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**BACHELOR DEGREE IN TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT**

***How can New Technologies help Promote a more Responsible Tourist Behaviour? - An Exploratory Study of Tourists Perceptions on Responsible Behaviour in context of Co-Creation Platforms***

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## ABSTRACT

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Responsible Tourist Behaviour and making the tourist activity more sustainable is one of the most pressing challenges of the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This study aims to explore the perceptions of tourists on Responsible Tourism as well as giving insights into Co-creation platforms as a possible solution to trigger a more Responsible Tourism Behaviour. According to recent literature, the responsibility is currently being placed primarily in the hands of tourism suppliers and governments, while the involvement of the tourist himself through the means of Co-creation remains rather understudied. Hence, this study aims to bridge the gap and study Co-creation as a tool for a more Responsible Tourism. This research thesis has been conducted by the means of quantitative data analysis through closed- and open-ended questions with more than 300 participants. The findings of this study show that there is a lack of awareness on the side of the tourists and a vast need of education for both - travellers and professionals. Co-creation platforms have been studied as a possible tool to deliver more information and collaboration between supply and demand. This study lays a foundation for future research to bridge the gap between tourism suppliers and users, contributing to the sector being more sustainable.

Keywords: Responsible Tourist Behaviour, Co-Creation, Sharing Economy, Responsible Tourism

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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## Contents

ABSTRACT .....	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	IV
TABLE OF FIGURES & TABLES .....	VI
ABBREVIATIONS .....	VII
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Context of the Research Problem .....	1
1.2 Identification of the Research Problem .....	2
1.3 Originality and Contribution.....	3
1.4 Research Aim and Objectives .....	4
1.5 Structure of the Study .....	4
2. RESPONSIBLE TOURIST BEHAVIOUR & CO-CREATION .....	5
2.1 The Tourism Industry .....	5
2.1.1 Background & Current Situation of the Tourism Industry .....	5
2.1.2 Impacts of Tourism.....	5
2.2 Responsible Tourist Behaviour.....	7
2.2.1 Defining Responsibility in Tourism.....	7
2.2.2 Implementing Responsibility.....	9
2.2.3 Achieving Responsible Tourist Behaviour .....	11
2.3 Co-Creation and Sharing Economy as Accelerators for a more RTB.....	15
2.3.1 Co-Creation in Tourism .....	15
2.3.2 The Sharing Economy .....	16
2.3.3 The Sharing Economy & Co-Creation through lens of TBL.....	17
2.4 Conclusions & Research Gaps .....	19
2.5 Literature Map .....	21

2.6 Conceptual Model .....	22
3. METHODOLOGY .....	23
3.1 Overall Research Design .....	23
3.2 Data collection techniques and research instruments .....	24
3.3 Research Context and participants .....	26
3.4 Data Analysis .....	27
3.5 Evidence of Data Collection .....	27
4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....	28
4.1 Participants Profile .....	28
4.2 Responsible Tourist Behaviour .....	29
4.3 Co-Creation Platforms .....	35
5. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	42
5.1 Conclusions .....	42
5.2 Limitations .....	45
5.3 Recommendations .....	46
5.3.1 Recommendations for Industry Professionals .....	46
5.3.2 Recommendations for future research .....	47
REFERENCES .....	49
APPENDICES .....	56
I) United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals List .....	56
II) Ethics Form .....	58
III) Questionnaire .....	62
IV) Questionnaire Results .....	66

## TABLE OF FIGURES & TABLES

Figure 1: Responsible Tourism vs Sustainable Tourism .....	9
Figure 2: Responsible Tourism & the Responsible Tourist.....	12
Figure 3: Literature Map .....	21
Figure 4: Conceptual Model .....	22
Figure 5: Participants Country of Origin (Total Responses: 301) .....	28
Figure 6: Results Q6 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301) .....	29
Figure 7: Results Q9 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301) .....	32
Figure 8: Results Q11 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301) .....	33
Figure 9: Results Q13 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301) .....	36
Figure 10: Results Q16 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 210) .....	41
Table 1: The 17 SDGs Aligned with the TBL.....	11
Table 2: Shades of Green .....	13
Table 3: Questionnaire content .....	25
Table 4: Results Q12 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301) .....	34
Table 5: Results Q14 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301) .....	37
Table 6: Cross Analysis Q9 & Q14 .....	39
Table 7: Cross Analysis of Q13 & Q14 (Total Responses Platform Users: 248; Non-Users: 53)..	40
Table 8: Demographic data from participants .....	66
Table 9: Question 6 (Total Responses: 301).....	67
Table 10: Question 7 & 8 (Total Responses: 301) .....	69
Table 11: Question 9 (Total Responses: 301 .....	69
Table 12: Question 10 (Total Responses: 301).....	69
Table 13: Question 11 (Total Responses: 301).....	69
Table 14: Question 12 (Total Responses: 301).....	70
Table 15: Question 13 (Total Responses: 301; multiple answers possible).....	70
Table 16: Question 14 (Total Responses: 301).....	70
Table 17: Question 15 (Total Responses: 210; voluntary to answer) .....	71

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
COCR	Co-Creation
DART	Dialogue, Access, Risk Benefits, Transparency
DMO	Destination Management Organization
DSR	Destination Social Responsibility
ICT	Information Communication Tool
n.D.	no Date
PRA	Public Responsibility Awareness
P2P	Peer to Peer
RT	Responsible Tourism
RTB	Responsible Tourist Behaviour
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRA	Self Responsibility Awareness
TBL	Triple Bottom line
UN	United Nations
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Context of the Research Problem

In April 2020, at the conference held in UIC “Envisioning a more just post-pandemic world”, the poet and activist Sonya Renee Taylor said:

*“We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalised greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature”.*

The importance of changing towards a more responsible and sustainable behaviour is not only affecting the tourism industry, but all industries worldwide. Introducing sustainable practices has been gaining attention increasingly for three decades (Stanford, 2008). Wheeler (1993, p.121) for instance argues that while the sustainability concept is “intellectually appealing”, it has been abused as a public relations tool to change the views on the touristic activity, rather than implementing the model into a destination's action plan.

Before analysing how the industry could improve towards a more responsible travel activity, the positive impacts of tourism on the world economy should be explored. Since the 1990s, the tourism industry has experienced accelerated growth. According to the World Tourism Organization reports of 2019, tourist arrivals grew by 4% compared to the previous year, reaching over 1.5 billion international travellers. Those increasing numbers of tourists provided destinations with opportunities of economic growth. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2019) those travellers contributed 10.3% to the global GDP, meaning US\$ 8.9 Trillion. Technological Development has been an accelerator of the global travel activity. The tourism industry is an extremely complex industry with a broad number of stakeholders who play part into it and where the public and private sector are closely related. From the accommodation, to the transportation and the cultural and entertainment sector, directly and indirectly provides jobs to 330 million people all around the globe (WTTC, 2019). The growth of the global travel and tourism activity observed in the last years has been affected exponentially by the development of new technologies (from digitalization to artificial intelligence) (Ali, A. & Frew, J., 2014). The tourism industry consists of an extremely competitive and constantly changing environment where new trends and challenges arise every day. Tourism has completely changed



the global scene as the world finds itself more connected than ever. The UN secretary Antonio Guterres at the 112th Session of the Executive Council (2020) expressed his views of this industry in a short video message:

*“Tourism can be a force of good in our world, playing a part in protecting the planet and its biodiversity, and celebrating what makes us human: from discovering new places and cultures to connecting with new people and experiences”*

Based on that statement, it can be agreed that tourism brings benefits to host-communities, since the incomes of the touristic activity can help preserve cultural and natural assets.

Although tourism contributes positively to the world’s economy, environment and culture in numerous ways, there is a long list of issues as well. From environmental catastrophes such as the destruction of entire ecosystems as seen in the Phi Phi Leh Islands after the popular movie “The Beach” (1999) starring Leonardo DiCaprio when there was a sudden influx of tourist arrivals and the environment was not able to keep up with the sheer number of visitors. The only way to salvage the sinking ship was to stop the travel activity entirely for two years, until 2021. Furthermore, there are economies, mostly developing countries or independent islands, where the main contributor to the GDP is the tourism industry. Tourism Hotspots such as Venice, Barcelona and New York are now - due to the COVID-19 pandemic - experiencing high numbers of unemployment and plunging incomes, leading to issues far bigger than a lack of travel activity. According to forecasts of the WTTC (2020) up to 197 million jobs are at stake.

## **1.2 Identification of the Research Problem**

When measuring the success of tourism organizations, mostly monetary values (economic growth and profit) are taken into consideration. However, experts agree that to measure the real success the tourism activity brings, the well-being of the host community and environment must also be accounted for (Ateljevic, 2020). With increasing knowledge about the negative effects of tourism on the triple bottom line (economy, environment, and socio-culture), the need for a shift of the industry is being called for (Ateljevic, 2020, Martin, 2016). Although alternatives such as sustainable’, responsible’ and eco’ tourism have been conceptualized and gained in popularity since the 1970s, only 2% of the total touristic activity can be classified as sustainable (Frey & George, 2010). In tourism research, it can be observed that large organizations such as the UNWTO have placed numerous attempts to tackle the previously mentioned sustainability challenges. Hence, action plans such as the *Agenda21*, the *Millennium Declaration* and the *Future we want* ultimately led to establishing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals for 2030,

that all UN member states voluntarily agreed to. Unfortunately, those goals are mainly used as a form of greenwashing and do not provide substantial change (Raviv, Becken & Hughey, 2013). However, the negative impacts cannot be further ignored, as the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates. Researchers are identifying a new shift in the global perception of how we travel, and we connect with each other. Now more than ever it is time to be innovative and rethink old ways of travel. Research has been focused on studying how the suppliers of tourism, hence governments and organizations, could improve towards a more Responsible Tourism. Concepts such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) have been introduced alongside with the 17 SDGs. However, other researchers point out that such actions will not be effective until the demand side assumes responsibility as well (Stanford, 2009; Raviv et al., 2013; Luo et al., 2019). In an attempt to bring demand and supply closer together, many researchers discuss Co-creation and sharing economy platforms as a possible way to tackle some of the industry's largest concerns (Gössling & Hall, 2019; Boar et al., 2020). Companies such as *Airbnb*, *Couch Surfing* and *TripAdvisor* have disrupted the industry in the sense that they force companies to act more transparently and responsibly as the consequence of higher customer involvement and feedback visibility (Sigala, 2014). Nevertheless, barely any research has been focused on studying Co-Creation as a possible tool for placing responsibility into the customers' hands and hence collaborating towards a more sustainable future.

### **1.3 Originality and Contribution**

When reviewing literature for this thesis it has been observed that most scholars concerned with the impacts and irresponsibility of the tourism sector simply call to action (Budeanu, 2007; Jamal et al., 2013; Ting et al., 2020), however few suggest actual measures to combat the sustainability challenges. Organizations like the UNWTO and academics attempt to tackle those challenges from the supplier side, calling to governments and companies to act according to the 17 SDGs and implement CSR into the cores of their businesses. However, in our economy the supply is very closely interlinked with the demand. Surprisingly, there is only little research on how placing responsibility and raising awareness in the demand side could potentially help to achieve the SDGs (Gössling et Hall, 2019; Boar et al., 2020). The perceptions and attitudes of the tourist himself have also been vastly understudied. While there is barely evidence of how the customer perceives the available interaction, however few academics applied the research to the tourism industry (Binkhorst & den Dekker, 2009; Binkhorst & Cerdan, 2019). With a research sample of over 300 participants, this paper attempts to explore the perceptions of tourists on responsible behaviour with the help of Co-creation platforms.

## **1.4 Research Aim and Objectives**

### Research Aim:

How can Co-Creation platforms accelerate RTB? Exploring the tourists' perceptions on responsible behaviour in context of Co-Creation platforms.

### Research objectives:

- I) To define what Responsible Tourism and Responsible Tourist Behaviour entail;
- II) To understand how the Sharing Economy & Co-Creation platforms aligned with the 17 SDGs may result in Responsible Tourism Behaviour;
- III) To explore the attitudes and perceptions of tourists regarding responsible travel, Co-Creation platforms, and the achievements of SDG; and
- IV) To advise industry experts on how to align Co-Creation with the achievement of the SDGs

## **1.5 Structure of the Study**

The present study reviews existing literature concerned with the topic of research in Chapter 2, followed by a literature map and a conceptual framework, establishing a clear understanding of the research problem through present knowledge.

Chapter 3 then continues to describe the methodology of the research design of the present study, explaining the approach to data collection and analysis, the context of research and finally taking into account the ethical considerations for conducting this study.

Ultimately, the findings of the current study are discussed in Chapter 4, leading to the conclusions drawn from the conducted and reviewed research in the final chapter. References and additional information can be revised in the appendices.

## 2. RESPONSIBLE TOURIST BEHAVIOUR & CO-CREATION

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### 2.1 The Tourism Industry

#### 2.1.1 Background & Current Situation of the Tourism Industry

Ongoing changes have been one of the most characterising factors of the tourism industry (Sigala & Baum, 2003; Neuhofer et al, 2013). While early modern tourism used to be reserved for the nobles to demonstrate their social class, power and status, the implementation of a centralized European transport system brought revolutionary changes and the creation of new trends (Towner, 1985). Thomas Cook (1808-1892) introduced the first forms of mass tourism, by offering organised group vacations to an all-inclusive price. Cook is hence seen as the inventor and pioneer of commercialised mass tourism (Gyr, 2010; Zuelow, 2015). With the “summer retreat holiday” the number of travellers increased from 9 to 32 million in 40 years leading up to 1991 (Gyr, 2010 quoting Lanquar & Raynouard, 1978). A powerful stimulus for the increase in travel was that travel by caravan, car, and later airplanes became available to a broader public and made holidays more affordable by the introduction of charter tourism (Gyr, 2010). In the last few decades, researchers started defining the tourist activity. Welford & Ytterhus (2004) describe tourism as an industrial activity which has impacts on destinations due to the use of scarce resources and the requirement of needing infrastructure to support the activity (p. 412). In 1993, McKercher found that to understand all benefits and costs of tourism, one has to understand the ‘fundamental truths’ about the industry. Those truths imply that tourism is an industrial activity and hence is a consumer competing for scarce resources in a private sector dominated, multifaceted industry making its activity nearly impossible to control. Since the income is generated by importing clients consuming entertainment rather than exporting products, decisions are mainly based on profit maximisation (McKercher, 1993). Once travel was widely available and better understood (fundamental truths), the positive and negative impacts of its activity started to crystallize themselves (Sigala, 2003).

#### 2.1.2 Impacts of Tourism

With those fundamental truths in mind, researchers started discussing the impacts - positive and negative - of the tourism activity. When analysing the impacts of tourism, experts commonly use the triple bottom line (TBL) approach, analysing economic, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects (Elkington, 1998; Manente et al, 2014; Mihalic, 2014). Elkington (1998), coined this concept as the 3 Ps: Profit, Planet and People. First and foremost, the tourism industry is

and has been a major contributor to the global gross domestic product (GDP) (Ting et al, 2020). According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2020), the sector contributed 10.3 % to the global GDP. Thanks to implementation of a touristic activity numerous destinations gained a significant increase in incomes and the creation of jobs. The UNWTO views tourism as the world's strongest employer, accounting for one in 10 jobs globally (UNWTO, 2019). Amongst the socio-cultural benefits are the exposure to outside influences and contact, awareness of other societies and seeing how other people live (Pearce, 2008). One of the pillars of obtaining socio-cultural benefits from the tourism activity is a population with high social capital, meaning that to be beneficial an "enterprise for a community must consider the links, connections and working relationships among community members." (Pearce, 2008, p.31). To avoid the dangers of commercializing tourism, destinations should implement self-determination mechanisms such as certifications and community approval of practises. However, the tourism activity becomes most beneficial when the TBL works together in harmony - a destination applying the incomes of tourism towards cultural and environmental conservation, both the visitor and the host can benefit from the travel activity. Steven et al. (2013) studied the conservation of endangered bird species in Africa by the means of Tourism Incomes and found that at least 10% of bird species globally rely on tourism revenue to not go extinct. Welford & Ytterhus (2004) studied the Norwegian region Lillehammer, which reacted with a strategy aligned with the TBL to combat declining visitor numbers in the 1990s. Lillehammer introduced three projects in order to minimize the negative environmental, social and economic impacts in the region. First, Lillehammer created the eco certification program 'eco-lighthouse' to minimize environmental impacts of companies, reducing their cost and taking advantage of marketing to a more environmentally concerned tourist. Secondly, Lillehammer introduced an advanced transport co-operation with improved schedules and ticketing systems and most importantly linking different types of transportation with each other, ultimately leading to increased revenues with lower operating costs and twice as many passengers as in the previous years since the dependency on cars had been removed. The third project was concerned with the aesthetics of the destination, hence cleaning up and bringing back the typical Norwegian character to the region. At the time of the case study in 2004 the plan was still being in its beginnings of implementation; however, the third action plan had increased the attractiveness of the region significantly. As can be seen in the case of Lillehammer, tourism is in constant need for re-evaluation, planning and taking action - but when done correctly it can lead to a minimisation of the impacts of tourism (Welford & Ytterhus, 2004).

