

Degrowth im Tourismus:

Akteure transformativer Pfade in eine wachstumsunabhängige
Zukunft des Tourismus.

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Zusammenfassung

Die Diskussion der negativen Auswirkungen des Wachstums des Tourismussektors in ökologischer und sozialer Hinsicht ist in den vergangenen Jahren sowohl in der Wissenschaft als auch in der Gesellschaft deutlich präsenter geworden. Aus ökologischer Sicht ist die Datelage eindeutig. Der Tourismussektor kann in weiteren Wachstumsszenarien weder die im Pariser Klimaabkommen festgehaltenen Ziele erreichen, noch überhaupt einen Beitrag zur Milderung des Klimawandels leisten. Besonders in Destinationen mit bereits hoher und teilweise noch steigender Tourismusintensität werden zudem unter den Stichworten Overtourism und Touristifizierung die vermehrt negativen sozialen Konsequenzen des Wachstums im Tourismus thematisiert. Dieser Kontext rief im vergangenen Jahrzehnt polarisierende und kontroverse zivilgesellschaftliche Reaktionen hervor. Unter anderem entstanden an verschiedenen Orten diverse soziale Bewegungen, die sich aktiv auf den Degrowth Diskurs berufen, um eine Abkehr vom wachstumsorientierten Wirtschaften im Tourismus zu fordern. Degrowth bezeichnet einen theoretischen post-kapitalistischen Ansatz die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Bedingungen in einer Art und Weise umzugestalten, dass der Energie- und Ressourcenverbrauch drastisch reduziert wird, um wieder mit den gegebenen planetaren Grenzen vereinbar zu werden, während die Ungleichheit in der Gesellschaft sinkt und das Gemeinwohl gestärkt wird.

Diese Dissertation untersucht anhand eines symbiotischen Strategieverständnisses für Transformationsprozesse, welche Rolle zivilgesellschaftliche Akteure in der Degrowth Transformation im Tourismussektor spielen. Zur Operationalisierung der Fragestellung werden verschiedene qualitative Methoden in den beiden Untersuchungsgebieten Barcelona und Mallorca genutzt, in denen jeweils unterschiedliche Akteure analysiert werden. Beide Destinationen sind von hoher Touristifizierung geprägt und ihnen ist die Existenz tourismuskritischer sozialer Bewegungen, eine fortlaufende Prekarisierung der Arbeitsbedingungen im Tourismussektor, sowie eine grundsätzlich breite Ablehnung in der Bevölkerung gegen das gegenwärtige dominante Tourismusmodell gemein. Während die erste Studie die Auswirkungen der Covid-19-Krise auf bestehenden Degrowth Aktivismus im Tourismus in Barcelona untersucht, fokussiert die zweite Studie die bis dato unterrepräsentierte Perspektive der Arbeiter:innen hinsichtlich politischer Vorschläge zur Reform des Arbeitsmarkts. Die dritte Studie wiederum greift die Frage nach den strukturellen Gründen bezüglich Beteiligung oder Nichtbeteiligung von Einwohner:innen an tourismuskritischen Protesten auf.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass in Barcelona die Forderungen der verschiedenen sozialen Bewegungen und aktivistischen Gruppierungen im Zuge der Covid-Pandemie politisch an Bedeutung verloren. Die durch den Krisenkontext eindeutig offenbarte Abhängigkeit vom Tourismus führte hauptsächlich zu technischen Lösungsansätzen, anstatt, wie von den sozialen Bewegungen gefordert, eine systemische Degrowth Transformation einzuleiten. Besonders hervorzuheben ist die Adaption des Narrativs von verschiedenen Stakeholdern, fortan auf ein vage definiertes qualitätstouristisch orientiertes Klientel in Barcelona setzen zu wollen. Die Fokussierung auf Qualitätstourismus, die keinesfalls eine Abkehr vom Wachstumsdenken bedeutet oder den Degrowth Prinzipien von Tourismus entspricht, erfüllt dementsprechend nicht die holistischen Forderungen der diversen sozialen Bewegungen und verdeutlicht stattdessen, dass die Möglichkeit eine nachhaltigere Entwicklung in der pandemisch bedingten Zwangspause touristischer Aktivität zu initiieren verpasst wurde. Weiterhin wird ersichtlich, dass Arbeiter:innen aus diversen Erwerbstätigkeiten im Tourismussektor von Barcelona bottom-up-empowerment gegenüber top-down Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung ihres oft von fortschreitender Prekarisierung, Ausbeutung und Rassismus geprägten Arbeitsalltags präferieren. Geprägt durch die eigenen Erfahrungen kollektiver Arbeiter:innen-

Organisation und das mangelnde Vertrauen in staatliche Strukturen, sehen die Arbeiter:innen insbesondere Economic Democracy als effektives transformatives Werkzeug für eine gerechtere Zukunft des Tourismussektors an. Die Arbeiter:innen erhoffen sich durch eine Demokratisierung der Macht und Kontrolle über Prozesse, Entscheidungen und Arbeitsbedingungen innerhalb von Unternehmen mehr Teilhabe an operativen Entscheidungen, um einerseits die eigens erfahrene Marginalisierung und Unterdrückung zu verringern und andererseits die generelle Handlungsmacht der Arbeiterschaft hinsichtlich einer sozio-ökologisch nachhaltigen Entwicklung des Tourismussektors zu stärken. Hinsichtlich der Beteiligung von Einwohner:innen an tourismuskritischen Protesten auf Mallorca ist zu konstatieren, dass die Nicht-Teilnahme nicht automatisch als Befürwortung des Tourismus und einer wachstumsorientierten Politik, wie bisher meist in der Literatur angenommen, angesehen werden kann. Stattdessen werden Faktoren wie Abhängigkeiten vom Tourismus, eine strukturell verankerte mangelnde Kapazität, sich mit sozialen und ökologischen Problemen im Tourismus zu beschäftigen, sowie Manipulation durch Desinformation, als die entscheidenden Gründe für die Nichtteilnahme an tourismuskritischen zivilgesellschaftlichen Protesten, selbst wenn sie mit den eigenen Absichten übereinstimmen, identifiziert. Darüber hinaus bestätigt sich, dass Protest als Mittel, um Ungerechtigkeiten zum Ausdruck zu bringen und für Veränderungen einzutreten, durch den eigenen Habitus und die soziale Klasse beeinflusst wird und daher eher höheren sozialen Schichten zur Verfügung steht. Tendenzen zur Resignation, Entpolitisierung und Ohnmacht von Einwohner:innen, die nicht an die Möglichkeit glauben, ungerechte Verhältnisse ändern zu können, werden dadurch offensichtlich. Durch den Fokus auf die zivilgesellschaftliche Akteursperspektive einer potentiellen Degrowth Transformation im Tourismus erweitert diese Dissertation den Nexus zwischen der Degrowth Literatur und der sonst oftmals stark an Management Ansätzen orientierten Tourismusforschung um eine Analyse der komplexen Realitäten von sozialen Bewegungen, Arbeiter:innen und Einwohner:innen. Sie leistet dadurch einen wichtigen Beitrag zum holistischen Verständnis einer notwendigen nachhaltigen, den planetaren Grenzen entsprechenden, Transformation des Sektors.

1 Degrowth im Tourismus: Hintergrund, Entwicklung und Bedeutung

Die Auswirkungen der Klimakatastrophe sind allgegenwärtig. Als zentrale Milderungsmaßnahme hat die Weltgemeinschaft im Pariser Klimaabkommen im Jahr 2015 vereinbart, die globale Erderwärmung möglichst auf 1,5 bis maximal 2 Grad Celsius gegenüber der mittleren Temperatur im prä-industriellen Zeitalter zu beschränken. Dieses Ziel zieht weitreichende Konsequenzen nach sich. Insbesondere die globalen Treibhausgas-Emissionen müssen zur Einhaltung des 2-Grad-Ziels bis zum Jahr 2050 auf Netto-Null reduziert werden (IPCC, 2022). Aktuell werden daher dringend benötigte Ansätze und Strategien diskutiert, um die Dekarbonisierung der Weltwirtschaft und die damit einhergehende Reduktion der Treibhausgasemissionen in diesem knappen Zeitraum in ausreichender Geschwindigkeit zu gewährleisten. Abbildung 1 veranschaulicht, dass die bisher vorgenommenen Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung des Klimawandels unzureichend für das Pariser 2-Grad-Ziel sind und die Menschheit auf den Pfad von 3,2 Grad Celsius Erderwärmung gegenüber der mittleren Temperatur im prä-industriellen Zeitalter brächten. Ein solcher Temperaturanstieg würde höchstwahrscheinlich katastrophale Konsequenzen, wie sich noch intensivierende Extremwetterverhältnisse, rapide ansteigende Meeresspiegel, irreversible Veränderungen bzw. Zusammenbrüche von Ökosystemen, sowie massive soziale und politische Instabilität nach sich ziehen (IPCC, 2023).

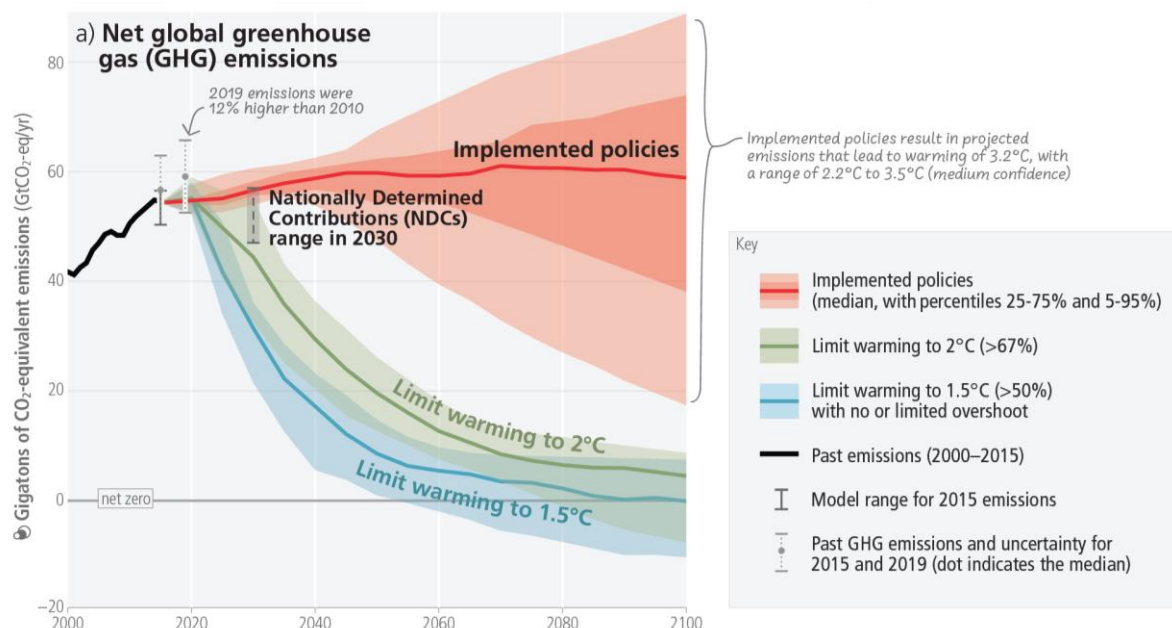


Abbildung 1: Differenzierung der Emissionspfade des 1,5-Grad-Ziels; 2-Grad-Ziels und den gegenwärtig implementierten Maßnahmen zur Emissionsreduzierung. Quelle: IPCC (2023, S. 22).

Insbesondere Länder mit hohem durchschnittlichem Einkommen und hohen Pro-Kopf-CO₂-Emissionen müssen ihre Emissionen schnell reduzieren, um die im Pariser Abkommen vereinbarten Klimaziele und Gerechtigkeitsverpflichtungen zu erfüllen. Die Daten von Vogel und Hickel (2023) in Abbildung 2 zeigen, wie weit selbst in reichen Ländern des Globalen Nordens, in denen eine sogenannte absolute Entkopplung (steigendes Bruttoinlandsprodukt bei sinkenden CO₂ Emissionen) vorliegt, die tatsächlichen Emissionsreduktionen (rote Balken) und die für die Einhaltung des Pariser Grad-Ziels benötigten Reduktionen (blaue Balken) auseinanderklaffen.

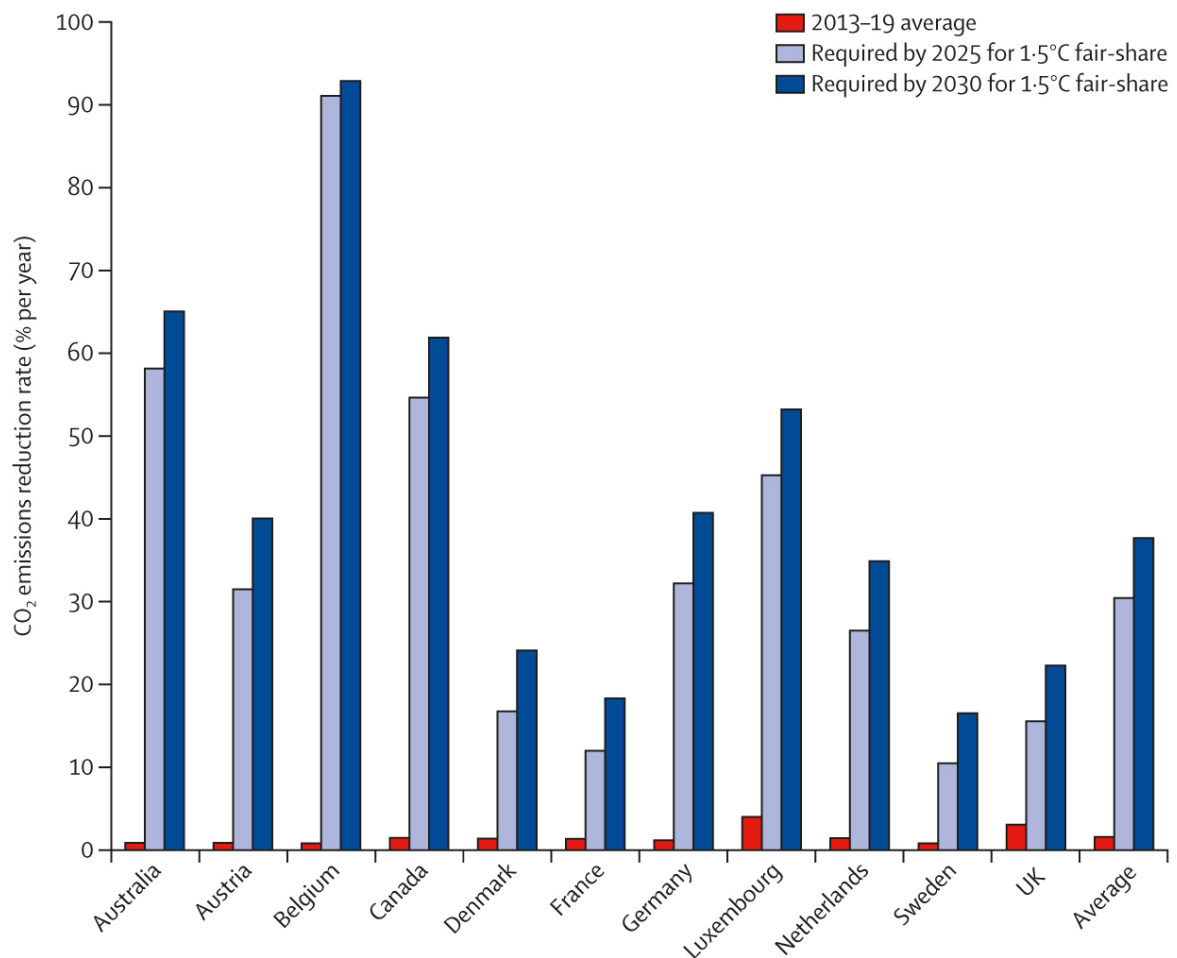


Abbildung 2: Zur Einhaltung des 1,5 Grad Ziels notwendige Emissionsminderungsraten für Länder mit hohem durchschnittlichem Einkommen. Quelle: Vogel & Hickel (2023, S. 764).

Die Notwendigkeit einer schnellen, weitreichenden und systemischen Transformation des Wirtschaftssystems ist demzufolge deutlich.

1.1 Ökologische Dimensionen der Transformation des Tourismus

Dem Tourismussektor kommt in diesem Zusammenhang aus einer Reihe von Gründen eine sehr große Bedeutung zu. Zum einen ist der Tourismus ein zentraler Treiber der Klimakatastrophe und ist von dieser wiederum erheblich betroffen, wodurch sich der Tourismussektor mitunter selbst gefährdet (Becken et al., 2020). Insgesamt war der Tourismus im Jahr 2013 allein für 8% der weltweit verursachten CO₂ Emissionen verantwortlich (Lenzen et al., 2018). Aktuellere Studien zeigen, dass die globalen Tourismusemissionen zwischen 2009 und 2019 um 3,5 % pro Jahr gestiegen sind, doppelt so stark wie die der Weltwirtschaft, und im Jahr 2019 bereits 8,8 % der gesamten globalen Treibhausgasemissionen ausmachten (Sun et al., 2024). Eine Ziffer, die sich in stark touristifizierten Destinationen wie Spanien fast verdoppeln kann (Osorio et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2022). Hauptgrund ist hierfür die besonders emissionsintensive Mobilität von Tourist:innen mit dem Flugzeug oder durch den Individualverkehr. Zudem ist der Tourismus weltweit ein stark wachsender Markt, für den weiterhin kontinuierliche Wachstumsraten prognostiziert werden, sodass derzeit nicht mit einem Rückgang der

Emissionen zu rechnen ist (UNWTO, 2022). Um die prognostizierten jährlichen globalen Wachstumsraten von durchschnittlich 3% für den Luftverkehr und 5% für alle anderen Segmente des Tourismussektors (WTTC-UNEP-UNFCCC, 2021) mit den Dekarbonisierungsanforderungen des Pariser Abkommens in Einklang zu bringen, wäre eine CO₂-Reduktionsrate von 8-10% pro Jahr erforderlich (Gössling et al., 2023). Selbst im ersten Jahr der Corona-Pandemie 2020 mit weitreichenden nationalen und internationalen Mobilitätseinschränkungen fielen die globalen Emissionen nur um 6% (Friedlingstein et al., 2022). Obwohl das Ziel darin besteht, die Emissionen des Tourismussektors bis 2030 zu halbieren, erachtet die UNWTO (2022) einen Anstieg um 25% als das wahrscheinlichste Szenario. Abbildung 3 verdeutlicht die beschriebene Herausforderung der Emissionsminderung für den Tourismus, indem sie das erwartete Emissionswachstum (rote gepunktete Linie) im Vergleich zum "Ambitionsszenario" (grüne Linie) von WTTC-UNEP-UNFCCC (2021) und den Weg zu Netto-Null-Emissionen bis 2050 im Einklang mit dem 1,5°C-Ziel des Pariser Abkommens (blaue gepunktete Linie) aufzeigt. So wird die starke Diskrepanz zwischen dem erwarteten Emissionswachstum des Sektors, Szenarien, die von Industrieverbänden propagiert werden, und den notwendigen Emissionsreduktionen, um das 1,5 C-Ziel einzuhalten, ersichtlich.

Absolute Emissions Index (2019 = 100)

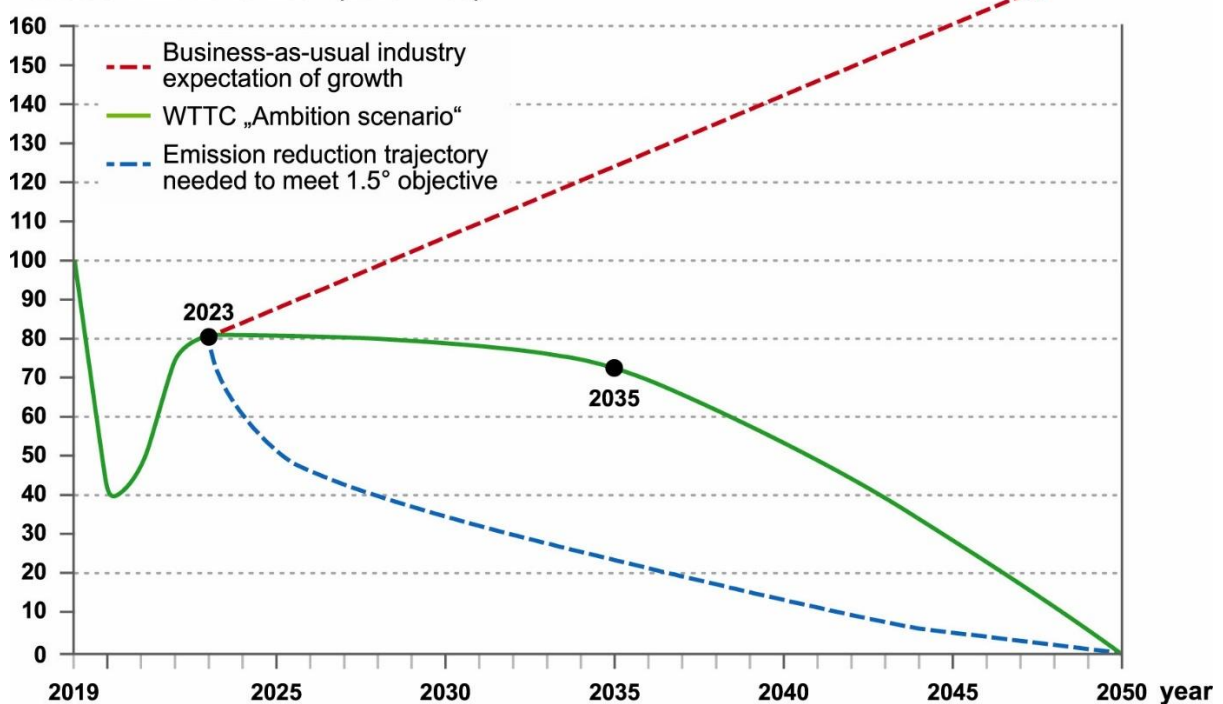


Abbildung 3: Wachstumsprognosen und Emissionsreduzierung im Tourismus. Quelle: Gössling et al. (2023, S. 5).

Verschiedene Studien (Becken, 2019; Becken et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2023; Gössling et al., 2021; Scott & Gössling, 2022; Scott et al., 2010) ziehen diesbezüglich die Schlussfolgerung, dass der Tourismussektor keine Klimaneutralität, respektive Netto-Null-Emissionen bis 2050 in weiteren Wachstumsszenarien erreichen wird.

1.2 Soziale Dimensionen der Transformation des Tourismus

Neben der dargelegten ökologischen Notwendigkeit einer Transformation des Tourismus müssen selbstredend auch die sozialen Dimensionen und Auswirkungen touristischer Praxis

thematisiert werden. Die extreme Ungleichverteilung hinsichtlich der Verursachung von CO₂ Emissionen lässt sich sehr deutlich am Tourismussektor veranschaulichen. So lässt sich beispielsweise für das Jahr 2019 feststellen, dass das reichste 1% der globalen Vermögensverteilung für 17% der Gesamtemissionen verantwortlich war, während das reichste Zehntel 48% zu verantworten hatte. Demgegenüber verursachte die ärmere Hälfte der Weltbevölkerung lediglich 12% (Chancel, 2022). Das bedeutet, dass im Jahr 2019 die Emissionen der superreichen 1% (77 Millionen Menschen) den Emissionen der ärmsten 66% der Menschheit (5 Milliarden Menschen) entsprochen haben. Seit den 1990er Jahren haben die superreichen 1% zudem doppelt so viel des Kohlenstoffbudgets verbrannt wie die ärmere Hälfte der Menschheit zusammen (Khalfan et al., 2023). Die in der EU im selben Zeitraum realisierten Emissionsreduzierungen sind dabei auf die Einsparungen von der ärmeren Hälfte der EU-Bevölkerung um 25% zurückzuführen, während die wohlhabendsten 10% ihre Emissionen sogar steigerten (Gore & Alestig, 2020). Ursachen für diese extreme Ungleichverteilung liegen unter anderem auch in der hohen touristischen Aktivität reicher Bevölkerungsschichten. Dies manifestiert sich beispielsweise in der Tatsache, dass das Perzentil der am meisten fliegenden Personen für mehr als die Hälfte der Gesamtemissionen aus dem Passagierflugverkehr verantwortlich ist. Im Gegensatz dazu nutzten im Jahr 2018 nur 11 % der Weltbevölkerung überhaupt das Flugzeug für Reisen, wobei davon höchstens 4 % internationale Flüge absolvierten (Gössling & Humpe, 2020). Somit wird offensichtlich, dass auch die Frage der sozialen globalen Gerechtigkeit im Tourismus Anlass zur Diskussion bietet.

Des Weiteren wurden in den vergangenen Jahren vermehrt soziale Konsequenzen des fortschreitend starken Wachstums des globalen Tourismusmarktes unter dem Stichwort *Overtourism* diskutiert (Milano et al., 2019b). Der Terminus ist überwiegend negativ konnotiert und wird mit touristisch induzierten Problemen in Verbindung gebracht, wie z. B. unter anderem der Gentrifizierung durch allgemeinen Anstieg der Preise auf dem Wohnungs- und Immobilienmarkt (Antunes et al., 2020; Diaz-Parra & Jover, 2021; Jover & Díaz-Parra, 2022), der intensiven Spezialisierung von Räumen auf die Tourismuswirtschaft (Cocola-Gant et al., 2020; Mansilla, 2018), dem relativen Kaufkraftverlust der lokalen Bevölkerung (Cheung & Li, 2019), der Prekarisierung von Beschäftigung im Tourismussektor (Cañada, 2018; Walmsley et al., 2022), Tendenzen sozialer Exklusion von Tourismusbeschäftigten (Valente et al., 2023), der Überfüllung von öffentlichem Raum (Koens et al., 2018) und der Privatisierung von vormalig öffentlichem Raum (Milano et al., 2019a).

Hinsichtlich der beschriebenen ökologischen und sozialen Ausprägungen stellt sich allgemein die Frage, wie der extrem emissions-intensive, rapide wachsende und in der Umweltbelastung hinsichtlich der Nachfrageseite durch eine starke Ungleichverteilung geprägte Tourismussektor, welcher zudem teilweise verschiedenste gesellschaftliche Probleme bedingt, hin zu verstärkter sozialer und ökologischer Nachhaltigkeit transformiert werden kann und welche Konsequenzen dies zur Folge hätte. Einen möglichen holistischen Ansatz, um die Weltwirtschaft zurück in planetare Grenzen zu führen, bietet der Degrowth Ansatz, der auch im sozialwissenschaftlich geprägten Diskurs der Tourismuswissenschaft an Bedeutung gewinnt.

1.3 Geschichte und Bedeutung von Degrowth

Bezüglich der intensiv diskutierten Wachstumsfrage innerhalb nachhaltig-transformativer Szenarien besteht gewissermaßen ein Dualismus zwischen zwei zentralen Paradigmen in der öffentlichen und wissenschaftlichen Diskussion: Green Growth versus Degrowth. In der Gegenüberstellung der Positionen wird ersichtlich, dass Vertreter:innen des Konzepts des grünen Wachstums eine Vereinbarkeit von kontinuierlichem Wirtschaftswachstum und Nachhaltigkeit postulieren, während Vertreter:innen der Degrowth Theorie eine Abkehr vom Fokus auf Wirtschaftswachstum fordern. Diese Haltung basiert auf der Annahme, dass Wachstum per se nicht nachhaltig ist (Hickel & Kallis, 2020; Keyßer & Lenzen, 2021).

Die Notwendigkeit der Transformation des wachstumsbasierten Wirtschaftssystems ist der generelle Ansatzpunkt der Degrowth Theorie. Die theoretischen Ursprünge hat die Diskussion um Degrowth in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren in den damals entstehenden wissenschaftlichen Diskursen der Politischen Ökologie und der Ökologischen Ökonomie (Fletcher et al., 2019). In den späten 2000er Jahren verstärkten sich wachstumskritische Stimmen im Kontext der neoliberalen Wirtschaftskrisen des globalen Nordens und der Degrowth Diskurs wurde konkretisiert und institutionalisiert. Kallis (2018, S. 9) formuliert eine allgemeine Definition des Konzepts: "Degrowth refers to a trajectory where the 'throughput' (energy, materials and waste flows) of an economy decreases while welfare, or well-being, improves". Degrowth kann daher als ein Ansatz charakterisiert werden, um die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Bedingungen so umzugestalten, dass der Energie- und Ressourcenverbrauch drastisch reduziert wird, um mit den gegebenen planetaren Grenzen vereinbar zu werden. Das Augenmerk liegt dabei bewusst auf einer Abkehr vom Fokus auf Wirtschaftswachstum im Globalen Norden, da dieser als Ursache für die ökologischen und sozialen Missstände auf der Erde gesehen wird (D'Alisa et al., 2015). Kallis (2018) kommt zu dem Schluss, dass Wachstum die zentrale Triebfeder des Kapitalismus ist, oder wie Foucault (2008, S. 144) es ausdrückt: "there is only one true and fundamental social policy: economic growth". Somit bedeutet der Versuch, den Zwang zum ständigen Wachstum zu durchbrechen, die Überwindung des Kapitalismus. Es ist jedoch wichtig zu betonen, dass es sich nicht um eine Rezession oder eine unkoordinierte wirtschaftliche Krise handelt, wie sie beispielsweise durch die Covid-19-Krise ausgelöst wurde, sondern um geplante Maßnahmen zur Reduzierung der wirtschaftlichen Aktivität (Hickel, 2021). Es wird ebenfalls anerkannt, dass Länder mit geringem durchschnittlichem Einkommen gegebenenfalls ihren Ressourcen- und Energieverbrauch erhöhen müssen, um grundlegende menschliche Bedürfnisse zu decken. Da der Degrowth Ansatz auf die Verringerung des übermäßigen, die planetaren Grenzen überschreitenden Ressourcen- und Energieverbrauchs fokussiert ist, richtet sich der Schwerpunkt auf die Reduktion der Pro-Kopf-Emissionen in den Ländern des Globalen Nordens, die einen überproportional hohen Verbrauch aufweisen (Hickel, 2019). Auf diese Weise soll Raum geschaffen werden, um die Volkswirtschaften des Globalen Südens aus ihrer aufgezwungenen Rolle als Exporteure billiger Arbeitskräfte und von der Ausbeutung ihrer Rohstoffe zu befreien und entwicklungspolitische Reformen zu ermöglichen (Dorninger et al., 2021). So könnte sich der Aufbau von Volkswirtschaften, die auf Souveränität, Selbstversorgung und menschlichem Wohlergehen ausgerichtet sind, realisieren lassen (Kothari et al., 2019).

Obwohl auf nationaler Ebene noch kein Land auch nur annähernd eine politische Agenda nach Degrowth Prinzipien verabschiedet hat (Fanning et al., 2022), haben lokale Regierungen

verschiedener europäischer Städte aktiv begonnen zu hinterfragen, inwiefern der Fokus auf weiterem Wachstum zur Nachhaltigkeit und zum kollektiven Wohlbefinden beiträgt. Daraufhin wurden bereits unterschiedliche Maßnahmen ergriffen, die unter das Spektrum von Degrowth Interventionen fallen. Beispiele sind die Förderung von langsamer Mobilität, Wohngenossenschaften, gemeinschaftliches Wohnen, Moratorien für Zwangsräumungen, Obergrenzen für Mieten oder Emissionen sowie bindende Ziele für den Ausstieg aus fossilen Brennstoffen in Amsterdam, Glasgow, Barcelona und Kopenhagen (Savini, 2024).

Hinsichtlich praxisorientierter Umsetzungsmaßnahmen von Degrowth Prinzipien auf makroökonomischer Ebene nennt Kallis (2018) beispielsweise Förderbeschränkungen für Ressourcen, neue Sozialversicherungsgarantien und Arbeitszeitverkürzungen, bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen sowie Einkommensobergrenzen, Steuern auf Verbrauch von Ressourcen, handels- und gewerbefreie Zonen, hohe Mindestreserveanforderungen für Banken und ein ethisches Bankwesen, grüne Investitionen, Förderung von genossenschaftlichem Eigentum und Unternehmen sowie CO₂-Obergrenzen. Als Beispiele zur Umsetzung auf der Mikroebene können die Bevorzugung und Förderung von Fahrradmobilität, Carsharing-Konzepte, vermehrte Wiederverwendung und Reparatur von Gütern, Priorisierung von vegetarischer oder veganer Ernährung, alternative Wohnkonzepte wie Co-Housing, der nachhaltige Anbau von Lebensmitteln, Solidarwirtschaft und Verbrauchergenossenschaften genannt werden.

1.4 Degrowth im Tourismus

Die aktuell fundierteste Definition von Degrowth im Tourismus stammt von Andriotis (2018, S. 108). Er definiert Degrowth im Tourismus als einen bewussten Wandel in touristischen Destinationen und deren lokalen Ökonomien, der die Übernutzung von Ressourcen sowie die Überproduktion bzw. den Überkonsum beendet, um das Tourismussystem wieder in die gegebenen planetaren Grenzen zu bringen. Darüber hinaus werden auch die Tourist:innen selbst in die Definition inkludiert, die sich auf verantwortungsbewusstes, erfüllendes, langsames und CO₂-armes Reisen bezieht. Zudem erweitert Andriotis (2018) das Verständnis von Degrowth im Tourismus in dem Sinne, dass es den Aspekt der gerechten Verteilung von Gewinnen aus dem Sektor zum Wohle aller beteiligten Akteur:innen umfasst, schädliche Subventionen abbaut und externalisierte Kosten einbezieht. An dieser Stelle postuliert Fletcher (2019, S. 11) die wesentlichen Voraussetzungen für das Verständnis und die Umsetzung eines postkapitalistischen Degrowth Systems im Tourismus. Folgende Faktoren werden als essentiell erachtet: "(1) forms of production not based on private appropriation of surplus value; and (2) forms of exchange not aimed at capital accumulation; that (3) fully internalize the environmental and social costs of production in a manner that does not promote commodification and (4) are grounded in common property regimes". Dies impliziert, dass Degrowth im Tourismus erfordert, dass sich der Sektor von einer hauptsächlich privatwirtschaftlich geprägten Aktivität zu einer Struktur entwickelt, die den Gemeingütern (Commons) dient (Euler, 2019).

