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Abstract

The role of risk in destination choices is a very interesting topic and was already researched a few times from certain experts in the field. The current theses dealt with this specific topic, taking an example country and finding out why people travel to this country, even though the perceived risk that is combined with a travel is assumed to be quite high. The country that was used as an example in this thesis is South Africa, which according to literature still has to suffer from a negative image especially regarding crime incidents. Thus it was very interesting for the author of the current paper to find out why more and more people travel to South Africa despite the risk factor.

In order to answer the research question, the author used eight qualitative interviews, done with young, German travelers, who are interested in South Africa and also have the intention to travel there one day. This method was selected because the author intended to use the qualitative results as a starting point for investigating this topic, which means that the outcomes were solely valid for this set of respondents and cannot be generalized. These eight interviewees were chosen on purpose, having different travel experiences and patterns for investigating the influence of previous experiences on the perception of risk and having an investigative study.

The purpose of the study was to find out, why tourists travel to South Africa despite its reputation of being a risky destination. Therefore topics like decision making, destination choices and its influential variables were employed as well as the influence of risk on these decisions. Also the topics of real and perceived risk, as well as risk reduction strategies were seen as being very important in order to answer this question. All these topics were presented in a theoretical chapter and were discussed with the help of the empirical data.

Within the analysis, it was discovered that South Africa does not have such a negative image as it is supposed through the theories. The respondents of the current study thought quite positive about the country. Of course certain risks could be connected to a travel to this country, but it was concluded that these risks are not life-threatening and, compared with other African countries, no reason for excluding this destination from future travel plans. In general South

Africa has to offer more positive things than negative and with the help of risk reduction strategies, such as asking friends or relatives, who have been in the country already, those risks can even be reduced. Especially the role of recommendations and personal reports about South Africa have been evaluated as being a crucial factor influencing the vacation decisions of the respondents enormously. The overall conclusion of the paper was that the risk that is combined with a travel to South Africa was no reason for avoiding this country, since on the one hand the risk is not very high and on the other hand risk can be minimized through certain risk-reduction strategies.

1 Introduction

In the following thesis the author deals with the role of risk in destination choice in tourism. The main question that should be answered at the end of the paper is: why do tourists travel to a certain country despite the fact that there are certain risks to expect? In order to get an answer to that question the writer decided to investigate the case of South Africa as an example of a risky destination and young German travelers as potential tourists traveling to that country. At the beginning of the thesis general statements about the development in tourism are made in order to introduce the reader to the topic

International tourist arrivals reached a total of 980 million in 2011, up from 939 million in 2012, in a year characterized by a stalled global economic recovery, political changes in the Middle East and North Africa and natural disasters in Japan (UNWTO, 2012). Just 5% of the overall amount of tourists spends their vacations on the African continent (UNWTO, 2012). The figures for this part of the world have not changed from 2010 to 2011, thus still 50 million international arrivals can be generated in Africa, as the gain of two million arrivals for the Sub-Saharan destinations (7%) was offset by the losses in North Africa (-12%) (UNWTO, 2012). 8 million arrivals were generated in 2010 for the chosen case country in the following thesis: South Africa (UNWTO, 2012).

The South African government evaluates the tourism sector as the most important industry as it contributes up to R80 billion annually to the country's gross domestic product (George, 2003). The main target groups of the tourism industry are namely the UK, Germany, Netherlands, France, Italy and the USA (George, 2003). The first things that come into the minds of potential tourists when they think of South Africa are probably Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban as major cities; nature reserves, wild animals, wine and unfortunately, as one major concern, crime (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). South Africa, which is one of Africa's top destinations, still has to suffer under lots of critical factors, such as political instability, violence and crime (Ferreira & Harmse, 2000). According to Ferreira & Harmse (2000) South Africa, which needs lots of tourists to bring in cash and create jobs, is listed as one of the 10 most dangerous places in the world (Ferreira & Harmse, 2000).

South Africa, the 'crime capital of the world', has gained an image of being an unsafe place to go on holiday, what is not surprising since the country has extraordinary high levels of violent crime (George, 2003). According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, South Africa ranks third on murder rates per 100.000 in the world, but Altbeker (2005) mentions that crime statistics cannot always be seen as an overly definite conclusion because of for instance different definitions of crime (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). George (2003) stated that some studies, for instance from Chesney-Lind & Lind (1986); Crotts (1996); de Albuquerque & McElroy (1999); Harper (1983) or Schiebler, Crotts & Hollinger (1996), mention that a rise of tourism at a destination leads to an increase of crime towards tourists (George, 2003). However George (2003) and the author of the current paper do not support this opinion what may be justified by the results of a think-tank conference on safety and security issues in the global tourism and hospitality industry, which state that crime would generally continue to escalate (not just against tourists) while travel increases and while the population itself grows, especially in countries where the gap between poor and rich is very big (George, 2003).

Personal experiences, media and word-of-mouth communication are the most important factors influencing potential tourists to visit the destination (Ferreira & Harmse, 2000). This negative image of South Africa has a huge, negative influence on the tourism industry of South Africa or as Farr (executive head of South African Tourism Board 1998) stated: the negative press of crime against one tourist results in 200 potential tourists deciding not to visit the country (Ferreira & Harmse, 2000).

More and different viewpoints about the country are given for instance from a study of George (2003) where ca. 50 % of his respondents felt safe during their vacation in South Africa, and more than 50 % of the respondents were likely to return to the country and would like to recommend this destination to friends and relatives (George, 2003). Another study from Donaldson & Ferreira (2009) showed that 35% of the respondents were worried about their safety before travelling to South Africa, 33% were neutral and 32% were not worried (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). After the trip the result was different because the relatively balanced numbers before the trip changed into 55% which evaluate

the trip as positive and just 15% said it was a negative experience, which may be an indicator of prejudices towards this country as being an unsecure place to spend the vacation (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009).

Lots of recently published papers share the opinion that one of the main reasons for traveling is relaxation and, that tourists don't want to be bothered with negative incidents during their vacation (Kozak, Crofts, & Law, 2007). Thus safety can be seen as an innate trait of human nature, which is the reason why risk is one of the major concerns that can be found regarding international tourism (Kozak, Crofts, & Law, 2007).

High perceived risk and safety concerns become more and more important in the decision making processes of potential visitors of a certain destination (Kozak, Crofts, & Law, 2007), (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). Travelers, who would like to visit a certain place but perceive it to be under risk, are most likely to avoid this destination for future travel plans (Kozak, Crofts, & Law, 2007). According to Kozak, Crofts and Law (2007) traveler's risk perception decreases while their travel experiences increase, which means that every potential tourist evaluates perceived risk of a place in a different way, depending on for instance previous travel experiences (Kozak, Crofts, & Law, 2007). But most of the times a decision maker has a tendency to be repelled by alternatives that he or she perceives as more risky over alternatives perceived as less risky (Weber & Milliman, 1997), (Sönmez, 1998), (Timothy, 2006). Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty (2009) mention, that tourists often feel safer in familiar environments, whereas novel environments may present a greater risk (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009).

On the other hand novelty might also function as an additional pull factor to visit a certain destination for some type of tourist, for instance adventure tourists, who are searching for new, exciting experiences (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). Political turmoil and danger of crime for instance might also in few cases lead to new target groups in tourism, who can be either conflict- or war tourists or journalists and researchers (Sönmez, 1998), but these 'positive' implications of a negative destination image are not going to be discussed in the following thesis, because the travel after risk can be considered as dark tourism, which is

only a small niche and there is no need to include this in the current paper. Nevertheless it is interesting for the author to find out if the respondents like to take risks or react more anxious about their decisions in order to research the influence of risk on potential tourists in their destination choice (Lepp & Gibson, 2008), (Pizam, et al., 2004).

Perceived risk can vary a lot in nature from crime, war, political turmoil over natural disasters up to fear of diseases (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007). South Africa is mainly associated with two types of risk: crime and HIV/AIDS infection (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007) but the latter one is no central point in the current work because the author, supported by a study from Donaldson and Ferreira (2009), evaluates crime as being the main issue for tourists travelling to South Africa and the risk of criminal acts like robberies or muggings seems to be more tangible for tourists, (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009).

Already the risk perceptions, rather than actual circumstances influence tourist behavior to avoid certain destinations which shows that travel decisions are most of the times based on perceptions rather than reality (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). Thus researchers have developed two different concepts: real and perceived risk (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009), (Dowling G. R., 1986). Incidents like natural disasters or political unrest lead to perceived travel risks whereas tourists' ignorance of the probability of such events might engage them in real risks (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). The perception of those possible risks is spread through media and word of mouth, which can be seen as activators of perceived risk, even if the potential visitors have never been to the place before (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009), (Sönmez, 1998). Especially crime against tourists is going to be dispersed through the media and probably results in lots of changing travel decisions of potential tourists, not to visit this specific destination (Sönmez, 1998). International tourists are warned against dangers of different destinations through books, travel magazines, academic journals, periodicals, up-to-date governmental travel advisories alerting individuals to actual and potential global security issues or the TV (Sönmez, 1998). According to Sönmez (1998) a result of the media coverage of crime incidents may lead to the situation, where perceived risk is outweighing reality in forming certain attitudes towards a destination (Sönmez, 1998),

because of the often exaggerating nature of reports (Timothy, 2006). The lack of knowledge of first time visitors is also a reason for the higher perceived risk in comparison to repeat visitors, who are able to compare the real and perceived risk and evaluate the situation better (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009), (Lepp & Gibson, 2008). But regardless of whether real or perceived, the presence of risk and thus the resulting negative image of a certain destination have the potential to change the nature of travel decisions (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). In this paper the focus lies on the perceived risk, since the interviewees have never been to South Africa before and could not yet experience the real situation in the country and thus rely on an image.

The destination image is a critical factor while choosing a destination (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998) which means that making tourists feel safe and secure before and during their trip may raise the competitiveness of a certain place as it contributes to a more positive image of the destination (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007). Especially in tourism, the image of a certain product (destination) is crucially important, since it is an intangible good and thus image is a major criteria, which potential tourists may use in order to gain information before a purchase (Sönmez, 1998). A negative image, which is created by a lack of safety and security, may damage the reputation of the country and may lead to a decrease in the local tourism industry (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007), (Timothy, 2006). One single act of terrorism, natural disaster, spread of disease or crime situation may sometimes lead to an overall negative image of a destination and even of its neighbor countries, which will stay in the visitor's mind for a long time (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007), (Timothy, 2006), (Sönmez, 1998). According to Milman, Jones and Bach (1999) safety (personal, environmental) and friendly hospitality might be seen as the most important attributes for travelers (Milman, Jones, & Bach, 1999), (Hsu, Tsai, & Wu, 2009). Although many hotels provide guests with a huge amount of amenities, they often do not realize that the most important amenity for lots of tourists is a safe environment, even in luxurious hotels (Milman, Jones, & Bach, 1999). Lots of tourists would not overlook lacks in personal safety even if travel costs would be very low (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009).

When dealing with the topic of crime, it has to be said that crime exists in all societies, independently of a single nation or region and that crime incidences have increased with the general growth of civilization (Milman, Jones, & Bach, 1999). In order to discuss the crime subject in a tourism context, it has to be said that traveler's previous exposure to crime influences the overall sense of safety (Milman, Jones, & Bach, 1999), (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). It was also found by a survey of Sirakaya, Sheppard and McLellan (1997) that an average traveler feels safe at a destination, until he has heard stories about crime and insecurity (Sirakaya, Sheppard, & McLellan, 1997), which again shows the different risk types (perceived and real) which can occur.

Deciding to avoid regions perceived as risky is simply an exercise of the freedom of choice enjoyed by vacation travelers (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). Clearly travelers are neither unaware of nor immune to the real or perceived safety and health threats that are inherent at a certain destination (Sirakaya, Sheppard, & McLellan, 1997). But what is not yet clear enough is to what extent this desirability of a destination influence traveler's choice of destination (Sirakaya, Sheppard, & McLellan, 1997) which is one reason why this thesis is made. When tourists have not visited a certain destination which might be unsecure and thus the personal experiences about that place are missing, they are most of the times willing to avoid this region (Lawson & Thyne, 2001) and choose another destination for their vacation (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). Whether the destination is really safe or risky does not seem to be as relevant in the decision making process as the potential traveler's own perception of the place (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). This behavior mentioned by Sönmez & Graefe (1998), of choosing another region when the former one is said to be dangerous, might not be transferred to all types of tourists since it may be stated that young adults are less concerned about safety than others (Sirakaya, Sheppard, & McLellan, 1997), what might be true, but in between this group of tourists, further differences in risk taking behavior can be found (Pizam, et al., 2004).

The following thesis is going to investigate how tourists are influenced by risk in their destination choice. After the introduction of the existent paper, various methodological considerations regarding the research design, chosen methods

like qualitative interviews, as well as theoretical and analytical approaches will be argued. The theory part of the thesis will contain discussions about the connections between risk and decision making in tourism and the role of risk in destination choice. In the first part the author mentions the process of decision making and the role that risk takes in this procedure. The handling (investigation and reduction) of risk will be part of the theory chapter as well. In the second fraction the process of decision making with its various disturbing factors will be discussed and evaluated. In the analysis-part the qualitative interviews with young German travelers with the intention to travel to South Africa will be used in order to draw on practical experiences and compare them with the theoretical framework constructed before. The results will be summarized and pointed out in an overall conclusion of the thesis in order to get an answer for the research question:

WHY DO YOUNG, GERMAN PEOPLE TRAVEL TO SOUTH AFRICA DESPITE ITS WELL ESTABLISHED PERCEIVED RISK?

