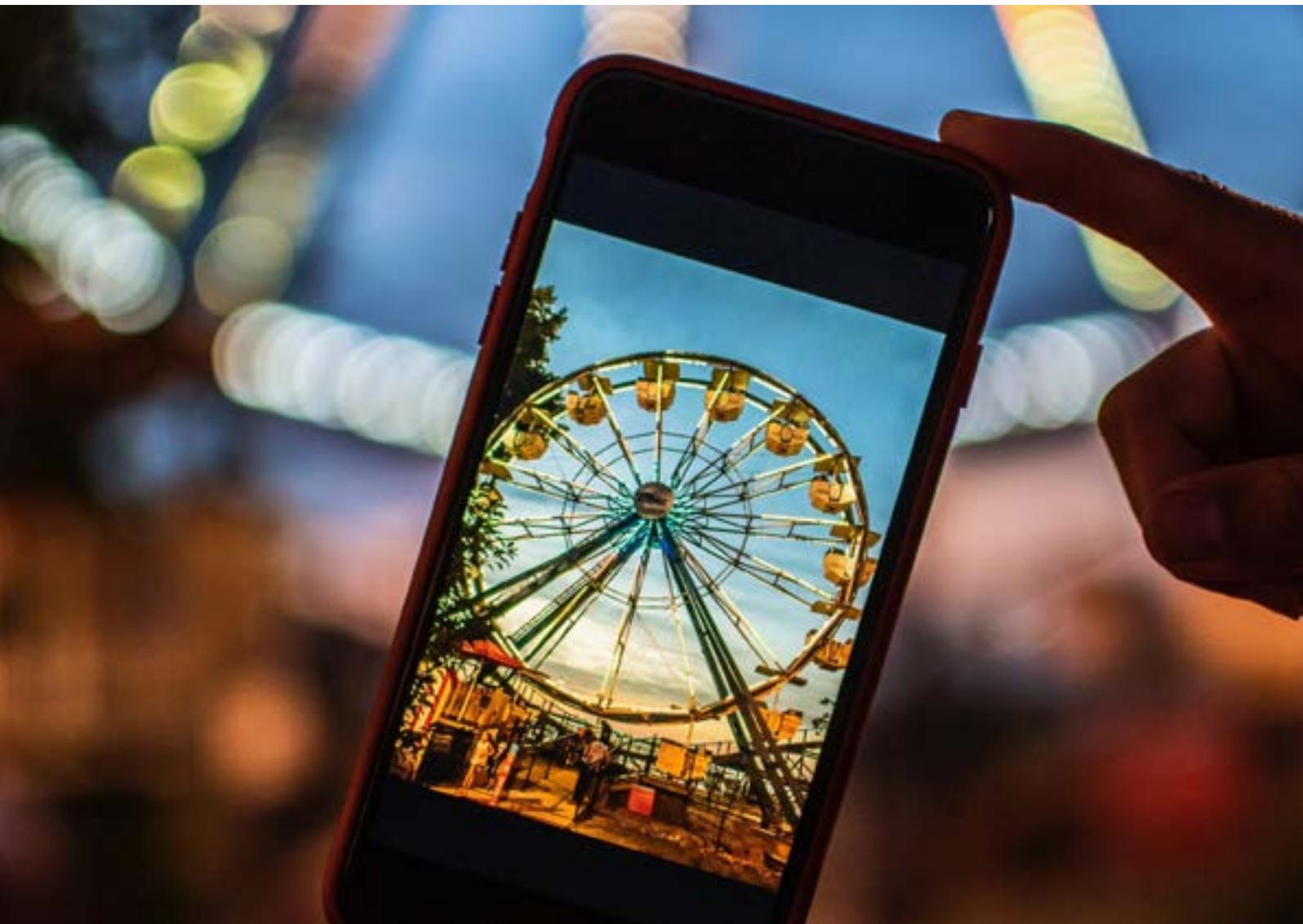ETOUR

PART OF MID SWEDEN UNIVERSITY

Tourism revisited

The influence of digitalisation on tourism concepts

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Tourism revisited. The influence of digitalisation on tourism concepts

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Abstract

Information and communication technology (ICT) is ubiquitous in tourism and this changes not only tourists' immediate behaviour, but also what tourism is. In this way, digitalisation is shifting perceptions of when tourism starts and ends, and how we can understand the term in principal ways. The aim of this working paper is to contribute to the debate about the consequences of today´s fast digitalisation on tourism concepts. It does so by producing arguments on the concepts of the (extra)ordinariness of tourism, travel information search, social media, tourist behaviour, tourist experiences, and the definition of tourism. In this way, the paper is based on observations from a wide range of perspectives. It also entails a short empirical study on digitalisation within regional destination organisations. In conclusion, the paper argues that we see a distinct conceptual shift away from parallel perceptions of everyday and tourism. Digitalisation is one major driver of this shift, as it is blurring the lines between dichotomies such as home and destination, everyday and holiday. The paper ends with comments on the importance of these insights for research, society, and industry, as well as for the transfer of knowledge between these areas.

Svensk sammanfattning

Digitalisering är på allas läppar, inte minst när det gäller turismutvecklingen. Digitaliseringen påverkar människors beteende på många olika sätt. Turismaktörer har lättare att nå ut och att analysera sina tjänster. Turistinformation har genom tiderna varit ganska svåråtkomlig: guideböcker kunde vara slutsålda turistbyråer kunde vara stängda. Dessa förskjutningar är intressanta i sig, men är samtidigt del av en större förändring. Den digitala tidsåldern påverkar turistens beteende på en strukturell nivå. På så sätt påverkar digitaliseringen våra grundläggande antaganden om vad turism är eller var och när en resa börjar och slutar.

Syftet med detta working paper är att bidra till den pågående diskussionen kring digitaliseringens påverkan på turism, en fråga som Etour sedan länge varit intresserad i. Fokus ligger på teoretiska utgångspunkter och antagningar. I texten ingår diskussioner kring e-turism, men intresset för en kritisk diskussion sträcker sig längre än så. På så sätt når texten ut till läsare som vill veta mer om långsiktiga förändringsprocesser, och till läsare som intresserar sig för konceptuella diskussioner kring turism. Diskussionen sker i sju perspektiv. De första sex infallsvinklarna är av mer teoretisk art, den sjunde presenterar ett empiriskt perspektiv på digitalisering inom regionala destinationsorganisationer.

Det första kapitlet undersöker huruvida turism fortfarande kan ses som en motsats till vardagen. Digitaliseringen suddar ut gränserna mellan vardag och turism genom att "det andra" blir mer tillgängligt och mer vardagligt. Kapitel två konstaterar att förändrade rutiner kring informationssökning även förändrar turismupplevelsen i sig. Turistbeteendet blir mer spontant. Informationssökning är mer kaotisk än vi hittills har förstått och turismämnet erbjuder inga bra modeller för att förstå turistens beteende i den digitala tidsåldern. Vi kan dock konstatera att digitaliseringen förskjuter själva värdet av informationssökning till mer hedonistiska värden. En av de viktigaste informationskällorna idag är sociala medier. Dessa diskuteras i kapitel tre.

Kapitel fyra diskuterar digitaliseringens påverkan på turistens planering. När möjligheter för spontanitet öppnas upp mer och mer förskjuts också synen på vad som kan definieras som attraktion. En annan konsekvens är att planering och spontanitet inte behöver vara varandras motsatser längre. Vi behöver nya teorier för att förstå denna utveckling. I kapitel fem diskuteras digitalisering i relation till turismupplevelser. Med hjälp av smarta telefoner förbättras inte bara chanserna att få en positiv upplevelse, utan förskjuts även definitionen av vad en turismupplevelse är. Vi behöver ställa nya frågor om platsens betydelse för turismupplevelsen, när upplevelsen i sig förskjuts.