Hall et al. (2021) identifizieren zwei wesentliche Cluster in der Literatur zu Tourismus und Degrowth. Eines konzentriert sich auf Entwicklungen rund um das Thema Overtourism und befasst sich dahingehend insbesondere mit Fragen der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung, während das andere Cluster Aspekte wie nachhaltige Tourismusentwicklung, Ökotourismus und Tourismusmanagement umfasst. Die Diskussionen innerhalb dieser Cluster konzentrieren sich

vordergründig auf zwei Ziele, die in der Degrowth Literatur bisher am stärksten thematisiert wurden (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022). Das erste konkrete Ziel ist die Begrenzung oder Reduzierung der touristischen Aktivitäten (Hall, 2009). Dies bezieht sich insbesondere auf Fernreisen, die auf fossilen Brennstoffen basieren. Vorschläge für regulatorische rechtliche Rahmenbedingungen für jene Reiseform sind unter anderem: Moratorien für touristische (Gebäude-) Neuentwicklungen (Navarro-Jurado et al., 2019), Maximalkontingente für den Besuch sensibler Räume wie Weltkulturerbestätten (Amore & Adie, 2020) und Beschränkungen für Kreuzfahrtschiffe (Renaud, 2020). Des Weiteren sollten für beschriebene touristische Aktivitäten gerechte Steuersysteme, die die Umweltkosten einbeziehen und so zu ihrer Deckung beitragen, implementiert werden (Fletcher et al., 2019). Das zweite Ziel ist eine Neukonzeptualisierung der Art und Weise, wie Tourismus „gedacht“ wird. Das formulierte Bestreben ist eine Neuausrichtung der derzeitigen dominanten neoliberalen und globalisierten Organisationsform des Tourismussystems hin zu Prinzipien des langsamen und lokalen Tourismus (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). Im Zentrum dieser Debatte steht eine Priorisierung des "Rechts zu leben" gegenüber dem "Recht zu reisen" (Gascón, 2019). Dies impliziert, dass die Rechte der Bewohner:innen und die Achtung der ökologischen Tragfähigkeit und Grenzen einer Destination gegenüber den kurzfristigen Bedürfnisbefriedigungen von Tourist:innen Vorrang haben sollten (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Weitere wichtige Aspekte der Forschung zu Tourismus und Degrowth sind die Ausweitung, Einführung und Priorisierung umweltfreundlicher Verkehrs- und Fortbewegungsmittel (z. B. (Nacht-)Züge, öffentliche Verkehrsmittel, Radfahren, Wandern) (Moriarty & Honnery, 2013), die Entwicklung ökologischer Tragfähigkeitskonzepte und die Förderung alternativer Eigentumsformen in der Tourismusbranche (z. B. Genossenschaftswesen) (Renkert, 2019).

In Bezug auf die geographische Dimension in der Literatur zum Thema Degrowth im Tourismus wird ersichtlich, dass die Diskussion bislang hauptsächlich urbane Räume und Küstenregionen betrifft, wobei ein deutlicher Fokus auf Europa und insbesondere Spanien zu beobachten ist (z.B. Blázquez-Salom et al., 2019; Mansilla & Hughes, 2021; Navarro-Jurado et al., 2019). Zum einen lässt sich dies durch den allgemeinen Eurozentrismus des Degrowth Ansatzes erklären, zum anderen trägt die hohe Frequentierung und Popularität zahlreicher spanischer Massentourismusziele zu dieser Entwicklung bei. In diesen geographischen Räumen entstanden Debatten über Overtourism, die das Interesse von Wissenschaftler:innen sowie sozialen Bewegungen an Degrowth geweckt haben (Fletcher et al., 2019; Milano et al., 2019a).

Abschließend lässt sich festhalten, dass in der Tourismus Degrowth Literatur vor allem kommunale beziehungsweise gemeinschaftsgeführte Initiativen diskutiert wurden (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). Der globale Handlungsraum und die Multinationalität der entscheidenden Tourismusakteure und Institutionen werden jedoch noch nicht stark genug berücksichtigt und transformative Pfade für den Sektor selten strukturiert thematisiert (Fletcher et al., 2021; Hall et al., 2021; Hall et al., 2020). Valdivielso und Moranta (2019) kritisieren das fehlende eindeutige Verständnis des „wer“ und „was“ der Tourismus Degrowth Literatur. Die Fragen, wer den erforderlichen moralischen und normativen Wandel hin zu weniger oder negativem Wachstum anstoßen soll und was innerhalb eines Degrowth Szenarios im Tourismus reduziert werden soll, werden in der Tourismus Degrowth Literatur weitestgehend ohne Einbezug der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse sowie der Politikgestaltung thematisiert und bleiben somit offen. Die Vorstellungen und Möglichkeiten der Umsetzung postkapitalistischer Degrowth Tourismuspraxis sind in der Literatur dementsprechend vage.

1.5 Forschungsbedarf hinsichtlich der Degrowth Debatte im Tourismus

Die Covid-19-Pandemie hat die Abhängigkeiten und den Mangel an wirtschaftlichen Alternativen zum Tourismus in vielen Destinationen erschreckend deutlich gemacht. Daher stellt sich die Frage, wie diese Abhängigkeiten und der damit verbundene Lock-in des Wachstumspfad des Sektors aufgebrochen werden können. Führende Degrowth Forscher wie Hickel et al. (2022) forderten diesbezüglich eine neue Forschungsagenda, die insbesondere darauf abzielen sollte, Wachstumsabhängigkeiten auf sektoraler Basis zu identifizieren und zu adressieren und damit zu verdeutlichen wie Gesellschaften ohne Wachstum prosperieren können. Daran anknüpfend stellen Durand et al. (2023) fest, dass auffallend wenig Forschung existiert, die tatsächlich thematisiert, was Planning für Degrowth bedeuten würde und wie die proklamierte notwendige Transformation eingeleitet werden sollte. Eine koordinierte und nachhaltige Degrowth Transition wird nur realisiert werden können, wenn ersichtlicher wird, welche Policies es ermöglichen würden, die in neoliberalen wachstumsorientierten Volkswirtschaften verwurzelten Pfadabhängigkeiten aufzubrechen. Dementsprechend proklamieren die Autor:innen (ebd.) fünf zentrale Ziele, die Planning für ein Postwachstumsszenario fokussieren und priorisieren sollte. Diese allgemeinen normativen Ziele lassen sich direkt auf den Tourismussektor projizieren. Das erste Ziel ist die klare Definition und Umsetzung von Limits und Priorisierungen hinsichtlich des Umgangs mit Treibhausgasemissionen, Ressourcenverbrauch und Biodiversitätsverlust (Hickel, 2019). Zudem sollte demokratische Partizipation berücksichtigt und auf ein breiteres Set an Stakeholdern, die in unterschiedlichen Formen involviert sein können, ausgeweitet werden (Schmelzer et al., 2022). Im Tourismus bezieht sich diese notwendige Ausweitung demokratischer Legitimation vor allem auf die Einbeziehung lokaler Bevölkerung und Tourismusarbeiter:innen in Entscheidungsprozesse (Erdmenger, 2022). Ein weiteres Ziel ist die Rekonzeptualisierung der Organisation von Arbeit vor dem Hintergrund einer gerechten Aufteilung gesellschaftlich erstrebenswerter und ökologisch vertretbarer Arbeit (Barca, 2017). Viertens erfordert Postwachstum auch eine tiefgreifende Umstrukturierung der materiell-technischen Basis der Gesellschaft in Verbund mit einer grundlegenden Veränderung der Produktionskräfte moderner Industriegesellschaften, die andere technische Modelle und eine andere Organisation der Arbeitsprozesse sowie veränderte Eigentumsstrukturen bedingen, um Kriterien der Nachhaltigkeit, Zweckmäßigkeit und Notwendigkeit in Innovationsprozessen und technischer Infrastruktur, im Gegensatz zur dominanten starken Profitorientierung, erfüllen zu können (Schmelzer et al., 2022). Zuletzt fordern Durand et al. (2023) Robustheit für einen reibungslosen Strukturwandel. Die beispiellose Geschwindigkeit und das Ausmaß der Veränderungen, die notwendig sind, werden verstärkt durch globale Disruptionen, wie beispielsweise die Covid-19-Pandemie mit bekannten Auswirkungen im Tourismussektor. Gewissenhaftes Planning könnte Rupturen und Störungen, die in diesem Prozess auftreten werden, mindern und entgegenwirken.

Trotz aller begründeten Forderungen, dargelegten Notwendigkeiten und normativen Appelle aus der Degrowth Literatur ist die Umsetzung beziehungsweise der Beginn einer solchen Transformation weder im Tourismus noch allgemein absehbar. Buch-Hansen (2018) identifiziert vier Voraussetzungen für einen Wandel in Richtung Degrowth. Von diesen sind derzeit jedoch nur die ersten beiden bis zu einem gewissen Grad erfüllt: eine tiefgreifende Krise des bestehenden Systems; ein alternatives politisches Projekt; eine umfassende Koalition gesellschaftlicher Kräfte, die politische Anstrengungen unternehmen, um das Projekt hegemonial

zu machen; und zumindest passive Zustimmung in der Bevölkerung. Ein Gramscianisches Verständnis von Gesellschaft und Transformation nutzend, fehlt es also sowohl in der politischen als auch in der Zivilgesellschaft an Unterstützung und Überzeugung für ein Degrowth Projekt (D'Alisa & Kallis, 2020). Dieses Scheitern, mit dem Degrowth Diskurs explizit eine breitere Masse an Personen oder Institutionen zu erreichen, kann durchaus verwundern, da Studien breite Zustimmungswerte für Postwachstumsideale sowohl in der Wissenschaft als auch in der Bevölkerung zeigen. Beispielsweise befürworten in der EU 86 % der Klimaforscher:innen Postwachstumspositionen (King et al., 2023). Eine Umfrage unter fast 500 Nachhaltigkeitswissenschaftler:innen ergab zudem, dass 77 % der Befragten Postwachstumspfade für Länder mit hohem Einkommen fordern (Koskimäki, 2023). Des Weiteren zeigen repräsentative Daten aus Deutschland, dass 88% der Bevölkerung zustimmen, dass "wir Wege finden müssen, wie wir unabhängig vom Wirtschaftswachstum gut leben können", und 77 % stimmen zu, dass "es natürliche Grenzen des Wachstums gibt, die unsere industrialisierte Welt längst erreicht hat" (BMUV, 2023, S. 51). Dies bestätigt auch eine Umfrage in 34 europäischen Ländern, die zeigt, dass durchschnittlich 61 % der Befragten Postwachstumsideale befürworten (Paulson & Büchs, 2022).

Darauf aufbauend, dass ein grundsätzliches Verständnis der Notwendigkeit eines Wandels weg von wachstumsorientierten Wirtschaften existiert, eine effektive Mobilisierung sozialer Kräfte für dieses Ziel aber ausbleibt, stellt sich die Frage, wie eine Degrowth Transformation eingeleitet werden sollte und welche Ansätze diesbezüglich existieren (Savini, 2024). Um transformative Strategien zu klassifizieren, verwendet diese Arbeit die analytische Perspektive des Modells von Wright (2010), welche drei Logiken und Visionen systemischer Transformationen identifiziert: ruptural, interstitial, symbiotic. Jede Vision ist mit einer politischen Tradition verbunden, entwickelt sich um einen zentralen politischen Akteur und weist eine besondere strategische Logik im Hinblick auf den kapitalistischen Staat auf. Die ruptural Strategie zielt auf einen frontalen Umbruch des Staats ab, um nach der Demontage bestehender staatlicher Institutionen neue emanzipatorische Einrichtungen zu schaffen. Dies entspricht einer revolutionären Logik. Bei der ruptural Strategie sind die in politischen Parteien organisierten gesellschaftlichen Klassen die zentralen kollektiven Akteure. Die Staatsmacht ist für die Überwindung des Kapitalismus unerlässlich, und die Staatsmacht kann von Anti-System-Kräften nur durch die Zerstörung der Kerninstitutionen des kapitalistischen Staates dauerhaft gesichert werden. Mit Bezug auf den Tourismus würde dies bedeuten, durch einen staatlichen Umsturz die komplette an der kapitalistischen Wertschöpfungslogik orientierte Tourismusstrategie bzw. Tourismuspolitik eines Landes zu revolutionieren. Ein solcher Vorgang ist bisher nie geschehen. Die interstitial Metamorphose konzentriert sich hingegen auf die Förderung horizontaler Alternativen innerhalb der Risse des kapitalistischen Systems, indem sie Neues in den Rissen/Zwischenräumen (interstices) des Alten, aber außerhalb von staatlicher Kontrolle aufbaut. Diese Strategie steht im Einklang mit anarchistischen Visionen, die das Ziel haben, selbstverwaltete Systeme in der Zivilgesellschaft parallel zum Staat aufzubauen. Interstitial Strategien basieren auf sozialen Bewegungen, die in einer heterogenen Gruppe von Akteuren, Interessen und Identitäten verwurzelt sind. Es gibt keine privilegierte soziale Gruppe, die das Projekt der Transformation anführt. Diverse kollektive Akteure sind abhängig vom Kontext am besten in der Lage, verschiedene Arten von interstitial Strategien zu verfolgen. Sie sind bestrebt, außerhalb des Staates zu agieren und versuchen, Konfrontationen mit der Staatsmacht so weit wie möglich zu vermeiden. Das strategische Ziel besteht darin, den Kapitalismus durch

den Aufbau von Alternativen herauszufordern, anstatt ihn direkt zu konfrontieren. Innerhalb des Tourismussektors entsprechen Entwicklungen postkapitalistischer Reise- und Beherbergungspraktiken, die nicht der kapitalistischen Profitlogik unterliegen, wie beispielsweise Couchsurfing oder das Reisen per Anhalter, diesem strategischen Verständnis. Die Strategie der symbiotischen Metamorphose sieht einen koevolvierenden Transformationspfad vor, der auf Kompromissbildung mit den dominanten politisch-wirtschaftlichen Kräften basiert. Diese Strategie strebt danach, staatseigene Werkzeuge zu nutzen und gesellschaftliche Stimmung zu mobilisieren, um den Staatsapparat und die Institutionen zu transformieren. Dieser Ansatz steht im Einklang mit einer eher reformistischen, sozialdemokratischen politischen Tradition (D'Alisa & Kallis, 2020). Symbiotische Strategien stützen sich hierbei auf gesellschaftliche Koalitionen, in denen die Arbeiter:innenbewegung aufgrund ihrer Bedeutung für das Schmieden positiver Klassenkompromisse traditionell eine zentrale Rolle spielt. In der Logik der symbiotischen Strategie besteht die Möglichkeit, den Staat zu nutzen, um soziale Macht sowohl innerhalb des Staates als auch an anderen Organisationen/Institutionen der Macht aufzubauen, und so zu versuchen, die Bedingungen für eine positive Kooperation zu schaffen. Als Beispiel im Tourismus kann die Verschiebung der politischen Priorisierung verschiedener Mobilitätsregime (Schienengebundener Verkehr vs. Luftverkehr; Individualverkehr vs. ÖPNV) durch Druck aus der Gesellschaft genannt werden. Ein prominentes Beispiel eines solchen Vorgangs war die zwischenzeitliche Einführung des 9€-Tickets in Deutschland im Jahr 2022. Wright (2019) lehnt selbst den konfrontativen revolutionären Ansatz als kontraproduktiv ab. Stattdessen spricht er sich für einen transformativen Ansatz aus, welcher bottom up und top down action kombiniert: "The strategy [...] combines initiatives within civil society to build emancipatory economic alternatives in the spaces where this is possible, with interventions from the state to expand those spaces in various ways" (Wright, 2019, S. 95). Diese Strategie passt zu dem strategisch relationalen Verständnis des Gramscianischen integral state, welche D'Alisa und Kallis (2020) als nützliche Herangehensweise der Konzeptualisierung einer Degrowth Transformation propagieren. Durch dieses Verständnis können unproduktive Dichotomien zwischen einerseits der Promotion von bottom up Basisinitiativen und dem Fokus auf top down Policies durch staatliche Intervention andererseits, welche die Degrowth Literatur mitunter prägen, überwunden werden (Cosme et al., 2017).

2 Konzeptualisierung der kumulativen Dissertation

2.1 Forschungsziele und Forschungsdesign

Diese Dissertation untersucht innerhalb der im vorherigen Kapitel beschriebenen Logik der von Wright (2010) definierten, symbiotischen Strategie für Transformationsprozesse, welche Rolle verschiedene zivilgesellschaftliche Akteure in der Postwachstumschwende im Tourismussektor spielen. Orientierung zur Strukturierung der kumulativen Dissertation bieten zusätzlich die von Durand et al. (2023) identifizierten fünf maßgeblichen Ziele der Postwachstumsplanung.

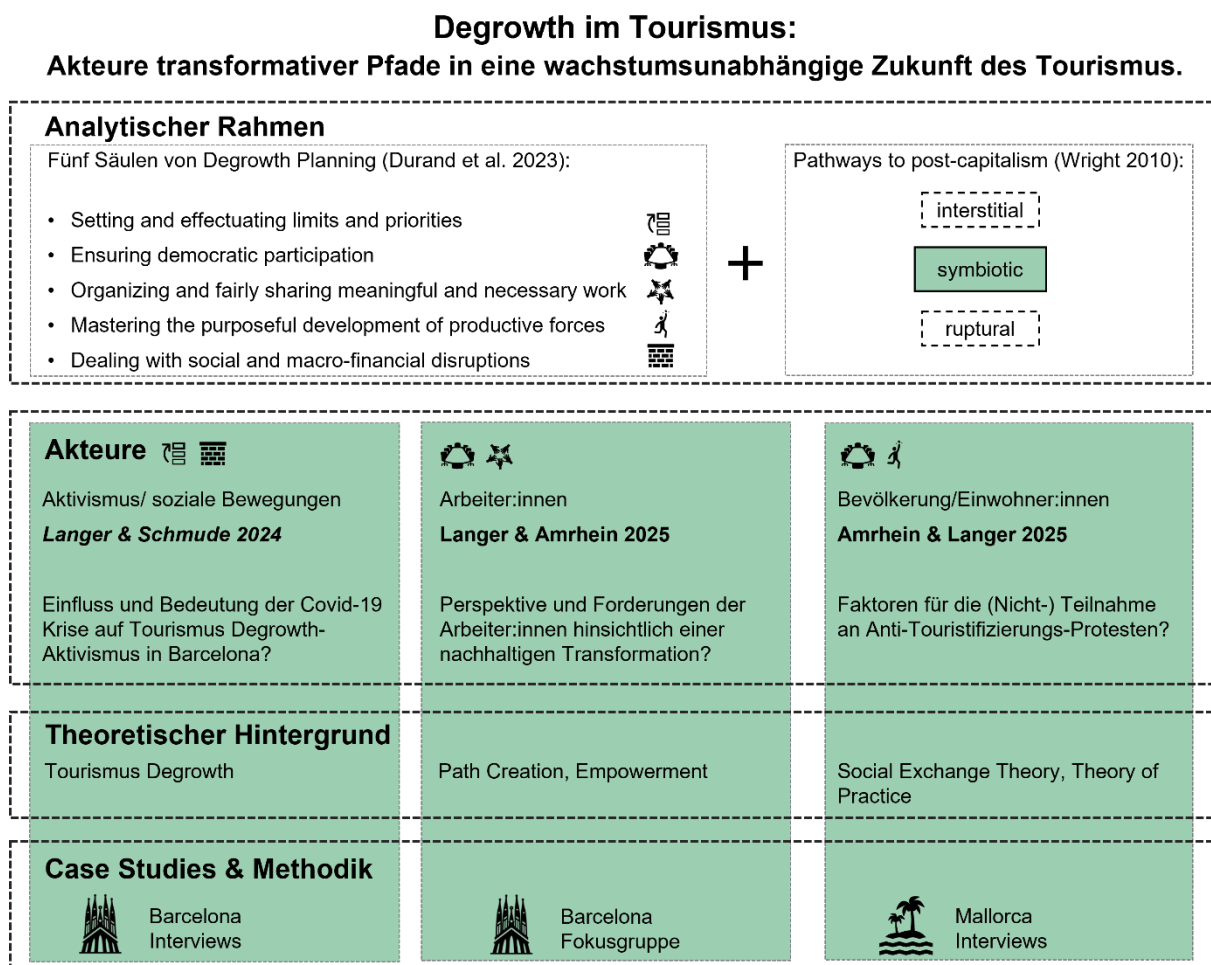


Abbildung 4: Analytischer Rahmen und inhaltliche Schwerpunkte der Dissertation. Quelle: Eigene Darstellung.

Das Hauptinteresse der Arbeit besteht darin, (1) die Einflüsse und Wechselwirkungen der verschiedenen Akteure zu kontextualisieren und (2) ihre Eigenschaften hinsichtlich der Initiierung transformativer Pfade zu verdeutlichen. Die resultierende übergreifende Forschungsfrage der Dissertation lautet:

Welche Rolle nehmen ausgewählte Akteure (soziale Bewegungen, Arbeiter:innen, Zivilgesellschaft/Bevölkerung) in transformativen Pfaden mit dem Ziel einer Degrowth Zukunft im Tourismus ein?

Die übergreifende Forschungsfrage lässt sich in drei Sub-Forschungsfragen untergliedern, die jeweils unterschiedliche Akteure in den drei Studien der kumulativen Dissertation thematisieren. Diese sind in chronologischer Reihenfolge wie folgt.

Forschungsfrage 1: *Wie hat sich die Covid-19-Krise auf bestehende transformative Degrowth Bewegungen in Barcelona ausgewirkt und was bedeutet der veränderte Kontext für die Initiierung einer nachhaltigen Degrowth Transition im urbanen Tourismus?*

Forschungsfrage 2: *Welche Perspektive haben im Tourismus beschäftigte Arbeitnehmer:innen auf ihre Situation auf dem Arbeitsmarkt und die daraus resultierenden Forderungen für Veränderungen? Inwiefern haben ausgewählte politische Vorschläge das Potential, die Arbeitnehmer:innen in ihrer Situation zu ermächtigen (empower) und somit neue Pfade zu einer nachhaltigen Degrowth Transition im urbanen Tourismus zu eröffnen?*

Forschungsfrage 3: *Was sind die maßgeblichen Faktoren für die (Nicht-) Teilnahme an Anti-Touristifizierungs-Protesten jenseits des Support Narrative?*

Durch die drei dieser Dissertation zugrundeliegenden Journal-Beiträge wird der Nexus zwischen der Degrowth Literatur und der geographischen Tourismusforschung weiterentwickelt. Sie leistet dadurch einen wichtigen Beitrag zum Verständnis einer nachhaltigen, den planetaren Grenzen entsprechenden Transformation des Sektors.

Tabelle 1: Publikationen der kumulativen Dissertation

Autoren	Jahr	Titel	Fachjournal
Langer, M. Schmude, J.	2024	COVID-19 as a paradigm shift? Insights from the degrowth debate in tourism	European Journal of Tourism Research
Langer, M. Amrhein, S.	2025	Transformational job-policies as pathways to a degrowth future in tourism? Understanding the workers' perspective	Journal of Qualitative Research in Tourism
Amrhein, S. Langer, M.	2025	Resistance and power dynamics in tourist destinations: a study of Mallorca's anti-touristification protests through Bourdieu's theory of practice	Journal of Sustainable Tourism

Quelle: Eigene Zusammenstellung.

2.2 Datensammlung und Methodik

Zur Operationalisierung der Fragestellung wurden im Rahmen der drei wissenschaftlichen Fachbeiträge verschiedene qualitative Methoden angewandt, die induktive und deduktive Ansätze kombinieren. Insbesondere Interviews, Fokusgruppen und Literaturanalysen bilden die empirische Basis dieser Dissertation. Diese Forschung reagiert damit auf die Forderungen nach neuen Forschungsagenden im Feld der Wirtschaftsgeographie und verwandten Bereichen der Analyse von regionaler Entwicklung, die verstärkt auf qualitative Forschungsmethoden setzen, um die Handlungsmacht (Agency) diverser Akteure in verschiedenen regionalen Kontexten zu

untersuchen (Hassink et al., 2019; MacKinnon et al., 2019). So können auf empirischen Daten basierend, dringend benötigte alternative zukünftige Entwicklungspfade explorativ aufgezeigt werden (Steen, 2016). Schoenberger (1991, S. 181) argumentiert, dass der Nutzen von qualitativen methodischen Ansätzen: "may be highest in periods of great economic and social change that pose new challenges to the analytical categories and theoretical principles underlying much quantitative research". Um die regionalen Dynamiken von Degrowth Transformationen im Tourismus zu erfassen, wurde eine Fallstudienforschung mit einem Multiple-Case-Design durchgeführt (Yin, 2010). Fallstudien ermöglichen eine sorgfältige Analyse der strukturellen Einflüsse und der kontingenten sozialen Praktiken, die sowohl auf bestimmte Akteure wirken, als auch von ihnen ausgehen (Barnes et al., 2007). Laut Bramwell (2011) sind Fallstudien dementsprechend besonders hilfreich für die Untersuchung der vielfältigen Wechselwirkungen zwischen den unterschiedlichen Dimensionen touristischer Aktivität, nachhaltiger Entwicklung und Governance.

Die folgende Tabelle illustriert die einzelnen methodischen Schritte der drei Studien im Detail.

Tabelle 2: Daten und Methoden der Publikationen

Methode	Beschreibung	Zeitraumen
Langer und Schmude (2024)		
Literaturanalyse	Analyse akademischer Literatur zu den Themen Degrowth, soziale und ökologische Konsequenzen von Städtetourismus, sowie den Auswirkungen der Covid-19-Pandemie auf den Tourismussektor zur Formulierung der Forschungsfrage und als Basis zur Vorbereitung des Forschungsdesigns.	10/2020 - 3/2021
Sekundärdatenanalyse	Kontextualisierung der Fallstudie durch Einarbeitung und Analyse verschiedener Sekundärdatenquellen wie Homepages und Pressemitteilungen sozialer Bewegungen, offizielle Berichte von Behörden auf verschiedenen Ebenen, Websites der wichtigsten Tourismusakteure und Diskurse in den sozialen Medien (insbesondere Twitter).	1/2021 - 8/2021
semi-strukturierte Stakeholderinterviews	Interviews mit Stakeholdern, Aktivist:innen und akademischen Expert:innen (n=13) zur Wahrnehmung des Einflusses der Covid-19-Pandemie auf die Degrowth Bewegung im Tourismus in Barcelona.	4/2021 - 6/2021
Analyse der Primärdaten	Untersuchung der Daten anhand des Konzepts der analytischen Induktion nach Patton (2015). Dementsprechend wurden die Daten im Anschluss an eine deduktive Analysephase erneut auf unentdeckte Muster und Erkenntnisse untersucht. Die Themen der Leitfragen der Interviews, die deduktiv aus der Literatur- und Sekundärdatenanalyse gewonnen wurden, bilden die	8/2021 - 3/2022

	Grundlage für die deduktive Kodierung der Daten. Im weiteren Verlauf wurde das Kodierschema um induktive Kategorien ergänzt.	
Langer und Amrhein (2025)		
Literaturanalyse	Analyse akademischer Literatur zu den Themen Degrowth und Arbeit, Pfadabhängigkeiten, Universelles Grundeinkommen (UBI), Arbeitszeitverkürzung (WTR), Wirtschaftsdemokratie (ED) und Arbeitsplatzgarantie (JG) zur Formulierung der Forschungsfrage und als Basis zur Vorbereitung des Forschungsdesigns.	2/2022 - 8/2022
semi-strukturierte Stakeholderinterviews	Anwendung eines Mixed-Methods-Ansatzes der Datentriangulation zur Stärkung der methodologischen Grundlage der Studie (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2013). Die Daten von zehn Experteninterviews, erhoben im Rahmen der ersten Studie im Zeitraum von April bis Juni 2021, dienen als Grundlage für die Vorbereitung der Fokusgruppe und erhöhen zudem die Kreditibilität, der im Ergebnisteil präsentierten Erkenntnisse, indem sie eine Validitätsprüfung der Daten aus der Fokusgruppe ermöglichen (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008).	2/2022 - 8/2022
Fokusgruppe	Durchführung der interaktiven Fokusgruppen Diskussion mit Arbeiter:innen (n=9) aus verschiedenen Tätigkeiten im Tourismussektor von Barcelona zur wahrgenommenen Situation auf dem Arbeitsmarkt und den erhofften Änderungen und möglichen formulierten alternativen Ansätzen in der Zukunft.	8/2022
Analyse der Primärdaten	Untersuchung der Daten mithilfe eines induktiven Ansatzes nach Thomas (2006). Somit wurde im Verlauf der explorativen Analyse ein offener Kodierprozess durchgeführt.	10/2022 - 3/2023
Amrhein und Langer (2025)		
Literaturanalyse	Analyse akademischer Literatur zu den Themen Support Narrative, Social Exchange Theory und Theory of Practice zur Formulierung der Forschungsfrage und als Basis zur Vorbereitung des Forschungsdesigns.	5/2021 - 7/2022
semi-strukturierte Interviews: erste Erhebungsphase	Qualitative Interviews mit zentralen Akteuren der Anti-Overtourism Bewegung auf Mallorca (n=11) zur Erörterung der Handlungsfähigkeit (Agency) von Individuen und ihren strukturellen Bedingungen hinsichtlich der Beteiligung an Protestformen.	8/2021 - 9/2021

semi-strukturierte Interviews: zweite Erhebungsphase	Qualitative Interviews mit Arbeiter:innen sowohl aus dem formellen (n=13), als auch aus dem informellen Sektor (n=8) im Tourismus auf Mallorca. Hintergrund ist die Erweiterung der Stichprobe der ersten Erhebungsphase um Arbeiter:innen in diversen Beschäftigungsverhältnissen und Erwerbstätigkeiten im Tourismussektor von Mallorca.	6/2022 - 7/2022
Analyse der Primärdaten	Analyse der Daten angelehnt an Bourdieus Theory of Practice, nach dem Verständnis von methodischer Innovation von Roose (2016).	8/2023 - 3/2024

Quelle: Eigene Zusammenstellung.

2.3 Forschungskontext

Wie Murray et al. (2023, S.7) hervorheben, sind stark touristifizierte Destinationen besonders gut als Fallstudien für eine Analyse des Potentials einer Degrowth Transformation im Tourismus geeignet: "For practical purposes, the most saturated tourist destinations are the best and most urgent 'laboratories', or points of departure, within which to investigate the potential of degrowth to reduce tourism's intensity and impacts." Obwohl die beiden dieser Dissertation zugrunde liegenden Destinationen Barcelona und Mallorca sehr unterschiedliche geographische Charakteristika aufweisen, verbindet sie in der Entwicklung des Tourismussektors viele Gemeinsamkeiten.

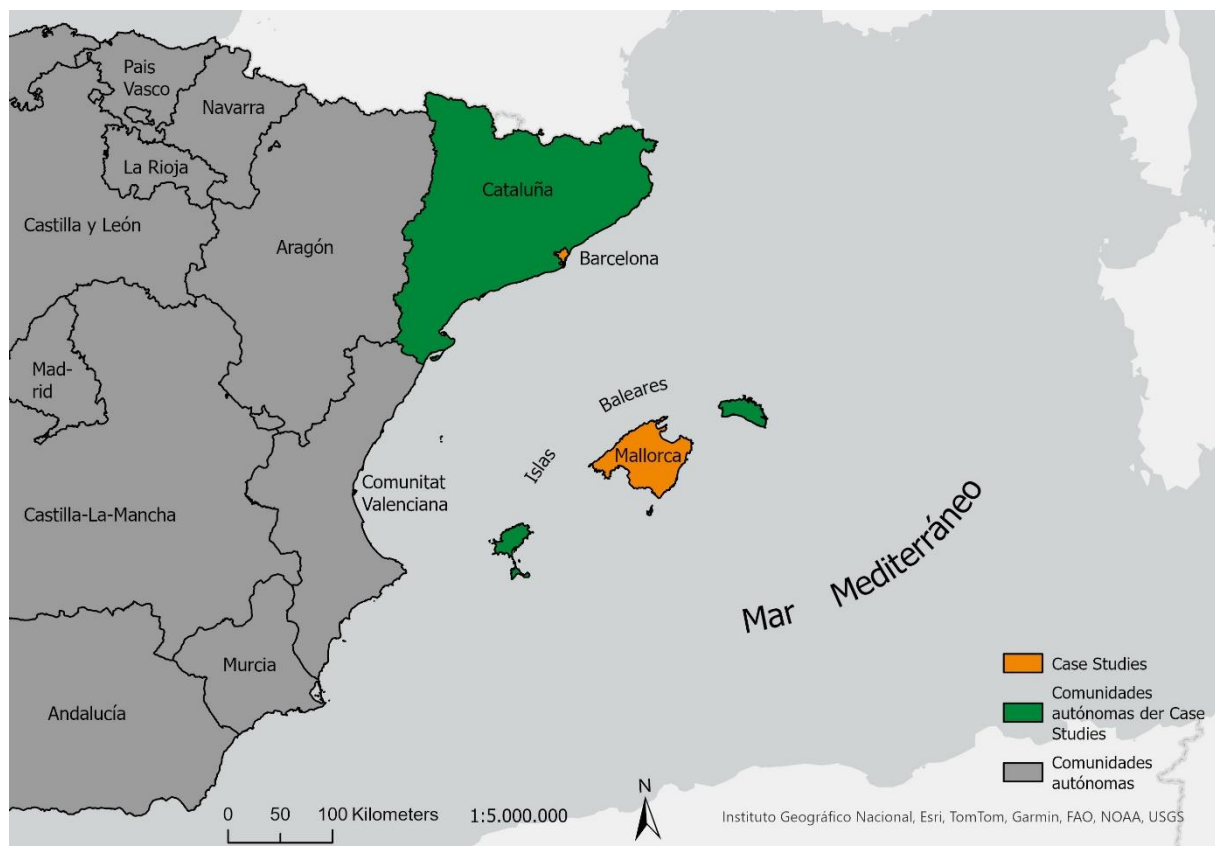


Abbildung 5: Übersicht über die Case-Study Regionen. Quelle: Eigene Darstellung.

