desire to travel to places of mass fatalities (Lemelin et al., 2010). Moreover, a perceived loss of authenticity due to over-visitation, pollution and urbanization at a tourism destination can be a key driver for tourists to engage in LCT as well (Dawson et al., 2011). One of such destinations that have been framed as LCT is Cuba. Cuba has experienced a boom in tourism after the trade agreements with the US have been loosened and now people fear that the country will change due to US American influences and lose parts of its unique culture (McCarthy, 2018).

2.2.2. The LCT paradox.

While engaging in LCT and traveling to a destination or attraction to see it before it is gone, may in some cases increase awareness and visibility about certain problems, in turn, this increase of tourism may intensify negative impacts, either locally or globally, as in the case with global climate change (Lemelin et al., 2010). Thus, LCT could be seen as a vicious cycle where tourists travel to a destination to see it before it disappears, emit high carbon emissions, for example, through long-haul travel, which further deteriorates the destination. This, in turn, may be raising the attractiveness of the destinations as LCT and create even greater market demand (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016, p. 397). While LCT may provide communities in tourist destinations with economic benefits, LCT often requires long-haul air travel – such as travel to remote Arctic regions – and thus contributes to the release of greenhouse gas emissions (Lemelin et al., 2010).

As Hindley and Font (2018) ask,

at a time when we are being encouraged to reduce our carbon footprint, what are the reasons behind tourists' traveling to destinations popularly described in the media as 'disappearing', because of climate change impacts? After all, the very act of travel is likely to produce more carbon emissions, which could result in the destination disappearing ever more quickly. (p. 3)

LCT can be seen as part of a larger discussion on trade-offs in the tourism industry where both environmental and socio-economic benefits may be difficult to be met at the same time. As (Hindley & Font, 2018) argue, tourists participating in LCT may be benefiting local communities in a destination both economically and socio-culturally but at the same time, this very activity results in high greenhouse gas emissions as is typically the case with (long-haul) travel and tourism. But, "aiming to reduce CO_2 emissions by avoiding travel can also result in serious economic and social impacts on the locals in disappearing destinations" (Hindley & Font, 2018, p. 11). Thus, LCT fits well into the broader paradoxes and contradictions of sustainable tourism (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016). This raises a key question being if tourism can ever be fully sustainable or if that could only be achieved without there being any travel which represents an impossible situation (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016). Further complicating the sustainability of LCT is its very nature which "relies on taking advantage of and utilizing that which is vulnerable" (Dawson et al., 2015, p. 134; cited in Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016, p. 398). The paradox of LCT has been illustrated in a model by Dawson et al. (2010) in their study on polar bear viewing tourism in Churchill, Canada (Figure 2).
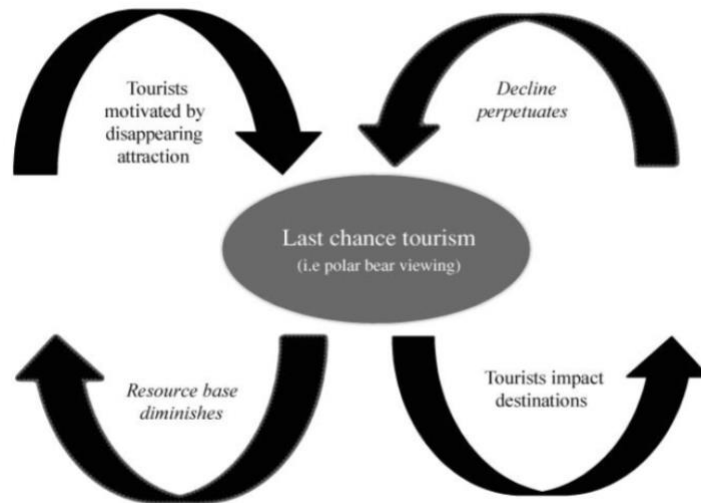
Figure 2. "Perpetuation of last chance tourism in a context of ongoing environmental change."
(Dawson et al., 2010, p. 331)

Dawson et al. (2011) apply Butler's (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle model to LCT (Figure 3). According to this model, with increasing vulnerability, demand increases but then decreases when the destination or attraction is fully deteriorating, or the tourism asset has become extinct (Demand Scenario A). At this stage, the tourism destination may have to adapt its touristic offer to something completely different in order to survive economically. If the destination or tourism asset is able to keep its status as highly vulnerable, demand is either sustained (Demand Scenario B), or the destination becomes less interesting and consequently less attractive to tourists and demand declines (Demand Scenario C) (Dawson et al., 2011).
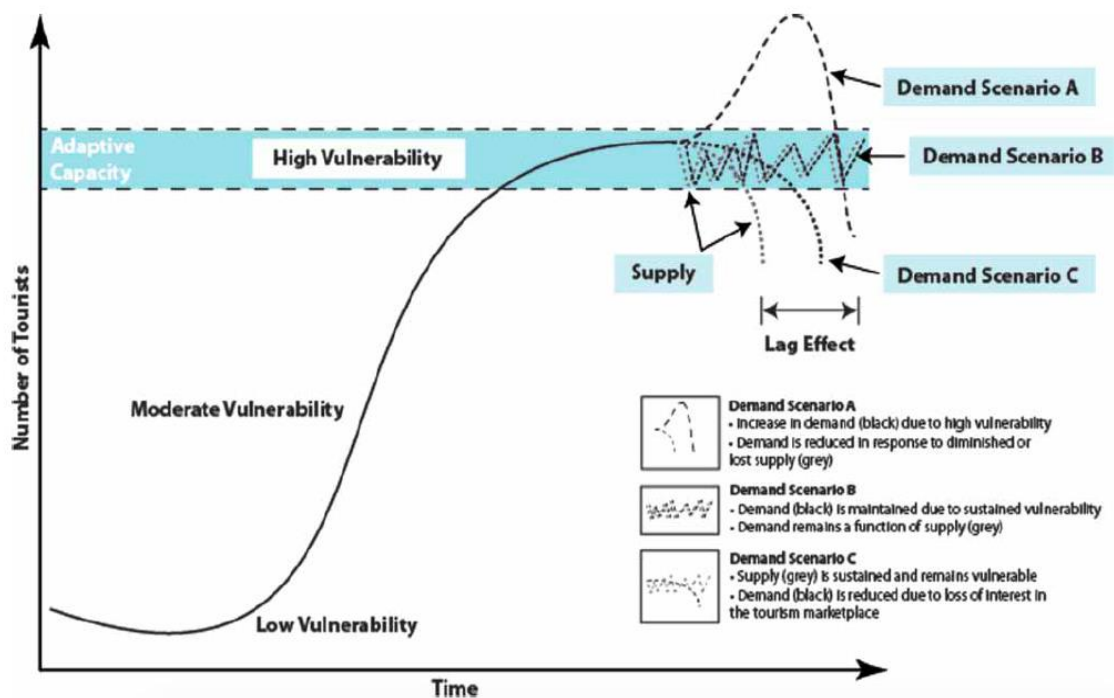
Figure 3. "Life cycle of LCT (after Butler, 1980)." (Dawson et al., 2011, p. 256)

2.3. Tourist Motivations

Many variables contribute to explaining tourist behavior, but, according to Crompton (1979), motivation is "the impelling and compelling force behind all behavior" (pp. 409-410). Tourist motivations are defined as "a set of internal psychological needs that cause a person to act in a certain way or stimulate their interest in travel and participation in a tourist activity" (Kim & Eves, 2012, p. 1458). This definition follows up on Crompton's (1979) findings that socio-demographic and psychological attributes determine tourist motivations. A widely used theory in tourist motivations is the push-pull theory (Crompton, 1979). In contrast to push factors that relate to socio-psychological motives, pull factors do not derive from the consumer but from the destination itself. Push factors are said to explicate "the desire to go on a vacation" (Crompton, 1979, p. 410) whereas pull factors are "useful for explaining the choice of destination" (Crompton, 1979, p. 410). In his paper, Crompton (1979) affirms:

> While a specific resort may hold a number of attractions for the potential tourist, his actual decision to visit such a destination is consequent on his prior need for travel. An examination of "push" factors is thus logically, and often temporally antecedent to that of "pull" factors. (p. 410)

Crompton (1979) expounds a traveler's "desire to transcend the feeling of isolation obtained in everyday life, and that this need for social interaction can only be fulfilled by the individual getting away from it all on vacation" (Crompton, 1979, p. 411). This relates to Perkins and Thorns (2001), who describe tourism as an escape from the ordinary everyday life that people want to leave behind for at least a limited amount of time. Tourists want to get away from their regular routines and experience something else, based on their individual personality, demographics and destination preferences (Perkins & Thorns, 2001). According to Hatch and Schultz's (2002) model, Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) state that what impacts the consumer in regard to travel motivation and behavior are a place's identity, the culture, and experience at the destination, as well as the destination image. The relation between these three factors is necessary to understand for which reasons consumers choose a destination as a result of how they perceive it (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

Hatch and Schultz's (2002) model builds upon this awareness. It is embossed by four simultaneously occurring sub-processes – expressing, mirroring, reflecting and impressing – which represent an interplay between the three factors culture, identity, and image. Thereby, "'culture is the context of internal definitions of identity' while 'image is the site of external definitions of identity' and 'how these two definitions influence each other is the process of identity'" (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013, p. 77). This process-based approach of place can, however, be considered as a "set of intertwined collective sub-processes" (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013, p. 79), which implies its complexity. This complexity and the constantly changing and occurring sub-processes and implications happening from this imply that places are dynamic. This is what previous literature has usually failed to investigate, namely the dynamic body of a place. Several researchers insist that a place is not static, but dynamic (Govers & Go, 2009; Hatch & Schultz, 2002). A place is more a result of dialogues between individuals and collectives and a result from

interactions between the internal and the external. Furthermore, it can be considered as a discussion of function and emotion, as subjective emotions can attach an individual more to places than objective functions and purposes (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013, p. 81). In order to research the subjectivity of a destination and how it can attire tourists by *representing*, the concept of destination image will be discussed in more detail in the following.

2.3.1. Tourist perceptions and destination image.

As this thesis intends to research tourists' motivation to visit endangered destinations which might soon not be as they initially were anymore, perception and display and the resulting image are essential concepts to be investigated. In regard to understanding a tourist's decision-making to travel to a destination, the tourist's image of the concerned destination plays a major role. Destination image has been widely researched in previous literature (e.g., Kock et al., 2016; Baloglu & McClearly, 1999). Destination image is an important concept helping to understand the nature of a destination. Perception and display both influence a tourist's mindset about and motivation to visit a destination (Baloglu & McClearly, 1999).

Destination image is a frequently used tool in marketing, particularly destination branding. Baloglu and McClearly (1999) sum up different definitions of destination image. Destination image can be defined as "the expression of all knowledge, impressions, prejudices and emotional thoughts an individual or group has of a particular object or place" (Baloglu & McClearly, 1999, p. 871). Similarly, destination image has been defined as "an overall or total impression which is formed as a result of the evaluation of individual attributes which may contain both cognitive and emotional content" (Baloglu & McClearly, 1999, p. 871). Kotler (2001) argues that destination image is "a set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person holds regarding an object" (p. 273) which adds up on the clear focus of socio-cultural factors playing a role in destination image.

2.3.2. Authenticity and commodification.

Tourists tend to search more and more for authentic experiences, something unusual and out of daily life (Franklin, 2003; Perkins & Thorns, 2001). However, tourists who embody a quest for authenticity and unique experiences often end up being disappointed when they realize that these expectations are not met (MacCannell, 1999; Urry, 1990). This dilemma is described in the theory of the tourist gaze by Urry (1990), according to which tourists have a certain expectation of local populations and expect authenticity, which local populations then try to fulfill in order to benefit financially. However, this often leads to commodification of local cultures and traditions. The theory of the tourist gaze also entails that tourists are influenced in their perceptions and pre-designated images of the destination, mostly through media and communication with other people (Urry, 1990). According to Urry (1990), there are two different types of tourist gazes: the romantic gaze and the collective gaze. The romantic gaze includes authenticity, solitude, privacy, and a personal relationship with the gazed upon object. The collective gaze is a complete contrast to the romantic gaze, as it is focused on amusement, events, and spending time at a place where other tourists are present. Some researchers also include a third gaze, which is the post (mass) tourist,

who knows that most places are pseudo attractions but still enjoys visiting them (Hospers, 2009, p. 229). Arguably, the tourist gaze also plays a role in LCT as the tourist wants to visit a destination of which he or she has a specific image in mind. The tourist may be expecting authenticity, solitude, and privacy at the destination (culture and local communities), which he or she is worried will soon disappear (Kock et al., 2016; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). Due to an increase in tourist arrivals, many destinations and original aspects of cultures are being commodified and, consequently, changed significantly. Often this means that it is difficult for tourists to get the authentic experiences that they traveled for.

2.3.3. Ego tourism.

"The ego is the bedrock of every identity project" (MacCannell, 2002, p. 148) and influences a consumer's decision where and why to travel. The ego is authorial and controlling, not admitting any false decision or opinion (MacCannell, 2002). Ego tourism is a form of tourism where tourists are in search of forms of travel that are in some way "status symbols" (Sharpley, Aicken, Page, & Ryan, 2005, p. 222). Ego tourists rather travel to satisfy their personal interests and needs than supporting sustainable tourism and helping to save a destination (Sharpley et al., 2005). While, as Lemelin et al. (2010) argue, LCT may "help raise awareness and visibility for a problem" (p. 478), ego tourists feed into this notion of LCT being a 'double-edged sword' (see Lemelin et al., 2010) by showing a contradictory behavior, namely by following their personal quest to visit such a destination. With that in mind, it may be argued, that ego tourists are likely to contribute to an acceleration of negative impacts of tourism on destinations as a result of fulfilling their travel interests and desires. The irony hereby lays in the fact that most tourists, while acting unsustainably, do not recognize their own negative contribution. Especially in LCT, many travelers embark on long-haul trips to endangered and vanishing destinations, seemingly unaware of the fact that the trip increases the harm even more (Lemelin et al., 2010). This performance can, however, be explained by Perkins and Thorns' (2001) theory of the tourist behavior which encourages tourists to get actively involved and rather experience a destination personally than only gazing at it from distance. This includes not only the travel act itself but also sending or posting pictures online to share the experience (Perkins & Thorns, 2001).

A related notion, which can be connected to the behavior and characteristics of an LCT tourist, has also been discussed by Urry and Larsen (2011). In relation to hyper-tourist consumption, they describe American tourists who "find pleasure in inauthentic contrived attractions, gullibly enjoying 'pseudo-events' and disregarding the 'real' world outside" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 8). This enjoyment in inauthentic experiences represents a certain ignorance towards a place's original characteristics, only highlighting the desire and ability to consume an experience at the concerned destination. It brings isolation from local citizens, their culture and real traditions as well as a loss of experience with it (Hospers, 2009). This condition is described as 'staged authenticity' in tourism literature which "is said to thwart the tourist's genuine desire for authentic experiences" (Perkins & Thorns, 2001, p. 190) which is far apart from *reality*

(Hospers, 2009; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Dyson, 2012; Perkins & Thorns, 2001; MacCannell, 1973).

According to MacCannell (2002), this is part of the problem of the contemporary tourism industry. He states that the "commodification of cultural forms [are a result of] . . . the conversion of authentic, efficacious cultural forms into 'local color' over which tourists have rights" (Sherry, 1987, p. 184; cited in MacCannell, 2002, p. 146). This implies that tourists do not have the possibility of *ownership* of attractions, sites or destinations they visit, but a certain *right* to consume it without buying it (MacCannell, 2002). The sole consumption is, however, enough to promote commodification, as Perkins and Thorns (2001) sum up in their paper titled 'Gazing or Performing'. They argue that "commoditization allegedly changes the meaning of cultural products and of human relations, making them eventually meaningless. . . . Furthermore, . . . since local culture can be commoditized by anyone, without the consent of the participants, it can be expropriated, and the local people exploited" (Perkins & Thorns, 2001, pp. 189-190) which finally can end up in ruining a destination's authenticity.

2.4. Tourist Motivation to Participate in LCT.

While there is not an abundance of research papers on LCT yet, a number of studies on tourist motivations in LCT do exist and some of these will be described in the following. This also helps provide an overview of the destinations that have been studied as LCT destinations thus far. Dawson et al. (2010) conducted a study with on-site tourist "to help evaluate tourist perceptions of climate change and to estimate their GHG emissions related to polar bear viewing tourism" (p. 319). They found that "polar bear viewing tourists perceive climate change to be negatively impacting polar bears but do not necessarily understand how they themselves contribute to GHG emissions, or understand offsetting possibilities" (p. 319). Lemieux et al. (2018) found that LCT tourists are participating in LCT because they want to learn about the impacts of climate change on the destination. According to the survey in Jasper National Park, Canada conducted by Lemieux et al. (2018) tourists had a distinct LCT motivation and the most important motivation to visit the glacier was to "to be close to nature" (Lemieux et al., 2018, p. 662).

Piggott-McKellar and McNamara (2016) got similar results in their study on the motivation of tourists to visit the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. They found that tourists that are visiting the reef because they want to see it before it is gone are also "more environmentally conscious, and have a higher level of concern about the overall health of the GBR" (p. 397). Piggott-McKellar and McNamara (2016) alert that it can be expected that, with the continuing deterioration of the site, LCT will occur more intensively at the Great Barrier Reef in the future which could potentially further confirm the LCT paradox. The scholars conclude that while some tourists are deeply concerned about the impacts of tourism on the region, they "are largely unaware of their own influences" (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016, p. 411). Furthermore, they suggest that "education linking tourists' own behaviors, how this impacts the region as well as ways to offset this may be useful to incorporate into management structures" (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016, p. 411).

Eijgelaar et al. (2010) calculated CO_2 emissions of cruise ships to the Antarctic and found that the per capita emissions of tourists to the Antarctic are significantly higher than to other destinations. Contrary to previous studies such as the one by Lemieux et al. (2018), Eijgelaar et al. (2010) state that the hypothesis that LCT trips create greater environmental awareness could not be confirmed in this study. This is also the case with the hypotheses that LCT trips encourage more sustainable future travel choices or change attitudes concerning climate change and travel emissions. With their survey, Eijgelaar et al. (2010) found that 59% of the tourists interviewed did not feel like their travel impacted climate change and less than 7% had offset their emissions. Thus, while tourism to the Antarctic produces above average CO_2 emissions, the positive impacts on tourist behavior and attitudes seem to be missing. Another study on LCT in the Antarctic was done by Vila, Costa, Angulo-Preckler, Sarda, & Avila (2014), which specifically looked at the concept of 'ambassadorship'. Vila et al. (2014) conclude that "tourists returning from the Antarctic do not seem to play the role of ambassadors because many visitors merely want a last chance to glimpse a vanishing world" (p. 459). Groulx et al.'s (2016) findings support those of previous studies saying that there is a distinct and identifiable motivation for tourists to participate in LCT and they found that the desire to learn about climate change is part of the LCT motivation (Groulx et al., 2016).

2.5. Marketing LCT.

Several studies have investigated the current marketing of LCT and the implications of this relationship (e.g. Swartman, 2015; Lemelin et al., 2010). In terms of the practice of marketing LCT, Dawson et al. (2011) state:

> It appears that destinations are increasingly being prioritized and marketed based on vulnerability in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities associated with 'disappearing' attractions. Many of the vulnerable landscapes, ecosystems, and species at risk being promoted are located in more distant and less prosperous locations when compared with the more popular and well-known tourism destinations of the world. (Dawson et al., 2011, pp. 251–252)

As Salkin (2007) notes, this kind of marketing of LCT is very powerful as it directly connects to the human ego, encouraging one to be the last one to do something, which he argues is a very strong sales tool. While, according to previous studies, tourism operators are less involved in marketing destinations as LCT, media, where the LCT term emerged in the 1990s (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016) such as online blogs and newspapers are more involved in advertising these LCT destinations (Lemieux et al., 2018). Swartman (2015) supports this by stating that "it is becoming common place for news outlets and bloggers to identify these types of destinations and make lists of "places to see before they disappear"" (Swartman, 2015, p. 3). The desire to visit a destination does not necessarily need to stem from scientifically documented climate change impacts as it is mostly tourists' perception of climate impacts and media's communication of this vulnerability that influences tourists' decision-making (Lemelin et al., 2010).

Olsen et al. (2011) and Johnston et al. (2011) found that tourism operators in their studies felt very negatively about using LCT as part of their marketing strategies (cited in Dawson et al., 2011). Often local stakeholders may not be aware of the LCT marketing that is occurring. This may have serious consequences for destinations as critical information may be neglected or misrepresented and negatively impact the identity of a destination (Lemieux et al., 2018). Therefore, it is a key question in marketing LCT whether it is morally appropriate to market these destinations in order to attract more tourists and revenue (Dawson et al., 2011). As Lemelin et al. (2010) state, "the desire for tourists to witness vanishing landscapes or seascapes and disappearing species may have important consequences for tourism management, yet the nature of these consequences is poorly understood by the academic community" (Lemelin et al., 2010, p. 477).