Det sjätte kapitlet tar itu med själva definitionen av turism. Definitionen har förändrats genom tiderna, vilket återspeglar turismens betydelse och vår förståelse av den. Det återstår att se om motsatsen mellan turism och vardag kommer att kvarstå i de definitioner som vi använder oss av. Hur som helst kan vi konstatera att turism är en typ av mobilitet, bland andra. Det sjunde och sista kapitlet innehåller en empirisk studie kring digitalisering i regionala turistorganisationer. Medan digitaliseringens möjligheter och betydelse poängteras flitigt i dialogen mot andra turismaktörer, finns digitaliseringen knappast med som en attraktiv faktor i marknadsföringen gentemot turister.

Working papret vill bidra till diskussionen kring digitalisering och turism genom att med öppen blick beskriva och tolka vad som sker. Digitaliseringen påverkar turism på flera direkta sätt, exempelvis genom att turister använder sig av digitala informationskällor. Detta leder i förlängningen till att vi får ett förändrat turistbeteende på strukturell nivå, vilket gör att vi behöver diskutera turismens ramar och vår förståelse av själva fenomenet. Dikotomier som hemma – borta, turism – vardag håller på att lösas upp, mycket som en konsekvens av den pågående digitaliseringen. Detta påverkar turismforskningen, besöksnäringen och inte minst dialogen mellan dessa.

1 Introduction

Information and communication technology (ICT) is ubiquitous in tourism. Tourists have access to digital booking platforms, they influence and are simultaneously influenced by social media and user-generated content. Tourism actors are computing digital strategies for their destinations and recently, they have begun to scrutinize visitor statistics by means of artificial intelligence-based analytics. Developments take place on levels that differ widely in their qualities: changes entail tourist behaviour, decision making, knowledge systems and potentials for collaboration, to name a few. Developments also take place in various places within the tourism system once coined by Leiper (1979), and they include modifications at home, at the destination, and in the space in between. This situation implies time-related changes and together, it is argued that the entire tourism system is *on the move*, to speak in Urry's (2003) and Cresswell's (2006) terms.

The aim of this working paper is to contribute to the debate about the consequences of today's fast digitalisation on tourism concepts. The text is serving as an underpinning of what I hope will be an extended and open discussion on the state of tourism from a holistic and societal perspective. Hence, the paper answers to a call by the editorial team of Information Technology & Tourism for a transformative research agenda in e-Tourism (Gretzel, Fuchs, Baggio, Höpken, Law, Neidhardt, Pesonen, Zanker, & Xiang 2020). In this transformative approach, the editors aim to visualise underlying value systems and scientific paradigms, and hence to make them transformable. This working paper puts itself in line together with debate contributions by Hughes and Moscardo (2019), Gössling (2021), Cai and McKenna (2020), and Zarezadeh, Benckendorff and Gretzel (2019), to name a few. In order to facilitate such a dialogue, this text offers a number of observations on current developments, sparked by an immersion in tourism research. The point of departure for this text are seven observations, six conceptual and one empirical, from the intersection between tourism and digitalisation. The observations are chosen because they are strongly influencing tourism and tourist behaviour. The conceptual observations are: the ordinariness of travel, travel information search, the role of social media, smartphones and the tourist experience, intended tourist behaviour, and developing tourism definitions. The empirical observation is about the digitalisation in regional destination marketing organisations (DMOs).

"Why these?" the reader may ask, "I would think of other altering fields as well, such as tourists' refusal of digital devices during holidays, the phenomenon

of digital nomads, or the tendency not to plan one's holiday due to perceived values of flexibility." Such an objection is fruitful, and I agree that there are various perspectives that are overlooked here. The list of non-included viewpoints is long. But the emphasis on few perspectives is aspired, because I argue that they are enough to convince the reader of the following argument: Digitalisation not only influences distinct aspects of tourist behaviour, but permeates the tourism system as a whole, as its elements may need new descriptions and understandings. I argue that this permeation leads to a new and partly different appreciation of central aspects of tourism, even the term tourism itself. This is why one observation discusses the evolution of the tourism definition.

This working paper is of importance for readers who are interested in principal questions of tourism. There is a minor empirical study in this report, which focuses on digitalisation in DMOs. Here, I am asking two major questions: i) If digitalisation is as important as many tourist actors say; how do regional tourism organisations emphasise digitalisation towards their customers? ii) The second question is about the inward emphasis. How do DMOs emphasise digitalisation towards their affiliated tourism actors? Altogether, the empirical study looks at digitalisation in relation to tourists, and to tourist actors.

The major part of this report is of conceptual character though. Conceptual advances are important in all disciplines, not least in tourism, because tourism studies have hitherto emphasised empirical studies. Conceptualisation is a process, in which abstract thinking leads to the mental representation of an idea. MacInnis (2011) describes conceptual thinking as a process, in which you understand a phenomenon in an abstract way, and identify patterns and underlying properties. This report aims to be a debating conceptual contribution. It is a kind of position paper, and a commentary upon what tourism scholars have argued for. Among others, such a contribution tries to challenge, dispute, and to counter argue previous thoughts of mind. It also re-evaluates previous perceptions.

Although this working paper is about tourism and digitalisation, it goes beyond the focus of e-tourism. Rather, it uses digitalisation to ask the principal question of what tourism is and has been, and how digitalisation is currently changing not only tourist behaviour, but the fundamentals of tourism. All of this puts new questions on the tourism research map. What does such a rapid technological and societal development do to a tourism system? If ICT is reachable everywhere in this system, is tourism still the same? In which ways does digitalisation influence tourists' perceptions of time, place, and space? What does digitalisation do to people's connections not only to other places, but to the people who are there? Such are essential questions when we are to understand tourism in

the digital age. This working paper starts with a background chapter that serves as a compass that explains and justifies the point of departure on which the literature review is based. Then follow six conceptual and one empirical observations. In the last chapter, the paper tries to conclude the most important deductions from the discussions and to answer the question how digitalisation influencing tourism concepts.

2 Foundational considerations

When the world saw the beginnings of the Internet in the early 1990s, the tourism industry with its high information dependence soon became a major user. In these early days, technology was mainly used as a marketing tool. Travellers welcomed the easy access to overarching accessible information. Later on, the Internet enabled personalised connections between supply and demand, including a shift from products to services and experiences. Historically, all this took place during the first full swing of globalisation, including de-regulation and the empowerment of capital markets. When smartphones appeared in 2007, we could once again see a major development step. The Internet, and thereby the whole world, became ubiquitous (Dredge 2016, 2018; Fuchs & Höpken 2021; Zillinger 2020). Popular stories within management literature would put it the following way: Everything and everyone was reachable from any place in the world, with a few exceptions when lagging Wi-Fi is concerned. But even beyond this glorifying fairy tale, one can state that many tourists, in many places of the world, got access to information in swift ways.

The fast and global digitalisation is paralleled by a fast and global tourism growth; Xiang (2018, p. 147) speaks of an "*accelerating age of digitalization*". The many yearly reports on tourist arrivals and accommodation statistics ascertain this on multiple spatial levels. Both developments have gone hand in hand and they are to a large degree reciprocal. Bauman's liquid modernity offers a decent approach to understanding our mobile, global society, in which tourism plays the role as a "*metaphor for contemporary life in Western societies*" (Bauman interviewed by Franklin 2003, p. 206). The late MacCannell (2018) formulated similar thoughts, arguing that understanding the tourist means that you are understanding a major part of current society. The high levels of freedom and flexibility enrolled in everyday life are certainly able to fuel the rise of tourism to the degree that tourism itself becomes part of the everyday. This is easy to understand if you think of travels with a clear start and end, like for example visiting friends or going on weekend trips regularly. You can also think of tourism as everyday when considering people's double residences. This way of arguing is quite new, and it stands in stark contrast to more hierarchical and inflexible, traditional versions of society. If we allow ourselves to hold on for a minute, we may ask ourselves the following question: If tourism today is a self-evident part of our mobile everyday life, how useable are the definitions of tourism that were coined in an obsolete production-dominant ontology? Among other perspectives, such definitions state that tourism is something that takes part outside people's everyday life.