However, the impacts of tourism are far from being only beneficial to the environment, economy, and culture. Researchers agree that there is a vast need for change in the Tourism Industry (Neuhofer et al., 2013). Debates around the impacts of tourism on the natural and socio-economic environments accelerated when George Young argued in 1973 that the effects of tourism are both a blessing and a blight (Young, 1973). Krippendorf (1987) was one of the first to make a call to all tourist service suppliers to assume responsibility for the population and environment, to further contribute to make a more human tourism, and to impose regulations to reach those. According to Manente et al. (2014) the communities became aware of the negative impacts of mass tourism as early as in the 1980's, claiming that the tourist activity should contribute to the development and conservation of the host community. Butler and Pearce reminded the Industry that more responsibility should be assumed for the effects of travel and the related behaviour on the host environment, both in its physical and human elements (Butler & Pearce, 1995). Goodwin and Francis (2003, p.271) identified the need for a more profound, responsible tourist experience and a "shift away from the predominance of the traditional sun, sand and sea holiday". Scholars have been calling for alternative and more sustainable forms of tourism since the early 2010s (Cohen, 2002; Murphy & Price 2005; Stanford, 2008). Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, this debate rose in popularity again and cities are being called to overthink present regulations and practices in an innovative manner, RT being one possible solution.

## **2.2 Responsible Tourist Behaviour**

### **2.2.1 Defining Responsibility in Tourism**

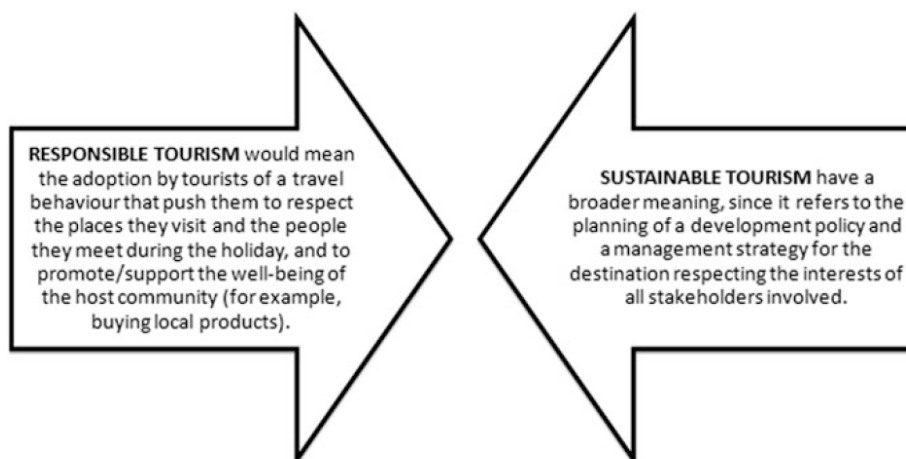
Defining *Responsible Tourism* (RT) and *Responsible Tourist Behaviour* (RTB) is a challenge undertaken by numerous researchers around the world. Firstly, a common definition of responsibility should be established - according to the Oxford Dictionary Online, responsibility is defined as "a duty to deal with or take care of someone or something, so that it is your fault if something goes wrong." (n.D.), implementing a moral duty to act ethically and being held accountable for one's actions. The attempt of integrating the concept of responsibility into the tourism activity gained its momentum in the 1970s, when Young (1973) claimed that the impact of tourism is both blessing and blight, launching the debate for alternative form of tourism. Introducing sustainable practices and shifting to a more RTB is what many researchers suggest as a solution to cope with the previously described challenges (Jamal et al., 2013; Mihalic, 2014; Ting et al, 2020). Before developing the concept of RT further, it is important to differentiate the concepts of sustainable tourism and RT. Since the 1980s alternative forms such as alternative',

quality', eco', responsible' green', sustainable' and ethical' tourism (Mihalic, 2014) started emerging as a response to the negative impacts of mass tourism (Jamal et al., 2013). Although the names vary, all those concepts encompassed the "desire to reduce the negative impacts and exploitation brought by mass tourism while ensuring that the local community received a just share of benefits" (Jamal et al., 2013, p. 4596). In response to the growing debate and a desire to make tourism more beneficial for all stakeholders, experts first focused on the sustainability tourism model. Sustainable Tourism is the three-pillar concept concerned with minimizing the impacts of travel on the economy, environment, and society (Mihalic, 2014; Ting et al. 2020). Accordingly, the UNWTO (2015) adopted the TBL concept of sustainable tourism to combat the negative impacts of mass tourism and lead the tourism industry into a long-term sustainable future. However, the TBL approach also received criticism of not encompassing the whole issue. For instance, Wheeler (1993, p.121) argued that while the sustainability concept is "intellectually appealing", it has been abused as a public relations tool to change the views on the touristic activity, rather than implementing the model into a destination's action plan. Other scholars share the concern about the effectiveness of sustainable tourism development and state that due to the lack of its practical implementation, the tourism industry maintains alarmingly unsustainable (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010; Kokkranikal & Chettiparamb, 2011).

After understanding that sustainable tourism is not enough by itself, the first models for RT were developed by tourism academics. The idea of RT is derived from the desire of self-realization (Krippendorff, 1987) and delivering "enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local culture, social and environmental issues" (Cape Town Declaration, 2002). A formal attempt of defining RT considers it as - all forms of tourism which respect the host natural, built and cultural environments and the interests of all parties concerned (Haywood, 1988; Smith, 1990). That same declaration defines RT as a form of travel that minimizes negative impacts while generating optimal economic benefits and enhancing the life of local people. Despite the benefits of tourism, Butler & Pearce called for "more responsibility for the effects of travel and behaviour on the host environment" (1995, p.5). RT - in contrast to sustainable tourism - is not only a concept to reduce the TBL, but in fact to emphasise generating social and economic benefits for the host community (Goodwin & Francis, 2003; Frey & George, 2010; Ting et al., 2020). Ting et al (2020, cited Goodwin 2016, p.3), stated that RT in its simplest form advocates for "making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit". The difference between both concepts has been established and elaborated well in the comparison

done by Colombo (2005) and Sambri & Pegan (2007), adopted by Manente et al. in 2014 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Responsible Tourism vs Sustainable Tourism



Source: Manente et al. (2014)

The concept of RT re-emerged amongst scholars during the COVID-19 crisis (Ting et al, 2020), painting a clear picture of the negative social, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism and the lack of its implementation stays heavily criticized.

### 2.2.2 Implementing Responsibility

To understand why RT is still lacking practical application (Wheeller, 1993) today, one must have a look at the tools used to implement the model. One of the concerns raised is that the concept calls for more responsibility from the side of the supplier, rather than asking for responsible behaviour from the visitor himself. In hopes that laws, policies, and regulations lead to a more RT, the issue is mainly placed in the hands of governments and Destination Management Organizations (Kumar & Nandani, 2017). Hence, the concept Corporate Social Responsibility was introduced by numerous scholars (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 1979). Zanfardini et al. (2015) argue that CSR includes actions and strategies of an organization aimed to listen to stakeholders' expectations and reach the TBL goals. Although CSR research and application skyrocketed in other industries, the "tourism sector has been slow to react to this trend." (Zanfardini et al, 2015, p.3, citing Frey & George, 2010). CSR was translated into tourism by the UNWTO in 1980 noting that "the conservation of historical, cultural and religious sites represents at all time, and notably in time of conflict, one of the fundamental responsibilities of states." (UNWTO, 1980, p.4). Later, Hague's Declaration on tourism added that "rational management of tourism may



contribute significantly to the protection and development of the physical environment and the cultural heritage, as well as to improving the quality of life” (UNWTO, 1989, p.7). Other scholars (Romani & Grappi, 2014; Lujun & Scott, 2017) have suggested that the reason why CSR cannot reach full potential is because they are individual actors. Instead, they proposed the concept of Destination Social Responsibility (DSR) includes stakeholder activities that protect and improve the social and environmental interests of an entire destination, in addition to the economic interests of the individual organizations. Achieving sustainable development of a tourist destination would appear to be, in part, driven by both engaging in socially responsible behaviours by the organizations associated with the destination and gaining the support of visiting tourists to act in environmentally responsible ways. Derived from the ongoing discussion, the Cape Town Declaration of 2002 characterised the responsible activity as the one minimizing negative impacts on the TBL while generating benefits for the economy, locals, and environment by involving stakeholders and providing access to all. Based on that declaration, Zanfardini et al. (2015, p.3) argue that CSR in tourism attempts to “deliver sustainable value to society, as well as to stakeholders, for the long-term benefits.” Similar action plans were previously adopted by countries worldwide such as the Agenda 21 (Earth Summit, 1992), the Millennium development goals (Millennium Summit, 2000) and The Future we want (Rio de Janeiro, 2012). In the most recently widely accepted attempt to facilitate the implementation of RT from the providers perspective, the UNWTO established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs (see Appendix I) are a call to action by all countries to all countries, aiming to promote prosperity and conserve the planet. These goals identify the need of ending poverty through long term strategies building a diverse and sustainable economy and catering to the social needs of education, health, job opportunities and tackling the challenge of the ever-warming climate. According to the UN, the SDGs provide a crucial framework for the recovery of the world after COVID-19. The aim is for all UN countries to collaborate, ensuring no one is left behind. Based on the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, the 17 SDG are summarized in the following table aligned with the TBL.

Table 1: The 17 SDGs Aligned with the TBL

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>
<i>(1) End Poverty</i> <i>(8) Decent Work &amp; Economic Growth</i> <i>(9) Industry, Innovation &amp; Infrastructure</i> <i>(10) Reduced Inequalities</i> <i>(12) Responsible Consumption and Production</i>	<i>(2) Zero Hunger</i> <i>(3) Good Health &amp; Well-being</i> <i>(4) Quality Education</i> <i>(5) Gender Equality</i> <i>(7) Affordable &amp; Clean Energy</i> <i>(11) Sustainable Cities &amp; Communities</i> <i>(16) Peace, Justice &amp; Strong Institutions</i>	<i>(6) Clean Water &amp; Sanitation</i> <i>(13) Climate Action</i> <i>(14) Life Below Water</i> <i>(15) Life on Land</i>
<i>(17) Partnerships for the goals</i>		

Source: Own elaboration as adopted from TBL (1997) and UNWTO (2015)

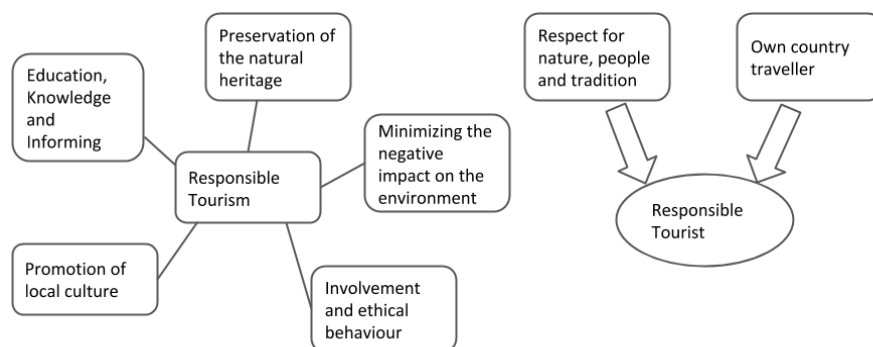
Implementing CSR and the 17 SDGs into the tourism industry has mainly been placed in the hands of governmental organizations, which some scholars view as critical (Kumar & Nandani, 2016) and suggest that for tourism to become truly responsible, it must be tackled from the tourists' side as well (Leslie, 2012b; Mihalic, 2014; Kumar & Nandani, 2016).

### 2.2.3 Achieving Responsible Tourist Behaviour

Reaching a RTB is placed in the hands of governments, companies and DMOs in hopes that laws, policies, and regulations lead to more RT. However, implementing such norms can only be effective if there is willingness to change from the side of the traveller himself (Verbeek, 2005; Tromp et al., 2011). Hashimoto (2000) explored the individuals' perceptions on issues affecting society such as well-being, environmental problems and who is responsible to fix them. The study results show that the most common answer to who is the responsible actor to solve these issues is the government and institutions in general, removing the responsibility from themselves as individuals. In previous studies regarding this same topic, there has been observed an increase in such tendency (US Travel Data Centre, 1992). When contemplating the idea of responsibility being in hands of society or self, it is interesting to look at Hofstede's theory (1984) about the dissonance between these two concerns: social and personal (individual) responsibility. He, among other authors (Joireman & Van Lange, 2008; Tromp et al., 2011), discusses the distinction between the individual and collective desire. As shown in the study (Hashimoto 2000), people place the responsibility in the desirable form but not necessarily include themselves in that collective responsibility. Okereke (2007), also puts the blame on the lack of action from the governmental institutions. It must not be forgotten that these studies

are carried out in anthropocentric societies, meaning that nature is perceived as something humans can benefit from. To further explain this, even though there is a collective tendency to worry and desire environmental preservation, there exists contradictions to it because at the same time, humans exploit nature and its resources for their own benefit with no regard to its effects. This translates into a greater or lesser extent depending on which society we talk about (Hashimoto, 2000). Leslie (2012a, p1) argued that not only the tourism providers shall assume responsibility, but the tourist himself must “bear responsibility for purchase of their tourism products and services”. Kumar and Nandani (2016) identified that 93% of tourists in the Kumaon Region (India) were unaware of the concept of RT prior to the study. They further argue that the tourists’ behaviour towards the host community is essential for the conservation and development of a destination and that all players of tourism need to behave responsibly to become a sustainable destination (Kumar & Nandani, 2016). Leslie (2012b) identified the responsible tourists as those exercising environmentally friendly behaviour, responsible behaviour towards locals and bringing benefits to their communities. To differentiate between what is RT and who is the responsible tourist, State and Bulin (2016) define RT as “the orientation of the natural preservation and minimizing the negative impact of tourist activity on the environment, but also education, knowledge and informing, promotion of local culture and ethical behaviour of all parties involved”, whereas the responsible tourist “respects nature, locals of the destinations visited, their tradition and customs, with a penchant towards travel to known, above all, his own country” (State & Bulin, 2016, p.791) (see figure 2).

*Figure 2: Responsible Tourism & the Responsible Tourist*



*Source: State & Bulin (2016)*

Swarbrooke (1999) discussed how the concept of responsibility (and responsible behaviour) is not a black or white idea but a scale of greys, well, in this case, a scale of greens. It is a very

important distinction that could further be adapted and modified depending on what aspect of tourism one wants to analyse. In general terms, Swarbrooke (1999) created four levels from “Not green at all” to “Totally green” which interestingly suggests that the perfect tourist is the one that in reality is not a tourist, meaning he does not travel at all. At the same time, stopping all tourist activities would clearly have a negative impact on the communities and its economy, so he discards that answer as well.

*Table 2: Shades of Green*

<i>Not at all green</i>	<i>Light green</i>			<i>Dark Green</i>		<i>Totally green</i>
Read what brochures say about green issues and sustainable tourism	Think about issues and try to reduce normal water consumption in destinations where water is scarce, for example	Consciously seek to find out more about particular issues and to become more actively involved in the issue, by joining a pressure group, for example	Use public transport to get to destination and travel around, while on holiday	Boycott hotels and resorts which have a poor reputation on environmental issues	Pay to go on a holiday to work on a conservation project	Do not take holidays away from home at all so as not to harm the environment in any way, as a tourist

*Source: Swarbrooke (1999)*

As discussed above it has been widely agreed that responsibility is placed in the hands of tourism suppliers, hence governmental organizations, and tourism companies. However, Bramwell et al. (1996) remind that the economy is built so that the demand determines the supply. Stanford (2008) cited Burns (2002, p 41), prompting that the tourist himself is the most important stakeholder since without him there would not be any demand once again reinforcing the idea that responsibility should be assumed by the tourist. Stanford further conducted a study in New Zealand, discovering that the level of responsibility expected or needed from the tourist is much higher in places where natural resources are a direct stakeholder of the tourist activity. However, Swarbrooke’s “Shades of the green tourist” (1999) and Stanford's study (2008) are limited in the sense that they only assume responsibility concerned with the environment, but as argued by multiple authors responsible behaviour goes beyond the environmental aspects (Elkington, 1997; UNTWO, n.D.). The study carried out by Stanford (2008) further showed that the communities surveyed considered tourists were responsible when they made an economic impact, meaning they spend in the local economy instead of consuming international products. This further supports the concept of the TBL, where economic impact is as important as the other two (Stanford, 2008). While arguably a responsible tourist should demonstrate all these

dimensions, it was suggested that a tourist may have more responsibility in one dimension but could be less responsible in another (Stanford, 2008). With this finding, Stanford (2008) raised the question whether responsible tourists are only the ones who have enough time and money that allows them to stay long enough to implicate themselves in the community and create a positive impact. Following that line of thought, alternatives for the mainstream tourism (mass tourism) have been gaining popularity but remain as niche markets with approximately only 10% of the tourism market altogether (Butcher, 2003). This reality is criticized by authors such as Budeanu (2005), who says that creating these niche alternatives will not solve the problem unless we redesign the mainstream tourism reality.

To tackle the issue, there is extensive research in recent years on sustainability, not only on how we can design more sustainable products but how we can behave more sustainably. Hand in hand with the shift of the companies towards becoming more socially responsible, the design of behaviour is going in that direction as well (Lilley et al., 2005; Lockton et al., 2008; Wever et al., 2008). There exists extensive work on the theoretical propositions on how to target behaviour but little knowledge on how to apply it in real life situations (Tromp et al, 2011). This explains why the current pattern seen in studies and initiatives remain just words and intentions with no substantial results (Han et al., 2010). Even though it has also been proven that the environment can only influence up to an extent and that aspects such as motivation and personal characteristics also have a large influence on that shift of behaviour (Tussyadiah, 2017). In line with Hofstede's theory, Tromp et al. (2011), suggest there are two main factors that coin human behaviour. These two elements identify the difference between the self or individual and the society or collective concerns that in turn become motivation and add to the sense of responsibility. For instance, it is a collective concern to preserve the environment but when traveling, individuals still will purchase flight tickets knowing that flying does not contribute to that social objective. Then again, in the tourist reality there appears conflict between the collective and individual concerns, such as a desire for comfort and efficiency. Swarbrooke (1999) made a very interesting point when he highlighted how tourism and the scene of going on holidays and being on vacation is purely based on hedonistic philosophy. To elaborate on this, Müller (1997) explained that humans' perception of traveling is a barrier to achieving responsible behaviour from their side. When people go on vacation, they generally look for adventures, or to "live life to the fullest" or anything but leave the responsibilities behind so their behaviour is inevitably less regarded. Luo et al., (2019) coined it a bit differently and proposed that the tourist responsibility awareness consists of a self and a public dimension which in Public Responsibility Awareness (PRA) and Self Responsibility Awareness (SRA) that

respectively is linked to collective and individual concerns. Tromp et al. (2011) support the idea that in order to achieve the target behaviour (in this case, RTB) individual concerns that are aligned (directly or indirectly) with the collective concerns should be triggered.