Als eine der weltweit führenden städtetouristischen Destinationen hat der Tourismussektor in Barcelona einen außerordentlichen Einfluss auf die urbane Wirtschaft (Langer & Schmude, 2024). Die katalanische Hauptstadt ist ein berühmtes Beispiel für städtische Entwicklung mit einem besonderen Schwerpunkt auf Kultur, Veranstaltungen und der Gestaltung des öffentlichen Raums (Valente et al., 2023). Dieser urbane Wandel, für den die "olympischen" Reformen zu Beginn der 1980er Jahre ein wichtiger Katalysator waren, hat Barcelonas Übergang zu einer postindustriellen Wirtschaft und zu einem florierenden Tourismusziel begünstigt (Marshall, 2004). Aufgrund der Bedeutung des Tourismussektors und seines enormen wirtschaftlichen Erfolgs seit der Austragung der Olympischen Spiele 1992 spielt Barcelona in der Diskussion über die Tourismuswirtschaft eine besondere Rolle (UNWTO, 2019). Kaum irgendwo sonst wurde die Debatte über den Platz und den Einfluss des Tourismus im urbanen Raum so leidenschaftlich und öffentlichkeitswirksam geführt wie in Barcelona. Da sich die Einwohner vor der Covid-19-Pandemie zunehmend kritisch gegenüber dem Tourismus äußerten und sich soziale Bewegungen entwickelten, die explizit Degrowth im Tourismus forderten, wurde die Governance des Tourismus im urbanen Kontext zu einem der wichtigsten politischen Themen in der Stadt (Blázquez-Salom et al., 2019; Langer & Schmude, 2024; Zerva et al., 2019). Im Jahr 2019 gaben mehr als 60 % der Befragten in einer von der Stadtverwaltung von Barcelona durchgeführten Umfrage an, dass die Stadt ihre maximale Tragfähigkeit für Tourist:innen erreicht habe (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2019). Dieser Wert wurde in der jüngsten Umfrage aus dem Jahr 2023 noch einmal übertroffen (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2023b). Darüber hinaus ergab eine weitere Umfrage des Stadtrats von Barcelona im Jahr 2017, dass der Tourismus "zum größten Problem Barcelonas" (Übersetzung des Verfassers) geworden ist und die Arbeitslosigkeit zum ersten Mal seit 2008 auf den zweiten Platz verdrängt hat (Mansilla & Hughes, 2021, S. 45). Vor allem in den Altstadtvierteln und der unmittelbaren Umgebung der beliebtesten Attraktionen wie Sagrada Familia oder Parc Guell wurden die Auswirkungen der Massifizierung des Tourismus ersichtlich. Unter anderem betrifft dies z. B. Mietsteigerungen, Verdrängungstendenzen autochthoner Bevölkerung auf dem Wohnungsmarkt, überfüllter öffentlicher Raum, Privatisierung des öffentlichen Raums und eine Vielzahl von prekären Arbeitsplätzen im Tourismussektor (Langer & Amrhein, 2025; UNWTO, 2019). Der Kontext Barcelonas ist somit ein paradigmatisches Beispiel für Städte, die Wachstum im Tourismus fokussierten, um die postindustrielle Transition und die wirtschaftliche Erholung nach der globalen Finanzkrise von 2008 zu unterstützen.

Der rasche Niedergang der spanischen Industrie und die Transition zu einer dienstleistungsorientierten Ökonomie in der finalen Epoche des Franquismus und dem Übergang zur Demokratie hat die Bedeutung des Tourismus insbesondere in den Mittelmeer- und Inselregionen weiter gestärkt (Armas-Díaz & Sabaté-Bel, 2022; Murray, 2012). Mallorca ist ein Paradebeispiel für diesen Prozess: zwischen den späten 1950er und den späten 1970er Jahren wandelte sich eine vorwiegend agrarische Wirtschaft mit bescheidener industrieller Aktivität zu einer urban geprägten Gesellschaft, die auf Tourismus und öffentlichen Dienstleistungen basiert (Yrigoy et al., 2022). Die Tourismusindustrie der größten Baleareninsel Mallorca entstand in den sechziger Jahren mit dem ersten großen Touristenboom. Quantitative Motive in der Tourismusplanung hatten den Vorrang gegenüber qualitativen, und die Insel wurde zu einem preisgünstigen saisonalen Massentourismusziel im sun, sand and sea Segment (Blázquez-Salom et al., 2021). Pauschalreisen in der Hochsaison im Sommer dominierten den mallorquinischen Tourismusmarkt und die Tourist:innen hielten sich insbesondere in speziellen touristisch

entwickelten Gebieten der Insel auf. Obwohl die Zahl der Ankünfte die der Einheimischen schnell überstieg, gab es kaum Probleme mit Überlastungserscheinungen oder Beschwerden der lokalen Bevölkerung, da die Tourist:innen kaum öffentliche Infrastruktur in Anspruch nahmen und sich nur selten weit vom Hotel oder dem nahe gelegenen Strand entfernten (Picornell, 2014). Heute sind die Balearen eine der wichtigsten Tourismusregionen weltweit und der Tourismus ist seit den 1950er Jahren die strukturelle Basis des Siedlungswachstums und der finanziellen Entwicklung. Die Tourismusaktivitäten im Jahr 2017 machten 44,2% des regionalen BIP auf den Balearen aus und schafften mindestens 30,8% der gesamten direkten Arbeitsplätze auf den Inseln (Balearic Islands Tourism Board, 2017). Rund 80% der knapp 15 Millionen Tourist:innen sind internationale Ankünfte (Institut d'Estadística de les Illes Balears, 2023). Die überwältigende Mehrheit von ihnen reist mit dem Flugzeug an, während nur etwa 4% den Seetransport nutzen (Balearic Islands Tourism Board, 2017). Mit dem jahrzehntelangen kontinuierlichen Wachstum im Tourismus entwickelten sich in Mallorca immer mehr Symptome von Overtourism und ökologische Probleme (insbesondere Wasserknappheit, Probleme in der Abfallwirtschaft und exzessive Tourismus-induzierte Schadstoffemissionen) traten vermehrt in den Vordergrund (Blázquez-Salom et al., 2021). Die balearische Regionalregierung ergriff deshalb im Jahr 2017 gesetzliche Maßnahmen, um die Zahl der Ankünfte zu begrenzen, den Naturraum zu schützen und die weitere Bebauung von Grundstücken einzuschränken (Valdivielso & Moranta, 2019). Die Umsetzung der Regulierungen des Tourismus und der Raumplanung wurde durch eine intensive öffentliche Debatte mit diversen gesellschaftlichen Kräften auf Mallorca, insbesondere Gewerkschaften, sozialen Bewegungen und politischen Parteien, begleitet. In den Jahren vor der Covid-19-Pandemie nahmen etwa 25 verschiedene Organisationen sowie unorganisierte Unterstützer an Demonstrationen teil, die ein Ende des unkoordinierten Wachstums des Tourismus forderten. Sie verlangten grundlegende Veränderungen, die primär den Bedürfnissen der lokalen Bevölkerung Rechnung tragen sollten, da sie die immer weiter expandierende Tourismusindustrie als Hauptursache für die soziale Ungleichheit und die Umweltzerstörung auf der Insel ansahen (Amrhein et al., 2022).

Wie Abbildung 6 hervorhebt, lässt sich zusammenfassend festhalten, dass sowohl Barcelona als auch Mallorca im Sinne ihres quantitativen Tourismusvolumens zu den international führenden Destinationen ihres respektiven Sektors gehören. In beiden Destinationen hat der Tourismus eine enorme wirtschaftliche Bedeutung inne und zählt zu den Schlüsselbranchen der regionalen Ökonomien.

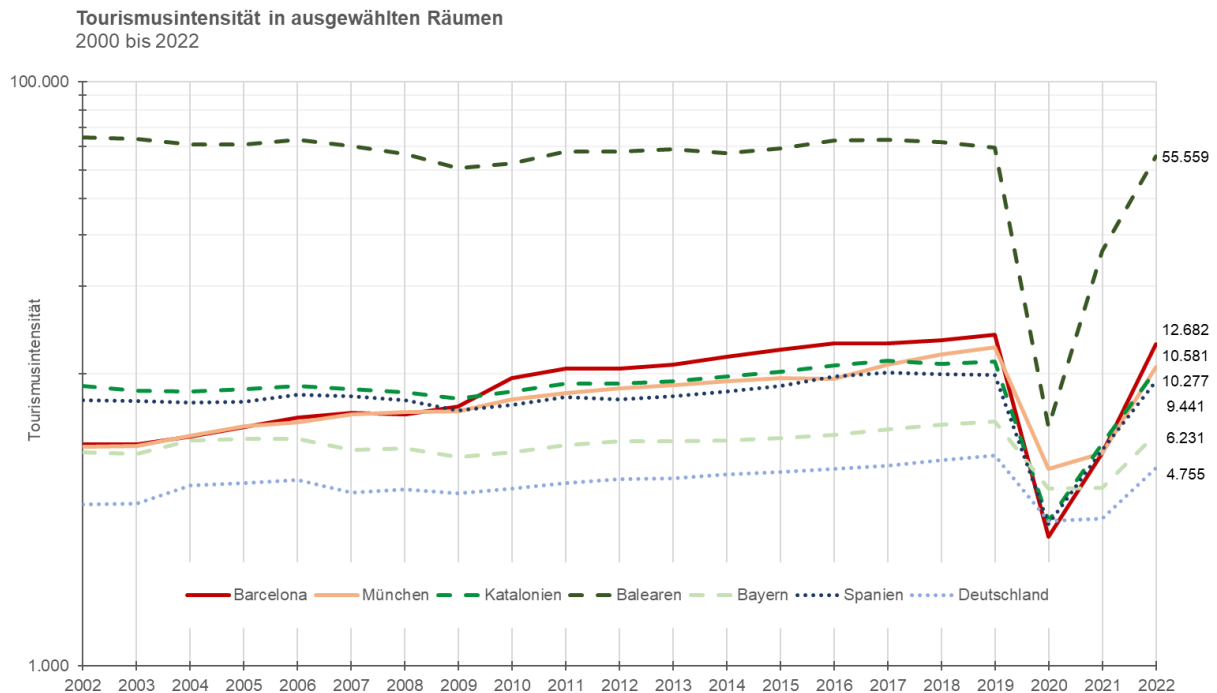


Abbildung 6: Vergleich der Tourismusintensität in ausgewählten Räumen. Eigene Darstellung. Datenquellen: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2023a; Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik, 2023, 2024; Eurostat, 2024a, 2024b; Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya, 2024a, 2024b; Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2023

Des Weiteren herrscht in Barcelona und Mallorca (bzw. den Balearen) eine hohe Tourismusintensität, die zu verschiedenen Overtourism Phänomenen geführt hat (Amrhein et al., 2022; Milano et al., 2019b). Diese Entwicklung hat wiederum polarisierende und kontroverse zivilgesellschaftliche Reaktionen im vergangenen Jahrzehnt hervorgerufen. Insbesondere ist bei den Destinationen die Existenz tourismuskritischer sozialer Bewegungen gemein (Amrhein et al., 2022; Amrhein & Langer, 2025; Langer & Schmude, 2024; Milano et al., 2019a), eine fortlaufende Prekarisierung der Arbeitsbedingungen im Tourismussektor (Langer & Amrhein, 2025), welche diverse Formen der Arbeiter:innenorganisation nach sich zog (Cañada, 2018; Cañada & Izcarra, 2022; Valente et al., 2023), sowie eine grundsätzlich breite Ablehnung in der Bevölkerung gegen das gegenwärtige dominante Tourismusmodell (Mansilla & Hughes, 2021).

3 Akteure einer nachhaltigen Degrowth Transformation im Tourismus

Im folgenden Kapitel werden die drei Publikationen der kumulativen Dissertation hinsichtlich ihrer Forschungsfragen zusammengefasst. Neben einer kurzen Einführung in den Kontext der Studien liegt der Fokus der Zusammenfassungen auf der Darstellung der wichtigsten empirischen Ergebnisse und Forschungserkenntnisse. Für detailliertere Informationen hinsichtlich des aktuellen Standes der Forschung, in den die Publikationen jeweils eingebettet sind, sowie den konzeptionellen Hintergründen plus theoretischen Rahmen der Studien sind in Kapitel 5 die veröffentlichten Studien komplett abgedruckt.

3.1 Einfluss der Covid-19-Pandemie auf die Degrowth Debatte in Barcelona

Referenz: Langer, M. & Schmude, J, (2024). COVID-19 as a paradigm shift? Insights from the degrowth debate in tourism. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 36, 3607.
<https://doi.org/10.54055/ejtr.v36i.3137>

Barcelona ist aus tourismusgeographischer Perspektive eine zwiegespaltene Stadt. Die Situation ist geprägt vom ökonomischen Erfolg durch steigende Touristenzahlen und sich intensivierenden Protesten gegen die zunehmende Belastung durch den Tourismus. Besonders im Jahrzehnt vor der Covid-19-Pandemie wuchs der Widerstand gegen den enormen sozialen und ökologischen Druck, den die hohe Tourismusintensität auf die Stadt ausübt und es wurden vermehrt zivilgesellschaftliche Stimmen laut, die aktiv Degrowth des Tourismussektors forderten. Im Folgenden wird auf Basis der zugrundeliegenden Interviews dieser Studie der Einfluss der Covid-19-Pandemie auf die Debatte rund um die Initiierung einer nachhaltigen Degrowth Transformation des Tourismusmodells in Barcelona kontextualisiert. Zudem werden die Implikationen des dargestellten Kontextes skizziert, was wiederum zur Identifizierung von fünf potenziellen Ansatzpunkten einer Degrowth Transformation führt.

3.1.1 Entwicklungen im Tourismus in Barcelona seit Beginn der Covid-19-Pandemie

Die spanische Regierung reagierte auf die Disruption der Covid-19-Krise mit dem bis dato ersten öffentlichen Rettungsschirm für den Tourismussektor im Umfang von mehr als 20 Milliarden Euro. Die dadurch ausgelösten Entwicklungen werden teilweise als accumulation by dispossession, also als neoliberale Tendenz, Kapital aus der öffentlichen Sphäre in die Privatwirtschaft zu transferieren, kritisiert (Harvey, 2004). Bedingt durch die Mobilitätseinschränkungen in Spanien waren in Barcelona, wie auch in vielen anderen Destinationen weltweit (Schmude et al., 2021), verstärkte Tendenzen von lokalen und nationalen Formen des Tourismus zu beobachten. Die dadurch entstehende vertiefte Interaktion zwischen der lokalen Bevölkerung und ortsansässigen touristischen Leistungsträgern (wie z.B. Hotels) führte zu einem erhöhten gegenseitigen Verständnis und Interesse am Austausch zwischen touristischen Akteuren und Teilen der Bevölkerung. Des Weiteren wurde eine Abnahme der gesellschaftlichen Unterstützung für den Tourismus Degrowth Diskurs in der Stadt ersichtlich. Dies ist unter anderem mit der Abhängigkeit der Stadt vom Tourismus erklärbar. Durch die prekäre Situation für viele Arbeiter:innen und den Mangel an wirtschaftlichen Alternativen in der Stadt, wird eine Rückkehr

zum vorherigen wachstumsbasierten Tourismusmodell als unumgänglich betrachtet. Die Stakeholder im Tourismus betonen ihr Bewusstsein für die Notwendigkeit, eine direkte Rückkehr zur, von Overtourismus geprägten Situation, vor der Covid-19-Pandemie zu vermeiden. Sie vertrauen in dieser Hinsicht insbesondere auf technische Lösungen. Der Fokus liegt speziell auf Dekonzentrierungsstrategien durch digitale Lösungen, wie beispielsweise die Einführung der Check Barcelona App. Zugrunde liegt das Verständnis, dass eine quantitative Reduktion des Tourismus in Zukunft nicht nötig ist, sondern nur effizienteres Management der Touristenströme benötigt werde. Zudem heben die Stakeholder hervor, in Zukunft auf das vage definierte Konzept des Qualitätstourismus setzen zu wollen, um für ein qualitätsorientiertes Klientel attraktiver zu werden. Das Profil der zu bewerbenden Qualitätstouristen ist charakterisiert durch hohe Ausgabenbereitschaft, gastronomische und kulturelle Interessen, sowie Herkunft aus internationalen Märkten, insbesondere vom nordamerikanischen und asiatischen Kontinent. Diesbezüglich bleibt festzuhalten, dass sofern der Fokus der zukünftigen Tourismusstrategie allein auf der Reduzierung quantitativer Indikatoren wie Ankünften oder Übernachtungen zugunsten eines Qualitätstourismus liegt, es fraglich bleibt, inwieweit und durch welche Maßnahmen einer drohenden Elitisierung des urbanen Tourismus in Barcelona Einhalt geboten werden könnte.

Abbildung 7 unterstreicht die zentralen Erkenntnisse der Analyse der Interviews durch eine Visualisierung der wesentlichen wechselseitigen Beziehungen zwischen der ökonomischen Abhängigkeit vom Tourismus, der schwindenden gesellschaftlichen Unterstützung für den tourismuskritischen Diskurs während der Pandemie und der dadurch bedingten Priorisierung einer Rückkehr zum wachstumsorientierten Tourismusmodell in Barcelona.

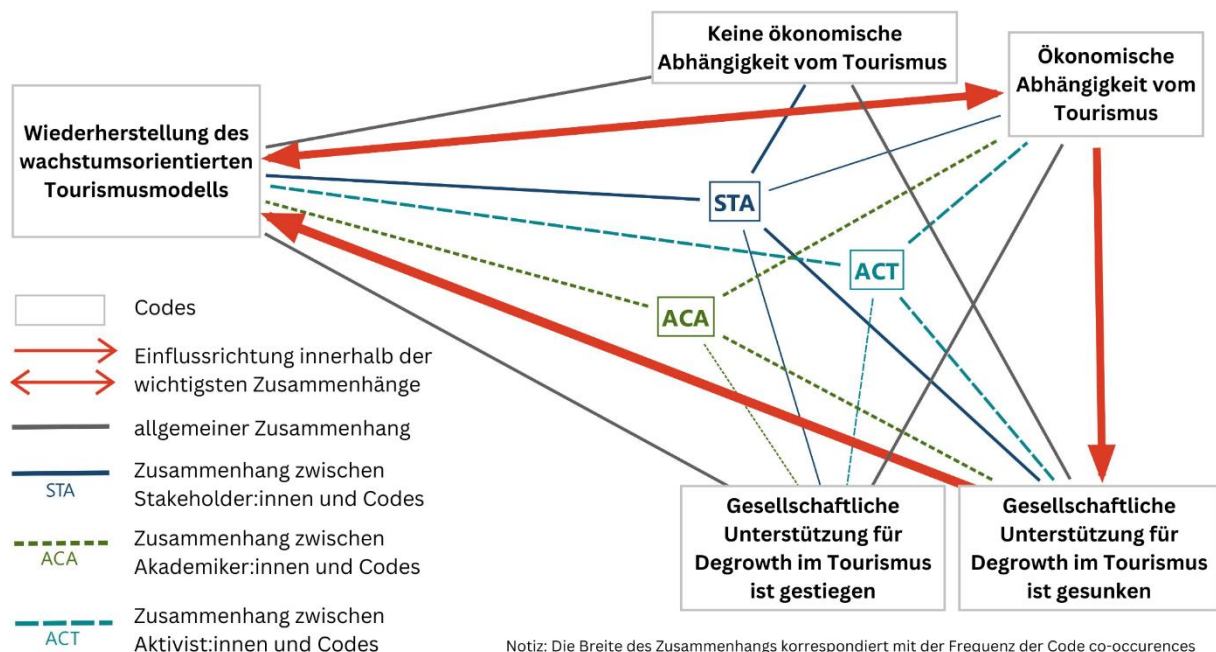


Abbildung 7: Code co-occurrence Model zur Verdeutlichung der Auswirkungen der Covid-19-Krise in Barcelona. Quelle: Langer & Schmude (2024, S.8).

3.1.2 Implikationen des Kontexts und Ansätze für die erfolgreiche Initiierung einer Degrowth Transformation

Auf Basis des durch die Covid-19-Pandemie grundlegend veränderten Kontexts des Städtetourismus in Barcelona arbeitet diese Studie fünf wichtige Implikationen für die Umsetzung einer Degrowth Transformation im Tourismus heraus. Grundsätzlich ist es ersichtlich, dass die Situation kaum vorhandener touristischer Aktivität durch die globalen Mobilitätseinschränkungen eine einzigartige politische Möglichkeit ist, die notwendige Verringerung der Abhängigkeit vom Tourismus in der Stadt voranzutreiben. Diesbezüglich wird besonders die Widerstandsfähigkeit der lokalen Stadtregierung gegenüber kurzfristig angelegten mächtigen ökonomischen Interessen, die eine schnelle Rückkehr zum touristischen Status Quo bevorzugen, von besonderer Bedeutung eingeschätzt, um eine Diversifizierung des urbanen Wirtschaftsgefüges zu realisieren. Der zweite wichtige Teilaspekt besteht darin, den derzeit von Arbeitslosigkeit betroffenen oder bedrohten Arbeitskräften im Tourismus neue Erwerbsmöglichkeiten und Perspektiven für berufliche Neuorientierung zu bieten. Die Phase der beruflichen Neuorientierung für eben jene Arbeiter:innen sollte durch Sozialversicherungsmaßnahmen gewährleistet werden. Dies verdeutlicht, dass die Umsetzung von Degrowth einen holistischen Ansatz bedingt, der mit anderen Thematiken wie dem Wohnen, der Infrastruktur und Mobilität verknüpft ist. Daraus resultiert als dritte Schlussfolgerung, dass die Degrowth Bewegung eine Vorreiterrolle bei der Förderung und Lenkung einer Bürgerdebatte nicht nur über die Rolle des Tourismus in der Stadt, sondern über einen ganzheitlichen und nachhaltigen städtischen Governance-Ansatz spielen sollte. Viertens werden verstärkte Diversifizierung, Vergenossenschaftlichung und Lokalisierung der urbanen Wirtschaft von den Expert:innen als wichtigste Entwicklungsschritte angesehen, um Pfade für Degrowth im städtischen Tourismus zu eröffnen. Die Expert:innen weisen darauf hin, dass weitere Regulierungen des Tourismusmarktes in Barcelona in Zukunft unumgänglich sein werden, um in dieser Hinsicht erfolgreich zu sein. Vorschläge diesbezüglich umfassen die Einstellung der fortlaufenden Subventionierung umweltschädlicher Unternehmen, die Anhebung des allgemeinen Steuerniveaus für Tourismusunternehmen, finanzielle und steuerliche Entlastungsmaßnahmen für umwelt- und sozialverantwortliche Unternehmen und die Einführung allgemeingültiger Obergrenzen für Übernachtungen und Ankünfte in der Stadt. Die Diskussion über und Umsetzung von nachhaltigen Entwicklungen muss auf demokratische, inklusive und unabhängige Weise umgesetzt werden. Daraus ergibt sich die fünfte Annahme, dass eine weitere Stärkung partizipativer Governance-Instrumente, wie der bereits eingerichtete Tourism council (partizipatives Organ der Bürgerbeteiligung zur Diskussion und Mitwirkung bei der Planung und Verwaltung touristischer Aktivitäten in der Stadt) oder die Decidim Plattform (partizipative demokratische Plattform, die es Bürgern ermöglicht, an politischen Prozessen verschiedener Art, wie Abstimmungen, Debatten, Konsultationen oder Selbstorganisation direkt teilzunehmen), von wesentlicher Bedeutung ist, um mehr horizontale Entscheidungsprozesse sowie proaktivere Formen des zivilen Engagements in der städtischen Politikgestaltung zu ermöglichen.

Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie können einen ersten perspektivischen Anhaltspunkt für die Degrowth Debatte seit Beginn der Covid-19-Krise in von Overtourism und Tourismusabhängigkeit geprägten Destinationen liefern. Es ist zu erwarten, dass mit der sich abzeichnenden Rückkehr zu wachstumsorientiertem Management im Tourismus die Degrowth Debatte in der akademischen und auch öffentlichen Diskussion an Bedeutung gewinnen wird. Die fünf identifizierten Ansatzpunkte für die Initiierung einer Postwachstumswende stellen diesbezüglich

einen konzeptionellen Mehrwert für die theoretische Fundierung von Degrowth im Tourismus in der akademischen Debatte dar. In der tourismuswissenschaftlichen Degrowth Literatur fehlt es an Untersuchungen, wie die angestrebte nachhaltige Transformation des Sektors tatsächlich eingeleitet werden kann. Die identifizierten Vorschläge erweitern die Debatte um diesen Aspekt und liefern erste konkrete Anregungen, um den Wandel zu forcieren. Vage und singuläre Ansätze wie der sogenannte Qualitätstourismus, die keine systemischen Veränderungen implizieren, sind letztlich nicht hilfreich und kaschieren vor allem das zugrundeliegende Problem im Tourismussektor. Zukünftige Forschungsarbeiten sollten hinsichtlich potentiell transformativer Tourismuspraktiken deutlicher herausarbeiten, welche bestehenden Ansätze, die evtl. nicht nach Degrowth benannt sind, aber ähnlichen Prinzipien folgen, bereits praktizierte erfolgreiche Alternativen zum dominanten neoliberalen Tourismusmodell bieten. Beispiele hierfür sind u.a. soziale Unternehmen, genossenschaftliche Eigentumsmodelle, Gemeineigentumsregelungen, Slow Tourism Initiativen oder gemeindebasierte Tourismusprojekte.

3.2 Analyse der Arbeitnehmer:innen Perspektive auf politische Vorschläge zur Transformation des Arbeitsmarkts

Referenz: Langer, M. & Amrhein, S. (2025). Transformational job-policies as pathways to a degrowth future in tourism? Understanding the workers perspective. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Tourism*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.4337/jqrt.2025.0018>

Die Covid-19-Krise hat die Abhängigkeiten und den Mangel an ökonomischen Alternativen zum Tourismus in vielen Destinationen, unter anderem auch Barcelona, verdeutlicht. Aus der Postwachstumsperspektive stellt sich daher die Frage, wie diese Abhängigkeiten und der damit verbundene Lock-in des Wachstumspfads im Tourismus aufgebrochen werden können. Ein zentraler Faktor ist dabei der Arbeitsmarkt sowie die Entkopplung von Erwerbsarbeit und dem Streben nach Wirtschaftswachstum (Mayrhofer & Wiese, 2020). Im Bereich der Arbeitsmarktpolitik fokussiert die Degrowth Literatur insbesondere eine Neukonzipierung von Arbeit durch die Depriorisierung von Lohnarbeit, eine grundlegende Verringerung von Arbeitslosigkeit, die Verlagerung von produktiven Tätigkeiten hin zu Care- und Freiwilligenarbeit sowie die Förderung von sozialen und ökologisch relevanten Arbeitsplätzen (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022). In diesem Zusammenhang sind vier politische Maßnahmen hervorzuheben: Universelles Grundeinkommen (UBI), Arbeitszeitverkürzung (WTR), Wirtschaftsdemokratie (ED) und Arbeitsplatzgarantie (JG) werden als elementare Bestandteile einer Transformation des Arbeitsmarktes angesehen, um die genannten Ziele zu erreichen (Hickel et al., 2022). Ziel der zugrundeliegenden Studie ist es, in diesem Zusammenhang einen Beitrag zur Degrowth Debatte im Tourismus zu leisten, indem die oft vernachlässigte Perspektive der Arbeitnehmer:innen auf ihre Situation am Arbeitsmarkt und die daraus resultierenden Forderungen und Ansatzpunkte für Veränderungen analysiert werden.

3.2.1 Kontextualisierung der Situation der Arbeitnehmer:innen

Die Situation der Arbeiter:innen, die im Rahmen der Fokusgruppe in Barcelona interviewt wurden, ist geprägt von Angst und Unsicherheit hinsichtlich der Kontinuität ihrer Arbeit und zunehmender Arbeitsüberlastung und Stress am Arbeitsplatz. Alle Teilnehmer:innen sind sich

einig, dass sich die Bemühungen, einen Lebensunterhalt in ihren jeweiligen Tätigkeiten zu verdienen, seit der Covid-19-Krise verschlimmert haben. Die meisten Teilnehmer:innen der Fokusgruppe berichten, dass sie mit Beginn der Lockdowns und dem totalen Stillstand jeglicher touristischer Aktivität ihren Arbeitsplatz ohne Anspruch auf Arbeitslosengeld, Kurzarbeitergeld oder staatliche Rettungsfonds verloren haben. Daraus ergibt sich eine enorme Enttäuschung gegenüber den staatlichen Institutionen in Bezug auf ihr Engagement zur Unterstützung der Arbeitnehmer:innen während der Krise. Die Arbeitnehmer:innen, insbesondere diejenigen, die in Leiharbeitsverhältnissen beschäftigt sind und keine spanische Staatsangehörigkeit besitzen, haben bis zum Zeitpunkt der Untersuchung keine pandemiebezogene finanzielle Unterstützung erhalten. Generell wird ersichtlich, dass die Arbeiter:innen in Leiharbeitsverhältnissen, die überwiegend einen Migrationshintergrund haben, durch den Mangel an politischer Repräsentation unter den prekärsten Arbeitsbedingungen leiden, während der Covid-19-Pandemie auf keine staatliche Unterstützung zurückgreifen konnten und im Arbeitsalltag am ehesten rassistischen und diskriminierenden Realitäten ausgesetzt sind. Diese Entwicklungen veranlassten viele Arbeitnehmer:innen, den Tourismussektor während der Pandemie zu verlassen, was wiederum zu dem öffentlichkeitswirksam thematisierten Personalmangel in vielen Destinationen führte.

Die aus der Situationsbeschreibung resultierenden Forderungen nach Veränderung sind vielfältig. Zum einen wird eine alternative Vision des Gastgewerbesektors gefordert, in der eine Humanisierung und respektvolle Anerkennung der oft unsichtbaren Arbeit im Gastgewerbe, sowohl vonseiten der Arbeitgeber:innen, als auch der Kund:innen, gewährleistet werden sollte. Zur Umsetzung der geäußerten Vision wird der Vorzug von flachen Hierarchien und horizontalen Organisationsstrukturen in Unternehmen hervorgehoben. Eine konkrete und nach Meinung aller Teilnehmer:innen zentrale erste Maßnahme auf dem Weg zu einer arbeitnehmerfreundlicheren Zukunft in der Tourismusbranche wäre die Beendigung der Externalisierungstendenzen vieler Unternehmen im Tourismussektor. Dies wäre effektiv nur durch Änderungen der Gesetzgebung möglich und ist somit vom politischen Willen abhängig, strengere Arbeitsgesetze für Unternehmen zu erlassen. Des Weiteren werden explizit gesetzliche Änderungen hinsichtlich einer Liberalisierung der Einwanderungsgesetze und ein schnellerer und effektiverer Zugang zu legalen Arbeitsgenehmigungen gefordert, um der fortschreitenden Prekarisierung und Ausweitung der Leiharbeitspraktiken entgegenzuwirken. Zur Erzeugung des notwendigen öffentlichen Drucks für diese weitreichenden politischen Veränderungen, deren Auswirkungen über die Tourismusbranche hinausgehen, betonen mehrere Teilnehmer:innen die Notwendigkeit, die kürzlich wieder entstandene Organisation in den verschiedenen Arbeitnehmer:innenkollektiven fortzusetzen und ihre Forderungen geschlossen in die Öffentlichkeit zu tragen. Darüber hinaus sind alle Teilnehmer:innen der Fokusgruppe optimistisch, dass der derzeitige Arbeitskräftemangel und der Branchenwechsel vieler Arbeiter:innen eine gute Gelegenheit bietet, die Verhandlungsmacht zu ihren Gunsten zu verlagern, und somit ein Momentum für positive Entwicklungen in der Tourismusbranche bieten könnte. Sollte es jedoch nicht zu Verbesserungen der Arbeitsbedingungen kommen, würden die gegebenen Umstände nur zu einer weiteren Intensivierung der Arbeit für diejenigen führen, die in der Tourismusbranche verbleiben.

3.2.2 Einordnung des transformativen Potentials von UBI, WTR, ED und JG

Als wichtigster Nutzen des UBI wird ein sofortiges Ende der zunehmenden Prekarisierung der Arbeitsumstände angesehen. Die Arbeiter:innen erwarten, dass durch die potentielle

Einführung eines UBI weitreichende Verbesserungen bei der Vereinbarkeit von Berufs- und Privatleben erreicht werden könnten. Die Hoffnungen der Arbeitnehmer:innen hinsichtlich der Effekte eines UBI decken sich somit mit den zentralen Zielen aus Sicht der Degrowth Literatur, nämlich der Beseitigung von gravierender wirtschaftlicher Unsicherheit, einem möglichen Schritt in Richtung angemessener Arbeitsbedingungen und dem Ende der Notwendigkeit, ausbeuterische oder entwürdigende Jobs annehmen zu müssen, um den grundlegenden Lebensunterhalt zu verdienen (Alexander, 2015).