This working paper argues that globalisation and current tourism are inextricably intertwined. Departing from the observation that not only people, but also products, ideas, money, risks, and viruses are on the move, interrelationships across space are growing stronger. The fast movements of labour, services, and information is a norm that is sometimes questioned ideologically, but that can hardly be thought away empirically. While the Silk Road is often taken as a point of reference for early expressions of globalisation, the Industrial Revolution is identified as the most powerful event to have accelerated it (Timothy 2018, 2020). Parallel to the Industrial Revolution and its concurrent innovation lift in transport technology, the first early steps in mass tourism were made: first in England, and then spreading to the rest of the world (Urry & Larsen 2011). As time-spatial developments intensified, so did the development of tourism. Today, we see an intense web of dependencies across the globe. People move in order to study, work and live with their loved ones in new places, they travel to make business and to implement plans. Some move voluntarily, others because they are forced to move due to conflicts or dismal future prospects, for themselves and for their families. Through time, we have seen our spatial relationships continuously growing. ICT is contributing to this development by its enabling of instant information fluidity.

The above arguments have severe consequences for the links between human relations and space: if human relations are stretched across the globe, it takes tourism to actually retain them. Gössling, Cohen and Hibbert (2018) vividly describe how human proximity in our days of late modernity are dependent not on staying where you are, but on moving in between places. If mobility is a prerequisite for close relations, we need to recognise tourism as an important contributor for the social status of Gemeinschaft. ICT is a major enabler of such structures. ICT is raising the demand for more and more digital facilities, because relationships arise where they would have been impossible in the pre-digital age. Suddenly, tourism is not primarily about individuals' search for exoticism and their longing for the other, but about the sustainment of closeness, friendship, love, and the everyday. Tourism then cannot be defined as a nice annex to human life, but needs to be explained as an elementary necessity for individuals' well-being. If tourism is used to maintain human relations, we should follow Larsen's, Urry's and Axhausen's (2007, p. 246) call for the "*de-exoticising of tourism*".

Such arguments have consequences for human relations and for place, too. People's foci are shifting by means of digital devices. Think of a tourist with a smartphone in her hands! The tourist is checking the latest emails from work, while simultaneously enjoying the tourism supply at the destination. When physical and digital realities are intermingled, the situation may be described as phygital (Gretzel, Zarezadeh, Li & Xiang, 2019; Mieli, 2021). This description of

reality implies that humans can be allocated to more than one place by means of digital devices. In this way, tourist experiences are profoundly shaped by the presence of information technology. The same is true for people at home, who have access to tourist destinations by means of digital devices. Included in the concept of the phygital are the notions of immediacy, immersion, and interaction. In a general manner, one can state that digitalisation influences people's attention. In extension, this means that digitalisation transforms relationships between tourist, space and place into fluid connections, again connecting digitalisation to Bauman's (2000) arguments about modernity. The borders are weakened, and the individual spots within and outside the tourism system are becoming more and more liminal. We are slowly becoming aware that being in- or outside the tourism system is not merely a matter of place. Rather, it is a matter of virtual links, be it to other tourists, places, or tourism actors. The term phygital can arguably be connected to the time-related expression *fragmented time*, used by Klein (2004), which relates to the blurring of work and leisure. The term *fragmented time* is in turn linked to *digital elasticity* (Pearce 2011), which defines the possibility to build links between destination and home while travelling.

Digitalisation is currently a well-debated theme in tourism research. Along with above considerations, there is an abundance of research on tourism and digitalisation. The periodicals *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, and *Journal of Information Technology & Tourism* are two important contributors to the study of information technology and tourism. The *International Federation of Information Technology for Travel and Tourism* is, partly via its annual research conference ENTER, continually contributing to the disclosure and discussion of studies in this field. Research has been published on extensive perspectives such as usage trends, business intelligence, digital innovation processes, mobile services, information search behaviour, recommender systems, and social media, to name a few. There is plenty of research with regard to specific application areas and use purposes. Research has also done its best to keep track with the rapid development of technical progress and user behaviours, respectively. For example, research on social media related information sources was first published in 2007, only shortly after its introduction. For overviews on recent research and the current e-tourism curriculum, see Fuchs and Höpken (2021) as well as Fuchs and Sigala (2021). Such publications go in line with my observation in this working paper that conceptual views on digitalisation in tourism are underdeveloped.

What else can we say about such research published so far? Studies and arguments have been published by scientists from human geography, history, and sociology, to name a few. The majority of work comes from the field of business management. Typical research aims have been to detect choice of information channels in relation to time and space, access to analogue and digital information,

respectively, generational aspects of information channels, socio-demographic factors, previous knowledge and experience, trip characteristics, and gender aspects. These aspects have contributed to knowledge extension at large. The perspective of these aspects has habitually been instrumental and practical, aiming for data on how to adapt and develop from a managerial point of view. Conceptual researchers would distance themselves from such a paradigm. Rather, they are "*suspicious of management science as a pre-defined instrument of social control and oppression*" (Fuchs & Sigala 2021, no page numbers). Contrary to a structuralist approach, this text aims to assert the one-sidedness of such research with the, hopefully, thought-provoking questions that are asked throughout this text.

There is a delicate, yet interesting altercation about these themes in the current numbers of *Journal of Travel Research*. Cai and McKenna (2020) have recently initiated a fundamental discussion on the need to enhance the theoretical and methodological development of information technology and tourism (ITT). Their two main arguments are based in the notion that ITT would benefit from synchronising to a greater extent with neighbouring disciplines (especially the discipline of information systems), and that ITT for the most part references to its own research area. Just like Munar and Gyimóthy (2013), they call for plural research perspectives, wider contexts instead of single cases, and the ability to challenge the unspoken norms and implicit ethics (cf. Brodbeck 2019) that form research questions.

In their counterstatement, Xiang, Fesenmaier and Werthner (2020) portray current research as being a well-developed, multidisciplinary field. In their view, ITT research is well connected with social sciences. To date, there is one more contribution to this discussion. In this, Cai, McKenna, Wassler and Williams (2020) restate the lack of theoretical development and call for a critical turn in the ITT field, including the re-examination of paradigmatic borders. A maturing field, they state, needs to challenge its boundaries. Such a statement is actually paralleled by Sigala's (2018) discussion about the business bias in tourism and technology research. In this publication, Sigala states that only a limited part of today's research on tourism and ITC has followed the path of general tourism research, which has often been multi-disciplinary. She is hereby asking for anthropological, sociological, and other disciplinary approaches "*that can explain a different part of the variance than rational/economic theories*" (p. 151).

The sum of these critical contributions shows the different perceptions not only of what research in this field consists of, but also where it should aim at. Such debates are most welcome for the development in the field of tourism and digitalisation. This working paper aims to be a part of this development. In this, it also joins the argumentation of Munar and Gyimóthy (2013), and Munar and

Bødker (2014), asking for a discussion of digitalisation in tourism that is based on questions arising in social science. There are several authors who call for a paradigmatic jump in research, among them Zarezadeh, Benckendorff and Gretzel (2019), who argue for the development of models originated in the pre-digital age, in this case in tourist information search. In relation to such statements, my argument here is that digitalisation not only changes single behaviours related to bookings, information search, or marketing channels, to name a few. Instead, one can presume that tourist behaviour is fundamentally affected when ICT is everywhere. It has the power to transform relations to humans, digital devices, and spaces. In this, we may talk of a new sociotechnical system. Based on such systems, we need to take a new look at conceptions that have long influence our perceptions, like the tourism system, and the definition of tourism.