## **2.3 Co-Creation and Sharing Economy as Accelerators for a more RTB**

### **2.3.1 Co-Creation in Tourism**

One of trigger facilitating the interaction between consumer and company in tourism is the Co-Creation (CoCr) of experiences and hence has been widely discussed and researched by scholars (Binkhorst & Den Dekker, 2009; Neuhofer et al., 2013; Rihova et al., 2018). With their book "The future of competition", Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004, p.8) popularised the concept of CoCr, defining the concept as "joint creation of value by the company and the customer, allowing the customer to co-construct the service experience to suit their context". Goolaup & Mossberg (2017) approaches CoCr from the tourist perspective and defines it as the process where the consumer is completely immersed (emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and physically) in the experience making himself the creator of value. By cooperating and fully immersing themselves with service providers, consumers, i.e., tourists co-create their own experiences. Hence, "CoCr of experiences is about the process through which customers interact with service providers, or settings, to create their own unique experience" (Mathis et al., 2016). According to Jansen & Pieters (2018, p. 15), this process is only effective when it is transparent and creates value in "ongoing, productive collaboration with, and supported by all relevant parties". In order to establish a common ground for CoCr Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004) developed a theoretical framework called the DART-model. DART establishes four fundamental building blocks as the basis of interaction between supply and demand, being composed of: dialogue (interaction between customer and firm), access (providing customer access to data, information & tools) risk-benefits (to assess risks and gaps between customer and company), and transparency (as information and data become more accessible, the firm's business model automatically becomes more transparent). Furthermore, Prahalad & Ramaswamy suggested that by combining the blocks companies can take greater advantage and build tighter relationships with their consumers. For instance, pairing access and transparency allow customers to make better informed decisions. Or when coupling dialogue and risk assessment, customers and companies can co-create. Prahalad & Ramaswamy argue that it is a complex task to establish a dialogue between the two parties (supply and demand) because they are often unequal in terms of knowledge and information. Meaning, companies' thoroughly study and analyse their audience but at the same time, these companies are not transparent to their customers. Following the

same line of thought as PRA vs SRA, to enable this dialogue to take place companies and customers must find issues of interest that concern both parties. In their paper, Binkhorst & Cerdan (2019) showcase the positive result of introducing the user into the creation and design phase; something that is usually not done in the tourism sector. The dialogue should be generated between supply and demand, not only during the tourism experience but as well in the pre-travel phase, demonstrates a significant improvement of the tourism experience, pre, during and after. Finally, Binkhorst & Cerdan (2019) concluded that when customers are given a voice that will be heard, a mutual and voluntary process of collaboration, learning and dialogue can be established.

### **2.3.2 The Sharing Economy**

With the introduction of Web 2.0 and ICTs, the tourism industry has once again been strongly disrupted, ultimately leading to the introduction of the sharing economy and platforms which foster customer involvement (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). The sharing or collaborative economy is a new, disruptive business model that could potentially promote placing the responsibility more on the demand side. Definitions of the sharing economy are broad, and researchers are struggling to find a common definition for the term. Summarizing the findings of multiple studies, the sharing economy can be defined as a “peer-to-peer” (P2P) based activity (Hamari, 2016; Aloni, 2016) of exchanging, sharing, swapping, renting, or donating goods and services (Habibi et al., 2017) facilitated through online or offline platforms (Heinrichs, 2013; Aloni, 2016; Barnes & Mattsson, 2016). Even though the concept has been given over 40 different terms (e.g., sharing economy, platform economy, collaborative consumption) at the centre of all those terminologies lies the consumer-centric experience and the value (co-)creation as a result of the sharing economy (Curtis & Lehner, 2019). Neuhofer et al. (2013) are convinced that since the creation of the internet, the tourist as a consumer has been more empowered and recognized as an active participant in the creation of experiences.

A vast part of the sharing economy in the tourism sector are collaborative platforms such as *Airbnb*, *Couch Surfing*, *TripAdvisor*, *Uber*, and *Yelp* but also Social Media platforms like *Facebook* and *Instagram* since they are facilitating the sharing of resources. All these platforms rely on active participation of users and customers to create their own user experience. Those New Players revolutionized the traditional creation of tourism experiences, by removing the aspect of ownership and introducing borrowing and renting (Curtis & Lehner, 2019). Sung et al. (2018) found that a major motivating factor for using collaborative platforms. However, Sung et al.

(2018) also argue that in the case of *Airbnb*, the responsibility is once again placed on the side of the provider, since the consumer is more motivated by personal interests and satisfaction, rather than considering the impacts of his journey. According to Sigala (2015), Social Media and the sharing economy enable customers to collaborate on a global scale, since those tools are being used to share opinions about suppliers and hence accumulating user-generated-content. Thus, making the collaborative commerce a multifaceted discipline affecting consumer behaviour amongst others and strengthening the creation of value due to its engaging nature (Sigala, 2015). In addition, Dolan et al. (2019) are convinced that those tools are effective since they are a facilitator of dynamic interaction between consumer and supplier, as well as amongst the customers themselves.

### **2.3.3 The Sharing Economy & Co-Creation through lens of TBL**

CoCr and subsequently, the sharing economy have been found as useful tools to combat the negative effects of tourism, since its benefits received a lot of previous attention from researchers. Scholars (Mont, 2008; Bardhi et al., 2012) have previously studied the effects of the sharing economy with a strong focus on the benefits on the TBL. As such, solutions to address unsustainable consumption patterns are needed. Through the previously discussed research, it can be concluded that the more aware a traveller is of the TBL, the higher the chance that he or she will conduct themselves in a pro-social and sustainable manner, whilst visiting a tourism destination. When relating the sharing economy to the previously analysed sustainability concept, Martin (2016) frames it as an economic opportunity, a more sustainable form of consumption, and a pathway to a decentralized, equitable and sustainable economy. Boar et al. (2020) agree that this new form of consumption is an economic opportunity and add that it positively impacts all the TBL. Azenha et al. (2015) highlight that the collaborative nature and active participation of citizens allows a better distribution of incomes throughout society and consequently promoting a more RT. As Weitzman (1990) had previously observed, citizens are encouraged to participate in sustainable ways, especially when they see others are collaborating. Within the collaborative economy, CoCr is one of the pivotal instruments fostering RT.

Both - Boar et al. (2020) and Gössling & Hall (2019) conducted thorough research concerned with how the sharing economy potentially can help to achieve the 17 SDGs. Especially in terms of environmental sustainability the idea of sharing is crucial, since shared consumption leads to less wasted resources (Boar et al. 2020, Gössling & Hall, 2019), hence positively impacting goals



11, 12, 13, and 14. Gössling & Hall found that through cultural learning and reducing pressure on the housing market by utilizing underused capacities, the sharing economy helps to positively affect society (goal 11). Especially platforms such as *house exchange* and *Couchsurfing* can reduce pressure on the housing market by using the existing capacity better (goal 12 and 11) (Gössling & Hall, 2019). The authors further state that by empowering consumers, sharing platforms can promote innovation and economic growth (Goal 8, 9), and consequently helping the local society (2019). In the sense of economic sustainability, the collaborative economy provides innovative opportunities (goal 9) for economic growth and decent work (goal 8), thanks to the ease of access to the market granted by platforms. Since this new business model fosters innovation and economic participation, it positively contributes to value chains and hence leads to regional development (goals 8, 11, 12) (Gössling & Hall, 2019). A factor especially crucial to the positive impact of the sharing economy is that businesses are forced to perform better and ethically due increased pressure through online reviews (2019). Further Boar et al. (2020) state that the hospitality industry may indirectly help achieve to remove poverty (goal 1), gender equality (goal 5) and promote peaceful and inclusive societies (goal 16) as a side effect of the sharing economy activity.

Even though the sharing of resources reduces for example CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Cleantech Group 2014), Gössling and Hall (2019) stress the rebound effect of P2P accommodation increasing the frequency of travel and hence contradict goals 12 and 13. Socially, the sharing economy also contributes more to the TBL than it takes, however it cannot be forgotten that *Airbnb* has disrupted housing markets (e.g. in Barcelona) so strongly that Gössling & Hall (2019) questions its contribution to well-being (goal 3), equality (goal 10) and sustainable communities (goal 11). Another interesting controversy concerning *Airbnb's* host community is that on average non-Caucasian hosts earn less rent while at the same time non-Caucasian guests are being turned down more frequently, hence strongly contradicting the equality goal number 10. In terms of the economy, impacts also remain predominantly beneficial, however fear *Airbnb's* monopoly status may take over the market concentration and increase competition in an unhealthy manner, hence not distributing revenues fairly and reducing access to economic participation, impacting negatively on the outcome of goal 8, 9, and 10.

When introducing negative impacts of the sharing economy and CoCr, researchers commonly describe the terminology “co-destruction” (Camilleri & Neuhofer, 2017; Dolan et al., 2019). Co-destruction occurs when in an interaction between two actors, one of them undergoes a decrease of value and occurs when “actors accidentally or intentionally misuse resources by

acting in an inappropriate or unexpected manner.” (Dolan et al., 2019). According to Dolan et al. (2019), social media and review platforms have a potential for both CoCr and co-destruction, through online complaints of tourists that are visible to everyone. Such complaints arise when a company's solution-seeking practice results in incongruent responses from the firm, which will lead to co-destruction. Another way co-destruction can occur is when opportunities for one of the actors are reduced or eliminated leading to an incongruent use of resources leading to the value diminishing (Camilleri & Neuhofer, 2017). The previously mentioned researchers studied CoCr and co-destruction in the case of *Airbnb*, revealing that the latter typically occurs when expectations are not met, the guest does not feel welcomed by the host, the guest leaves with dissatisfaction and negative feelings, and when there is a lack of interaction and clear communication between host and guest (Camilleri & Neuhofer, 2017). Hence, value co-destruction mainly occurs due to negligence from the side of the host.

#### **2.4 Conclusions & Research Gaps**

Since changes have been one of the most shaping aspects of tourism (Sigala & Baum, 2003), many industry experts have been concerned with establishing a common ground / definition (Mc Kercher etc). In more recent years, research in tourism has been more concerned about the impacts the activity has. In this overcrowded industry, researchers are calling for more responsibility from all stakeholders of tourism to collaborate for a better and more sustainable future. Crucial changes towards sustainability were started when McKercher (1993) established the fundamental truths about tourism and when Elkington (1997) introduced the TBL approach, making the impacts of tourism undeniable. To counter those impacts, the United Nations collaborated in numerous summits to pave the way towards the 17 SDGs for 2030. Further, the industry has been widely concerned tackling these issues from the supplier side by introducing concepts such as CSR and DSR to promote responsibility among companies and governments (Romani & Grappi, 2014; Lujun & Scott, 2017). In the new millennium, new forms of tourism such as sustainable', responsible' and eco-tourism arose, however overcrowding, pollution, and undiversified economies are still the norms (Frkoey & George, 2010). Recently, scholars have been focusing the attention more on the tourist as the responsible actor in the equation and describe how the responsible tourist behaves (Stanford, 2008; Su & Swanson, 2019). Concepts such as the shades of a green tourist (Swarbrooke, 1999) or State and Bulin's (2016) conceptualization of RT and RTB. Once the tourist had become the centre of study, researchers began identifying barriers in the achievement of such behaviour. A commonly raised concern is

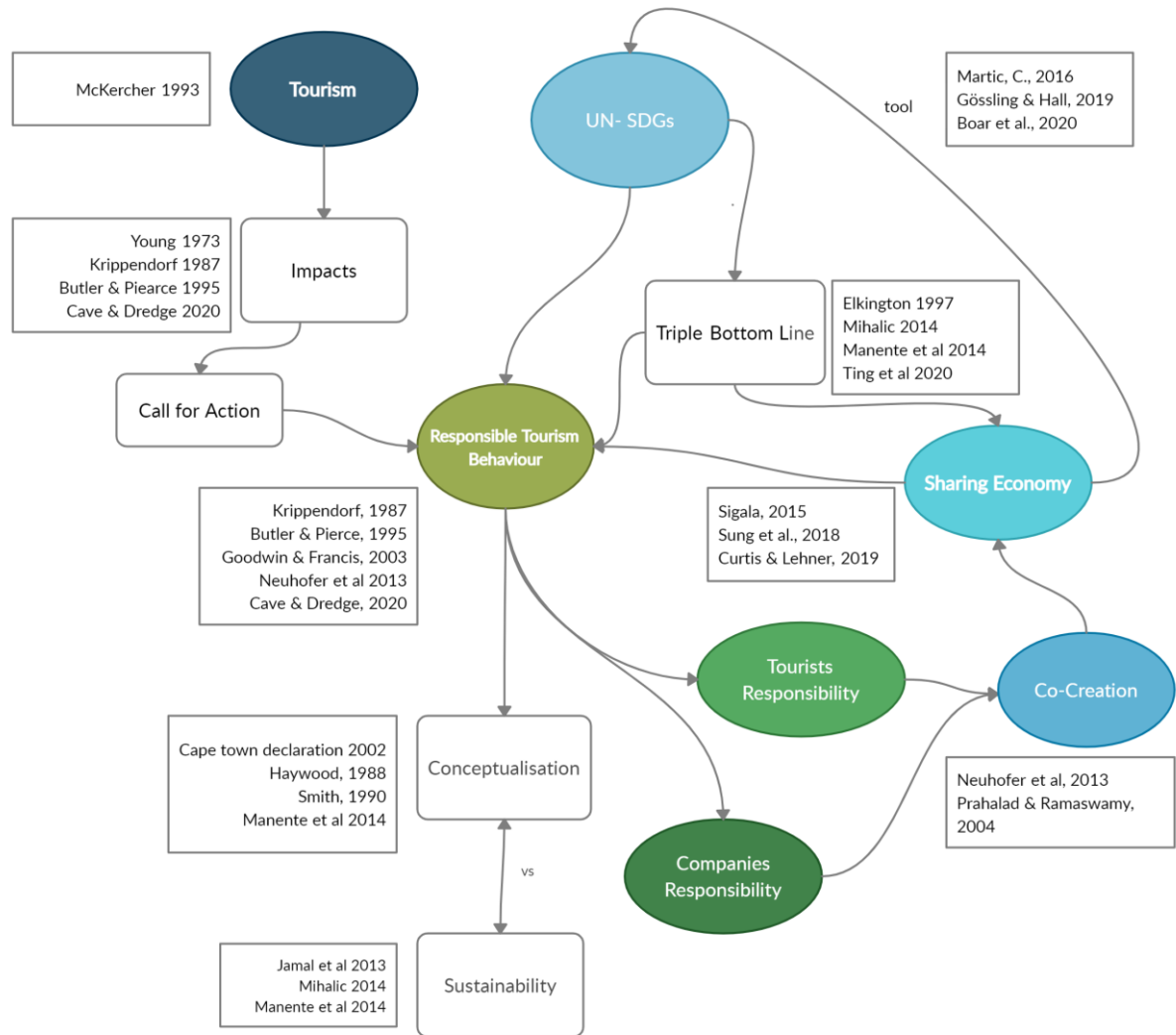
the inherently selfish nature of travel motivations (Müller, 1997; Luo et al., 2010), contradicting the urgent need for more responsible behaviour (Luo et al., 2019).

Resulting from the growing concern on the tourism impacts, the sharing economy has gained a lot of popularity and it has strongly revolutionised the tourism industry (Mont, 2008; Bardhi et al., 2012). Companies such as *Airbnb* and Co. have popularised the adaptation of CoCr into their business model. Shared platforms enable a dialogue and collaboration between suppliers and consumers as well as it helps aligning both parties' concerns (or whatever) (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Many researchers consider those as the appropriate tools towards more responsible behaviour (from the TBL approach). However, other researchers raise concerns about the impacts of the sharing economy once it becomes massified (e.g., *Airbnb*) (Martin, 2016).

## 2.5 Literature Map

For the sake of providing a clear overview of the literature reviewed in chapter 2, a literature map has been developed. As the first category of the review, a common definition of Tourism has been found to lead to what RTB means. RTB is closely connected to the UN 17 SDG and the TBL, where CoCr acts as a link between the tourists and the sector's responsibilities.