Die Teilnehmer:innen der Fokusgruppe sehen den zentralen Nutzen von WTR- Maßnahmen in einer grundlegenden Humanisierung ihrer Arbeitssituation. Daher wird er als wichtiger Schritt zur Schaffung respektabler und würdevoller Arbeitsbedingungen wahrgenommen. Führende Degrowth Expert:innen räumen jedoch ein, dass das Verständnis der kollektiven Auswirkungen von WTR-Maßnahmen noch begrenzt ist und dass der potenzielle Druck, der von WTR auf vulnerable Arbeiter:innen ausgehen könnte, weitergehend analysiert werden muss (Hickel et al., 2022). Im Zusammenhang mit dem derzeitigen Arbeitskräftemangel im Tourismus sollte speziell untersucht werden, inwieweit reduzierte Arbeitszeiten tatsächlich zu geringerer Arbeitslosigkeit führen. Des Weiteren ist unklar, ob Arbeitszeitverkürzungen nicht zu einer Intensivierung der Arbeit und damit zum Gegenteil des erhofften Effekts führen würden.

In einem Szenario mit verstärkter Wirtschaftsdemokratie streben die Arbeitnehmer:innen bottom-up-empowerment an, indem innerhalb der Unternehmen die Strukturen von überwiegend vertikalen zu horizontaleren Organisationsmodellen konvertiert werden. Dadurch soll die vorherrschende Marginalisierung von weiblichen und migrantischen Arbeiterinnen im Tourismussektor überwunden werden. Die Teilnehmer:innen an der Fokusgruppe gehen davon aus, dass ED das Potenzial hat, die Dynamiken innerhalb des Tourismussektors systematisch zu verändern, wodurch erhebliche Verbesserungen der Arbeitsumstände erreicht werden könnten. Dies passt zum Verständnis von ED nach Kallis et al. (2018), das einen notwendigen Schritt hin zu partizipativeren Formen der Entscheidungsfindung in Unternehmen darstellt, um die Struktur der Wirtschaft in einem Degrowth Szenario radikal zu reformieren.

Die Arbeiter:innen sehen den zentralen Nutzen einer potentiellen Implementierung von JG- Programmen darin, dass es ein Ende der Externalisierungstendenzen durch Leiharbeit in der Branche bedeuten würde. Dies ist wiederum, wie im vorherigen Abschnitt beschrieben, eines der Hauptanliegen der interviewten Arbeiter:innen. Wray (2015) argumentiert, dass in einem Szenario mit bestehenden JG-Initiativen die privaten Arbeitgeber gezwungen sind, Löhne und Bedingungen anzubieten, die mindestens denen des Programms entsprechen. Aus Sicht der Arbeitnehmer:innen dient JG daher in erster Linie als Instrument, um kontinuierlich stabilere Arbeitsbedingungen zu erwirken. Dies deckt sich mit dem allgemeinen Verständnis der Degrowth Literatur von JG als einem transformativen Ansatz für soziale und wirtschaftliche Gerechtigkeit (Unti, 2015).

Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie zeigen, dass sich viele Beschäftigte im Tourismussektor nach wie vor in einem ausbeuterischen System befinden, welches in neokolonialer kapitalistischer Praxis verwurzelt ist und die Prekarisierung von überwiegend weiblichen und migrantischen Arbeitskräften seit Beginn der Covid-19-Pandemie noch verstärkt reproduziert. Um die Situation auf dem Arbeitsmarkt zu verbessern und sich aus der Abhängigkeit vom Tourismus zu befreien, werden im Allgemeinen allen vorgestellten Maßnahmen path creation Potential zugeschrieben. Das Vertrauen in top-down Interventionen wie UBI oder JG ist allerdings geringer

als in bottom-up-empowerment durch eine Mobilisierung und Organisation der Arbeiter:innen. Verstärkte Formen von Wirtschaftsdemokratie sind das greifbarste Szenario und werden daher als die praktikabelste und realistischste Option zur Transformation der Arbeit im Tourismussektor angesehen.

3.3 (Nicht-) Beteiligung von Einwohnern an Protesten in Anbetracht von Touristifizierung, Machtdynamiken und Abhängigkeiten vom Tourismus

Referenz: Amrhein, S. & Langer, M. (2025). Resistance and power dynamics in tourist destinations: a study of Mallorca's anti-touristification protests through Bourdieu's theory of practice. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2025.2455397>

Seit einigen Jahren sind nicht nur die negativen Auswirkungen des Tourismus, sondern auch der Widerstand der Bevölkerung gegen wachstumsorientierte Entwicklungen immer deutlicher zu beobachten (Colomb & Novy, 2016; Gössling et al., 2020; Milano et al., 2019a). In vielen Destinationen (unter anderem auf Mallorca, dem Fallbeispiel der Studie) entwickelten sich aus ursprünglich eher spontanen Nachbarschaftsaktionen international koordinierte soziale Bewegungen, die für eine stärkere Berücksichtigung der Bewohner:innen und ihrer Bedürfnisse protestieren. Ihre Forderungen umfassen eine Abkehr von einer wachstumsorientierten Politik, eine Reduzierung der Touristenzahlen, eine wirtschaftliche Diversifizierung, höhere Unternehmenssteuern und Reformen für eine sozial gerechte und umweltfreundliche Tourismuspolitik. Die Entstehung dieser Protestbewegungen und ihr öffentliches Auftreten weckten bei zahlreichen Autor:innen den Optimismus, dass die Akteure der Bewegungen die Handlungsmacht entwickeln könnten, Politiker:innen und die Tourismusindustrie vom wachstumsgetriebenen Weg abzubringen, der in der Tourismusentwicklung seit Jahrzehnten verfolgt wird (Dodds & Butler, 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). Umfragen vor der Covid-19-Pandemie zeigen, dass insgesamt zwei Drittel der Bewohner:innen der Balearen für eine Reduzierung der Tourismusströme waren (Guijarro, 2017). Doch wie Fletcher et al. (2021) schlussfolgern, waren die Protestbewegungen bis dato nicht in der Lage, ausreichenden Druck auf politische Entscheidungsträger auszuüben, um weitreichende Änderungen zu initiieren. Der öffentliche Druck scheint jedoch zuzunehmen. Während die Protestbewegungen in den Jahren 2017-2023 nur einige Dutzend bis einige Tausend Teilnehmer umfassten (Amrhein et al., 2022; Europa Press Islas Baleares, 2022), versammelten sich im Sommer 2024 wiederholt Zehntausende von Menschen auf den Kanarischen und Balearischen Inseln (Domblás, 2024; Jones, 2024). In diesem Kontext analysiert die vorliegende Studie die Frage der Hintergründe von Beteiligung oder Nichtbeteiligung von Einwohner:innen an Protesten für eine umwelt- und sozialverträgliche Tourismuspolitik. Ziel ist es, die Tourismusforschung um eine Analyse der Lebensrealitäten der Anwohner:innen zu bereichern, die ihre Entscheidungen für oder gegen Proteste beeinflussen. Die bis dato in der Resident Attitude Literature dominierende Social Exchange Theory und der daraus abgeleitete Support Narrative basieren auf einer Kosten-Nutzen Argumentation hinsichtlich der Einstellung von Einwohner:innen zum Tourismus (Nunkoo et al., 2013). Schmitt (2016, S.60) kritisiert diese Betrachtungsweise ohne Einbezug der Lebensrealitäten der Einwohner:innen als unterkomplex: "agency-oriented approaches lack a consideration of society and an adequate concept of agency because they are referring to simplifying rational actor theories". Da die soziale Position der Einwohner:innen und die

von der Tourismusindustrie (re-)produzierten Abhängigkeiten in der vorliegenden Studie berücksichtigt werden, werden weit verbreitete Annahmen über die Akzeptanz von Tourismus in Frage gestellt.

3.3.1 Soziale Einflussfaktoren hinsichtlich der Beteiligung an Protest und Widerstand

Die Basis des vorliegenden Papers bilden 32 qualitative Interviews mit Bewohnern der Baleareninsel Mallorca. Die empirischen Daten wurden auf der Grundlage der Praxistheorie von Bourdieu interpretiert, die in der Literatur über soziale Bewegungen als geeigneter Rahmen gilt, um die komplexen gesellschaftlichen Umstände der (Nicht-)Teilnehmer:innen von Protestbewegungen zu reflektieren (Crossley, 2008). Um die diversen Perspektiven der Bewohner:innen hinsichtlich der Anti-Overtourism Proteste zu erörtern und Gründe für oder gegen eine Unterstützung zu finden, wurden Interviews mit Einwohnern geführt, die im Tourismus arbeiten und somit sowohl die negativen Auswirkungen des Tourismus erleben als auch durch ihre Arbeit vom Tourismus finanziell profitieren. Der Forderung Bourdieus folgend, Menschen eine Stimme zu geben, die oftmals nicht gehört, beziehungsweise beachtet werden, lag der Fokus auf Personen der Arbeiter- bzw. Unterschicht, die gleichzeitig die größte Gruppe der im Tourismus Beschäftigten bilden (Bianchi & Man, 2021). Des Weiteren wurden auch Beschäftigte im informellen Sektor (Reinigungspersonal und Verkäufer von Waren wie Strandutensilien), die in der bisherigen Tourismusliteratur kaum berücksichtigt wurden und zentrale Akteure der Protestbewegung interviewt.

Die Aussagen von formell Beschäftigten im Tourismus belegen deutlich die Unzufriedenheit der Befragten mit ihrer jeweiligen Situation und der grundsätzlichen touristischen Entwicklung auf Mallorca. Das Instrument des Protests kommt für viele jedoch nicht in Frage, was sie durch ihre persönlichen Charaktereigenschaften oder die mangelnde Akzeptanz durch ihr soziales Umfeld begründen. Ihre Aussagen widerlegen damit die weitverbreitete Annahme des Support Narrative, welcher die Nichtteilnahme an Protesten automatisch darauf zurückführt, dass Personen, die persönlich vom Tourismus profitieren, grundsätzlich positiv gegenüber der touristischen Entwicklung eingestellt sind. Darüber hinaus liefern die Aussagen Hinweise für die Stichhaltigkeit der Thesen, dass das Mittel des Protests vorzugsweise höheren sozialen Schichten zur Verfügung steht (Schmitt, 2016) und innerhalb des Arbeitermilieus weniger akzeptiert würde (Barlösius, 2011). Anstatt die persönlich erlittenen Ungerechtigkeiten und prekären Verhältnisse sichtbarer zu machen, zeigen die interviewten Arbeiter:innen Anzeichen von Resignation und Entpolitisierung (Bourdieu, 1998). Diese Tendenzen werden durch eine zunehmende Prekarisierung verstärkt, die mit wachsenden Abhängigkeiten und Unsicherheiten der Arbeitnehmer einhergeht. Globale Disruptionen wie zuletzt die Covid-19-Pandemie verstärken diese Abhängigkeiten noch und fördern das Gefühl der Verunsicherung. Diesbezüglich wurde in den Interviews auch die besondere Rolle der Medien ersichtlich. Durch tendenziöse Berichterstattung, die die Forderungen der Protestbewegungen delegitimiert und verzerrt darstellt, wird massiver Einfluss auf die Entscheidung der Partizipation an Protest ausgeübt. Lemke (2004, mit Verweis auf Foucault) charakterisiert in Analogie zu Bourdieu (1998) diese Verunsicherung der Arbeitskräfte als eine wesentliche Komponente zur Aufrechterhaltung neoliberaler Praktiken. Auch Honneth (2011) sieht die Sprachlosigkeit der Arbeitnehmer:innen als eine Folge der im neoliberalen System verankerten Unsicherheiten.

Des Weiteren wird ersichtlich, dass die Gruppe der informell Beschäftigten am meisten unter den vorherrschenden diskriminierenden Praktiken der Beschäftigung im Tourismussektor und

der daraus hervorgehenden Alternativlosigkeit vom Tourismus leidet. Durch die fehlende legale Arbeitserlaubnis der informell Beschäftigten und der daraus resultierenden Exklusion von jeglicher legalen Aktivität in der Tourismusindustrie, unterliegen sie den eigenen Regeln des informellen Sektors, woraus sich für sie sehr enge Grenzen in Bezug auf Aufstiegsmöglichkeiten und starke Abhängigkeiten ergeben. Durch ihre Aussagen wird offensichtlich, dass die Teilnahme an Protesten für eine Änderung der Tourismuspolitik für sie weit von der Realität entfernt ist. Industrienähe Stimmen könnten aus diesen Aussagen schließen, dass auch die Menschen im informellen Sektor vom Tourismus profitieren und ihn deshalb befürworten. Im Rahmen der Studie wird allerdings argumentiert, dass die Gründe für die Nichtteilnahme an Protesten eindeutig in der extremen Abhängigkeit und der persönlich herausfordernden Situation ohne legale Arbeitserlaubnis liegen, die jede Auseinandersetzung mit den negativen Folgen des Tourismus verhindert.

Anders verhält es sich bei verschiedenen Akteuren der Protestbewegung, die aufgrund ihrer beruflichen Stellung und ihres relativ hohen formalen Bildungsniveaus eher der Mittelschicht oder der oberen Mittelschicht zuzuordnen sind. Außerdem sind sie wirtschaftlich weitgehend unabhängig oder zumindest nicht direkt von der Tourismusindustrie abhängig. Das Ausbleiben touristischer Aktivität während der Covid-19-Pandemie und die sich daraus ergebenden finanziellen Probleme für die Tourismusarbeiter:innen waren jedoch Anlass für die Bewegung ihre Bedürfnisse stärker zu berücksichtigen. Diese Erkenntnis führte zu einem stärkeren Engagement für durchführbare Maßnahmen, die auch die Perspektive der Arbeitnehmer einschließen. Die diesbezüglich getätigten Aussagen bezogen sich jedoch auf die „legal“ beschäftigten Arbeitnehmer:innen in der Tourismusbranche. Absichten, den informellen Sektor in die Forderungen und Überlegungen der Protestbewegung zu integrieren, waren nicht erkennbar.

3.3.2 Schlussfolgerungen für soziale Bewegungen

Ausgehend von Bourdieus Ansatz, die Gesellschaft zu theoretisieren, unterstreicht die vorliegende Studie, dass die bestehenden Meinungen und Entscheidungen zur (Nicht-) Teilnahme an tourismuskritischen Protestbewegungen nicht in einer Kosten-Nutzen Logik, wie vom Support Narrative propagiert, begründet sind. Sie sind das Ergebnis von Machtstrukturen, die durch neoliberale Diskurse verstärkt werden, die nicht nur Unsicherheiten und Abhängigkeiten (re-)produzieren, sondern auch (ohne dass sich der Einzelne dessen bewusst ist) das Denken und die Emotionen der Menschen beeinflussen und ihre Handlungen und Überzeugungen aufrechterhalten. Dies geschieht sowohl bei denjenigen, die unter diesen diskriminierenden Strukturen leiden, als auch bei den von Bourdieu als herrschende Klasse bezeichneten Akteuren. Daher behindern der inhärente Habitus und die unbewusst akzeptierten gesellschaftlichen Regeln, auch wenn sie persönliche Diskriminierung implizieren, weitreichendere gesellschaftliche Protestwellen und ermöglichen es der dominanten Klasse, ihre Machtinstrumente zur Aufrechterhaltung dieser Strukturen einzusetzen.

Diese Studie zeigt, dass die soziale Stellung eines Individuums Einfluss darauf hat, einen bewegungsorientierten Habitus zu entwickeln. Dies wiederum begünstigt die stärkere Vertretung privilegierter Klassen in sozialen Bewegungen. Wie Bourdieu (1988) feststellt, birgt eine solche Überrepräsentation einer bestimmten Klasse in den Bewegungen die Gefahr, für andere, weniger privilegierte Menschen zu sprechen und sie sogar von der Teilnahme auszuschließen. Eine solche Tendenz kann auch in der vorliegenden Studie festgestellt werden. Nachdem sie sich dieser Umstände zunächst nicht bewusst waren, scheinen die Akteure der

tourismuskritischen Protestbewegung auf Mallorca dieses Problem erkannt zu haben und Verbesserungen im Hinblick auf die Einbeziehung der Arbeiter:innenklasse vorzunehmen. Es zeigt sich, dass die Anerkennung der Arbeiter:innen und ihrer Bedürfnisse entscheidend für die sozialen Bewegungen ist, um die Teilnehmerzahlen zu erhöhen und schließlich ausreichend Druck auf die Entscheidungsträger in Politik und Tourismusindustrie ausüben zu können. Diesbezüglich findet die Einbeziehung der Beschäftigten im informellen Sektor derzeit nicht in ausreichendem Maße statt. Ein Appell an die Protestbewegungen ist daher, ihre Bedürfnisse zu berücksichtigen, einerseits um die eigenen Erfolgschancen zu erhöhen, aber auch um den Menschen eine Stimme zu geben, die am meisten unter den diskriminierenden Strukturen im Tourismussektor leiden.

4 Fazit: Zukunft der Degrowth Transformation im Tourismus

Wie im ersten Kapitel ausgeführt, identifiziert Buch-Hansen (2018) vier Bedingungen für einen Paradigmenwechsel in der Gesellschaft, hin zu Degrowth Prinzipien. Obwohl Degrowth eine Reihe von Lösungsansätzen der gegenwärtigen multidimensionalen Krise bietet und in der Wissenschaft vermehrt Aufmerksamkeit generiert, ist es weiterhin ein marginales Projekt, welches nicht in der Lage ist, relevante sozioökonomische Entwicklungen zu beeinflussen. Harvey (2010, S. 228) resümiert diesbezüglich, dass „a revolutionary politics that can grasp the nettle of endless compound capital accumulation and eventually shut it down as the prime motor of human history requires a sophisticated understanding of how social change occurs“. Anknüpfend an das Zitat von Harvey, rückt Wright (2019) die Akteursperspektive in den Mittelpunkt der Entwicklung von Strategien postkapitalistischer Pfade. In gewisser Hinsicht bestehe die größte Herausforderung bei der strategischen Vision der Überwindung des Kapitalismus darin, wie kollektive Akteure mit ausreichender Kohärenz und Handlungsmacht geschaffen werden können, um postkapitalistische Projekte (wie z.B. die Degrowth Bewegung) zu forcieren. Es reicht nicht aus, eine solide Diagnose und Kritik der Welt, wie sie ist, und eine überzeugende Darstellung der Wünschbarkeit und Durchführbarkeit von Alternativen zu haben, die die Welt zu einem besseren (nachhaltigeren, gerechteren) Ort machen könnten. Es reicht nicht einmal aus, diese transformativen Strategien aufzuzeigen. Damit diese Alternativen tatsächlich realisierbar sind, muss es Akteure des Wandels geben, die in der Lage sind, sie mithilfe dieser Strategien zu verwirklichen (ebd.).

Die vorliegende Dissertation knüpft an diese Problematik an und untersucht, welche Rolle ausgewählte Akteure (soziale Bewegungen, Arbeiter:innen, Zivilgesellschaft/Bevölkerung) in transformativen Pfaden mit dem Ziel einer Degrowth Zukunft im Tourismus einnehmen. Es zeigt sich, dass in Barcelona die Möglichkeit, das urbane Tourismusmodell während der pandemisch bedingten Zwangspause touristischer Aktivität nachhaltiger und tragfähiger zu gestalten, weitestgehend verpasst wurde. Die Forderungen der verschiedenen sozialen Bewegungen und aktivistischen Gruppierungen in der Stadt verloren politisch an Bedeutung und fanden auch in der öffentlichen Diskussion weniger Anklang. Die entstehende Krise und prekäre Situation für viele Beschäftigte im Tourismus verdeutlicht den Mangel an Alternativen zum Tourismus und die damit verbundene Abhängigkeit vom Tourismussektor in seiner bisherigen Ausprägung. Die Reaktion auf die Krise von weiten Teilen der Tourismusindustrie war die Adaption des Narrativs, fortan auf Qualitätstourismus in Barcelona setzen zu wollen (Langer & Schmude, 2024). Dies ist allerdings keinesfalls als Reaktion auf die Forderungen der verschiedenen Kollektive, die mitunter ja eine Reduzierung des quantitativen Volumens an touristischer Aktivität fordern, zu interpretieren. Stattdessen ist es eine Strategie, ein neues zahlungskräftigeres Klientel in der Stadt zu etablieren, welches sich vage definierten Reisemotiven wie kultureller Orientierung oder dem Fokus auf gastronomischen Erlebnissen bedient. Die Entwicklung von Qualitätstourismus, die keinesfalls eine Abkehr vom Wachstumsgedanken bedeutet oder den Degrowth Prinzipien von Tourismus entspricht, erfüllt dementsprechend nicht die holistischen Forderungen der diversen sozialen Bewegungen und kann stattdessen als weiterer Vorstoß der Reproduktion und Akkumulation von Kapital angesehen werden.

In der Charakterisierung der Akteursbasis der symbiotischen Transformationsstrategie spricht Wright (2010) neben sozialen Protestbewegungen besonders der Arbeiter:innenbewegung

eine zentrale Rolle zu. Im Rahmen des gewählten Forschungskontexts der Dissertation wird ersichtlich, dass Arbeiter:innen aus diversen Erwerbstätigkeiten im Tourismussektor von Barcelona bottom-up-empowerment gegenüber top-down Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung ihrer oft von fortschreitender Prekarisierung geprägten Situation auf dem touristischen Arbeitsmarkt präferieren. Geprägt durch die eigenen Erfahrungen kollektiver Arbeiter:innen-Organisation und das mangelnde Vertrauen in institutionelle Strukturen, sehen die Arbeiter:innen insbesondere Economic Democracy als effektives transformatives Werkzeug für eine nachhaltige Zukunft des Tourismussektors an. Durch eine potentielle Demokratisierung der Macht und Kontrolle über Prozesse, Entscheidungen und Arbeitsbedingungen innerhalb von Unternehmen, erhoffen sich die Arbeiter:innen mehr Teilhabe an operativen Entscheidungen, um einerseits die persönlichen Arbeitsbedingungen zu verbessern und andererseits ihre Agency hinsichtlich einer sozio-ökologisch nachhaltigen Entwicklung des Tourismussektors zu stärken (Langer & Amrhein, 2025). Bisher sind die Arbeiter:innen zwar in verschiedenen Formen (gewerkschaftlich, betriebsrätlich, unabhängige Arbeiter:innen-Bewegungen) organisiert, eine wirklich weitreichend enge Vernetzung innerhalb der Arbeiterschaft über die Grenzen des Berufsstands hinweg (z.B. Reinigungspersonal, Tour-Guides, Taxifahrer etc.) oder gar zu anderen zivilgesellschaftlichen Akteuren, wie den sozialen Bewegungen, besteht allerdings kaum. Außer den öffentlichkeitswirksamen Aktionen der Kelly-Bewegung in Spanien (Alcalde-González et al., 2021; Cañada, 2018) ist die Arbeiterschaft in der öffentlichen Wahrnehmung als Akteur einer nachhaltigen Transformation im Tourismus unterrepräsentiert. Dies manifestiert sich auch in der geringen Beachtung der Situation und Interessen der Arbeiter:innen in der tourismusgeographischen Literatur (Walmsley et al., 2022) und dem fehlenden Schulterschluss zwischen Akteuren der Degrowth Bewegungen und der Arbeiterschaft (Barca, 2017).

Obwohl eine Mehrheit der Bevölkerung sowohl auf Mallorca, als auch in Barcelona kein weiteres Wachstum im Tourismus befürwortet (Agència d'Estratègia Turística de les Illes Balears, 2023; Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2023b), ist zu konstatieren, dass die bestehenden zivilgesellschaftlichen Protestbewegungen bisher keinen ausreichenden Erfolg hatten eine konstante breite zivilgesellschaftliche Allianz, die ausreichenden Druck gegen die oftmals wachstumsorientierte Tourismusentwicklung in Barcelona und Mallorca entwickelt, zu formieren. Dies hat ihren Ursprung in der bestehenden Abhängigkeit vom Tourismus und Alternativlosigkeit zu ebendiesem, sowohl auf struktureller als auch auf individueller Ebene. Die existierenden persönlichen Unsicherheiten vieler im Tourismus Beschäftigter, gezielte Desinformationskampagnen von Teilen der Medien, sowie die mangelnde Kapazität dieser Menschen, sich mit sozialen und ökologischen Problemen ihres Sektors zu beschäftigen, aufgrund der täglichen Anstrengung überhaupt die lebensnotwendigen Grundbedürfnisse zu erfüllen, werden als die entscheidenden Gründe für das Ausbleiben von Protest identifiziert (Amrhein & Langer, 2025). Darüber hinaus bestätigt sich, dass Protest als Instrument, um Ungerechtigkeiten auszudrücken und für Veränderungen einzutreten, eher höheren sozialen Schichten zur Verfügung steht (Schmitt, 2016). In niedrigeren sozialen Schichten wird Protest eher als transgressiv empfunden, seine Anwendung ist daher weniger eine Option. Tendenzen zur Resignation, Entpolitisierung und Ohnmacht von Einwohner:innen, die nicht an die Möglichkeit glauben, ungerechte Verhältnisse zu ändern, sind ebenfalls offensichtlich. Die Nichtteilnahme an tourismuskritischen zivilgesellschaftlichen Protesten, selbst wenn sie mit den eigenen Absichten übereinstimmen, ist daher in vielen Fällen wahrscheinlich (Amrhein & Langer, 2025). Insgesamt sind die analysierten Akteure einer Degrowth Transformation in den betrachteten Fallbeispielen Barcelona und Mallorca also entweder mit zu geringer Handlungsmacht ausgestattet

(soziale Bewegungen, Aktivismus), zu wenig vernetzt (Arbeiter:innen) oder haben bisher nicht die konstant notwendige Größe (zivilgesellschaftliche Proteste), um tiefergreifende Entwicklungen anstoßen zu können.

Im Forschungskontext der Dissertation, der durch starke Ungleichheiten in Machtverhältnissen gekennzeichnet ist, basieren alle drei Untersuchungen hinsichtlich des methodischen Studiendesigns auf der Überzeugung, dass es für die Analyse der Situation der Akteure einer Degrowth Transformation im Tourismus essenziell notwendig ist, die persönliche Wahrnehmung der verschiedenen Akteure im Kern der Arbeit zu berücksichtigen. Die von den Aktivist:innen, Arbeiter:innen und Zivilpersonen erlebten und wahrgenommenen Entwicklungen ermöglichen es den Studien der Dissertation, ein umfassendes Bild der untersuchten Phänomene und ihrer Komplexität zu entwickeln. Nichtsdestotrotz hätte in dieser Hinsicht durch eine Adaption von partizipativen Forschungsmethoden eine höhere Validität der Forschungsergebnisse erreicht werden können. Insofern der Autor der Dissertation dauerhaft in den ausgewählten Forschungsgebieten ansässig gewesen wäre oder längere Zeiträume dort hätte verbringen können, wäre eine engere Vernetzung mit den Akteur:innen zu erwarten gewesen. Dies wiederum hätte wahrscheinlich eine bessere Berücksichtigung des partizipativen, sozialen und relationalen Charakters menschlichen Handelns zur Folge gehabt (van der Riet, 2008).

Bezüglich einer kritischen Einordnung von Privilegien und Positionalität in den Sozialwissenschaften stellt Le Bourdon (2022, S. 2) fest: „By reflecting on how our views have been formed and how we subsequently engage in the world, we begin to unlock new ways of seeing, knowing and doing“. Forscher:innen sollten dementsprechend bedenken, wie sich die Privilegien, die sie innehaben, auf die epistemologischen und methodischen Ansätze bei der Untersuchung auswirken (Sousa Santos, 2008). Obwohl in allen Datenerhebungen und Analysen der Dissertation versucht wurde, dies zu berücksichtigen, kann der Autor der Dissertation nicht abstreiten, eine sehr privilegierte Forschungsposition einzunehmen, die eventuell nicht immer dem Forschungskontext beziehungsweise der teilweise von Rassismus, Sexismus, Ausbeutung und Ausgrenzung geprägten Lebensrealität der Studienteilnehmer:innen (insbesondere in Paper 2 und Paper 3) gerecht wurde.

Um der Marginalisierung relevanter Akteure entgegenzuwirken und die von Buch-Hansen (2018) beschriebene umfassende und koordinierte Koalition gesellschaftlicher Kräfte voranzutreiben, sollte die Degrowth Bewegung im Tourismus grundlegend breitere Allianzen mit unter anderem Gewerkschaften, anderen Basisbewegungen, die ähnliche Interessen verfolgen, bereits institutionalisierten Umweltverbänden etc. schmieden. Savini (2024) argumentiert ebenso, dass eine Degrowth Transformation nicht von einer einzigen Gruppe von Akteuren angeführt werden kann, da diffuse Handlungsmacht oder Agency entwickelt werden muss, um einem System entgegenzuwirken, das die Macht konzentriert. Durch nichtlineare Verläufe strebt Degrowth danach popularisiert zu werden und dann Druck auf bestehende Institutionen auszuüben, die Wachstum gegenüber ökologischer Regeneration und sozialer Gerechtigkeit bevorzugen. Um eine solche Koalition im Tourismus zu ermöglichen, muss unbedingt verhindert werden, dass der Degrowth Diskurs im Tourismus nur zu lokalen eigennützigen Bewegungen führt, die lediglich ein geringeres quantitatives Volumen an Tourismus in ihrem eigenen geographischen Raum fordern. Stattdessen ist es notwendig, dass Konflikte um Overtourism und Gentrifizierung zu solidarischen und klassenübergreifenden, multi-thematischen Allianzen führen, die Interessen über die geographischen Grenzen ihrer Organisation hinweg vertreten (Valdivielso & Moranta, 2019). Ein erster Schritt in diese Richtung ist mit der

Errichtung des Network of Southern European Cities against Touristification (SET-Network) bereits getan (Langer & Schmude, 2024).

Hinsichtlich der Zustimmung in der Bevölkerung, dass Degrowth als Alternative im Tourismus wahrgenommen wird, sollte deutlicher werden, was ein solch weitreichender Wandel in der Praxis für eine Destination und ihre Einwohner für ökonomische, politische und soziale Konsequenzen hätte und durch welche Maßnahmen bzw. Policies ein Degrowth Szenario koordiniert realisiert werden könnte. Bisher wird die Degrowth Bewegung hauptsächlich als Widerstand gegen die Ausdehnung der touristischen Grenzen, d. h. die Touristifizierung von Räumen, bzw. als Widerstand gegen die fortschreitende Kommodifizierung des Tourismus verstanden (Valdivielso & Moranta, 2019). Man könnte diese Perspektive des Widerstands zum Zweck des Schutzes (von Raum, Umwelt, Bevölkerung) allerdings auch erweitern und andere positiv konnotierte Fragen aufgreifen. Beispielsweise stellt eine im Rahmen der ersten Studie (Langer & Schmude, 2024) interviewte Professorin die elementare, dem Konflikt um Degrowth im Tourismus in Barcelona zugrundeliegende Frage: „What kind of city model do you want? And then, how do you integrate tourism as a part of it?“ Um auf holistische Fragen dieser Art stichhaltige Antwort- bzw. Lösungsvorschläge liefern zu können, ist es essenziell, dass die Degrowth Bewegung eine emanzipatorische, inklusive und demokratisch organisierte Bewegung ist. Deren Ziel sollte es sein, die in kapitalistischen Marktwirtschaften meist nicht existente „capacity to participate in fundamental decisions about who we are or want to be, and about what our form of life is and should be“ durch die Teilhabe von Bürger:innen an grundlegenden wirtschaftlichen Entscheidungen (die zwar im Kern ihrer Existenz politisch sind, aber bisher ohne demokratische Teilhabe gehandhabt werden) zu gewährleisten (Fraser & Jaeggi, 2018, S. 131). Dies ist ein Weg vielfältige gesellschaftliche Kräfte und Akteure geschlossen zu bündeln und demokratisch legitimierte Antworten auf Fragen wie, welche Form von Tourismus man in seiner Stadt/auf seiner Insel haben möchte, zu finden.

5 Abdrucke der Publikationen

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5.1 COVID-19 as a paradigm shift? Insights from the degrowth debate in tourism

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Als Erstautor war ich federführend für die Konzeption, Methodologie, Datensammlung, Datenauswertung sowie das Schreiben des gesamten Artikels verantwortlich, wobei die Ergebnisinterpretation und -diskussion in enger Abstimmung mit dem Zweitautor erfolgte.

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COVID-19 as a paradigm shift? Insights from the degrowth debate in tourism

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Abstract

For years, Barcelona has been a city torn between economic success in tourism through increasing numbers of tourists and protest against the rising pressure on the city due to tourism. Resistance to the increasing social and ecological pressure exerted by intensive tourism in the city grew especially in the last ten years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and voices emerged that actively demanded a degrowth transition of the tourism sector. This paper studies the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the quest for a sustainable degrowth transformation of Barcelona's tourism model. In this regard, the central developments in Barcelona's tourism sector since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic are analyzed and the implications of these developments for the degrowth movement in the city are outlined. Within the context of the qualitative content analysis, the different social and economic perspectives of the degrowth debate in tourism in Barcelona are contrasted and classified. The central research results outline that the measures taken so far for a more sustainable tourism since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic are mainly of a technical nature and do not have systemic-transformative components. Accordingly, there are reasons to believe that a return to the growth-oriented tourism model is prioritized, and so far, no indications point to the initiation of a degrowth transition.