In their call for transformative research, Gretzel *et al.* (2020) accentuate that e-tourism research should beneficially challenge existing paradigms in order to critically evaluate their previous foundations. The aim of such a paradigmatic jump is a development based on reflectivity upon values: considering the values on which theories are based, and how such theories are matched with empirical data. As a guidance to future critical scholars, they present six pillars to build on. They call for research in e-tourism that is based on i) historicity: mindful of the past, while also valuing continuity; ii) reflexivity: building on an awareness of aspects affecting knowledge creation; iii) transparency: being explicit about one's values; iv) equity: being aware of varying possibilities to take part in research, and to have an impact therewith; v) plurality: an openness towards topics and approaches, and vi) creativity: a willingness to break boundaries. In the best of worlds, such factors can guide future scholars to ask more critical questions, and to touch upon new aspects in new ways or, to put it differently: allowing to think about the unthinkable.

The remainder of this text intends to ask these basic questions. It does so by offering a literature review on selected topics within tourism and digitalisation. It aims to inspire the development of thought from different perspectives, and to be one of many stepping stones towards an understanding of tourism that is adapted to a world in which people uphold everyday acquaintanceships across space, and overcome this space both by travels in Cartesian space, and by digital connections.

3 What's new about the extraordinariness of tourism?

The reciprocal developments of globalisation and digitalisation have had profound influence not only on the internationalisation of tourism, but also on the global tourism system (see Buhalis 2020 for a distinct, yet uncritical overview, and Gössling 2017). Places are transformed rapidly by the high level of digital access, which causes disruptive developments. These developments are not evenly spread though. They differ significantly both among places and among individual actors. Interaction is facilitated by the permeation of ICT. In tourism, this development has provided for the stimulation of social media, user generated as well as consumer-ready information, and product reviews, to name a few. For tourist destinations around the globe, this has meant an increasing enforcement to innovation and competitiveness. So far, this has led to more and more homogenous places around the world (Peters & Vellas 2020) and to a prominence of what is most profitable on the support side (Fuchs, Fossgard, Stensland & Chekalina 2021). On the demand side, it has led to an almost constant possibility to travel, and to stay in touch with home – wherever that is. Along with the development of ICT, tourism numbers have consistently grown, with only a few drawbacks like the crisis of 9/11, the financial crisis in 2008-2009, or the pandemic since 2020.

The rise of ICT brought with it the possibility not only for international corporations, but also for individuals to become part of global networks. Families, friends and colleagues are part of such networks (the *global family*) and often find themselves enabled and obliged to travel in order to maintain personal relations (Axhausen 2002). For the immobile part of society that stays home, this does not mean that access to global products or services is excluded. By means of telecommunication and ICT, you can scan appetisers from the whole world in your living room, when receiving signs and electronic images. Examples for this are TV-productions, debates, or concerts that are streamed to a digital device. This was the case even before the Internet age, although on a much lower level (Lash & Urry 1994; Urry & Larsen 2011). However already in those times, this lead to more travel. Having parts of your social contacts in places dispersed around the world however, also means that ICT is needed in order for individuals to stay in touch. Here, the cat bites its tail, as the use of ICT actually leads to the obligation for even more demand for ICT. This situation arises when there are close contacts around the world, where there have hardly been connections in the pre-digital age.

Society today is marked by a significant level of mobility. Historically, time-space compression has led to time-space distanciation as well (Giddens 1990), as

social networks are dispersed across space. Even before the digital age, this development took speed through faster and smoother transport communications, mail systems across the globe, and cheaper national and international phone calls. Later on, text messaging was both cheap and easy, and emails free of charge were sent in no time at all (Larsen 2008). Families including children, parents, and grandparents are increasingly on the move. They study in university towns around the world, commute on weekly bases, and move to warmer places of residence for parts of the year. This entails not only that the concept of home is being repositioned, but also that families and friends are spending more and more time apart from each other (Zillinger 2021a). Larsen, Urry and Axhausen (2006) vividly show how strong ties at-a-distance have become common by using the above mentioned techniques. And so, they conclude, *socializing at-a-distance* has become a substantial everyday practice.

Moving further the argument of socializing across space, research has seen a novel perception of travel and tourism – and what it means to be a tourist. Visiting friends and relatives is on its way to becoming a major part of mobility flows. This is no surprise, as mobility is feeding new mobility: migration and tourism fuel each other. As they constitute two phenomena on the same time-space continuum, it is impossible to draw plain margins between them (Williams & Hall 2002; Hall & Williams 2013). They transect on societal and individual levels, leading Salazar (2020) to ask, 'What would tourism be without migration?' and 'What would migration be without tourism?' A quantitative answer is that both tourism and migration would decrease considerably without their respective counterparts.

Alongside, Gössling, Cohen and Hibbert (2018) show how mobility is growing these days, as people enrich their lives together with those who live somewhere else. Urry (2003) once argued that co-presence is crucial for maintaining close, social relations, leading to considerable mobility between places. In this argument, he refers back to Molotoch and Boden's (1993) *compulsion to proximity*. Much of mobility is actually taking place because society is increasingly characterized by perceived loneliness and isolation, Gössling *et al.* (2018) say. They build their argument on the postulation that social belongings and affiliations are essential endeavours to humans: individuals' senses of self and self-esteem derive from social interaction (cf. Vaughan & Hogg 2002). In order to socially belong to an individual or to a group, people will make vast efforts in order to reach this togetherness – including travel. Contacts via digital devices will maintain social interactions, and simultaneously increase the longing for corporeal meetings.

Consequently: Socialising has historically been equated to spatial nearness. But in the digital age, closeness and communion can no longer be paralleled with spatial proximity. While socialising has for long times been linked to everyday

practices, Larsen (2008) shows how socializing takes place over distances, too. And in order to take part in what Simmel (1949) called *sociability*, people will increasingly need to overcome spatial distances. This is actually not a new idea. The intriguing thing however is that digitalisation and globalisation are driving the development forward at such speed. Visiting and hosting friends and relatives is part of this sociability, and Larsen (2008) shows how current everyday socializing is often mediated and distanced. These arguments commemorate Hägerstrand's (1970) notions of coupling constraints and space-time prisms. Hägerstrand's model departs from the basic idea that a person can only be physically in one place at one time. It gives at hand that people can travel a certain distance within a time unit; the faster the machines, the longer the trip. But what about digitalisation in Hägerstrand's model? The notion of overcoming distance becomes a non-issue when emails and other text messages are concerned. The same goes for digital meetings, in which you see and talk (but cannot touch) with other people around the globe within no time at all.

Digitalisation does not decrease distance decay, but actually deletes it. This notion has important implications for sociability, to speak in Simmel's term, and for socializing-at-a-distance, to follow Larsen's terminology. Not least, it has significant consequences for the concept of tourism. As digitalisation dissolves such time-spatial requirements, because people can meet via screens instead of in physical places, we need a new understanding of tourism in relation to time and space. It remains to be seen however, whether meetings and social contacts will be replaced to an extent that is forecasted. After all, physical meetings bring with them values that cannot be replaced by digital gatherings. While physical business meetings focusing on the exchange of information can be replaced quite easily, it seems impossible by definition to replace co-created local authentic tourism experiences. The question would also be how far the definition of tourism stretches towards immobility. If people stay home and take part in a digital guided tour of a tourist destination for example, is this still tourism by definition?

Research literature delivers several arguments in this matter and shows the close connectedness between digitalisation and mobility. In their 2018 paper, Gössling *et al.* argue that "*one's ability to be mobile may now has become the single most important determinant of social connectedness*" (p. 1594). It is *proximity through movement* that is at stake here, and movement can be overcome by travel or by digital devices. Tourism here is a mediator of connectivity (cf. Bauman 1998, 2000; Gössling *et al.* 2018). Officially, some 27% of tourism refers to VFR travels (UNWTO 2015), but such numbers are probably underscored. In addition, they rise by trend. A reason for the importance of digitalisation here is that digital habits by themselves foster travel – as do, by the way, the relatively new structures of global families. The Internet also visualises life at home and on the move to fellow

people in other places. When the Internet allows for virtual co-presence, this leads to new forms of locations of sociality; explicitly, online locations. Ultimately, such developments create new practices of network capital (Gössling & Stavrinidi 2016).