- What variables influence the decision making process/destination choice of the respondents?
- How does a destination image arise for potential tourists?
- What role does risk play in the destination choice?
- What risk-reduction strategies can be applied when the perceived risk in a travel decision is too high?

2 Methodology

In this section of the current paper all methods and strategies that are used in the thesis will be described and evaluated in a traceable way. The author used qualitative interviews for the current thesis, which are done with eight young, German travelers having an interest in South Africa and the intention to travel there one day. With the help of these semi-structured interviews it is tried to answer the research question and also the sub-questions of the paper. The decision to use this research strategy as well as other choices and also consequences of those choices, plus evaluation criteria of the results will be presented in the following chapter.

2.1 Theoretical basis

The present thesis makes use of theory as well as empirical data. At first a literature review was done by the author as a means of gaining an initial impression of the topic area. Furthermore the theory was needed to figure out what is already known in connection with the role of risk in destination choices as well as theoretical and methodological approaches in the research area in order to avoid 'reinventing the wheel'. Reviewing literature helped to set a framework for the topic and functioned as a basis for developing the research question. Of course, the literature review finally also assisted with the interpretation of the author's research findings. For the present thesis a lot of articles from different peer-reviewed journals were used, because articles are very detailed and specific about the influence of risk in a vacation decision, more than for example textbooks, seen as giving general information (Bryman, 2008), which was not the intention of the present paper.

The researcher decided to make a narrative literature review, because it was important to still have the opportunity to move the boundaries of the study during the research, especially during the interviewing process, because the view on the theories can change as a result of the analysis of the collected data. By doing a literature review, on the one hand the challenge was to figure out relevant texts and articles and break them down for the current topic, because plenty of sources existed. On the other hand the author was confronted with lots of psychological texts written in a difficult branch language solely dealing with

the general risk of making a decision, not relating to the crime content, where the focus in this paper lies on, and in that respect the challenge existed to understand the literature and decide whether and how to connect them to the topic.

In the present study *hermeneutic principles* are used firstly for interpreting the meaning of different texts during the literature review and secondly for the analysis by interpreting the empirical data, thus in other words: the interpretation of meaning is characterized by the hermeneutic circle (Kvale, 1996). The understanding of a text takes place through a process in which the meaning of the separate parts is determined by the global meaning of the text, as it is anticipated (Kvale, 1996). The closer determination of the meaning of the separate parts may eventually change the originally probable meaning of the totality, which again influences the meaning of the separate parts, and so on (Kvale, 1996). In principle, such a hermeneutical explication of the text is a boundless process, while it ends in practice when one has reached a sensible meaning, a valid consistent sense, free of inner contradictions (Kvale, 1996).

2.2 Factors influencing social research

Several factors might influence a social research to a greater or less extent, which will be investigated in the following sections.

2.2.1 Induction/deduction

The relationship between theory and research might appear in two ways, either inductive or deductive, but it has to be said that these two are rather tendencies than hard-fact distinctions (Bryman, 2008). Deductive work is characterized by deducing theories and then testing them through observations, whereas induction means that theory is formed on the basis of observations (Bryman, 2008). In the present thesis the process of relating theory and research might be described as being primarily deductive, because no new theory is generated. The author searched for various theories from different authors, because lots of articles about this issue already exist, and tested them through interviews. Inductive work was not issued in the current paper because in the point of view of the writer lots of interesting theories already exist and it was very appealing

to test and maybe to a certain extent adapt them for the specific case of South Africa and German young travelers. It might be said that some kind of inductive work was also used in this thesis because the theories are viewed with other background information and adapted to the specific case, which might be seen as generating new versions of the theories, but since no totally new theoretical considerations are formed, the author decided to describe the process of relating theory and empirical data as being deductive.

2.2.2 Epistemological considerations

But not just the relationship between theory and findings can influence the social research, but also epistemological and ontological reflections. In terms of epistemological considerations (What is regarded as knowledge?) the author adheres to interpretivism. Within that approach human actions and behaviors should rather be understood through interpretation than explained (Bryman, 2008). Furthermore subjective meaning of social actions should be grasped from the researcher's point of view (Bryman, 2008). The meanings of statements will be analyzed (Bryman, 2008), which means for the present paper that the given answers from the semi-structured interviews will be interpreted by the researcher. Thus it means that the answers of the respondents will be analyzed by the author of the thesis and the findings are resulting from the interpretations solely from the author's point of view. This also means that not everybody may see the results as being right, because probably everybody would interpret the answers in an individual way and because of that fact, it is tried to clarify the results in order to make the interpretation process more transparent for the reader. Together with the interpretivism approach goes the hermeneutic approach which was already explained above.

2.2.3 Ontological considerations

The nature of social entities in this paper is seen as social constructions built up from perceptions and actions of social actors and thus the author adheres to the constructivist paradigm (Bryman, 2008). Consequently the findings are seen as a reality that is not definite, just the reality for the moment that finds itself in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction. The constructivist position of the author is seen as a point of reference but with being in a process of

constant development because of the fact that social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them (Bryman, 2008). For the present thesis this means that the author is not looking for an external reality, for an overall right answer of the research question (where it is questionable, if an overall answer exists at all), but for individual viewpoints forming a context bound reality, which can change anytime and in any direction. The findings of the present paper may be seen as valid for the interviewees of the thesis and the current state they were in at the moment of interviewing them, but the author is aware of the fact that knowledge often depend on the person producing it and thus the results of this thesis cannot be seen as an overall answer to the research question, but as solely valid for those interviewees (but it was never the goal of the paper to get a generalizable result).

2.2.4 Research strategy – qualitative research

Next to the already mentioned influencing factors on social research there are still some missing, as for example the choice of the research strategy. For the present thesis the research strategy should function as a general orientation to conduct social researches. The qualitative strategy was used because the author wanted to put emphasis on words and content rather than quantifications. The preference in this approach lies in the emphasis on the ways in which individuals interpret the social world (→ interpretivism) and in the assumption that social reality is a constantly shifting accomplishment of social actors (→ constructivism) (Bryman, 2008). This strategy can also be seen as a tendency rather than a hard-fact definition (Bryman, 2008). In this paper a qualitative study is used because the author wanted to have exploratory and individual, in-depth information about the current topic. The individual opinion about the role of risk in destination choice, specifically regarding South Africa, in the author's point of view requires deep and detailed research, which was done with the help of semi-structured interviews. The choice of qualitative research strategy may also be justified with the uniqueness of the consumer behaviour of the subject group, which is a reason for doing in-depths research in order to find out differences and similarities in this complicated and individual decision process (Kvale, 1996). Also the transition from modern to postmodern society is

one reason why qualitative interviews are used, or according to Kvale & Brinkmann (2008) qualitative methods are getting important in the increasingly deregulated consumer societies of a postmodern age, centred on an experiential economy, which require contextualized qualitative methods of inquiry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). This is relevant to the choice of the research strategy in the current paper not only because it deals with consumer behaviour, which is seen as being very individual and not generalizable, but also because of the nature of the tourism business, which is a social phenomenon and can be defined as an experiential industry.

2.2.5 Values and practical considerations

The last two issues that might influence a social research are values and practical considerations. There is a growing recognition that it is nearly impossible to keep out values totally from a research process (Bryman, 2008), but in this thesis values are not seen as a major problem as the interviews took place at one point of time, so that there was less time to influence the interviewees by certain values. The writer of the current paper tried to be as objective as possible in order to avoid having guiding effect on the respondents. The fact that each result might be useful for the author and no predetermined outcome was expected can also be seen as an advantage in not consciously having determinative values in the research process. But it has to be said that still in the analysis phase underlying values might have influenced the results.

From the author's point of view the results might mainly be influenced by certain practical considerations as for instance the problem formulation required a specific research design and –strategy as in-depth information about the role of risk in destination choices was needed. Also the fact that the thesis deals with the issue of consumer behavior and decision making influenced the choice of method enormously, since explanatory information is needed in order to find out more about this individual process. These last aspects were just a few, but definitely essential reasons for choosing certain approaches over others.

2.3 Evaluation criteria of social research – trustworthiness

One important part of the methodological section is the reflection about evaluation criteria (in theory mostly known as reliability, validity and replicability) which might be used in order to find out the quality of a social research. As these terms are mainly used in connection with quantitative research there are some authors who used other terms for similar approaches in order to transfer these criteria to qualitative research. Lincoln & Guba (1994) used the approach of trustworthiness, which entails: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this thesis the Lincoln & Guba (1994) approach will be used, as it was developed for qualitative research, which is done in this paper as well. Furthermore it suits well to the constructivist point of view, saying that there is more than one and possibly several accounts of reality, rather than one absolute truth about the social world (Bryman, 2008).

Lincoln & Guba (1994) propose that it is necessary to specify terms and ways of establishing and assessing the quality of qualitative research that provide an alternative to reliability and validity. The criterion of *credibility* is linked to the belief that more than one social reality exist out there (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus it is the credibility of the conclusions that is going to determine the acceptability of the research to others (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In the present paper credibility is tried to be accomplished by assorting various theoretical considerations. In the author's point of view the sources utilized can be seen as credible, since the articles used in the current paper are written from experts in the tourism industry and most of them already dealt with the topic of risk in tourism decision making very often.

Qualitative research is characterized by rich detailed findings which provide others with a database for making judgments about the possible *transferability* of findings to other milieus (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In the present thesis the results are not made in order to be generalized and may not implicitly be transferred on other tourism projects. But it might be the case that the results may function as a thought-provoking impulse for similar projects that might for instance deal with the role of risk in destination choices for other destinations or with other topics that should be researched in South Africa.

The third criterion of trustworthiness, *dependability*, might be seen as a parallel to reliability for quantitative researches (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Lincoln & Guba (1994) propose that researchers should adopt an 'auditing approach' in order to assure dependability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This approach entails ensuring that complete records are kept of all phases of the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In the current paper the author tried to keep all steps traceable as they are described in a detailed manner. Decisions such as the selection of respondents, interview transcripts and audio files as well as data analysis decisions were judged and written down in order to make the research more transparent to the reader.

Establishing *confirmability*, which is the fourth and the last criterion of the trustworthiness approach, means that it should be apparent that the researcher has not allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations to sway the conduct of the research and findings deriving from it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The author of the present thesis tried to be as objective as possible even though complete objectivism is impossible in social research. For example in the present paper the author tried to evaluate theories in an objective manner, being critical about certain statements and not totally believe everything said by the experts. Also the answers of the respondents are researched as objective as possible without allowing personal opinions influencing the analyzing process (as far as this is possible).

2.4 Research design and research method

Now the choice and also the consequences of the research design, research method and also the strategy of sampling will be explained and judged.

2.4.1 Research design - comparative design with case study elements

In the present thesis the comparative research design is used because the author assumes that consumer behavior and decision making processes can be better understood when more than one example are used and compared. With the help of similar points of departures of the interviewees (young German travelers with the intention to visit South Africa one day) and hence comparable interviews, similarities and differences can be recognized and may give

occasions for questioning concepts in the theoretical chapter. Attention was paid next to the similar states of the respondents, also on differences in previous travel experiences, because this seems to be one major influence factor on the perception of risk while on holiday. Within the research design, also elements of a case study design can be found as one specific case, in the current thesis the country South Africa, will be looked at in-depth. In fact the current paper is specifically dealing with crime and risk factors to be the main aspects, which potential tourists are worried about, thus deliberately leaving out other factors like HIV infection or poverty, which appeared to be important in the travel decision to South Africa as well, but it was not planned to look at these issues from the beginning and in-depths. So the research design of the present thesis may be described as a comparative design with case study elements.

2.4.2 Research method – semi-structured interviews

The chosen research method in the existing thesis is semi-structured interviews. It was preferred over others because on the one hand it gives the interviewees the possibility to answer open questions broadly and to include some examples or specific stories about that issue. On the other hand the themes that should be investigated are written down in an interview guide (Appendix 1) in order to be sure that all aspects are covered. Open questions in order to get detailed, rich answers as well as follow-up questions are used and going off the planned track is seen as a good possibility to gain even more knowledge about the interviewee's point of view (Bryman, 2008). An interview guide was used as a memory list of questions and topics that should be discussed in order to be able to deal with the problem formulation, but the sequence might alter from interview to interview according to the respondent's answers. The interviews were decided to be held in German because in the author's point of view the mother tongue of the respondents gave them the possibility to give more detailed answers, than it would have been possible in a foreign language. Of course this decision also has a disadvantage which lies in the fact that quotes used in the analysis chapter are translated into English and might be slightly altered to the original wording. But this is not seen as a major problem since the author tried to translate the quotes as precise as possible and not consciously altering the content of the statements. During the

interviewing process attention was paid to the fact that the language is comprehensible, so no technical wording was used and that the questions did not lead the answers in any kind of direction. During the interviewing processes the author did not notice any misunderstanding from the questions. The interviews started with general, introducing questions to the respondents in order to get into the conversation and the interviewer tried to act responsive to what was said. After all interviews were done and recorded, they have been transcribed also in German language because key themes could though be better identified, similarities and differences emerged and it brought the author closer to the data, even though it produced a huge amount of texts that has to be analyzed (see transcriptions on the CD). During the transcribing process the focus concentrated on statements rather than pauses or linguistic patterns. The recording and transcribing in this paper was done because it helps to correct limitations or memories, it permits repetitions and it allows the data to be reused (Bryman, 2008). A disadvantage of recording interviews might be the uncomfortable feeling for the respondents. This could for example lead to biased answers because of the fear of the participant to give wrong statements.