Keywords: Degrowth Tourism; Urban Tourism; Quality Tourism, Barcelona; Transition; Sustainable Tourism; Overtourism.

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1. Introduction

In current times of great uncertainty in which massive societal challenges and upheavals are imminent, hegemonic ideas are beginning to be questioned. Western lifestyles have caused fundamental ecological and social problems, that can no longer be ignored (IPCC, 2022). At this point of transformative situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic proves to be, it is essential to look at a sector that has strongly shaped the way of life in the Global North pre-COVID-19 and that is particularly in crisis: the tourism industry (Gössling *et al.*, 2023; Hall *et al.*, 2020). The time since the start of the pandemic dealt a major blow to the global tourism industry (Fotiadis *et al.*, 2021; Škare *et al.*, 2021). The current debate in the industry therefore revolves around the question of how to manage tourism within the current pandemic situation and what the lasting consequences of the pandemic will be in the sector. Higgins-Desbiolles (2020) emphasizes that this historic, transformative and globally unique moment offers a great opportunity to break new ground in tourism. This somehow contrasts with the UNWTO's (2020) mainstream argument for 'green growth' and a speedy recovery of the industry. Already before the pandemic, the organization stressed that the growth or quantity of tourism was not the problem, but that more efficient management was needed (UNWTO, 2018). These views and demands are for example also reflected in statements by the WTTC (2020). Even though these prominent industry proponents identify sustainability as a key challenge for the recovery of the tourism sector, the capitalist growth logic of the sector is not being questioned (Gössling *et al.*, 2023; Ioannides & Gyimóthy, 2020).

In the literature, on the other hand, a critical discussion has developed in recent years about the nature of the tourism industry and in particular about the approach to the recovery of the sector after the pandemic (Everingham & Chassagne, 2020). Gössling *et al.* (2021) highlight that the pandemic confronts the tourism industry, policy makers and tourism researchers with the systemic challenges of globalized tourism, while offering an opportunity to accelerate the transformation towards a more sustainable tourism. Furthermore, it is urgently necessary not to return to 'business as usual' after the crisis. Lew *et al.* (2020) and Brouder (2020) concur, that the crisis could prove to be a turning point for rethinking a formerly unsustainable sector. Approaches to date to considering external hazards as a stimulus for change in tourism have been discussed above all in the 'build tourism back better' discourse (Mannakkara *et al.*, 2018). In the current context, demands for socialized or post-capitalist perspectives for tourism were raised (Fletcher *et al.*, 2021; Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.*, 2021). However, a practical approach to transforming the sector remains relatively unclear until this moment.

The degrowth discourse, which is steadily gaining in popularity, is pursuing an alternative economic paradigm that is not based on exploitation and environmental destruction for the sake of economic growth and capital accumulation (Kallis *et al.*, 2018). These ideas were also increasingly discussed in tourism in the last years before the pandemic (Fletcher *et al.*, 2019). Under the current circumstances, the attempt to transform to a degrowth tourism model in certain destinations struggling or having struggled with overtourism phenomena seems more relevant than ever.

The aim of this research is to provide insights into this endeavor, using the case of the iconic urban tourism destination Barcelona, by analyzing the questions of how the existing transformational degrowth approaches in the city have been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and what the altered context implies for the initiation of a sustainable degrowth transition of urban tourism. Thus, the current situation of the pandemic, with unprecedented developments to date, is framed in the context of a degrowth turn in tourism. Accordingly, the following research builds a bridge between community-based action and global transformation perspectives in tourism with a focus on urban tourism.

This paper is structured as follows. First, the literature review and the research context introduce the degrowth debate in tourism and the case of Barcelona. Second, the research and analysis methods are described in the methodology section. Subsequently, in order to answer the research questions

regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the degrowth movement in Barcelona, the findings section is divided. Primarily, the central developments regarding tourism in Barcelona since the beginning of the pandemic and their influence on the degrowth movement are outlined. Thereafter, the implications of the given context are presented, resulting in the identification of five proposals for the successful initiation of a degrowth-transformation. The following section conflates the findings and discusses the proposition that no turn away from the growth-oriented tourism model is to be expected post-COVID-19 and that instead, the vaguely defined concept of quality tourism is receiving increasing attention. Finally, the contributions and limitations of this study, as well as needs for future research, conclude the paper.

2. Literature review

The theoretical origins and basic ideas of degrowth can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s in the fundamentals of then emerging scientific discourses such as political ecology and ecological economics (Kallis, 2018). Within the context of neoliberal economic crises in the late 2000s in the global North, voices critical of economic growth intensified and the degrowth discourse was concretized and institutionalized. Kallis (2018, p.9) provides a general, yet frequently cited definition of the concept: 'degrowth refers to a trajectory where the 'throughput' (energy, materials and waste flows) of an economy decreases while welfare, or well-being, improves'. Degrowth is thus seen by its leading proponents as a proposal to reorganize political and economic conditions in such a way that energy and resource consumption is drastically reduced in order to be compatible with the given planetary boundaries (Demaria *et al.*, 2013). The focus is deliberately placed on turning away from economic growth, as this focus is seen as the reason for the ecological and social transgressions that characterize Western societies (D'Alisa *et al.*, 2015). At this point, however, it is important to emphasize that this is not a recession or uncoordinated economic collapse, as provoked by the COVID-19 crisis for example, but a planned policy to downscale economic activity (Hickel, 2021). A much-discussed question is whether degrowth, with its growth-critical position, is hence a post-capitalist theory. Kallis (2018) concludes that growth is the central driving force of capitalism, and thus the attempt to break through the need for continuous growth means overcoming capitalism.

With regard to tourism, Hall (2009) was one of the first authors to link the general aspirations for a more sustainable sector with the degrowth movement. He connects degrowth principles with the existing debate whether to focus on qualitative development instead of aggregate quantitative growth overexploiting the environment. The most profound analysis thus far of what degrowth means in tourism is provided by Andriotis (2018). He defines degrowth in a tourism context as a deliberate transition in tourist destinations and their local economies, ending the overexploitation of resources as well as the overproduction, respectively overconsumption, to bring the tourism system back within the given planetary boundaries. Additionally, the tourists themselves are explicitly included in the definition, which advocates more responsible and fulfilling, slow, low-carbon travel. Furthermore, he expands the understanding of degrowth in tourism in a sense that it encompasses the aspect of the equitable distribution of profits from the sector for the sake of all involved stakeholders. At this point, Fletcher (2019, p.11) postulates the essential prerequisites for the understanding and the implementation of a post-capitalist degrowth-system in tourism. It has to entail: 'forms of production that are not based on private appropriation of surplus value; and forms of exchange not aimed at capital accumulation; that fully internalize the environmental and social costs of production in a manner that does not promote commodification and are grounded in common property regimes'. This implies that degrowing tourism requires the sector to evolve from a mainly private economic structure to one that serves the commons (Euler, 2019).

COVID-19 as a paradigm shift? Insights from the degrowth debate in tourism

Hall *et al.* (2021) identify two main clusters within the literature on tourism and degrowth. One centers around the topic overtourism and deals particularly with issues concerning economic development, while the other encompasses themes such as sustainable tourism development, ecotourism and tourism management. The discussions within these clusters mostly concentrates on two goals, that have received the greatest share of attention in the literature so far (Fitzpatrick *et al.*, 2022). The first concrete goal is to limit or reduce tourism activity (Hall, 2009). This refers specifically to fossil fuel-based travel, which should be subject to certain regulations (e.g. moratoria on tourism developments (Navarro-Jurado *et al.*, 2019), quotas to visit sensitive areas like World Heritage Sites (Amore & Adie, 2020); restrictions on mega-cruise ships (Renaud, 2020)) and be included in just tax schemes to cover the environmental costs (Fletcher *et al.*, 2019). The second goal is a rethinking or reconceptualization of the way we approach tourism and redirection of the current neoliberal globalized organization of the tourism system towards principles of slow and local tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.*, 2019). Central to these discussions is a prioritization of the 'right to live' over the 'right to travel' (Gascón, 2019). This encompasses favouring residents' rights and respecting environmental carrying capacities or limits over tourists' short-term wants (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Further topics being developed are the expansion or introduction of low-impact modes of transport (Moriarty & Honnery, 2013) (e.g. (night)trains, public transport, cycling, walking) and the promotion of alternative forms of ownership in the tourism industry (Renkert, 2019) (e.g. cooperativism).

Regarding the geographic scope and scale of the tourism degrowth literature, it gets apparent that so far the discussion has been mostly held in urban spaces or coastal destinations, with a strong European and especially Spanish focus (e.g. Blázquez-Salom *et al.*, 2019; Mansilla & Hughes, 2021; Navarro-Jurado *et al.*, 2019). This can partly be explained due to the general euro-centrism of degrowth and also the mature state and popularity of many Spanish mass tourism destinations leading to overtourism debates, which evoked the interest in degrowth by scholars and social movements alike (Fletcher *et al.*, 2019; Milano *et al.*, 2019a). Furthermore, tourism degrowth literature has mainly discussed community-led initiatives (Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.*, 2019; Mowforth, 2016). However, the global operational level and the multinationality of the decisive tourism players have not yet been considered strongly enough (Hall *et al.*, 2020). The issue of the level at which tourism should be transformed leads to the debate about top-down or bottom-up action to initiate a degrowth scenario (Fletcher *et al.*, 2021). D'Alisa and Kallis (2020) note the paradox that degrowth authors seemingly favor bottom-up grassroots action but still also rely on governmental top-down policy interventionism. They resolve this issue with a neo-Gramscian model of the integral state, demonstrating that transitions require changes of common senses. This happens through the creation of alternative spaces and institutions and the generalization of these changes through governmental interventions. Hence, bottom-up action and top-down policies together enable transitions (D'Alisa & Kallis, 2020). A striking example of activism seeking to transform a dominant tourism system and the impact this confrontation has on the political and societal landscape is the object of this study: Barcelona. Resistance and protest from civil society against the effects of mass tourism is a global phenomenon (Colomb & Novy, 2017). Unlike other urban tourism destinations suffering from overtourism symptoms (Amore *et al.*, 2020), such as Venice or Amsterdam with protests against inter alia cruise tourism or anti-social behavior of tourists, the case of Barcelona is unique in the sense that there the struggle against mass tourism is directly linked to the holistic degrowth debate. Nowhere are the calls of turning away from the dominant tourism model more clearly tied to demands of an urban transformation taking into account the principles of degrowth than in Barcelona.

3. Research context

As one of the world's leading urban tourism destinations, Barcelona's tourism sector has and continues to have remarkable impact on the urban economy, which also has strong industrial and manufacturing sectors as well as a dominant service industry (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2022). It is estimated that the tourism sector contributes 14% percent to the local GDP (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2023b) and

has a share of about nine per cent of all employment (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2023a). The hotel industry alone employs almost 180.000 people in the province of Barcelona (Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal, 2022). Due to the importance of the tourism sector and its enormous economic success since the city hosted the 1992 Olympic Games, Barcelona plays a special role in discussions about the tourism economy (UNWTO, 2019). Hardly anywhere else has the debate about the place and influence of tourism in the urban space been conducted as passionately and with such a high public profile as in Barcelona. As the inhabitants were increasingly critical of tourism in the city before COVID-19, the governance of tourism in the urban context became one of the key political issues (Blázquez-Salom *et al.*, 2019; Zerva *et al.*, 2019). In 2019, more than 60% of the respondents of a survey conducted by the municipality of Barcelona stated that the city had reached its maximum carrying capacity of tourists (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2019). Furthermore, another survey among citizens by the Barcelona City Council in 2017 indicated that tourism had 'become Barcelona's biggest problem', displacing unemployment to second place for the first time since 2008 (Mansilla & Hughes, 2021, p. 45). Especially the old town districts and the immediate surroundings of the most popular attractions, such as Sagrada Família or Parc Guell felt the effects of the massification of tourism, such as rent increases, displacement on the housing market, overcrowded public space, privatization of public space and a multitude of precarious jobs in the tourism sector (UNWTO, 2019). The municipality of Barcelona affirmed that these community disputes between tourists and residents generally associated with overcrowding and concentration problems seemed to be on the rise, even despite the management efforts the municipality already took (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017b). The most notable measure was the implementation in 2017 of the Special Urban Plan for Tourist Accommodation, the first intervention of this kind in Europe, which regulates all different kinds of tourist accommodations (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017a; Blanco-Romero *et al.*, 2018). The PEUAT (*Pla Especial Urbanístic d'Allotjaments Turístics* – Special Tourist Accommodation Plan) urban plan was designed based on intensive citizen participation and ultimately enacted to defend the right to housing as an extension to the right to the city (Marcuse, 2016; Russo & Scarnato, 2018).

Due to the enormous pressure of tourism on the city, both socially and ecologically, social movements emerged that actively demanded a change from the growth-oriented tourism model of the city (Milano *et al.*, 2019a). In other words, a debate around degrowth in tourism arose in Barcelona. Milano *et al.* (2019a) identify the Universal Forum of Cultures in 2004 as one of the foundational events to debate the controversial relationship between the citizens of Barcelona and the growing tourism in the city. In the following years, diverse protests emerged from civil society. The protest was particularly related to the gentrification of certain neighborhoods and the resulting sharp rise in housing and living costs in the city (Milano *et al.*, 2019a; Zerva *et al.*, 2019).

From 2015 onwards, the organization ABDT (*Assemblea de Barris pel Decreixement Turístic* – Assembly of Neighborhoods for Tourism Degrowth) was established out of the discourse critical of tourism in the city. The grassroots organization, which was founded out of thirty-five Barcelona-based social movements, associations and entities, has since been one of the central bodies regarding demands for a more socially fair and ecologically sustainable tourism in the city. Important starting points for a transformation of the tourism model on the part of the ABDT are refocusing on the right to the city, taking up the housing and cost of living issue politically and generally reducing the number of tourist arrivals in the city. In particular, a limit on flights and cruise ships has been repeatedly called for in the public discussion (ABDT, 2021). In 2018, the Network of Southern European Cities against Touristification (SET Network) emerged from the second Neighborhood Forum on Tourism organized in Barcelona. In this network, social movements from 16 southern European cities joined forces to fight against the dominant growth-oriented tourism model (ABDT, 2021). Through this protest, Barcelona became one of the pioneer cities regarding the debate about degrowth in tourism (Milano *et al.*, 2019a).

Meanwhile, the demands of the social movements have provoked a wide public response and have also been taken up by political parties (Mansilla & Hughes, 2021).

4. Materials and methods

In order to investigate the impact of the pandemic on the degrowth discourse in tourism, it is reasonable to choose an urban destination, in which the discourse was already represented in the public discussion before the pandemic, as much as in hardly any other city worldwide. Qualitative case studies are identified as one of the most suitable methods to analyze social phenomena (Yin, 2010). The use of case studies can encourage the perpetual tacking back and forth between provisional theoretical remarks and the empirical analysis on the specific case (Barnes *et al.*, 2007). As Bramwell (2011, p. 475) demonstrates, case studies are therefore especially helpful when exploring the diverse interactions between dimensions of tourism, sustainable development and governance and thus making it: 'possible to explore the context-specific character of sustainable tourism'.

The first part of the research process consisted of desk research, conducting an extensive literature review on tourism degrowth and the general impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector, as well as the examination of secondary data sources such as social movements homepages and press releases, official reports from public authorities of different levels, websites of main tourism stakeholders and social media discourses.

Following up on the literature review, this study uses an interpretative research paradigm in order to better understand the underlying phenomenon. Through the interviewees' perspectives, interviews can help to discover interrelationships, structures and patterns within cases and in this way elucidate the functioning of systems and contexts (Patton, 2015). Hence, the selected qualitative method for the described case comprised semi-structured explorative interviews. Based on the conducted interviews, it was possible to gain a deeper insight into the lived experiences and knowledge of experts and stakeholders (Creswell & Poth, 2016). To reach an enhanced understanding of current developments and underlying dynamics, a variety of qualified perspectives and opinions were taken into account. In total, 13 interviews were conducted between April and June 2021, with tourism stakeholders ($n = 7$, labelled STA1-7), complemented by social movement activists ($n = 3$, labelled ACT1-3) and academic experts in the field of tourism ($n = 3$, labelled ACA1-3). The targeted stakeholders were officials from regional or local authorities as well as public-private entities, or in management positions of local tourism businesses of different kinds. The academics were from several public universities in the region and the activists from different social movements, all being directly engaged in the cause of urban tourism development in Barcelona. All of the respondents were selected based on their direct involvement within the debate revolving around tourism in the city, their expert knowledge of the topic and through snowball sampling once the data collection process began. The sample size of this research followed the concept of saturation as a guiding principle during the qualitative data collection (Boddy, 2016; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The majority of ten interviews were held personally in Barcelona, two – at the request of the interviewees – took place online, using the software Zoom, and one interviewee answered the guiding questions in written form. All interviews took place between May and June 2021, were conducted either in English or Spanish, according to the preferences of the interviewees, were recorded after permission was given and lasted between one and two hours. Subsequently, the interviews were transcribed, resulting in 225 pages of transcribed material, which constituted the primary research data.

The examination and analysis of this data, followed the concept of analytic induction as elaborated by Patton (2015). This means that following up on a deductive phase of analysis, the researcher strives to explore the data anew for undiscovered patterns and emergent understandings. The coding, which was conducted using the software MAXQDA, follows this scheme. The themes of the guiding questions of

the interviews, which were deductively obtained from the literature research, form the basic deductive coding of the data. In the further course, inductive categories emerging from the data were added to the coding scheme, in line with direct content analysis as an attempt to identify core consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2015). Figure 1 illustrates the theme-based code structure of this research with respective deductive and inductive levels.

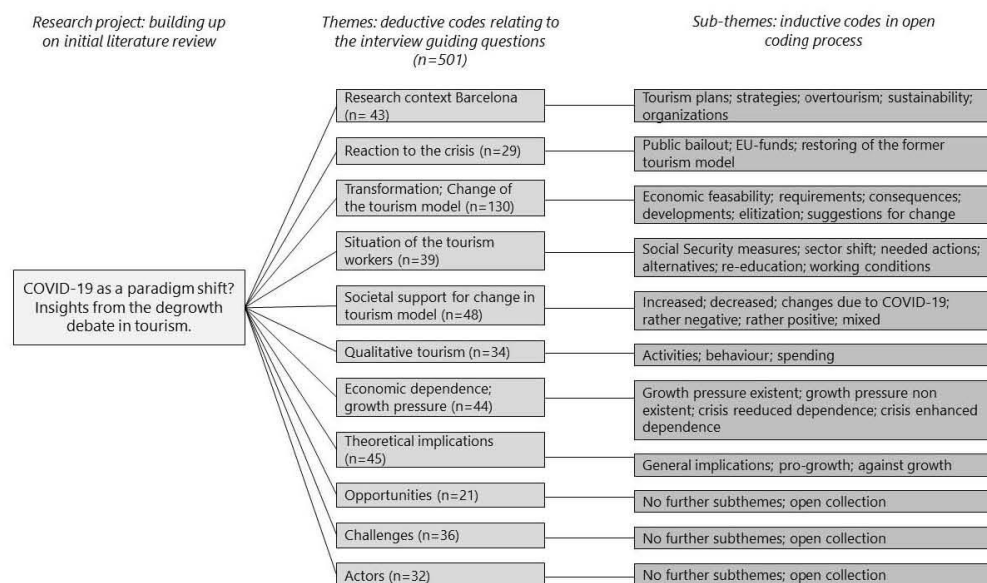


Figure 1. Coding scheme. Source: Author.

5. Findings

5.1. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Barcelona's urban tourism

Figure 2 highlights the key observations from the interviews through a visualization of the essential interrelation between the economic dependency on tourism, diminishing social support for the discourse critical of tourism and the prioritization of a return to the growth-driven tourism model in Barcelona. The data-based 'code co-occurrence model', created using the MAXMaps tool of MAXQDA, maps out the intersections of the five selected codes as well as the connections to the three interviewee groups in a network structure. The model evaluates how many documents, in this case the 13 interview transcripts, contain the selected codes. The width of the connecting lines between the codes in the model indicates the frequency of the code co-occurrences within the 13 interview transcripts and therefore the significance of the given interrelationship between the codes (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019). The thicker the connecting line, the more often the codes occurred together in the documents. The five displayed codes are all sub-themes represented in the broader coding scheme of the research, visualized in figure 1. 'Restoring of former tourism model; continued focus on growth' is the most frequently mentioned expected reaction to the COVID-19 crisis. The four other visualised codes are the interviewees' assessments of whether there is a dependence on tourism and whether societal support for degrowth in tourism has shifted. The figure shows that all academics (light green) and activists (light blue) recognize an economic dependence on tourism in Barcelona, whereas the majority of stakeholders (dark blue) question this. Furthermore, the majority of all three interviewee groups state that the social

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support for the degrowth movement has decreased since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. There is a strong interrelationship between economic dependency and diminishing societal support, as well as between both codes with the code 'restoring of former tourism model; continued focus on growth' respectively.

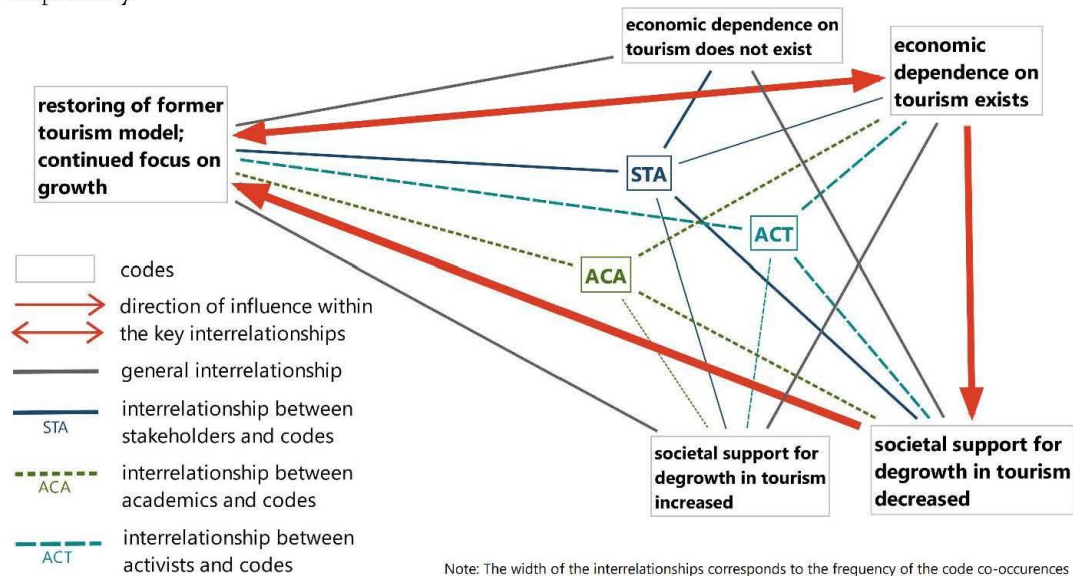


Figure 2. Code co-occurrence model highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Barcelona.

Source: Author with MAXQDA 2022.

The Spanish government reacted to the disruption of the COVID-19 crisis with a massive public bailout of the tourism sector, the first of its kind for this industry. The total sum, which amounts to over 20 billion euros, was distributed in three packages, through different channels (Mansilla & Hughes, 2021). The public bailout is criticized as (ACT₃):

‘The tendency [...] to rescue companies using the argument of labor. And what should be done is to rescue people directly in terms of work, forgetting the companies. And if companies have to go bust, let them go bust.’

This is a recurring theme in interviews with actors of civil society and academia (ACT₂, 3; ACA₂, 3). It can be identified that the crisis leads particularly to the absorption of small tourism enterprises by international chains (ACA₂). Through a Marxist perspective, these ongoing processes in the tourism economy can be identified as accumulation by dispossession (ACA₃). In this concept, Harvey (2004) argues that neoliberal capitalist policies support the accumulation of capital through the (i. a.) dispossession of private entities and the public sphere.

Another development that could be observed in Barcelona, as in many other destinations worldwide, were more local and domestic forms of tourism (Schmude *et al.*, 2021) due to strict mobility regulations in Catalonia. The enhanced interaction between the local population and touristic businesses stands out particularly in this respect. Hotel owners emphasize that (STA₂):

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'Yes, we are open, but thanks to the population of Barcelona, as the restaurants were closed, people come here to dine and sleep, they can be neighbors and this gives us a bit of joy. Because people are aware that the hotel is part of the neighborhood. I think this is the beautiful thing, that people say no, it can't be that the hotel that was next to us is closing.'

It could therefore be argued that the pandemic created an increased mutual understanding and even interest between tourism stakeholders and parts of the local population (STA6). In particular, the stakeholders emphasize the need for smoother coexistence between tourists and the respective tourism businesses and the local population, and refer to this under the term 'Convivencia' (STA2, 5, 6).

Furthermore, a change in societal support for the tourism degrowth discourse could be observed during the pandemic. A degrowth activist explains that the affinity for the discourse critical of tourism decreased as (ACT3):

'The main problem for the people is not that there is no tourism, the problem is that there is no work.'

This development is very much connected to the dependency on tourism in the city, an academic adds (ACA2):

'I think that the question is also that when you have a real dependency on just one sector, the opinion about that sector is always mediated by many contradictions.'

As long as no real feasible alternative to the given urban economic model heavily dependent on tourism is presented to the local population, the only viable option for many is the rebuilding of the former tourism model (ACA2):

'I mean, you can criticize an economic activity, but if you don't have an alternative? You may accept that you need it.'

The touristic stakeholders are very much aware of the necessity of their sector and hence focus on technical solutions to avoid reaching another overtourism situation that persisted in the city pre-COVID-19 (STA4, 5, 6; Milano *et al.*, 2019b). The focus lies especially on deconcentration strategies through digital solutions, such as the recently introduced Check Barcelona App, and strategic promotion for certain markets (STA3, 4, 5, 6). Accordingly, the dogma is that a reduction in tourist numbers compared to pre-pandemic levels is not necessary, but that better management of tourist flows is essential. As one stakeholder points out (STA4):

'I think, I really think that if we manage, if we manage them well, it is not necessary to reduce the number of tourists. On the contrary, I think that if we reduce the number of tourists, we will have a major economic problem.'

Following up on this assumption, it becomes apparent that within the debate on how to build tourism back better, tourism stakeholders increasingly use the notion of qualitative tourism and call for a switch from quantitative to qualitative indicators in tourism management. However, the concept quality tourism is not defined more precisely. Emphasis is put on the fact that (STA3):

'Quality tourism is not related with money, it is related with what kind of visitors and why they come to the city. It has to do with the motivation, with concern for sustainability, for the environment, for the city itself.'

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Meanwhile, another stakeholder argues that growth in international tourism businesses means more qualitative tourism (STA5):

'I think if we grow in especially the international markets, that will bring us more business, probably to the city, this is going to bring us more interest in international chains. And I think that gives us a quality tourism.'

Additionally, cruise tourists are being labeled quality tourists (STA7):

'Cruise tourists represent quality tourism, as they spend more than a normal tourist.'

Hence, it appears that the profile of the new quality tourists is characterized by high spendings, cultural and gastronomy orientation, and origin from international markets, especially from the North-American, and Asian continents (STA3, 5, 6). In order to attract this clientele, the city has meanwhile resumed its promotional activities, after the management of tourism had been prioritized by the tourism authorities since 2010 and promotion had even been discontinued since then, according to an official of the tourism council (STA3). Regarding the turn from quantitative to qualitative indicators, an academic states (ACA2):

'I don't know if this means that the intention is to get more tourists or more arrivals, but to get more benefits. And if you can have the same benefits or more benefits by having less tourists, that's also an option.'

Insofar as the focus of a degrowth transition is purely on the reduction of quantitative indicators such as arrivals or overnight stays for the sake of quality tourism, it remains questionable to what extent and through which policies a pending elitization of tourism in the city could be contained.

5.2. Implications for the degrowth tourism debate in Barcelona

The significantly changed context of urban tourism in Barcelona, due to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, results in five key implications for initiating an effective degrowth shift in tourism. First is the acknowledgement, that the current situation is a unique and essential moment for the necessary reduction of dependence on tourism in the city (STA2):

'From a political point of view, it is absolutely the right moment. We will never again see a reset like we have at the moment, a forced stop.'

Accordingly, several respondents point out that the capability of politics, especially at the municipal level, in confronting the powerful economic interests in the city will be crucial for a change in the urban tourism model (ACA1, 2, 3; STA2). In this respect, there are in particular concerns about the role of the semi-private and semi-public consortium Turismo de Barcelona, which is responsible for the city's tourism marketing (ACA1, 3). The incumbent pressure for this confrontation between politics and the tourism lobby comes mainly from the social movements arguing for a different future of urban tourism and the protests from civil society (ACT1, ACA3). Problematic in that sense is that often, executive power imbalances between the different political levels (municipal, state, national) prevent progressive policies at the municipal level, as the main legislative power in terms of tourism is the Catalan state (STA2, ACT1, ACA2).

The second important aspect of a degrowth shift in tourism is to provide the tourism workforce currently affected or threatened by unemployment with new employment opportunities and prospects for professional reorientation (ACT3):

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'Tourism activity must be reduced, and it cannot be at the expense of workers, who were already the most exploited and most of whom have been left in the street with nothing.'

While one stakeholder emphasizes that the current labor situation in tourism is natural and in line with market mechanisms after an external shock like the pandemic (STA6), an academic argues that social security measures are needed for the workers during the phase of professional reorientation (ACA1):

'We have to redirect support for these people, adequate training, but at the same time readapting the economic system and the economic structure so that once they are trained, they can be absorbed by the labor market. It is true that the economy has its own private and internal dynamics, but there have to be social security measures, otherwise these people, out of fear and the reality of not having an economic and social cushion to protect them during this time of transition, will continue to do what is easiest, which is to return to the tourist sector under whatever conditions.'

The discussed labor issue already makes it apparent, and indeed, tourism stakeholders as well as activists and academics agree that the analysis of the tourism model in the city actually requires a holistic approach. Hence the implementation of degrowth in tourism is an overall urban issue with severe spatial implications connected with topics such as housing, infrastructure or mobility. This leads to the third implication, that the degrowth movement needs to be at the forefront of promoting and guiding a citizen's debate not only about the role of tourism in the city, but about a holistic and sustainable urban governance approach. An activist emphasizes that (ACT3):

'Above all, we have been promoting a citizens' debate, free of pressure from lobbies and self-interested opinions. Let them [citizens] choose not only how much tourism or tourist activity we want, but what economic model we want for the city?'

An academic adds that the endeavor of a degrowth transition in tourism is in fact a question of (ACA1):

'What kind of city model do you want? And then, how do you integrate tourism as a part of it?'

In a degrowth scenario, issues such as the reconversion of parts of the tourist-infrastructure for the locals or the decarbonization of urban mobility, to name just two matters with an urgent need for action, need to be approached in a democratic, inclusive and unbiased way. Hence the fourth assumption, that a further strengthening of participative governance tools, such as the already implemented Tourism Council or the Decidim Platform, will be essential to guarantee more horizontal decision-making processes as well as more pro-active forms of civil engagement in urban policymaking (ACA3; Erdmenger, 2022).

Finally, respondents identify the diversification, cooperativization and localization of the urban economy as the key developmental steps towards opening up the space for degrowth in urban tourism (ACA1, 2, 3; STA3; ACT2, 3). Activists and academics specify that, in order to succeed in this regard, a further regulation of the touristic market in the city will be inevitable in the future (ACA2):

'the question is that if you have a free market, whoever has the power on that free market is going to benefit. So you have to control it. You have to impose rules, to place clear limits on what you can do and what you can't do [...] you have to let citizens be free and control the market. Now, what we have is that we leave the market free and we control the citizens.'

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The stakeholders agree to certain regulations, but only in the case of competitor markets, such as Airbnb from the hotel industry's point of view, or day-trip tourism which is not as beneficiary as overnight stays (STA4, 5). Suggestions on how to regulate the market include an immediate termination of subsidization of polluting businesses, raising the general tax level on tourism businesses, financial and fiscal relief measures for environmentally and socially responsible enterprises and imposing general caps on overnight stays and arrivals in the city (ACA1, 2, 3; ACT3).

6. Discussion

The aim of this paper was to provide insights into the impacts the COVID-19 crisis had on the degrowth debate in tourism on the basis of urban tourism in Barcelona along the lines of the two given research questions. Regarding the influence of the COVID-19 crisis on the tourism degrowth movement in Barcelona, it becomes apparent, that the tourism industry discovered the credo of quality tourism as a means of justification to be building tourism back better (Colmekcioglu *et al.*, 2022; Gössling & Schweiggart, 2022). As a consequence of the dependency on tourism, the local population on the other hand, especially the tourism workers, couldn't be offered viable alternatives to the tourism industry. The signs for a shift towards a degrowth tourism in the city, which does not operate at the expense of the local population and the environment, are therefore conceivably bad (Mansilla & Hughes, 2021). It appears that it will not be possible to seize the unique opportunity to rethink tourism within the context of the COVID-19 crisis (Brouder, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Lew *et al.*, 2020).

Necessary steps towards the initiation of a degrowth shift in Barcelona's tourism, arising through the presented context, would have been a reduction of dependency on tourism by diversifying and localizing the urban economy (Euler, 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020), leading to the creation of alternative employment opportunities for tourism workers with fair wages and working conditions (Cañada, 2018). But instead of developing a holistic urban approach to confront the crisis, the measures taken so far aiming towards the creation of a more sustainable tourism are mainly of a technical nature. Soft solutions such as decongestion apps are being prioritized over systemic and political consequences such as controlling the sector through market regulations like caps on arrivals or overnight stays in the city (Fletcher *et al.*, 2019; Fletcher *et al.*, 2021). This leads to the assumption, that returning to the growth-oriented tourism model is being prioritized over systemic-transformative changes. Accordingly, one activist concludes that Barcelona's society is generally far away from reaching consent about the appropriate urban economy model and the extent of tourism (ACT3):

'[We need] to be able as a society to think effectively and collectively about another economy. Which is something that in some areas, a few of us are capable of doing, but which we are obviously not capable of bringing to society as a whole. Just to be able to imagine it collectively. It would be a fundamental first step. And it is not happening.'