Following up on such arguments, network capital is strongly connected to individuals' access to digital devices that maintain social connections at-a-distance. Therefore, tourism is not only a means to access the exotic other, as has been stated in earlier tourism research (e.g. MacCannell 1979; Urry 1990 and others). Such a view departs from an ontology of antitheses, two of them being home – away and tourism – everyday. The view on tourism that aims at maintaining social relations would therefore see the rise of even more tourism. What we observe is that an increasing number of humans are travelling for motives related to both migration (often push factors), and work/human relationships (often pull factors). Thereby, they induce further physical and online traffic, back to their non-travelling relatives and friends (still) at home. As such, travelling and online communication go hand in hand.

Note that the conception of tourism as a way to maintain social relations is not new: connectivity has always been a strong motivation for tourists. In classical tourism literature, Dann (1977), Cohen (1979) and others have shown how friends and families are using their journeys in order to build good relationships with each other. The difference between the argument in those days, and 2021, is that today, we more and more feel the need to travel TO the people we love – not WITH them to another place. Related to this is the individualism thesis. More and more holidays turn out to be super-complex as peers tend to travel more and more individually. Tourists may travel to the destination on dates and itineraries chosen by themselves, and/or accompanied by yet other individuals, like friends bringing their own peers. One scientific challenge to this acknowledgement is whether the expected flexibility may be compensated by individual, social, and ecological costs. On a sidestep, it may be mentioned here that reducing travel due to sustainability reasons is demanding, when the maintenance of social relations is at stake. But that wicked problem is for someone else to concern.

The above text shows that there are both obvious and subtle commonalities between digitalisation, globalisation, mobility, tourism, and the everyday. It also shows the difficulties in differentiating between tourist activities and other activities related to mobility, or to the mundane (cf. also other publications, like e.g. Hannam, Butler, & Paris 2014). The use of digital devices contributes to bridging a spatial gap, but it also enables new constellations of socialities, as has been shown above. The forthcoming text aims at showing how digitalisation is weakening such long-existing dichotomies. When the above paragraphs mentioned the antitheses home – away, and tourism – everyday, the argument was

based on literature published in the pre-digital age (in the cases above, 1979 and 1990). Parts of the current literature are discussing the question how harsh the borders are between the opposites. By doing so, they actually blend into the notion of liminality. The argument made here is that tourism can be so ordinary, and the everyday can be so extraordinary, that the opposition of these two concepts has played out its role.

As shown above, Jonas Larsen is critically dealing with the concept of tourism in relation to concepts that have long been seen as its opposite. In his 2019 publication in the anthology *Tourism and Everyday Life in the Contemporary City*, he sets off to unsettle, and to reverse, the claim that tourism is fuelled by difference. He shows that tourism practices are driven by socialities to a large degree, and that tourism itself has tangible bearings on the everyday life of hosting cultures. The editors of the mentioned anthology come up with a number of examples that support Larsen's claim. For instance, they argue that everyday life in the destination can itself become a tourist attraction (Stors, Stoltenberg, Sommer & Frisch 2019). Depending on visitors' living conditions, the tourist masses in Venice or Barcelona may even be confused with locals. All or this has, by the way, become problematic in cases of overtourism, as shown by Nilsson (2020). Secondly, inhabitants may themselves become tourists in their own city, when they visit attractions or start gazing at places due to an increased interest– an argument sustained by Diaz-Soria (2017). Technology supports the amalgamation of extremes, as digitalisation offers ubiquitous access to information, which fundamentally influences the experience of space (Guttentag 2015). In addition, online platforms have the ability to connect locals and visitors. Based on such arguments, the editors presume the inappropriateness of isolation between urban life lived by tourists, and by inhabitants.

Larsen (2008, 2019) and Stors *et al.* (2019) are not alone in stating that the use of oppositional categories oversimplify the world as we know it. Authors like Baerenholdt, Haldrup, and Urry (2004), and Uriely (2005), argue along the same line. Interestingly, Urry – partly together with Larsen – changed his mind about the dichotomy of tourism and the everyday. In the 1990 edition of *The Tourist Gaze*, Urry postulated the distinction between home – away, and ordinary – everyday, which caused tourists to gaze at selected sights. Four years later, he proclaimed the end of tourism, together with Lash (Lash & Urry 1994), where the tourist gaze was no longer conceived as something apart from everyday life. On the contrary, the authors state that people are tourists most of the time. In reaction to this, Gale (2009) and Stors *et al.* (2019) show that digitalisation and globalisation further accelerate the touristification of everyday life. By and large, this all means that we ought to de-exoticise tourism theory and stop seeing it as something that everyday life is not.

What does this chapter show? It shows that digitalisation is speeding up a development that has already begun. One important difference between post- and pre-digitalisation is that mobile devices enable socializing-at-a-distance anywhere at any time. This implies that close relationships can be preserved on the move, as tourists are travelling. My proposition is that if we are always potentially linked to home, and our homes are always linked to far away placed and people, the tourist gaze becomes an impossibility, because that concept is based on dichotomies. This is yet another example for a tourism term that is affected by digitalisation. Another proposition is that digitalisation reduces dichotomies and instead makes them to degrees of differences. We need to consider that definitions are highly temporal (Fuchs 2021). Thus if dichotomies emerge from the perspective of belief systems that are again based on definitions, we can state that dichotomies in themselves are highly fragile and questionable. What, then, was the intention of the term tourist gaze? The term was coined by MacCannell (1979) within a frame of critique on post-colonialism. It was devised in a time when travelling meant going to places that were not all yet reached by globalisation, and that were often very different to the homes of the travelling people. In such a time period, I would say that the dichotomy makes sense, because it helps us understand something about ourselves. But today's travel is less and less performed with the intention to visit the opposite or the exotic, as was shown above. In this way, dichotomy has played out its role.

4 What's new about information search in tourism?

Travel information search constitutes one of the major topics in tourism research. This is explained by the intangible and complex nature of tourism services and products, which often evoke emotional responses (Xiang & Fesenmaier 2020). In its basics, information search is about the means of checking and referring to different kinds of sources and channels before, during and after decision-making (Grønflaten 2009). While the focus on different information channels has shifted, the main research foci are still about search behaviour and information influence. Historically, it has been argued that the nature of information search differs between the various parts of the tourism system (Zarezadeh, Benckendorff, & Gretzel 2019). In other words, information search at home has been somewhat compared to information search at the destination. Information search after the journey, which means home again, has come to researchers' interest rather lately. It has also been argued that the aim of tourist information search is the reduction of risk and uncertainty (e.g. Zillinger 2007), as well as the increase of experience quality during travel (Fodness & Murray 1998). Tourists would not want to miss eudemonic experiences: if one could reach a complete hedonic experience, why should one settle for less?

What about the practice of digital information search: how do tourists actually search for travel information? In an empirical study on German tourists in Sweden, Zillinger, Eskilsson, Månsson, & Nilsson (2018) found that tourists were unclear about the ways they digitally searched for information about their destination. In a subsequent experiment with the same visitor group, the authors found that tourists tend to search for general information about the destination first, followed by specific information like accommodation and transport. Booking the accommodation was considered the most important part of travel preparations. Tourist information categories are hierarchically structured (Kang, Kim and Park 2020). Information search decisions can be classified into primary (destination and accommodation, length of stay, travel party,…), secondary (attractions, activities), and peripheral (shopping, food options, rest stops) evaluations (Jeng and Fesenmaier 2002; Kang, Jodice, & Norman 2020). Kang, Kim and Park (2020) noted that the category "what to see/enjoy" was the most important piece of travel information. It was important for German tourists as well, although late in the process, often after arrival; spontaneity value is considered important. As a rule, information overload was omitted.