2.4.3 Sampling

The author decided to base the study on eight qualitative interviews with young German travelers, with different travel behaviors, but also a similar interest in travelling to the case country, South Africa. This group of young respondents was selected because they can be seen as the future for the travel industry. Germany as the source country of the interviewees was chosen because on the one hand the author is German as well and thus might profit from the mother tongue of the interviews and on the other hand Germany is one of the major target markets of South Africa. It was specifically focused on the case South Africa because the author itself was often confronted with prejudices about the country but still knew lots of people who want to travel there. Furthermore South Africa might be seen as a growing touristic destination for the German target market. In the current thesis it was decided to focus on a specific group of respondents and a certain case country in order to achieve a higher comparability of the answers which, according to the author, would not at all have been possible with totally different respondents and general answers not

belonging to one destination. Therefore a purposive sampling was done in order to make sure that the respondents like travelling and also have a certain interest in travelling to South Africa, which is relevant to the posed research question. This relevance was seen by the author because of the fact that without the interest in South Africa, it would have been very difficult for the interviewees to answer questions about the country and the influence of risk within the travel decision, because probably they would have known very little about that destination. On the other hand it would have also been interesting to see, how much knowledge the respondents would have about South Africa when they were asked about that country without prior announcing it, but this might be done in future research. The author decided not to narrow the group of respondents further down, because it is interesting to have answers from interviewees with different travel behaviors and previous knowledge and furthermore the interviewer was dependent on the willingness of the respondents to take part in the interviews. Because of the fact, that it is a non-probability sampling approach, purposive sampling does not allow generalizing the result (Bryman, 2008), but that was never the goal of this study, it is more seen as an investigative study to find out what kind of role risk play for those specific respondents in their destination choices.

The respondents were chosen through a mixture of convenient and snowball sampling (Bryman, 2008). Within this approach, the researcher starts initial contact with one person or a small group of people, who seem to be relevant to the research topic and then uses these respondents in order to establish contacts with others (Bryman, 2008). The first interviewees were known by the author and therefore it was assured that they were interested in travelling, familiar with South Africa but have not been there yet, but the intention was given to travel to this country one day. Three interviewees were chosen this way: two who are travel experienced and one on the other hand who is a low-frequency traveler. These interviewees gave the author advice on which people might have similar points of departure about the topics South Africa and traveling. By doing such a sampling the author could be sure to choose consumers, who are interested in this topic and also willing to participate in the interviews in order to receive useful data. A negative aspect of such a sampling

approach is that it does not allow generalizing the result at all (Bryman, 2008), but as already mentioned, this study was not done with the intention to generalize the results. The data will not allow definite findings to be generated, but it could provide a springboard for further research (Bryman, 2008).

2.5 Data Analysis

The goal of analyzing the gained data is to figure out and interpret the relevant statements of the interviewees and that means the analysis is mainly based on the transcriptions (Bryman, 2008). Therefore the author must carefully transcribe the interviews, because mistakes in the transcriptions lead automatically to mistakes in the analysis. During the interview analysis the author tried to extract facts and essential meanings from the statements of the interviewed people, which might be translated for the analysis and used as quotes. The interviews will be analyzed by a qualitative content analysis. Thereby the meaning of the transcription will be compared to the theoretical considerations of the thesis (Bryman, 2008). This will be done in order to get a new view on the theories and estimate about their adaptability. According to John (2010) analysis is part of a larger interpretive process, which reminds of the hermeneutic circle, which will be used as methodological frame for doing the analysis in this paper (Johns, 2010). The understanding of the interviewees evolves from a dialectical process from moving between single parts and the whole. With a content analysis the author aspires to exhibit a good degree of transparency. That means that the collected information can be followed easily by everybody while reading the transcriptions. A possible disadvantage of that kind of analysis could be that the quality is highly dependent on the quality of the interviews (Bryman, 2008). Furthermore it could be the case that the analysis has a lack of theoretical connections, if the participants of the interviews answered the questions in a different way than expected by the interviewer.

3 Theory

In this section of the current paper several theoretical considerations about decision making, the influence of perceived risk in those decisions and destination choices evaluated by the author are summarized. Those particular theories were chosen because they help to deal with the problem formulation from an academic point of view and to answer the sub-questions of the current paper.

3.1 The process of decision making in tourism

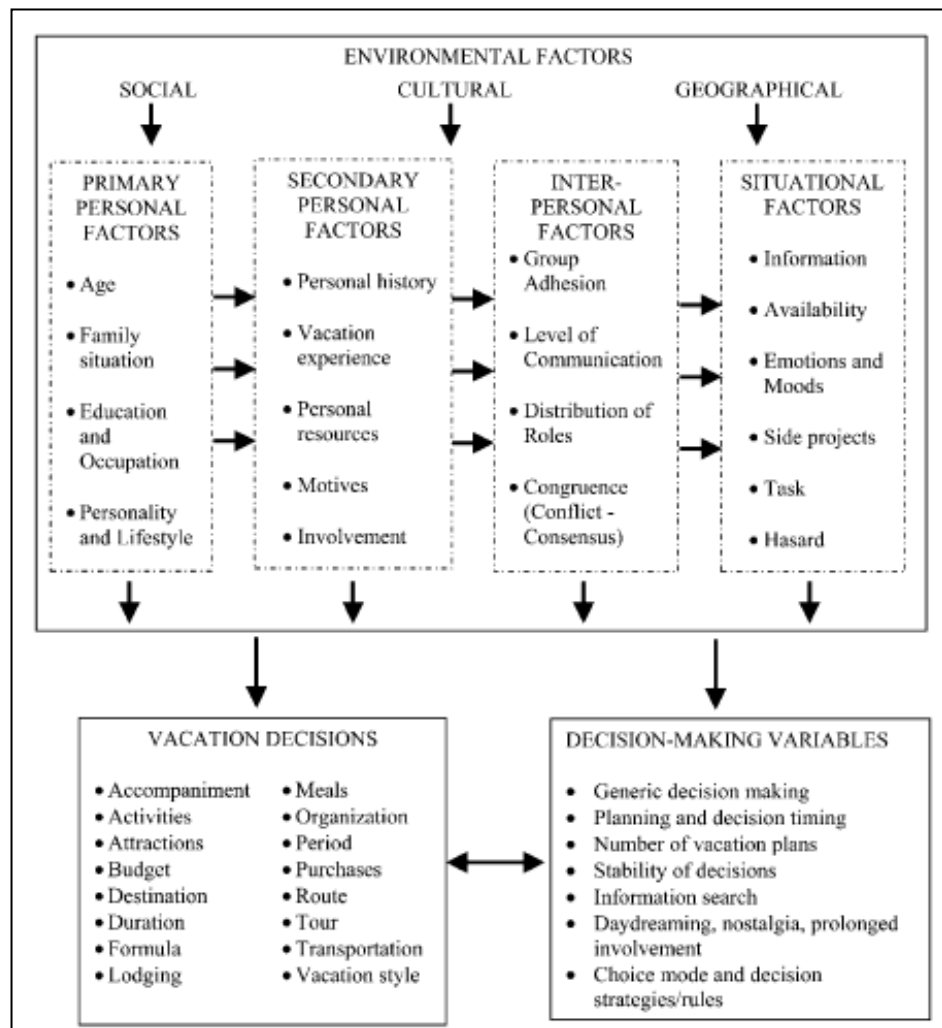
A variety of social science disciplines publishes lots of studies focusing on how individuals make decisions (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Howard & Sheth (1969) and Gilbert (1991) provide the earliest influential models, called the grand models of consumer behavior, explaining decisions relating to tangible, manufactured, products (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Due to these models, decision-making can be broken into five stages: (1) problem recognition, (2) information search, (3) alternative evaluation and selection, (4) outlet selection and purchase, and (5) post-purchase processes (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Although not designed to explain service purchase decisions, these models were also often used by tourism scholars, functioning as a starting point for explaining the process of purchasing tourism services (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005) and the author of the current thesis also shares this opinion. According to Sirakaya & Woodside (2005) a majority of tourism decisions may be unclear choice situations, where the outcomes are unknown, because of the intangible nature of tourism (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005), but nevertheless it has to be said that for sure expectations about the product are held by potential tourists on which a destination choice is normally based on. Furthermore tourism service purchases may be considered to be high-involvement, extensive decision-making purchases, because of the relatively high costs (monetary and non-monetary), which are involved in these decisions (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005), but these concerns about tourism purchase decisions will be explained later in this section specifically.

Decision-making processes are obviously influenced by different variables:

1. internal variables (i.e., attitudes, values, lifestyles, images, motivation, beliefs and intentions, personality characteristics of a buyer, lifecycle stage, risk reduction methods, information search behavior);
2. external variables (i.e., constraints, pull factors of a destination, marketing mix, influences of family and reference groups, culture and subcultures, social class, household-related variables such as life-style, power structure, role, group decision-making style);
3. the nature of the intended trip (i.e., party-size, distance, time, duration of trip) and
4. trip experiences (i.e., mood and feelings during the trip, post-purchase evaluations) (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). The ultimate decision will depend on the nature of interaction among these variables (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005).

Decrop & Snelders (2005) categorize the influencing variables in another way: environmental, personal, interpersonal and situational factors (Decrop & Snelders, 2005), which, in the author's point of view, partly concur with those mentioned by Sirakaya & Wooside (2005): (1) environmental factors (external) such as culture, the social network and the geo-physical environment, which are structural elements that encompass all other factors; (2) a distinction is made between primary and secondary personal influences: age, family situation, occupation, personality and lifestyle (internal), which are the primary roots from which the other personal variables originate; (3) personal factors, which affect group decision-making, including a lot of interpersonal influences (nature of trip); (4) situational factors (trip experience), which come into play when the vacationer makes his/her decisions (Decrop & Snelders, 2005). Those contextual influences may have different weights depending on the vacationers (Decrop & Snelders, 2005).

Figure 1 Variables influencing the decision making process



(Decrop & Snelders, 2005)

Both types of variables fit very well to the current paper but for the analysis the terms of Sirakaya & Woodside (2005) will be used. From the author's point of view the different categories describe similar kind of variables, which are important in deciding about a destination (South Africa as well) but the classification of Decrop & Snelders (2005) seems to be a bit more overlapping and the division of specific factors into one of the groups might be unclear in some cases.

3.2 Risk and safety influencing vacation decisions

According to Hsu, Tsai & Wu (2009) the most important factors for travelers when deciding about a vacation are personal and environmental safety, destination image and quality, which also support previous results of tourism

studies (Hsu, Tsai, & Wu, 2009). Because of the high importance of safety at a destination, the issue of perceived risk in decision-making grows very much in meaning and raises various questions as how tourists perceive international tourism in terms of risk and safety, and what factors may influence this perception (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). The introduction of risk into the already complex decision process is likely to further complicate it (Sönmez, 1998). Travel-related decisions already involve high uncertainty due to the intangible nature of tourism services and thus require uncertainty-reduction strategies such as extensive information search strategies (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Behavioral models suggest that potential tourists collect lots of information about different alternatives, which they assess and eliminate with the help of even more additional information to make a better decision, in order to get to a final choice (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Information search is an ongoing process, which can predate the generic decision to go and which does not end after booking (Decrop & Snelders, 2005). Additionally it is less intensive than usually assumed, because the information is often collected passively and not used immediately when collected, but stocked for later possible use (Decrop & Snelders, 2005). The topic of information search will appear again in this section, more focusing on the risk-reduction function of information search.

In Lepp & Gibson's (2003) point of view tourists feel safer in familiar environments, whereas novel environments may present greater risk (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). But in coherence with this topic it has to be said that each tourist understands and evaluates situations at a destination differently depending on his or her need for novelty or familiarity and previous experiences (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). In the case of absence of past experiences, individuals can easily avoid destinations they perceive as risky by choosing others they consider as being safer, thus the product can be seen as easily replaceable with other destinations (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). Therefore, it can be mentioned that personal experiences with travel in general or a destination in particular can influence the likelihood of future travel to, or the desire to substitute, that destination (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). According to Gu and Martin (1992) destination substitution can be identified as a logical solution for international tourists who perceive risk (Sönmez, 1998). But risk cannot be seen

as the only factor, which might cause travel shifts, but there might be lots of additional reasons, such as intensive marketing efforts and currency exchange rates, which might also explain why some destinations are preferred over others (Sönmez, 1998). In the current thesis it will be focused solely on the risk factor because otherwise it would go beyond the scope of the paper.

In the past three decades, only a few researchers examined the relationship between risk-taking and tourist behavior (Pizam, et al., 2004). Plog (1973), as one of the first researchers, classified leisure tourists into two main personality types based on risk perception: allocentrics and psychocentrics (Pizam, et al., 2004). Allocentrics, which are adventurous, relatively anxiety-free, curious, try new products and enjoy the sense of discovery, are tourists who are looking for places that provide novelty and escape from the boredom of life, whereas psychocentrics, on the other hand, are more likely to go to familiar tourist destinations, are restricted, seek the comfort of familiar surroundings, use well-known brands and are non-adventurous (Pizam, et al., 2004). In order to find out what kind of role risk plays in a destination choice process, it is important for the author of the current paper to find out, which type of risk takers the interviewees are with the aim to evaluate their answers within an appropriate background.