In the course of this argument, it is worth mentioning that during the severe tourism crisis, the construction of two prominent large-scale projects were discussed in Barcelona. The expansion of the airport and the construction of the Hermitage Museum were under debate, but were ultimately not realized after heavy protests from civil society (ACA2, STA5). The latest data from Barcelona, which shows that various tourism-specific metrics, such as cruise ship arrivals and hotel reservations, are already back in the range of 2019 or even surpassing the last year before the pandemic, confirms the perception that no turn away from the growth path is to be expected (Observatorio del Turismo en Barcelona, 2022). This is line with literature indicating that also on a global scale, evidence for a COVID-19 rebound in the tourism industry is emerging, while future high growth rates can be expected (Gössling *et al.*, 2023; UNWTO, 2021). Following up on this, an academic expects that in the case of Barcelona (ACA1):

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'The administration is going to look for ways to give everyone permission to do almost anything they want. Employers want to continue or achieve pre-crisis levels. Employees want normal work, they have to survive. And the general population? We have an enormous desire to travel and to go back to tourism. So all social strata of the population are going to be on the same line towards growth, as we understood it before.'

7. Conclusion

Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, there was a plethora of publications on the theorisation of degrowth in tourism and the practical implications of the discourse (Andriotis, 2018; Fletcher *et al.*, 2020). At the beginning of the pandemic, comments were made on what opportunities the pandemic "break" could hold for a sustainable transformation of the tourism industry. The actual impact on the degrowth debate, however, is as yet largely unexplored. In order to understand the prospects that lie in a profound degrowth debate towards more sustainable tourism, it will be essential to understand the impacts of the past years in order to be able to turn towards the future. First, this paper makes an important contribution respectively extension to the academic degrowth debate, as it is the first (to the authors' knowledge) to explicitly examine the influence of the current COVID-19 crisis on the degrowth discourse in tourism on a case basis. In this respect, it provides a first reference for the influence of external shocks with far-reaching impacts on tourism, on the degrowth debate. A perspective for possible developments regarding the growth debate in a future post-pandemic time in tourism is opened up, which enhances the conceptual discussions on degrowth in tourism around the context of the most recent global crisis. It is to be expected that with the indicated return to growth-oriented management in tourism, the degrowth debate will soon regain prominence in the academic and also public discussion. Second, the five identified proposals for the initiation of a degrowth transition add conceptual value to the theorization of degrowth in tourism within the academic debate. In the tourism degrowth literature, there is a lack of research on how the intended sustainable transformation can actually be initiated. The identified proposals extend the debate around this aspect and provide first concrete suggestions to foster change. Both the temporal context of the study with strongly increasing tourism figures after the pandemic-related mobility restrictions, as well as the geographical setting in one of the central destinations with overtourism problems and protest against the dominant tourism model is highly topical and therefore of particular relevance. Furthermore, the proposals can be of special interest for governance actors and policymakers in destinations with the need to degrow and generally for all stakeholders and social movements committed to degrowth in tourism. The overall findings can provide a first reference since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis for the situation of the degrowth debate in destinations characterized by overtourism and tourism dependency.

However, a limitation of this study is the question to what extent the results are generally transferable to other urban tourism destinations that do not share immediate similarities. Consequently, this is also a call for comparative studies to analyse the development and future perspectives for the tourism degrowth discourse in other destinations. The results of this study cannot be fully exonerated from the assumption that they are a social construct of the selected interviewee groups, which is also influenced by a certain unavoidable subjectivity of the researchers in the analysis process. In order to increase the validity of the study, it could have been beneficial to extend the scope of the research to the residents through a survey of their assessment of the situation.

The need for further research on the degrowth agenda in tourism should above all propose ways out of the dependence on tourism that exists in many destinations, to enable the exploration of regional, slow and decarbonized alternative forms of tourism. In order to counter the lack of alternatives to tourism within the context of the dominant capitalist growth logic, two questions that have received little attention so far seem essential. On the one hand, how, in a coordinated degrowth scenario, specific

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tourist infrastructure, for example hotels, could be repurposed for the local population in a constructive way, enhancing the general wellbeing in the destination. On the other hand, the degrowth discourse must not forget the precarious situation many tourism-workers find themselves in and point out paths to alternative employment opportunities with better working conditions. This paper illustrated that the unique opportunity to reform the sector during the pandemic has seemingly been missed. A more socially and ecologically sustainable model of tourism in an urban context will only be feasible in conjunction with other sectors such as urban transport & mobility, housing and the general infrastructure. Short-sighted, vague and singular approaches like quality tourism that do not imply systemic changes are ultimately not helpful and mainly conceal the underlying problem. Furthermore, it should be made more clear which existing approaches, probably not necessarily called degrowth tourism but following resembling principles, already offer successful alternatives to the dominant neoliberal tourism model. Examples are inter alia social enterprises, cooperative ownership schemes, common property regimes, slow tourism initiatives or community-based tourism projects. Degrowth needs to forge broader alliances at this stage to enhance the profile and feasibility of a sustainable transformation. In order for degrowth to be increasingly perceived as an alternative in tourism, it must become more evident what such a far-reaching transition would mean in practice for an urban tourism destination and its citizens, and through which actions a degrowth scenario could be realized in a coordinated manner. The collective understanding or notion that such a scenario would be beneficial for cities struggling with overtourism and tourism dependency issues is still largely missing.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix

Interview-guideline Stakeholder Interviews (semi-structured):

How long have you been in your position and to what extent do you deal with the overtourism & degrowth debate, what experience do you have in the overtourism & degrowth debate?

Currently, due to the developments of the Covid crisis, there is a discussion about a potential reduction of the economic dependence on tourism. What is your position in this debate?

What is your position in the discussion regarding growth pressure in tourism?

To what extent do you think it is economically feasible that a destination like Barcelona, after the covid crisis, no longer focuses on tourism growth (compared to pre-covid level) in the long run/therefore strives for degrowth in tourism?

How do you perceive the societal support for a shift away from the current, strongly growth-oriented tourism model?

What would be the most significant consequences of moving away from the current tourism model in Barcelona at this point in time?

Who among the current actors do you see as crucial change-agents/co-creators for a future growth-independent tourism model?

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What political and economic preconditions are needed for the covid crisis to become an initiator for a growth-independent future in Barcelona's tourism? How could the transformation of the tourism model be implemented after the crisis? (through which legal guidelines)

From your point of view, what could a growth-independent tourism model that is oriented towards the needs and interests of Barcelona's local community look like in the future?

In your opinion, what are the most important obstacles or challenges for a transformation of the tourism model at the present time?

What key opportunities do you see for the development of a growth-independent tourism model in Barcelona in the future?

What do you wish for the future of tourism in Barcelona? Are there still aspects of the development that we have not addressed but that are essential from your point of view?

Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

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Transformational job-policies as pathways to a degrowth future in tourism? Understanding the workers' perspective

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The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that it will only be possible to move towards a sustainable transformation in tourism, if path dependencies rooted in neoliberal growth-oriented economies are addressed. A central transformative component is the labour market and the decoupling of work from the pursuit of economic growth. The aim of this study is to contribute to the tourism degrowth debate by elucidating the often-neglected perspective of workers concerning their situation on the labour market and the resulting demands regarding policies for change. For this purpose, a focus group with nine tourism workers from Barcelona, complemented by ten stakeholder interviews, allowed to analyse their current situation and explore to what extent different popular policy proposals would empower them and thus have path creating potential towards a sustainable transformation of the tourism industry. The results outline that the workers find themselves in an exploitative system rooted in neo-colonial capitalist practice, which reproduces the precarisation of predominantly female and migrant labour even more since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. To improve the situation on the labour market, workers endorse all of the discussed policy programmes, but clearly favour bottom-up initiatives for empowerment such as a strengthened system of economic democracy.

Keywords: Path creation, Tourism degrowth, Universal basic income, Working time reduction, Economic democracy, Job guarantee, Qualitative research, Barcelona

1 INTRODUCTION

The general hope in society as well as in the academic world at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis that the pandemic hiatus could serve as an impulse to rethink our relationship with the environment has vanished. Regarding tourism, it can be observed that the anticipated turn towards sustainability in line with planetary boundaries has mostly not taken place (Gössling et al., 2023). In many places, tourism-specific

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indicators, such as arrivals or overnight stays, are already at pre-pandemic levels and a path-dependent response to the crisis, in line with the continuously dominant growth-paradigm, is evident (Wilkinson et al., 2022; UNWTO, 2023).

The pandemic highlighted the dependencies and lack of economic alternatives to tourism that prevail in many destinations. Hence, the question arises about how to break up these dependencies and the associated locked-in growth path of the sector. A growth-critical theory that has generated more and more attention in the past decade, *inter alia* due to the incompatibility of a continuation of the current tourism model with the Paris climate goals, is the degrowth concept (Gössling et al., 2023). Degrowth in tourism can be defined as a deliberate transition in tourist destinations and their local economies, ending the overexploitation of resources as well as the overproduction and overconsumption, leading to a general improvement in well-being of all involved stakeholders (Kallis, 2018). The aim is to bring the tourism system through responsible and fulfilling, slow, low-carbon travel back into the given planetary boundaries. In addition, the degrowth concept considers the aspect of equitable distribution of profits from the sector for the benefit of all stakeholders involved, the dismantling of harmful subsidies and the incorporation of externalised costs (Andriotis, 2018). Most degrowth scholars agree that such a transformation requires moving beyond capitalism, as it is not compatible with capitalism's imperative of continuous economic accumulation (Foster, 2011; Kallis, 2018; Schmelzer et al., 2022). It rather implies the necessity of rethinking society's fundamental values around concepts like sufficiency, community, care, well-being, conviviality, equity and global justice among others (Büchs and Koch, 2019; Büscher and Fletcher, 2019; Kallis et al., 2022).

Leading degrowth researchers like Hickel et al. (2022) recently called for a new research agenda particularly seeking to identify and address growth dependencies on a sector-by-sector basis. At this point, Durand et al. (2023) recognise strikingly little research on what planning for degrowth would actually entail and how the transition should be initiated. It becomes apparent that it will only be possible to move towards a sustainable degrowth transition if questions such as how and which policies would enable to break up path dependencies rooted in neoliberal growth-oriented economies are addressed. A central component in this endeavour is the labour market and the decoupling of work from the pursuit of economic growth (Mayrhofer and Wiese, 2020).

The aim of this study is to contribute to the tourism degrowth debate in this regard by elucidating the often-neglected perspective of workers regarding their situation in the labour market and the resulting demands and proposals for change. For this purpose, a focus group with nine tourism workers from Barcelona, complemented by ten semi-structured stakeholder interviews, allowed us to analyse the characteristics of their current situation and explore to what extent different popular policy proposals would empower them and thus have path-creating potential towards a sustainable degrowth transformation of the tourism industry. The policies analysed are being debated in progressive agendas and proposed by degrowth thinking: universal basic income, working time reduction, economic democracy and job guarantee (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022).

Hereof this paper adds value to the degrowth debate regarding the lack of research on planning instruments (Durand et al., 2023), extends the path creation concept in evolutionary economic geography (Hassink et al., 2019; MacKinnon et al., 2019) and establishes a constructive dialogue between workers' voices and the degrowth discourse (Barca, 2017), which is essential for the success of a socio-ecological transition.

2 DEGROWTH IN TOURISM

The degrowth discourse has become increasingly prominent in recent years, both in academia and in civil society. The level of approval for fundamental positions advocated by degrowth proponents (see Latouche, 2003; D'Alisa et al., 2015; Kallis, 2018) can be seen in recently published studies that confirm broad levels of support for post-growth ideals amongst both scientists and the general public. For example, 86% of climate researchers in the EU are in favour of post-growth positions (King et al., 2023). A survey of almost 500 sustainability scientists also found that 77% of respondents call for post-growth pathways for high-income countries (Koskimäki, 2023). Furthermore, representative data from Germany show that 88% of the population agree that 'we must find ways to live well independently of economic growth' and 77% agree that 'there are natural limits to growth that our industrialised world has long since reached' (BMUV, 2023). This is also confirmed by a survey in 34 European countries, which shows that an average of 61% of respondents are in favour of post-growth ideals (Paulson and Büchs, 2022). Also on a practical level, local governments in various European cities have begun to actively question how the mainstream focus on continued growth contributes to sustainability and collective well-being. As a result, various policies that can be attributed to the spectrum of degrowth interventions have already been implemented. For example, cities such as Amsterdam, Glasgow, Barcelona and Copenhagen promoted slow mobility, housing cooperatives, communal living, moratoriums on evictions, rent caps or emissions caps, and binding fossil fuel phase-out targets (Savini, 2024).

Nevertheless, the initiation of a wider degrowth transformation is neither foreseeable in tourism nor in general, as the real-existing impact of the degrowth movement on the functioning of the growth-oriented economic system is so far insignificant. Buch-Hansen (2018) identifies four prerequisites for a change towards degrowth. Of these, however, only the first two are currently fulfilled to a certain extent: a profound crisis of the existing system; an alternative political project; a comprehensive coalition of social forces that undertake political efforts to make the project hegemonic; and at least passive consent, not only for some ideals but also for the project as such, amongst the wider population. Utilising a Gramscian understanding of society and transformation, there is thus a lack of support and conviction for a degrowth project in both political and civil society (D'Alisa and Kallis, 2020). This raises the question of agency within degrowth transformations (Savini, 2024). Amongst degrowth advocates, there is general agreement that the movement is rooted in grassroots cultures, particularly among social movements advocating for public transport, housing, care, equal rights, public space and land rights, while opposing extractivism (Latouche, 2009; D'Alisa et al., 2013). Considering political agency, degrowth advocates argue for an ecological class consciousness through the formation of a new social movement, which bridges economic and ecological concerns (Barca, 2017).

In addition to the central theoretical and conceptual papers on tourism degrowth (e.g. Fletcher et al., 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Fletcher et al., 2021) and articles including comprehensive literature reviews on the topic (e.g. Dwyer, 2023; Murray et al., 2023; Langer and Schmude, 2024), most recent contributions focused especially on the analysis of the claim to degrow mass tourism as a means to implement 'quality tourism', leading to an elitisation of travel vs a genuine touristic degrowth agenda, downscaling the eco-social overreach of the industry through social and environmental justice measures (Blanco-Romero et al., 2023); the relationship between degrowth in tourism, energy spending and climate change through the lens of localised forms of

travel (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2023); or practical possibilities of tourism degrowth at the local level (Ruiz-Ballesteros and González-Portillo, 2024).

However, the questions of who should initiate the necessary change towards less or negative growth and what exactly should be reduced within a degrowth scenario in tourism continue to be addressed in the tourism degrowth literature largely without the consideration of agents of social transformation and policy-making and thus remain unanswered (Valdivielso and Moranta, 2019). In particular, workers are not yet considered as key actors with agency in the tourism degrowth literature, although this is exactly what is advocated in the broader degrowth literature (Barca, 2017). A look at the general degrowth literature on labour shows the focus on a reconceptualisation of work through deprioritising wage labour, reducing unemployment, redistributing productive activities towards care and volunteer work and the promotion of social and ecologically meaningful jobs (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022). In this regard, four policy features stand out. Universal basic income (UBI), working time reductions (WTR), economic democracy (ED) and job guarantee (JG) are considered to be elementary components of a transformation of the labour market, in order to achieve the objectives mentioned (Hickel et al., 2022). All four policies are frequently outlined and cited within the degrowth literature; hence, according to leading researchers, they belong to the ten core policy instruments of a degrowth transformation (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022). They are not considered mutually exclusive in the degrowth literature but could also coexist or act in a complementary way. Subsequently, they will be briefly characterised.

UBI is a state-led programme in which every citizen receives an unconditional income on a regular basis (Birnbau, 2016). The level of this payment differentiates in the literature, but most advocates argue that it should be sufficient to cover one's basic needs (Wright, 2010). There is no form of behavioural conditionality, pre-requisites or means test to receive the UBI (Birnbau, 2016). While the UBI frees people from the necessity to work to fulfil their basic needs, everybody can still choose to engage in income-generating activities (Mayrhofer and Wiese, 2020). Scholars argue that the introduction of UBI is a means to create more equalitarian and happy societies (Pickett and Wilkinson, 2010), by practically eliminating poverty and economic insecurity (Alexander, 2015). A wealth redistribution supported by UBI, financed through progressive taxation schemes, could imply a reduction in consumption of scarce natural resources, as research shows that income inequality and environmental degradation are highly interlinked (Wiedmann et al., 2020). Furthermore, it might be a pathway to more fulfilling jobs, as workers would improve their bargaining power concerning decent working conditions by reducing their dependence on paid employment (Alexander, 2015), which could lead to higher engagement in environmentally and socially beneficial non-profit oriented work (Birnbau, 2009). Generally, proponents of degrowth argue that the introduction of UBI supports degrowth transformations by distributing wealth and income through non-market mechanisms, and by maintaining an adequate material guarantee for all during transitions to smaller and less marketised economies (Kallis et al., 2020).

Second, WTR refers to the reduction of the total spent working hours at constant or higher income levels. Different conceptions exist about how this could be implemented. They range from shorter working weeks to an increased minimum number of holiday days per year, as well as strengthened rights towards maternity and paternity leave, rights to reduce working hours (e.g., for care-work) and earlier retirement policies (Pullinger, 2014). The benefits of reducing time spent in wage labour include, amongst others, higher rates of productivity (Bourlès and Cette, 2006), better work-life balance allowing people to engage in welfare-enhancing activities (Albertsen et

al., 2008) and reduced involuntary and structural unemployment through work sharing (Schor, 2015). Additionally, WTR policies are receiving increasing attention as a means to lower carbon emissions and overall environmental pressure (Kallis et al., 2013; Fitzgerald et al., 2018). It is thus seen as a key policy to reconceptualise work within the degrowth literature by deprioritising wage labour, leveraging productivity gains, ending overproduction and hence freeing time for self-defined work, such as self-regulated community initiatives (Kallis et al., 2020; Fitzpatrick et al., 2022).

Third, the central idea of ED is a redistribution of control over firms from corporate managers and corporate shareholders to a larger group of stakeholders, mainly workers (Archer, 1995). Johanisova and Wolf (2012: 564) thus define ED broadly as 'a system of checks and balances on economic power and support for the right of citizens to actively participate in the economy regardless of social status, race, gender, etc.' Several forms of ED exist, all aiming at democratising the power and control over processes, decisions and working conditions within a company, as well as the mission, objectives and operational direction of the company and the economy itself (Cumbers et al., 2020; Mayrhofer and Wiese, 2020). Examples include cooperatives, social enterprises (Johanisova and Wolf, 2012), worker-managed private and public businesses or worker-owned businesses (Gunderson, 2019). Some of the key advantages of ED being discussed in the literature are the reduction of inequality within contemporary societies (Johanisova and Wolf, 2012; Cumbers, 2018), the creation of more resilient and economically stable organisations (Mayrhofer and Wiese, 2020), higher quality of life amongst the workers (ESS, 2016) and a general strengthening of democracy (Timming and Summers, 2020). Moreover, as opposed to capitalist firms operating within the growth imperative, it is argued that ED might also have environmental benefits, as economic-democratic firms could potentially further incorporate sustainability in the decision-making (Gunderson, 2019). Kallis et al. (2018) perceive ED as an essential element within a degrowth transformation to radically restructure the scope, functions and organisation of economic processes through collective deliberation. Furthermore, Johanisova and Wolf (2012) argue that ED would enable easier implementation of degrowth policies, by for instance mitigating growth pressures caused by profit-oriented enterprises, creating more resilient societies and consequently enhancing the protection of natural support systems and non-industrial methods of production.

Lastly, the JG signifies a permanent, federally or nationally funded, and locally administered policy programme through which the government offers voluntary employment opportunities for everybody of legal working age, regardless of labour market status, race, sex, colour or creed, who is willing to work at a living wage (Wray, 1998; Tcherneva, 2018). While the jobs and respective projects are funded by the state, their implementation is administered in a decentralised, local and democratic manner in order to respond to the necessities and characteristics of the local communities (Tcherneva, 2018). The preferred fields of application are especially those which are not sufficiently covered by the private sector, such as social community services, environmental community development or renewable infrastructure installations (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022; Hickel et al., 2022). Key strengths of the JG are the elimination of involuntary unemployment, a decoupling of employment and economic growth (Wray, 1998; Parrique, 2019), the manifestation of employment as a right rather than as a duty, positive implications for the well-being of individuals (Alcott, 2013; Tcherneva, 2018) and the function as a macroeconomic stabilisation and inflation control tool (Tcherneva, 2018). Accordingly, in degrowth literature, it is argued that JG leads to a general mobilisation of labour towards social and ecological objectives. One

example could be the assurance of a just transition out of jobs for workers in declining industries, such as those based on fossil fuels (Hickel et al., 2022).

3 PATH CREATION IN TOURISM

Path dependence and path creation, sometimes also referred to as (new) path development (MacKinnon et al., 2019), are the key theoretical approaches of evolutionary economic geography (EEG), arguably one of the most influential paradigms in economic geography of the past decade, to analyse the challenges and impediments to initiating transitions (Martin and Sunley, 2006; Boschma and Frenken, 2011; Hassink et al., 2019). Path dependency essentially refers to forms of current and future development that are rooted in the past and have limited capacity for change (Anton Clavé and Wilson, 2017). These developments are characterised by self-reinforcing dynamics that result in inertia and irreversibility (Gill and Williams, 2017). A major deduction from the path dependence theory is the concept of lock-in. This refers to different structural, cognitive and political elements that act as mechanisms to preserve the continuation of the established path (Grabher, 1993).

Discourses supporting a more radical rupture with the past are being developed under the term path creation (Karnøe and Garud, 2012). Nielsen et al. (1995: 7) highlight the importance of human agency within path creation and emphasise that ‘within specific limits, social forces can redesign the board on which they are moving and reformulate the rules of the game’. The catalysts of change (Gill and Williams, 2017) leading to new paths with permanent changes and towards more sustainable outcomes can be, *inter alia*, formal and/or informal policy measures, political and grass-roots collaboration or entrepreneurial innovation-led mechanisms (Martin and Sunley, 2006; Sanz-Ibáñez et al., 2017). Concerning the role of agency within path-creating developments, EEG analysis has focused traditionally on firm-driven processes, hence firm-driven agency (Boschma and Frenken, 2011). Hassink et al. (2019) and Dawley et al. (2015) instead argue for an expansion of the scope of analysis, also to the system-level agency of a broader range of actors, such as policy actors and the state. Therefore, influences outside the institutional and organisational boundaries of companies should be included and the importance of future-oriented expectations and visions of different actors should be taken into account (Steen, 2016).

Within tourism research, a lot of emphasis has been put on understanding the potentially negative outcomes of path dependence in mature destinations with high tourism dependency (Brouder et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2022). Path dependence in tourism was especially analysed regarding the avoidance of future regional ruination, as it implies being forced to continue on the same path once established as well as limited capacity for innovation (Anton Clavé and Wilson, 2017). The COVID-19 crisis confirmed the early assumption of Brouder (2020) that the likelihood of transformation as a result of the crisis is low, due to the insufficient capacities of institutional innovation on both demand and supply sides. Meanwhile, the dependencies on tourism prevailing in many destinations became apparent, resulting in a lock-in to the dominant growth path (Wilkinson et al., 2022).

Recently, Hassink et al. (2019) called to rethink critical research on path creation and follow-up upon new research strands beyond the development of paths towards goals such as competitiveness, innovation or growth. Furthermore, EEG generally is being criticised to neglect the role of social and institutional environments of economic activities (Henning et al., 2013; Pike et al., 2016), whilst also not incorporating other

potentially influential exogenous sources, such as national and supranational policies and regulations (Martin and Sunley, 2006; Dawley et al., 2015).

The views and perceptions of workers regarding national and supranational policies and regulations potentially creating new paths in the tourism sector have not been integrated in sufficient depth into the tourism geography literature (Cañada, 2018). Moreover, to the best of the authors' knowledge, workers have not yet been studied as actors obtaining human agency in tourism degrowth transition literature.

A notable exception explicitly highlighting the agency of workers in mostly rural and indigenous settings in the so-called Global South is the stream of literature focusing on community-based tourism (Chassagne and Everingham, 2020; Renkert, 2020; Cañada, 2021). However, this article focuses on tourism workers in urban settings in the so-called Global North, which are employed and dependent on wage labour, whilst also not possessing any direct ownership in the tourism organisations or businesses they are working at.

Against this background, we want to assess to what extent the outlined policies, all core features within the broader conceptualisation of a degrowth transformation, could potentially act as path creating forces towards a sustainable future in tourism. The chosen approach extends the analytical focus of path creation research beyond firms and entrepreneurs as actors and aims to determine whether and how the policies are perceived by workers as possibilities to pave new paths in the tourism industry. In order to characterise and differentiate the potential for change perceived by the workers, the empowerment concept is used. Aghazamani and Hunt (2017: 343) define empowerment as 'a multidimensional, context-dependent, and dynamic process that provides humans, individually or collectively, with greater agency, freedom, and capacity to improve their quality of life as a function of engagement with the phenomenon of tourism'. According to Scheyvens (1999), we differentiate between economic, psychological, social and political forms of empowerment as opposed to disempowerment, which refers to the lack of participation in decision-making or governance, to assess the path creation potential of the presented policy instruments.

4 RESEARCH CONTEXT

As outlined, the COVID-19 crisis revealed the path dependencies in many destinations, where the necessary sustainable transition of the tourism model could not be initiated, but the 'old normal' as Wilkinson et al. (2022: 3) label the lock-in to the dominant neoliberal growth-oriented path in tourism, is returning. One of those destinations is Barcelona, a city where tourist arrivals are already above pre-pandemic levels (Observatori del Turisme a Barcelona, 2022). The city, therefore, proves to be a valuable context to explore the perception of workers in precarious working environments (Cañada, 2018; Cañada and Izcara, 2022; Walmsley et al., 2022) on potentially path creating elements. In Barcelona, the tourism labour market plays a significant role within the urban economy. Estimates indicate that 9% of the working population in the city are employed in tourism (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2023). The governance of the growing and intensifying urban tourism in Barcelona was the subject of intense public and political debate before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Blázquez-Salom et al., 2019; Milano et al., 2019; Mansilla and Hughes, 2021). Cañada (2018) identifies increasing outsourcing practices, enabled by a labour reform in 2012, as a particularly influential factor leading to precariousness in the tourism labour market in Spain. These externalisation tendencies led amongst others to a decrease in salaries; an intensification of work; greater

uncertainty in the duration of employment, timetables and work schedule; deprofessionalisation; negative effects on workers' health, including increased stress and burnout as well as a decrease in the capacity of representation of workers caused by a decline in unionisation (*ibid*). Furthermore, Cañada and Izcara (2022) researched the situation of tourism workers in Barcelona during and after the COVID-19 induced lockdowns, and how the pandemic changed the situation of the tourism labour market. Their results outline a situation of increasing uncertainty and precariousness in many jobs, leading to a lack of staff in numerous companies. Many workers seem to flee from a sector that is characterised by low wages, unfavourable working hours and an overload of work. Despite the growing acknowledgement that neoliberal organised and growth-driven tourism management leads to precarious jobs and deteriorating working conditions in many destinations suffering from overtourism (UNWTO, 2019; Bianchi and Man, 2021), there is so far little engagement within the tourism geography discipline in general and studies of tourism degrowth in particular with tourism employment and the marginalised situation of many tourism workers regarding the involvement in decision-making (Cañada, 2018; Walmsley et al., 2022). Nevertheless, it can be observed that since the COVID-19 pandemic the interest in topics surrounding tourism labour and employment, the so-called sustainable employment in tourism agenda (Mooney and Baum, 2019) is increasing. Examples include studies on decent work (Ioannides et al., 2021), dignity in tourism employment (Winchenbach et al., 2021), job vulnerability and income inequality (Sun et al., 2022) or the interconnectedness of tourism and labour migration (Salazar, 2022), amongst others. In this paper, tourism workers' perspectives on the situation are explicitly incorporated, through which the paper fosters to build up a necessary constructive dialogue between workers' voices and the degrowth movement (Barca, 2017).

5 METHODOLOGY

This research follows calls for new research agendas within economic geography based upon qualitative research methods (Hassink et al., 2019; MacKinnon et al., 2019), exploring agency beyond firms as actors in order to generate empirical prospective data of anticipated alternative futures (Steen, 2016). As a methodological approach to engage with the worker perspective, a focus group seems particularly suitable in this endeavour. Focus groups allow for in-depth exploration of individual views of several participants, whilst also generating interesting group dynamics, which stimulate and enhance creative debates between the participants (Barbour, 2018). In a group setting, participants can outline their experiences, perspectives and opinions on a given topic, which allows the researcher to understand the contextual factors shaping behaviours in a given economic and social setting (Krueger and Casey, 2015). The diversity of the multiple perspectives involved in a focus group helps to identify patterns, commonalities as well as different social and psychological dimensions amongst the participants. This contributes to a comprehensive and deep understanding of the researched issue and involved processes (Barbour, 2018). The composition of the participants of the focus group was based on the principle of purposive sampling, aiming for a group characterised by heterogeneity in terms of employment fields in tourism and diversity in terms of sociodemographic attributes, professional experiences and personal backgrounds (Patton, 2015). Ladkin (2011) acknowledges the complexities in defining tourism employment, which are connected to the ongoing discussion of whether tourism and hospitality are to be seen as a common or two separate industries. We adapt an understanding of tourism employment in a broad sense, based on the UNWTO (2024:

5) definition of employment in the tourism industries referring to ‘all jobs (or persons employed) providing tourism and non-tourism services in all tourism industry establishments’. According to the ILO (2006: 5), tourism industries are the sum of all tourism characteristic industries, which in turn can be defined as ‘an industry that either (a) produces commodities of particular importance to visitors which therefore represent a significant part of tourism demand, (...) or whose existence is very strongly dependent on tourism demand and would be seriously affected were tourism to cease’. We adhered to this definition and understanding of tourism workers, in the sense that all focus group participants were falling into this categorisation. As we focus on the perspective of the working class, all participants were employees, who are compensated through salary-based contracts and rely upon their earnings from wage labour. The participants were contacted and invited online (especially through social media) and via existing contacts in the tourism field in Barcelona from previous research. Apart from being willing to share and discuss own experiences, expectations and needs of workers in the tourism sector, no further background information on the research approach was given prior to the focus group. All necessary information about the researcher and the research project as well as the focus group procedure was explained verbally at the beginning of the focus group. The revelatory heterogeneous group highlighted diverse perceptions of tourism labour among workers and thus fulfilled the goal of providing an information-rich perspective on the research topic (Daniels et al., 2018). Furthermore, in the sampling process we paid attention, that there are no hierarchies or power imbalances within the group (Barbour, 2018). Along with Krueger and Casey (2015: 26) we tried to establish a ‘permissive environment that encourages participants to share perceptions and points of view’.

The focus group that forms the empirical basis of this research took place on the 24 August 2022 in Barcelona. Participants were nine tourism workers from different employment fields and employed by different companies. The group constellation reflected the predominant female and migrant workforce in the tourism sector in Spain (Cañada and Izcara, 2022), insofar as eight out of nine participants were female and six out of nine participants were not from Spanish nationality (Table 1).

The focus group was organised in three stages, which also laid ground for the structure of the results section. First of all, participants shared insights on their current situation on the tourism labour market (see Section 5.1) and subsequently discussed their wishes and demands for change (see Section 5.2). Throughout this part, the session was moderated using guiding topics and questions. In addition to oral contributions

Table 1 Focus group constellation

–	Nationality	Employment field	Employment type	Gender
P1	Brazil	Event Industry	Self-employed	female
P2	Spain	Retail	Regular contract	female
P3	Spain	Kitchen	Regular contract	male
P4	Colombia	Cleaning	Regular contract	female
P5	Ecuador	Cleaning	Subcontracted	female
P6	Spain	Cleaning	Subcontracted	female
P7	Peru	Cleaning	Subcontracted	female
P8	Belgium	Catering trade	Regular contract	female
P9	Brazil	Event Industry, Nightlife	Self-employed	female

Source: Author elaboration.

and as a means to render the session more dynamic and visual, note-pads were made available for all participants where they had to write down key words and ideas associated with the themes being discussed. Second, the focus group moderator presented and defined the four policy programmes to the participants, which, third, were asked to assign the keywords collected during the discussion to the four policies. This was done in a collective manner, placing the note-pads on a board with regard to the potential of addressing their problems or meeting the demands formulated. Furthermore, participants were given the opportunity to specify which of the issues they highlighted would not be addressed by the policies and would therefore require alternative measures. Figure 1 depicting the final visualisation of this process, as well as a further analysis of this activity can be found in Section 6. The sense of implementing an interactive character in a focus group through specific tasks or activities is to foster active participation, enhance collaboration and stimulate creativity amongst participants in order to generate data and insights in a synergistic manner (Finch and Lewis, 2003).

This study furthermore adapts a mixed-methods approach of data triangulation to strengthen the methodological basis of this research (Patton, 2015). Apart from the focus group, ten semi-structured stakeholder interviews with high-level officials from the public administration of Barcelona (IADM1,2), social movement activists involved in the debate around tourism degrowth in Barcelona (IACT1,2,3), tourism science academics of different public universities in Barcelona (IACA1,2,3) and executives in management positions of local tourism businesses (IBUS1,2), all conducted in May and June 2021, serve as a foundation for the preparation of the focus group and also complementary enhance the credibility of evidence presented in the results section, by providing cross-data validity checks (Mertens and Hesse-Biber, 2013) (Table 2).