On a side note, what do we actually mean by the word joy in relation to travels (taken from the category "what to see/enjoy")? Is it the prospect of being with your

loved ones? Of getting to know new people? Of discovering something new: a place, a sight, a person, a feeling? Is it the chance of self-recognition, which, in Fuchs' (2021) terms means the "*transcendence of ego patterns, and the recognition of emptiness of all phenomena*" (cf. Sheldon 2020, too)? Fuchs suggests the inclusion of happiness studies, positive psychology, and eudemonic philosophy to gain new and profound insights into travel information search behaviour.

Scholars have a difficult time covering empirical aspects and theoretical advancements when it comes to travel information search and digitalisation. Actually, this whole working paper is on the need for more theoretical contributions in the field of digital tourism. In order to make a statement on theoretical development in the field, let us look back at one of the most influential models on tourist information search: the information search strategy model by Fodness and Murray (1998, 1999). The model explains differences in search strategies by situational influences, product characteristics, and individual differences between tourists, among others. It is still widely referred to in current research (cf. Kang, Kim & Park 2020, Zarezadeh *et al.* 2019, Zillinger, 2021b). To date, it has been cited some 800 times. However, the model is based on empirical data from the US in the 1990s. This means that the model was designed in a time without the Internet, and without smartphones that offer ubiquitous access to information. Needless to say that this raises major questions on the adaptility of the model today. Tourism research is in need of new models that help us understand travel search behaviour in the digital age.

Consequently, research on tourist information search behaviour has been accused of lacking theoretical progress. This argument is closely connected to the transition from analogue to digital information channels (Zarezadeh *et al.* 2019). In 2020, Gretzel, Zarezadeh, Li and Xiang published an overview on travel information search research. Based on a document study of papers on the keyword "information search" in 30 tourism journals, they show temporal patterns of publication. Research on offline channels has been published for a long time, with a peak around 2007. Online information sources appeared on the publication arena in 1999 and have since consistently surpassed the amount of offline publications. Within research on tourist information search, social media constitutes the biggest share. This explains and justifies why social media is taken up as one perspective within digitalisation in this paper. Again, 2007 marks an important year in publication processes, when the first article on social media use was published. With rising publication numbers, social media now constitutes the most published field.

While the above reviews present a thematic overview on research in the field, Law, Chan and Wang (2018) also include methodological approaches in their

literature review. Their study is not only on travel information search, but more commonly on mobile technology use. From their literature study, they conclude that "(m)obile technology has become a necessity for tourists" (p. 626). In contrast to earlier publications stating that the use of mobile technology would soon reach market saturation (e.g. Dickinson, Hibbert & Filimonau 2016), Law *et al.* (2018) forecast that mobile technology use will continue to grow. They see a so called mobile superstorm that brings along a dramatically changed tourist behaviour. The authors state that most studies are based on quantitative methods. At the same time, they ask for more innovative methods in future research. The most employed theories are technology acceptance model, the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology model, innovation diffusion theory, and theory of planned behaviour. When it comes to publication channels, the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, and *Tourism Management* are important journals in the field. Research topics include motivators/inhibitors of tourists to use mobile technologies; impacts of mobile technologies on tourist behaviour, and perceptions of their use.

Note that classifications of information channels historically depart from a view on information as either offline or online. This dichotomous classification is less and less appropriate. In early digital times, the boundaries between digital and analogue were still clear-cut. Think of guidebooks for example, one of the most important tourist information channel before the breakthrough of the Internet. These are books made of paper and book covers, they can be bought in book stores, carried around during journeys, and marked with their readers' individual comments along the printed text. Then again smartphone applications seem to be clearly digital: they are accessible via digital devices whenever there is Wi-Fi available. But modern technique has blurred the lines, and talking of guidebooks does not necessarily mean that tourists travel with a book in their hand. Instead, more and more publishers offer guidebook contents via homepages or applications that can be downloaded to any technical device, thus accessible at any place and at any time. Therefore, a logical question would be, what is a guidebook, or a brochure? Even a friend's comment may have turned digital, as it can be accessed via travel portals like Trip Advisor and the like. While we may still differentiate between word of mouth and the electronic ditto, e-wom, in future we may not have to use the prefix "e" anymore, because everything is in some way electronic. The digital is on its way of becoming the new default situation.

Such a merge between offline and online channels is paralleled to the blurring of physical and virtual space, which is enabled by smart technology. Neuburger, Beck and Egger (2018) describe how interaction with space is altered by phygital developments. Phygital experiences can enrich physical stays in one place by virtual information. Technologies like virtual and augmented reality can

amalgamate tourists' perception of physical and virtual places and thereby open up for the question of where tourism actually takes place. Mieli (forthcoming a) argues that tourists' perceptions of time and space are reformed, as people may perceive to be located in more than one place at a time. This is viable due to the both physical and virtual access to technical devices, which opens up for a person being physically in one place, while digitally in another. One example for this is the physical presence in a tourist destination while electronically reading one's local newspaper from home. Another example is the digital search for local tourist information from home. So in relation to this, we can ask ourselves how local events still are, when we think of the globalised world we live in.

The conception of being in, and having access to, more than one place is an interesting point of departure for future research, not only in tourism studies. Models shape both our emotions and our agency. They determine what is thinkable, and which words can be used to describe what we see (cf Blom 2020). Many thinking models have a geographical connection, and if one sets aside the necessity of being physically located in one place, it enables for us to use new ways of reasoning. Hitherto, much of our time-spatial thinking has been influenced by Hägerstrand's time geography, saying that every individual is in one place at one time. With the ubiquitous accessibility of digital devices, this thinking model may have to be evolved.

What does all this mean? I argue that digitalisation not only influences the mere process of tourist information search. Rather, I propose that a changing search behaviour has implications on all parts of the tourism system, and the general tourist behaviour therein. Here follow some considerations about the wider influence of digitalisation on information search. The argumentation goes from the specific to the holistic. As a point of entrance for this issue, Zillinger (2021b) points at principal changes in information search in the *Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing*. Such changes are, among others, communication as an interactive process instead of as a one-way communication; the acceptance of dissonance between planned and actual travel behaviour; the perception of information search as an experience in itself; and the search for digital information as a first step in information search. Changes related to these matters are presented below.

Historically, research has stated that tourists start their planning process by using their own internal memory. An example for internal information search is one's personal experiences; if you have been to a place before, this will influence your choices the next time you go (Zillinger 2007; Jacobsen & Munar 2012). Research has previously shown that individuals turn to external information channels thereafter, like word-of-mouth, books, or the Internet. So theory has

claimed that individuals follow a chronological sequence, from internal to external. But recent studies show that digitalisation has the potential to change such search patterns (Xiang & Fesenmaier 2020, Xiang & Fesenmaier 2021; Zillinger 2021b). Individuals increasingly turn to digital channels as a first step of information search, instead of turning to physically close friends' advice, or paying much attention to past experience.

On a sidestep, it is an interesting question how and in which ways social media influence what we actually mean by a "close friend". Social media very much invites us to utilize other users called friends: for personal goals, or for different kinds of maximisation criteria. In the long run, social media can make information search more group-based and less individual. This assumption implies that people would quickly turn to what others have said, written, and posted. These "others" belong to digital peers, with the advantage that they are easily accessible via social media. The high accessibility lowers the barrier of getting this done, and simultaneously lessens the need to rely on oneself, and one's own experiences. This is important as the own self is partly generated through the other, which means that there is an interdependence between people. In a way, everybody is just because of others and vice versa. This is an important double nature and of importance when we here think about the interrelationship between information search, social media, and friendship.