A key challenge related to LCT is that while in the short term it might make sense to capitalize on LCT economically, due to its very nature, LCT usually only brings short-term economic benefits and is thus not a sustainable long-term form of tourism (Groulx et al., 2016). This also links to the different adaptive capacities of different stakeholders in LCT and tourism in general. As Scott et al. (2009) highlight, tourists have high adaptive capacity in tourism, while other stakeholders such as local tourism operators, hotels and resorts, and communities have low adaptive capacity. In the context of LCT, this is also supported by Hall et al. (2013) saying that tourists and tourism operators can have very unequal adaptive capacities. Tourists have a rather high adaptive capacity as they can simply choose to travel to another destination. However, for tourism operators and local communities, the situation is different as they are often highly vulnerable due to being place-bound and, therefore, have fewer possibilities to adapt to climate change impacts (Groulx et al., 2016).

2.6. Suggestions for Future Research in Previous Studies.

Due to LCT being a relatively new and little-studied phenomenon, existing literature suggests a number of interesting investigations for future research to undertake. Hindley and Font (2018) conducted a study on values and motivations of people participating in LCT and highlight the need for further research on values and motivations "that underpin tourists' decisions to visit disappearing destinations" (p. 6). Piggott-McKellar and McNamara (2016) support this argument and argue that further research on the motivations of tourists is required to improve management, government, and marketing of specific tourist regions and to ensure long term sustainability for both local economies and environments as it can be expected that LCT will have significant impacts on destinations (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016). Piggott-McKellar and McNamara (2016) also state that it has not been identified to what degree LCT is occurring in areas outside of the Arctic and Antarctic. The scholars add with their study on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia that LCT is emerging in the region. Furthermore, Piggott-McKellar and McNamara (2016) suggest further research on "how specific marketing and policy strategies impact on tourists' levels of awareness and concern about issues and threats facing the [Great Barrier Reef]" (p. 412) and "that tourists have a limited understanding of the impacts they themselves have on the region in which they are visiting" (p. 412), thus recommending further

research on this in order to improve education and marketing strategies. Finally, they recommend research on other potential LCT destination to find out how widespread LCT is (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016).

Following these suggestions, the aim of this study is to add to the understanding of tourist motivation in LCT, what tourists perceive as LCT and the perception of issues surrounding LCT. Furthermore, the study aims to understand the role that media plays in forming this motivation and perception. As Lemelin et al. (2010) found, tourists are strongly influenced by media reports on LCT and Groulx et al. (2016) include this urgency to see a place before it changes or disappears as mediated by media reports as a key component in their structural model on LCT (Groulx et al., 2016, p. 1533). And as the studies by Olsen et al. (2011) and Johnston et al. (2011) (cited in Dawson et al., 2011) show, tourism operators themselves may often be reluctant against using LCT in their marketing strategies, which is why this study looks at (online) media, which has been reported to be more involved in marketing LCT destinations (Lemieux et al., 2018).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

For this exploratory research on perceptions, values, and motivations of tourists in LCT, a mixed methods approach (Bryman, 2012) has been employed. We have used both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. First, a thorough literature review on LCT has been conducted, which revealed that most studies on LCT have been focused on climate change related LCT and that there seems to be a lack of knowledge on socio-cultural issues in relation to LCT. Existing literature suggests further research on values and motivations in LCT. Thus, the aim of this paper is to uncover tourists' motivations to visit LCT destinations based on their perception of LCT which may also be influenced by the way media projects LCT.

For our data collection, we conducted a content analysis of online media and we distributed an online questionnaire. Even though a questionnaire traditionally is of a rather quantitative nature, still, we insist on the qualitative validity of our approach as the online survey has been designed to research tourists' personal interests, values, and motivations which influenced the construction and formulation of the survey questions (Bruner, 1991). The questionnaire consisted mostly of questions in which respondents had to choose their answer from a list of provided ones, but also questions that gave respondents the freedom to write out their answers in text boxes. Thus, instead of using only one type of data collection, we used both qualitative methods (a qualitative content analysis) and quantitative methods (a questionnaire). By using the findings of the content analysis for developing questions for the questionnaire, we combined both methods with each other. By doing so, we used both research strategies together as one evidence rather than seeing them as two separate parts of our data collection process (Bryman, 2012). We also define our data collection and analysis using the questionnaire as a mixed methods approach, because we combine both quantitative data (a questionnaire) and qualitative data (text answers provided by respondents). Moreover, as will be clarified at a later point, much of the collected quantitative data has been analyzed in a qualitative approach rather than quantitative. As Bryman (2012) clarifies, mixed methods cannot only provide a "better understanding of a phenomenon than if just one method had been used" (p. 649) but it also can "enhance our confidence in our own or others' findings" (p. 649).

This research follows a social constructivist approach. The aim of a social constructivist approach is not to find the *right* or *wrong*, *true* or *false*, or *good* or *bad* answers from survey respondents (Hannam & Knox, 2011), as it means that we assume that there is no objective truth (Hirschman, 1986) and no one reality (Dyson, 2012). This connects to what Bruner (1991) describes when he says that "there is the possibility of any but a single interpretation [of reality]" (p. 9). Qualitative research often entails unique context which is only significant to "the aspect of the social world being studied" (Bryman, 2015, p. 384). For the named reasons of individualism, we consider social constructivism as a tool to produce knowledge as a result of social interactions being suitable to evaluate subjective travel motivations (Hannam & Knox, 2011). Social constructivism has been defined as a purely qualitative approach (see Hannam & Knox, 2011). As humanistic researchers, we were interested in the underlying perceptions and values that people

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have in regard to a certain phenomenon. This especially makes sense considering that values, perceptions, and motivations are very subjective attributes that usually cannot be generalized among a large group of people. With LCT being such a value-laden, complex, paradoxical and also dynamic phenomenon, it would not make sense to try to make generalized, quantitative statements, but rather to get a thorough understanding of the phenomenon under study and to learn from what the responses from both the quantitative and qualitative questions in the questionnaire tell us about tourists' perceptions, values, and motivations.

3.1.1. Conceptual framework (tourist perceptions and values).

With this study, we aim to find out the motivations of tourists in LCT. The concepts of *tourist perceptions* and *tourist values* are seen as central components in this study in order to measure tourist motivation. Therefore, in the following, *tourist perceptions* and *tourist values* will be briefly introduced and we clarify how these concepts are understood and defined in the context of this study, as well as why they are seen as important to be included in this study on LCT. As Hindley and Font (2018) state, tourists' perceptions affect the decision-making of tourists to visit certain destinations, and tourists' values and motivations are influencing this decision-making, as well.

By including the concept of perceptions in our research we aim to find out what the level of awareness of tourists is on issues related to tourism, and how the way they perceive or imagine destinations, especially those that are perceived to be LCT, influences their travel behavior and decision-making. Perceptions are also seen as a vital part of this research on LCT, as, like Lemelin et al. (2010) state, the desire to visit a destination does not necessarily need to stem from scientifically documented climate change impacts as it is mostly tourists' perception of climate impacts and media's communication of this vulnerability that influences tourists' decision-making. When talking about LCT it makes sense to rather talk about the *perception of LCT*, as LCT can be understood differently by different people and what one person perceives as LCT may not be LCT to another person. This is one of the intended purposes of the questionnaire: to deconstruct the notion of LCT, to find out what tourists perceive as LCT, and to find out how LCT can actually be defined in socio-cultural terms. This is similar to the idea that 'development' may be perceived and judged differently by different people, and, since this is seen as a central component of socio-cultural LCT, there have been questions addressing this in the questionnaire, as well.

Values and motivations play a central role in tourism consumer behavior (Hindley & Font, 2018; Cohen, Prayag, & Moital, 2014). Hindley and Font (2018) identify values, knowledge, beliefs, and motivations as four common personal variables, but add ethics as a fifth variable given the understanding that climate change is an ethical issue. Similar to the prior variables, "ethical norms and values are learned from the cultural environment, with differing cultures having different ethical values and perceptions of ethical dilemmas" (Hindley & Font, 2018, p. 3). This refers back to visiting an endangered destination indicating an "attitude-behavior gap" (Hindley & Font, 2018, p. 10), as personal curiosity and interests are put above the place's sustainable well-

being. Hindley and Font (2018) assert that "values and motivations appear to be self-centered" (p. 11). Referring to Schwartz (1992) they argue that this creates a paradoxical situation for the tourists where this self-centered motivation to travel "has practical, social and psychological consequences which conflict with the pursuit of other values" (Hindley & Font, 2018, p. 11), for example, pursuing these goals can have significant impacts on the environment due to the carbon emissions. This raises the question of why tourists seem to not be as concerned about climate change when being on holiday compared to home (Hindley & Font, 2018). Following from this, the scholars suggest that policies and marketing strategies will need to encourage pro-sustainability behavior to guide tourists in the right way. Hindley and Font (2018) also argue, that values are a strong motivational factor to participate in LCT and link to Peeters, Gössling and Lane (2009) who state that "many people have a powerful belief in their personal right and need to travel, coupled at the same time with a contradictory powerful belief that others should be denied that right for the good of the planet" (p. 248; cited in Hall, Scott, & Gössling, 2013).

Online media influences people's motivation to travel (Chu & Luckanavanich, 2018) and it may be assumed that it can also impact tourists' motivation to participate in LCT. Hudson and Thal (2013) imply that "social media have fundamentally changed the consumer decision process" (p. 156). Chu and Luckanavanich (2018) confirm this understanding as they argue that social media directly influences tourists intention to travel. In fact, especially if online media allows users to communicate with each other, for example, by letting users comment on the online content, consumers perceive online media as more credible than traditional travel information sources (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008). Overall, digital media in general, and social networking sites, in particular, have "reshaped travel motivations in several ways; the amount of travel information and the ability for travel communities to form has allowed for new ways of sharing travel experiences, while the influential abilities that social media provides creates new reasons for travel" (Scott, n.d.). This importance of online media on tourists motivation to travel, was distinctive to us when deciding to do a content analysis as one of our data collection methods.

In their model on 'Interacting variables of LCT', Dawson et al. (2011) present the various components that are interacting in the reinforcing cycle of LCT (Figure 4). According to this model, Global Environmental Change produces the supply side of LCT as it is a driving factor in changing a destination and making it vulnerable. In this model, both the supply side and the demand side are influenced by 'Externalities', such as 'Land Use Change' (e.g., 'Habitat Loss') or 'Mass Media' which lead to the changing and potential degradation of a destination, making them vulnerable and in danger of disappearing, but, at the same time, increasing its attractiveness for potential LCT tourists. It is this vulnerability that is taken advantage of in order to make economic profit. LCT then accelerates both the direct and indirect pressures on the destination such as those associated with tourist related activities and carbon emissions due to long-haul airplane travel (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016; Dawson et al., 2011). This model is included here because it includes Mass Media as an Externality that influences demand, which reinforces the relevance of conducting a content analysis of online media in this study. Also, importantly, this model shows that the Supply side creates Perceptions, Values and Motivations, which influence Demand.

The two models by Dawson et al. (2010) (Figure 3) and Dawson et al. (2011) (Figure 4) clarify two key aspects of LCT: first, without demand there would be no LCT, meaning it is necessary that tourists are motivated to travel to the destination and, second, due to the increased travel to an LCT that is ought to be seen before it is gone, the destination is further deteriorating (Piggott-McKellar and McNamara, 2016; Dawson et al., 2011; Dawson et al., 2010). Also important to note within LCT is that short term implications from increased demand can have devastating long term effects due to negative impacts of increased visitation (Dawson et al., 2011; Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016).
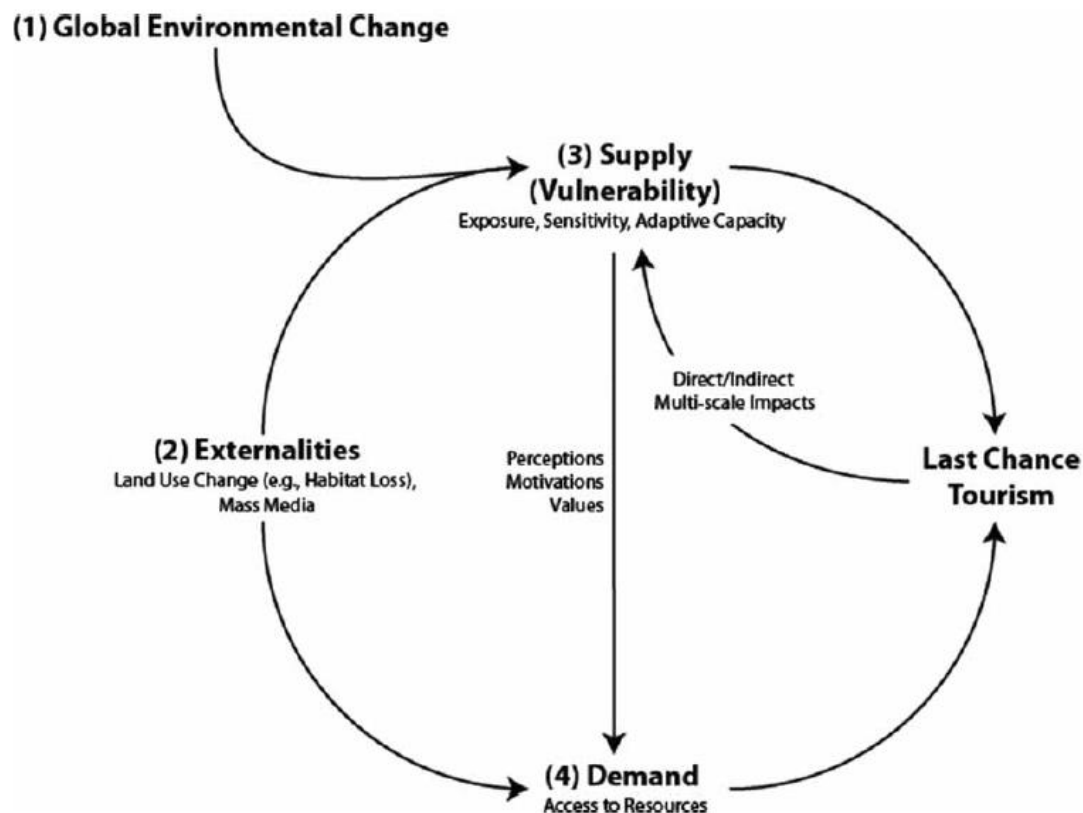
Figure 4. "Interacting variables of LCT." (Dawson et al., 2011, p. 252)

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis
3.2.1. Content analysis.

The first part of the data collection was done by means of qualitative content analysis. We did so to investigate the influence of online media on the decision-making process of tourists and their motivation as well as behavior in relation to LCT. Furthermore, we based certain questions of our questionnaire on the outcome of our content analysis. In fact, we used attributes we identified during the content analysis process to ask people about their motivation to travel to an LCT destination in the questionnaire. Doing a content analysis allowed us to gather and analyze text data related to LCT, thereby, we could discover how online media generally treats the term

'LCT' as well as which particular content of online articles may be motivating and distinctive to tourists to visit an LCT destination.

In literature, content analysis is known as an empirical technique used to identify different topics within texts and categorize them, hereby, counting words and coding is involved. According to Hannam and Knox (2005), content analysis assumes that "there is a relationship between the frequency of a specific theme and its significance or dominance" (p. 24). Based on this assumption, content analysis often is seen as a rather deductive and quantitative approach to analyzing texts (Hannam & Knox, 2005). On the contrary, as Zhang and Wildemuth (2017) describe, content analysis can also be used in qualitative research:

> [Qualitative content analysis] goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes, and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text. It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner. (p. 318)

As social constructivists, our aim was to get beyond the widely used term of 'LCT' and to really understand the social realities behind LCT. In fact, with the content analysis, we wanted to discover *how* LCT is presented in online media and *how* this presentation may be influencing tourists perceptions of LCT and consequently their motivation to participate in LCT. As a result, we decided to do a qualitative content analysis. As shown in Figure 5, according to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), a differentiation between three major approaches to content analysis can be made in qualitative research: 'Conventional content analysis', 'Directed content analysis', and 'Summative content analysis'.

Type of Content Analysis	Study Starts With	Timing of Defining Codes or Keywords	Source of Codes or Keywords
Conventional content analysis	Observation	Codes are defined during data analysis	Codes are derived from data
Directed content analysis	Theory	Codes are defined before and during data analysis	Codes are derived from theory or relevant research findings
Summative content analysis	Keywords	Keywords are identified before and during data analysis	Keywords are derived from interest of researchers or review of literature

Figure 5. "Major Coding Differences Among Three Approaches to Content Analysis."
(Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1286)

For this thesis, we mainly used the 'directed content analysis' approach. Based on our theoretical chapter, we identified codes which we thought were relevant for understanding people's motivation to choose an LCT destination for their travels. In fact, we started analyzing online content about LCT in view of the following code words: 'authentic', 'local culture', 'indigenous', 'disappearing', 'vanishing', 'damaged', and 'endangered'. However, these code words were

changed and adjusted during the data analysis process many times. Hannam and Knox (2005) suggest constructing a coding frame so that everyone who takes part in the content analysis would get the same outcomes. The upcoming eight steps to conduct qualitative content analysis as suggested by Datt (2016) were followed. These steps include: 1) to prepare the data; 2) to develop themes; 3) to define sub-themes and code schemes; 4) to pre-test the themes and code schemes; 5) to apply the codes; 6) to check codes of validity and reliability; 7) to draw inferences based on the codes; and 8) to present the results of each code (Datt, 2016).

Data collection took place during the first two weeks of March 2019. We used Google as a search engine and considered all text data covering the issue of LCT that was written in English as relevant, however, academic articles were excluded. We went through these Google results until the content of our data started to repeat itself. Overall, we ended up with 15 different online articles related to LCT. These articles were published by (online) magazines and newspapers, non-profit organizations, travel bloggers, tourist organizations, research centers as well as a broadcaster. Following the next step, we now developed themes based on code words we defined in view of the theoretical chapter of this thesis. The following themes were developed:

- *Authenticity*, including code words such as 'local culture' or 'indigenous';
- *Disappearance*, including code words such as 'before it's gone' or 'vanishing';
- *Damage*, including code words such as 'destroyed' or 'dying';
- *Danger*, including code words such as 'threatened' or 'destructing';
- *Overtourism*, including code words such as 'flocking' or 'crowded'; and
- *Outstanding*, including code words such as 'unique' or 'off-the-beaten-track'.

We used the code words as our coding scheme as we measured all content similar to the defined code words as relevant for analyzing the different themes. Pre-testing was done by counting the number of code words to discover their consistency in the articles with the result that all words were used more than once. After the pre-testing process, we started applying the codes to our chosen online articles by reading through each article and highlighting relevant paragraphs or quotes which fitted to our coding frame. The highlighting was done by applying different colors to each coding theme (see Appendix A). By establishing a coding scheme as well as by pre-testing the defined codes we already contributed to the validity of the content analysis (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). In order to ensure reliability, we applied all codes to each article to test if reproductivity of the codes was given (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). Following the next step, we draw inferences based on the codes and compared all data with each other. This allowed us to not only identify similarities and differences of each code within the data but also to discover relationships between the codes and online media. Additionally, drawing inferences, helped us to better understand how online media generally treats the phenomenon of LCT. In the following, the results of our content analysis will be presented:

Firstly, we discovered that in online media LCT is a widely used term and approached in many different ways. We noticed that generally LCT is either seen as a positive or negative

phenomenon. If presented positively, LCT is often seen as a travel trend which people should not miss out as it gives tourists the opportunity to see remote and endangered places (e.g., McCarthy, 2018; Talty, 2017). When presented negatively, online content often refers to the damage that is occurring in LCT destinations (e.g., Hutton, 2019; Shrikant, 2019). Out of the fifteen articles used in the content analysis, the majority were critical towards LCT. In fact, only two articles described LCT as a travel trend for people to experience something unique (see McCarthy, 2018; Talty, 2017), and one article described LCT destinations as part of people's bucket lists (Leisure Group Travel, n.d.). However, all three articles also referred to LCT destinations as places that are under threat by external influences such as climate change. In fact, out of all articles, only one article saw the criticism towards LCT in a positive way (see Islam, 2019). This particular article implied that visitors of LCT destinations often become more eco-conscious and, as a result, they may act as climate change ambassadors who inform people about the negative effects of climate change and, thereby, contribute to sustainable development (see Islam, 2019). All other articles were critical towards LCT. In view of the critical articles, it became apparent that the critique usually referred to the environmental issues of LCT destinations. Only three articles adumbrated socio-cultural issues (see McCarthy, 2018; Mallory On Travel, n.d.; Marash, n.d.) but still none of the articles set their focus on the socio-cultural problems that come with LCT.

In view of our coding themes, *disappearance* was represented the most among the fifteen articles (e.g., Lee, n.d.). In fact, we could identify attributes and phrases linked to *disappearance* in all articles except from one, namely the one by Skirka (2019). The term 'before it's gone/too late' appeared to be one of the most used phrases in view of *disappearance* in online media. We noticed that only two articles mentioned *disappearance* in a socio-cultural context. Marash (n.d.) writes that "Alaskan communities are already experiencing flooding and land loss due to climate change, and some have already had to relocate", and McCarthy (2018) states: "Globalization and an increase in tourism worldwide is also changing indigenous cultures and there is a niche but strong market for exploring these before those changes fully take hold" (McCarthy, 2018). All other articles referred to vanishing landscapes and natures in view of *disappearance*, for example, Islam (2019) points out: "As many of the world's natural wonders deteriorate and vanish, glaciers and coral reefs especially, people are urged to see them before it's too late."