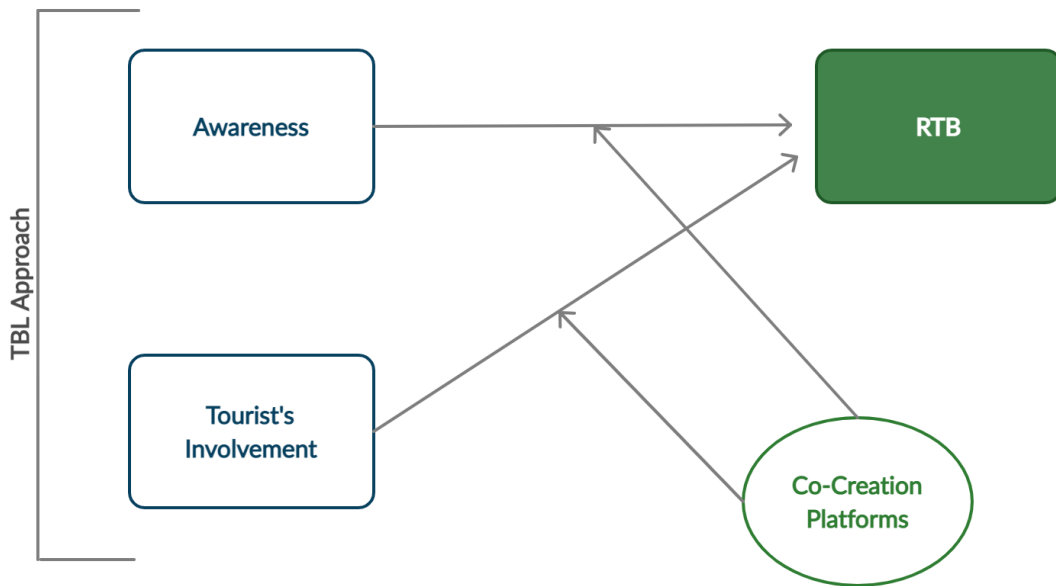
Figure 3: Literature Map



Source: own elaboration

## 2.6 Conceptual Model

Figure 4: Conceptual Model



Source: own elaboration

For the means of this thesis, a conceptual framework has been developed including the most important variables explored in the literature reviewed, showcasing their interrelation. The aim is to find out the degree to which Awareness and Involvement from the tourists (Independent Variables) can lead to RTB (Dependant Variable) through the moderation of CoCr platforms (Moderating Variable), while always considering the TBL approach.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

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#### 3.1 Overall Research Design

The principles of inductive and deductive reasoning have been introduced into the research-landscape by numerous authors (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Creswell, 2003; Brunt et al, 2017). According to Brunt et al. (2017), deductive dichotomy is a process based on the logical examination of available facts to test a specific theory. Taking a general understanding and narrowing it down into specific insights is based on Brunt et al. (2017) the essence of the deduction dichotomy, which is why it is the process chosen for this study. The prior literature review identifies numerous studies on the impacts of tourism and introduces responsibility and CoCr as possible tools to tackle such issues. In the present study, tourist's perceptions on these concepts have been tested in order to give a more specific insight into the field of CoCr for RT. According to Brunt et al. (2017) deductive reasoning is commonly paired with the paradigm of positivism and quantitative data.

This study has been undertaken through the positivism paradigm, which, according to Altinay and Paraskevas" (2007, p. 88), "promotes a more objective interpretation of reality, using hard data from surveys. By adapting a positive approach, the researchers remain distanced from test subjects focusing on factual results and test unstructured hypotheses through the collection of quantifiable data.

Primary data, also known as raw data, suits this study's needs better than secondary data because the main objective is to identify a set of opinions and perspectives from a specific audience (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2007). The topic this research covers is understudied, and the aimed findings are not available elsewhere (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2007). Furthermore, primary data is considered more reliable than secondary sources (Ajayi, 2017).

Further, this study adapts a quantitative approach as research was conducted through a mostly closed ended questionnaire. Becker et al. (2012) suggests that the quantitative approach is suitable for research that is looking to (dis)prove theories and hypotheses. The previous research on this topic, reviewed in the literature review (Hashimoto, 2000; Kumar & Nandani, 2016), has been considered as too old, in a too specific context and overall inconclusive according to the research objectives of this thesis. Thus, the aim of this research is to explore the topic again and find out if the results support previous research. Moreover, this approach is adequate because positivism has been used as the method of research (Becker et al., 2012). It is also argued that

qualitative studies are more accurate (Sandelowsky, 1986). In the case of the present study, the questionnaire strives to find out perceptions and attitudes of a sample size for the sake of generalizing the outcomes for the larger population. That is why the questionnaire includes open ended questions to understand the perceptions in a deeper manner.

### **3.2 Data collection techniques and research instruments**

This study aims to find out the perceptions of tourists regarding how their behaviour and attitudes impact the TBL. There is very little research on how tourists perceive travel, how aware they are of its impacts and how or if the attempts made by the supplier side to make them more aware and change their behaviour are effective. Few studies focused also on integrating the SDGs in the equation (Gössling & Hall, 2019; Boar et al., 2020). Even though it has been widely agreed among the researchers and experts that the responsibility to act should and has been placed on the hands of the organisations and companies (supply), it has also been argued that in the current times, the economy is built so that the demand determines the supply (Bramwell et al., 1996). Burns (2000) stated that the tourist is the most important stakeholder. Without tourists, there would be no demand. So then again, supports the idea that unless the responsibility is also placed on the tourist the situation will remain the same. Finally, the study aimed to explore the efficiency of CoCr platforms as a tool to place such responsibility on the demand side.

A survey with mainly closed ended questions has been chosen as the appropriate tool to study tourists' perceptions, since questionnaires can help to establish generalized conclusions on a population's beliefs, values, and perceptions (Jankowicz, 1995). For the sake of utmost objectivity, the questionnaire was self-administered since this technique has been proven to avoid biases and influence the respondent the least (Janes, 2001). Questionnaires are particularly useful in descriptive research to understand the status quo of a given population (Janes, 2001). In the case of the present study, the questionnaire strives to find out perceptions and attitudes of a sample size to generalize the outcomes for the larger population.

Aligned with the previous review of literature, this questionnaire is divided in three main blocks: description of the profile of the participant, exploring the level of awareness concerning impacts of travel and RT, and testing the perceived effectiveness of CoCr platforms to enhance the responsibility issue. The following table shows how the questionnaire has been designed in alliance with the research objectives of this study.

Table 3: Questionnaire content

<b>Aim / Objective</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Purpose and Context</b>
Establish a clear image of the respondent	1. Where do you typically travel?	With these questions, a clearer idea of the respondent's profile can be defined.
	2. Why do you travel most?	
	3. Which is your country of citizenship?	
	4. How old are you?	
	5. What is your gender?	
Test the general level of awareness of the tourists regarding their travel behaviour, its impacts, and relevant concepts for this thesis.	6. What is responsible tourist behaviour to you?	By letting the respondent answer with his own words, it can be tested if the words mean the same to the tourists as to the experts who established the definitions.
	7. Based on your own definition, would you consider your previous travel as responsible?	To see if the respondent, before any type of reflection, sees his/ her behaviour as responsible.
	8. Based on the official definition, would you consider your style of travel responsible?	The questionnaire contains an image that summarises what responsible tourism behaviour means for experts. By comparing their own definition to the real one, it can be observed if the respondent is aware of the difference between their perception of their own behaviour according to their standards and the official ones.
	9. Which of the following aspects do you consider when travelling to a destination?	Using the triple bottom line approach, the respondent can choose multiple answers regarding the considerations they have when travelling. to test if one of the aspects is generally more regarded than the others. The respondent also has the option to add more.
	10. Have you ever heard of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals for 2030?	With the option of yes/no, draw an image of the level of awareness of the respondents. Do they even know that such initiative exists?
	11. Do you think that by travelling you create a positive impact on any of the following aspects?	The aspects listed in this question are only those SDGs directly affected by the tourism activity. This question tests the respondent's view on the links between tourism activity and its impacts.
Explore the perceptions of responsibility in a context of travel behaviour	11. Do you think that by travelling you create a positive impact on any of the following aspects?	The aspects listed in this question are only those SDGs directly affected by the tourism activity. This question will show if the tourist thinks that he/ she has an impact on the SDGs, even if he is not aware that the options are all SDGs.



	12. Please, rate the following statements based on your opinion (see Appendix)	The respondent has to rate a total of 9 (a to h) statements in a Likert scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means “Strongly disagree” and 5 means “Strongly agree”. The statements express negative and positive opinions regarding the idea of responsibility and travel behaviour patterns (always from the triple bottom line point of view).
To explore the attitudes and perceptions of tourists regarding responsible travel & CoCr platforms and the achievements of SDG	13. When you travel, which of the following co-creation platforms do you normally use? (Please, add if it is not on the list)	To know the level of usage that travellers have of co-creation platforms. The most well-known appear in the short list where the respondent can tick multiple answers and add others as well. Such platforms were not specified with the term “co-creation” to not confuse the respondent who might not be aware of its meaning,
	14. Please, rate the following statements based on your opinion (see Appendix)	The respondent must rate a total of 11 (a to k) statements in a Likert scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means “Strongly disagree” and 5 means “Strongly agree”. The statements express negative and positive opinions on the relation between these co-creation platforms and the achievement of the SDGs. The statements are divided according to the triple bottom line approach.

Source: own elaboration

### 3.3 Research Context and participants

The sample target for this research are travellers who - in a setting without COVID-19 - travel on a regular basis, since those are typically the tourists impacting the TBL most and hence are the most relevant for this context. By using a screening question in the very first part of the questionnaire (Do you travel regularly\*? (\*before COVID-19 & Regular is considered when you travel once or more per year), it has been ensured that only the targeted sample will participate in the study. That was the main restriction to be considered for the research target, in terms of gender, age, race or any other aspect. Overall, basic understanding of the English language from the respondents’ side was necessary as the questionnaire was written entirely in English. However, the respondents could answer the open-ended questions in their own language if they did not feel confident enough to answer in English.

The questionnaire was mainly distributed through online professional networks and social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook. Because of the author’s

geographical location and their online networks, the questionnaire was targeted towards Europeans or people who live in Europe of similar ages and generations, Gen Z and Millennials. Another channel through which the questionnaire was distributed was the mailing list from the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS). Thanks to that many respondents were members from tourism universities and schools; therefore, the percentage of young respondents (ages between 18 to 25 years old) is high. Moreover, according to Altinay & Paraskevas (2007), to get results that are representative enough for such a large sample population, this questionnaire aimed to receive a minimum of 300 responses. The data was collected in the time frame of two months between November and December of 2020. A total of 325 responses to the questionnaire were received. Of those, 301 questionnaires were found adequate and complete to use due technical errors such as duplicated responses.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The data collected through the self-completed questionnaire were examined with the help of Microsoft Excel according to two main processes. The first assessment of the data gathered was done through a descriptive analysis where the most significant results for each question of the survey has been laid out. Comparatively as similar studies (Kumar & Nandani, 2016), hereafter connections were created by cross-analysing multiple variants tested in the questionnaire to draw in conclusions and formulate recommendations.

### **3.5 Evidence of Data Collection**

Records of all the data retrieved from the research is kept in the form of an Excel document in Google Drive that is automatically generated when the respondents answer the questionnaire created with Google Forms. A summary of the results of the questionnaire conducted was presented in the analysis of the following chapter but also were made available in the Appendix IV in the form of summary tables (Tables 8 – 17).

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

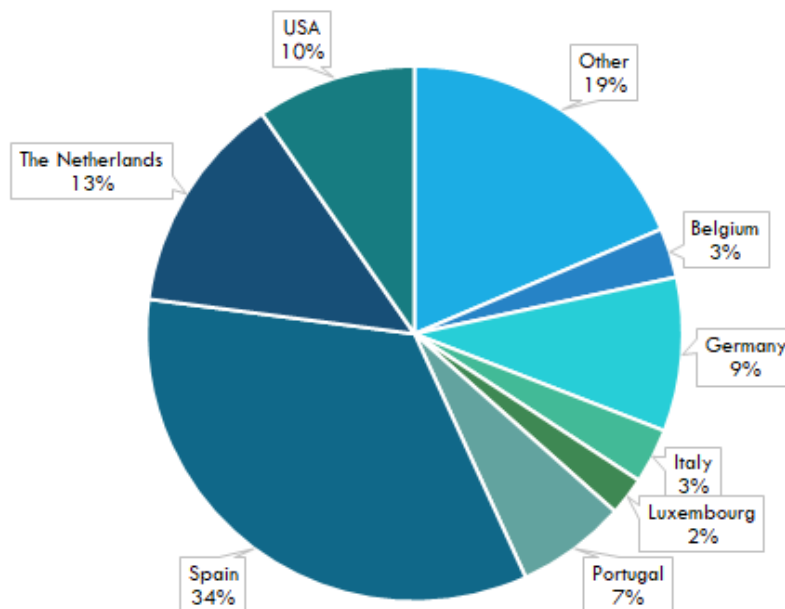
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The findings of the research are displayed following the same structure as the questionnaire, which at the same time follows the same order as the research objectives. Firstly, the profile of the participants is being described. The rest of the findings are divided into two main blocks referring to the research goals and the conceptual framework: the first section explores the perceptions RTB and the second investigates the role of CoCr platforms into the achievement of RTB. Results are presented by question or group of questions and each of them is followed by a discussion of those findings.

### 4.1 Participants Profile

The demographic profile of the participants shows 64 % were female and 36% male. Further, 41% of respondents were aged between 18-25, representing the largest group of participants. Furthermore, 18% were aged between 26-25 years, 9% between 36-45 years, 28% from 46-45 years, and finally 4% were over 65 years old at the time of the survey. The respondents were predominantly from European countries (82%). The non-European participants were 2% from Asia, 14% from America, 2% from Africa and 1 respondent from Oceania (see Appendix IV).

Figure 5: Participants Country of Origin (Total Responses: 301)



Source: own elaboration.

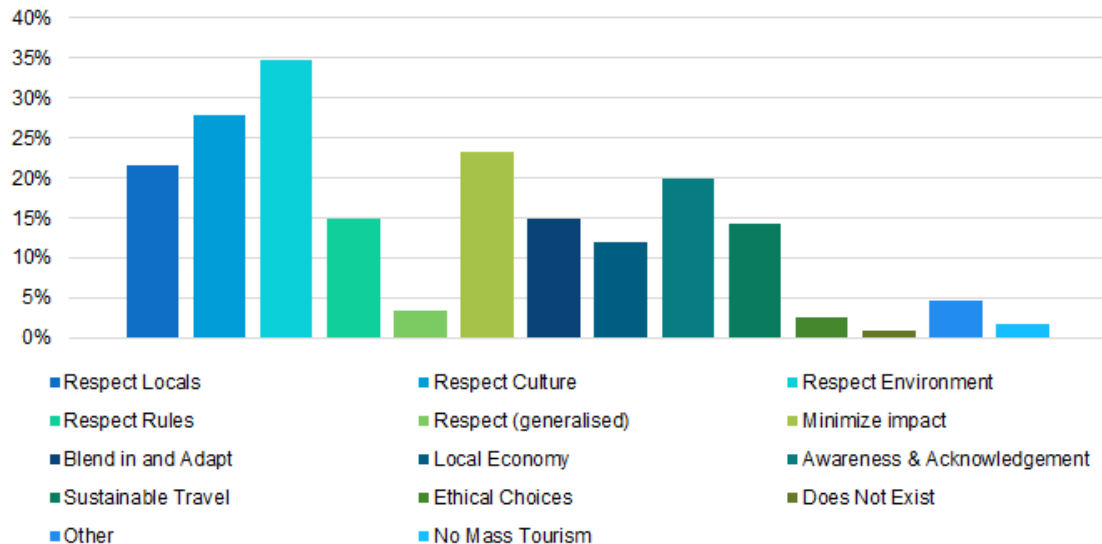
In terms of travel motives, 35% travel to visit their Family & Friends, 50% travel for leisure purposes and only 15% were travelling for business reasons. Most of the participants travel within their own continent, accumulating to 45%, while 15% travel only within their own country and 40% travel world over (see Appendix IV).

## 4.2 Responsible Tourist Behaviour

### Findings about RTB

In pursuance of exploring how frequent travellers perceive RTB and creating a general picture of how the public defines it, participants were directly asked what that concept (RTB) means to them in the form of an open-ended question. Results from the research conducted show that the term RTB is inevitably subject to individual interpretation. Nevertheless, after thoroughly analysing the answer to the open-ended question on how respondents define RTB, certain ideas appeared repeatedly. With a presence of 52% in the total responses, the main idea among the participants regarding RTB is the term “*respect*”. While a very small portion of those who mention the concept of *respect* (4%) gave a very simple answer, e.g., “*Respectful and thoughtful*”, the main words the participants linked the word respect were somewhat according to the TBL: respect towards the culture, the people, and the environment.

Figure 6: Results Q6 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301)



Source: own sources

It should not go unmentioned that only a few considered the economy when defining RTB and, the ones who did (12%), defined it as the tourist who is concerned with contributing to the local economy specifically. Conversely, being present in 35% of the answers, the environment is the clear protagonist of this section. Another frequently mentioned theme was the idea of preserving natural spaces and trying to impact them as little as possible, e.g. *“Not damaging the places that we visit; leave intact for future visitors”*. Therefore, the environment would not be worn out or degraded; and consequently, remain for future generations. Such premise was commonly followed by the suggestion of sustainable travel in the sense of movement; to avoid taking planes and make use of low carbon footprint transportation, e.g., *“Avoid mass tourism in environmentally problematic areas; Use responsible transportation and avoid great distances; ...”*, to limit one’s trips to their region while avoiding long distances, and overall basic notions of respect towards the environment, *“Showing respectful behaviour in nature. e.g., do not leave waste, do not disturb birds/other animals”*. Yet another standpoint recognised within the responses was the idea of making oneself aware of and acknowledging both, good and bad impacts created as tourists, and making decisions accordingly. This line of thinking is strongly tied to the previous pattern of respect towards the destination that is being visited. On top of this, a concern about the harmony between tourists and locals has been identified, meaning that a responsible tourist should do as possible to blend in with the locals and not stand out for the wrong reasons. This goes hand in hand with the proposition to respect the rules and regulations of a destination represented in 15% of the answers. On a smaller scale, there appeared concepts such as *ethical consumption* alluding to how one treats the host community and the products and services consumed during a trip, and finally, there were a small group of respondents who thought that such a thing as RTB is inherently impossible and currently does not exist.