Another changing perspective is about the perceived reasons for information search. The reason has long believed to be the reduction of risk and uncertainty. This approach builds on the assumption, that tourist information search is done to enable secure travel decisions, and to solve problems. The more you know the less dangerous travel is. Information search was considered a functional behaviour. The number of published research articles in this area is huge (cf. e.g. Amaro and Duarte 2013). Importantly, risk has been perceived from the tourist's perspective, and with a view on herself. Note that research has hardly considered tourists' views on others' risks, the risk for employees working in immoral tourist organisations, for example. Recent empirical studies come up with a slightly different view when it comes to the values of information search. Tourists benefit from efficiency, excellence, play, aesthetics, status, and esteem value as they are searching for information, in this case guidebooks (Mieli and Zillinger 2020). Tourists have also been shown to enjoy information search. It brings pleasure and fun, apart from pure information (Choe, Vogt, and Fesenmaier 2017). This is true even for those who do not intend to travel anywhere, but who consume information for their own pleasure. Concluding, travel information search is closely related to hedonic behaviour.

A related perspective deals with information search in relation to trip phase. While early research only focused on activities before travel, studies published from 2005 onwards show rising numbers for activities during and after travel. Gretzel *et al.* (2019) show that the number of studies on information search post travel bypasses the studies focusing during travel since 2015. This development is interesting because it demonstrates a shifting perception of what travel information search is and what values it brings. In its existence, the rising number of studies post-travel shows that information search can be understood as something else than pure instrumental activities. It also shows that the lines between where and when travel starts and ends are continuously blurred. It is time we alter our research from a view on information search as establishing a plan for the time away, which is then carried out. This existential shift is important because it brings with it a view on tourism as more spontaneous, less linear, and closer to a perception of tourism as an opportunity for serendipity, as described in Mieli and Zillinger (2020), and Mieli (forthcoming b). Thoughts about this concept are presented along with the theme of tourist behaviour (see below).

This chapter shows that travel information search is changing, and that this development carries along fundamental changes for the tourist experience, the tourism system, and hence the tourism industry. One important conclusion is that we should stop categorising many of the knowledge bits that we have. For example, offline and online information are about to merge in many ways (think phygital), and digital social media resembles the analogue word of mouth. Another conclusion is that information search is cyclic, rather than linear. The erroneous categorisation of information channels may limit our theoretical understanding, and hence theoretical innovation in the field. Although major decisions are often made before travel (especially transport and accommodation), there is no clear sequence of information search. Rather, one research stream is discovering tourists' unplanned behaviour as increasingly relevant. New research highlights that tourist behaviour is becoming more spontaneous just like other parts of human behaviour; think for example of election behaviour studied in political science, or when and how students decide what and where to study. At the same time, tourists can access a multitude of information flows anywhere, at home and during travel. Sometimes, this is a conscious action, and sometimes it is not. In this way, we need to acknowledge that travel information attainment can be both active and passive.

We should consider travel information search as a process less rigid, more open, and even fragmented. This entails that the process of travel information search is messier than hitherto believed. Future research should contribute to untangling this messiness, and dare to do it without the support of outdated information search models from the late 1990s. I am encouraging more discussions, quarrels,

and disagreements, like the one commenced in *Journal of Travel Research* on the theoretical and methodological development of information technology and tourism. We need research that proposes new models on travel information search behaviour, rooted in the digital age and on a digital sociotechnical system. Such a model not only includes a phygital reality, but also accepts various values that promote information search, like hedonic and sign values. Travel information search is more play, less seriousness, and particularly: less ordered than hitherto believed. "Who believed this?" you may ask. It has been a great number of researchers who believed so much in the mantra of behavioural economists. But as it turns out, humans are not following the model of the homo economicus, which emphasises the trading-off quantities and prices in order to maximise any kind of utility. Tourist behaviour is just one example for the falsification of this theory. New models on travel information search should go along with more methods to learn about tourists' information search. I propose both an increased use of experiments and the systematic use of digital footprints from people's online information search in order to gain such knowledge.

5 What's new about travel information search by the use of social media?

One can say a lot about human behaviour and related values by looking at preferred modes of information search. The most popular information channel is currently spelled social media Leung, Sun, and Bai (2018, p. 517) claim social media to have "*jumped on the superhighway*" since the advent of internet technologies. Figures are almost useless here, as the number of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram users is steadily growing. More or less all people are involved in social media. There are few non-users due to spatial or technical inabilities to use it. Some however refuse social media due to personal and/or ideological reasons. This is, by the way, an interesting perspective for future research, as we actually do not know too much about the reasons for non-use. We do know that the effortless ways of publishing statements, pictures, and videos seem appealing to most users. The visual emphasis of published objects attracts us due to a stated occulacentrism, which describes the supremacy of the visual in contemporary Western life (cf. Rose 2004). This is actually nothing new. Images have been used in propaganda since time immemorial, and we should not be surprised when images are used to boost consumerism in demand-induced growth economies.

Social media is of special importance in tourism and hospitality because of its combination of information intensity and service convergence. They play a major role in information search and the corresponding decision-making. With their review sites, wikis, forums, and community sites, they offer varied ways for people to be socially connected, across space. Like with other internet-connected media, social networks do not decrease spatial restrictions – like high speed trains or new airplane technology that fly faster. They remove them. In extension, they immediately affect people's lives. Zheng and Gerritsen (2014) state that social media do not simply represent a new way of communication, but that they embody an entire online environment that is built on contributions and interactions of each individual in the community. This is why social media do not just mean another way of information search, but a new way of human action, that finds its way into tourist behaviour.

We have seen that social media, in company with other ICTs, have initiated a new era not only for tourism, but for the whole global economy. While these opportunities have fundamentally changed prerequisites and opportunities for information search, this does not mean that social media have outdated other information channels (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisanen 2015, Jacobsen 2018). Rather, tourists are hybrid information seekers (Zillinger 2020). In relation to other channels, social media are powerful guides, in that the users themselves make up

information (or rather, to use the sign system of written language to tell stories of their tourist experiences). This entails a power shift towards tourists, as to what information they disseminate, and how they do it. In other words, user generated content (UGC) is redistributing power in the tourism system. The use of social media transforms tourists into co-producers and co-consumers of experiences. Information that is received from fellow travellers is deemed as sincere, believable, and trustworthy. UGC in tourism is used for a variety of reasons, among them evaluation of destinations and services, social acceptance, communal feelings and involvement, and enjoyment. It is important whether the source is located in- or outside the own network. Coming from outside, source credibility becomes more important, which in turn includes trustworthiness and expertise (Sotiriadis 2016; Ukpabi & Karjaluoto 2018).

Choi, Lehto, and Morrison published the first research article on social media in 2007. It was an empirical study on different web information channels in Macau. Blogs were one of the chosen channels, and the authors still wrote the neologism *blog* in quotation marks. In 2010, Xiang and Gretzel published their seminal paper on the *Role of Social Media in Online Travel Information Search*, that has inspired many thinkers in the field of travel information search, and that to date has been cited no less than 1300 times. In these early days, the study forecasted an increasing importance of social media in the field of online tourism. The authors noted the fact that social media is accessible anytime and anywhere, which provides a "*jump board*" (p. 186) for online travelers. One of the aims in this publication is to support the supply side, by pointing at the importance of technological dynamics so as to promote businesses and destinations. The authors go on arguing for the need of search engine optimisations and the like, and to actually embrace social media in the long-term planning.

The number of social media related publications has been steadily growing since 2007. Most publications consist of empirical studies, conceptual publications in the field are rather rare. This is a problem, as empirical case studies tend to be stringed together without advanced theoretical analysis that help us understand the essence of social media. In geographical terms, they predominantly derive from North America (35%), Asia (27%), and Europe (21%). The targeted industries are hotel (44%), travel (36%), and restaurants (12%). They study UGCs (44%), general impacts (30%), and give managerial implications (17%) (cf. Leung *et al.* 2018; Gretzel, Zarezadeh, & Xiang 2019). The common statement is that social media has changed the practice of travel information search and marketing practice. While social media has been repeatedly assigned to act as a need generator (pushing the desires for travelling to new places), another role is that of the final approver of decisions (Liu, Mehraliyev & Schuckert 2019).