The second most frequent coding theme in this content analysis is the theme of *danger*. Just as *disappearance*, *danger* could also be found in all articles except from the one by Tompkin (2018), however, it was not used as often as the coding theme of *disappearance* within the articles. Again, we identified that generally *danger* was only mentioned in view of nature, wildlife and landscapes being under threat, for instance, Mallory On Travel (n.d.) implies: "more species become endangered, polar-bears, orang-utans, amphibians and oceanic coral dependent species are struggling." The only time it was mentioned in a socio-cultural context, it appeared to be the same phrase that could already be applied to *disappearance*: McCarthy (2018) referring to globalization and heavy tourism as the reasons why indigenous cultures are changing. In fact, overall, we recognized that the coding theme of *danger* was often related to phrases referring to 'change'.

Another coding theme which was identified in most articles is the coding theme of *damage*. This coding theme did not refer to socio-cultural issues of LCT at all, instead, all articles approached LCT out of an environmental perspective. Phrases like "The reef is also dying, and dying quickly" (Marash, n.d.) or "Our love of travel is damaging the world to an almost unreconcilable [*sic*] state" (Brown, 2018) represent the use of *damage* in online media. Climate change or heavy tourism appeared to be the main reasons why places experience *damage*.

The coding theme of *outstanding* could be identified among the articles many times as well, however, other than the coding themes mentioned above, *outstanding* was used in fewer articles overall. Nevertheless, some articles set their focus on attributes which can be applied to *outstanding*, for example, the article "Last Chance Tourism is on a Bucket List, but whose?" (Leisure Group Travel, n.d.) almost exclusively used phrases of the coding theme *outstanding*. Phrases and statements that could be applied to *outstanding* usually referred to "inspiring and utterly breathtaking" (Tompkin, 2018) nature, "unique experiences" (Leisure Group Travel, n.d.) or "off-the-beaten-path destinations" (Talty, 2018).

In contrast to the coding themes of d*isappearance, danger, damage* and *outstanding,* the coding theme of *overtourism* was not mentioned that often in online media. In fact, only around half of the articles referred to *overtourism* when describing LCT. The most outstanding code word of *overtourism* turned out to be 'flocking'. "'Last-chance' tourists flock to sites before they vanish" (Joselow, 2018) is only one of many phrases when 'flocking' was mentioned.

The last coding theme, the theme of *authenticity*, was used the least in all articles – precisely in less than half of the articles. Additionally, when phrases and statements of *authenticity* were found, they only appeared very occasionally. Some articles mentioned "local and indigenous culture" (McCarthy, 2018) a few times or others referred to Antarctica as "Earth's last untouched frontier" (Skirka, 2019). Unlike the other coding themes, the coding theme of *authenticity* was more often described in a socio-cultural than in an environmental context.

Furthermore, we recognized that most of the coding themes are interconnected with each other: Firstly, we discovered that the coding theme of *disappearance* stands in close relation to the coding theme of *danger*. It turned out that articles that could be applied to *disappearance*, could often be applied to the coding theme of *danger* as well. Online content of the coding theme of *danger* often referred to places being under threat and consequently to places that will experience a rapid change in the future (see Cohen, 2017; O'Reilly, 2016). Statements like "Rising sea levels, erosion, deforestation and urban development are just some of the man-made reasons our most treasured corners of the earth are changing beyond recognition" (Brown, 2018) are highlighting the interconnectedness of the two coding themes *disappearance* and *danger*. Additionally, *disappearance* and *danger* can also be seen in relation to the coding theme of *overtourism*. "Climate change, heavy tourism and logging have these destinations in danger of vanishing" (Cohen, 2017), as stated in this phrase, some online content, described *overtourism* as one of the reasons why change is happening. Furthermore, an endangered and disappearing place may also experience a loss of *authenticity*. For example, the phrase "Globalization and an increase in tourism worldwide is also changing indigenous cultures and there is a niche but strong market for exploring

these before those changes fully take hold" (McCarthy, 2018) can be applied to all three coding themes. On the one hand, *authenticity* is mentioned in view of 'indigenous cultures' and the changes it will experience. On the other hand, *disappearance* can be identified in the need to explore cultures "before those changes fully take hold" (McCarthy, 2018) and, finally, globalization and increased tourism are stated as reasons why places are in *danger* of disappearing or losing their authenticity. Besides, by referring to an 'increase in tourism worldwide' this phrase can also be linked to the coding theme of *overtourism*.

In regard to the coding themes of *damage* and *outstanding*, we realized that generally online content only refers to one of the themes at once. In fact, most of the articles that described LCT with attributes linked to the coding theme of *outstanding* (e.g., Talty, 2018; Leisure Group Travel, n.d.) approached the phenomena of LCT much more positively than online content that could be applied to the coding theme of *damage* the most (e.g., Shrikant, 2019). Nonetheless, we also noticed text data that included both themes at a time (e.g., Joselow, 2018; Cohen, 2017). Furthermore, we recognized that articles which were critical towards LCT and set focus on the coding theme of *damage* could often be linked to the coding theme of *danger* as well. For example, the article "Last Chance Tourism: Nine places to see before climate change takes them away" (Marash, n.d.) almost exclusively used attributes which could either be applied to the coding theme of *damage* or *danger*. Overall, we noticed that all fifteen articles were characterized by a mix of at least three different coding themes at a time.

After drawing inferences based on the codes as well as after identifying connections among the different coding themes, we developed questions for our questionnaire in regard to each coding theme. Asking specific questions to the participants of our online survey helped us to better understand why people decide to visit an LCT destination as well as to identify which kind of online content is relevant to motivate people when traveling. Text data referring to *authenticity* usually related to the local culture of an LCT destination. In fact, we identified 'local and/or indigenous culture' as the most used coding word of *authenticity*, thus, we draw the inference that reading about 'local and indigenous culture' in online media could also change people's perception of LCT. To discover if this observation is true, we asked the question in the questionnaire, named: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when I read that it has indigenous and/or local people/culture" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16).

As mentioned before, with respect to the coding theme of *disappearance*, we could apply the theme to all articles except from one and, furthermore, 'before it is gone/too late' appeared to be the most outstanding coding phrase. This made us assume that 'vanishing' or 'disappearing' places are of particular interest for people when traveling to an LCT destination. Consequently, we developed the following question for the questionnaire: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when I read that it is said to be disappearing (to see it 'before it is gone')" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16).

In view of the coding theme of *damage*, we realized that most articles referred to places experiencing damage through outside influences just as overtourism or climate change. This made

us think that places which are untouched and have not experienced any damage or external influences yet, appear more attractive to travelers than places that are under destruction when visiting an LCT destination. Consequently, we asked in the questionnaire: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when I read that it is said to be untouched" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16).

When applying the coding theme of *danger* to the articles we discovered that most online content about LCT refers to places being either 'endangered', 'in danger' or 'threatened'. In fact, some articles almost exclusively used these attributes to describe LCT (e.g., Mallory On Travel, n.d.; Marash, n.d.). As a result, we asked ourselves if endangered destinations appeared to be more attractive for LCT tourists than other destination. Based on this thought, we asked in the questionnaire: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when I read that it is said to be endangered" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16). Additionally, we realized that the code words 'endangered' and 'threatened' often relate to places being under change (see Cohen, 2017; O'Reilly, 2016). However, in literature 'change' is not necessarily seen as something negative that contributes to a destinations destruction, instead, it even can foster the development of a destination (e.g., UNWTO, 2013; Tosun, 1998). To identify how people perceive a destination which is under change we asked: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when I read that it is said to be changing" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16).

As mentioned above, in terms of *overtourism* we identified 'flock' or 'flocking' to be the most outstanding code words. It seemed like that in online media phrases like 'people are *flocking* to places' are used as deterrents to avoid more people visiting an (LCT) destination. In consequence, we were interested to find out if people actually are put off by phrases like this and thus, we asked in the questionnaire: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when I read that tourists are flocking (coming in large numbers) to the destination" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16).

Lastly, in respect of the coding theme *outstanding*, phrases and statements often referred to places either being 'unique' or 'remote' and 'off-the-beaten-path'. To investigate if these descriptions of a place contribute to people's motivation to visit an LCT destination, we asked the following two questions in the questionnaire: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when I read that it is said to be unique" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16) as well as "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: I feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when I read that it is said to be off-the-beaten-path" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16).

3.2.2. Questionnaire.

To find out about the perceptions, motivation, and values of tourists to participate in LCT, a questionnaire was distributed (see Appendix B & C). There was no predefined target group for the survey, meaning that no restrictions regarding socio-demographics, travel behavior or the like were made. Data collection for the questionnaire took place over 13 days from 7 April 2019 to 19

April 2019. Data collection was ended after 13 days because response collection slowed down after some time and we were satisfied with the number of collected responses. A link to the questionnaire was distributed through the following means: on private Facebook pages, in several Facebook groups (public and closed), on LinkedIn, in private networks (family, friends, fellow students, and alumni et cetera) and through extended networks with the help of family and friends. Distributing the questionnaire through social media was chosen as this enabled us to reach a large number and diverse group of potential participants ourselves.

For the data analysis, we eventually made the conscious decision to not analyze the data using a statistical program such as SPSS, which would have been a rather quantitative approach. Initially, we analyzed the data using SPSS, however, it felt inappropriate for the style of research that we were undertaking. While using SPSS allowed us to filter out incomplete cases and have a rather tidy dataset, we instead decided to take the dataset as it is and to count every single answer, no matter if a respondent answered every single question or, for example, only the first one. This also made sense in light of our humanistic approach where we aim to get an understanding of people's perceptions, values, and motivations in LCT rather than to make generalized, quantitative statements about the answers provided. The chosen approach also allowed us to be more flexible with our dataset. Since we used some indirect questioning techniques and many questions were designed in a way that they left a lot of room for interpretation for us as researchers, we were able to more freely talk about the data that we accumulated, rather than having to be "statistically correct".

Moreover, it allows making assumptions about why some questions may have been unanswered by many respondents whereas others have been answered by almost all respondents (e.g., because it was an uncomfortable question that demanded of respondents to admit to their own potentially negative behavior or potential ignorance of certain issues). However, this, of course, means that we are dealing with some rather big jumps in the number of respondents per question, which is something that we need to keep in mind and, overall, one could surely criticize the lack of "statistical correctness". The sample size thus fluctuates from 91 responses to 308 depending on the question (note: these numbers apply only to those questions where respondents had to choose an answer and not those where writing text was required, as it can be assumed that these were in any case neglected by many respondents). Nonetheless, SPSS was at times used to facilitate the analysis (e.g., to count frequencies of the countries respondents come from). To double check, we applied a filter variable in SPSS that selects only those cases that answered the first question and the question on gender and this results in 195 cases, which leads us to believe that 195 participants have filled out the whole questionnaire, which corresponds with what the survey program tells us.

3.2.2.1. Sample.

Out of the 195 respondents that answered the question asking for gender, 140 (72%) are female and 54 (28%) are male and one (1%) identifies as gender neutral (see Figure 6). The majority of respondents are between 25 and 34 years old (39%), the second largest group are 18

to 24 years old (36%), followed by 35 to 44 years old (12%), 55 to 64 years old (6%), 45 to 54 years old (3%), 65 years or older (2%) and 17 years or younger (1%) (see Figure 7). Out of the 175 respondents that answered which country they are from, 65 are from Germany (33.3%), 22 from Denmark (11.3%), 18 from the Netherlands (9.2%) and 16 from the U.S. (8.2%). Eight are from Italy (4.1%), six from France (3.1%) and five each from Canada, Norway, Spain (2.6% each). Two each are from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Czech Republic, England, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Sweden and the UK (1% each). One respondent each comes from Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Colombia, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland, and U.S./Austria. One respondent gave a fictional place which leads us to doubt whether this respondent was serious in filling out the survey, however, unfortunately, the survey program does not allow us to identify individual cases and delete these, thus, this respondent is included, nonetheless (0.5% each).
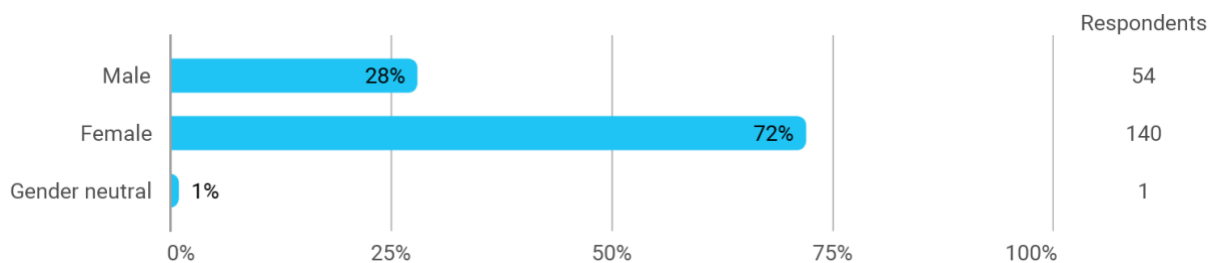
Figure 6. Question 17: Distribution of gender of questionnaire respondents.
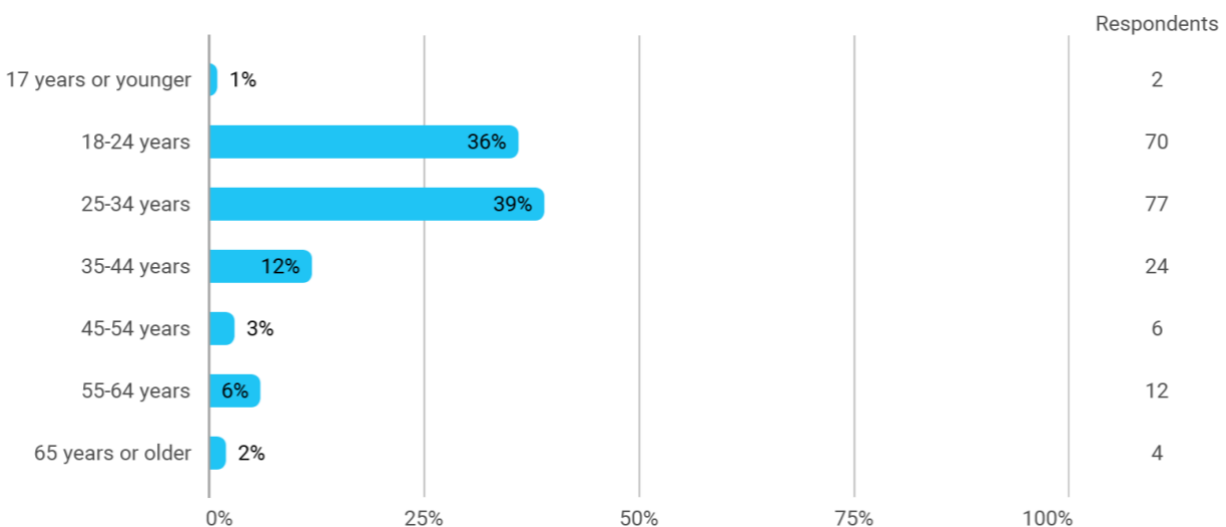

Figure 7. Question 18: Distribution of age of questionnaire respondents.

3.2.2.2. Questionnaire design.

At the beginning of the questionnaire, the purpose of the questionnaire and some ethical statements were provided. The questionnaire was purposely divided into two parts which meant that participants were only introduced to LCT approximately halfway through the survey. The

questionnaire consisted of 19 questions, however, the questionnaire was designed in a way where some questions were only shown if a certain condition had been met (e.g., the previous question was answered with "yes") in order to follow up on that response. Most questions included an option named "I do not know" in order to prevent participants from selecting or giving a random answer in case they were unsure about what to answer. The possible limitations of this are discussed in subchapter 3.3. Limitations to Methodology.

The questions in the questionnaire were based on both existing scholarly literature and studies on LCT (see Literature Review), the Content Analysis as well as personal interests and curiosity. The questionnaire started with asking participants whether they have ever (because of certain changes or developments) wanted to visit a destination now rather than later, thus already asking a core question concerning LCT, without participants being aware of it (unless they already knew what LCT is). This question was considered to be an interesting and attention-catching question to start the survey with and could later be cross-checked with answers given after the participants were introduced to the topic of LCT and asked similar questions again. If the participants answered with "yes", they were asked to fill out a text field with which destination and for what reasons they had wanted to visit "rather now than later". The next question asked participants whether they had ever visited a destination and been disappointed because it had changed too much, which, similarly to the first question, implicitly was targeted at the idea of destinations constantly changing and this being perceived as a negative aspect by tourists. The proposed options for answers in the following question which asked for reasons for this disappointment were also mostly aimed at this changing and developing of destinations. Participants were also able to write out other reasons in a text box. This question was seen relevant in order to deconstruct the idea of LCT and to contest the existing definition of LCT under a socio-cultural point of view. Next, participants were asked what motivates them to travel to a destination with the choice of answers purposely being framed around motivators relevant to LCT and tourist values as well as the idea of the tourist gaze. As the focus of this study is on socio-cultural LCT, only one answer option referring to climate change-driven LCT was provided. Like in the previous question, participants could provide their own written answers, as well. Continuing with questions implicitly asking about LCT motivators, the next question asked participants when they would consider it too late to visit a destination. This question again was seen as beneficial to get a clear idea of what LCT means and what constitutes an LCT destination that is already in its final stage of degradation according to tourist perceptions. Again, the answers provided were mostly framed around socio-cultural aspects rather than environmental ones.

The following question asked participants in more general terms about how important sustainability is to them when traveling to which participants could respond by selecting their ranking from "not important at all" to "very important" on a 5-point Likert scale. This question was included to get a further idea about the sustainability consciousness of the sample and to cross-check other answers given with the participants' own judgment of the importance they place on sustainability while on holiday. The next two questions were aimed at revealing participants' awareness of the (potential) negative impacts of tourism on a destination by asking them whether

they are concerned about potential environmental, social and/or economic impacts on a destination and whether they think they are contributing to environmental, social and/or economic damages themselves when visiting a destination. This question was key to later be able to address the paradox in LCT. Existing literature and previous studies have found out that LCT tourists may be aware of negative impacts of tourism but often do not feel like they are contributing to the issue themselves by engaging in these activities (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016). After this question, participants were finally introduced to the topic of LCT through a short text that briefly described the phenomenon and gave the polar regions, the Maldives, the Great Barrier Reef, Myanmar, and Cuba as examples for LCT destination. While having given specific destinations as examples may be seen as a limitation (see subchapter 3.3. Limitations to Methodology), it was considered necessary to give people who had never heard of LCT before a clear idea of the topic under study.

Similar to the first question in the questionnaire, participants were then asked if they could imagine visiting a destination because they think it is their last chance to see it. Following, they were asked if they had ever visited an LCT destination before, and participants could say that they had and provide the name of the destination that they had visited, decline, or provide a name of a destination that they are soon going to visit which they consider to be LCT. Depending on previous answers given, participants were presented with the question of what motivates them to visit an LCT destination, which again was similar to the previous question asked on what motivates them to visit a new destination. However, the answers provided were slightly different to the ones in the previous question and also targeted at identity building and the idea of LCT tourists engaging in such trips for educational purposes and becoming (climate change) ambassadors that had been brought up in previous studies (see Lemieux et al., 2018). Inspired by Groulx et al. (2016), the next question asked participants whether they had ever decided against traveling to an LCT destination. With this question, initially, it was hoped that interesting differences could be identified between this group of participants and the rest or that at least this group of travelers that seemed to be somewhat aware of LCT and its implications would provide interesting findings. However, the same limitation may apply here that destinations were given as examples in the introductory text and may, therefore, have influenced the answers given by some respondents. Also, with the decision to not use a statistical program for data analysis anymore such interferences could not be drawn after all.

The following two questions were both made up of statements (10 statements and eight statements respectively) which respondents were asked to rank on a 5-point Likert scale. The first set of statements were more general statements related to perceptions, values, and motivations in LCT where participants were asked to rank the degree to which they agreed with these statements. The second set of statement resulted from the previously conducted content analysis and included the attributes that were found to be most used in online media and deemed as most relevant as possible influential factors in tourist decision-making and forming of LCT motivation (see 3.2.1. Content analysis). These statements consisted of the sentence "I feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when I read that…", which was then completed with the respective attributes. Here,

participants were again asked to rank the degree to which they agreed with these statements. Lastly, respondents were asked socio-demographic questions, namely their gender, age and the country they are from. The survey ended with a thank you message and an invitation to send the survey to anyone else who might be interested in filling it out to increase the sample size.

3.3. Limitations to Methodology

The sample. We have chosen the method of an online questionnaire as it allowed us to reach a large number of potential participants. In addition, not only did an online questionnaire allow us to reach a large number of people, but it also allowed us to reach people from all over the world from various international countries. However, some potential limitations in regard to the sample are that we have to assume that some people in our sample are "experts" in the field of sustainable tourism, as the questionnaire was also accessible to fellow students and fellow alumni from tourism studies and, therefore, might have given different and more informed answers than other people who do not know a lot about tourism and issues around sustainability. Also, we have to assume that some of the respondents are people we personally know and, thus, come from rather similar social backgrounds. Moreover, one should keep in mind that over 70 percent of the respondents are female and that 75 percent are between 18 and 35 years old meaning that the distribution of gender and age is not even. However, we do not see this as a limitation in our exploratory study, but it is something that a future study might want to consider, for example, in order to make conclusions about potentially different perceptions, values, and motivations between the different genders and age groups.