Conducting the stakeholder interviews was the first step in the research process. Targeting the research participants for the stakeholder interviews followed the principle of purposive sampling (Patton, 2015). All interviewees were contacted online and given information about the research before the interviews. The interviews were guided by predetermined questions, whilst still allowing the interviewees to express insights on their own experiences and perspectives on the research topic. Building on the contextualisation of the situation by the stakeholders from diverse professional backgrounds and involvements in the debate around urban tourism development in Barcelona, the focus group described before was then methodologically developed upon the empirical foundation of the interviews. We use this qualitative method triangulation to achieve

Table 2 Overview of interviewees

–	Institution/Organisation/Business
IADM1	Consell de Turisme i Ciutat
IADM2	Consorci de Turisme de Barcelona
IACT1	Ecologistas en Acción
IACT2	Assemblea de Barris pel Decreixement Turístic
IACT3	Federació d'Associacions de Veïns i Veïnes de Barcelona
IACA1	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
IACA2	Universitat de Barcelona
IACA3	Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
IBUS1	4-star hotel owner in Barcelona
IBUS2	Certified tour guide for Catalonia

Source: Author elaboration.

more comprehensive understandings of the research phenomena through enhanced data richness and depth of inquiry (Lambert and Loisel, 2008). The interview data complement the focus group data in Section 6 to explore the structural characteristics of potentially path creating policies in the tourism sector. The synergy of data sources ultimately creates a more complete picture of the research topic. All interviews lasted in between one and two hours. Eight interviews were conducted personally in Barcelona and two interviews took place online, using the software Zoom.

The effort to protect the confidentiality of the participants of the focus group and the interviewees was ensured at all times. The focus group was conducted in Spanish, the interviews in either Spanish, English or German. All the material was recorded (with permission of all participants/interviewees), transcribed and subsequently translated to English by the authors.

Regarding the analysis of the data, a primarily inductive approach with an open coding process was used. As Thomas (2006: 239) outlines, in the inductive analysis 'although the findings are influenced by the evaluation objectives or questions outlined by the researcher, the findings arise directly from the analysis of the raw data, not from a priori expectations or models'. The only level of a priori set deductive codes was the categorisation of the findings of the transcribed discussion in the focus group as well as the visualised collection of the key themes and their respective relation to the four policies into the four dimensions of empowerment or disempowerment (Scheyvens, 1999). The analysis of the empirical data was carried out with MAXQDA to guarantee rigor by enhancing validity, transparency and credibility (Chandra and Shang, 2017).

6 RESULTS

The following section focuses on the experiences of the workers in the given context, as well as on the resulting demands and desired changes on the labour market through their perspective. The analysis is structured into the different forms of psychological, social, political and economic disempowerment being experienced or empowerment the workers are seeking. Finally, the path creation potential of the different policies is assessed. Throughout this section, the empirical findings from the focus group are being complemented by the perspectives derived of the stakeholder interviews.

6.1 Situation of the tourism workers

Fear and uncertainty regarding the continuity of their work characterise the psychological situation participants are experiencing currently, and which is especially enhanced through the COVID-19 crisis (P3):

'I think there is also a fear of being out of work. The fear of not having continuity of employment has also been a factor after the pandemic. If there was already poverty before the pandemic, this has even made people more afraid. So fear makes it easier for the company to control the worker'.

Furthermore, they account an increasing overload of work and stress at the workplace (P1):

'It is simply not possible to work more than we are currently working',

coupled with a lack of empathy and valorisation towards their work from many employers (P1, P6, P7). Finally, the participants report that the political mobilisation

of workers has resumed after the pandemic break, taking up the fight again to claim their rights and improve the working conditions in the sector. It gets emphasized that the main demands, such as an end to subcontracting and a reduction in the volume of work, have not changed significantly in comparison to the years before the pandemic, but must now be reintroduced into the public debate in an organized way (P5).

All focus group participants agreed that the struggle to gain a livelihood with their respective jobs has worsened since the COVID-19 crisis:

‘Because in the end we are the same or worse off than before, because we have been regressing years and people are getting poorer and poorer while the millionaires make more than before at the expense of the working class. We are struggling to make ends meet’. (P5)

The necessary financial support during the pandemic came mainly from small self-organised collectives and the community, but not the state, as one participant explains:

‘We have received help from small collectives to get ahead, because many of our colleagues have found themselves on the street (...) So they [the collectives] went on to set up soup kitchens. They have been the ones who have brought whole families forward. As we always say, the people save the people, because the governments and the institutions or the trade unions don't do anything’. (P6)

The hope of a staff member in the tourism department of the city of Barcelona that the COVID-19 crisis might be utilised for an improvement in working conditions for tourism workers, therefore, proved to be false:

‘Hopefully now is a moment to rethink that, when the tourists come back to Barcelona, they [the workers] have better working conditions. I really hope that the city can develop norms or whatever it's needed to make that happen’. (IADM1)

From the preceding aspect results an enormous disappointment towards political structures in their commitment to support workers during the crisis (P1, P5, P6, P7). The focus group participants, particularly those who are in subcontracted employment relationships and without the Spanish nationality, have until now not achieved any pandemic-related financial support, as one participant points out:

‘COVID-19 has closed the doors [to receive public support] even more to us’. (P6)

Hence, there is no hope among them, that effective help can be expected from governmental structures (P5, P6, P7, P9). This is also manifested by the non-fulfilment of political promises such as the implementation of the ‘Kelly law’, which would have meant comprehensive improvements in the working conditions of subcontracted workers in the hotel industry (P5). Overall, there exists widespread disagreements between self employed or subcontracted workers (P1, P5, P6, P7, P9) and those in regular employment (P2, P3, P4, P8) about the role of the state as well as about the major trade unions. While regularly employed participants in less precarious situations emphasise the value of works council organisation supported by trade unions, the self-employed or subcontracted workers, who face higher barriers to union organising, feel left behind and have mostly lost faith in state or trade union institutions.

There is a common agreement that the externalised and subcontracted workers, who result to be the most vulnerable, were most impacted by the crisis in economic terms, while the ones organised in works councils were less affected (P3, P4). Most of the focus group participants report that with the beginning of the lockdowns and the total

halt of any tourism activity, they lost their jobs without any eligibility for unemployment benefits, short-time allowances or state rescue funds. One of the self-employed participants (P1) of the focus group shares her experience, which she has in common with many other self-employed or subcontracted colleagues:

'I was left in the [...] pandemic with nothing to earn. Nothing, nothing. Because there are no events, I'm self-employed and bam [I'm without any income]'.

This shows that the governmental institutions have mostly failed to meet the needs of workers in precarious working environments and have not complied with the measures demanded by stakeholders at an earlier stage of the pandemic, especially geared towards fast and easily accessible universal social security measures to vulnerable tourism workers of all employment types (IAC1, IAC2, IAC3).

Those able to continue to work sporadically give account that wages were often paid long overdue or sometimes not at all due to insolvencies of their employers (P1, P6, P7). Furthermore, participants reported that it is common practice to employ migrant workers without legal residence papers and in subcontracted relationships, often drastically below the actual Spanish minimum wage:

'The first step is to have papers, so there are a lot of people like the chambermaids that don't have papers. But they [the employers] arrange something so that you can work. It's unbelievable. What they pay is five euros per hour if you don't have papers'. (P1)

The above-described developments, amongst others, led to many workers switching the sector and leaving the country during the pandemic, causing the much-reported shortages of staff many destinations and tourism businesses are experiencing currently (P3, P4, IBUS1, IBUS2).

6.2 Demands arising of the context

Regarding the psychological dimension of empowerment, several participants are calling for a better valorisation of their work from their employers (P1, P4, P6, P7). This demand is also expanded towards the worker–customer relationship. Different workers emphasise that a different vision of the hospitality system is needed, in which a humanisation of the often invisible work that workers are performing should be guaranteed (P1, P2, P7, P8). The participants share reflections upon the desired vision, which revolve foremost around respect (P8):

'I know a bar, where in the bathroom there is a sign that says this bathroom is cleaned by a person. And the fact that it has to be there for people to notice that kind of thing is horrible. It really disgusts me. [...] It's an invisible job. In the end you can't see if it's done, but if it's not done, who cleans up the world? We lack respect for these people who do it, don't we?'.

Additionally, an underlying critique of money and power in contemporary capitalist societies is highlighted. One participant (P1), who works in the events industry, illustrates that an unjust system prevails in tourism in which many workers from the Global South depending on tourism labour are exploited and tourists predominantly from the Global North enjoy a feeling of superiority due to their high solvency. As a result, many of the participants repeatedly experience situations where both the tourists and the employers convey the feeling that they can get away with anything:

'So there is a whole colonial system within a capitalist system in which the idea of tourism is: I pay, I can'. (P1)

To confront the various problems on the labour market in tourism, the necessity of ensuring basic working conditions for all workers is acknowledged from the public administration (IADM1). One academic expert (IACA2) emphasises that:

‘the first step is to give decent jobs to this generation. So, to get these cleaners and housekeepers a decent job, meaning a 40-hour contract, not a temporary job. And then we can start to talk about a more sustainable sector’.

Above all and as a first step from the workers perspective, improving the reconciliation between job and family and ensuring the continuity of work must be addressed (P3, P6). To ensure these basic rights, several participants highlight the imperative to continue the recently re-emerging organisation throughout the different workers’ collectives and take their demands as a unified sector to the streets (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6).

Concerning social forms of empowerment to be advanced in the sector, different participants pledge for the worth of social tourism certificates to enhance the profile of sustainable travel choices for the consumers (P1, P3). In this way, participants explicitly stress the consumers’ responsibility. To fulfil this responsibility, it is also emphasised that further information and educational measures regarding the social and ecological impact of tourism actions would be necessary (P1). Additionally, the need to improve training and educational measures within the sector is commonly identified by the focus group participants (P6, P7) and academics (IACA2) as well as the public administration:

‘If we want to be an example of sustainable urban tourism, the first thing we must do is to educate well all the people we have working in our sector and equip them with really equitable salaries. We have to give value to these professionals, because one of the big problems in tourism is staff turnover’. (IADM2)

Improved educational measures, therefore, apply, on the one hand, to minimise job-related health risks and accidents, and on the other hand, to counteract the emigration of human capital to other countries (P6, P7).

As a means of political empowerment, participants view legislation changes within the tourism industry as inevitable (P1, P3, P5, P6). They place a special focus on an easing of immigration laws and easier access to legal working permits (P4, P6, P9). Female migrant workers particularly suffer from exploitative working conditions and externalisation due to their lack of political representation, despite arguably being the basis of one of the most important sectors of the whole Spanish economy (IACT3):

‘[we have to] work on the immigration laws, the recognition of migrants as a class which is actually the basis of everything. Like we come here to do the work that people here don’t want to do and we do it well. All the people that I see are the most hardworking. The Latin Americans, the Africans, the Asians’. (P9)

To confront the political forms of disempowerment experienced by the participants, they are calling for the imperative of adapting an intersectional migrant and feminist perspective to resolve the racist and discriminatory issues that still affect many of them in their daily professional life (P1, P9). In order to create the necessary public pressure to move towards these far-reaching policy changes, which impact goes beyond only the tourism industry, two workers highlight the role academia could play in this regard (P1, P2). They directly call on the scientific community to endorse the workers’ organisation, because diverse mobilisation and communication channels are needed to increase the public pressure on governmental structures:

‘We need both internal and external impacts’. (P2)

Apart from trying to stimulate public and hence political pressure through workers' organisation and potential alliances with the academic world, focus group participants also formulate approaches on how to transform the economy from within, as a means of economic empowerment. Particularly flatter hierarchies leading to a more horizontal organisation of companies and the stimulation of an open and direct communication culture in businesses through the introduction of assemblies in which strategic decisions can be reached in a straightforward and efficient manner are considered essential in order to move towards a different economic structure:

'I am referring to an organisation with a more afro-diasporic vision, in which there are more assemblies as a form of exchange of ideas and functions as well'. (P2)

The ideas expressed by the participants therefore correspond with the proposals from researchers for strengthening cooperativism and social economy principles:

'When we think of cooperativism or social economy, we should also be talking about the tourism industry'. (IACA3)

As well as the introduction of bottom-up dynamic participatory governance approaches in order to move towards a more resilient and diversified local economy in Barcelona:

'That is something that should come from a bottom-up approach with dynamic participatory governance. The population needs to decide together with the politicians about the diversification and an alternative understanding of the urban economy'. (IACA2)

A tangible and, according to all focus group participants, central first measure towards a more worker-friendly future in the tourism industry would be to end the externalisation through subcontracts of many workers in the sector. They agree that this will effectively only be possible through changes in legislation and thus will ultimately depend on political will to regulate and impose stricter employment laws on companies:

'I believe that we need to end outsourcing [externalisation]. That is the core principle. And the main basis of a company is that essential services should not be externalised'. (P1)

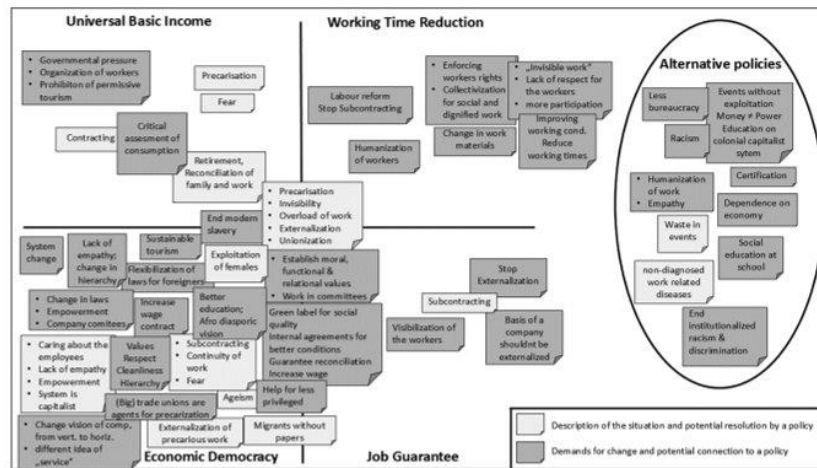
Several workers reflect optimistically that the current labour shortage and switch of sectors of many workers offers a good opportunity to shift bargaining power towards the workers and could thus provide an occasion for positive developments in the tourism industry (P3, P8). However, if an improvement of working conditions does not occur, the given circumstances would only entail a further intensification of work for those who remain in the sector (P3).

6.3 Workers perception of the policies

Figure 1 shows the result of the collective process of visualising the issues discussed throughout the focus group and the assessment of the path creation potential of the four policies.

The benefits of a UBI-scheme are primarily seen in social and political terms. Through the perspective of the participants, the key benefits of the UBI are an immediate end to the ongoing casualisation many workers are increasingly experiencing after the COVID-19 crisis. Participants assume that through the introduction of a UBI, far-reaching improvements regarding the reconciliation of work and family life could be achieved. The hopes of the workers regarding the UBI thus coincide with the central benefits from the perspective of degrowth advocates, which are the elimination of severe economic insecurity, a potential step towards decent working conditions and the end of the necessity to accept exploitative or degrading jobs just to survive (Alexander, 2015).

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Source: Author elaboration.

Figure 1 Visualisation of the focus group results

It becomes apparent that the introduction of WTR policies would mainly address and improve psychological forms of disempowerment participants are being confronted with in their professional lives. This in line with research that found WTR policies to have positive effects on health and well-being (Lepinteur, 2019). The focus group participants see the prime benefit of WTR in a general humanisation of their work situation. Hence, it is perceived as an important step towards creating respectable and dignified conditions in the workplace. However, degrowth proponents acknowledge that the understanding of collective impacts of WTR policies is still limited and that potential pressures resulting from WTR on vulnerable workers need to be studied and addressed (Hickel et al., 2022). In the context of tourism with current labour shortages, it should be specifically examined to what extent reduced working hours really lead to less unemployment. Second, it is not yet clear whether a reduction in hours might not lead to an intensification of work and thus the opposite of the desired effect.

The concept of ED is participants' preferred concept in psychological, social, political and economic terms of empowerment. In a scenario of strengthened ED, workers aim to achieve bottom-up empowerment by structuring themselves into committees, hence changing the vision of companies from vertical to horizontal organisation and thereby overcoming the predominant marginalisation of female and migrant workers. ED is considered to have the potential to systematically alter the dynamics within the tourism sector, through which significant improvements in the working conditions could be realised. Participants ultimately expect that ED would allow for a new conception and understanding of the service economy. This clearly fits within Kallis et al. (2018) ED notion, as a necessary step towards more participatory forms of decision-making within businesses, in order to radically reform the structure of the economy in a degrowth scenario.

The main benefit of JG programmes would be to bring about the immediate end of externalisation and subcontracting tendencies in the industry, one of the prime concerns of the participants. When compared to the other policy features, the impact of

JG is unambiguously in economic terms of empowerment. Wray (2015) argues that in a scenario with existing JG, private employers will be forced to provide pay, benefits, and conditions at least on par with those of the programme. Accordingly, from the workers' point of view, JG serves primarily as a tool for achieving more stable working conditions. Workers thus have a clearly defined perception of the benefits of JG. This aligns with the degrowth literature's broader understanding of JG as a transformative instrument towards social and economic justice (Unti, 2015).

Factors that, from workers' perspective, would not be impacted by the policies presented are mainly social. In particular, it is striking that a large share of issues that can be attributed to social forms of disempowerment (social education, racism/discrimination, work-related diseases and lacking environmental awareness of the impacts of tourism) are not addressed by the four policies according to the participants but would require alternative approaches. Especially the experienced racism and discrimination on the job, which should be alleviated through systematic education initiatives, are the main challenges at this point.

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study highlighted that many tourism workers still find themselves in an exploitative system rooted in neo-colonial capitalist practice, which reproduces the precarisation of predominantly female and migrant labour. The focus group participants of this research outline a significant worsening of the situation within the tourism sector since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Generally, all the presented policy programmes are perceived as helpful in improving the situation in different manners, as outlined above. While all four policy schemes can be attributed to path creation potential, the confidence in top-down interventionist schemes like the UBI or JG is lower than in bottom-up empowerment through workers' organisation. A strengthened ED seems to be the most tangible scenario and is, therefore, prioritised as the most feasible and realistic option for the workers to transform their sector and empower themselves from within. Vogel et al. (2024) highlight that the discussed policy interventions have the potential to secure livelihoods and reduce dependency and vulnerability in volatile economies, such as the tourism industry. This could ultimately render the necessary stringent environmental policies needed to move towards degrowth in tourism more socially sustainable and politically viable.

The study shows that the workers lack confidence in political institutions to effectively improve their precarious situation in the tourism sector through top-down policies. By tolerating and in some instances even promoting their continued marginalisation for years, the belief that they could expect effective help from political structures eroded. The handling of the COVID crisis was just another step in this loss of trust and confirmation of the feeling of being left behind. Taking into account the current political climate in Europe and the almost total absence of degrowth positions in popular political discourse, the degrowth movement should, therefore, refocus again on its roots as a bottom-up movement instead of promoting top-down policy schemes as silver bullets to initiate a degrowth transition. There is currently a lack of political momentum for the implementation of policies, such as UBI, JG or WTR. The focus group showed that ED, on the other hand, has greater potential to mobilise the working class, challenge economic power structures and advocate for the democratisation of the economy. Johannisova and Wolf (2012) argue that strengthening ED would allow

for easier implementation of further degrowth policies, weaken calls for growth by better satisfying the needs of alienated and marginalised groups and mitigate growth pressures caused by predominantly profit-oriented businesses. Furthermore, it could be one central step in limiting the increasing inequality of societies in most Western democracies and thus be a measure against the advance of the political far right, which is highly influential in the current political discourse in Europe and makes any serious engagement with degrowth transformations on a broader scale unrealistic.

This paper added knowledge to the degrowth discourse regarding the general lack of understanding on how and through which policies to overcome growth dependencies in the tourism industry, by expanding the concept of path creation towards the evaluation of four key policy proposals of a degrowth transformation and integrating the so far often-neglected perspective of tourism workers. The findings revealing the different forms of empowerment workers are seeking in the selected policy proposals are of high value for governance and policy actors working on a socio-ecological transformation of the tourism industry, beyond the dominantly academic field of degrowth. A governance and planning approach to a tourism transformation should acknowledge and integrate the perspectives of the often-marginalised and oppressed voices of workers, which constitute the essential basis of the tourism industry. As such, it is more likely to be resilient and actionable than purely scientific visions of destination governance and policy-making, lacking the understanding of their social realities.

As Steen (2016) lays out, analysing path-creating elements requires attention to both context and agency. Hence, this study is clearly explorative in this regard and the results are especially tied to the context of the tourism industry in Spain and the personal experiences and views of the participating workers. The resulting limitations of the research design of this study, being based primarily on one focus group, are therefore, that we cannot claim the findings to be universally applicable and representative beyond the geographical context and time of data collection. Moreover, due to the challenging circumstances of the research, it was not feasible to establish a more time-intensive in-depth process to further involve the workers, who face heavy time constraints and stress resulting from their work situations. Further research in different geographical contexts and with a broader range of participants should verify and extend the explorative findings of this study to support future socio-ecologically sustainable policy-making in the tourism sector.

Finally, the findings of this study shed light on a paradox inherent in the degrowth discourse. Degrowth essentially aims for bottom-up empowerment but relies predominantly on top-down policy interventions as path-creating forces towards a socio-ecological transformation (Cosme et al., 2017; D'Alisa and Kallis, 2020; Durand et al., 2023). To harness the path creation potential of bottom-up initiatives and overcome this unproductive dichotomy inherent in the degrowth literature, a new research agenda through which the degrowth discourse increasingly fosters dialogue with workers should be pursued. The aim would be a common engagement, which works towards the joint goal of establishing transformative pathways to a growth-independent sustainable future.

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5.3 Resistance and Power Dynamics in Tourist Destinations: A Study of Mallorca's Anti-Touristification Protests through Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

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Resistance and power dynamics in tourist destinations: a study of Mallorca's anti-touristification protests through Bourdieu's theory of practice

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ABSTRACT

The negative effects of an ongoing touristification has sparked resistance among the residents in affected tourist destinations. The resulting movements and their demands were labelled as violent and xenophobic, selfish and envious by the tourism industry, politicians and parts of academia. In our study, we contradict these claims. Instead, we demonstrate that these allegations are based on questionable scientific research and/or attempts by the ruling class to delegitimise the movements. Based on a literature review and 32 qualitative interviews with residents of the Balearic island of Mallorca, we identify reasons such as financial dependence, social class and habitus, and manipulation through misinformation as reasons for accepting or not protesting against the negative impacts of tourism. touristification, Bourdieu, social movements, protest, overtourism, tourism dependency

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Introduction

Tourism destinations are confronted with various negative impacts that have recently become known as overtourism – defined by Koens et al. (2018) as an “excessive negative impact [...] on the host communities and/or natural environment” (p. 2). Cañada et al. (2023) confirm the negative effects, but criticise the more quantitative dimensions targeted by the term overtourism, which in turn are attempted to be solved by management approaches. They therefore favour the term touristification, which refers to the structural problem of a capitalist logic that underlies tourism development and the associated socio-spatial changes, which are alarming in their extent (Cañada et al., 2023). Cocola-Gant (2023) for instance elaborates on the impact of the commercialisation of spaces on the freedom of movement and social life using Barcelona as an example. Mansilla (2018) and Antunes et al. (2020) also use the example of Barcelona to elucidate social exclusion and displacement effects of tourism development. Tourism's impact on the costs for housing and gentrification processes are also demonstrated in various other

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places such as Lisbon (Mendes, 2018) or Berlin (Vollmer, 2018). In a study outlined in Seville, Diaz-Parra and Jover (2021) demonstrate that tourism growth can lead to alienation effects among residents; further burdens on society and the environment include changes of the local infrastructure such as trade or transport, crowding effects, noise, waste and the overuse of resources (Dodds & Butler, 2019; Milano, 2018; Novy & Colomb, 2019). While many of the mentioned studies focus on urban and European spaces, scholars demonstrate similar consequences in rural areas and Non-European examples such as the Scottish-Highlands (Butler, 2019), the municipality of Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany (Steiner et al., 2023), the Big Sur coastline in California, USA (Atzori, 2020) or the city of Seoul in South Korea (Jang & Park, 2020).

For some years now, these effects have provoked resistance among residents (Colomb & Novy, 2016; Gössling et al., 2020; Milano et al., 2019). In destinations such as Barcelona, Berlin, Venice or Mallorca¹ social movements emerged, campaigning in favour of greater consideration of residents and their needs. They emphasise that they are not against tourism in general, but demand a move away from growth-oriented policies, a reduction in tourist numbers, economic diversification, higher corporate taxes and reforms for socially just and environmentally friendly policies, as can be read in the manifesto of the network Ciudades del Sur de Europa ante la Turistización (Southern European Cities Against Touristification – translated by the author) (Sud, 2025). These requirements have hardly been met to date. Instead of initiating profound changes, many destinations implement rather partial measures, mainly focused on a more evenly distribution of tourists across the destination, smart solutions such as apps to avoid crowding or the launch/increase of tourist taxes (Kuenen et al., 2023; Langer & Schmude, 2023). Fletcher et al. (2023) thus conclude, the movements have so far not been able to exert sufficient pressure on political decision-makers to initiate far-reaching amendments. However, this pressure seems to be increasing. While the protest movements in 2017–2023 consisted of only some dozen to a few thousand participants (Burgen, 2017; Europa Press Islas Baleares, 2022; *France* 24, 2018), tens of thousands of people gathered in the Canary and Balearic Islands in the summer of 2024 (Domblás, 2024; Jones, 2024). In the literature, the size of a social movement is seen as the supposedly most important factor for its success (Chenoweth, 2020; Ozden & Glover, 2023). Instead of recognising the needs and demands of the thousands of participants, tourism industry representatives, politicians and academics seized on the use of water pistols, with which some demonstrators sprayed visitors in Barcelona, to condemn the protests as violent, as crossing red lines, reprehensible and confrontational (Edenado, 2024; Reuters, 2024) by “people who are not in their right minds” (Jorge Marichal, head of the Spanish Confederation of Hotels and Tourist Accommodation, cited in *The Post*, 2024, n.p.). Such attempts to discredit the movements and their demands are not novel. Tourism scholars portrayed them as violent (Butcher, 2020) while politicians and industry representatives incriminated protesters of fearing tourists (turismofobia) or even of xenophobia, (see Blanco-Romero et al., 2019; González, 2017; Mansilla, 2018; Milano, 2018). Furthermore, movement participants are accused of egoism and frustration for not benefitting economically from tourism and advocating only individual opinions (Buhalis, 2020, 2024; O'Regan et al., 2022). At the same time, it is automatically assumed that non-protesters, and therefore still the majority of the population, are in favour of tourism development.

In our article, we contradict these representations. Instead, we claim that these allegations are based on one-dimensional, methodologically questionable investigations on the one hand and attempts by the ruling class to discredit the demonstrators and their demands on the other. In order to support these claims and to reveal further reasons for non-participation, we aim to answer the research question of why people do not participate in protests against tourism development and its negative effects. We have divided our paper into two parts. In the first part, we conduct a comprehensive review of existing tourism literature to challenge the emergence and validity of the widespread assumption that tourism support increases with financial benefit (Boley et al., 2018). In the second part, we analyse 32 qualitative interviews with residents of the Balearic island of Mallorca. The interpretation of the answers is based on Pierre Bourdieu's

theory of practice. Our study is intended to show the complex realities of people's lives in destinations heavily dependent on tourism, which cannot be depicted using previous, mostly positivist approaches. We further draw attention to structural social inequalities, (financial) dependencies and the functions of individual social classes, which we believe have a decisive influence on people's decision regarding the acceptance of tourism and its negative effects.

The delusion of rationality in tourism- and social movement research

"At the core of the resident attitude literature is the general understanding that the more residents economically benefit from tourism, the more they support tourism" (Boley et al., 2018, p. 1 – further referred to as support-narrative). This narrative has persisted for years despite some serious criticism regarding methodological weaknesses and the one-sided economic perspective underlying the studies. In an investigation of resident attitude research papers published between 1984 and 2010, Nunkoo et al. (2013) concluded that a "positivistic paradigm [...] has dominated research on residents' attitudes to tourism" (p. 13). They further show that in more than 50% of all theory-based research, the social exchange theory (SET) has been applied. SET assumes that the attitude of residents towards tourism is based on a cost-benefit consideration (Nunkoo et al., 2013). As early as 1976, Emerson (1976) described the approach as "the economic analysis of noneconomic social situations. [...] Exchange theory brings a quasi-economic mode of analysis into those situations" (p. 336). Jonason and Middleton (2015) criticise the approach on the basis of its fundamental assumption of "humans being rational, calculating animals" (p. 674). Regarding the application in tourism, this signifies that the relationship between hosts and guests is reduced to financial aspects (Harrill, 2004; Woosnam & Norman, 2010). Concerns about SET's theoretical adequacy and sophistication, the oversimplification of resident's decision-making processes and its "exclusive emphasizing on resident's rationality while overlooking the impact of affective responses" (Gursoy et al., 2019, p. 4) is even expressed by Gursoy et al. (2019), who himself applied the theory several times (eg Gursoy et al., 2002, 2010; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004). Nunkoo et al. (2013) also see the problem that the basic assumption of SET and the resulting research design merely repeats existing knowledge and tests hypotheses, instead of producing new, unexpected findings. This is also pointed to by Amrhein (2023), who sees the support-narrative as both, the basic assumption and, as a result, as the outcome of the studies, whereby other important factors such as dependencies are not sufficiently considered. Boley et al. (2018) confirm these problems in previous resident attitude research, noting that "tourism researchers and destination managers have taken a somewhat haphazard and nonchalant stance towards the measurement of these perceptions" (p. 18). In addition, they criticise the assumption that employment is equated with financial benefit, without considering the often-precarious working conditions of tourism employees (Boley et al., 2018), which are documented in various studies (see Bianchi & Man, 2021; Cañada, 2015, 2018, 2019; Murray & Cañada, 2017). It can thus be concluded that resident attitude research is at large based on oversimplified assumptions, resulting from unsophisticated methodological approaches. Derived, generalised statements regarding the non-participation in anti-touristification protests are therefore highly questionable.

In social movement research, this inadequacy of positivist approaches to depict social realities was also noted (Roose, 2016). The problems identified are similar to the critique of SET and include the false assumption of actor's rational behaviour, the inability to include the emotional decisions of individuals, the research design building on priori assumptions and the lack of consideration of external circumstances in which movements develop (N. Crossley, 2002; Roose, 2016). Schmitt (2016) attests the "agency-oriented approaches [to] lack a consideration of society and an adequate concept of agency because they are referring to simplifying rational actor theories" (p. 60).

A more comprehensive inclusion of surrounding conditions is considered by proponents of crisis- or macro-approaches. They assume that movement actors primarily react to external circumstances, which result out of the general situation of postmodern societies (Della Porta,

2015); are triggered by a specific event (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2013) or have their origin in the social structure and the milieu of the protesters (N. Crossley, 2002), whereby a distinction between the three categories is often difficult and the boundaries are fluid (N. Crossley, 2002). In tourism research, in addition to the aforementioned positivist perspective on movements, the structural view has been chosen (although not explicitly mentioned) to explain the emergence of the anti-touristification movements. From this perspective, the actual situation is seen as the tip of an ever-growing iceberg, at the end of which public protest is the consequence (Goodwin, 2017). However, following this approach, the outlined negative effects of tourism would necessarily lead to more comprehensive protest. As mentioned, the protests have gained support in a few places this year, but the vast majority of the population is still not taking part. This contradicts the rather linear logic of this perspective and for which it does not provide a sufficient explanation, as Salman and Assies (2017) note. They criticise the expectation of an automatism according to which accumulated anger turns into protest, as this does not capture the full dimension of the dynamics of social movements and the life-realities of residents (Salman & Assies, 2017). They point to the need to consider “that the actors involved-or, for that matter, the actors that had the chance but declined becoming involved-have life histories, and solidified capabilities and inabilities, and views and judgements, and knowledge and networks” (Salman & Assies, 2017, p. 65). They thus point to the important component of non-protest and that a decision in favour of or against participation is not entirely free, but is influenced by both structural and personal factors such as “societal position, access to resources, role in power-configurations, gender, age, etcetera” (Salman & Assies, 2017, p. 63). In line with Salman and Assies (2017), Schmitt (2016) sees the weaknesses of the two currents in their separate consideration of protest and crisis. An approach that can overcome these shortcomings is seen in Bourdieu’s theory of practice (N. Crossley, 2002, 2003; Ibrahim, 2015; Roggeband & Klandermans, 2017; Schmitt, 2016). We therefore see Bourdieu’s theory with its analytical dualism (Archer, 1995), ie the consideration of both agency and structure as well as the differentiated description of their mutual influences, as a valuable analytical tool for our study.

Bourdieu’s theory of practice and the importance of class

Bourdieu’s theory of practice is an attempt to theorise society. The conceptualisation is inextricably linked with the term *habitus*, which can be understood as a multi-layered process of conditioning, influenced by upbringing, the cultural and social environment as well as personal experiences and the social position of the individual (Bauer & Bittlingmayer, 2014). Each personal history leads an individual to unconsciously develop and internalise dispositions and tendencies as well as patterns of perception, evaluation and thought (Bourdieu, 1990). These stored patterns of belief and thought cause a person’s assessment and behaviour in certain situations, again without the individual making a conscious decision (Barlösius, 2011).