Following the previous question (#6), respondents were asked to assess whether their travel behaviour can be considered as responsible or not. Results show a clear majority of 84% who think they are responsible when they travel. Further, they were presented with a visual and simple explanatory image of what responsible travel is, sourced by Beauty of Japan Tours (n.d.) (see Appendix III), and asked again if, according to the latter, they still considered their travel behaviour as responsible. The results display 81% of affirmative and 19% of negative answers.

### Discussion on RTB

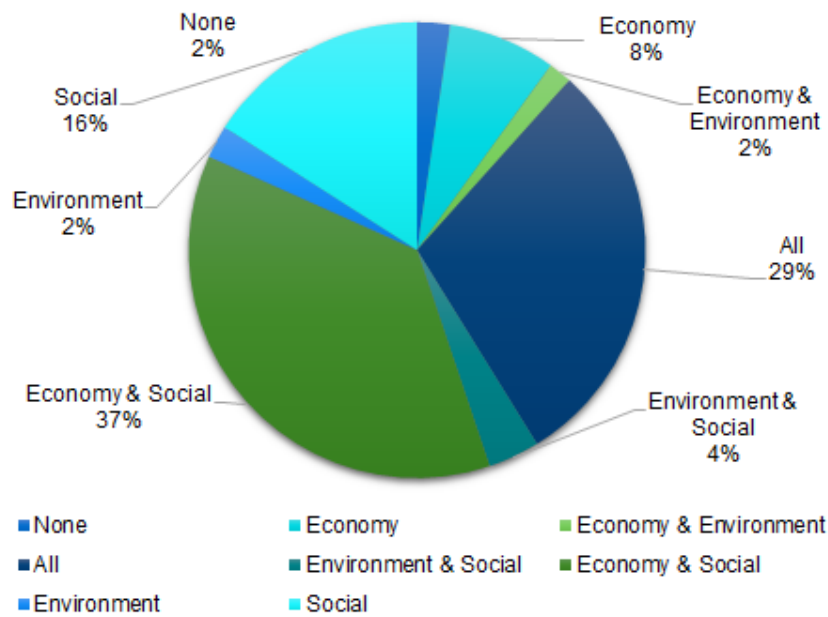
As explained in previous chapters, the concept of RTB is broad and complex; travelling responsibly takes consideration on many levels, hence it is rather unlikely to act fully responsible as a tourist. Similarly to the study carried out by Stanford (2008), there is an ongoing discussion about RTB, and the conclusion is that there is no such thing as the perfect tourist. Altogether, there are two main blocks detected in the previously presented data. The first group focused RTB on the human aspect, referring to the locals, community, culture, and customs. Whereas the second large group of respondents related the concept with the environment and preservation of natural resources.

On the other hand, it cannot be ignored that these answers and definitions are inevitably biased by the respondents' culture, their personal past experiences as visitors and in destinations they are locals in. When asking the participants to assess their own behaviour, it is remarkable to see that 40% of those who answered affirmatively to whether they are responsible tourists are also those who usually travel overseas. This result presents a contradiction to Swarbrooke (1999) who claims that taking a plane makes one's travel inherently irresponsible. On the other hand, 91% of the respondents who usually take part in domestic tourism acknowledge their travel behaviour as responsible. Furthermore, it has been analysed whether respondents changed their answers of being a responsible traveller after seeing the official definition of RTB. The answers of 89% of the respondents remained affirmative, whereas only 11% now thought of themselves as irresponsible tourists. Of those who previously responded that they are not responsible tourists, 39% thought of themselves as responsible tourists after seeing the definition, and 61% stuck with their negative response.

### Findings about tourists' considerations and impacts on the SDGs

With the aim of testing how tourists perceive the effects of tourism in relation to the SDGs, participants were asked to choose which of the presented aspects alluding to the TBL approach they consider when planning the elements of a trip. The results in Figure 7 show a clear focus from the audience towards the sociocultural and economic impacts with a 76% and 86% respectively and, similarly, 37% indicated both at the same time; therefore, it is observed that these factors go fairly hand in hand. Moreover, results show that less attention is given to the environmental impacts with a score 37% and, 79% of people who mentioned it, were choosing all three items at the same time.

Figure 7: Results Q9 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301)



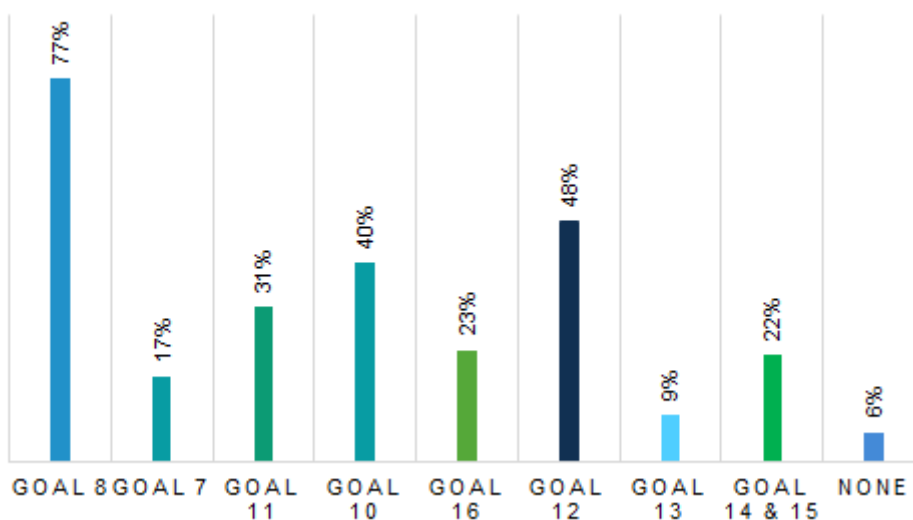
Source: own elaboration.

The next section of the research focuses on the UN 17 SDGs. With the aim in mind to find out the level of awareness the respondents have regarding how powerful the tourism industry is and how much impact it can have on the achievement of the UN 17 SDGs, respondents were asked two questions. Firstly, to see if respondents are aware of the global initiative, they were asked whether they know about the UN 17 SDGs; and to test how tourists perceive the effects of tourism in relation to the SDGs, participants were asked to choose from a total of seven items list, each of them referring to the SDGs #7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 16 (see Appendix I) without specifying such information.

The analysis scores a tight result between the affirmative and negative answer; 51% answered that they had never heard of the 17 SDGs. The data presented in Figure 8 reveals that a fairly low number of respondents (6%) did not choose any of the proposed items and specified that they considered that their tourism activity has no impact on any of the aforementioned items; consequently, a minor group of the sample believe that their travels cannot have a positive impact towards the achievement of the SDGs but the other way around. On the other hand, only 3% of respondents selected every single item of that list. Further, there is a clear common denominator in the results and that is Goal 8 (Creation of decent jobs and economic growth) with a presence of 77% throughout the data. all the other Goals are left in a background role as none of them surpass the 50% of total presence. The most remarkable goals mentioned that follow the first one are Goal 12 (Responsible production and consumption) with 48% and Goal

10 (Reducing inequalities) with 40%. Then again, all the goals concerned with the environment are those scoring the lowest; Goal 7 with 17%, Goal 13 with 9%, and Goal 14 & 15 with 22%.

Figure 8: Results Q11 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301)



Source: own elaboration

#### Discussion on tourists' considerations and impacts on the SDGs

By cross analysing the respondents' definitions of RTB and their perception of their own behaviour, it can be overserved that, those who considered themselves responsible travellers defined such concepts with more anthropological denotations such as respect for the culture and their locals and overall, leaving the environment in a secondary role. Meanwhile, those who responded to that question with a negative answer, defined RTB more concerned with the environment, such as making the smallest impact possible.

Moving on to the UN SDGs, given that the questionnaire was widely shared among connections within the industry but also on social networks, it can explain why the amount of people who know and who do not know about the SDGs is so polarized. It is more probable that those who study and work in the tourism industry were the respondents who marked that answer affirmatively.

Granting that the SDGs can be classified in the three categories of the TBL approach, there is a clear link between social and economic impacts and again, those have the highest scores. As seen in the results of Figure 8 the item that was picked the most time by participants is Goal #8 on Decent Work & Economic Growth. While according to data from 2017 (UNWTO), the tourism and travel sector, directly employed nearly 119 million people, and supported 313 million jobs,



it is also known that for instance in Spain, jobs related to hospitality are mostly considered exploitative and precarious and the less earning industry of all (INE, 2017). Following the rank, in second place there is Goal #12 on Responsible Consumption & Production. This result also presents another contradiction, because the way mass tourism works, where x flights are taken every month for instance, does not align with the idea of neither responsible production nor consumption. Additionally, much more effort is needed in the consolidation of this goal as it can mainly be done by small contributions, as seen in the UNWTO webpage for the SDGs (*tourism4sdgs*, 2017). Ultimately, as explained in the findings, all those items referring to environmental issues did not score over 25%. Again, there seems to be a concurrence with the answers given in the definition of RTB; meaning all those goals concerned with social and economic issues were far more present in the answers than those related to the environment.

#### Findings about tourists' sense of responsibility and travel considerations

Using the Likert-scale model, respondents were asked to assess a total of eight items (from A to H). The scale goes from Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A) to Strongly Agree (SA). The statements alluded to two main topics: the sense of responsibility and responsible behaviour. Table 4 shows the results by frequency and percentage. Items from A to C test whether the tourist perceives himself as one of the responsible actors for the tourism impacts and, from item D onwards, addresses further on the tourists' perception of their own behaviour.

*Table 4: Results Q12 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301)*

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b>12 A.</b>	81	26,9	151	50,2	27	9,0	31	11,3	6	2,0
<b>12 B.</b>	11	3,7	14	4,7	25	8,3	153	50,8	94	31,2
<b>12 C.</b>	11	3,7	8	2,7	26	8,6	130	43,2	122	40,5
<b>12 D.</b>	9	3,0	30	10,0	74	24,6	114	37,9	71	23,6
<b>12 E.</b>	9	3,0	8	2,7	24	8,0	110	36,5	146	48,5
<b>12 F.</b>	8	2,7	9	3,0	39	13,0	129	42,9	113	37,5
<b>12 G.</b>	7	2,3	29	9,6	69	22,9	116	38,5	77	25,6
<b>12 H.</b>	75	24,9	124	41,2	67	22,3	21	7,0	11	3,7

Source: own elaboration

The first three statements express different approaches and attitudes to see if the participants, as tourists, have a sense of responsibility in their actions when traveling. Previous studies have tested who is responsible for issues not necessarily tourism (Hashimoto, 2000) and statement 12-A suggests that same idea. There is a clearly negative response to that suggestion since

results show that 77% either chose D (50%) or SD (27%). However, statement 12-B that presents the same idea, was answered the opposite way; 82% of respondents agreed with the idea that destinations should be the ones making sure that their activities and touristic products are beneficial regardless of the tourism demand. In statement 12-C the statement is formulated the other way around expressing that it is the tourist's responsibility to consume responsibly and opposing the previous statement (12-B) then again, results show high scores with 40% SA and 43% A. When presented statements in first person to touch on the participants' travel behaviour in very general notions, there can be observed a spike in the neutral opinions in statements 12-D (impact awareness and travel decisions), 12-G (contribution to the local economy), and 12-H (consume from big corporations respectively); while the majority tends to agree ( 12-D SA 24%, A 38%; 12-G SA 26%, A 39%; 12-H SD 25%, 41%), neutral opinions mount to an average of 24% in the three statements. Conversely, the last two items mentioned in this analysis, 12-E (adapt one's behaviour to the current destination) and 12-F (engagement with community), there is again a strong positioning in the responsible side where, respectively, 37% (A) & 49% (SA), and 43% (A) & 36% (SA) agreed that they are respectful to the local traditions and try to blend in and engage as much as possible.

#### Discussion on tourists' sense of responsibility and consideration

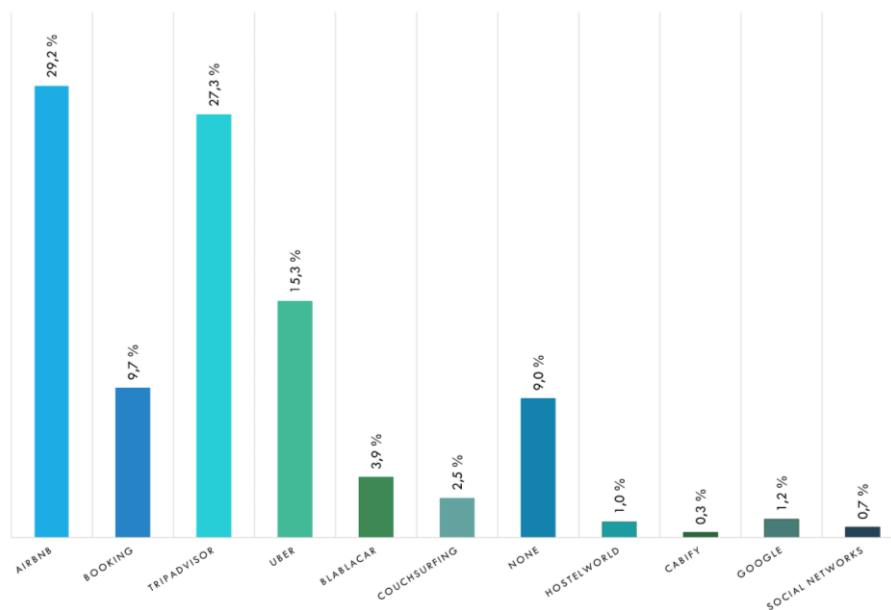
Results from the first section of question 12, show the perception of the tourists as a shared responsibility from both sides, demand, and supply. Although tourists agree that companies and governments should be responsible for creating policies and products that are beneficial for their community, they do not discard the idea that themselves play a role in all this as well. Further, there is no apparent distinction in the responses between people who think they are responsible for their impacts and whether their behaviour is or not classified as responsible. Moreover, after cross analysing how the participants rated all those items with what they consider when planning a trip (social, economic, and environmental) no matter what they chose, there seems to exist no distinction.

### **4.3 Co-Creation Platforms**

With the questions in this section the study aimed to discover which CoCr platforms are known by the participants. The respondents were given the option to choose between: *Airbnb*, *Couchsurfing*, *BlaBlaCar*, *Uber*, *Booking.com* & *TripAdvisor*. Furthermore, the respondents were asked to add other platforms they use when travelling. Generally, 82,4% of respondents were aware of the mentioned platforms and 17,6% do not use or know any of them. With 29%, *Airbnb* was the most used platform among the respondents, closely followed by *TripAdvisor* with 27%.

Moreover, *Uber* received nearly 15% and *booking.com* was being used by 10% of all respondents. *BlaBlaCar* and *Couchsurfing* were the lesser known and used options with only 4% of participants opting for *BlaBlaCar* and 3% for *Couchsurfing*. Finally, respondents had the option to add other CoCr platforms they use when travelling, of which 1% indicated *google*, 1% suggested *Facebook* and *Instagram*, and another 1% suggested *Hostelworld*. All respondents who added *Hostelworld* were from Germany. Furthermore, 2 respondents from Spain suggested they use *Cabify* rather than *Uber*, since that is their local platform.

Figure 9: Results Q13 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301)



Source: own elaboration

Again, using a Likert-scale model from Strongly Disagree to Strongly agree (as seen above), question 14 aimed to find the tourists' perception of how the platforms discussed in question 13 can help achieve the 17SDG. Table 5 shows the responses based on frequency of answer and their percentage. In accordance with the previously reviewed literature, the statements were organised in the categories of the TBL approach. Therefore, statements A-B test for the economic aspects, while C-F are concerned with the environmental impacts and G-K aimed to find out the socio-cultural levels.

Table 5: Results Q14 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 301)

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b>14 A.</b>	9	2,9	36	11,9	92	30,6	130	43,2	34	11,3
<b>14 B.</b>	19	6,3	79	26,2	88	29,2	94	31,2	21	7,0
<b>14 C.</b>	27	9,0	87	28,9	93	30,9	78	25,9	16	5,3
<b>14 D.</b>	10	3,3	36	12,0	76	25,2	36	12,0	42	14,3
<b>14 E.</b>	27	9,0	79	26,2	118	39,2	69	22,9	8	2,7
<b>14 F.</b>	39	13,0	103	34,2	110	36,5	43	14,3	6	2,0
<b>14 G.</b>	38	12,6	99	32,9	114	37,9	114	37,9	3	1,0
<b>14 H.</b>	14	4,7	34	11,3	66	21,9	139	46,2	48	15,9
<b>14 I.</b>	19	6,3	57	18,9	92	30,6	102	33,9	31	10,3
<b>14 J.</b>	18	6,0	60	19,9	100	33,2	100	33,2	23	7,6
<b>14 K.</b>	25	8,3	78	25,9	97	32,2	73	24,3	28	9,3

Source: own elaboration

#### Findings of Statement A-B (economic impacts)

When asking participants for the economic impacts of tourism and CoCr platforms in Statement A, the vast majority responded with SA (11,3%) or A (43,2%), meaning that Co-Cr platforms could create new job opportunities and support the economy. A total of 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 30,6% of respondents remained neutral. Further, participants were asked to indicate whether those platforms help them to spend more money in the local economy, however responses were rather inconclusive and evenly spread, since 29,9 % of respondents had a neutral opinion, and 38,2 % agreed while 32,5 % disagreed.