Nonetheless, the socio-demographics of our sample may influence the destinations that respondents have mentioned as LCT destinations or destinations that they have wanted to visit now rather than later. For example, we may assume that US Americans rather mention a destination such as Cuba as an example for an LCT destination, given the current political situation, but also the close proximity, between the two countries. Also, Europeans may not be thinking of Arctic destinations such as Manitoba in Canada (where some previous studies on LCT have been conducted) as much, but rather be aware of European destinations that they may perceive as LCT, also given the distances to the different destinations. Furthermore, with the majority of our sample being rather young and trips to, for example, Antarctica being very expensive, this may also explain why Antarctica, which has also been named LCT in previous literature, was not mentioned as much.

Data collection and analysis. In regard to data collection, we have decided to use an online questionnaire instead of other tools such as interviews. In addition to the reasons mentioned in the paragraph above, we chose to do an online questionnaire as it is an efficient way to collect a lot of data in a relatively short period of time. An online questionnaire meant that we were more independent and did not rely on the cooperation of other actors, such as travel agencies, to spare their time and help with our data collection. A limitation may be that a questionnaire is a rather quantitative data collection tool, and, while there were some text boxes, there was not as much room for respondents expressing their thoughts and opinions on LCT as there would be in, for

example, an interview setting. However, as the questionnaire included questions related to one's own values and behavior, as well as morals, an anonymous online questionnaire was seen as a suitable tool in order for respondents to not feel uncomfortable and be able to answer all questions truthfully. Nonetheless, this leads us to some more general limitations that we as researchers should be aware of when using a questionnaire as the data collection tool. First of all, we, nonetheless, have to expect that some questions may have been answered dishonestly, for instance, if the respondent did not want to give the true answer or did not fully understand the question. In addition, we cannot be certain that respondents have always fully read and understood every question or text. Also, the questionnaire was only available in English and arguably contained rather difficult language, which might have made it difficult for some respondents to fully understand the questionnaire, especially given that the three biggest groups of respondents come from countries that are not native English-speaking countries.

We are also aware that some questions might not have been formulated clearly enough and, therefore, may have been misunderstood or interpreted differently by respondents. For instance, the questionnaire included the question "What motivates you to travel to an LCT destination?", and one of the answer options given was "To experience something special and share it with others". While this answer was intended to address the idea of seeing traveling as part of one's own identity formation (i.e. experiencing something extraordinary and then telling others about it to receive recognition, e.g. through social media), it might have well been understood as traveling to a destination and sharing this experience with others (i.e. going on a holiday with friends and/or family), which implies a rather different scenario. Therefore, we have to address this answer with caution and, unfortunately, cannot make judgments about whether traveling for identity formation purposes is a motivational driver for LCT tourists in our sample when looking only at this question.

Furthermore, as we have noticed ourselves, many respondents have skipped individual questions which means that there are many incomplete cases in the dataset. For example, many respondents have only answered the first question and then dropped out of the survey. In the end, it is, thus, a rather big limitation that respondents were able to skip any question as there were no forced responses. This decision had been made for ethical reasons so as to not force anyone to answer a question that they felt uncomfortable to answer, but also to avoid people just selecting any answer in case they had not understood a question. This could have potentially been prevented by equipping every single question with an "I do not know" answer, which was already the case with some of the questions. But still, it is debatable whether such respondents would always opt for the "I do not know" answer or still just select any other answer. Also, in general, the option of "I do not know" may oftentimes be the easiest solution for a 'lazy' respondent who does not feel like fully thinking about the question and his or her possible answer. Given the anonymity of the questionnaire, it is, of course, not possible to identify individual respondents that may have given an interesting answer which would be interesting to follow up on. Similar to participants skipping questions, many respondents did not write anything in text boxes which might have been due to a lack of interest, laziness or survey fatigue. In connection to this it should also be mentioned that respondents were able to go back to the previous page and change their given answers, which

becomes problematic in case respondents did so because they were, due to their given answer, confronted with a follow up question asking them to write something in a text box, which would not have appeared with another answer.

In the text that was explaining the concept of LCT to the participants in the questionnaire, we gave examples of "known" LCT destinations, namely the polar regions, the Maldives, the Great Barrier Reef, Myanmar, and Cuba. We chose to do this in order to make it easier for respondents to understand what LCT is and to provide some direct examples that participants might have been to already or heard of before and, therefore, understand the notion of LCT better by connecting it to their own experiences. However, this poses another potential limitation to our data and survey responses, as it has to be assumed that this information influenced respondents in the answers they gave. The question following this introductory text asked participants whether they had been to an LCT destination before, and many responded with influenced "Yes, I have been to an LCT destination" solely because they have been to, for example, Myanmar or Cuba but they did not actually perceive it as LCT. Some people have also pointed this out in the text boxes (e.g. "I did NOT go there because of last chance but mention it here because you write it is a last chance destination" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 12). This is also true for the question asking if respondents have ever decided against traveling to an LCT destination. Some respondents may have stated "yes" because they read in the given text that, for example, Cuba has been mentioned as an LCT destination and they once decided not to go there, but not because they were aware of LCT in general, and especially in connection to Cuba as a destination.

In terms of our data analysis, the biggest limitation may be that we did not use a statistical program such as SPSS to analyze the data. The reasons for this decision have been laid out in 3.2.2. Questionnaire. The program "SurveyXact" is, in contrast to a statistical program like SPSS, not able to provide an overview of all replies a certain individual has given. Therefore, we were not able to connect replies from different questions with each other, which sometimes made it difficult to interpret the given answers and conduct the analysis. The first question asked the respondent if he or she has ever wanted to visit a destination rather now than later because of certain changes or developments. Question 2 and 3 were supposed to be connected to it by asking the respondent to indicate the destination and providing the reason for the nomination. It would have been advantageous to identify which destinations respondents have wanted to visit due to which reasons. However, as this was not possible, we were dependent on the respondents mentioning the destination again in their text answer of Question 3. As we did not ask for this in the questionnaire and respondents obviously did not know about this issue, there were only a few replies including the concerned destination. This led to the other fact that we were unable to correlate the majority of text answers to the destination they were referring to and led to a lack of correlation amongst many questions.

3.4. Trustworthiness

While in positivist science, the criteria for evaluating the quality of a study are *internal* and *external validity*, *reliability*, and *objectivity,* humanistic research instead can be evaluated with the

criteria of *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability*, which fall under the term 'trustworthiness' (Bryman, 2015). This differentiation has been made because in positivist science the belief is that there is a single objective truth of social reality, but this is seen as inappropriate in humanistic research (Bryman, 2015). *Credibility* is synonymous to *internal validity* and is about "carrying out research according to the principles of good practice and submitting research findings to the members of the social world who were studied in order to obtain confirmation that the investigator has correctly understood the social world" (Bryman, 2015, p. 384). In our study, we have informed the questionnaire respondents about the purpose of the study, what the data will be used for and that the survey is anonymous. We have employed triangulation of sources as we have made the questionnaire available to different groups of people online and not made any restrictions in regard to who could take part in the study. The sample consists of people from different age groups and a variety of different countries. Also, being a team of three students we have employed triangulation in our data analysis, by each one of us reviewing the findings. Nonetheless, while we claim to have acted according to the principles of good practice, given the anonymity of the questionnaire and the large sample, we are not able to send the findings to everyone that participated in order to make sure we have "correctly understood the social world" (Bryman, 2015, p. 384) of the respondents.

In terms of *dependability* (paralleling *reliability* in positivist science) we have kept "complete records . . . of all phases of the research process" (Bryman, 2012, p. 392), by having stored all of our working documents from the beginning on in a shared Google Drive folder, which remains accessible. While positivists look at reliability from a quantitative point of view and aim to find out "whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice" (Trochim, 2006, "Dependability," para. 1), humanists see dependability as a way to "account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs" (Trochim, 2006, "Dependability," para. 2). Tourism is a dynamic industry with destinations constantly changing their images and characteristics (Govers & Go, 2009; Hatch & Schultz, 2002) highlighting the necessity to consider this dynamic within our research project.

Transferability in humanistic research is what *external validity* is in positivist science and means that while the findings from this study may be transferable to another setting, they are not generalizable. This is because, in this kind of research, the context is often unique and only significant to "the aspect of the social world being studied" (Bryman, 2012, p. 392). As the authors of this study we have provided transparency and clearly described the theoretical and methodological assumptions underlying this research project. From this point on it has to be determined on an individual basis whether the findings of this study can be transferred to another context or not (see Bryman, 2015).

Confirmability is analogous to *objectivity* and "concerned with ensuring that, while recognizing that complete objectivity is impossible in social research, the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith" (Bryman, 2012, p. 392). Confirmability is about adding uniqueness to the study in order to increase its value and develop findings from previous literature. It is also about guaranteeing to have made the best possible effort to provide an objective perspective of the

topic of LCT. We have aimed at doing this by creating our questionnaire in a way that respondents were objectively asked about their experiences with traveling in general, without mentioning specific destinations, too detailed pre-given answers to select or formulating the questions towards a certain direction or reply we wanted to receive. For this reason, the concept of LCT has only been explained in approximately the middle of the questionnaire.

5. Questionnaire Results

After distributing the link to the online questionnaire to potential groups of respondents, data collection was carried out over a period of 13 days. As explained in 3.2.2. Questionnaire, there were no forced responses in the questionnaire. This means that the number of respondents varies from question to question, as participants were able to leave any question unanswered and skip to the next one. In total, 195 complete responses have been registered. The questions where respondents could provide their own answers in text format resulted in a large dataset of text, which will be used and analyzed in the Analysis chapter but neglected in this chapter. All answers can be found in Appendix B. The first question asked participants if they have ever wanted to visit a destination now rather than later due to certain changes or developments. Out of the 308 responses, two thirds (66%) responded with *'Yes'*, while the remaining ones answered with *'No'* (34%) (Figure 8).
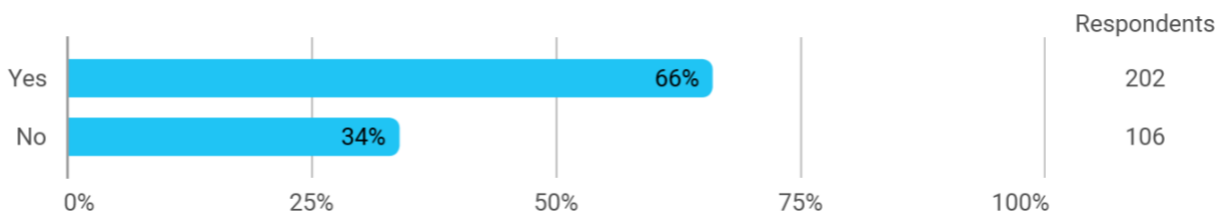

Figure 8. Question 1: Have you ever wanted to visit a destination now rather than later (because of certain changes or developments)?

Those who positively replied to this question were asked to indicate the specific destination they associate with their response to the first question. 71 different destinations were mentioned, out of which 45 destinations were only mentioned once each. This indicated a large variety, as well as different perceptions and experiences amongst the 152 respondents. It should also be highlighted that some respondents referred to cities, some to countries, some to specific attractions, and others gave rather general replies as for instance *several islands and destinations with glaciers*. Some respondents indicated only one destination in their reply, others mentioned two or more. The majority of all 152 respondents to this question mentioned *Cuba* as a destination that they have wanted to visit now rather than later due to certain changes or developments (28 out of 152 answers). *Antarctica*, *Asia*, and *the Great Barrier Reef* were mentioned by six respondents each, *the Maldives* and *Australia* by five respondents each, and four respondents indicated *Iceland*, *Venice* and *Turkey* as destinations they have wanted to visit now rather than later. *Thailand*, *Greenland*, *the Middle East*, *Myanmar*, and *Egypt* were each mentioned three times. Two replies each can be assigned to *North Korea*, *New Zealand*, *India*, *Africa*, *Morocco*, *Georgia*, *Istanbul*, *the Northern polar lights in Norway*, *the Amazon rainforest*, *Canada*, *Nepal*, and *Tibet*. Mentioned by one respondent each were the following remaining destinations: *the Faroe Islands*, *South Korea*, *Romania*, *Indonesia*, *the United States of America*, *the Fiji Islands*, *Scandinavia*, *Israel*, *China*, *Lapland*, *Mount Kilimanjaro*, *Armenia*, *the Galapagos Islands*, *Belarus*, *Panama*, *Pompeii*, *Iran*, *Helsinki*, *Bora Bora*, *Alaska*, *Machu Picchu*, *Cambodia*, *England*, *Portugal*, *Svalbard*, *Botswana*, *Jordan*, *Costa Rica*, *London*, *Spain*, *Lebanon*, *Copenhagen*, *Kazakhstan*, *Bonaire*,

Kiribati, *the Dead Sea*, *Japan*, *Tulum*, *ski resorts worldwide*, *beach and mountains*, *Jammu and Kashmir*, *South America*, *Universal Studios in Florida*, *Chernobyl*, and *several islands and destinations with glaciers*.

In the next question, respondents were asked if they had ever visited a destination and been disappointed about the destination having changed too much (Figure 9). 27 percent of respondents responded with *'Yes'* and indicated different destinations they had had a negative perception of when visiting. Hereby, *Venice* was the destination mentioned most, followed by *Amsterdam*, *the Great Barrier Reef*, and *Thailand*.
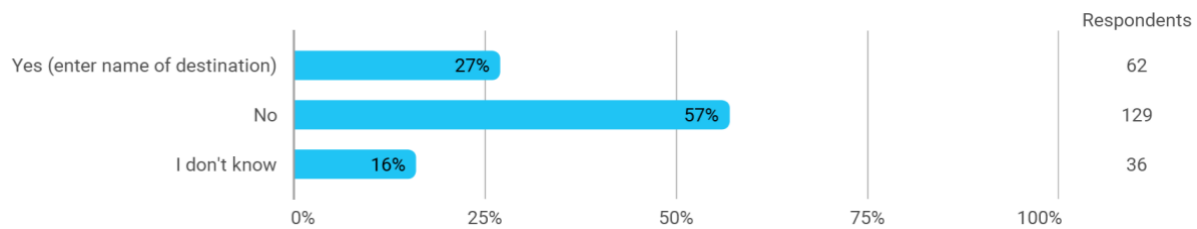

Figure 9. Question 4: Have you ever visited a destination and been disappointed because it has changed too much?

When asking about the reason for their disappointment, 144 respondents selected answers amongst the given choices. The majority (67%) stated that there were *'Too many tourists'*. 43 percent indicated *degradation of nature* as the main reason for their disappointment, followed by *'Locals were too dependent on tourism'* (35%) and the *commodification of culture and traditions* (32%). The remaining replies refer to the destination being *too developed, for example, because of technology and smartphones* (25%) and *unfriendly locals* (23%). 15 percent mentioned other reasons such as *high prices*, *unsafe nightlife* or *weather conditions* (Figure 10).
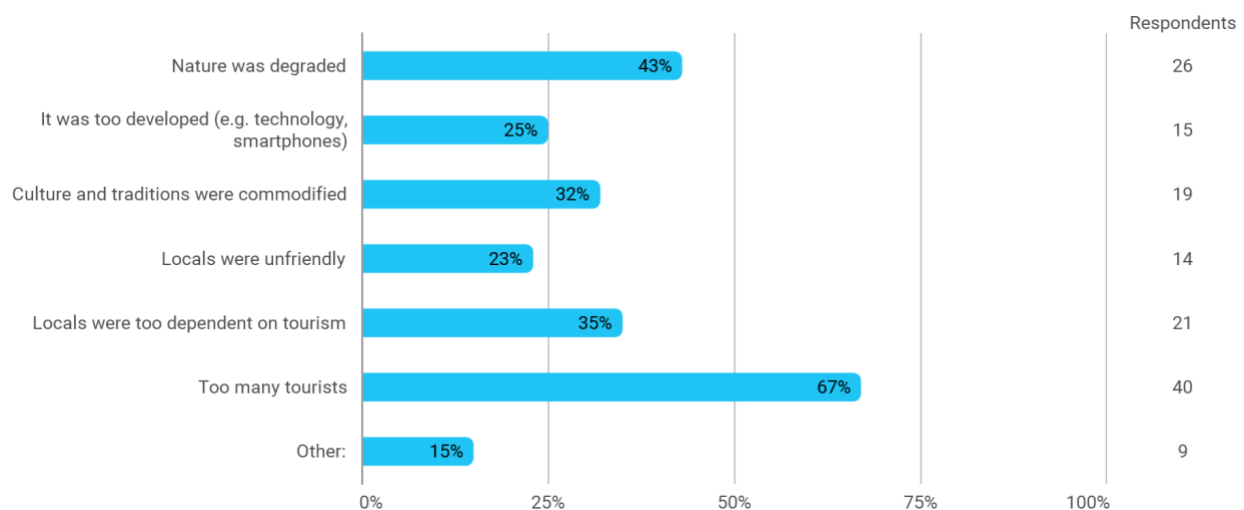

Figure 10. Question 5: If yes, what had changed too much?

The next question asked about the motivation to travel to a destination. 84 percent of all respondents stated their wish *'To see authentic cultures, traditions, places'*, closely followed by *'To experience (local) culture'* (76%). 62 percent of all respondents chose *'To see untouched nature'* and *'To experience something special and share it with others'* as travel motivations. *'To see a place now before it is changing or disappearing (e.g. because of climate change)'* is a motivator for 37 percent of all respondents, followed by *'To see a place with few to no modern influences'* (19%) (Figure 11). Respondents were also able to write their own answers about what motivates them to travel to a destination when selecting *'Other'*. The answers given by the respondents mostly center around the typical pull factors of destinations, such as good weather, nature, architecture, sports, touristic activities such as hiking and scuba diving, traditional food, sightseeing, cities, beaches and so on. Among the remaining responses, one respondent said "to shock my prejudices" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, 2019, question 6), another one said "to see as many of the world's wonderful countries and cultures in my lifetime [as possible]" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 6) and another one said to "find another place of "Heimat" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 6).
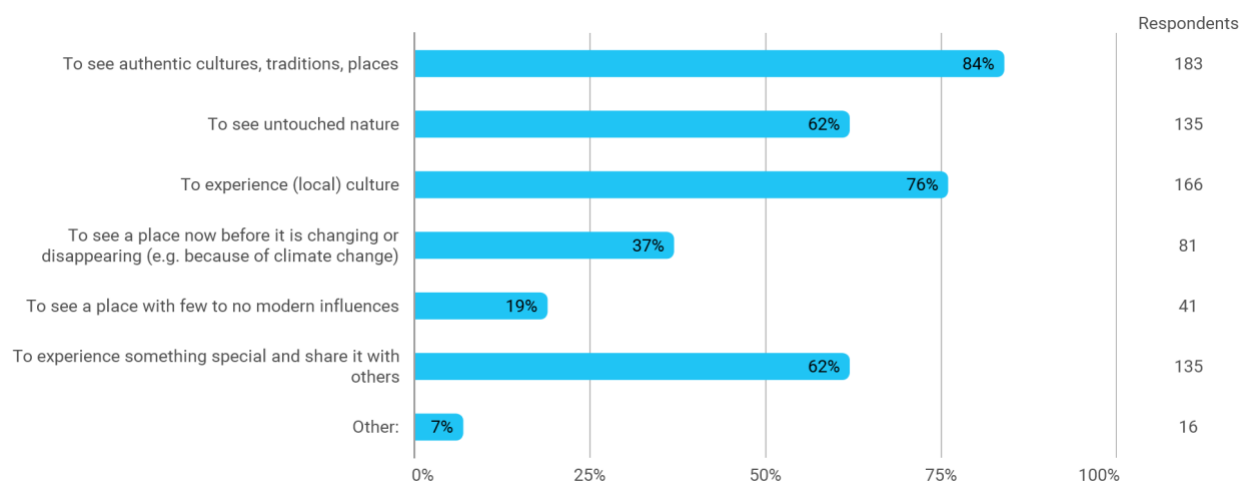
Figure 11. Question 6: What motivates you to travel to a destination?

After this, the respondents could choose amongst different options to indicate when it would be too late to visit a destination. Multiple answers per respondent could be selected. The top answer with 43 percent of all 431 responses was *'When local flora/fauna goes distinct'*, followed by *'Locals are only after making profit from tourists'* (42%), *'Friends who have been there tell me it is too touristy now'* (40%) and *'Too many foreign influences on local culture (loss of authenticity)'* (40%). 12 percent indicated *'Too developed, too much technology'* as reasons. 13 percent of all respondents stated that *it is never too late to visit a destination*. Six percent mentioned other reasons as for instance a *lack of safety*, *overtourism*, *political or language barriers*, and six percent said that they *do not know* (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Question 7: When would you say it is too late to visit a destination?