Another tourist classification was made from Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992), who categorized tourists into three groups also based on their perception of risk: risk neutral, functional risk, and place risk (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992). The first group is not considering tourism in general or the destination at all to involve any type of risk, whereas the functional risk group considers the possibility of mechanical, equipment or organizational problems as the major source of tourism related risk (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992). The place risk group perceives vacations as fairly risky and the destination itself as the main source of risk (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992), which is the group that is mainly focused on in the current thesis, but in the author's point of view it is not possible to separate those groups exclusively, since elements of the other groups may always appear. An interesting similarity between the tourist groups mentioned by Roehl and Fesenmaier (1992) and the categories of Plog's tourist types (1973) is evident (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). The risk neutral group seems to

emphasize more of a need to experience excitement and adventure when on vacation than the other two groups and these tourists automatically combine uncertainty (or risk) with the excitement of tourism (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). This suggests a quest for novelty similar to the allocentric group of Plog (Lepp & Gibson, 2003).

In order to assess the influence of risk in decisions, as far as possible, it is essential to understand cognitive and affective processes, individuals experience when they feel threatened (Sönmez, 1998). Travel should be an enjoyable experience and when dark elements enter the equation, the joy of the experience is immediately gone (Sönmez, 1998). It has to be said that research can shed only limited light on these issues, because deep rooted emotions such as fear and the need for safety are difficult or even impossible, to be quantified (Sönmez, 1998). An often discussed and common perception among tourists is that they see themselves as easy targets for criminals while being on holiday (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). According to Pizam, Tarlow and Bloom (1997) the reasons for this perceptions might be the fact that tourists are:

- tempting targets (carry large sums of money and other forms of portable wealth),
- involved in risky behavior (i.e., frequent nightclubs and bars at late hours, travel to remote and unfamiliar places, venture into unsafe areas; consume alcohol and drugs),
- ignorant of local language(s)/dialect, signage, and/or customs,
- lacking local support groups and/or local resources,
- perceived to be aggressive and insensitive to local norms and customs and
- bringing notions about safety and the role of law enforcement agencies based on their experience at home (Pizam, Tarlow, & Bloom, 1997).

In order to summarize this list it can be concluded that tourists mainly engage in risky behavior either because they are on vacation and thus act not as careful as in daily life, or because they lack the knowledge about the specific destination. Those tourists are often exposed to media coverage of international political violence (Sönmez, 1998). The relationship between tourism and crime

is expanded by the media and as a result, perceived risk may outweigh reality in forming attitudes towards destinations (Sönmez, 1998). Popular travel magazines and various other periodicals illustrate the dangers of international travel concerning terrorism, political turmoil, as well as health issues (Sönmez, 1998). Furthermore international tourists are warned against dangers of different destinations by books, academic journals and up-to-date governmental travel advisories informing individuals to actual and potential global security issues (Sönmez, 1998). Media reports most of the time exaggerate problems resulting in perceived risks associated with the destinations often prevailing over real conditions (Timothy, 2006).

Previous investigations have identified five major risk factors for tourists: terrorism, war and political instability, health concerns, crime and cultural and language difficulties (Lepp & Gibson, 2003), (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009), (Lawson & Thyne, 2001). Even the slightest whispers of political discontent, disease and natural disaster typically send tourist arrivals in this region plummeting, because tourism can be seen as a volatile business and thus the destinations can be substituted very easily (Timothy, 2006). Especially political turmoil has persistent properties and can effectively impede travel to affected areas and create an enduring barrier for international tourism for a very long time, since most of the time it is not possible to announce an end date for the turmoil and mention a specific point of time, where travel is safe again (Sönmez, 1998). It appears that a variety of political problems may have comparable impacts on tourism: destination image is damaged, visitation suffers, revenues are lost, and development plans are shelved (Sönmez, 1998). If a tourist feels unsafe or threatened at a destination, a negative impression of the destination may be developed, which can be very damaging to the destination's tourism industry and can result in the decline of tourism to this area (George, 2003).

This can happen in the following ways:

1. Prospective tourists may decide not to visit the destination because it has a reputation for having a high crime rate.
2. If tourists feel unsafe at a destination, they are not likely to take part in activities outside their accommodation facility.

3. Tourists who have felt threatened or unsafe are not likely to return to the destination, and they are not likely to recommend the destination to others (George, 2003).

What makes crime prevention so important is the fact that security issues in tourism always have a spill-over effect, which means that tourists tend to associate a security incident with an entire region (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). In order to turn a destination into a more attractive destination both for service providers and visitors, the long-term stability of a region has to be promised (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007), as far as this situation might be guaranteed. Among tourists the most common response to political turmoil or other crisis is avoidance with the exception of those people who travel to view disaster sites, like for instance journalists (Timothy, 2006).

Concluding for this section, it has to be said that clearly, travelers are neither unaware of nor immune to the actual or perceived safety and health threats in certain destinations at certain times (Sirakaya, Sheppard, & McLellan, 1997). What is not clear yet and what should be found out in the current paper is the question, why people travel to a certain destination despite the risk they combine with this vacation? What kind of role does the persistent risk at the destination play in the decision making process and the final destination choice?

3.3 Perceived vs. real risk

When talking about the influence of risk in destination decisions, it first has to be said that risk is a common daily phenomenon and every person experiences it to some degree, but the handling with this risk might be varying from person to person, as already mentioned before (Pizam, et al., 2004), (Weber & Milliman, 1997). An underlying assumption in this paper is that most people are averse to risk most of the time and that they prefer less risky products to more risky products. Psychologists define the tendency to take risk as a personality tendency to seek out stress-inducing situations that entail novelty or danger sufficient to create anxiety for most people (Pizam, et al., 2004). According to Pizam et al. (2004) risk can generally be defined as the possibility of experiencing a negative outcome (Pizam, et al., 2004). Critical elements of risk

might be described as follows: (1) potential losses (psychological, financial, time or physical (Mitchell & Vassos, 1997)), (2) the perceived significance of those losses and (3) the uncertainty of those losses (Pizam, et al., 2004). The issue of risk is said to be so complex and potentially changeable, that it is difficult to be measured accurately (Mitchell, 1999), (Dowling & Staelin, 1994).

Risk may be differentiated according to Bettman (1975) into two related constructs: inherent and handled risk (Dowling, 1986), where inherent risk is the latent risk a product class holds for a consumer, while handled risk is the amount of conflict the product class is able to arouse when the buyer chooses a brand from a product class in his/her usual buying situation (Mitchell, 1999). But in the author's point of view this classification is better to be used when talking about products, but tourism purchases are seen as service purchases and thus another categorization is used in this paper: real and perceived risk. When risk is influencing the travel decision before the actual vacation is happening, it can be supposed that perceived risk instead of real risk matters in this decision making process, since most of the times the tourists have not visited the destination before and just have a perception about the local situation (Dowling, 1986). Whether a destination or region is really safe or risky does not seem to be as relevant for the final travel decisions as potential travelers' own perceptions (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). Perceived risk was originally defined by Bauer (1960) to have a two-dimensional structure, namely uncertainty and adverse consequences (Dowling, 1986). According to Dowling (1986) individuals perceive lots of risk in high involvement product choice situations, which entails tourism purchases and thus risk is a very important topic (Dowling, 1986). When a product's perceived risk exceeds an individual's maximum tolerance level, it probably will be rejected or will cause the individual to attempt to reduce the risk involved, whereas a product's perceived risk fails to exceed an individual's minimum tolerable level, it may, under conditions of boredom, be rejected in favor of a more risky product, thus it can be concluded that a product or service needs to lay between those two extreme levels (Dowling, 1986).

3.4 Risk reduction strategies

When perceived risk is influencing the vacation decision but still lots of people are travelling to destinations considered as risky, it raises the question: how consumers reduce those risks in decisions (Mitchell & Vassos, 1997)? This process of consumers actively trying to reduce uncertainty or consequences of a decision can be described as the risk-reduction process (Mitchell & Vassos, 1997), (Mitra, Reiss, & Capella, 1999). Within the tourism context information search from brochures in the travel agency, friends and family, travel agency staff or other personal sources is said to be a major risk reducer by Mitchell & Vassos (1997), in contrast to brand loyalty in connection to other contexts, which is much more difficult to define for holidays because of the multifaceted nature of the product (Mitchell & Vassos, 1997). But nevertheless some kind of loyalty can also be found in the tourism context since consumers can be loyal to a tour operator, a travel agent, a destination, a hotel or even family and friends, but still it is not as easy to explain as in a retail context (Mitchell & Vassos, 1997), (Mitra, Reiss, & Capella, 1999). According to a study from Mitchell & Vassos (1997) risk-reducing strategies have been listed and are mentioned in a summarized version as follows:

- reading independent travel reviews, brochures about destination's culture
- purchasing some kind of travel insurance recommended by tour operator
- visiting the tour operator or travel agent personally
- taking a similar holiday from a tour operator you have dealt with before
- purchasing travel items such as electrical adapters and comfortable shoes, language phrase book
- asking friends, travel agent representatives, local people for advice
- waiting to pay for the holiday until last minute except for the required booking deposit
- watching television program about destination or holiday traveling in general (Mitchell & Vassos, 1997)

Within these strategies there is a huge difference between the single approaches (for instance between doing research about a destination and buying comfortable shoes), but this is not seen as being a disadvantage of the

list. Actually it can be said that lots of different facets of risk reduction strategies were captured within this list from Mitchell & Vassos (1997), but the different approaches are seen as being very diverse in their complexity. Thus it is the question if it is useful to put these various strategies into one register, maybe it would be more helpful to cluster the single strategies into different groups. Also the question of the completeness of this list arises, because for instance the possibility of substitution of the destination is not mentioned and probably there are even more strategies that might be used. Nevertheless the list is used in this project and also in the analysis as point of departure when talking about different risk reduction strategies even though it is not seen as being perfect.

It has been illustrated that higher subjective knowledge leads to a more confident person that will rely less on interpersonal and other sources of information, which leads to the assumption that potential tourists seem to collect the most important information through personal talks and profit from personal experiences or in other words: we trust our friends in a way we do not trust people or institutions we do not know well (Mitra, Reiss, & Capella, 1999). Search activity is seen to lower the person's overall perceived risk and the identity of the search activities undertaken (and thus the amount of search) is an indicator of the person's acceptable risk level, the costs and expected benefits of the service purchase and the ability of the person to suffer a loss (Dowling & Staelin, 1994), (Freudenburg, 1988).

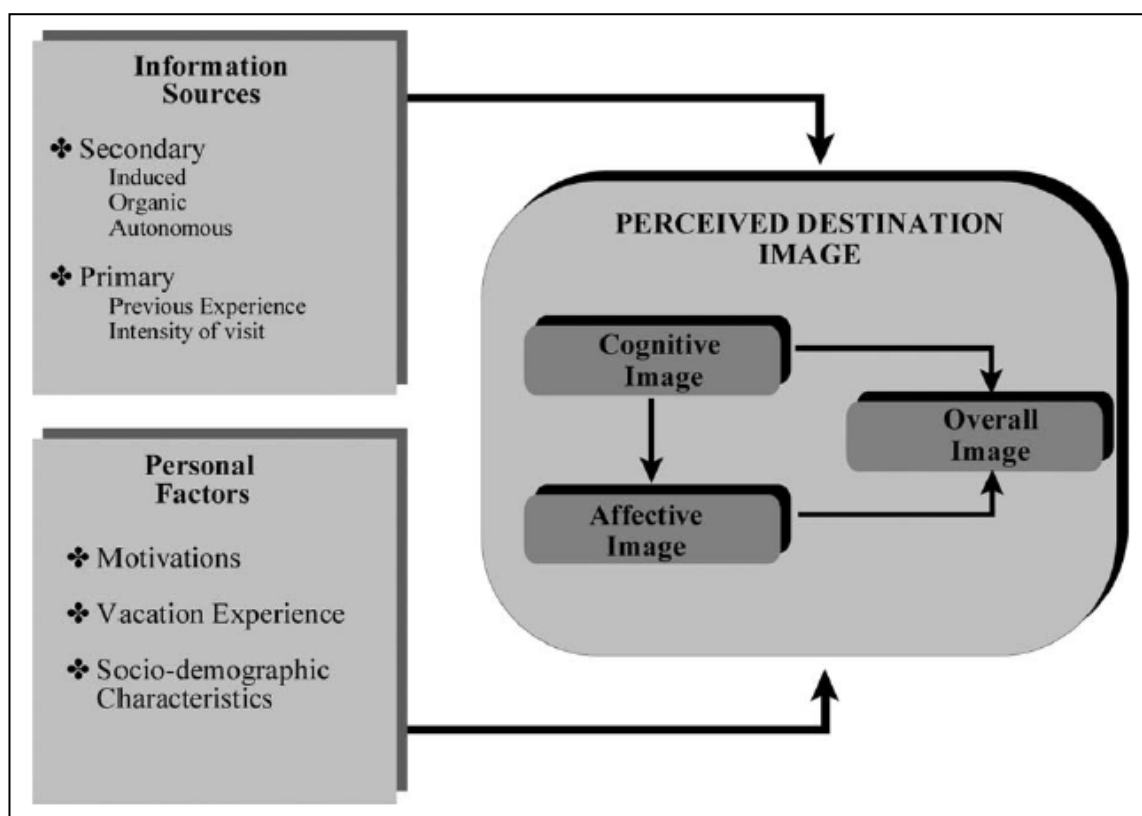
3.5 Destination image

When it comes to the topic of an image of a destination, which Crompton (1979) defined as 'the sum of beliefs, impressions, ideas, and perceptions that people hold of objects, behaviors, and events' (Sönmez, 1998), it also can be said that peace, safety and security are primary requirements for the growth, attractiveness and competitiveness of tourism destinations (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). Without being safe, destinations cannot successfully compete, because potential tourists do not want to visit a place that is said to be unsafe (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009), (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). The negative image created through the lack of safety issues may damage the reputation of the tourism industry often induced through the negative word-of-mouth

communication (Kozak, Crotts, & Law, 2007). This is also a big problem for the country that is dealt with in the current paper, South Africa, which is most of the times associated with risk and insecurity (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). It is very important for the destination to appear secure, both for its citizens and tourists in order to be considered as a place with a positive destination image (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009).