#### Discussion of Statement A-B (economic impacts)

These findings support Sung et al (2018) who stated that collaborative platforms bring amongst other economic benefits and encompass the most important aspects of responsible tourist consumption. It also supports the sustainable development goal number 8 and 9 concerned with sustainable economic growth and the creation of opportunities and innovation, which these platforms bring, reinforcing Gössling & Hall (2019). In conclusion, the majority agreed that such platforms have high potential creating economic opportunities and bringing innovative solutions to diversifying the economy.

#### Findings of Statements C-F (environmental impacts)

In the environmental section of the statements, people were firstly asked if they think platforms could be a creative and innovative solution to tourism issues such as environmental impacts. Most people (30,9%) remained neutral in this statement, however the majority (37,9%)

responded with SD or D, and slightly fewer with A or AS (31.2%). Furthermore, most people agreed that the platforms do not necessarily help reduce negative impacts of travel (45,2%), while only 12% thought that the sharing economy has a potential of minimising impacts. Asking about the potential of platforms to enable tourists to travel more sustainably in an environmental context, roughly 40% of all respondents reacted neutral, while 26,2% disagreed and only 22,9% agreed. Hence, unsurprisingly most people proceeded to disagree with statement F (34,2%), asking whether platforms make them reflect more on their negative impacts.

#### Discussion of Statements C-F (environmental impacts)

Counter the previous findings in the literature review, most respondents do not agree that platforms have a potential to minimize negative environmental impacts. There is a gap between the academics and tourism companies who believe that the sharing economy can help conserve the environment by sharing resources (Boar et al. 2020, Gössling & Hall, 2019), however the demand side, the consumers and participants of the present study do not think of these platforms as useful tools for responsible consumption and development. However, it should be considered that when being asked about possible improvements in question 15, some respondents indicated that they do believe platforms are a useful tool, however the “big ones” such as Airbnb & Co counter that potential. It can be concluded that the demand side of the tourism spectrum does not think of CoCr platforms as potential facilitators of a more RTB.

#### Findings of Statements G-K (social impacts)

The last part of this section was concerned with tourism impacts on a socio-cultural level. Based on the responses concerned with the environmental aspects, it does not come as a surprise that respondents do not agree that platforms can help them to act more responsibly. In fact, 45,5% (strongly) disagreed with this statement and only 16,6% agreed. Nevertheless, most respondents agreed (62,1%) that CoCr platforms bring benefits to both - the locals and the visitors - and that they increase the respect and understanding between the two (44,2% agreed). Furthermore, most respondents (39,8%) view platforms as an enabler of close participation with the local community and only 25,9% disagree with that statement. However, when being asked about the level of emotional and cultural immersion, most participants could not connect to the question and there are no clear results to be identified.

### Discussion of Statement G-K (social impacts)

The findings of this social section of q14 align with the previous findings on social benefits of CoCr platforms of Boar et al (2020) and Gössling & Hall (2019). The respondents mostly agreed that platforms can be beneficial on a socio-cultural level, since they bring host and guest closer together and enable respect, understanding and proximity between the two.

All around, there is a large number of respondents who responded neutrally to all statements of question 14. This could be the result of a lack of knowledge regarding the matter or basically that the respondents do not find any association between CoCr platforms and RT. Finally, Table 6 demonstrates a comparison of Q9 and Q14 to analyse how perceptions and opinions of respondents changed throughout the survey. Hence, it has been analysed how the response to question 9 affected their answer to Q14.

Table 6: Cross Analysis Q9 & Q14

	Yes / I agree		Yes / Neutral		Yes / I disagree		No / I agree		No / Neutral		No / Disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
<b>Economic (228 consider; 73 do not consider)</b>												
<b>14 a</b>	126	55,3	66	28,9	36	15,8	38	52	26	35,6	9	12,3
<b>14 b</b>	90	39,5	65	28,5	73	32	25	34,3	23	31,5	25	34,3
<b>Environmental (112 consider; 89 do not consider)</b>												
<b>14 c</b>	31	27,7	33	29,5	48	42,8	63	33,3	60	31,7	66	34,9
<b>14 d</b>	63	56,3	25	22,3	24	21,4	116	61,3	51	26,9	24	12,7
<b>14 e</b>	27	24,1	41	36,6	44	39,2	50	26,4	77	40,7	62	32,8
<b>14 f</b>	22	19,4	38	33,9	52	46,4	27	14,2	72	38,1	90	47,6
<b>Social (259 consider; 42 do not consider)</b>												
<b>14 g</b>	21	18,8	44	39,3	47	41,9	29	15,3	70	37	90	47,6
<b>14 h</b>	162	62,6	59	22,8	38	14,6	25	59,5	7	16,6	10	23,8
<b>14 i</b>	115	44,4	83	32,1	61	23,5	18	42,8	9	21,4	15	35,7
<b>14 j</b>	108	41,7	88	34	63	24,3	15	35,7	12	28,5	15	35,7
<b>14 k</b>	90	34,8	81	31,3	88	33,9	11	26,1	16	38,1	15	35,7

Source: own elaboration

In question 9, 75,7% of respondents indicated that they consider their impacts on the economy when traveling, so it does not come as a surprise that of those, more than half agreed that CoCr platforms can be a beneficial tool for the creation of jobs, new opportunities and bringing money to the local economy. Interestingly, many of those who previously did not consider their economic impacts also agree with the statements, however, do not necessarily agree that it promotes spending money in the local culture. When previously asked about considerations towards the environment, more than half of the respondents indicated that they do not take

their environmental impacts into account when travelling. However, both, the people who do and those who do not consider their impact on the environment, respond similarly to the statements asking about the potential benefits of CoCr platforms for the environment. As described in the previous findings, the participants of the questionnaire have a strong consensus that CoCr platforms do not help remove environmental impacts and trigger more thought for sustainable forms of travel. Finally, the overwhelming majority of respondents (86%) previously indicated they consider their impacts on a socio-cultural level. However, even those who do not consider their impacts on society when travelling agree that CoCr platforms can be beneficial to strengthening the respect and understanding between host and guest.

Furthermore, a cross-analysis of Question 13 and 14 has been conducted, to see if respondents who do not know or use the mentioned platforms have different opinions to those who do use them. For the sake of simplicity, the categories “I strongly agree” and “I agree” have been summarized into one segment, as well as the negative responses. Hence, the following analysis accounts only for the three categories: agreement, neutral, and disagreement.

*Table 7: Cross Analysis of Q13 & Q14 (Total Responses Platform Users: 248; Non-Users: 53)*

<b>I agree</b>	<b>14 A</b>	<b>14 B</b>	<b>14 C</b>	<b>14 D</b>	<b>14 E</b>	<b>14 F</b>	<b>14 G</b>	<b>14 H</b>	<b>14 I</b>	<b>14 J</b>	<b>14 K</b>
<i>Uses Platforms</i>	147	103	81	146	71	42	42	169	121	111	96
%	59,3	41,5	32,6	58,9	28,6	17,3	17,3	68,2	48,8	44,8	38,7
<i>Does not use Platforms</i>	17	13	14	33	6	6	7	17	12	12	5
%	32,1	24,5	26,4	62,2	11,3	11,3	13,2	31,1	22,6	22,6	9,4
<b>Neutral</b>											
<i>Uses Platforms</i>	70	96	79	65	96	88	97	48	74	78	77
%	28,2	27,8	31,9	26,2	38,7	35,2	39,1	19,4	29,8	31,5	31,1
<i>Does not use Platforms</i>	22	18	14	10	22	22	18	19	19	23	21
%	41,5	33,9	26,4	18,8	41,5	41,5	33,9	35,9	35,9	43,4	39,6
<b>I disagree</b>											
<i>Uses Platforms</i>	31	76	88	37	81	117	108	31	53	59	75
%	12,5	30,7	35,5	14,9	32,6	47,5	43,5	12,5	21,4	23,8	30,2
<i>Does not use Platforms</i>	14	22	25	10	25	25	28	17	22	18	27
%	26,4	41,5	47,2	18,9	47,1	47,1	52,8	32,1	41,5	33,9	50,9

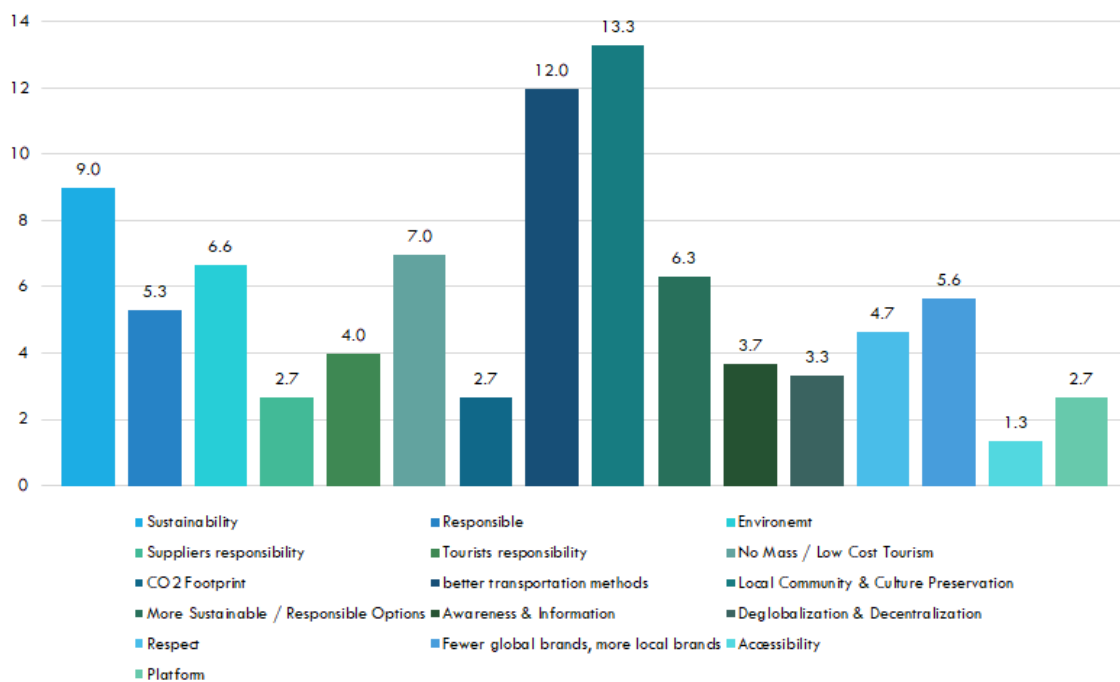
*Source: own elaboration*

Respondents who do not use or are not familiar with CoCr platforms generally disagree more with the statements and the possible benefits they could bring. It can be observed that platform users were generally more in agreement with the possible benefits of CoCr platforms, especially those benefiting the economy and the local community. Furthermore, it should not go unnoticed that the non-users responded neutrally more often than those who use platforms. Consequently, travellers who previously participated in CoCr experiences and platforms are

more likely to respond in favour of the platforms, possibly through their personal positive experiences with such tools.

Finally, respondents were given the option to voice changes they would like to see in the future of travel, where strong similarities could be observed throughout the responses. Of all received feedback, more than 14% were concerned with respecting the local economy and immersing themselves more in the authentic culture offered. Furthermore, 13.3 % want to see alternative transportation methods and 4 % call for less Co2 emissions. More than 23% of all participants call for more sustainable and responsible ways to travel, while being concerned about the affordability of alternative offers. Finally, many people ask for less massification (7.7%) and the promotion of local brands (6.3%) instead of global companies. Multiple people (4%) asked for platforms that help identify more responsible ways to travel. Interestingly, while people call for alternatives, they also complain about the high prices of substitute products and that they are not willing to stop their travel or pay more to be more responsible in their travel.

Figure 10: Results Q16 (see Appendix III) (Total Responses: 210)



Source: own elaboration



## 5. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 5.1 Conclusions

With closed borders, country access bans and international travel interrupted almost entirely, COVID-19 has dramatically affected the tourism industry. At the beginning of the year 2020, the world suddenly came to a halt bringing uncertainty of what the future has in store. One matter that is certain, however, is, that the way people used to travel - and still do today - cannot be described as responsible. Travel has been embossed by mass tourism, gentrification, the war for the cheapest prices and an overly competitive and saturated market (Zhang et al., 2007). After carrying out the research study encompassing more than 300 participants -all of them frequent travellers- insights about their perceptions of RTB and the relationship with platforms have been gained.

To answer the first research objective and define RTB, current literature has been reviewed and further research has been conducted. The findings of the questionnaire show that generally, there is a seeming lack of awareness among the tourists concerning the intangible impacts their trips create. Based on the responses, it can be confirmed what previous literature argued: there is no definitive or universal meaning of RTB. Results show a clear division identified by the respondents between sustainability and responsibility, meaning that there are two main tendencies: either respondents mentioned the preservation of nature and protection of the environment or they focused on the human aspect of travelling (respecting cultural differences, adapting to the local lifestyle, obeying the laws, etc...). Based on this finding, it can be concluded that the ongoing discussion around *responsible* and *sustainable tourism* that still nowadays creates semantic confusion among the respondents and researchers (Mihalic, 2016). It would be noteworthy to find out whether their definitions are influenced by the type of travel they usually do; meaning perhaps respondents who usually do nature-based tourism tend to respond as the latter compared to those who do urban tourism. The social element of travel was widely acknowledged by the participants, leaving the environment in the background. It shows why most of the sample believes that they are behaving responsibly. However, RTB goes beyond covering your bare skin while visiting a church or throwing the trash in the bin while having a picnic in nature. Furthermore, considering the conceptual framework used for the background of this research, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents are able to identify the social impact of their trips and subsequently, be more mindful of it. On the other hand, if the

tourists are not aware of all elements of RT (economical, environmental, and social), they would consequently not assume a truly responsible behaviour.

The concept of *Responsible Tourism* has been classified in different ways (Swarbrooke, 1999; Leslie, 2012a; State & Bulin, 2016), and it has been redefined multiple times and still is being reformulated into more and more accurate definitions. Despite that, some (Stanford, 2009) would argue that as soon as a tourist does certain things such as taking a plane automatically removes any possibility of responsible behaviour. Due to the unique nature of each destination, it strongly varies what can be considered as beneficial to the TBL, and hence academics struggle finding “cookie cutter” best practices for triggering RTB in destinations. Moreover, even within the same destination there are numerous stakeholders who all assume different roles, creating a complex ecosystem where in a capitalistic and globalist world that ultimately leads to unfair competition and a constant struggle for independent entrepreneurs to strive and survive in the sector.

It is no new occurrence that experts call for measures to be taken on this matter, indeed, the need for change has been claimed since before the 1970s (Brundtland, 1991; Mitlin, 1992). This shift towards sustainability is not limited to scholars but it has also been adapted by large international organizations, the main one being the UN, which has made several attempts throughout the years, last one being the 17 SDGs. The second research objective was to find out which role CoCr platforms play into the achievement of the SDGs. Recent studies have explored that matter (Gössling & Hall, 2019; Boar et al., 2020), and they have proven that these platforms have multiple impacts on both sides, positive and negative. Moreover, a smaller but quickly increasing number of papers that strive to define new forms of tourism that are potentially less harmful and more beneficial (Raviv et al., 2013; Su & Swanson, 2015; Luo et al., 2019). Linking the current literature to the findings of this study, an obstacle to achieve RTB has been identified. This barrier is the lack of recognition respondents have regarding the impacts of tourism on the SDGs. Consequently, based on the conceptual framework, people do not realize the power they have to transform the industry and subsequently, the responsibility that partially lies in their hands to do so. As Burns (2002) reminded, the tourist himself is the most important stakeholder since without him there would not be any demand, once again reinforcing the idea that responsibility should be assumed by the tourist, as well as the supplier side. Only in harmony both parties can create a responsible ecosystem for the tourism industry.

Previous research shows that the way tourists perceive responsible behaviour and responsibility is crucial to enable a dialogue between companies and consumers. CoCr platforms such as

*Airbnb*, *TripAdvisor*, and *BlaBlaCar* have undeniably changed the scene of tourism and they have given tourists a new motivating factor due to their collaborative nature. Other motivations include economic benefit, sustainability, enjoyment, and social relationships, and hence encompasses the most important aspects of responsible tourist consumption (Sung et al., 2018). Recent studies have attempted looking at how the popularization of these platforms can help achieve the SDGs (Gössling & Hall, 2019; Boar et al., 2020), and there were mixed results for and against the goals. On the other hand, one of the most important tourism stakeholders -the tourist himself- is rarely considered in those academic studies, since they are predominantly focused on placing responsibility in the hands of tourism suppliers and governments. Various respondents further call for smaller more responsible businesses as opposed to large companies such as Airbnb and Booking. Hence, there is room for entrepreneurship and innovation for CoCr platforms that trigger a more RTB through raising awareness and making the traveller directly participate. All over, there was a large number of neutral responses, which could be a lack of knowledge about the matter of RT or that the respondents do not associate CoCr platforms and RTB. Respondents were aware of the existence of CoCr platforms, however, do not fully agree that they can minimize all impacts of tourism. There was a strong consensus that these platforms boost economic growth and bring hosts and visitors closer together, strengthening their common respect and understanding. However, the respondents did not see how platforms can help behaving more responsibly towards the environment. Hence, CoCr platforms do have the potential to reduce the impacts on the TBL and trigger a more RTB, however in terms of the environment there is a lot of improvement left to do. Both, the platforms, and the users must work together to create a more responsible and sustainable future of the tourism industry and hence the entire world.