The formation of *habitus* differs for each individual and is influenced by social fields (such as artistic, political, academic, etc.) one is acting in and surrounded by. These fields in turn function according to historically differentiated social structures and follow their own internal rules – compliance with these rules is honoured with recognition, non-compliance with rejection (Barlösius, 2011; Schmitt, 2016). In order to be a recognised part of, or to rise within a field, various forms of capital are necessary (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu distinguishes between economic (wealth), social (networks, connections), cultural (knowledge, education) and symbolic capital (prestige, recognition), which have different meanings depending on the field (eg cultural capital in academia, social capital in politics) (Bourdieu, 1986). While fields operate somewhat independent from each other, high possessions of capital in one field (eg economic) can be used to acquire the necessary capital in other fields (eg politics). The possession of the different forms of capital impacts the social position (for which Bourdieu uses the term *class*) of an individual and thus reinforces hierarchical and discriminatory structures (Bourdieu, 1986).

These field specific rules and the belief in them (which Bourdieu labels *illusio* and compares it with the rules of a game) shape one's habitus and are vice versa reproduced by people's behaviour (Barlösius, 2011). Bourdieu (1986) therefore speaks of a complicity of habitus and field. The invisibility of the structures, the belief in the rules and the unconsciousness of internalisation are in turn the reasons why no doubts arise about the correctness and constitution of one's own perception, even if the circumstances are disadvantageous or discriminatory for individuals themselves (Schmitt, 2016). Rather than recognising those conditions and protesting against them, individuals will consider them as reality and presumably see themselves as responsible for their social position, which in turn contributes to the reproduction of existing power structures (Schmitt, 2016). Bourdieu describes this phenomenon as (symbolic) violence, whereby the ruling class is favoured and at the same time the status quo of society is maintained (Bourdieu, 1998).

This theorisation of society is seen by Maton (2008) as "the link not only between past, present, and future, but also between the social and the individual, the objective and the subjective, and structure and agency" (p. 53), emphasising the importance of the approach for social movement research. This significance becomes enhanced by Bourdieu's (1998) comments on the influence of the capitalist system on social structures. He describes neoliberalism, the resulting rollback of the welfare state and the increasing precarisation of work as enhancing the effect of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998). According to Bourdieu (1998), these developments produce collective feelings of insecurity, which he considers a reason for demoralisation, demobilisation and ultimately increasing depoliticisation among primarily already marginalised classes (financially poor people, low levels of education, etc.) and thus make it more difficult to recognise the responsible power structures. Members of the middle class are considered to be less affected by these insecurities and thus, in terms of political activism and protest, are more likely to develop a movement-orientated habitus (N. Crossley, 2002; Orchowska, 2024). In agreement with Orchowska (2024), Schmitt (2010) points out that people with a movement-oriented habitus are not free from habitus- and field-specific imprints themselves, which in turn harbours the risk of excluding lower classes from protests or of not taking their needs into account. Bourdieu also recognises this possibility, stating that the intention to give a voice to the oppressed always bears the danger of speaking for them and thus perpetuating their powerlessness (Bourdieu, 1988). The risk is seen by Bourdieu not only in social movements but also in science. However, this peril must not lead to an escape from responsibility, but rather to researchers recognising, and choosing a suitable methodological approach that minimises it (Bourdieu, 1988). Taking Bourdieu's differentiated perspective into account and aiming to meet his requirements for researchers, we developed our research design, which is outlined as follows.

Methods

With regard to a critical categorisation of privilege and positionality in the social sciences, Le Bourdon (2022) states: "By reflecting on how our views have been formed and how we subsequently engage in the world, we begin to unlock new ways of seeing, knowing and doing" (p. 2). Accordingly, researchers should consider how the privileges they hold affect the epistemological and methodological approaches to the study (Santos, 2008). Although an attempt was made to take this into account during data collection, the authors cannot deny that they occupy a privileged position compared to the realities of the interviewees, some of whom may have experienced racism, sexism, exploitation and marginalisation. On the basis of this awareness and Bourdieu's requirements to give voice to people who are often unheard, our focus was on members of the working- or lower classes (a categorisation into classes was not pursued more precisely, the affiliation was merely estimated on the basis of professional activity and legal status), who at the same time form the largest group of tourism workforce (Cañada, 2018; International Labour Office, 2017). A qualitative approach

was considered appropriate to analyse the complex realities and factors influencing the decision for or against participation in the protests. Qualitative approaches can be found in Bourdieu's own empirical studies (eg *The Weight of the World*, Bourdieu & Accardo, 1999) as well as the application of his theory in social movement research (eg M. L. Crossley & Crossley, 2001).

As a result, we conducted semi-structured interviews with adult residents who work in tourism and thus experience both, the negative effects of tourism and also possibly benefit from it. We also spoke with workers of the informal sector (cleaning staff and vendors of goods such as beach utensils) and considered statements from interviews with movement actors, conducted in an earlier study in 2020 in Mallorca (see Amrhein et al., 2022). The qualitative approach does not allow complete representativeness in the statistical sense but aims to provide a profound exploration of societal structures by capturing the nuanced perspectives and lived experiences of individuals.

We analysed 32 qualitative interviews with residents of the Balearic island of Mallorca. The interviewees were either investigated and contacted in advance, approached on the recommendation of other interviewees (snowball sampling) or contacted spontaneously in their everyday environment. Six of the interviews were carried out online, 26 were held in various locations in Mallorca (eg Palma, Magaluf, El Arenal, Soller, etc.). With the people we approached spontaneously in public spaces, asking for an interview, the high number of refusals (33 in total) was striking. Reasons given by people in the formal sector were mainly high workload, time pressure and concerns about possible consequences from the employer. People in the informal sector, the majority of whom (according to their own statements) did not have a residence nor work permit, showed signs of uncertainty and fear of legal actions. Consequently, to avoid any consequences, the interviewees were given the opportunity of using a pseudonym and neither image- nor audio recordings were made. All participants took part voluntarily, free of charge and agreed to their anonymised statements being used for scientific purposes.

The interviews were conducted in German, English or Spanish language, ranging from a few up to 90 min. The short duration of some interviews results either from the lack of timely resources of the interviewees or from language barriers between interviewers and the interviewees who came to Mallorca from Senegal. It cannot be completely ruled out that the brevity of the interviews, the language barrier, and in some cases even mistrust on the part of the interviewees prevented a more in-depth conversation on their personal situation.

Finally, all interviews were either recorded (audio or audio-visual) or documented *via* interview transcripts, following the recommendations of Vogel and Funck (2018). The interviewees' statements were examined for reasons for non-participation in the protests and then categorised. The categories (see "Internal hurdles – habitus, field and (internalised) rules of the game" section, "External factors – events, media and the power of naming" section, and "Insecurity, dependency and structural violence" section) were derived from Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and our literature review (see "The delusion of rationality in tourism- and social movement research" section), which corresponds to a deductive approach (see Mayring, 2014).

The Balearic island of Mallorca was chosen as destination for our study. Mallorca met the necessary criteria, including existing protest movements, studies on the existence of negative impacts of tourism, a sufficient number of potential interviewees who benefit from/depend on tourism, as well as factors such as accessibility for the researchers and their ability to communicate in Spanish language (Spanish and Catalan are the official languages on site).

Table 1 gives a brief overview about the interview partners and their answers on

1. job/employment in tourism and legal status;
2. overall support of anti-touristification movements and their demands;
3. general opinion on tourism (numbers) in Mallorca and support for a reduction;
4. active participation in movements.

Table 1. Interview partners 2020–2022.

Person	Directly employed	Indirect employment	Not employed	Informal sector /legal documents	Supports movements generally	Supports tourism reduction	Participated in protests	Place of origin
P1			Cleaning (retired)		Yes	Yes	No	Mainland Spain
P2	Restaurant				No	Yes	No	Germany
P3	Management assistant				Yes	Yes	No	Brasil
P4	Waitress				No	Yes	No	Mallorca
P5	Car rental				No	Yes	No	Mallorca
P6	Part-time waitress				Yes	Yes	No	Mallorca
P7	Receptionist				No	Yes	No	Mallorca
P8	Restaurant owner				No	No	No	Mallorca
P9	Promoter				Not aware	Yes	No	Germany
P10	Waiter				No	Yes	No	Mallorca
P11	Part-time receptionist				Yes	Yes	No	Mallorca
P12	Car rental				Yes	Yes	No	Mallorca
P13	Cleaning				Yes	Yes	Yes	Mainland Spain
P14				Beach vendor / no	No (not aware)	No	No	Senegal
P15				Beach vendor / no	No (not aware)	No	No	Senegal
P16				Beach vendor / yes	No (not aware)	No	No	Senegal
P17				Beach vendor / no	No (not aware)	No	No	Senegal
P18				Beach vendor / yes	No (not aware)	No	No	Senegal
P19				Beach vendor / no	No (not aware)	No	No	Senegal
P20				Cleaning /no	No	Yes	No	Peru
P21				Beach vendor / no	No (not aware)	No	No	Senegal
Person	Directly employed	Indirect employment	Not employed	Informal sector /legal documents	Supports movements generally	Supports tourism reduction	Participated in protests	Place of origin
B1			University		Yes	Yes	Yes	Mallorca
B2			NGO (retired)		Yes	Yes	Yes	US
B3			NGO		Yes	Yes	Yes	Mallorca
B4			University		Yes	Yes	Yes	Mallorca
B5			Student		Yes	Yes	Yes	Mallorca
B6		House rental	University		No	Yes	No	Mallorca
B7			Higher management (retired)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Mallorca
B8			Hotel manager (retired)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Mallorca
B9			University		Yes	Yes	No	Germany
B10			Teacher (retired)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Mallorca
B11			Politician		Yes	Yes	Yes	Mallorca

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It further displays that all positions (P1–P13) in the formal sector are service or administrative jobs that generally do not require a university degree. In the informal sector (P14–P21), the majority (all male interview participants) work as vendors of souvenirs and beach utilities. The only female person (P20) in this sector works as a cleaner in a holiday apartment building. The strong disproportionate number of male interview participants is most likely not representative but results from the fact that salespeople (strongly male-dominated) are very present in the public eye and were therefore more easily accessible for interviews. Jobs that are presumably more likely to be carried out by women (eg cleaning, housekeeping) take place less in public spaces and were therefore more difficult to interview (two female read persons who offered massages and hairstyling on the beach declined interviews). Interview partners B1–B12 were part of a study with movement actors in 2020. As can be seen, the majority of this group finds themselves in positions that require an academic education and are independent of, or not directly dependent on the tourism industry.

Interpretation of the results in light of Bourdieu's theory of practice

If we would analyse the variables of protest participation and employment in tourism (see Table 1) in a quantitative analysis, we could (prematurely) conclude that people who are employed in tourism (P1–P21) are not protesting against it (all, except P13) and thus construct a confirmation of the aforementioned support narrative. With our following analysis, we show that this conclusion would represent a too undifferentiated explanation of the observations, which does not reflect the realities of people's lives. Following Bourdieu's analytical dualism (Archer, 1995), we divide the reasons for (non-)protest into agency ("Internal hurdles – habitus, field and (internalised) rules of the game section"), which includes one's own habitus as well as (internalised) field structures and rules; and structure ("External factors – events, media and the power of naming" section), which in our analysis includes external influences such as the experience of negative effects of tourism development, manipulation by certain interest groups and working conditions. In "Insecurity, dependency and structural violence" section, we devote special attention to the topic of dependency, which emerges as a decisive influencing factor both from Bourdieu's (1998) statements and from our literature research under 2. As in Bourdieu's theory of practice, the boundaries between the subcategories in our study are also fluid, and circumstances, influences and reactions influence, reinforce and sometimes reproduce each other. This subdivision is therefore primarily for the sake of clarity.

Internal hurdles – habitus, field and (internalised) rules of the game

Life history and the social environment influence people in their decision in favour of, or against participating in social movements (Schmitt, 2016). The existence or development of a movement-orientated habitus and thus a higher probability of participating in protests is higher for members of the middle class than in lower classes (N. Crossley, 2002; Orchowska, 2024). Bourdieu (1998) describes the opportunity to have an opinion and to express it as a luxury that is unequally distributed. Our interviews provide evidence for the correctness of this assumptions. The three tourism workers P3, P5 and P7 report high levels of stress in the workplace combined with inadequate pay. They further agree with the necessity of tourism reduction on the island but have themselves never participated in protests. P3 states that protesting contradicts her character, as she is a very peaceful person. P5 is generally in favour of tourism, but describes the current situation as no longer healthy. Above all, he sees the increasingly deteriorating working conditions in the form of stress, high workloads and poor pay as problematic. Nevertheless, he does not take part in protests because he considers himself not be a protest person (P5). P7 states that she does not like to go to demonstrations and also lacks the time

to do so due to the high workload. However, she understands the protesters' concerns. For her too, tourism numbers are clearly too high, especially in summer, which she describes as being "only for tourists, locals don't have summer" (P7, pos. 4).

P12, who works as a clerk in a family-owned business, also sees an urgent need for change in tourism practices on Mallorca. She reports an extreme workload and pressure because of which she is already struggling with mental health issues (P12). P12 therefore supports the protests. However, she herself has never participated, as protesting and complaining are no options in her family. For her parents, founders of the company, "taking a break or resting is already seen as a weakness, criticising tourism is seen as a bad thing. That's the world I'm living in" (P12, pos. 28). With this situation, she describes precisely the practical implementation of the above-mentioned rules of the field which are accepted by individuals in order to avoid negative reactions from their social environment, even if they recognise the structures' adverse effects for themselves (Barlösius, 2011; Schmitt, 2016). In response, both P12 and P5 show signs of resignation, which according to Bourdieu (1998) is a common reaction to perceived powerlessness.

Another frequent reaction is the acceptance of the personal circumstances and the attempt to climb the "symbolic ladder" (Schmitt, 2016, p. 66) within one's own field. This can be observed with interview partner P3. She intends to study for a degree, in order to be promoted to a higher management level where the workload is lower and wages are better (P3). According to Schmitt (2016) this behaviour does not expose power structures, but rather transforms them into competition between individuals and further consolidates them through acceptance and reproduction. Moreover, improvements in one's own situation are not a matter of course (Schmitt, 2016), as P3 herself provides an example. Her aunt fought for a management position in a hotel through a great deal of commitment. Since then, stress and responsibility have increased, but are not compensated by a significantly higher salary. However, her aunt, like herself, is a peaceful person, so she would not complain, but continue working to get ahead (P3). Nevertheless, studying can open up new career opportunities but getting there is not easy, especially for immigrants. P3's school achievements from her home country of Brazil were not recognised as equivalent in Mallorca, which is why she first has to catch up on the university entrance requirements – which, from Bourdieu and Accardo's (1999) perspective, can be interpreted as an act of symbolic violence. The respondents' statements that protest contradicts their character/personality or is not accepted by their social environment confirm the assumptions that habitus and the social environment have a decisive influence on the decision to (not) participate in protests.

Further evidence to support this assumption came from our interviews with movement activists, the majority of whom we categorised as middle- or upper middle class, based on their professional position and relatively high level of formal education. Several of the interviewees confirmed that they had used the instrument of political activism and protest before joining/supporting the anti-touristification movement. B5, for instance, started his political activism in the Fridays for Future movement and B1 was already involved in actions for the protection of natural areas and against the celebrations of the fifth century of the conquest of America. B2, B3 and B4 confirm their engagement in environmental movements before getting active in the anti-touristification protests. These statements point to the early development of a so-called movement-orientated habitus. At the same time, we recognise that the development of such a habitus does not have to take place at an early stage, but can occur at a later point in time. In our case, the experience of the negative effects of tourism (structure) played a decisive role for some of our interviewees in this respect.

External factors – events, media and the power of naming

Several interviewees delineate the devastating effects of tourism on Mallorca as an eye-opener, which led them to change from original tourism supporters to critics. Amrhein et al. (2022)

describe the experiences as a disorienting dilemma). B2 confirms that she has been actively involved in environmental movements for many years, but for a long time did not consider tourism as a problem in this context. Her experiences in recent years, with tourism's dramatic negative effects on people and nature, have led her to rethink and participate in protests. Such a change in perspective is also confirmed by the two retired interviewees B7 and B8, both of whom worked in tourism for many years and supported its growth at that time. B8 calls himself a "fool" because he believed the promises of the industry and politicians and even helped to promote tourism development (B8, pos. 68). Now he regards tourism as devastating because it destroys the environment and drives people into dependence on precarious working conditions. B7 also confirms the disastrous effects and necessary changes of an industry which is solely focussed on profit and growth. Della Porta's (2015) assessment that the negative effects of capitalist practices (structure) lead to resistance in society is supported by these statements.

For the success of movements and ultimately the implementation of far-reaching changes, the support of society is an important factor (Ozden & Glover, 2023). According to Bourdieu (1990), the ruling class tries to prevent this by utilising their ability to create representations, make them public and even official and thus create/maintain a common sense about the social world. Bourdieu calls this possibility the power of naming, which serves to manifest the supposedly inevitable neoliberal discourse (Barlösius, 2011). Salman and Assies (2017) assert, that attempts to change discriminatory societal structures, as by the protesters, are perceived by the ruling class as an attack on the established norms and are therefore susceptible to the risk "of being marginalized and ridiculized as 'absurd', abnormal, and eccentric" (p. 85). Operated by various actors and institutions (eg politics, economists, but also academia and media), the power of naming operates on diverse levels and consequently affects various societal classes. In aggregate, the exercise of power hinders/complicates the uprising of discriminated classes, obscures the mechanisms of power and thus contributes to the maintenance of existing structures (Bourdieu, 1990). As outlined in our introduction, such attempts for the authority of interpretation of the field of tourism as well as to discredit the movements and their demands have already been observed.

Statements by interviewees in our study contain indications of such attempts to exert influence. For instance, P4, who is dissatisfied with her tiring and poorly paid job, acknowledges the necessity of reducing tourism in Mallorca. The movements' enquiry to abolish tourism (as she believes they advocate for) is not seen as a viable solution. P8 complains that the local's low wages contribute to lower expenses in his own restaurant. He is working in gastronomy for 18 years and observes the development since then. He describes the actual situation as dramatic. Nevertheless, he does not support the protests, dismissing them as "too radical and stupid" (P8, pos. 4) due to their, in his opinion, perceived goal of banning tourism from the island. A similar thought is expressed by P2. She generally holds a positive view of tourism and is cautious about labelling mass tourism negatively. However, while she partially understands the protesters, she deems their intentions to ban tourism as exaggerated and without sense and reason. P10 enjoys his job in the gastronomy sector but describes it as highly demanding with simultaneously inadequate remuneration. Particularly due to the steadily increasing real estate prices, he finds it challenging, relying heavily on good tips. He characterises tourism in general as excessive, necessitating a reduction. Nonetheless, he accuses the protesters to be misguided, citing the pandemic as evidence of the detrimental effects that would ensue if there was no tourism on the island. In addition to these uniformly expressed, incorrect assumptions regarding the objectives of the movements (as outlined in 1.), the dismissive, annoyed attitude of the interviewees towards the protesters was striking. As sources of these (false) information, unspecified media (social media, newspapers and television) were cited.

It cannot conclusively be clarified whether the interviewees did not want to disclose the sources or, as stated, did not remember the exact origin of the information. In any case, the influence of this communication on the interviewees' attitude towards the protesters and their

demands is remarkable. Due to the fact that the specific media outlets remain undisclosed, it is challenging to assess the initiator(s). Even without being able to name the initiators, it is clear that social struggles are taking place here, which are about public opinion, the legitimisation of a neoliberal discourse or its rejection and ultimately about socio-ecological justice, as already portrayed by Valdivielso and Moranta (2019) and Armas-Díaz et al. (2024).

Injustices and discriminatory structures are also reinforced by increasing precarisation, growing dependencies and insecurities among the workforce as we will outline as follows.

Insecurity, dependency and structural violence

Lemke (2004, referencing Foucault) analogue to Bourdieu (1998) characterises the uncertainty among the workforce as an essential component in sustaining neoliberal practices. Honneth (2011) also views the workers' speechlessness as a consequence of uncertainties rooted in a neoliberal system. Put more plainly, Hadjisolomou et al. (2022) express, after studying 293 workers in the Scottish hospitality sector: "People who need jobs don't complain" (p. 20).

Our interviews also revealed feelings of dependence and insecurity on the part of the tourism workforce which influence their opinion and behaviour. Eleven out of thirteen people (P1–P5, P7, P8, P10–P13) who are/were directly employed in tourism confirmed their personal dependence and/or Mallorca's dependence on tourism. With the exception of P8, all of them support the reduction of tourism. However, P4 considers this to be difficult to realise, as there are hardly any other employment opportunities in Mallorca. P3 and P5 are in favour of a reduction of tourism and would personally like to work in another sector, but see no other option. The answer of "yes, but (we depend on it)" to the question about being in favour of a reduction in tourism was always noticeable in the interviews. For P10 and P11, the two events of the 2008 financial crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused great uncertainty among employees, underlined this dependency.

Even more serious than for people in the formal sector was the dependency and its effects for informal workers. In our study, we spoke to eight people who carry out activities such as selling goods and souvenirs, cleaning and construction work on Mallorca. Six of the eight interviewees indicated not to hold legal documents to pursue formal work. One female interview partner (P20) came to Mallorca from Peru and works as a cleaner in a holiday apartment building. As she confirms, payment is very poor, significantly lower than that of legally contracted cleaners. She does not possess an employment contract which leaves her with no financial security and the risk to be dismissed at any time. She also mentions that locals accuse her of stealing their jobs because she has to work for much less money. She wishes this was different, but sees no other option without legal papers, which she does not know if and when she will receive. Tourist numbers are too high in her opinion but she thinks that tourism is necessary. She has neither heard of, nor taken part in protests (P20).

Of the seven beach vendors, two (P16 and P18) indicated to hold a Spanish passport. P16 received it because his father has been working on the island for many years. P18 came to Mallorca in 2005. He was given the permission to follow his parents, who are on the island since approximately 30 years, because he had a heart problem and needed a surgery. After arriving in Mallorca, he was working in hotels but gave up five to six years ago because it was too exhausting. He still has some heart problems and needs to take brakes regularly which is impossible in the hotel job and left him without an option as to work at the coast in summer. The income at the beach is low, not reliable and at night "there are a lot of drunk and very bad people" (P18, Pos. 4). He states that the situation has changed dramatically since the pandemic, as nobody wants to buy sunglasses or other souvenirs anymore. All interviewees agreed that the job is very demanding. P14 mentions the low income between 0 and 30€ per day – depending on luck and endurance – with daily working hours from approximately 11 am till 1 am. P19 adds the competition among the vendors and the pressure of his family in Senegal to support them

financially. P21 describes also bad people among his own colleagues, tourists and the police as problems they have to deal with on a daily basis. In fact, two interviews were interrupted (P15 and one conversation which had not yet started) because police cars appeared and the interview partners had to flee. Most of them (P14–P18) prefer jobs in agriculture or construction which are difficult to obtain and also seasonable. For many, the work at the beach is therefore the only opportunity. The negative effects of tourism on the island is not debated by the interviewees and protests against them are unknown. Instead, more tourists are appreciated. Especially the situation during the pandemic seems to influence these opinions, as some consider the time without tourists as very difficult. P14 mentions that he only had enough to eat and shelter because the Senegalese community was helping each other, official support was not received.

Their most pressing topic is to get legal documents and to find work. Thus, the boundaries within which people in the informal sector operate are even narrower than those of the formal sector. Jobs in restaurants or hotels, which were previously described by the formal workers as very demanding and poorly paid, are even seen as an improvement of the situation of the informal workforce which it is worth striving for (P14; P29). At the same time, the statements reveal that discriminatory structures are already internalised and accepted as reality, as possibly better paid and less strenuous jobs lie beyond the realms of the imaginable. This is illustrated by P18, for whom a job in an office would be favourable due to his health issues but which is not possible, as he adds. However, the interviewees do not seem to be conscious of these structures or do not speak out about them. Instead, luck is mentioned as needed to improve their situation: "I'm in Mallorca already for nine years and applied a few times for legal documents, but so far, I had no luck" (P15, pos. 3).

The group, and especially those without legal papers, possess almost no capital and occupy a very low position in dominant society. Due to the lack of a work permit, they also miss the opportunity to officially participate in the field of tourism. They are therefore subject to their own rules or even play their own game with very narrow limits in terms of opportunities for advancement and strong dependencies. The statements also demonstrate that even with residence and work permit, the hopes and chances of advancement in the societal hierarchy are limited, as the intended professional positions make clear. Nevertheless, the intention to achieve this can be noted. Whether this is due to the belief in the rules of the game or the dependency and lack of alternatives cannot be evaluated. It can only be stated that the group of informal workers suffer the most from the discriminatory structures and symbolic violence. Cynical voices might conclude that people in the informal sector also benefit from tourism and are therefore in favour of it. For us the reasons clearly lie in the extreme dependency and symbolic violence that prevents them from being part of the society.

In contrast, another look at the movement activists shows that being (financially) independent and belonging to the middle class makes political activism more likely. A circumstance that might lead to the over-representation of certain classes in movements (Bourdieu, 1988), which, in turn harbours the risk that, instead of adhering to the propagated charitable purposes, they too (unconsciously) follow their own internalised thought patterns and interests when they call for a far-reaching change in tourism policy. B6 made precisely this accusation. He criticised the movements, alleging that the actors predominantly composed of academics who fail to take the plight of those employed in tourism into account (B6). B3, as an active participant in the protests, acknowledged that the demands of the movements partly relied too much on theoretical problem-solving, not recognising the requirements of the tourism workforce. The absence of tourism during the pandemic and the resulting financial problems for workers were an eye-opener for the movements for stronger consideration of their needs (Bourdieu, 1988). This was an important realisation that led to a greater commitment to feasible measures, including the realities of the workers (Bourdieu, 1988). However, these statements pertained to "legally" employed workers in the tourism industry. Intentions to recognise the informal sector were not evident. This was apparent in statements from a (former) union member (P1) or a member of

the organisation "Kelly's" (Association of Cleaning Staff) (P13), who mainly campaign for the rights and improvement of the situation of the working class, meaning formal tourism workers.

Conclusion

The research question of why people do not participate in protests against tourism development and its negative effects is a complex one and does not allow for simple answers.

However, it becomes very clear that movement actors show no sign of envy or frustration about their lack of economic participation in the big tourism business nor of too much criminal energy, as stated by Buhalis (2020, 2024) or Butcher (2020). It is further evident that non-participants cannot automatically be regarded as supporters of tourism and a growth driven policy. Rather, we see dependencies, uncertainties as well as people's lack of capacity to deal with societal and environmental problems, due to their daily struggle to fulfil their basic needs as crucial reasons for the absence of protest. Furthermore, our research provides evidence for the assertion that protest as a tool to express injustices and advocate for change is influenced by one's habitus and social field and thus available to rather higher social classes. In lower classes protest is more likely to be considered as aggressive or not accepted by their social environment, its application is hence less an option. Tendencies towards the resignation, depoliticisation and powerlessness of residents who do not believe in the possibility to change unjust circumstances are indicated. It thus becomes clear that people's decisions are influenced by complex life realities and various factors that positivist approaches such as SET are not able to reflect.

Building on Bourdieu's attempt to theorise society, our investigation reveals that these opinions and decisions do not arise in a vacuum. They result from power structures reinforced by neoliberal discourses which do not only (re-)produce uncertainties and dependencies but influence the thinking and emotions of people, perpetuating their actions and beliefs. This occurs both among those who suffer under these discriminatory structures as well as among the actors identified by Bourdieu as the ruling class. Therefore, the inherent habitus and the unconsciously accepted societal rules, even if they imply personal discrimination, hinder the uprising of the popular classes and allow the ruling class to use their instruments of power to maintain these structures. One of these instruments is the power of naming. We have identified indications of its usage in the form of media to disseminate (false) information as well as tourism scholar's attempts to delegitimise the anti-touristification movements. Nevertheless, a profound analysis of our observations corresponding to the usage of naming power was not possible within the methodical approach of our research. An in-depth investigation of the influence would be desirable.

Our research demonstrates that a way to evade these influences and develop a movement-oriented habitus is an individual's social position, which in turn favours the higher representation of privileged classes in social movements. As Bourdieu (1988) noted, such an overrepresentation of a certain class in the movements harbours the risk of speaking for other, less privileged people and even of excluding them from participation. Such a tendency could also be identified in our study. After initially being unaware of those circumstances, movement actors seem to have recognised this issue and are making improvements regarding the inclusion of the working class. This consideration and better cooperation between different social classes are possible reasons for the growing participation in the movements in 2024 on the Balearic and Canary Islands. From our perspective the recognition of lower classes and their needs is crucial for the movements to increase the numbers of participants and finally exert sufficient pressure on decision makers in politics and the tourism industry. This should include the informal workers who suffer most from structural inequalities, which we would describe as yet insufficient. However, the improved cooperation might not be the only reason for the increase in participation, which is why it would be highly desirable to analyse further success factors that could be used as a blueprint by movements in other affected destinations, where protests are still rather small.

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For tourism research, we recommend taking greater account of the complexity of human interactions and decisions and refraining from simplified methodological approaches based on economic, positivist perspectives. In line with Cañada et al. (2023) we urge for critical, gender and class sensitive perspectives in tourism scholarship and to turn away from the frequently found management approaches. Additionally, we highlight the importance for scientists to question their own structural biases and assumptions, using their naming power to reveal discriminatory structures and neoliberal discourses instead of reproducing them and to offer the suppressed classes a language that enables them to express their experiences. Because, as Saad-Filho (2010) says, “The violence of the capitalist system may be hidden, but it is violent nonetheless,” (p. 124) – with far worse effects than water guns.

Note

1. The protests in European tourist destinations have received a lot of media and academic attention in recent years, but are by no means limited to the European continent, as examples from Oaxaca, Mexico (Greenwald, 2024) or Hawaii (McDonagh, 2022) demonstrate.

Ethical approval

The research has been approved by the Ethics Assessment Committee EACLM Faculty of Law and Nijmegen School of Management under the following approval number: 2024-FT-09.

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Eggli, F., Erdmenger, E., Langer, M., Reif, J., Sommer, C., Stors, N., Völkening, N., Winsky, N. (2025). Stadt und Tourismus. In: Eisenstein, B., Gronau, W., Harms, T., Hopfinger, H., Mayer, M., Scharfenort, N., Voshage, I. (Hrsg.): *Geographien des Tourismus und der Freizeit*. Berlin, (in Vorbereitung zum Druck).

Langer, M. & Amrhein, S. (2025). Degrowth im Tourismus. In: Schmude, J., Freitag, T. Bandi Tanner, M. (Hrsg.): *Tourismusforschung: Handbuch für Wissenschaft und Praxis* (S. 847–853). Baden-Baden.

Langer, M. (2023). Exploring tourism workers' perspective on transformational job policies: the case of Barcelona. In G. J. Hospers & S. Amrhein (Eds.), *Regionen in Europa/European regions: Band 7. Coping with overtourism in post-pandemic Europe: Approaches, experiences and challenges* (pp. 102–115). Lit Verlag.

Sonstige Veröffentlichungen

Langer, M., Roth, R., Schmude, J., Siller, H. (Hrsg.) (2024). *Zukunftsfähige Tourismusentwicklung. Neue Perspektiven für Politik und Praxis*. Schriften zu Tourismus und Freizeit. ESV Verlag.

Wissenschaftliche Vorträge

Beiträge und Präsentationen auf Konferenzen

8th International Degrowth Conference: The Hague 2021, Degrowth in tourism: The case of Barcelona and the role of the Covid-19 pandemic. 24–28 August 2021, Den Haag.

AAG Annual Meeting 2022, Degrowth in tourism: The role of the Covid-19 pandemic in Barcelona. 25 Februar-1 März 2022, New York (online).

IGU Centennial Congress 2022, COVID-19 as an accelerator of change? The impact of the pandemic on the Degrowth debate in Barcelona's tourism. 18-22 Juli 2022, Paris.

Workshop: Coping with overtourism in Europe, Transformational job policies as pathways to a Degrowth future in tourism? Understanding the worker's perspective. 10-11 November 2022, Kleve/Nijmegen.

9th International Degrowth Conference: Zagreb 2023, Transformational job-policies as pathways towards a Degrowth future in tourism? Explorative analysis of the worker's perspective. 29 August-2 September 2023, Zagreb.

Deutscher Kongress für Geographie 2023, Sitzungsleitung: Kritische Analyse des Tourismus: Zwischen alternativen Pfaden und transformativen Zukunftsvisionen (1&2). 19-23 September 2023, Frankfurt.

Deutscher Kongress für Geographie 2023, Transformative politische Maßnahmen als Wegbereiter für eine Degrowth Vision im Tourismus? Explorative Analyse der Perspektive der Arbeiter:innen. 19-23 September 2023, Frankfurt.

35th International Geographical Congress 2024, Transformational job-policies as pathways to a degrowth future in tourism? Understanding the workers' perspective. 24-30 August 2024, Dublin.

Lehrveranstaltungen

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München

Praktikum	Angewandte Anthropogeographie
	SoSe 2021 SoSe 2022
Übung	Einführung in die Anthropogeographie
	WiSe 2020/21 WiSe 2021/22 WiSe 2022/23 WiSe 2023/24
Exkursion	Große geographische Exkursion
	Norddeutschland SoSe 2021 (Master) Kanada/USA SoSe 2022
	Südfrankreich SoSe 2023 Apulien SoSe 2024
	Kleine geographische Exkursion Fahrradmobilität in München SoSe 2022

Curriculum Vitae

Dieses Kapitel enthält personenbezogene Informationen, die zum Zweck des Datenschutzes aus der zur Veröffentlichung vorgesehenen Fassung entfernt wurden.