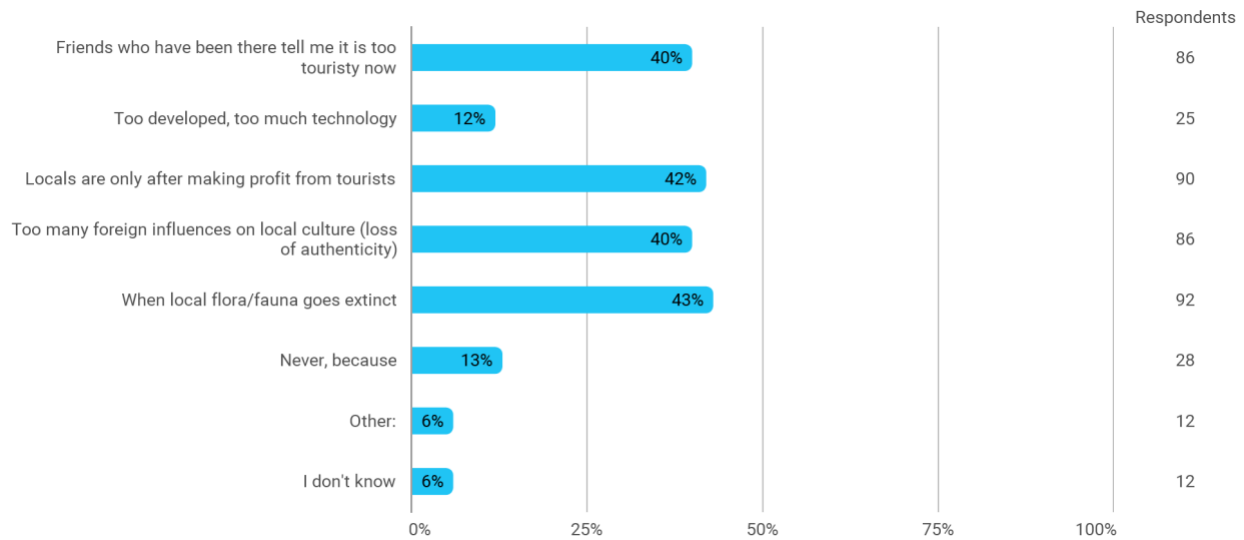The next question was *'How important is sustainability to you when you are traveling?'*. Respondents could rank the importance on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *'Not important at all'* to *'Very important'*. Out of the 213 responses, the majority indicated that sustainability is *'Somewhat important'* to them when traveling (42%), followed by 34 percent indicating *'Important'*, 15 percent saying *'Very important'* and seven percent *'Not important'*. One respondent indicated that sustainability is *'Not important at all'* to them when traveling (Figure 13).
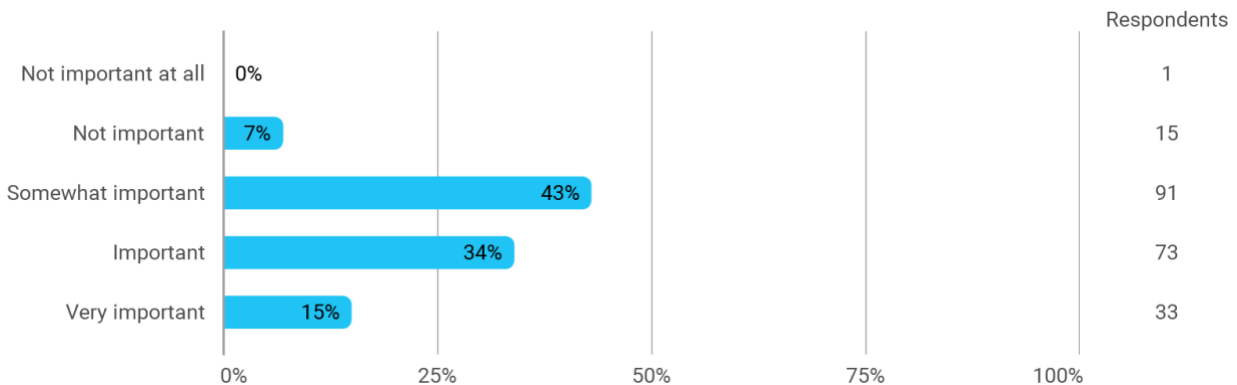
Figure 13. Question 8: How important is sustainability to you when you are traveling?

After entering the topic of sustainability, the subsequent two questions addressed the respondents' ethical mindset. First, the questionnaire asked about the respondent being concerned about potential impacts of tourism on a destination. Amongst the multiple answers to choose from, the grand majority (86%) indicated that they are *concerned about environmental impacts as for instance waste and degraded nature*. 68 percent are also *concerned about social impacts as for instance a commodification of local culture and traditions*. For 58 percent of all respondents,

41

economic impacts as for instance economic leakage (when profits from tourism do not reach the local community) are a matter of concern. Only five percent are *not concerned* about tourism impacting a destination and four percent responded with *'I don't know'* (Figure 14).
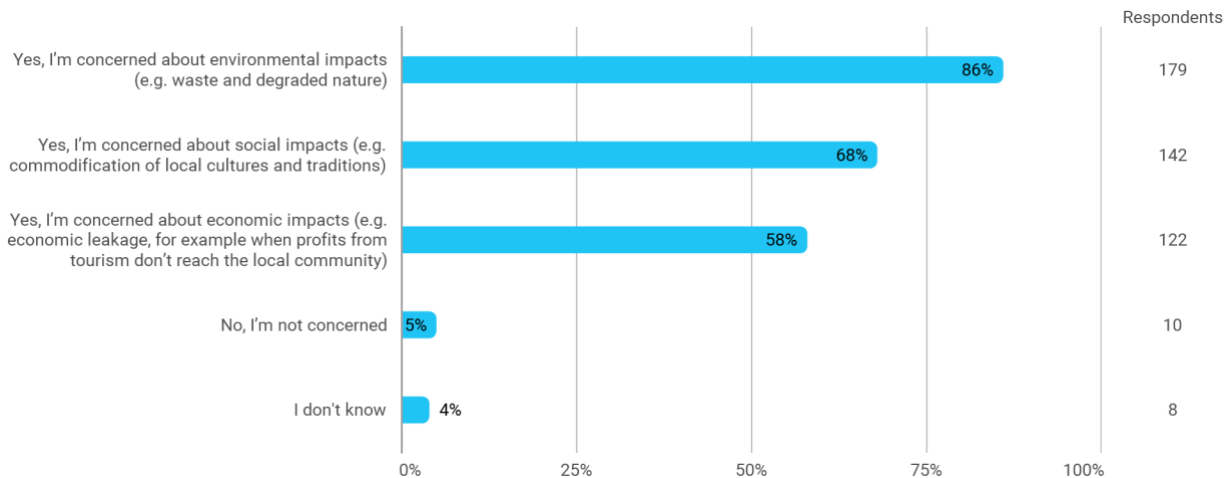
Figure 14. Question 9: Are you concerned about the potential impacts of tourism on a destination?

Second, the questionnaire addressed the respondents personally by asking whether they think that they are contributing to certain issues when visiting a destination. The same options as in the previous question were given. Simultaneously, the majority of answers is related to *environmental damages* with 54 percent thinking that they are contributing to such damages. 46 percent of all respondents think they are contributing to *economic damages*, followed by 43 percent thinking they are contributing to *social damages*. 13 percent indicate that they *do not know* and nine percent *do not think that they are contributing* to any issues when visiting a destination (Figure 15).
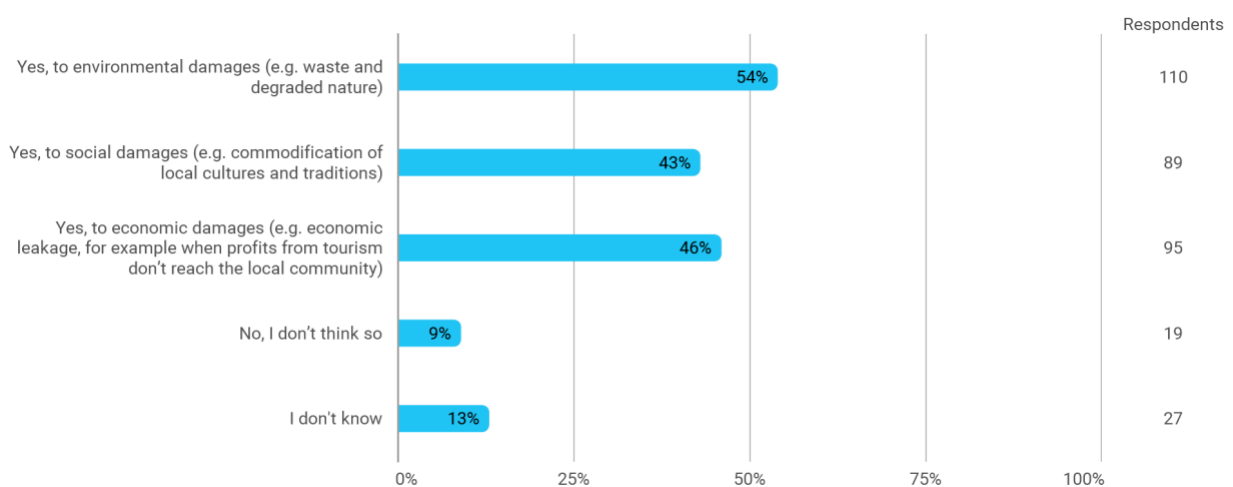
Figure 15. Question 10: Do you think you are contributing to certain issues when visiting a destination?

After this question, the respondents were introduced to the topic of LCT with a short text explaining the concept to them and giving examples of some LCT destinations. The subsequent question asked respondents whether they could imagine visiting a destination because they think it is their last chance to see it, which was mostly answered with *'Yes'* (61 %). 23 percent replied with *'Maybe'* and 16 percent replied with *'No'* (Figure 16).
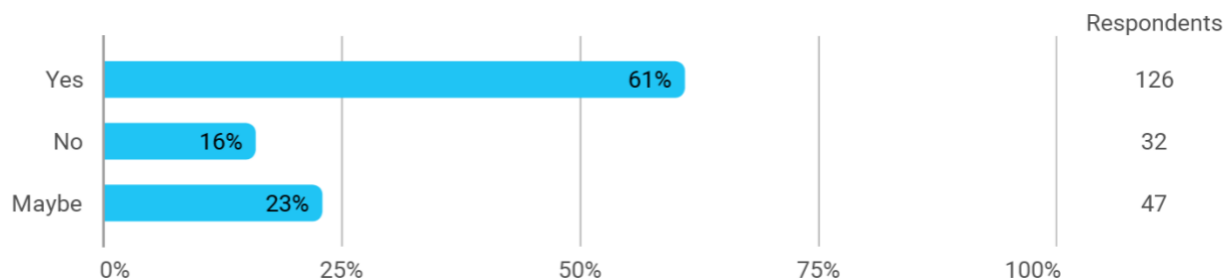
Figure 16. Question 11: Could you imagine visiting a destination because you think it is your last chance to see it?

This brings us to the first question specifically related to LCT. 62 percent stated that they have *not visited an LCT destination before*. 23 percent responded that they *have visited an LCT destination before*, six percent are *soon going to an LCT destination*, and nine percent are *not sure* if they have visited an LCT destination before (Figure 17).
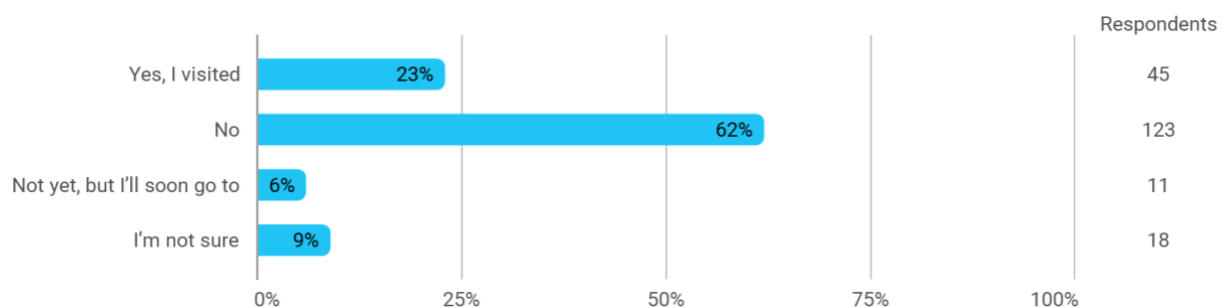
Figure 17. Question 12: Have you ever visited an LCT destination?

Amongst the 56 respondents having visited an LCT destination, 22 different destinations were indicated. *Cuba* was again mentioned the most with 27 percent of all replies, followed by *the Great Barrier Reef in Australia* and *Myanmar* with 18 percent each. *New Zealand* accounts for six percent of all replies, and *the Maldives* and *Venice* register four percent each. Several destinations have been mentioned by one percent of respondents: *Paris*, *Bhutan*, *Iceland*, *Chernobyl*, *the Alps*, *the Polar Regions*, *glaciers in Montana*, *Alaska*, *Egypt*, *India*, *Guatemala*, *Machu Picchu*, *Ghana*, *Greenland*, and *Azerbaijan*. Amongst the ones who have not visited an LCT destination yet but are soon going to one, nine replies have been collected indicating the following destinations: *Cuba* was mentioned three times, *the Maldives* two times, and *Pripyat/Chernobyl/Ukraine*, *Greenland*, *Australia*, and *Machu Picchu* were mentioned one time each.

Then, respondents were asked about their motivation to visit an LCT destination. The majority (59%) stated that they are motivated *'To be there before the authentic local culture gets lost'*. Over half of the respondents also indicated that *seeing a place before it becomes too touristy* (53%) and '*To see endangered nature'* (52%) motivates them to visit an LCT destination. 41 percent of the respondents are motivated to visit an LCT destination *'To learn about environmental and socio-cultural issues'*, 37 percent *'To educate myself and teach friends and family about it'*, 30 percent *'To see a less developed place'* and 18 percent *to be part of a small group of people that has been to the destination and to see a place that no one else goes to* (Figure 18). Five percent specified other motivations as for instance *visiting before the safety decreases*, *politics*, *educational reasons* or *to talk to locals*. Some have also stated that they *have not heard of the term 'LCT' before* or that they *do not believe in it*.
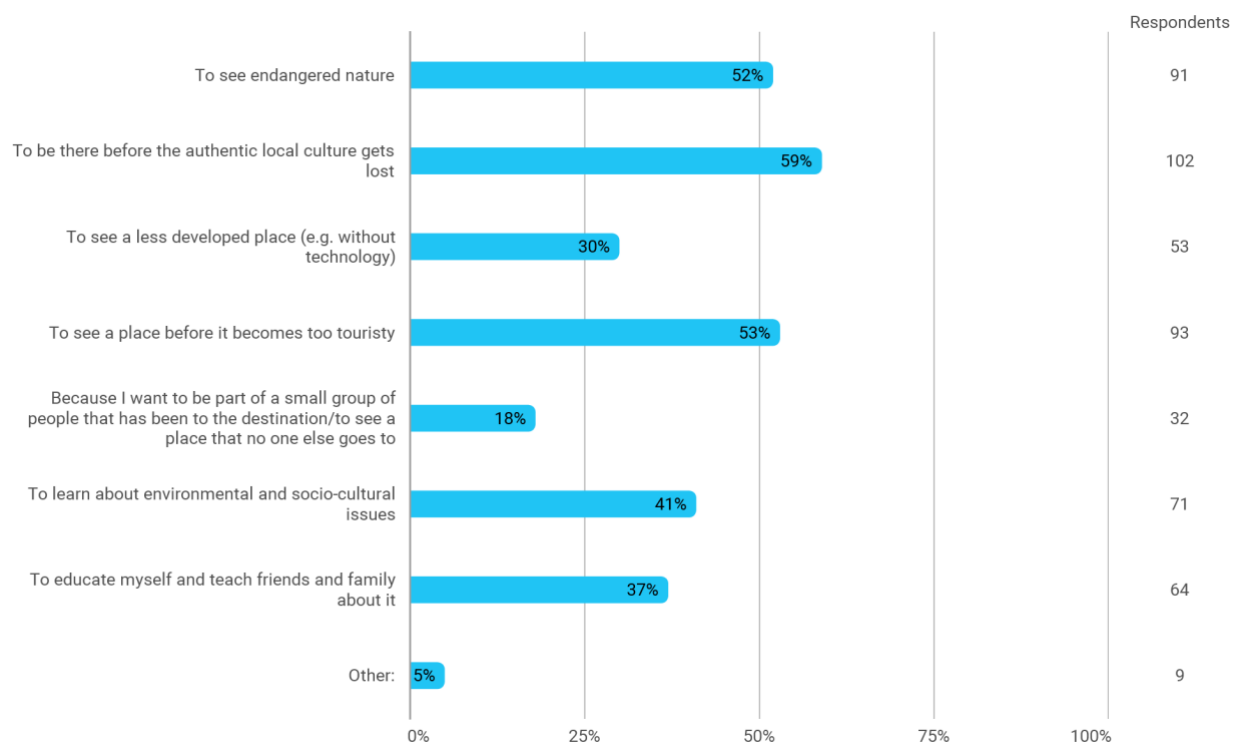
Figure 18. Question 13: What motivates you to visit an LCT destination?

The following question relates to the precedent one by asking if any explicit decision against traveling to an LCT destination has been made before (Figure 19). 45 percent of all respondents state that they are *not sure*. 44 percent indicated that they *have not decided against visiting an LCT destination before*. The majority did either not think about the visited destination being LCT, or was explicitly curious on going to an LCT place. Many replies seem not to answer the actual question of why *not* to decide against visiting an LCT destination as further statements mention why to decide against visiting. 11 percent affirm to *have decided explicitly against traveling to an LCT destination*, mostly because of *not wanting to pollute or damage the*

environment and contributing to harm the destination, but also due to *overtourism*, *inauthentic trip promotion*, or *terrorism threats*.
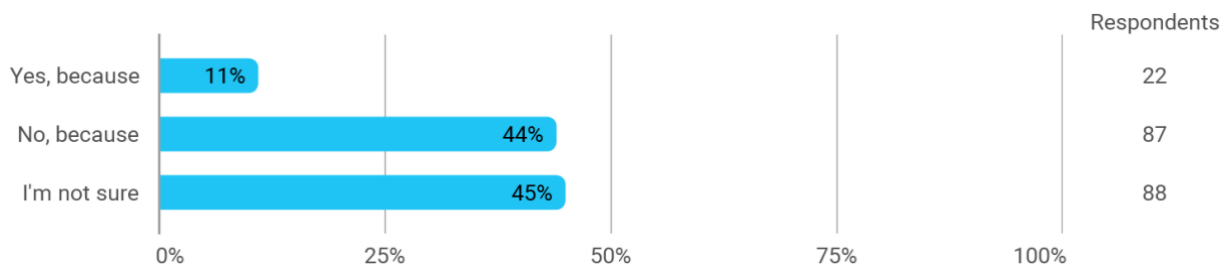
Figure 19. Question 14: Have you ever explicitly decided against traveling to an LCT destination?