A review of the literature discusses the existence of lots of factors that influence image formation, which are proposed in the following model and involve both information obtained from different sources and the characteristics of the individuals, which according to this model both have an influence on the formed image (Beerli & Martin, 2004).

Figure 2 Model of the Formation of Destination Image



(Beerli & Martin, 2004)

Baloglu (1999) proposes the general theoretical model of image-formation factors (valid for first time visitors, because of the fact that repeat visitors might have other factors than objective mass media information in order to create an image of a destination), which are differentiated between stimulus factors

(information sources, previous experience, and distribution) and personal factors (psychological and social) (Baloglu, 1997), (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Stimulus factors (also called information sources) are the forces, which influence the forming of perceptions and evaluations and refer to the information sources used by potential tourists, including destination information acquired as a result of having visited the place and determine that certain destinations are considered as possible alternatives (Beerli & Martin, 2004). The image formed through media, advertisements or documentaries is basically perceived before experiencing a destination, which Phelps (1986) calls secondary or induced image, fulfilling three basic functions in destination choice: to minimize the risk that the decision entails, to create an image of the destinations, and to serve as a mechanism for later justification of the choice (Beerli & Martin, 2004), (Sönmez, 1998), (Chon, 1990). In contrast, the primary or organic image is formed by actually visiting the destination and may differ from the secondary image (Beerli & Martin, 2004), (Sönmez, 1998), (Chon, 1990). Indeed, some authors, such as Gartner and Hunt (1987), Pearce (1982) and Phelps (1986) point out that the image that is formed after visiting a destination tends to be more realistic and complex than the one formed prior to the visit (Beerli & Martin, 2004), which is also the opinion of the author of the current paper.

An individual's personal characteristics also affect the formation of an image, since beliefs about the attributes of a destination are formed by individuals, but the nature of those beliefs will vary depending on the internal factors of the individuals (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Therefore, according to Beerli & Martin (2004), the perceived image will be formed on the one hand through the image projected by the destination and on the other hand through the individual's own needs, motivations, prior knowledge, preferences and other personal characteristics, what leads potential tourists to build their own mental picture of a place, which in turn produces their own, personal perceived images (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Different people can hold quite different images of the same place depending on their different personalities and those images normally stick in people's minds for a long time, even if it already lost validity (Gertner & Kotler, 2004).

When destinations have to suffer under a negative image, the question of how the place can correct its image arises (Gertner & Kotler, 2004). According to Gertner & Kotler (2004) there are three distinct ways in which negative attitudes towards specific places can be overcome: (1) 'ignore it and it will go away'; (2) turn a negative element into a positive element through reframing or repositioning and (3) add new positive attitudes, build characteristics and use communication and branding tools to disseminate the message to the targeted markets (Gertner & Kotler, 2004). When the image in contrast turned negative because of crime and insecurity issues the destination might have the following possibilities: alert visitors to avoid certain locations and favor others; put in more resources to contain or reduce the number of negative events and report progress if any is made or use the media to explain what efforts are being made to contain the problem (Gertner & Kotler, 2004), (Chon, 1992). Another method would be icon marketing, which partly was successful in South Africa with Nelson Mandela being honored for his role in fighting racism and social injustice and with the help of his persona having partly changed the country's image in the minds of people all over the world (Gertner & Kotler, 2004). In South Africa also another tool might be seen as trying to overcome the negative image, which was the FIFA Worldcup 2010, which turned out to be a success because the organization was well-done and thus repositioning the country's image for some potential tourists.

3.6 The process of destination choice

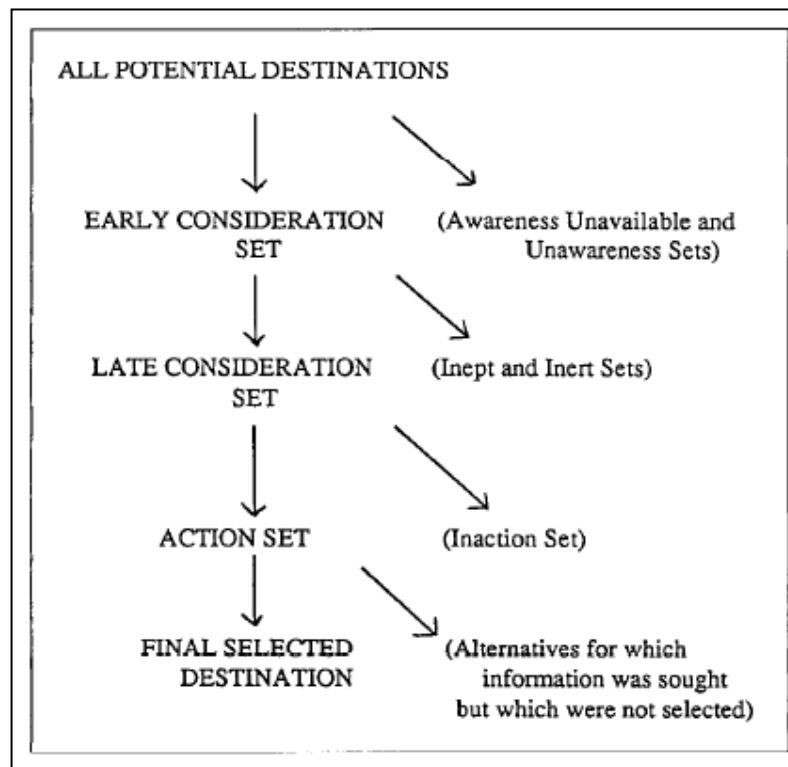
According to the literature on destination selection, it is suggested that the likelihood of traveling to a certain place depends on the attractiveness of a destination (the image) as well as the personal needs, motivations, and resources of a potential traveler (Sirakaya, Sheppard, & McLellan, 1997). Destination decisions are not made at one point of time, but they are developed over a period of time and most studies of tourists' travel choice address tourist destination choice as the key element in the travel decision-making process (Hsu, Tsai, & Wu, 2009).

According to Lawson & Thyne (2001) destination choice is a two step process: (1) delineate the search set, and (2) evaluate those choices (Lawson & Thyne, 2001). Not all researchers would support this hierarchical view as an accurate representation of how consumers actually work when making choices about destination alternatives (Lawson & Thyne, 2001) and from the author of this paper it is solely perceived as parallel. Describing this complex process in just two steps seems to be a bit too simple and thus another concept is used in the current thesis, which is the choice set model from Um & Crompton (1990), which is still easy to understand but considers more than just two steps in the destination choice process (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). One criticism that can be levied against the choice set theory is that it may tend to be very deterministic in nature (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). But it has to be said that the choice set approach in the destination choice process was initiated as an alternative and more practical perspective to previous behavioral approaches, which were generally criticized as being too complex and difficult to test empirically (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). The Um & Crompton approach is simpler and more theoretically and methodologically sound compared to many other approaches in tourism decision research (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005), which is the reason why it is used in the current paper. According to Crompton & Ankomah (1993) choice sets can be seen as a central component of destination selection models (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). With the help of the widely accepted choice set model, introduced by Howard (1963) and developed further by Um & Crompton (1990) it can be explained, how individuals make purchase decisions, when they are confronted with a wide range of alternatives (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). According to Spiggle & Sewall (1987) the notion of choice sets is most likely applicable when two conditions are present: when the individuals typically seek information and evaluate alternatives before the actual purchase and when the purchase entails some degree of perceived risk and implies a certain level of involvement (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). Many of the vacation destination selection decisions appear likely to meet these two conditions and hence, the concept has been used by lots of tourism researchers and is now established as a central part of tourism choice behavior models (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993).

When talking about the process of destination choices there are a few things that have to be mentioned upfront, in order to set a frame and explain possible discrepancies between the literature and empirical cases: (1) it has been noted that an individual's use of decision rules is likely to vary from one situation to the next and (2) it is assumed that a decision-maker has an extensive information processing capacity and therefore it is possible that alternative destinations may be evaluated by different choice criteria and decision rules, if information on some criteria is for instance less well-developed for some destinations than for others, the potential tourist may have to use different rules (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993).

According to the Um & Crompton (1990) concept, the destinations are chosen from a large number of destination alternatives, comprising of all the destinations available, which is also known as the total/awareness set (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). In this model, a tourist's destination choice is made through a 3-stage process: a composition of an awareness set (an initial set of destinations that a tourist is aware of at any given time), an evoked set (late consideration set), and final destination choice (Um & Crompton, 1990). According to the choice set model, the destination should be included in each choice set stage in order to be selected as a final destination and the criteria that affect this process include personal (push) factors, destination attributes (pull factors), and constraints (Um & Crompton, 1990). In other words, a potential traveler generates a series of choice sets with an ever-decreasing number of remaining alternatives in a funnel-like process over time, until a final choice is determined (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005).

Figure 3 Choice set model



(Crompton & Ankomah, 1993)

The early consideration set (awareness set) may be defined as comprising the destinations that a traveler considers as *possible* vacation destinations within some period (e.g., a year) (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). If a destination is not in an individual's early consideration set, then it has no chance of being selected at the end of the process (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). A number of studies proved that the destinations included in the early set do not have an equal possibility of being selected as the final choice, since an initial hierarchy of preferences is most of the times present at this early stage (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993).

The second set, the late consideration set (evoked set), is defined as those destinations that a traveler is considering as *probable* destinations within some period of time (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). The size of set is normally relatively small, and consists usually between two and five alternatives (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). It can be said that the size of the late consideration set is a proportion of the size of the early consideration set, thus a functional relationship between those two sets can be recognized (Crompton &

Ankomah, 1993). Impressions, evaluations, and judgments already formed of destinations under consideration (possibly after personal experience with those destinations) may change if (1) additional destinations are added to the evaluation (i.e., an attractive vacation destination previously not considered is recommended by a friend), (2) new information with the potential of changing the consideration set is learned (i.e., recent crime wave at/near the destination under consideration), or (3) travelers' perceptions of a region/destination change as a result of new information, prior to final choice (i.e., media coverage of terrorist activity/natural disaster) (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998).

When the late consideration set is formed out of the early set, those destination's attributes, also called facilitators, that make the traveler chose the specific destination in the late set, is likely to be the dominant criterion for selection (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). However, in selecting a final destination from the late set, situational constraints, also called inhibitors, (such as cost, travel time to the destination, potential health problems, safety and physical accessibility) were likely to be more dominant criteria for the selection than facilitators (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993).

The awareness set in the potential traveler's mind is formed through passive information from the outside environment, whereas the evoked set emerges with active information searching from external sources including past experience, media, family, friends and others (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Regarding the second stage it is the question, what types of information is most effective in influencing potential tourists at each stage (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). An additional stage between the late consideration set and final choice decision based on nature of the information search was proposed by Spiggle and Sewall (1987) (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). They called it action set (and the opposite inaction set), which is composed of all destinations for which a potential tourist contacts the destination's marketers or their representatives (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). This additional set was invented because tourists are likely to develop more commitment to destinations in the action set and are more likely to evaluate them positively than to those they seriously considered but took no further action (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993).

At the end of the theory chapter the most important points that were introduced in this section should be summarized and function as a starting point for the analysis:

- the process of decision making/destination choice and influencing variables
- the destination image formation process
- the impact of risk in destination choices
- the risk-reduction strategies and the importance of information search in travel decisions when perceived risk seems to be too high

4 Analysis

The following analysis is based on the empirical data, which were collected by doing eight qualitative interviews. These data will be analyzed and connected to the theory in order to find parallels or contradictions about to what extent risk is influencing a destination choice for the representatives using South Africa as an example destination. The references in the analysis chapter are based on the abbreviations of the transcriptions. That means the capital letter Q stands for 'question', the letters A to H for the answers of the different interviewees and the number represents the specific question, e.g.: C3 = third answer of interviewee C. In the following analysis the perception of risk of the respondents as well as strategies for reducing this risk will be analysed. Within this analysis the information search strategies, the influence of past travel experiences and the destination image formation will be discussed. At the end of this chapter the question should be answered, why the respondents travel to a country like South Africa even though they are aware of the fact, that a certain risk is connected with that travel.