Finally, it is noteworthy to mention that people have a desire to travel and see the world, and this desire will never disappear; moreover, it is one of the rights of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (UNWTO, 2001). Further findings show that some respondents expressed their desire to travel responsibly but, besides the lack of awareness, another obstacle is the lack of affordable priced alternatives. Hence, there is room for entrepreneurship and innovation for CoCr platforms that trigger a more RTB through raising awareness and making the traveller directly participate.

## 5.2 Limitations

The most significant limitation for this paper is the method design used for the research. Firstly, the research tool was mainly shared on both digital professional networks (LinkedIn, ATLAS) and social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) so there was not a defined structure that guarantees the utmost sincerity and seriousness of the respondents. The time constraint also did not permit to make the necessary modifications that were learned along the process of collecting and analysing the data. For instance, the Digital Travel Platforms used for this study are not available everywhere and are more commonly used in Western European countries. Consequently, some people found themselves not knowing what to reply to in some of the questions of the questionnaire. Another potential limitation could be that in question 13 some respondents suggested normal booking platforms instead of specifically CoCr platforms, leading to the assumption they may have misinterpreted the following statements concerning CoCr. Furthermore, the language used for the questionnaire was English, and although google forms provides automatic translation, this could be a potential barrier to fully understanding the content and questions. Since there was limited time to redistribute a new questionnaire, the researchers missed on a fair number of potential respondents. Additionally, since the questionnaire was self-administered, it is impossible to know if the participants replied honestly or not because of the type of questions asked; for instance, question 12-D, "I would not visit a place if I knew that my visit has negative impacts on the destination", some people might not want to recognise that they would still do it, so they marked the answer considered appropriate. In this case, qualitative methods could have been beneficial to go deeper into those topics and discuss the reasons for answering the way they did. As it has been demonstrated along the different chapters of this paper, RTB is an extremely broad and at times subjective issue. What applies to one specific destination will not apply to another; even within the same destination there are so many different stakeholders and all of them playing various roles that it becomes this very complex environment. While the quantitative method has allowed the study to gather statistical data, it has not permitted to create a detailed image of each respondents as there would have needed deeper research. Perhaps a more in depth and thorough investigation would have produced more insightful results. Then again, this topic involves a global audience so there would have been a need for several in-depth interviews that time and resources did not allow. Similar to the concept of RTB, every CoCr platform differs from each other in so many ways (market target, segment, product, etc...) that putting all of them together and judging them as a whole could lead to wrongful conclusions. Although it gave a general idea of the tourists' perception of such platforms against the traditional business models, there should be a more

in-depth analysis of each of them. However, yet again this purpose was unrealistic considering the resources and time assigned to this thesis. Acknowledging how important the aforementioned CoCr platforms in the tourism industry have become in the recent decades, it is crucial to further investigate this matter. Lastly, how the world has been completely transformed because of COVID-19 will (and already has) inevitably changed the world of travel forever and will not go back to normal entirely. The way people perceive all the items discussed in this paper will shift and they may have even had issues connecting to the topic, since a fair amount of time had passed between the survey and their last travel. Therefore, now more than ever, RTB and the tools to its implementation should be the subject of further substantial research and development.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

#### **5.3.1 Recommendations for Industry Professionals**

This study aimed to find out the perceptions of tourists on the topic of RT and CoCr platforms and fill the identified gap in literature. As it has been observed in the literature review, a large issue in the tourism sector is that responsibility is placed in the hands of suppliers (Hashimoto, 2000; Romani & Grappi, 2014; Su & Swanson, 2016). Many respondents assumed part of the responsibility but, they also called for more alternatives and sustainable options when being asked about the changes they would like to see in the future of travel. Of the respondents, 3% is convinced that companies and governments need to assume more responsibility, while 4.5% stated that the travellers themselves need to be more aware of their impacts and assume accountability. Industry entrepreneurs should hence focus on bridging the gap between tourists' expectations and their own expectations concerning responsibility to create a better future for all.

Another aim of this thesis was to understand the levels of awareness among the tourists regarding the topics discussed, and the study found there is a lack of such. Numerous respondents gave voluntary feedback at the end of the questionnaire expressing that they were not aware of responsible travel prior to responding to the questionnaire & the survey inspired them to rethink their travel behaviour. Based on the feedback, it is hence recommended to all tourism professionals, researchers, entrepreneurs to make their main priority to spread awareness and educate people about the impacts of travel. This matter goes even beyond educating the tourists but also the future industry professionals being schooled in universities. After the study, the authors of this thesis observed that there is a lot of potential for educating

about responsibility in tourism schools, that way future professionals would consequently be more concerned with this issue when starting their careers.

Regarding the tourism suppliers, as it is observed in the conclusions, they have the possibility to make a shift towards more responsible practices because people will never stop wanting to travel. Moreover, the tourism industry should not provide sustainable and responsible products as a luxury but rather accessible to everyone, by offering more affordable prices (then again that does not mean the war of cheapest product). As observed in the results, various respondents expressed their inclination to support smaller businesses instead of large companies such as Airbnb and Booking. Thus, it is recommended a shift towards entrepreneurship and innovation for CoCr platforms that trigger a more RTB through raising awareness and making the traveller directly participate. Furthermore, it is recommended to the tourism industry experts to involve tourists closely in the creation of experiences to balance the responsibilities of both the demand and supply. Binkhorst & Cerdan (2019) experimented by introducing the participation of customers into the creation of tourism experiences and their results support that practice. It is important to create synergy between the two to reach a true RTB, instead of both sides “blaming” the other to assume responsibility.

### **3.3.2 Recommendations for future research**

Having studied the attitudes and behaviours towards travel, has established a foundation for future research concerned with possible solutions for a more responsible future for the tourism industry. As explained in the previous section of limitations, this thesis should be viewed as a basis for future studies. After conducting this research, multiple new questions have arisen from it. This research method has enabled the collection of statistical data but, to further understand these attitudes and perceptions and draw more insightful conclusions, qualitative research is also needed. For instance, in the question where the impact of tourism on the SDGs was put to test, it would have been interesting to test what the subjects would have answered in case they had not been given a shortlist to choose from. Then again, there seems to be a concurrence with the answers given in question #6 regarding RTB. Another observation made by cross analysing their definitions of RTB and their perception of their own behaviour found that respondents who considered themselves responsible travellers defined such concepts with more anthropological denotations such as respect for the culture and their locals and overall, the environment was left in a secondary role. Meanwhile, those who responded to that question with a negative answer, defined RTB more about the environment, making the smallest impact possible, etc... It would be interesting to find out if the type of tourism these participants usually practice (e.g.,

Nature based, city trips...) influence their perception of RTB. Further, regarding those who usually travel locally, it could be assumed that they do it for the environmental impact but, what it is unknown is the reason why they travel locally; do they do it for financial reasons? Is it because they believe in RT? Do they travel by car or use public transport?...

All these question marks lead the authors to think that this research could be performed at a deeper level using qualitative research such as in-depth interviews and focus groups on a large scale. On the other side, the quantitative approach is still being viewed as appropriate for this research, however some considerations should be taken into account: having a budget would help to use sampling techniques that would avoid the risk of false profiles when sourcing participants through social media; a longer timeframe for collecting data would be beneficial to assure equal participation in the different demographic groups and hence obtaining clearer results; repeating this survey or conducting interviews post COVID-19 is highly recommended since participants could connect their answers to recent travel experiences and would be more conscious about their level of responsibility while travelling; adapting the survey to each participant (e.g. translations) would help participants to grasp the questions and possibly broaden the sample; and finally, more experimental research approaches could be recommendable for this topic such as brainstorming sessions and focus groups with tourists to collect data and possible solutions.

Moreover, this research should be conducted separately by different communities to obtain a broader view of the responsibility matter all over the world. From these results, larger scale conclusions could be drawn, since they would showcase what aspects of responsibility destination have in common and in which they differ.

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## APPENDICES

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### I) United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals List

**SDG #1 End Poverty:** Firstly, the UN aims to eradicate poverty in all its forms, everywhere on the planet. This is being achieved by implementing social protection systems and measures and establishing equal rights to economic resources, basic services, ownership and control over land and property, natural resources and appropriate new technologies and financial services.

**SDG #2 Zero hunger:** The second SDG aims to end hunger by achieving food security and adequate nutrition for all while promoting more sustainable and highly productive agricultural practices. This shall be achieved by amongst others ensuring genetic diversity of seeds and crops and increasing investments in rural infrastructure, agricultural research, and technological development.

**SDG #3 Good Health & Well-being:** This goal is directed to guarantee a healthy life and encourage well-being for all humans worldwide. Therefore, epidemics such as AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and others are aimed to be eradicated by 2030 through ensuring universal access to health care and health related education.

**SDG #4 Quality Education:** All countries should work together to guarantee quality education for all. Meaning that all forms of education should be accessible to anyone - girl, boy, woman, men, Asian or European - by providing affordable and quality education and removing gender and racial disparities.

**SDG #5 Gender Equality:** This goal aims to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls all over the world, by eliminating violence, harmful practises (eg forced marriage, genital mutilation) and ensuring full and effective participation and equal opportunities for women on all levels of decision making.

**SDG #6 Clean Water & Sanitation:** By reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and increasing water-use efficiency, the UN wants to achieve universal access to clean and affordable water. Furthermore, a global integrated water resource management shall be implemented in hopes to protect and restore all water-related ecosystems.

**SDG #7 Affordable & Clean Energy:** By increasing energy efficiency, the share of renewable energy worldwide and by enhancing international cooperation, universal access to

affordable and clean energy shall be guaranteed. Hence, the aim is to reduce fossil-fueled technologies and expand infrastructure using sustainable energy services.

**SDG #8 Decent work & Economic Growth:** Higher levels of economic productivity should be guaranteed by diversification, technological advancement, and innovation, while promoting development-oriented policies supporting a decent job creation, entrepreneurship and equal job opportunities for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities as well as equal pay for work of equal value.

**SDG #9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure:** Tourism has the capacity to influence on the development and readjustment of public and private infrastructure. Fostering innovation, promoting inclusive and sustainable growth, and moving towards resource- efficient and low carbon progress.

**SDG #10 Reduced Inequalities:** By engaging local populations and all key stakeholders in its development. Tourism can contribute to urban renewal and rural development by giving people the opportunity to prosper in their place of origin. Promote and adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, regardless of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or economic status. Put efforts on regulation and monitoring of such.

**SDG #11 Sustainable cities & communities:** Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated, and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries. Support positive economic, social, and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional job development planning. Protect cultural and natural heritage.

**SDG #12 Responsible consumption & production:** Reduce by half the food waste in the hospitality industry. The development of tools to facilitate and monitor sustainable practices can create jobs and promote local culture and products.

**SDG #13 Climate action:** This being one of the most pressing issues at a global scale, the UN intends to involve tourism stakeholders to play a leading role in the global response to climate change. By reducing its carbon footprint, in the transport and accommodation sector, tourism can benefit from low carbon growth and help tackle one of the most pressing challenges of our time.

**SDG #14 Life below water:** By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism.

**SDG #15 Life on land:** Rich biodiversity and natural heritage are often the main reasons why tourists visit a destination. Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial



ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

**SDG #16 Peace, justice & strong institutions:** Tourism, which benefits and engages local communities, can also consolidate peace in post-conflict societies. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

**SDG #17 Partnerships for the goals:** Finally, global partnerships for sustainable development are aimed to be revitalized through strengthening the means of cooperation towards all 17 goals.

## II) Ethics Form

It is important that you are sufficiently prepared to collect data doing fieldwork with ‘human participants.’ Your supervisor will support you in completing the Ethics Form.

**The Ethics Form MUST BE COMPLETED BY YOURSELF AND SIGNED OFF BY YOUR SUPERVISOR BEFORE UNDERTAKING RESEARCH.**

**THE SIGNED ETHICS FORM MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE FINAL DEGREE THESIS.**

Risk checklist – Please answer ALL the questions in each of the sections below.

<b>Risk category 1</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Use any information OTHER than that which is freely available in the public domain?	X	
Involve analysis of pre-existing data which contains sensitive or personal information?		X
Involve direct and/or indirect contact with human participants?	X	
Require consent to conduct?	X	

Require consent to publish?	X	
Have a risk of compromising confidentiality?		X
Have a risk of compromising anonymity?		X
Involve risk to any party, including the researcher?		X
Contain elements which you OR your supervisor is NOT trained to conduct?		X
<b>Risk Category 2</b>		

Require informed consent OTHER than that which is straightforward to obtain to conduct the research?		X
Require informed consent OTHER than that which is straightforward to obtain to publish the research?		X
Require information to be collected and/or provided OTHER than that which is straightforward to obtain?		X
<b>Risk category 3</b>		
Involve participants who are particularly vulnerable?		X
Involve participants who are unable to give informed consent?		X
Involve data collection taking place BEFORE consent form is given?		X
Involve any deliberate cover data collection?		X

Involve risk to the researcher or participants beyond that experienced in everyday life?		X
Cause (or could cause) physical or psychological negative consequences?		X
Use intrusive or invasive procedures?		X
Include a financial incentive to participate in the research?		X

**IF APPLICABLE:**

<p><b>List agreed actions with your tutor to be taken to address issues raised in questions Risk Category 1:</b></p> <p>.....</p>
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**Student Declaration:** I confirm that I will undertake the Degree Thesis as detailed above. I understand that I must abide by the terms of this approval and that I may not make any substantial amendments to the Degree Thesis without further approval.

**Name:** Berta Contijoch **Signed:** ..... **Date:** 3 December, 2020

**Name:** Valerie Wiedersich **Signed:** ..... **Date:** 3 December, 2020

Agreement from the supervisor of the student:

**Name:** Esther Binkhorst **Signed:** ..... **Date:** 3 December, 2020

**Risk Category 1:** If you answered NO to all the questions, your study is classified as Risk Category 1. In this case:

- The supervisor can give immediate approval for undertaking the field work for the Degree Thesis.
- A copy of this signed Form MUST be included in the Degree Thesis.

**Risk Category 2:** If you answered YES only to questions in Risk Category 1 and/or 2, your study is classified as Risk Category 2. In this case:

- You must meet with your supervisor and clarify how the issues encountered are going to be dealt with before taking off with the field work.
- Once clarified, the actions taken must be stated in the Form. Then the supervisor can guarantee approval for the field work for the Degree Thesis.
- A copy of this signed Form MUST be included in the Degree Thesis.

**Risk Category 3:** If you answered YES to questions included in Risk Category 3, your study is classified as Risk Category 3. In this case:

- You must discuss with your supervisor how to redirect the research and data collection thesis to avoid risks mentioned in Category 3.
- You must complete the Ethical Form again until Risk Category 1 or 2 is obtained.
- A copy of this signed Form MUST be included in the Degree Thesis.

### III) Questionnaire

#### Section 2

1. Where do you typically travel?
  - Within my own country
  - International, but within my own continent
  - International (overseas)
2. Why do you travel most?
  - Leisure
  - Business
  - Family & Friends
3. Which is your country of citizenship?

*Short answer*

4. What is your age?
  - 18-25
  - 26-35
  - 36-45
  - 46-65
  - 65+
5. What is your gender?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Non-binary
  - Prefer not to say
6. What is "Responsible Tourist Behaviour" to you? (Please, describe in few words)

*Short answer*

7. Based on your own definition, would you consider your type of travel responsible?
  - Yes
  - No

#### Section 3

What responsible tourism means according to experts:



8. Based on the image, would you consider your style of travel "responsible"?
- Yes
  - No
9. Which of the following aspects do you consider when travelling to a destination?
- Benefiting the local economy (e.g., buying local products)
  - Minimizing my impacts on the environment (e.g., buying Co2 efficient flights)
  - Respecting local customs & traditions (e.g., wearing a scarf to cover head and shoulders in Muslim countries)
  - None of the above
  - Other
10. Have you ever heard of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals for 2030?
- Yes
  - No
11. Do you think that by travelling you create a positive impact on any of the following aspects? (multiple answers possible)
- Using affordable and clean energy
  - Creating decent jobs & sustainable economic growth
  - Reducing inequalities (e.g., race, gender, religion)
  - Developing more sustainable Cities and Communities
  - Consuming & Producing responsibly
  - Reversing Climate Change
  - Protecting Life on Land & under Water
  - Fighting for global Peace & Justice

Other

12. Please, rate the following statements based on your opinion (Likert-scale)

- a. Governments & Companies are the only ones responsible for making sure tourism has positive impacts
- b. Destinations are responsible to offer products that do not damage their environment.
- c. It is my responsibility to purchase products that do not do harm to the destination I visit.
- d. I would not visit a place if i knew that my visit has negative impacts on the destination
- e. When travelling, I adapt my behaviour to respect local rules and costumes (e.g., covering hair & shoulders with scarf)
- f. When I travel, I try to learn and engage as much as I can with the host community
- g. I always buy local handicrafts or souvenirs to support the local economy
- h. When I travel, I prefer consuming products from brands I already know from home

#### Section 4

13. When you travel, which of the following platforms do you normally use? (Please, add if it is not on the list)

- Airbnb
- Couchsurfing
- Blablacar
- Uber
- Tripadvisor
- None of the above
- Other

14. Please rate the following statements based on your opinion (Likert-scale)

- a. These platforms help to create jobs & new economic opportunities
- b. These platforms encourage me to spend my money in the local economy
- c. These platforms offer innovative and creative solutions to tourism issues like environmental impacts
- d. These platforms do not necessarily help to reduce the negative impacts of travel