The last two questions were designed in a 5-point Likert scale and asked respondents to which extent they agree with a certain statement. The majority of respondents *agree* (42%) or even *highly agree* (16%) with the statement that *travel is a personal right* for them. *Experiencing the local culture and meeting locals at the destination* is something that is important to respondents as well, as 82 percent *agreed* or *highly agreed* with this statement. 48 percent of the respondents *agree* or *highly agree* with the statement *'If my expectations of a destination were not met I would go to another destination'*. A high approval is accounted to the statement *'At an LCT destination I would be especially concerned about leaving a positive impact on the destination'* where 71 percent of all respondents either *agreed* or *highly agreed*. In general, equally few respondents would both *agree* and *disagree* to *tell others to visit a destination 'before it is too late'* (39% each), whereas the remaining 23 percent are *neutral*. This split in attitudes can also be seen in the statement *'Even if I know that tourism is affecting a destination negatively I would still visit it'* which 41 percent *disagree* or *highly disagree* with and 32 percent are *neutral* about. This can be related to the statement about behavior at an LCT destination. 53 percent stated that they *would behave differently in an LCT destination compared to any other destination*, whereas only five percent claimed *to not behave any different at an LCT destination*. 44 percent feel *neutral* towards the statement *'Destinations are always changing and this is a good thing'*, and there are more respondents who *disagree* (31%) or *highly disagree* (4%) with this statement than ones who *agree* (20%) or *highly agree* (1%). The majority of respondents (51%) *agrees* or *highly agrees* that *LCT destinations are attractive to visit* whereas 34 percent remain *neutral* and 16 percent *do not think that LCT destinations are attractive to visit* (Figure 20).
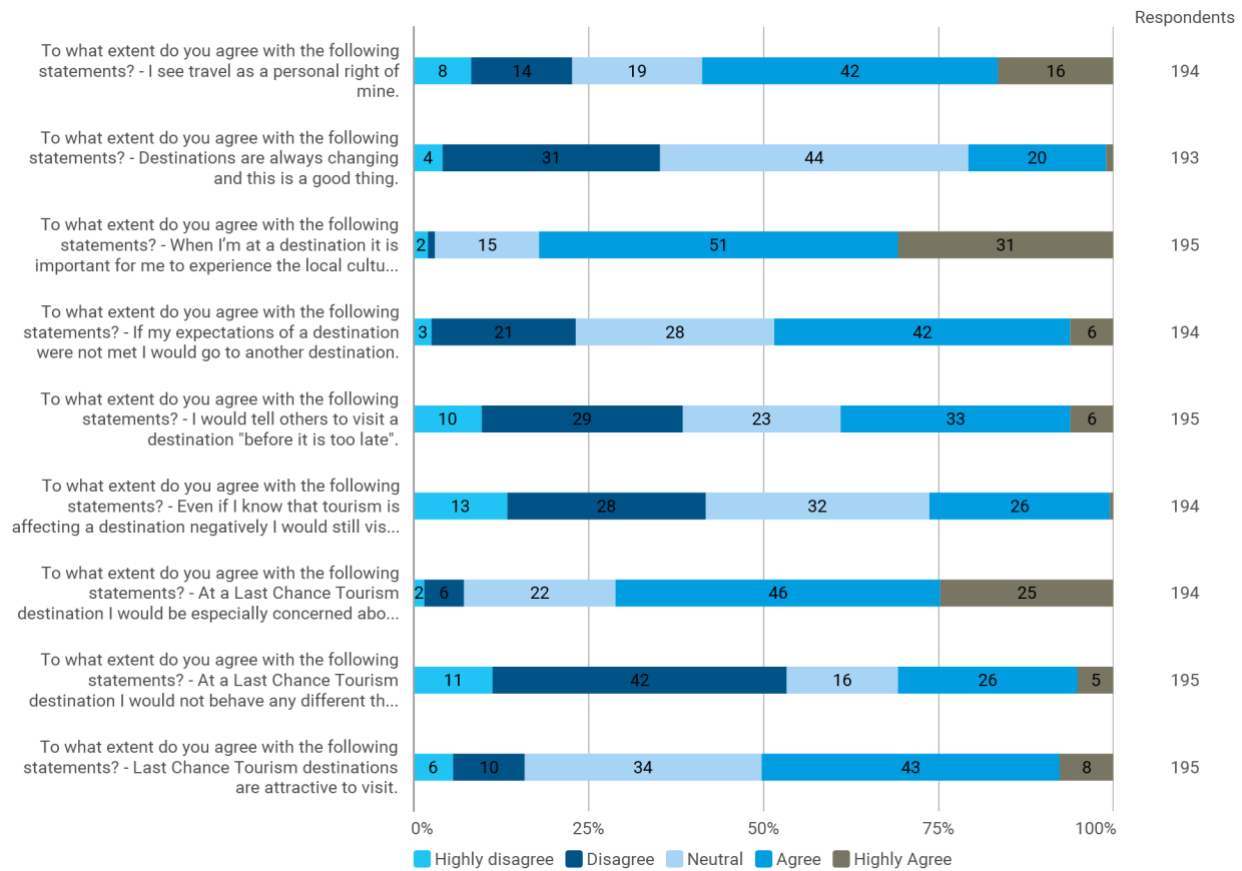
Figure 20. Question 15: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

The second question which was constructed by a 5-point Likert scale asked the respondents whether they feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when they read certain statements (Figure 21). Almost half of the respondents (46%) *do not feel urgency to visit a destination if it is said to be endangered*. 50 percent of the respondents seem to *feel urgency to visit an LCT destination when it is said to be off-the-beaten-path*. In general, approximately half of all respondents indicate a rising urgency to visit a destination when it is said to be *disappearing*, *off-the-beaten-path*, *indigenous* or *untouched*. The vast majority (77%) *agrees* or *highly agrees* with the statement that they feel more urgency to visit a destination when it is said to be *unique*, which can be linked to the subsequent result of having a special experience which could soon not be special anymore. Only 33 percent of the respondents seem to *feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when it is said to be changing*, whereas 44 percent feel *neutral* towards this statement.

49 percent of the respondents *feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when it is said to be disappearing, to see it 'before it is gone'*. 57 percent of the respondents *feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when it is said to have indigenous and/or local people/culture* and 57 percent also *feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when it is said to be untouched*. The majority of respondents (73%) *do not feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when it is said that tourists are flocking to the destination*. Strikingly, on average around a third of the respondents opted for *neutral* in most of these statements (ranging from 26% to 44%), with only the statement about a

destination being *unique* only receiving 12 percent on the *neutral* option. These results can be connected to the statement about feeling more urgency to visit a destination if tourists are flocking, that 73 percent disagree or highly disagree with, meaning that large numbers of tourists make the place less attractive. Even though the respondents have similar tendencies towards some statements including strong opinions about approval or disapproval, a relatively large number of respondents also indicates to be neutral towards some statements. 44 percent state to have a neutral urgency to visit a destination if it is said to be changing which can seem slightly contradictory in contrast to other replies but might be a result of the vague question formulation.
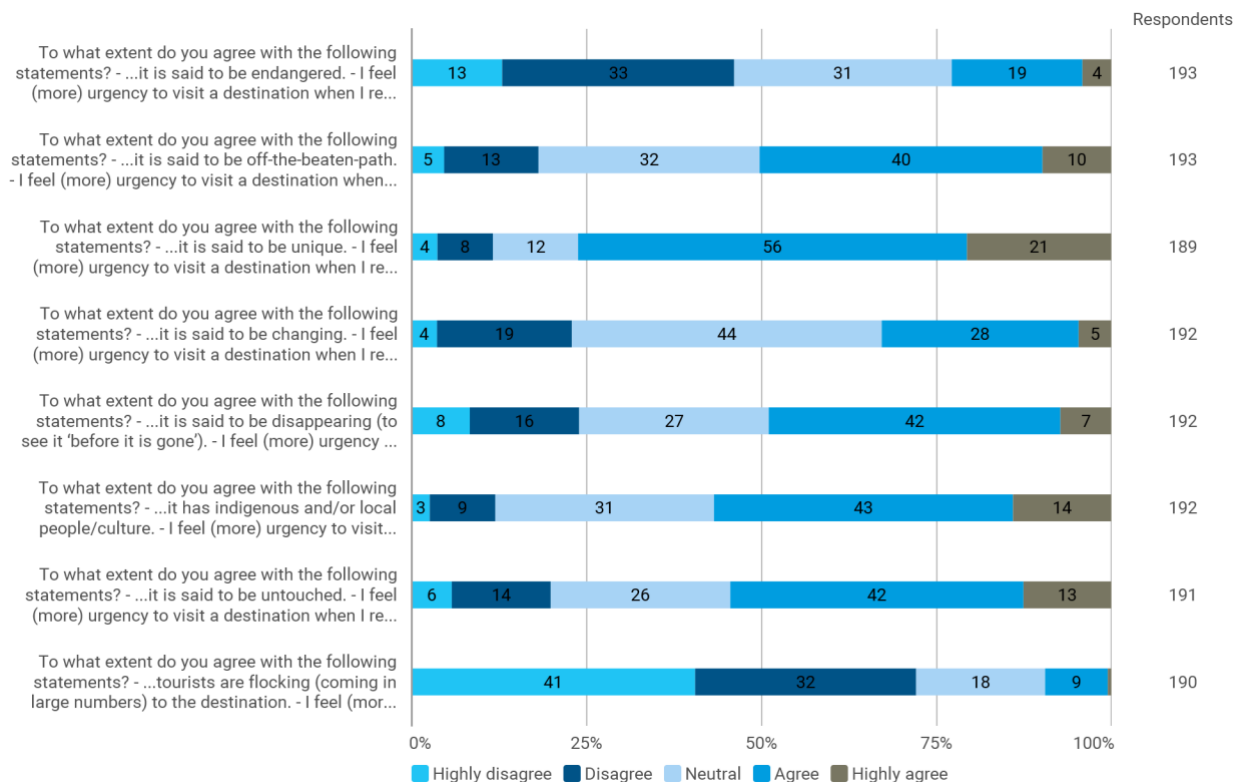

Figure 21. Question 16: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
- I feel (more) urgency to visit a destination when I read that...

6. Analysis

In order to compare findings from previous studies on LCT and the findings from our survey, relevant text answers by respondents, as well as the general results from the survey, have been used to enhance the analysis, with the overall aim being to reach our research objective and find answers to the research questions and aims. The analysis is structured in different paragraphs, referring to the major topics we identified in the questionnaire and content analysis. The major topics refer to tourist motivations to visit an LCT destination, their awareness and self-responsibility towards sustainable tourism development, factors like authenticity, overtourism and commodification which occur at the destination, and the role of traveling and tourism in one's identity formation.

Respondents are motivated to travel when it is the 'last chance'.

As an opening question to the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they have ever wanted to visit a destination now rather than later because of certain changes or developments. The question was purposely formulated without mentioning the term LCT so as to not influence or confuse respondents with a term they might not have heard about before. Two-thirds of all respondents affirmed the first question, saying that they have wanted to visit a destination now rather than later before. This already serves as a first indication that the desire for tourists to visit a destination that is (currently) undergoing change or development does exist.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections, with the first couple of questions asking participants about more general travel behavior and the second part being explicitly directed at LCT. After having introduced the term 'LCT' in the questionnaire, participants were asked in Question 11 if they could imagine visiting a destination because it is their last chance to see it. We compared the outcome of this question to the opening question. This showed that the percentage of people who are willing to visit such a destination only slightly decreased (from 66% to 61%) and was, thus, almost the same. In contrast, the number of people who could not imagine visiting such a destination more than halved itself when being confronted with the expression 'last chance' in the question (from 34% to 16%). This result shows that the respondents might not be aware of the term LCT itself, however, it still implies that respondents generally are motivated to visit a tourist destination with LCT characteristics.

In order to investigate on possible pull factors to explain the respondents' destination choices (see Crompton, 1979), those who have wanted to visit a destination now rather than later before were asked to indicate the destination and name the reason for the nomination. The respondents mentioned 71 different destinations, out of which 45 destinations were only mentioned once. The large variety of destinations indicates that destinations changing or developing – and thereby creating a pull factor for tourists wanting to visit these – is a global phenomenon. The answers range from continents like South America, to geographical regions like Scandinavia, and countries like India, Morocco or China, cities like Venice, London or Helsinki, to specific places as for instance the Great Barrier Reef in Australia or the Universal Studios in Florida, or even natural appearances such as the Northern Lights in Norway. This variety of LCT destinations listed

in literature and LCT destinations respondents mentioned demonstrates how all-encompassing the term 'LCT' seems to be. Whereas in literature LCT destinations usually are defined because of the impact climate change has on them (Lemelin et al., 2010), or, because of socio-cultural changes happening in the destination as it is in the case of Cuba (McCarthy, 2018); among the respondents other reasons like a change of the security standards in a country, e.g. the fear of war or terrorist attacks, or unsteady political circumstances appeared to be some of the reasons why people define a destination as an LCT destination. That said, one respondent explicitly implies that he or she is motivated to visit an LCT destination "if the security is degrading and I want to see it before it becomes unsafe" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 13).

After having been introduced to the term LCT, in Question 12, respondents were asked if they have ever visited an LCT destination. Although two-thirds of the respondents negated this question, most of the remaining respondents have either already visited an LCT destination or are planning on visiting one soon. Among the LCT destinations respondents have visited already, Cuba turned out to be the most popular destination. This also reflects the outcome of the opening question of the questionnaire. However, in contrast to the opening question, the remaining destinations appeared to be different. Whereas in Question 1 Myanmar was only mentioned three times, it now was mentioned along with the Great Barrier Reef the second most out of all responses. On the one hand, this can be led back to the fact that we introduced Cuba, Myanmar, the Great Barrier Reef, and the Maldives as examples of LCT destinations in our survey. On the other hand, it still is surprising that some of the other destinations people mentioned are not explicitly described as LCT destinations in literature. In fact, in literature, the polar regions of Antarctica (Eijgelaar et al., 2010) and the Arctic (Dawson et al., 2010), the Great Barrier Reef (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016), Venice (Hindley & Font, 2018), the Maldives, Mt. Kilimanjaro, the Galapagos Islands (Dawson et al., 2011) and Cuba (McCarthy, 2018) have been used as examples of LCT destinations. In addition to this, respondents listed a big variety of other destinations such as New Zealand, Venice, Paris, Bhutan, Iceland, Chernobyl, the Alps, the Polar Regions, Glaciers in Montana, Alaska, Egypt, India, Guatemala, Machu Picchu, Ghana, Greenland, Ukraine, Australia and Azerbaijan as LCT destinations they have been to already or will go to soon (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 12).

As mentioned above, in Question 1 ("Have you ever wanted to visit a destination now rather than later (because of certain changes or developments)"), three respondents, and in Question 12, 13 respondents mentioned Myanmar as a destination that they want to visit. One respondent is aware of the new possibilities to visit Myanmar and Cuba as tourists and states: "Myanmar and Cuba . . . were cut off from some international influences. I had some kind of perception of these countries as a place from the past that would allow me to experience non-capitalistic, less corrupted and a truly different society" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 3). Another respondent also addresses new opportunities to visit certain destinations, by using the example of Cuba: "It opens up to western countries which is amazing to the people and their economy. For tourists now would be the last time to visit the Cuba it was the last decades" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 3). Both of these responses show some degree of nostalgia

among these tourists. Another one points out the changes occurring in these destinations: "it is special and authentic now because it has been a pretty closed country. But now it starts to get more available which van can make it lose its authenticity in the future" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 3).

Overall, throughout the questionnaire, Cuba was the most frequently mentioned destination by respondents (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 1 & 12). This was due to some people being concerned about the authenticity of the country's culture changing which has previously framed Cuba as an LCT destination (see McCarthy, 2018). This can partially be traced back to the current political situation between Cuba and the US. One respondent said that he or she "[has] always been interested in Cuba and did a lot of reading about its history and culture" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3). Another respondent critically stated that "with [the] opening of Cuba's borders to Americans I am afraid it will get to commercially touristy, and lose some of the authenticity that I find appealing by the country" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3). The "uncertain political situation between [the] USA and Cuba" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3) is a reason for why one of the respondents felt the urge to visit Cuba soon rather than later. The current "given . . . issues between the U.S. [and] Cuban governments [made me] want to visit now before Trump tightens the ability to do so" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3). Another respondent said "Cuba + Myanmar because I wanted to see it before it lost its own identity. I wanted to explore the history and the real culture before it became Americanized" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3). The answers provided by these respondents illustrate that a political situation and political developments at a destination can be a driving factor for these tourists to want to visit a destination now rather than later. And, thus, that when specifically looking at LCT, it may be assumed that such developments and changes can be influential to LCT decision-making processes of tourists. Moreover, a place that was perceived as a cheap tourism destination, now becoming more expensive, has been shown to be something that makes tourists want to visit a place now rather than later. For example, one respondent said that they have wanted to visit a destination now rather than later "because once more people start to enter, I assume a lot of things will change. Maybe prices will escalate in regard to food and other activities and the way of life will also be heavily impacted" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3).

Cultures, traditions, and authenticity are major drivers in motivation to travel.
When asked about their motivation to travel to a destination in Question 6, most respondents selected the answers that fall into the theme of cultures, traditions, and authenticity. The great majority of replies mentioned "to see authentic cultures, traditions, places" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 6), closely followed by "to experience (local) culture" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 6), highlighting the importance of a local and authentic experience at the destination. Also in a later question, respondents chose the theme of authenticity, precisely "to be there before the authentic local culture gets lost" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 13), as the most motivating force to participate in LCT. The quest for authenticity

has long been identified as a major driver for people to engage in tourism (see MacCannell, 1999; Urry, 1990), with the aim being to experience something out of the ordinary and different to everyday life (Franklin, 2003; Perkins & Thorns, 2001). However, seeing a place with few to no modern influences was only chosen as a motivator to travel to a destination by one-fifth of the respondents. This is an interesting observation, as it can be assumed that an undeveloped or less developed place is oftentimes perceived as authentic. This is also what Urry (1990) talks about in his concept of the tourist gaze, where western tourists are gazing down onto local populations and thereby creating a power imbalance. Dawson et al. (2011) also talk about the "lure of authenticity in the exotic" (p. 251) that attracts tourists to participate in LCT. Nonetheless, when asked directly about this scenario (i.e. in Question 5: traveling to a destination to see a less modern or developed place) most respondents declined.

What is interesting to note is that while the respondents point out authenticity as the main motivator to travel to a destination, tourists may not be aware of that tourism often contributes to changes in cultures and, thus, what they perceive as authentic. Commonly discussed issues in relation to loss of authenticity are commodification and staged authenticity (see MacCannell, 1973). With authenticity playing such a central role in respondents' motivation to travel to a destination, arguably, cultures and traditions in certain LCT destinations may be threatened by commodification. Commodification, where local culture is being transformed into a new, staged one (Kock et al., 2016; Dyson, 2012; MacCannell, 1999) can be denoted as a result of a gap between ownership and consumption, where "local culture can be commoditized by anyone, without the consent of the participants, it can be expropriated, and the local people exploited" (Perkins & Thorns, 2001, pp. 189-190).

Tourists with an interest in authentic and original destinations might often be disappointed when having too high or unrealistic expectations which are then not met (MacCannell, 1999; Urry, 1990). However, the respondents do not seem to take into consideration that increasing tourism may lead to issues surrounding perceived authenticity, such as commodification of cultures and staged authenticity (see MacCannell, 1973). The 62 disappointed respondents from Question 4 ("Have you ever visited a destination and been disappointed because it has changed too much?") may potentially be explained in terms of a lack in authenticity at the destination. This is also connected to one-third of these respondents in Question 5 indicating that "cultures and traditions were commodified" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 5) and "locals were too dependent on tourism" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 5) as well as "it was too developed (e.g. technology, smartphones" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 5) and one respondent saying "There were little stands where you could by souvenirs all over the place" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 5), making the respondents feel like the destination was not authentic anymore. Tourists might be concerned about not experiencing the destination as it used to be which may have been the reason they originally wanted to visit it, and thus feel a certain pressure to visit and experience their idea of authenticity. Therefore, they might want to visit the destination very soon in order to still get the authentic and original experience that they imagine and expect.

In literature, 'staged authenticity' describes a situation in which certain parts of cultures and places are displayed as real and authentic even though they are not (MacCannell, 1973) to which Dyson (2012) adds that this can be used as a tool to attract consumers. However, Dyson (2012) states that "there is no one reality" (Dyson, 2012, p. 261), highlighting the subjective character of Question 4 and how complex and dynamic the topic of authenticity actually is. Therefore, there might be people amongst our survey respondents which are concerned about a destination not being 'original' and 'authentic' compared to others who might consider them as being 'authentic' and who are satisfied with the experience they get. Therefore, another theory that may be relevant to consider in this regard is what Urry and Larsen (2011) call "hyper-tourist consumption" (p. 233). They argue that people "find pleasure in inauthentic contrived attractions, gullibly enjoying 'pseudo-events' and disregarding the 'real' world outside" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 8). This statement could be connected to a condition of 'staged authenticity' at a destination, whereby the tourist does not identify the experience as inauthentic because he or she is ignorant towards a destination's original characteristics. That this attitude leads to a certain isolation from the local culture, traditions, and the local population, might not be obvious to such tourists. Therefore, this could be another possible explanation for the majority of our respondents not to be disappointed and still having a satisfying experience at the destination (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Overtourism plays a central role in LCT.

Another topic that is touched upon a lot in the responses by the respondents is mass tourism and overtourism (e.g., Francis, n.d.; Goodwin, 2017; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013), while, interestingly, overtourism has not previously been identified as a component of LCT in existing studies on LCT. Overtourism is a topic which is largely discussed in the contemporary tourism industry as more and more destinations experience this phenomenon. Overtourism means that "hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors" (Goodwin, 2017, p.1) which makes the experience at the destination beyond the pale. Overtourism can be defined as a result of an overwhelming allurement of a particular destination, attracting a large number of tourists which then leads to a decrease in quality of life for locals or a negative holiday experience for tourists (Goodwin, 2017; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013).

In our survey, respondents have either purely stated "overtourism" in their answers or talked about a fear of a place which they now still consider remote being "overrun" by tourists in the near future or they talk about destinations that do not have a lot of tourists yet. For example: "That makes it hard to travel through countries without being just one of the 100,000 tourists before that people now make use of" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3), "more and more people go there, it's more touristic and crowded than scenic" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3). The destinations mentioned by the respondents under the aspect of overtourism mostly include cities and specifically some that have previously been framed as overtourism destinations, such as Amsterdam and Venice, but also Thailand, Machu Picchu, and Iceland, which all are destinations that have appeared in the media for residents feeling dissatisfied about too many visitors at the destinations. Additionally, asking for reasons for their disappointment at a

destination in Questions 4 and 5, the majority of respondents (40 respondents) chose "too many tourists" amongst the provided answers, which correlates with destinations such as Amsterdam and Venice being mentioned frequently.

Furthermore, in Question 3, many respondents indicated crowding and mass tourism as a major factor that had made them disappointed about their experience at a destination. Respondents named Thailand, Venice, Machu Picchu, Iceland, London or Copenhagen which are all popular destinations that have appeared in the media for residents feeling dissatisfied about too many visitors at the destinations. Many replies were collected within the survey claiming that the respondents "would like to visit before tourism changes the authenticity" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3) and that they are "scared that it is going to be too touristy" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3) in the near future.