4.1 Information search/destination image formation

In order to find out, why tourists travel to a certain country, even though this destination is perceived as being risky, it is important to find out the different perceptions towards risk of the respondents. Before a travel decision is made, potential tourists collect lots of information about different alternatives, which they assess and eliminate with the help of even more additional information to make a better decision, in order to get to a final choice (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Because of this fact the first issue that should be analyzed in this chapter is the information search of the respondents, since it is very essential for the final destination choice and it may also influence the perception of the destination image in general as well as in terms of risk (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005).

One common pattern in the information search process that could be found by reviewing the interviews, was that all respondents used two types of information sources: recommendations from friends and relatives as well as information, which is generally accessible to the public (A-H21).

“...through media, especially through TV, TV series like ‘Goodbye Deutschland’ or similar entertainment series and also documentaries but also reports from friends.” (G21)

The information, which is collected before the actual travel is happening, is most of the times gathered passively (Decrop & Snelders, 2005), which is also the case for the respondents of the current paper. In order to answer the question of where the information about a destination came from, there appeared words like “*general knowledge*” (E8), “*from the society*” (C8) or “*general image of the place*” (H8), which shows that it was difficult for the respondents to describe the actual source of information, giving evidence for collecting information passively without consciously searching for facts. From the author’s point of view it is even questionable if any kind of structured information search happened at all.

“...you always have a destination in mind and when you see a documentary coincidentally, then you watch it, because you are interested in this country and want to get more information about it. But I am not looking for information actively, like selecting some information on my own; it is more short-run” (B10)

This general picture of a place that (most of the times unconsciously) arises because of media, advertisements and documentaries (independent of active or passive information search) is called the secondary or induced image (Beerli & Martin, 2004), (Sönmez, 1998), (Chon, 1990). Through the interviews the author explored the same behaviour as it was already mentioned in the theory chapter by Beerli & Martin (2004), that potential tourists are not convinced by the presented image from the media to be completely true. Some interviewees had the feeling that images presented through media are most of the times negatively, because negative information are more exciting for the audience (C8) and that the personal picture of a place depends on the nature of media coverage about that destination (E21).

“...image develops through reports from the media, good or not so good, depending on the focus of the specific report...” (E21)

Those published reports or documentaries may also simply highlight certain prejudices (H21c), which may be the main reason, why personal recommendations from friends and relatives seem to have more weight on the travel decision for all of the respondents.

“...oral recommendations and personal impressions are actually the most important things, because then new things appear in one’s mind...the thing with brochures and marketing is that it attracts tourists but you never know what is true about it. But if you get information from people who have been at the destination, then it is more based on facts and you can count on this information” (A26b, c)

This fact leads to the necessity of researching the influence of Word of Mouth communications on tourism decisions in contrast to the media influence, but this will not be part of the current thesis. Also when it came to the topic of risk at a destination, there was a common answer that appeared during the interviews: the major source of information where the risk came from was said to be the media (TV and journals) and not recommendations from friends, which supports the previous mentioned suspicion that media mainly covers negative issues about a destination, which not even might be true at the end (A23).

“It may be the case that the situation is portrayed too dramatically through the media and that South Africa is not that dangerous. That could also be interesting to find it out myself.” (G25)

The aspect of information search can be seen as also being very important for the respondents of the current paper. All of them collect some information about a certain place, either actively or passively and either through media or recommendations from friends and also mentioned those information as being very essential for the final vacation decision.

The recommendations and personal reports about a country present a more credible image of the destination, because probably friends will tell the truth about their experience and do not need to embellish or falsify things. This picture will probably not be equal to the one after a visit at the destination (the primary image), because according to Beerli & Martin (2004) the image that is

formed after visiting a destination is even more realistic and complex than the one formed prior to the visit (Beerli & Martin, 2004). The statement, that the secondary image appearing through media may not be the real one, can also be supported through another fact that appeared during the interviews which was that all respondents but one instantly could mention one situation where their image about a destination has changed (partly or totally) after visiting that place (Q7).

“...for example my last travel to Chile, there I thought it would be more dangerous and exotic but afterwards I have to say that especially the big cities, like Santiago, seem to be very European. And thus the picture has changed for me. I would also tell this somebody who is planning to travel to this country, that the Third World image is the wrong one.” (H7)

This shows that it may be the case that a place is displayed in a wrong way through the media and when the tourist is at the destination himself, he gets a totally different impression of the region. These findings support the statements that were presented in the theory chapter and thus no surprising findings for the author of the current paper could be generated yet.

4.2 Past travel experiences

But next to the information sources, there is a second group influencing the destination image formation and also the perception of risk: previous travel experiences (Beerli & Martin, 2004). According to the author of the current paper the influences of the media on vacation decisions might be quiet big but are dependent on the tourist's own past travel experiences. If the person is travelling a lot, then it is easier for him to handle the information from the media within the right background, because he probably has seen reports about a place he has been to and sees that it not corresponds totally with what he experienced about the place. Past travel experiences are said to have a huge influence on future travel patterns and on the perception of risk (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005), (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998), which is the reason why the author of the current paper chose the respondents on purpose in order to find out, if differences in travel frequencies and patterns (Q1-6) evoke different opinions about the influence of risk in destination choices. Respondents were

chosen, who are travel experienced and travel a lot, far away and for long time-periods (B, C, D, H) as well as interviewees, who travel less, for a shorter time and have not been outside of Europe yet (E, G). During the interviews one tendency could be recognized very fast and easy: those respondents who travel less, tend to be more interested in package tours, where everything is planned and booked upfront (similar to Plog's group of psychocentrics) (Pizam, et al., 2004), whereas the other group is more attracted by individual tours, where most activities can be booked at the destination spontaneously (similar to Plog's group of allocentrics) (Pizam, et al., 2004) (Q4). This classification of Plog (1973) was based on risk perceptions and according to this categorization it should have been resulted that the psychocentrics like to visit familiar places whereas the allocentrics are more likely to visit new destinations (Pizam, et al., 2004). But surprisingly though the interviews it can be said that all respondents are more likely to explore new destinations than travelling to a place, which they already know. From the author's point of view this difference to the theory occurred because all respondents still want to see a lot of the world and are interested in different cultures, the difference only appears in the way of travelling and planning. The psychocentrics would like to see new destinations but just when everything is planned upfront...

"I would like to have planned entertainment." (E6)

"I don't need and like risk in my vacation because I am a scaredy-cat." (G6)

...whereas the others would like to be more spontaneous and adventurous on their travels, likely to have an exciting holiday (Q6).

"Yes I like the risk [here the risk of uncertainty], otherwise it would not be so much fun...it gives an additional kick to the experience...what happens, if something goes wrong?...otherwise the spontaneity is missing...so you have a better opportunity to experience more things, which you would not experience otherwise, like meeting new people..." (D6a, b)

"I am more adventurous on vacation than at home...then I have the heart to do things, I wouldn't do at home, like Bungee Jumping, sleeping over at a foreigner's place or drive with the night-bus through the country..." (H6a, b)

It was interesting to see (but also expected) that those two respondents with the smallest travel experiences said that they do not need any type of risk in their vacations at all, opposite to the other six interviewees having more travel experiences.

According to the theory chapter past travel experiences, either in general or at the specific destination, influence the future travel behaviour to a great extent, especially regarding the behaviour towards a risky destination (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). When less past travel experiences exist, then for the tourists it is very easy to substitute the risky destination with another safer alternative (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). Because of the fact that all respondents have not been to South Africa before, nothing can be said about the influence of the experiences at the destination, just about the influence of the general travel patterns and past experiences. The above statement from Sönmez & Graefe (1998) cannot be supported through the interviews, since the behaviour towards a risky destination is very similar among all interviewees, despite the different travel experiences.

“As the case may be...it depends on the type of danger that exist there, I would probably search for more information and afterwards decide for myself, if it is worth to take the risk or not.” (C15/16)

This quote can be seen as summarizing the common reaction of all interviewees despite the different travel experiences, on the information that the potential destination is said to be risky (Q15). None of the respondents would totally exclude the destination from the consideration set and it always depends on the level of risk that needs to be taken. Here it can be concluded that the different tourist types have different opinions towards the way of travelling and planning upfront a vacation, but have quite similar reactions on the fact that a destination is said to be dangerous. Thus it can be said that from the author's point of view the perception of risk is varying dependent on past travel experiences (do not need any kind of risk on vacation vs. a certain risk gives the experience a kick) but the reactions towards a risky destination are quite similar (no exclusion, but dependent on risk level).

What was very surprising for the author of the current paper was the fact that past experiences with crime on vacation do not seem to influence the behaviour of the interviewees to handle risk at a potential destination very much. Four of the eight interviewees have been direct targets of robberies (stolen wallet, breaking in apartment, breaking in car, stolen money) (Q13), which they have considered as not being very bad and most of them even got their money back, but still it was an act of crime during holiday. The influence for those four respondents reached from very intensive information search in future, which was mentioned by all of them, in order to avoid such incidents, up to the total exclusion of this destination for future travel plans for one of the interviewees (Q14). Robberies are not seen as very dramatic crime incidents since they may happen everywhere in the world, but if the interviewees would have been in physical danger than the influence would probably have been much bigger.

“Since now it has not been that dramatic. If something is stolen from somebody than it is not so bad, but when it gets physical threatening, then it is something else, but I haven’t experiences that yet...As soon as the own life is in danger or the physical well-being, then I can imagine that I would not travel to that destination again.” (F14a, b)

The other four interviewees, who have not been victims of crime during their vacation, have also been asked about the possible influence of such an occurrence on their future travel behaviour and the results were quiet similar. The extensive information search in order to avoid dangerous quarters or to minimize the risk at the destination was mentioned by all respondents and one even mentioned that she would not travel to the region again.

“It may be that I would not travel to that place again. You always have a bad feeling, here I was robbed, and you always remember that...It would always have a negative aftertaste...It may also have an impact on the image of the whole country for me” (G14a, b, c)

This statement supports the declaration of Donaldson & Ferreira (2009) stating that crime prevention is so important because security issues in tourism always have a spill-over effect, which means that tourists tend to associate a security incident with an entire region (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). During the

interviews it appeared that solely for two respondents a negative incident may fade to the whole region, what makes the statement of Donaldson & Ferreira (2009), at least for this set of respondents, weaker because spill-over effects cannot 'always' be recognized, but still this problem can be seen as very big for a country because this effect can occur without knowing it before and evaluating the range.

Past travel experience in general definitely have an influence on the perception of risk on holiday as it was already mentioned before and thus this finding was not very surprising for the author of the current paper. What was more surprising was the fact that the influence of past experiences with crime on holiday has no great impact on the general perception of risk from the author's point of view, since it always depends on the regions where the respondents became victims of crime as well as on the act of crime. Maybe the respondents got confirmed in their perception of risk especially on holiday, but this perception has not changed for them according to the author of the current paper. Robberies and break-ins can happen always and everywhere in the world (B26).

4.3 Image of South Africa

Those two issues, which were discussed until now (information sources and past experiences) are according to the model of Beerli & Martin (2004) the two main factors influencing the formation of an image of a destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004) and from the author's point of view are also influencing the perception of risk. Since the current thesis is dealing with a specific case, South Africa, it is very interesting to find out, what image the respondents held about this country. According to Donaldson & Ferreira (2009) crime is still a major concern when thinking about South Africa and the country still has to suffer under lots of critical factors (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). If these conditions are true, one would assume that potential tourists have a negative image about the country and first thoughts deal with these problems, but in the interviews it was totally the opposite: when the respondents were asked about spontaneous associations about South Africa (Q18) no one thought about crime, risk or danger, but all mentioned positive issues about the country. The associations

ranged from wilderness and animals, over climate and diverse landscape until nice cities and different culture. These associations may be seen as different from what was supposed to be the picture of South Africa in theory. The interviewer needed to ask more directly, if also negative associations with the country occur in mind of the respondents and then all of them had very quick ideas about this issue. Next to the crime topic which was noticed to be nearly in all minds (B19, D19, E19), the big difference between rich and poor people or rather between black and white inhabitants emerged negatively in coherence with South Africa (C19, E19, G19). Especially the situation in the townships and the region around Johannesburg was said to be very dangerous according to the interviewees.

“...when you hear things about Johannesburg, it should not be safe there. I have friends who lived there for a while and then they moved because it was too dangerous for the kids...I could not imagine to go on vacation there, stuck in a tourist bus and be driven around, because when I travel, I want to experience the country authentically and meet the people there...and I don't want to drive around in a bus like visiting a museum...” (D19)

Possible reasons for that negative site of South Africa were also mentioned by the interviewees, which are the not yet fully conquered Apartheid (B19, C19, E19, F19) and also the sometimes happening quick actions from the government without thinking about consequences:

“...I talked with friends and relatives who live in South Africa and they told me that the situation there is a bit chaotic, that the development happened too fast. One thing that I remember was that under Mandela all townships got electricity but the country did not have enough power stations, so that the whole electricity supply in the country broke down. I have the prejudice about South Africa, or Africa in general, that decisions are not always reflected on a long-term base. Quickly acting before thinking about it.” (F19)

One common thing with all respondents was that they associate a certain kind of risk with a visit to South Africa (Q22), which most of the time arises because of the little knowledge, which they have about that country. The risk varies among the interviewees from being victim of crime and robberies over physical

danger until fear of diseases like Malaria or HIV infection (D22), but the risks are not being seen as very high.