- e. Using these platforms enables me to travel in a more sustainable way
- f. These platforms make me think more about the negative impacts I make when travelling
- g. These platforms help me to act more responsibly
- h. Both, the visitor and the locals can benefit from using these platforms
- i. Using these platforms increase the respect and understanding of host and guest
- j. These platforms enable me to participate closely in the local life and community
- k. Using these platforms allows me to immerse myself deeper on a cultural, intellectual, and emotional level

15. What changes would you like to see in the future of travel?

*Long-answer text*

16. If you would like to add any thoughts or feedback, feel free to do so below:

*Long-answer text*



#### IV) Questionnaire Results

Table 8: Demographic data from participants

Variables		Frequency	Percentage	
		<i>f</i>	%	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	108	35,9	
	Female	191	63,5	
	Non-Binary	1	0,3	
	Prefer not to say	1	0,3	
<b>Age</b>	18-25	125	41,5	
	26-35	53	17,6	
	36-45	27	8,9	
	45-65	85	28,2	
	+ 65	11	3,6	
<b>Travel Motivation</b>	Leisure	101	33,5	
	Visiting Family & Friends	45	14,9	
	Business	23	7,6	
	Leisure, Family & Friends	86	28,6	
	Leisure, Business	20	6,6	
	Family & Friends, Business	7	2,3	
	Leisure, Family & Friends, Business	19	6,3	
<b>Where they travel</b>	Within own country	45	15	
	Within own continent	121	40	
	Worldwide	135	45	
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Europe</b> <i>(Count of 245)</i>	Austria	1	0,3
		Belarus	1	0,3
		Belgium	9	2,9
		Czech Republic	4	1,3
		Finland	2	0,6
		France	5	1,6
		Germany	28	9,3
		Greece	2	0,6
		Hungary	1	0,3
		Ireland	2	0,6
		Italy	10	3,3
		Lithuania	1	0,3
		Luxembourg	7	2,3
		Poland	1	0,3
		Portugal	20	6,6
		Romania	2	0,6
		Spain	102	33,9
		Sweden	1	0,3
		The Netherlands	40	13,3
		United Kingdom	6	1,9
	<b>America</b> <i>Count of 42</i>	Argentina	1	0,3
		Brazil	2	0,6
		Canada	2	0,6

		Colombia	2	0,6
		Ecuador	2	0,6
		Mexico	2	0,6
		Peru	2	0,6
		USA	29	9,6
		Venezuela	1	0,3
	<b>Africa</b> Count of 6	Ethiopia	1	0,3
		Kenya	1	0,3
		Rwanda	1	0,3
		South Africa	3	1,0
	<b>Asia</b> Count of 7	China	3	1,0
		India	1	0,3
		Israel	1	0,3
		Russia	2	0,6
	<b>Oceania</b> Count of 1	Fiji	1	0,3

Source: own elaboration

Table 9: Question 6 (Total Responses: 301)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Examples
	<i>f</i>	%	
Respect Locals	65	22%	Being respectful of the destination you travel to (people, buildings, culture, religion...) and avoid gentrification // Be respectful with the environment and the local people // Cuidar del medio ambiente, recursos y personas cuando viajas.
Respect Culture	84	28%	For me it means to be responsible towards the place you are travelling to and have the behaviour you will have in your own country (meaning respectful behaviour) // respectful behaviour towards culture and nature // Behaving in accordance with local culture, customs, and norms.
Respect Environment	105	35%	Travelers respecting the local people and environment in every place they visit // Throw the trash in the bin // respectful with the environment, the host culture.
Respect Rules	45	15%	Responsible tourism is to be aware of the impacts that tourism activity has on the destinations, including environment and people, and to behave respectfully, considering local people, traditions, culture, economy, and environment. // To follow rules and regulation at the destination and respect both people and nature // Respectful of people, places, and things. Following rules and guidelines.
Respect (generalised)	10	3%	Respectful and thoughtful // Respect the cities that you visit // Just to be respectful wherever I go.
Minimize impact	70	23%	To respect local customs and sites. To buy services and goods from sustainable businesses (e.g., a local restaurant instead of a fast-food restaurant). To avoid leaving trash. To prefer public transport (train, bus) over planes and cars. // I think that would entail respect of the local culture, environment and values when travelling to a country that is not your own. Also contributing to the local economy through sustainable

			tourism (for example by purchasing local food products or visiting historical heritage sites, and not engage in activities that are detrimental to the local environment and biodiversity). // This term refers to the tourists respecting the rules of the country they are visiting as well as respecting the environment (by not throwing their rubbish anywhere for example) and any restrictions or regulations that might be imposed on them. Also, a responsible tourist takes responsibility for their actions and accepts the consequences.
Blend in and Adapt	45	15%	Appropriate and respectful behaviour // Mantener un comportamiento cívico respetando las costumbres locales. // Respeta las normas de cada lugar, es limpio, no arma jaleo.
Local Economy	36	12%	you asked in the intro to answer with as much honesty as I can so honestly, I have no idea, but I would say travelling responsibly both in terms of ecology so taking the environment into account as well as economically// Being respectful to destination country's culture; waste recycling; being nature friendly // Not going into large hotel chain and favoured local transport rather than plane (once there)
Awareness & Acknowledgment	60	20%	Behave in a good manner, be respectful to the city and the people, not to cause any trouble // Travelling around the country, eating local foods, learning about the culture, and doing active / extreme activities // That is s complex question but for me is someone that wants to learn about the culture and traditions of the country that is traveling to and is respectful to the people and the environment that is visiting.
Sustainable Travel	43	14%	Compensate CO2 for flights, be responsible with garbage // buying the "sustainable" ticket // to travel climate neutral
Ethical Choices	8	3%	Be ethical in how you treat others. Treat them as you would expect to be treated yourself. // A kind of ethic code that mandates appropriate behaviour for tourists while on vacation. These can include environmental, socio-cultural, economic, political issues. // Ethical and respectful behaviour. Spending money in the local economy. bey
Does Not Exist	3	1%	No travel is responsible because all travel affects the environment and takes from the people. // There is none since we all travel by plane/train/car and we overconsume.
No Mass Tourism	5	2%	Not going to overcrowded places. // Travelling to less known places not to over crowd the already popular ones, trying to really get to know the local culture and not just stop at the main attractions, travelling less by plane // Being respectful of the destination you travel to (people, buildings, culture, religion...) and avoid gentrification.
Other	14	5%	Being Safe and take no Risks. // a certain behaviour the tourist has in order to be responsible when traveling // Bring along an open attitude.

Source: own elaboration

Table 10: Question 7 & 8 (Total Responses: 301)

	YES		NO	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Based on your own definition, would you consider your type of travel responsible?	255	85%	46	15%
Based on the image, would you consider your style of travel "responsible"?	244	81%	57	19%

Source: own elaboration

Table 11: Question 9 (Total Responses: 301)

Which of the following aspects do you consider when travelling to a destination?		
	Frequency	Percentage
	<i>f</i>	%
None	7	2%
Economy	23	8%
Economy & Environment	5	2%
All	89	30%
Environment & Social	11	4%
Economy & Social	111	37%
Environment	7	2%
Social	48	16%

Source: own elaboration

Table 12: Question 10 (Total Responses: 301)

	Have you ever heard of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals for 2030?	
	Frequency	Percentage
	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	147	49%
No	153	51%

Source: own elaboration

Table 13: Question 11 (Total Responses: 301)

Do you think that by travelling you create a positive impact on any of the following aspects?		
	Frequent	Percentage
	<i>f</i>	%
Goal 8	233	77%
Goal 7	52	17%
Goal 11	94	31%
Goal 10	121	40%
Goal 16	68	23%
Goal 12	146	48%
Goal 13	28	9%
Goal 14 & 15	65	22%
None	18	6%

Source: own elaboration

Table 14: Question 12 (Total Responses: 301)

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b>12 A.</b>	81	26,9	151	50,2	27	9,0	31	11,3	6	2,0
<b>12 B.</b>	11	3,7	14	4,7	25	8,3	153	50,8	94	31,2
<b>12 C.</b>	11	3,7	8	2,7	26	8,6	130	43,2	122	40,5
<b>12 D.</b>	9	3,0	30	10,0	74	24,6	114	37,9	71	23,6
<b>12 E.</b>	9	3,0	8	2,7	24	8,0	110	36,5	146	48,5
<b>12 F.</b>	8	2,7	9	3,0	39	13,0	129	42,9	113	37,5
<b>12 G.</b>	7	2,3	29	9,6	69	22,9	116	38,5	77	25,6
<b>12 H.</b>	75	24,9	124	41,2	67	22,3	21	7,0	11	3,7

Source: own elaboration

Table 15: Question 13 (Total Responses: 301; multiple answers possible)

Variables	Frequency		Percentage	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Airbnb	172	29,2		
Booking.com	57	9,7		
TripAdvisor	161	27,3		
Uber	80	15,3		
Blablacar	23	3,9		
Couchsurfing	15	2,5		
Hostelworld	6	1,0		
Cabify	2	0,3		
Google	7	1,2		
Social Networks	4	0,7		
None	53	9,0		

Source: own elaboration

Table 16: Question 14 (Total Responses: 301)

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b>14 A.</b>	9	2,9	36	11,9	92	30,6	130	43,2	34	11,3
<b>14 B.</b>	19	6,3	79	26,2	88	29,2	94	31,2	21	7,0
<b>14 C.</b>	27	9,0	87	28,9	93	30,9	78	25,9	16	5,3
<b>14 D.</b>	10	3,3	36	12,0	76	25,2	36	12,0	42	14,3
<b>14 E.</b>	27	9,0	79	26,2	118	39,2	69	22,9	8	2,7
<b>14 F.</b>	39	13,0	103	34,2	110	36,5	43	14,3	6	2,0
<b>14 G.</b>	38	12,6	99	32,9	114	37,9	114	37,9	3	1,0
<b>14 H.</b>	14	4,7	34	11,3	66	21,9	139	46,2	48	15,9
<b>14 I.</b>	19	6,3	57	18,9	92	30,6	102	33,9	31	10,3
<b>14 J.</b>	18	6,0	60	19,9	100	33,2	100	33,2	23	7,6
<b>14 K.</b>	25	8,3	78	25,9	97	32,2	73	24,3	28	9,3

Source: own elaboration

Table 17: Question 15 (Total Responses: 210; voluntary to answer)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Examples
	<i>f</i>	%	
Sustainability	27	9,0	I would like to see that travel becomes more sustainable and helpful for the environment // More consciousness regarding the sustainability and safety of the trip. // Less mass tourism and sustainable travel
Responsibility	16	5,3	More promotion for responsible travelling, so that we as visitors/tourists can be more aware of the negative impacts we could have and be more conscious of the local economy, local environment, and local culture. // More responsible energy use, less waste of natural resources
Environment	20	6,6	No more waste in nature // More regulations on natural environments // clearer transportation to reduce the impact of travelling on climate change // more environmentally friendly long-distance transportation; less but longer, more responsible travel; less mass tourism; less cruise ships // Less massification and more respect with nature
Suppliers / Governments Responsibility	8	2,7	Making it easier to be sustainable; sustainability and responsible tourism/consumerism should not be left at the hands of consumers alone. They should not have to carry the weight of the responsibilities our leaders should be carrying. // More sustainability practices imposed legally. A lot of companies are not going to do it voluntary. // I would like to see more sustainable options offered by big companies. While I think the traveller has a responsibility, I think companies have an even bigger one and I think the focus is currently on the wrong side. // A major commitment from companies to really help to achieve SDG's
Tourists Responsibility	12	4,0	tourists should be more mindful about the impact they have on a destination, especially the ones already affected by mass tourism like Venice, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Thailand etc. // Tourists thinking more on the host community: their needs, their land... and not only on themselves // More critical reflection towards tourism and travel. A deeper understanding of possible consequences and alternatives. // A more conscious tourist, which is involved in learning about the destination and preserving the places where they travel.
No Mass Tourism / No low cost travel	21	7,0	I would personally like to see that travel is done in a more ethically correct way, that places are not overcrowded by that damaging them, that animals are not being mistreated and that locals life is enhanced rather damaged by the tourists coming into their life space.// more environmentally-friendly long distance transportation; less but longer, more responsible travel; less mass tourism; less cruise ships // Higher flying prices to limit unnecessary flights // More affordable train tickets

			in Europe, faster and cheaper than flying. // Cheap flights should be stopped, better train connections to stimulate alternatives for airplanes. No massive destructive hotels and resorts, no losses of nature and skylines, e.g., along coasts. Use existing infrastructure and houses // Less short trips, less flights (honest price), encourage stays closer to home // I would look at sustainable transport alternatives. As well as a reduction in the mass tourism that kills the life of certain native district
Co2 Footprint	8	2,7	0 pollution in displacement // Travel with no carbon footprint // Planes using fuels with less CO2 emissions // More conscious travel by knowing our footprint per activity/choice
Flights / Transportation	36	12,0	I would like to see more sustainable travel. While many people do travel at the moment, they often do so via low cost flights and stay in an Airbnb and buy their food from a chain supermarket. This is bad for tourism, because all those providers have a horrible impact on the environment and SDGs. I would prefer to see people eat in local high quality and healthy restaurants. Spend their money on culture instead of quick fashion, and stay in hotels which is safer and better for employment //
Local Community / Preservation of Culture	40	13,3	More and real connection with locals. Tourism should be seen as a social integration tool // More interest towards local communities, less commercialisation // Fair jobs and fair salaries for everyone; fair work schedules; Improved job conditions, hygiene and safety; reduced inequalities; gender equal opportunities; less environmental impacts; less natural resources consumption; better life conditions for locals; heritage and culture conservation; better distribution of economic profits // I would like to see more cultural travels, not changing the Ambiental resources only to please humans.// I would like tourism to focus more on the connection between cultures than on what it is to visit a country, but only to know what tourist agents show // continue strengthening community based tourism
More Sustainable / Responsible Alternatives	19	6,3	More investment in sustainable travel means (e.g. trains), less corporate owned website, easier access to locally owned companies // Tourism and travel should turn into more sustainable ways of traveling, especially in the means of transport, but also regarding destinations. Tourist should be more aware and forms of tourism like mindful tourism, spiritual tourism or slow tourism should be promoted. // Sustainable and responsible tourism with a positive social and environmental impact + a type of tourism which empowers and benefits local communities instead of big companies. // I would like to see more incentives to travel sustainably. Sometimes for example, sustainable options are very expensive

			and the fact that I am a recent graduate with no job, that does not allow me to afford it even if I would really like. So, I would say to make sustainable option more affordable for a wider range of users.
Awareness & Information	11	3,7	lifting of travel bans due to COVID-19 and hence easier information transmission about current entry requirement in a centralized manner (currently everyone publishes their own arrival regulations in a different way and it is difficult to receive changes made by governments in English in real-time) // People with more consciousness about their human footprint at natural environments and local economy // More education on effects of traveling in local community and environment. // More awareness and less mass and non-critical tourism
Decentralization / Deglobalization	10	3,3	Even more sustainable traveling. More possibilities to get in touch with locals. Spread hostels. That the cities don't try to keep tourist in one specific area. More preservation of culture and environment // Less international travel. Appreciation of domestic travel and in general on the most ecological way possible
Respect	14	4,7	Respect the environment, respect the host country culture and traditions... // More respect - platforms really would help making a better tourism and travel future! // Respect people plants and animals & the whole planet // People respect of visited countries more // Respect for environment and local economies // More Respect to the local People, emotions, and food.
Fewer big brands / more local brands	17	5,6	More unique and local businesses instead of big brands // Small travel platforms, not big companies like booking.com // Support of local hotels. // Better accreditation for local craft products and consumer awareness and fair pricing for crafts. More attention to local food and animal varieties as this will help to maintain biodiversity.
Accessibility	4	1,3	Sustainability and accessibility // easier access to companies that are responsible or sustainable // Sustainability, accessibility, and recovery
Platforms	8	2,7	encourage the local original culture and gastronomy from any supplier, more platforms to connect with local services // To have one platform, which looks into all websites (written above) and can show me the results of my search with better and deeper filters. Although filters like: Where does the wastewater goes? Does the hotel, provider uses natural electricity? Where does the drinking water comes from? Is the monthly average salary of the employees above or lower average? // a platform which gives more options regarding responsible tourism // More responsible platforms that are sustainable and eco friendly

Source: own elaboration



#### Question 16: Some interesting feedback from the Participants

1. "I think until governments don't inform tourists on the negative impacts of tourism in some destinations and until they don't make it mandatory to consume local products, people will still travel in a non-responsible "selfish" way."
2. "I'm not used to think on the negative effects when travelling and thanks to your questionnaire I did. I will try to have a more Responsible behaviour in the future"
3. "Theory and practice :-) Although I consider responsible travel absolutely important, I personally would like to see as much of the world as possible and want to make long and far trips."
4. "I think that in general young people have more responsible tourist behaviour for some reasons:
  - In our generations is so easy to travel, but for older generations it was their first time, and the ways of traveling were new. So, they are mostly used to other ways of traveling
  - Young people usually have less money so they cannot afford big hotel companies for example, so we rent Airbnb instead which is kind of more responsible."
5. "How can I as customer make responsible choices? This is difficult so I rather do not travel anymore..."
6. "My thought is that humans need to change, and this change is directly connected with education, so the promotion and real investments in education is crucial to change minds and then change behaviours"
7. "Emphasis on the responsibility of visitors / travellers"
8. "If you want to save the planet, stay home. If you want to educate yourself and appreciate other cultures, travel."
9. "Education is a must, if we would like to see a better behaviour we need to insist on education, not only to the poor areas, a must for people from the first world, they are the issue. "
10. "Just looking forward to everything getting back to normal in the travel world, sooner, rather than later, for everyone involved, especially the folks working in the travel and hospitality industry."