Interestingly, although many respondents chose "to see a place before it becomes too touristy" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 13) as a motivational factor to participate in LCT, only the minority of people appeared to have the desire to "see a place that no one else goes to" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 13). This, not contradicts to the issue of 'overtourism' as just identified, but also to one common understanding of people's' general motivation to travel in literature: The need for travelers to experience something unique and special (see MacCannell, 1999; Urry, 1990). Apparently, the respondents are not that much interested in being the only one at a destination but rather in visiting a destination that is already known by tourists but not run down by them yet. This also supports the understanding of Goodwin (2017) as well as Zenker and Beckmann (2013) who imply that the interest of tourists to experience something special at a place is growing when the place gains on attractiveness and, therefore, on attention as well. It also became clear that increasing tourism and a destination becoming "too touristy" are reasons for respondents to find such destinations not authentic anymore, as it proves that too many people have visited the destination and changed the image and experience through their presence. A change of authenticity is a topic that has been mentioned by several respondents such as the following one: "This country is now being marketed very strongly and tourism is on the rise. I would like to visit before tourism changes the authenticity" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 3), implying that a destination is not authentic anymore once tourism is developed fully. Additionally, also in the content analysis, we identified that the themes of *overtourism* and *authenticity* often are interconnected.

Traveling is part of one's identity formation.

Coming back to the opening question ("Have you ever wanted to visit a destination now rather than later (because of certain changes or developments)"), the reasons for the need to visit a destination earlier rather than later can also be related to different theories about tourist motivations which are "the impelling and compelling force[s] behind all behavior" (Crompton, 1979, pp. 409-410). Kim and Eves (2012) state that people are motivated to travel to a specific destination due to internal psychological needs which increase people's interest in visiting.

Wanting to travel to a destination sooner rather than later indicates an apprehension that the place might not conform with initial expectations anymore if too much time passes.

In fact, this can also be detected when examining the survey respondents' answers as some included personal factors as major travel motivations. "Everybody has the possibility to travel to every single part of the world and traveling has become something that people use to identify. I feel like people are "collecting" countries and the more exotic countries you have seen, the more "in" you are" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3) was stated by one respondent. This respondent is thereby highlighting what MacCannell (2002) stated by saying "the ego is the bedrock of every identity project" (p. 148), and Sharpley et al. (2005) who said that people travel as a pursuit of "status symbols" (p. 222). Dawson et al. (2011) add to this understanding: "[LCT] plays on the same sense of rarity, pristineness, and elusiveness that is the foundation for the 'firsts' and draws on the elitism of peak or continent 'bagging' and the lure of authenticity in the exotic" (pp. 250–251). By visiting a destination that is under change and likely to not even exist anymore in the near future (Lemelin et al., 2010), last chance tourists get the feeling of experiencing something unique and special which they then can add to their 'status symbols'. This can explain why respondents of the questionnaire seem to be more motivated to visit a destination when it explicitly is described with the expression of 'last chance' (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 12). In Question 6 ("What motivates you to travel to a destination?"), the motivator of experiencing something special and sharing it with others seems to be of high importance to the respondents as well. What is striking about this is that the respondents indicate that they perceive it to be 'too late to visit a destination when it has become too touristy', but indicate here that they find it motivating to travel to a destination to share the experience with others, which presumably are friends and family.

By letting the participants rate to what extent they agree with particular statements in Question 15 and 16, we aimed at getting a better understanding of respondents' ethical considerations related to both traveling in general and LCT in particular. When being asked if respondents see traveling as their personal right, the vast majority of respondents either 'highly agreed' or 'agreed' to the statement, only 22 percent disagreed. This can be related to Hindley and Font (2018) who argue, that values function as strong motivational factors to participate in LCT. By seeing traveling as their personal right (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 15) the respondents also meet Peeters et al.'s (2009) thought who imply that "many people have a powerful belief in their personal right and need to travel, coupled at the same time with a contradictory powerful belief that others should be denied that right for the good of the planet" (p. 248; cited in Hall et al., 2013) and this can also again be linked to the idea of the 'ego tourist' (see Sharpley, 2005). While in this context we may not be talking about "the good of the planet" (Peeters et al., 2009; cited in Hall et al., 2013, p. 248) *per se*, it does display that idea of having the right to travel anywhere, but denying others to travel there as well, as in the bigger picture it ruins the experience at and quality of the destination. This leaves the impression that when one travels to a new destination they expect the place to be authentic (which has also been confirmed by the respondents in previous questions), and at the same time does not want to accept that they are not the only ones

going to that particular destination. Traveling is seen as a personal right for oneself (see Peeters et al., 2009; cited in Hall et al., 2013), but as soon as other people are engaging in the same activities (i.e. a destination being too touristy), this is perceived as something negative. However, this again contradicts to the responses to Question 13 (What motivates you to visit a Last Chance Tourism destination?"), in which only the minority of respondents (18%) chose the option: "Because I want to be part of a small group of people that has been to the destination/to see a place that no one else goes to" (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 13).

Trade-off between personal values and sustainability.

In order to get a clearer picture of how sustainability-conscious the respondents depict themselves, they were asked how important sustainability is to them when they are traveling (Question 8). The large majority of respondents indicated that sustainability is either somewhat important (43%), important (34%) or very important (15%) to them. This question was asked to get a clearer picture of the characteristics of our sample and the values that they hold. We consider the importance one places on sustainability as a core value for a tourist in this research on LCT. As Hindley and Font (2018) state, values influence the decision-making of tourists on which destination to visit and are key concepts in tourism consumer behavior. Knowing that sustainability is important to the respondents when going on holiday makes it interesting to investigate how this may or may not be reflected in other responses given by them. Thus, it is interesting to investigate whether this is being reflected in the other responses the respondents gave. By adding sustainability as a value in our research, we can investigate whether this is standing in a trade-off with other personal values and may potentially lead to ethical dilemmas (see Hindley & Font, 2018).

Hereby, in Question 14, only very few respondents (22) said they have decided against traveling to an LCT destination before, while the vast majority of respondents denied this question because they "didn't know that [LCT] even existed" or "haven't heard from it before" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 14). Others simply "have never thought of visiting a [LCT]" or "haven't considered it so far, so [they] couldn't decide against it either" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 14). This shows how unknown the term 'LCT' actually is among the respondents. Therefore, although LCT has been rated as a travel trend (Talty, 2017), it seems like most people are still not aware of its existence.

On the other hand, when reading through the text answers of people who affirmed Question 14, responses became more interesting. Most of the respondents implied that they do not want to contribute to the destination declining. Statements like "The destination is already dying so I would feel guilty contributing to it dying quicker" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 14), "Most of the time tourism is the reason for the current state of the destination and I don't want to damage a destination even further" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 14) or "I want to preserve such regions" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 14) represent how most of the respondents reasoned their decision of not traveling to an LCT destination. Such statements may imply that some tourists are very much aware of the impact traveling has on a destination. However, overall, the text answers demonstrate that most of the respondents were only concerned

about the environment and, therefore, about the impact their travels have on the nature of an LCT destination, for example, as one respondent points out: "[LCT] would only weaken the sensitive nature" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 14).

In Question 5, when not explicitly referring to LCT, a lack of environmental concern could be identified with one respondent saying that they have been disappointed about their visit because "locals have put regulations on how many people can visit certain areas of the Grand Canyon and it is too difficult to gain entry" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 5). This statement shows a certain level of egoism again, as it highlights the non-awareness of the difficult situation in regard to social and environmental sustainability at the Grand Canyon. In consideration of what Sharpley et al. (2005) state, this respondent seems to travel for the satisfaction of his or her own needs, simultaneously neglecting sustainable tourism development, although a contradictory finding has just been discovered above in regard to Question 14 with many respondents being concerned about environmental impacts. The only interest seems to be getting access to the concerned destination, disregarding the fact if negative or positive contribution will result from it (Lemelin et al., 2010). Hindley and Font (2018) found that visiting an endangered destination indicates an "attitude-behavior gap" (Hindley & Font, 2018, p. 10), as personal curiosity and interests are often put above the place's sustainable well-being and that "values and motivations appear to be self-centered" (Hindley & Font, 2018, p. 11). As Schwartz (1992) has argued, this may create a paradoxical situation for the tourists where this self-centered motivation to travel has "has practical, social and psychological consequences which conflict with the pursuit of other values" (Hindley & Font, 2018, p. 11), for example, pursuing personal goals can have significant impacts on the environment due to the carbon emissions. The respondent's statement could also be considered under the aspect of MacCannell's (2012) theory of a tourist having the *right* to consume a destination but not *owning* or deciding about if and how it will change. However, as one respondent realized as well, "changes are inevitable" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 4) highlighting that places are always changing due to the dynamic body of a destination (see Govers & Go, 2009; Hatch & Schultz, 2002).

Tourists motivation to participate in LCT might also be described by the urge to learn about climate change and its impact on destinations (see Lemieux et al., 2018). As a matter of fact, being able to learn about social and environmental issues as well as to educate oneself appeared to be motivational factors for respondents of the questionnaire. In literature, this educational part of LCT can be extracted as one of the main opportunities of LCT (see Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016). LCT tourists learning about climate change and, as a result, becoming climate change ambassadors is seen as an opportunity to promote climate-conscious behavior as well as to ensure the conservation of nature (Lemieux et al., 2018). For example, one respondent stated that he or she wants "be reminded about how big impact people have on nature" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 13) when he or she is visiting an LCT destination. However, only a fraction of the respondents explained their motivation to visit an LCT destination by the option to "teach friends and family about it" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 13). Most respondents seemed to have more self-interested reasons to participate in LCT like the desire to experience the authentic

and local culture of a place or to visit an LCT destination before it is impacted by heavy tourism. Again, these travel motivations can be led back to the term of 'ego tourism' as these reasons to participate in LCT are more about satisfying the personal interests of oneself than helping a destination fight the problems it may be experiencing (see Sharpley et al., 2005).

The impact of climate change on LCT motivation was also identified in Question 6, where we asked respondents about their motivations to travel to a tourist destination. Based on the content analysis, one optional answer of this question asked respondents about their motivation to travel to a new destination to see it before it is changing or disappearing (for example because of climate change). This option was only chosen by a small number of respondents (just over one-third of respondents). Looking at this question separately would indicate that the tourists in our survey are mostly not motivated to travel to a destination because climate change induced LCT. However, this is a rather odd finding, as in other responses and text answers given by the respondents, environmental factors do seem to play a big role in (LCT) travel motivation (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 1). Nonetheless, this, for now, leaves the impression that the tourists in our sample are mostly not motivated to travel to a destination when it is changing or disappearing because of climate change, which is a surprising finding in light of the abundance of studies on tourist motivations in climate change induced LCT. However, in this context it may also be necessary to consider that the tourists in our sample may not be familiar with places that are already visibly affected by climate change (such as Antarctica or the Maldives) and, therefore, climate change and its impacts on tourist destinations may be a concept difficult to grasp for many respondents. This is also due to the rather long-term nature of climate change where many of its consequences may not be visible yet, and respondents may simply not be aware of these.

Environmental sustainability receives the most concern, but respondents do not think that they are contributing to these issues themselves.

The questionnaire also addressed the topic of awareness and sense of responsibility among tourists, by asking the respondents whether they are concerned about certain impacts of tourism on a destination and whether they believe they are contributing to these negative impacts (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 9). The majority of respondents are concerned about negative environmental impacts, but only about half believe that they are contributing to these. A smaller number of respondents (but still significantly more than half) are concerned about social impacts, but less than half of the respondents think they are contributing to these. The smallest number of respondents are concerned about negative economic impacts, and less than half (however slightly more than those thinking they contribute to negative social impacts) believe that they contribute to the economic impacts.

The focus on environmental sustainability is also reflected at other points in the survey's results, with many respondents referring to nature and the natural environment, as well as natural degradation and climate change and global warming, in their text answers, like in the following examples: "Because of the nature and vast landscapes" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3) and "For endemic species and beautiful landscape" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question

3). Some respondents are implicitly already including characteristics of LCT in their answers, as in "because it is going to melt soon" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3), "I heard soon they won't exist anymore so I want to see them before" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3), "They are dying and disappearing due to climate change" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3), "Now because the Great Barrier Reef is dying" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3), "Might not exist in future" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3), "The Maldives because I am aware that the environmental changes most likely will make several of the islands disappear one day" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3), and many others.

These results of Question 3 can also be seen in the responses of Question 13 ("What motivates you to visit a Last Chance Tourism destination?"), in which many respondents selected "to see endangered nature" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 13) or "to see a place before it becomes too touristy" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 13) as reasons to participate in LCT. In literature, tourists' motivation to participate in LCT often relates to the desire to experience nature (Groulx et al., 2016), in fact, Lemieux et al. (2018) identified being "close to nature" (p. 662) as most important to last chance tourists who visited Canadian glaciers. Respondents' motivation "to see endangered nature" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 13) reflects this connection between nature and people's motivation to engage in LCT. In contrast, in the text answers of Question 13 one respondent stated:

> I remember a few years back I was inclined to go to the Great Barrier Reef or visit certain glaciers to the fear of environmental degradation. I quickly came to realize that I would only put additional pressure on the environment if I were to go there. I guess the same is applicable to cultural degradation but I guess inter-cultural exchange can be mutually beneficial but I feel like I can't give much back to the natural places. (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 13)

This statement demonstrates that this respondent actually was aware of its own impact to the environment, and additionally, the statement also demonstrates that tourism can actually reactivate cultural awareness about a destination whereby cultural traditions can be brought back into use. However, in Question 4 and 5 ("Have you ever visited a destination and been disappointed because it has changed too much?" (Question 4); If yes, what had changed too much?" (Question 5)), nature degradation was, again, a reason for many respondents who have been disappointed about a destination having changed too much (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 5). Three respondents not only mentioned a destination but also wrote their reasoning for having been disappointed, which all relate to environmental changes. These respondents said: "I visited Australia and make a tour to the Great Barrier Reef. I was very disappointed about the bad state of the corals" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 4), "French Alps - too warm to ski earlier in season" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 4) and "Yucatán coast - all the beach/coastline was full of seaweeds growing due to pollution" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 4).

While these negatively perceived developments at the destinations made the respondents disappointed, they do not seem to consider their own travel's contribution to this. What becomes clear when looking at these results is that the respondents are most concerned about negative

environmental impacts of tourism whereas negative socio-cultural and economic consequences do not receive the same concern (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 9). Overall, while the respondents are rather concerned about the negative impacts of tourism on a destination, it can be concluded that they do not necessarily think that they are contributing to these issues themselves. A small number of respondents even explicitly stated that they do not think they are contributing to the negative impacts of tourism as in Question 9 ("Are you concerned about the potential impacts of tourism on a destination?"), five percent of the respondents negated this question. This leaves the impression that these tourists do not blame themselves, but rather shift the responsibility to others.

Looking at the question of whether respondents would be motivated to travel to a destination 'before it is too late' (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7), this raises the question of how this goes together with the majority of the respondents saying that sustainability is important for them while traveling and that they are concerned about environmental, socio-cultural, and economic damages to the destination. While they even are aware of contributing to damages themselves (43% to social damages, 46% to economic, and 54% to environmental damages), still, 61 percent state that they would visit an LCT destination before it is too late. This relates back to Hindley and Font (2018) asking: "At a time when we are being encouraged to reduce our carbon footprint, what are the reasons behind tourists' traveling to destinations popularly described in the media as 'disappearing', because of climate change impacts?" (p. 3).

What is increasingly important to emphasize on in regard to LCT, is the ethical point of view in traveling. In their research on tourist values and motivations in LCT, Hindley and Font (2018) suggest ethics as an additional variable to personal values, given that climate change – and arguably LCT, as well – is an ethical issue. The majority of respondents indicated the soon-to-be-destroyed or disappearing nature as reasons why to visit a particular destination soon. One respondent said that "Because of the absolute beauty of the place. I would like to experience that, and the people before the climate change ruins the place" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3), disregarding the fact that tourism is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change and also increasing tourist numbers in the present and the future are significant factors to harm a destination. Another respondent stated that "I heard soon they won't exist anymore, so I want to see them before" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3), again neglecting the point that his own visit contributes negatively to the existence of the concerned place. We consider statements of this kind to be part of the ego tourism phenomenon (MacCannell, 2002).

The text answers of Question 3 highlight the significance that has been assigned to environmental sustainability (Thatcher, 2014), not only among respondents but also in existing literature and online media (see content analysis). In literature, the focus on environmental issues detected that social and economic sustainability are often neglected. This goes back to the 'Three-Pillar Model' by Spindler (2013) which claims that sustainability should be equally distributed to social, environmental and economic aspects (Saarinen, 2014; Spindler, 2013; Thatcher, 2014). Our survey respondents, however, valued environmental aspects as most important or at least as most

compatible with the subject and, therefore, follow the tradition that has been described in scholarly literature (e.g., Cole, 2006). The responses to the survey also match to the outcome of our content analysis where we identified that also online media mostly refers to LCT in view of its vanishing nature, landscapes and wildlife (e.g., McCarthy, 2018; Talty, 2017).

Change is seen as something negative.

Tourists aim to see a vanishing or disappearing destination in the condition it is expected to be to comply with their image of the concerned destination. Baloglu and McClearly (1999) outline that a tourist's destination image represents "the expression of all knowledge, impressions, prejudices and emotional thoughts an individual or group has of a particular object or place" (Baloglu & McClearly, 1999, p. 871). The destination is supposed to look like the tourist imagines it to be before visiting, an image which was created on "a set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions" about a place (Kotler, 2001, p. 273). This can be confirmed by a questionnaire respondent who stated that he or she wants to experience the destination under the image that he or she is expecting and that he or she is not willing to miss this experience and have a different perception of the concerned destination: "Because the landscape there can change in a matter of Years, and If you delay the trip to sometime later, maybe we don't have the view we have today from there" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 3). This means that tourists might often have a rigid, time-frozen or even nostalgic idea of a destination, where certain factors and characteristics are fixed and not desired to change.

Also, Question 15 asked respondents about their perception of change and development of a tourist destination. It turned out that people are indecisive towards a tourist destination being under change. In fact, the majority of people decided to stay 'neutral' to this statement. Most of the remaining respondents perceive a changing tourist destination as something negative. This also links back to the beginning of the questionnaire, where two-thirds of all respondents affirmed the first question ("Have you ever wanted to visit a destination now rather than later (because of certain changes or developments)?"), already providing the first evidence for a potential imbalance at a certain destination which could result from changes or developments. Additionally, in Question 5, 15 respondents indicated that the destination was too developed and 14 respondents stated locals were unfriendly which resulted in their personal disappointment as their previous expectations and imaginaries could not have been fulfilled. This is interesting as change and development not necessarily impact a tourist destination in a negative way, quite the contrary, it can even support local communities by, for example, providing new infrastructures or fostering the local economy (e.g., Jamal & Robinson, 2009; Tosun, 1998; World Tourism Organization, 2013). However, in context of the questionnaire, respondents might immediately have related 'change' to LCT and, therefore, only thought about disappearing and vanishing landscapes and cultures (Lemelin et al., 2010) when thinking about a tourist destination being under change. However, it still has to be taken into consideration, that the attributes of 'change' and 'development' can be perceived in many different ways.

Also, according to the responses given in Question 5 and 7, it is perceived as a negative development when locals are dependent on tourism and are trying to make profit from tourism. This presents a scenario in which the perception is that what people in developed countries are entitled to do (i.e. make (increasing) profit from tourism) is not what is expected at a tourism destination (in a potentially less developed place). Also, this relates back to the paradox of being dissatisfied about a destination but at the same time contributing to this issue or development through one's own travel. This might relate back to the theory of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990) according to which tourists often expect other places to be primitive and once they realize that this is not the reality, they are disappointed and, going back to LCT, then perceive it as 'too late' to visit a certain destination. Hence, this also raises some considerations on power issues that may still be prevailing in tourism today, also reflecting Mowforth et. al (2007) understanding who identified an unequal distribution of economic and financial benefits made in tourism among different tourism stakeholders.

Additionally, the responses to the statement "To what extent do you agree with the following statement? - Destinations are always changing and this is a good thing" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 15) can also be put into relation to the responses to the next statement which asked about the importance to experience local culture as well as to meet locals at a destination. Among all statements, this statement had by far the most people agreeing to it, only three percent of the respondents disagreed. This desire of people to experience local cultures at a destination can also explain why the majority of respondents perceived a changing destination in a negative way as in literature the change of "indigenous cultures" (McCarthy, 2018) is described as a motivational factor for tourists to experience these culture "before those changes fully take hold" (McCarthy, 2018).

The desire to experience local cultures, again, can be linked to the theme of 'authenticity' in literature as well (e.g., Perkins & Thorns, 2001). This can be connected to Question 7, where we asked respondents when it is too late to visit a destination (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April, question 7). The major outcome was that only local flora/fauna going extinct scored slightly higher than loss of authenticity and foreign influences on local culture. This is interesting as authenticity and local cultures had previously been identified as the main drivers to travel to a destination. However, the topic of development and technology scored low here, indicating that the respondents do not see development as a negative thing *per se*. But a destination having become too touristy and locals being only after making profit from tourists scored rather high, meaning that the respondents see this as a negative development and as something that makes it too late to visit a destination. This opens room for a relevant discussion on the perceptions and behavior that tourists have. It leaves the impression that when one travels to a new destination they expect the place to be authentic (which has also been confirmed by the respondents in the previous questions), and at the same time does not want to accept that they are not the only one going to that particular destination.