“I would not be afraid of losing my life. You have to inform yourself, where to go and what to do and then I think it is fine.” (A22)

One topic that was also mentioned within the question of risk in South Africa is the comparison of the development of the country with other African countries. When South Africa is compared to other countries like for instance Somalia, then it seems to be quite well developed and the risk in these countries is seen as being much higher (F26). Even though the positive aspects of South Africa seem to outweigh the negative aspects (E26), there is no doubt that the country is still associated with lots of negative aspects (maybe not mentioned at first but still existent in all minds). Thus the question arises, what South Africa might do in order to be seen in a more positive light? Two directions can be summarized when analysing the interviews: either reduce the crime rate at the location or improve the marketing, so that more positive aspects can reach potential tourists. The first kind of improvement may be achieved by more education in order to overcome the huge differences in society, which is easier said than realized.

“If the relation between poor and rich would be more balanced, then I think that the risk of being a crime victim would not be that high anymore. Because the people would be more satisfied and maybe have a nice job and then have the feeling of being treated fair, then they don't have the feeling that they need to rob other people... the thought that others have more money and that's why we can steal from them because they can quickly get it back again would probably go away” (E25)

The other kind of improvement of the image of South Africa with the help of marketing efforts is also very complex, since this may only function if the positive aspects of the country are displayed credible and if just the honest situation is presented.

“Work honestly with the situation, because no tourist would believe it to be a paradise where nothing bad may happen...Maybe they can work with comparisons with crime statistics from other countries, because I don't think that the numbers are that bad...showing Pros and Cons of the country or also mention arrangements which should be followed by tourists in order to be more safe in South Africa. But mainly be honest with the situation.” (H25)

When these statements should be compared with the theoretical possibilities mentioned by Gertner & Kotler (2004) as well as by Chon (1992), it can be said that they are mostly consistent with each other, since they also mentioned the improvement of the local situation and the afterwards publishing of these recovered conditions (Gertner & Kotler, 2004), (Chon, 1992). These thoughts about South Africa were also kind of expected from the author of the current paper. The only surprising aspect was that the first open-ended association with South Africa did not include any negative assumption, but only positive characteristics were mentioned. As soon as it was asked specifically about negative connotation about the country, each respondent could mention something without long reflecting about it. This shows that South Africa is still perceived as being risky and dangerous, but not at first place, which could be important when it comes to the final destination choice.

4.4 Influencing variables on decision making process/destination choice

Next to the image of a destination there are still lots of other variables influencing a destination decision, which will be analysed now. According to Sirakaya & Woodside (2005) tourism decisions are high-involvement decisions with an unknown outcome (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005), which is the reason why these choices are difficult to make and lots of variables influence this process. They tried to cluster the influencing variables into 4 categories (internal, external, nature of the trip, trip experience), which will be also used in order to analyse the decision making process for the respondents of the current paper. The first group are the internal factors consisting of attitudes, motivations, lifestyles etc. of the potential tourists (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Among the respondents the suspicion arose, that the influence of internal variables is not very big, because most of them are not looking for specific

destinations catering for certain needs or motivations. Nevertheless there is one pattern that could be recognized by the author of the current paper that seems to be very important for the interviewees, which is the fact that they are still young and thus now want to travel a lot and far away as long as this is still possible.

“I think that I want to see places that are very far away very soon, before I am getting old and weak, and then it is not possible anymore.” (D10a)

“At the moment one of my main criteria for choosing a destination is that I have not been there yet.

Because at the moment I want to experience always new things.” (H9a)

The second group that is mentioned by Sirakaya & Woodside (2005) are the external factors, such as influence of friends and relatives or group decision making patterns etc. (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). As already mentioned earlier in this chapter all interviewees are extremely influenced by the opinion of their friends and relatives about a certain place and this statement can be repeated in this section, showing that external variables have a big influence on the vacation decisions. One very important variable when deciding about a vacation is that friends have talked positively about that place and gained good experiences (B9, C9, H9), which is one starting point for choosing a destination. Another factor is recognized as being very important as well, which is the availability of a travel partner or, if no partner could be found, the existence of an acquaintance at the destination in order to share the experiences with somebody and not to travel alone.

“The first question when planning a holiday is: with whom? That is my main point and at the moment I cannot find a travel partner. So I have to find a place where I can go, where I know somebody who is living there, because I don’t want to travel alone...this is stupid.

So the first crucial point is the travel partner. “(E9)

Finding the right travel partner might also belong to the third group of variables influencing a vacation decision, which is: the nature of the trip, but the author found another factor more fitting into this group which is the time-effort relation.

Thus the respondents agreed on the fact that they would not travel far away when they only have a few days to go and also that they want to experience as much as possible with the money invested. With that small amount of free days in the year, it is important to get the most out of your vacation time.

“It depends on the time that I have: if I only have 2 days then I plan a short city break and I search for a place which I can reach fast and where I can see a lot in a short period of time. If I have more time then I choose a destination, where I have not been yet and where it is worth the time. So when I have 3 weeks, then I don’t fly to New Zealand or so, that is still too less time.” (B9a)

About the last group of factors mentioned by Sirakaya & Woodside (2005), which is the trip experience, the author has to rely on the general travel experiences of the respondents, because all respondents did not yet travel to South Africa before and thus cannot evaluate the experience afterwards. As already mentioned in detail in the beginning of the chapter, past travel experiences can be seen as quite influencing, especially regarding the risk factor. But still the author shares the opinion that also post-purchase evaluations (meaning the opinion of the tourists after the travel in the specific country) would influence a decision afterwards as well, for instance in the way that the tourists judge their decisions in another way. One indication for this behavior might be that 50 % of the respondents are searching actively for information about the destination they have been to after a vacation (Q11). The reasons for this information search were stated in the general interest of a destination where one has spent a certain amount of time or when friends ask for advice. Even if the other 50% of the respondents did not search for information actively they admitted that it often happens by accident, for instance when the specific country is on the news, then they are also interested in what is going on there.

In order to investigate influencing variables on decision making processes in tourism, one topic also lies near which is the issue of destination choices. Crompton & Ankomah (1993) wrote about the choice set model introduced by Um & Crompton, which might be used in order to explain the destination choice process. The first set of destinations that a potential tourists has in mind, also

called the early-consideration set, is already characterized by a few attributes (Q9), which vary from reports of friends over the fact that the destination is not known yet until the fitting into the time context that is available for the vacation.

“I think I am influenced a lot from friends. For example I had the idea to travel to India this summer because I have heard from two friends who already were there, that they liked it a lot” (H9a)

In order to reduce the number of destinations into consideration, Crompton & Ankomah (1993) mention facilitators, specific characteristics of the destination, which attract tourists and convince them to choose a certain destination over others (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). These attributes were also recognized during the interviews but not at this stage of the process. The respondents meanwhile stated attributes like finding a travel partner, the accessibility of the destination and also money issues as being more important when reducing the number of possible destinations. According to theory these factors are called inhibitors (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993) and are said to come into play at the end of the destination choice process, when a final destination is chosen. During the interviews it can be recognized that the influencing attributes are reversed and that first inhibitors are considered and at the end facilitators.

“The first question when planning a holiday is: with whom?...So the first crucial point is the travel partner. The region is not very important since I haven't yet seen a lot and I still want to see a lot. So I would say the second point is the price and the accessibility. Just point three is the destination itself.” (E9)

In theory it appeared that both types of factors are similar important for the final destination choice, but this cannot be supported from the author of the current paper. During the interviews the author remarked that for the respondents inhibitors are much more important in a vacation decision than facilitators, because some respondents also solely mentioned inhibitors without making a point on facilitators in the whole destination choice process. From the author's point of view this difference to theory occurs because the interviewees are all very young and still want to see lots of places in the world. They have not seen many destinations yet and are interested in learning much more about the world, other regions and cultures, independent of specific attributes that exist at

a destination. The second reason is that the interviewees are partly still students or just started a new job and thus those situational constraints, such as time and money, are still in the forefront when deciding about a destination.

4.5 Real and perceived risk

One of those inhibitors, which was meant to be very important in a vacation decision, (Lepp & Gibson, 2003) and which also appears during all interviews (Q9) was safety during the vacation. Here the question of the real or perceived risk comes into play, which was presented in the theory chapter and introduced by Dowling (1986) and which is also a very important topic when, assessing the perception of risk. As already mentioned earlier in the analysis chapter, the respondents have an image of the destination in mind, but it may not be the real one, because they might be manipulated through media reports.

“I think it is simply the picture of South Africa that you know through films or media and so on. But I haven’t heard from friends anything negative yet...yes, I would say that it is maybe a prejudice.” (H21b, c)

The real risk situation can only be found when a person is at the destination and develops its own picture of the destination, but according to Sönmez & Graefe (1998) the real situation does not seem to be very important in the final choice (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). This statement cannot be supported through the interviews since the interviewer had the feeling that all respondents tried to evaluate the real situation at a destination as good as possible upfront by for instance looking for lots of information from different sources and channels.

“Basically I like it to collect lots of different opinions and for instance also through the internet, that I use different sources there in order to get a more objective picture about a place.” (C10b)

This statement indicates that the respondents not always believe everything that is said in the media, but that they try to evaluate this information in a more objective background and also weight the information while comparing them with other sources, thus the statement that the real situation is not very important in the final destination choice, is not supported in the current thesis. Of course the information that is searched cannot be called ‘real’ risk situation,

because the interviewees have not been at the destination yet, but still the effort of getting a relatively objective picture of a place that somebody (else) holds after visiting this destination can be recognized. Also the fact that was mentioned earlier, that all respondents trust the information of friends and relatives a lot supports this assumption because friends are supposed to tell the truth, since there is no need to convince the potential tourists to travel to a certain country. Most of the times friends have similar travel patterns and preferences and thus the respondents may evaluate the given information better. Another factor also comes into play when talking about the real and perceived risk, which was already discussed a few times in this chapter and which should solely be mentioned here, which are past travel experiences. Here again the amount of past travel experiences helps the tourist to evaluate the risk perception with the right background: when less travel experiences exist than the perceived risk can be seen as being real, but when lots of past travel experience exist it is easier to differentiate between real and perceived risk (but it is still not possible to separate them totally).

4.6 General perspective vs. South African perspective

After analyzing the different levels of influence on the risk perception of the interviewees and the influencing factors on the decision making process, the author wants to summarize the risk types, which were mentioned with the help of Roehl & Fesenmaier's (1992) classification, dividing risk neutral tourists from those who primary see functional risks while travelling and also from the third group identifying the place as the main source of risk (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992). As already mentioned in the theory chapter, the author of the current paper believes that these groups cannot be separated completely but the main tendencies should be concluded. When the respondents should state general influencing variables which are important in their decision making process (Q9) all three types could be found. While one interviewee did not mention any type of risk combined with travelling in general, just two respondents mentioned place risk in form of crime at the destination as being an influencing variable. The functional risk group was mentioned the most, either through the problem of finding an appropriate travel partner or enough time for travelling, over price considerations up to distance and accessibility questions.

These general reflections changed a lot when it came more specific to the destination South Africa (Q19). This finding is very interesting because it shows that there is a difference in how the respondents view risk when talking about this issue in general and when talking about a specific destination. Now everybody saw at least one type of risk and the place risk group grew enormously. Six out of the eight respondents connected place risk in form of crime incidents in the country with a vacation in South Africa. The other two respondents were either afraid of chaotic circumstances in the country because of a too quick development or saw the functional risk in travelling alone (which can also be seen as place risk, because the individual travel is evaluated as maybe being too dangerous in South Africa).

“I don’t know how easy it is to travel as an individual tourist in South Africa, because this is what I want to do. I am scared that I have to plan a package tour when I want to travel around...I imagine it to be difficult to travel alone with a backpack in a bus or so. Maybe you are dependent on a tour operator.” (H19)

Thus it can be seen that the classification of risk types of Roehl & Fesenmaier (1992) is dependent on a specific destination and cannot be used for arranging tourists into one of these groups in general. Another interesting result of the interviews (which was already hinted in this chapter) was that all respondents mentioned the same type of risk, which they combine with South Africa: the risk of criminal assaults (Q22). Only two interviewees could also think of another type of risk: one the risk of getting bitten by a shark and the other mentioned the fear of diseases. Thus solely two of the five major risk factors mentioned in the theory chapter (terrorism, war and political instability, health concerns, crime and cultural and language difficulties (Lepp & Gibson, 2003), (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009), (Lawson & Thyne, 2001)) were recognized of being valid for South Africa during the interviews. This may be one important indicator that the country may not be that dangerous as it is pictured through the media, because other countries in the world have to deal with more and also greater risk factors than South Africa.

Summarizing the so far gotten results it can be concluded that the major factors influencing the perception of risk are past travel experiences and information sources. Having more experiences with traveling leads to a bigger questioning of the information about a place and not just simply believing everything that is displayed about this region. Especially the influence of the media has to be said as very questionable, since not everything that is published should be believed by the audience without investigating it further. Various other variables influencing the destination choice and also the perception of risk have also been researched as well as the difference between a general vacation decision and the specific case of South Africa, which also was very surprising for the author of the current paper.