Destinations are not static. Change is natural.

Question 7 ("When would you say it is too late to visit a destination?") and the corresponding answers also raise the broader question of why certain aspects and developments are perceived as making it 'too late to visit a destination'. This makes it seem like a very straightforward and static process, almost like Butler (1980) suggests in his model of the lifetime of a tourism destination, which Dawson et al. (2011) have previously applied to LCT. The idea picked up by this question is that a destination first becomes more attractive to tourists, then experiences a peak in tourist visitation which then declines because the destination becomes less interesting and, consequently, less attractive and tourists do not want to visit it anymore. However, importantly, scholars like Hatch and Schultz (2002) and Govers and Go (2009) remind us that a place is dynamic and not static.

Respondents also had the option of saying that they think it is never too late to visit a destination and were able to write text answers related to this. Several respondents indicate in their answers that "every place is worth seeing and experiencing" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7), "you can always find something unique and lovely" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7), "there will always be something new to experience" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7), and there is "always something to learn and someone to meet somewhere" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7). One respondent stated: "Even when a place is overwhelmed with tourists I still tend to enjoy it. Most of the time there's a good reason why all the tourists are there anyway" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7). Another respondent draws on the issue of ego tourism as discussed in our literature review by saying "if I want to visit somewhere, I go, that's it" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7). This tourist clearly shows how he or she travels to satisfy a personal desire to visit a place, seemingly without thinking too much about other external factors.

Several respondents in their answers on why they think it is never too late to visit a destination are using the debate on destinations constantly changing and developing and raising their opinions about this topic. One respondent brought this to the point by stating that "Culture and place are always changing. Change is the only constant" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7) indicating that change is not necessarily a bad thing or something that makes it 'too late' to visit a destination. This is supported by another respondent who writes "it's never too late to see a new place, even when it is changes, it is authentic for this specific moment until it changes again" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7) and another one saying "Change is natural. I can still have preferences but I would never totally rule a place out" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7).

Three respondents raise that LCT is a rather subjective topic and that everyone may be interpreting what they perceive as LCT differently. The responses by these three participants are the following: "If I haven't been there I can't compare it to its earlier days" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7), showing that what others may describe as LCT does not necessarily have to be LCT to someone else and, thus, it should be up to everyone to make up their own mind about whether a destination has changed too much and is now 'too late' to visit. The second respondent

said "your mindset and preferences can change" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7) potentially indicating that when one is at a destination that was previously described to them as LCT, they may not perceive it as such when being there themselves. The third respondent stated "I am open to go to a new destination as it is and have a positive experience" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7), showing that there is something good to find in every destination and that it is, therefore, never 'too late' to visit a new destination. One respondent nicely brings together these two discussions on LCT being a subjective perception and change not necessarily being a bad thing: "It's always worth a visit to explore things by yourself and get yourself a chance to make up your mind about it. And even it has changed because of too much foreign influence, it would most likely still beat a mix of local and foreign and that is exciting to see of course as well" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7).

LCT may have consequences for local communities.
In Question 7 ("When would you say it is too late to visit a destination?"), one respondent refers to the adaptive capacity of different stakeholders involved in tourism that was also introduced by Swartman (2015) in the literature review. This respondent wrote the following as their reply to when it would be too late to visit a destination: "When the destination could be "anywhere" on the planet" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7). On the one side, this amplifies the idea of tourists wanting to go somewhere unique that cannot be found anywhere else on the planet, which was supported by the questionnaire respondents, as well. On the other side, it brings attention to the issue that tourists can easily substitute one destination for another, should it become too unattractive to them. So, especially in terms of climate change, which leads us back to the emergence of LCT, tourists are highly adaptable, whereas local tourism operators and local communities are not because they usually are place-bound (Groulx et al., 2016). This notion of a tourist finding it 'too late' to visit a certain place may, therefore, have significant consequences for local communities dependent on tourism (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2016). The question in this respondent's answer is what it is that makes a destination not unique anymore and like any destination "anywhere on the planet" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7). Presumingly, this would be due to foreign influences, more or less turning destinations all over the world into almost identical destinations This is also supported by another respondent's reply who wrote that it is too late to visit a destination "when McDonald's arrives" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 7). Overall, this almost sheds a destructive light on overtourism and specifically LCT as this seems to be supporting the notion that destinations are only attractive as long as they are authentic and unique, but as soon as the negative consequences of tourism become visible, it is as if it is time to move on to the next destination.
Thereby, this also leads back to the application of Butler's (1980) 'Tourism Area Life Cycle' to LCT (see Dawson et al., 2011). As shown in Figure 3, the demand and supply side are both influenced by externalities which lead to a destination's change. That this change is mostly perceived negatively has already been discussed in this chapter. Externalities, as, for example, the introduction of modern and too developed factors such as McDonald's or the degradation of

natural attractions, make a destination vulnerable and interesting for potential LCT tourists at the same time. As identified previously in this chapter, first, tourists show an increasing motivation to travel to an endangered destination the more vulnerable a destination is. This has been shown in many replies by our questionnaire respondents. After the destination becomes more attractive, however, the 'Tourism Area Life Cycle' (Butler, 1980) continues and loses its attractivity once the destination or attraction becomes extinct or is fully deteriorating (Dawson et al., 2011). Another important point, which has not clearly been indicated by none of the survey respondents, is that the time frame also plays a crucial role. Implications from LCT in the short-run might have disastrous long-term impacts on a destination, all from a social, environmental and economic point of view (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016; Dawson et al., 2011).

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to uncover what motivates tourists to participate in LCT, and what perceptions, values and consequent travel behavior are at play. Thereby, our objective was to deconstruct the notion of LCT to learn more about tourists' perceptions about an endangered destination which might soon change due to environmental, economic or socio-cultural reasons. We found it important to focus on the social side of sustainability, since this perspective contributes significantly to a destination's image and a tourist's experience at the place, and has also rather been neglected in previous literature. The data collection consisted of an online media content analysis and an online questionnaire.

The main research question that this thesis answers is "What motivates tourists to participate in LCT?". Four sub-questions or aims have been formulated in order to answer the main research question and reach the research objective:

➢ How does online media content about LCT influence tourists' perception?
➢ How do tourists perceive LCT destinations?
➢ What are tourists' values when traveling to (LCT) destinations?
➢ Is there a need to (re)define LCT?

To answer the first sub-question ("How does online media content about LCT influence tourists' perception?"), a content analysis of online media covering LCT has been conducted. The final question in the questionnaire was based on the findings from the content analysis. By asking survey participants about attributes online media makes use of when describing LCT, our aim was to better understand if respondents 'feel (more) urgency' to visit a destination when it is described with those attributes. Thereby, we could discover if the attributes contribute to people's perceptions of and motivations to visit LCT destinations.

We found that respondents do not feel urgency to visit a destination when it is said to be 'endangered' or 'under threat' (e.g., Talty, 2018; Dawson, 2010). As already became apparent in previous questions, this can be led back to the fact that although respondents think that LCT destinations are attractive, they still do not want to contribute to the decline of them (see results of questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 14 and 15). In contrast, when asking respondents to indicate if they 'feel (more) urgency' to visit a destination that either is said to be 'off-the-beaten-path' or to be 'unique', it appeared that online media can enhance respondents urgency to visit such destinations. This can also be linked to the theme of authenticity and Perkins and Thorns' (2001) understanding of tourists searching for authentic experiences out of ordinary life when traveling. It should be noted that in contrast to the previous two attributes 'unique' and 'off-the-beaten-path' which are positive words, 'endangered' and 'under threat' are not, which may have influenced respondents and might have made them rank those attributes highly.

Reading about tourists 'flocking' to a destination was identified to be extremely demotivating to respondents of the questionnaire. The statement "people are flocking (coming in large numbers) to the destination" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16) can be linked to the theme of overtourism (e.g., Goodwin, 2017; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013) which was

identified as a deterrent for people to visit an LCT destination earlier in the results of the questionnaire. However, it also has to be considered that the attribute of 'flocking' in itself implies something negative and, therefore, 'flocking' might mostly be used by online media to gain the reader's attention. Reading about the attribute of 'change' makes around one-third of the respondents feel (more) urgency to visit a destination. Further attributes which were identified in the content analysis and which appeared to contribute to respondents' feelings to "feel (more) urgency to visit a destination" (questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16) were the attributes of 'disappearing' or 'untouched', or if a destination has 'indigenous and/or local people/culture'. As a result, attributes that are used as characteristics of LCT in online media can indeed contribute to tourists motivation of considering an LCT destination for their travels in the future and thereby contribute to their travel motivation. However, it turned out that not all attributes used in online media influence tourists perception and motivation to participate in LCT.

The second sub-question was "How do tourists perceive LCT destinations?". Previous studies on LCT have mostly been conducted in Antarctica (Eijgelaar et al., 2010) and the Arctic (Dawson et al., 2010), the Great Barrier Reef (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2016), and Venice (Hindley & Font, 2018). However, with the approach that we have chosen to not focus our research on only one destination, but rather aimed to find out which destinations tourists perceive as LCT and why. The large variety of destinations that respondents have mentioned as LCT destinations demonstrates how all-encompassing the term 'LCT' seems to be. Whereas in literature LCT destinations usually are defined by the impact climate change has on them (Lemelin et al., 2010), or, because of socio-cultural changes happening in the destination as it is in the case of Cuba (McCarthy, 2018), among the respondents other reasons like a change of the security standards in a country, e.g. the fear of war or terrorist attacks, or unsteady political circumstances, appeared to be some of the reasons why people define a destination as an LCT destination. Change occurring at destinations seems to be perceived as something negative and, thus, a characteristic of LCT destinations. For LCT, this might imply that tourists have a rigid, time-frozen or even nostalgic idea of a destination, where certain factors and characteristics are fixed and not desired to change and there is a perception of there being a last chance to experience this stage of the destination.

Authenticity including the fear of a loss of authenticity was identified as a major driver for our respondents to have LCT motivation. Respondents which are concerned about a destination losing its identity due to certain changes or developments perceive a destination that in their eyes is authentic as a destination that falls under the notion of LCT. With cultures and traditions changing, respondents feel the urge to travel to such destinations rather now than later. In addition to the quest for authenticity feeding into the framing of destinations as LCT, mass tourism and overtourism were topics that were mentioned a lot by respondents in relation to their understanding of LCT. Overtourism decreases the experience of tourists at a destination and future overtourism is something that many respondents seem to be concerned about. Goodwin (2017) defines overtourism as "destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably" (p. 1). It appeared that when a destination is visited by "too many tourists" (see

questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 5), tourists lose their interest in the LCT destination and think it is not worth visiting anymore. This shows that the respondents in our study frame LCT destination differently to what has been found in previous studies and also shows a different image to what has been found in the content analysis. While in previous literature, LCT destinations are usually characterized by being 'under change' or 'disappearing' (e.g., Lemelin et al., 2010), the findings of our survey add to this that tourists are often disappointed by a destination which they perceive as having too much tourism and, therefore, consider this to be LCT. This indicates that LCT also seems to be about tourism development itself, rather than certain attractions or sights changing or disappearing in the near future.

The third sub-question was "What are tourists' values when traveling to (LCT) destinations?". As it was identified during the data collection process, tourists often perceive traveling as their personal right (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 15) but seem to be rather dissatisfied about other tourists doing the same. However, in general, we discovered that only some respondents appeared to have a rather self-focused and ignorant attitude towards their own travel behavior, and the impact it causes to the environment and the destination. In fact, sustainability in general and specific issues like global warming and endangered nature as part of environmental sustainability seemed to be of major interest and concern for the majority of respondents of our questionnaire. The respondents seemed to be aware of the fact that tourism can cause harm to a destination but generally did not identify their own travel behavior and participation in tourism as a negative contribution.

The vast majority of respondents indicated to be concerned about potential impacts on the visited destination, but only half of them stated to be contributing to this negative development themselves. This led to the discovery that there was a trade-off between personal values and sustainability, with an identified lack of responsibility for sustainable harm. This gave an interesting insight into tourist behavior and how traveling is part of one's identity formation. This fits to what Sharpley et al. (2005) stated when talking about ego tourists who primarily travel for the satisfaction of their own interests, but not to support sustainable tourism and save a destination.

The fourth sub-question was "Is there a need to (re)define LCT?". As it became apparent among the survey responses, we have found that the majority of respondents seemed to either not have heard about the concept of 'LCT' before, or had very diverse ideas and perceptions about it. Disregarding this fact the analysis revealed, however, that the great majority of respondents still felt a significant interest in visiting a destination that is said to be soon disappearing or changing significantly due to certain developments. Despite the previous unawareness about the term of LCT, the notion itself still seemed to be present in tourists mindsets. This made us question the original concept of LCT: The initial definition of LCT defining an LCT destination by its attraction of being 'disappearing' or 'under change' might be time-frozen, and not coherent with contemporary topics which are of importance for an LCT destination.

As identified in the analysis chapter, sustainability is primarily thought of in terms of its environmental aspects. This can also be seen in the case of the most commonly used definition of LCT in literature that defines LCT as a form of tourism in which "tourists explicitly seek vanishing

landscapes or seascapes, and/or disappearing natural and/or social heritage" (Lemelin et al., 2010, p. 478). Hereby, a strong focus on natural resources rather than on socio-cultural or economic aspects of LCT is set. This focus on the environment can be traced back to the initial definition of sustainable tourism development which goes back to the Brundtland report and its agenda of sustainable development (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The report triggered a public debate about environmental issues (Jamison, 1996), and thereby, environmentalism was transformed into political ideology (Eber, 1996 in Cole, 2006). Hereby, the Brundtland report also set its focus on environmental issues and natural resources in view of sustainability. Until today this remained central in view of sustainable development generally speaking, and sustainable tourism development in particular. This can explain, why until today, socio-cultural issues in tourism are not perceived as important as the environmental ones (Cole, 2006). As a result, also in view of LCT most concerns relate to its environmental part and the declination of its natural attractions.

Therefore, we argue, that the approach to mainly focus on environmental issues of LCT should be reconsidered. As Isaac and Hodge (2011) imply, sustainable tourism development should primarily "protect the interests of local cultures and societies" (p. 101). In order to foster sustainable development at an LCT destination, it is important to actively integrate the local community in decision-making processes (see McKenzie, 2004; Moscardo & Murphy, 2016). By giving decision-making power to the local community, its members can integrate their own values and interests to tourism strategies and its activities of their destination. This is important as the local community contributes to the uniqueness and authenticity of a tourist destination (e.g., Kock et al., 2016), and, as it was identified during the data collection process, LCT participants are not only interested in environmental topics but also in 'authentic' and 'local' tourist experiences (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 15 & 16).

In terms of economic benefit, and thus the inclusion of both the social and economic side of sustainability (see Three-Pillar Model by Spindler, 2013, p. 23), it can be questioned if the term of 'LCT' is only used as a marketing tool that contributes to the attractiveness of tourist destinations. If a destination is marketed with attributes such as 'vanishing', 'disappearing', 'changing' or being 'in danger' (see content analysis), a tourist's desire to visit such a destination can be strengthened (see questionnaire, 7 to 19 April 2019, question 16). Salkin (2007) identified LCT to be a powerful marketing and sales tool as it encourages the human ego to be the last one at a destination. The vulnerability of a destination makes it attractive to visit for many tourists, who, as identified in the Analysis, find themselves back in a trade-off between their ethical mindset towards sustainable traveling and their personal and egoistic interest and contribution to LCT. On the one side, tourists seem to be aware of the environment being hurt and damaged. On the other side, they do take part in LCT and actively contribute negatively to issues themselves, however, without taking any responsibility. This thinking is mostly aligned in the short-run, as the last chance could come very soon. Groulx et al. (2016) point out that LCT is generally of a short-term nature, especially in terms of economic benefits for the concerned LCT destination, making it not a sustainable long-term tourism form (Groulx et al., 2016). Does this mean that LCT is in reality

only a marketing tool which brings short-term benefits for local stakeholders and feeds a tourist's need of hyper-tourist consumption to participate in this *trend*, to be part of everything and consume a special experience *right now* before it is too late?

All these reflections led us to the final conclusion that the notion of LCT requires to be reframed, as it needs to get rid of its static character and image. Thereby, we highlight the difference between 'redefining' and 'reframing', as a 'redefinition' would again enhance a rather final and static character, which we do not consider suitable for the notion of LCT. With a 'reframing' of the LCT notion, we aim to achieve a more flexible, dynamic and subjective character, as one should not forget that "there is no one reality" (Dyson, 2012, p. 261). The constantly changing and developing landscape of the tourism industry makes a destination dynamic and requires literature's and researchers' consideration. Even though the dynamic of a place was, as we discovered, mostly outlaid negatively – both in the questionnaire and the online media content analysis – we argue that change is a natural and not necessarily negative process. As Jamal and Robinson (2009) highlight, change and development, can benefit a destination and particularly its local communities by empowering local stakeholders to get involved in the environmental, economic and social development of their own home (Jamal & Robinson, 2009). Therefore, we argue that *change* should not always be considered from a negative point of view, as it was apparent amongst the survey respondents. Also, we are convinced that the term LCT should be considered from a more dynamic point of view and rather focus on a *constant change* of a destination and not on *the end* of a destination. How long does the "last" in LCT last for? When will it really be too late to visit an LCT destination - in one month, one year, ten years, 50 years or even longer?

The main research question this thesis answers is "What motivates tourists to participate in LCT?". In view of our main research question, the questionnaire was crucial to us. It helped us to understand tourist behavior and motivation to visit an LCT destination better. First, we identified that culture, traditions, and authenticity appeared to the main drivers to participate in LCT among respondents of the questionnaire. The quest for authenticity, combined with a feeling of nostalgia, could be identified as a major motivator for respondents to participate in LCT. In combination with the identified negative perception of change and development of LCT destinations among respondents, we found that respondents are motivated to travel to a destination when it is the 'last chance' indicating a unique experience where not many possibilities are left to visit the place before its natural deterioration or its loss of authenticity as a result of emerging or increasing tourism. Second, negative perceptions around overtourism could be identified as a major driver for LCT motivation, as tourists seem to want to experience a destination that is not suffering from overtourism. To be at a destination before it becomes too touristy is, thus, part of LCT motivation. Third, ego tourism and the aim to fulfill personal values play a central role in decision-making in LCT, with these personal values potentially being in a trade-off with other, collective values, which again amplifies not only the paradox of LCT itself but also sustainable tourism in general.

7.1. Suggestions for Further Research

As this thesis is based on a mixed method approach with the focus on a quantitative questionnaire, we suggest investigating the concept of LCT further by conducting qualitative interviews with LCT tourists. This could be both former LCT tourists and travelers who are planning on or considering visiting an LCT destination in the near future. Conducting qualitative interviews with former and potential LCT tourists would allow for more in-depth answers to relevant questions as well as to ask follow-up questions. Hereby, the focus should be set on the socio-cultural part of LCT and its relation to sustainability. As we discovered, not online in scholarly literature but also in online media and among respondents of our questionnaire, LCT is mainly approached by its characteristics of being a 'disappearing' or 'changing' natural attraction and thereby focus is almost exclusively set on the environmental part of LCT.

Cuba appeared to be the most popular LCT destination among the responses. It can be seen as an LCT destination that is characterized by socio-cultural changes; therefore, a case study of Cuba is suggested in order to explore this notion of culture-related LCT more. Hereby, we suggest doing qualitative interviews with tourists on-site who are visiting Cuba because of LCT. By focusing on one specific case it would be possible to investigate the implications and consequences of LCT on local communities and/or the local population. Furthermore, by focusing on one particular destination, qualitative interviews could be conducted with tour operators on-site. When interviewing tour operators, we suggest investigating how, or if, they market Cuba as an LCT destination. Doing so would provide a better understanding of the implications that LCT has on marketing and vice versa. In general, the effectiveness of LCT as a marketing tool will be an interesting topic for further research. As identified during the content analysis and by the results of the questionnaire, some attributes that are used to describe LCT can enhance people's motivation to engage in LCT, however, other attributes appeared to not have any influence on LCT motivation. As a result, it will be interesting to discover how much impact marketing really has on tourists' motivation to participate in LCT.

Moreover, we suggest further research on LCT on a more global scale which would also allow covering a wider range and variety of socio-demographics such as cultural backgrounds and a more even distribution of age and gender. As mentioned in the limitations chapter of the Methodology part, this would allow making conclusions about potentially different perceptions, values, and motivations between the different genders and age groups. Therefore, it is suggested to use a statistical program for the data collection that enables the researchers to draw interferences between people's cultural backgrounds, in particular, their nationalities, and the destinations they mention.

Overall, we suggest further and continuous research on LCT. As LCT is still in its infancy stage, it will be interesting to continue studying the development of LCT as well as how LCT will establish itself as a popular travel trend to tourists as it was identified during our content analysis. Furthermore, we argue for continues research on the question, which future role LCT might play in (sustainable) tourism development. As discovered in this thesis, the subject of identity building

in LCT is very complex and offers space for further research. This also applied to the implications and consequences LCT brings to its destinations and the local communities on-site.

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