4.7 Risk-reduction strategies

Now that the different perceptions of risk and influencing factors have been analyzed, there is still the question: why people travel to a certain destination even though it is said to be risky. An interesting topic belonging to this subject that was discussed in the theory chapter and brought up from Lepp & Gibson (2003) is the fact, that tourists often see themselves as targets of crime while being on holiday (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). This statement was more or less confirmed by all respondents but with certain constraints. Summarized the opinions of the interviewees to this topic can be listed like that: It may be true that tourists are more often the targets of crime than inhabitants...:

- ...because they look obviously like typical tourists (A, C, G, H12)
- ...when they travel in poor regions (B, C, D, F12)
- ...because they seem to have more money than the locals (D, G, H12)
- ...because they are not alerted while on holiday (E, H12)

These reasons partly concur with the reasons stated by Pizam, Tarlow & Bloom (1997). Reasons that were not mentioned by the respondents, but by Pizam, Tarlow & Bloom (1997) are those dealing with the ignorance and insensitiveness related to social norms and customs and the risky behavior of tourists (Pizam, Tarlow, & Bloom, 1997). One reason for this not-mentioning

might be that all respondents search for lots of information especially about norms, what to do (or not) and where to go, before a vacation is made and thus know the rules and want to follow them. Another reason might be that the factors were observed and listed by scientists after researching this topic for a certain time and most travelers would not describe themselves as cultural insensitive or as behaving in a risky way, what should not mean that they do this anyway. The dependence on the region where they are going was only mentioned by the respondents and not by Pizam, Tarlow & Bloom (1997), but it is also seen by the author of the current paper as a significant restriction when talking about tourists as crime targets, as well as the obvious appearance as looking like a typical tourist. When tourists would align themselves a bit to local conditions, then probably the danger of being robbed would be smaller. With the help of the interviews it can be seen that the list of reasons for the statement that tourists are more often victims of crime, is not complete and probably even more reasons can be found. It is very interesting to see for the author of this thesis that the respondents believe that the tourists themselves have an influence on how big the risk for them is to be a victim of crime, as they may reduce this risk while adapting to the local circumstances, norms and rules without looking like a typical tourist.

But there have to be more possibilities, how the respondents may reduce the risk to travel to these destinations. According to Mitchell & Vassos (1997) the best way, and also the most employed way, to reduce the risk is information search (Mitchell & Vassos, 1997). This was also recognized by the author of the current paper during the interviews next to the fact that the respondents also tried to reduce their risks through the help of the opinions of friends and relatives. With those personal experiences, the risk of experience something unexpected and getting surprised negatively can be reduced according to the interviewees. This risk reducing behavior can be described as kind of loyalty, not to a certain brand as it may be described for products, but to recommendations from certain friends and relatives (Mitchell & Vassos, 1997), (Mitra, Reiss, & Capella, 1999).

When comparing the risk reduction strategies of the respondents with the suggested list of Mitchell & Vassos (1997) there are a few differences occurring:

- reading independent travel reviews, brochures about destination's culture
- purchasing some kind of travel insurance recommended by tour operator
- visiting the tour operator or travel agent personally
- taking a similar holiday from a tour operator you have dealt with before
- purchasing travel items such as electrical adapters and comfortable shoes, language phrase book
- asking friends, travel agent representatives, local people for advice
- waiting to pay for the holiday until last minute except for the required booking deposit
- watching television program about destination or holiday traveling in general (Mitchell & Vassos, 1997)

As already mentioned in the theoretical chapter, there are a few things missing in this list and it seems to be not perfect fitting and here some missing points should be illustrated. Information search for instance in travel reviews or with the help of friends and relatives or watching TV programs can be found in this list as well in the interviews, but this is the only compliance. Most of the points from the list of Mitchell & Vassos (1997) have not been mentioned from the respondents, because they deal with the fact that the vacation is booked with a travel agent or tour operator and the respondents in contrast plan their vacation on their own. The last point that was on the list and was not mentioned during the interviews is the purchase of certain travel items and the reason for this not-mentioning in the author's point of view is that the respondents have not thought about this kind of risky issues, like not having an adequate adapter or the right shoes; it was more thought about the risk of crime. But also a few additional reducing methods were mentioned by the interviewees, which can be summarized as being practical methods, which can be adapted when the tourist is already at the destination, like for instance not carrying much cash with one (H16) or staying in safe areas (F16), but still are evaluated by the author of the current paper as being very important.

“I would not change money on the streets, because there you often get mucked.

I would also chose a good hotel with a western standard, having a central safe...not carry much cash with me and be very careful with my credit cards...I

would not buy something from dodgy street hawkers,

as far as I can evaluate this...” (E16)

Concluding it can be said that the list mentioned by Mitchell & Vassos (1997) may be good for package tourists, who book with travel agents those methods mentioned are just points that can be adopted upfront the actual travel and thus it can be said that lots of things are still missing.

4.8 Influence of risk on travel decision to South Africa

Even though risk can be reduced in the opinion of the respondents there is no doubt that a certain kind of risk is combined with a travel to South Africa, so it is the question, how this risk is influencing the decision to travel to the country anyway (Q24). Three of the respondents answered that the risk has no influence on the decision to travel to South Africa at all and one even thought that it makes the vacation even more exciting. The other interviewees are influenced in a certain way, but for none of the respondents the risk is a reason for excluding the country from the set of possible destinations. The influence ranged from searching for additional information (most of the times again through friends and relatives) (B, G24) over the avoidance of areas that are supposed to be dangerous until the general careful behavior at the destination.

“I think I can reduce the risk for me. When I know that a certain area is dangerous at night...when I know that upfront, then I can minimize the risk... I think with enough knowledge about the destination, the risk can be minimized very much.” (C24)

Thus it can be concluded that the most employed strategy for all respondents (and this was also mentioned in theory) is the information search in general. Tourists need to look for information about the country so that they know how to behave, what to avoid, where to go and what to do at a destination. When this knowledge is kept by the tourists then the risk for the respondents is minimized enough to travel to the country anyway. For the special case of South Africa the

risk is not seen as being very high and life-threatening, compared to other countries in Africa, since it is very well developed already. There is no doubt that a certain risk is combined with a travel to the country, but since this risk can be reduced by information search for the respondents, there is no reason for not visiting the country. The associations with South Africa were more positive than negative and thus it is worth a little risk.

5 Conclusion

The present thesis deals with the influence of risk on the vacation decisions. In detail the research questions of the current paper are:

WHY DO YOUNG, GERMAN PEOPLE TRAVEL TO SOUTH AFRICA DESPITE ITS WELL ESTABLISHED PERCEIVED RISK?

- What variables influence the decision making process/destination choice of the respondents?
- How does a destination image arise for potential tourists?
- What role does risk play in the destination choice?
- What risk-reduction strategies can be applied when the perceived risk in a travel decision is too high?

One behavior pattern, that influences the answering of all of those questions and which seems to be very important for all of the respondents when deciding about a vacation, is the relying on reports and recommendations from friends and relatives about their experiences at a certain destination. Those information sources can be seen as one of the most crucial influencing variables. In general it can be said that the respondents mainly use situational constraints, such as time, money or travel partner in order to decide about a destination. The attributes of the single places do not seem to be that relevant for the final decision, since all of the respondents still want to see and experience a lot and not yet have specific needs or wishes that should be catered by a destination.

The information sources are also one of the two most important variables influencing the destination image formation of the interviewees. The other important variable is the existence of previous travel experiences. Those two factors are mainly responsible for the picture that is formed about South Africa from the respondents. The main source, or the most credible one, of information about the country are friends and relatives, who have already been at the place and share their opinions with the potential tourists. With the help of previous travel experiences the respondents evaluate the information they get about South Africa within their own created background. The image that was held of the respondents about South Africa can summarized be seen as more positive than expected.

Negative associations only appeared on demand, but then it seemed to be easy for the respondents to think about possible risks that are connected with a travel to the country.

This risk, which is associated with South Africa does not have big influences on the actual travel, since it is not seen as being very big. Mainly it can be said that it is a similar risk that can be found in other big cities all over the world: the risk of crime. No life-threatening risk is associated with South Africa and there are other countries on the African continent, where the risk is evaluated as being much higher. The connected risk with a travel to the country would not lead to the exclusion of the destination from the consideration set for all of the respondents.

Even the risk of crime can be reduced according to the respondents with the help of specific strategies. The most important strategy is again the additional information search before the journey, in order to inform oneself about rules and restrictions, areas to be avoided or behaviors to be adopted. The second important group of tactics can be implemented while being on vacation, including not carrying much cash, not looking like a typical tourists and align oneself to the local circumstances. Now it was researched that the risk of a vacation in South Africa is not seen as being very bad and that this risk even might be reduced through certain strategies but still the question is unanswered:

Why do people take the risk instead of choosing a safer destination and not having to worry about anything and still gaining wonderful experiences somewhere else? The intentions from the interviewees towards this subject are summarized in a small list below:

- Personal reports from friends are very positive and this is balancing the risk
- There are more positive points than negative and thus the charm is outweighing the risk
- Curiosity about the country and thus it is worth to take a little risk
- Without risk, the experience would not be that great
- It is not too risky compared to Somalia, it has a government and it is no country where people are killed everyday
- Nowhere in the world it is risk- or crime-free
- Risk can be reduced through preparation

Concluding these intentions it can be said that all respondents think that South Africa has to offer lots of good sites and that is why it is worth to take a little risk. The risk in South Africa is not seen as very drastic compared to other countries in the world or solely on the African continent, since the country is very well developed already. There is no such thing as paradise in the world, where tourists can be sure that nothing happens to them and when you want to explore and experience something new, it is always a bit risky, because you never know what might happen. But for South Africa it can be said that more good associations about the country exist than negative and this fact convinces the tourists to travel there, despite the reputation of being dangerous.

These findings kind of support the results of a study from George (2003), which was mentioned in the introduction, where he found out that 50% of his respondents who have been in South Africa felt safe during the trip and would also return to the country (George, 2003). Also another study from Donaldson & Ferreira (2009) can be stated here, where prior to the vacation in South Africa 1/3 of the respondents was worried about safety, 1/3 was not worried and 1/3 was neutral (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). After the trip the numbers changed into 55% positive opinions about South Africa and solely 15% negative (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). These findings and also the results of the current interviews show that South Africa is not such a dangerous country, as it is often pictured from the media and even though a certain risk exists for a visit in the country, it is no reason for potential tourists not to travel there and have a great experience.

Finally one slogan might fit very well into this thesis:

**99% OF WHAT YOU WORRY ABOUT DOESN'T EVER HAPPEN;
AND WHAT DOES HAPPEN IS NOT ON THE LIST! (anonymous)**

The author is aware of the fact that the relatively small sampling of 8 qualitative interviews and the snowball sampling can be seen as a weakness of the thesis. If the study would have been based on more interviews or if the sampling would have been done more randomly, then the findings might have been used beyond this thesis (even though this was never the goal of this paper). Like that the current paper can be seen as an investigative study, where the results are only valid for this set of respondents. Nevertheless the present thesis might be

a good starting point for other studies in connection with the influence of risk on destination decisions or dealing with South Africa.

One topic which appeared to be very important in this connection seems to be the influence on media publications on the decision making of tourists in contrast to Word of Mouth. This issue may be researched further especially with the connection to South Africa. Another possibility for further research could be a quantitative study about the influence of risk on destination decisions, because it would be very interesting to have specific numbers regarding this issue, which can be worked with in the future.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview guide 1/2

WHAT ROLE DOES RISK PLAY IN THE DESTINATION CHOICE TO TRAVEL TO SOUTH AFRICA?

PAST TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Q1: How often do you travel?

Q2: How long are you travelling?

Q3: Where are you normally going?

Q4: Do you like package tours or self drive vacation? Why?

Q5: Do you like more new destinations or previous visit places, you are familiar with?

Q6: Are you adventurous on holiday? Would you like to experience a certain type of risk in your holiday?

Q7: Have you already changed your mind about a place after really visiting it? Why? What happened?

Q8: Where did you find the information about the place before the travel?

TRAVEL DECISIONS/DESTINATION DECISIONS

Q9: Can you explain to me, how you make a travel decision? What attributes are important in travel decision? When do you decide? (What has to be decided?) What influence the travel decision? (factors)

Q10: Where do you look for information in order to make a travel decision? When do you start searching for information? Is the source of information also important?

Q11: Do you also search for information after traveling? Why?

RISK

Q12: Do you think that tourists are often targets of crime when on holiday? Why/why not?

Appendix 1: Interview guide 2/2

Q13: Have you experienced any crime/risky situation in your past travel experiences? If yes, what did you do afterwards?

Q14: Would you travel to the same city again? Or not even to the same country? Why? When a city is supposed to be dangerous would you travel to another city in the same country? Why/why not?

Q15: What do you do, when a place is said to be risky? (Choose another destination? Search for more information?)

Q16: How would you try to reduce the risk to go there?

SOUTH AFRICA

Q17: Can you imagine to travel to South Africa in the future? Why/why not?

Q18: What do you associate with South Africa?

Q19: Good and bad things?

Q20: Have your picture about the country changed after the FIFA Worldcup 2010?

Q21: How does the picture arose in your mind? Where did you get information from? What influences your opinion about the country? (factors)

Q22: Do you associate any type of risk with travelling to the country?

Q23: Where does the risk come from?

Q24: What does it mean for your decision to travel to South Africa?

Q25: If negative picture: How could South Africa correct the negative image in order to persuade you to visit the place? What needs to happen that the risk for you is reduced to travel to South Africa?

Q26: Why would you travel to the country even though you think it could be risky?