Based on its ad-hoc accessibility and actuality, social media has the capacity to either strengthen or to change people's previous decisions right before its performance. This means that the power of social media is strong in times when tourists are at the destination. Such a confirmative behaviour is per se nothing new; human beings are looking for confirmations to make sure that they have made the right decision. An analogue counterpart of a travel information channel playing this role is the tourist information centre, as has been stated in Zillinger *et al.* (2018). Tourists would go here to check whether the information they have found online is correct. But tourist information centres play a minor role in many places today, simply because they are decreasingly accessible. Yet the accessibility of social media is growing, not least due to growing connection speeds. Social media is also developing in technical ways, as for example its location-based services that identify nearby attractions.

Through the possibility to connect individuals, social media influence the boundaries of tourism. Due to the ability of every single user to post their own interpretations, there is a growing influence of media platforms on the construction and perception of places. Jansson (2018) has studied the influence of social media on the desire of middle class tourists to distinguish themselves from mass tourists. The result of this study indicates that spreadable media, like social media, foster a heightened cultural reflexivity. Social media may provide extensive resources for tailored, individual communication, but they also impede a retention of cultural distinctions (cf. Bourdieu 1982). Social media contribute to the spreadability (Jenkins, Ford, & Green 2013) of sights, which means that new commercial logics remain persistent. This leads to the social standardisation of what has been called the popularity principle (van Dijck & Poell 2013). In the long run, this may lead to the (re)coding of tourism places and practices. In this way, social media contribute to the blurring of boundaries between tourism and other areas of social life. Social media are intensifying a development that was initiated by other types of media, like television and video, before. Together, they contribute to the growing circulation of tourism related media in- and outside the tourism system. These processes have early on been acknowledged by Urry (1990), among others.

So if we take a step back and try to look at the current situation, what do we see? An increasing tourist group that wants to confine itself from others; a greater individualisation in society; an increasing group of travellers who may want to consume responsibly and who look for information on how to do it; a fast development of social media and other online information channels. But no matter how individual social media may be, they tend to follow rather traditional circuits of representation, where certain places, attractions, and experiences qualify as being sharable, while others are not. Users perceive certain places as more

appealing and more accessible than others (Munar & Jacobsen 2014). This leads to the replication of dominant tourism discourses. Jansson (2018) points to an important boundary work of social media between the standardised and the extraordinary: the increasing popularity of social media enables the circulation of alternative perceptions of place. Such alternative readings could be the empowering of the local, the decrease of dependencies, or even less consumerism. Then again, the more intense this revelation of alternative perceptions becomes, the less unique such stories turn out to be, simply because more and more people all over the world would tell these same alternative stories. In the end, these stories are not alternative anymore, but yet another homogeneous narrative, supported by social media.

6 What's new about tourists' propensity to stick to their intended behaviour?

Through all times, tourism researchers have tried to understand what tourists do, and why. Tourist behaviour is one of the major publication themes in tourism research: It deals with questions such as decision making, information search behaviour, transport behaviour, changed behaviour during travel, and many more. One of the major contributors to the field of tourist behaviour was Philip L. Pearce (e.g. 2019). In the latest edition of his book on the topic, he discusses questions such as choosing destinations, getting around, consuming food and beverage, experiences and interactions. Research has usually departed from the theory of planned behaviour (e.g. Sheeran 2011), assuming that plans will be performed. However, there are more and more hints in empirical studies that many tourists neither perform nor want a strict plan, which they make at home and then strictly follow. One object seems to disturb planned behaviour more than others during the time spent at the destination. This is the smart, mobile and omnipotent telephone.

Smartphones are one of many devices influencing travel behaviour, and probably the most influential one. A general view on smartphones as one sort of travel information channel shows their strong influence on what people do during the trip. The influence is especially strong in spontaneous plans. Smartphones have more power to change planned behaviour than many other factors do. In this way, smartphones contribute to a new type of planned tourist behaviour. This statement challenges a longbelieved truth. This truth – aka theory of planned behaviour – states that planned behaviour conforms to implemented behaviour. This has long been an accepted grand theory, which has influenced not only tourism research, but research on human behaviour in general. These new trends open up the door for phenomena such as information, marketing messages, consumer fashion and trends to influence the traveller. There is a huge impact of influencing/persuasive/manipulative information that tourists are exposed to.

Studies on tourist behaviour are calling upon numerous social psychological models. Among them are the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975) and the extension thereof, planned behaviour (Ajzen 1985). Such theories propose intention as the most important predictor of human behaviour (see e.g. Sheeran 2011). Epistemologically, this has resulted in loads of studies on intended behaviour, for example the intention to return to the tourist destination; intention to purchase certain products or services; or the intention to use certain means of transport. Dolnicar (2018, and Dolnicar, Knezevic Cvelbar, & Grün 2017) is one of the authors that strongly argue against the use of these theories. Her publications

offer good indications that there is low concordance between what humans plan and what they actually do. This insight has important implications for future research on tourist behaviour. They can also be seen along with the perspective that planning is a human, ethical virtue.

In tourism literature, tourist behaviour has been closely related to tourists' search for information. The focus is and has been on the ways that travel information influences tourists' decisions. Wozniak, Schaffner, Stanoevska-Slabeva and Lenz-Kesekamp (2018) summarise research results from the past years. They state that these days, travellers do not need to plan their entire journeys in advance, as they can easily search for information during the whole trip. This enables more spontaneous behaviour on tour. Zillinger *et al.* (2018) find that all information sources have the propensity to change plans. In their study, analogue channels are somewhat more powerful than are digital ones. This empirical result is an anomaly in the research landscape, though. Most other publications point to the power of digital channels due to their high accessibility and their topicality, which allow for timely adjustments on the spot. Wang, Xiang, and Fesenmaier (2014) explicitly point at the power of smartphones to do so. Newer results, like the study on smartphone use before and during trips, confirm this view (Kang, Jodice & Norman 2020, Mieli forthcoming a).

Departing from the perspective that travel is dynamic and ambiguous, Kah and Lee (2016) compare travellers' propensities to change travel plans based on their use of analogue versus digital information channels. They state that i) not all travel behaviour is planned, and ii) not all travel behaviour is actualised. What they find is a dissonance between intentions and actual behaviours on the spot for those who use information technology during travel. Travellers' active exposure to new information on the go leads to considerable inconsistencies between plans and actual behaviour. While this result may not be revolutionising, it is interesting that technical devices and digital information, seem to have the power to change planned behaviour to a greater degree than does the analogue ditto. The reason for this power is the high accessibility in all parts of the tourism system. What we see is that digitalisation not only affects the variety of information channels, but that it changes tourist behaviour both before and during travel. This has implications for the conceptual understanding of tourism.

Digitalisation has another effect on tourist behaviour. Tourism studies have long emanated from a logical antonym between plans and flexibility. The argument is built upon a seeming juxtaposition between planned and changed behaviour. But current research rather points to the combination of tourists' willingness and unwillingness to change plans. Tourism research has lately introduced the term serendipity, however it is yet sparsely used. The term is

related to the inclination to leave room for sudden changes (e.g. Cary 2004). In its essence, the term describes an individual's lucky chances in relation to being able to grasp these possibilities as they appear. Serendipity is the moment when tourists forget that they are actually tourists. This includes the liminality of being in between tourist and non-tourist. It also includes the unexpected discovery of something valuable. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (2002: 2762) describes the term as "*the making of happy and unexpected discoveries by accident or when looking for something else*". The definition can be understood in terms of tourists' search for eudemonic experiences and is thus related to tourists' perceptions. Serendipity appears through a transformed view gained in the course of travelling. Huang and colleagues (2015) conclude that independent travellers appreciate serendipity more than do tourists on a structured journey. These tourists also use more information sources than do the more structured (group) tourists.

The concept of serendipity goes straight against the view of tourism as a planned activity, which has been a common view in tourism research. In this previous view, tourists would search for tourist information before departure in order to reduce risk and uncertainty, and to maximize the value that can be gained at the destination. This is an instrumental view both on tourist information and on the tourist experience. In the end, it is an instrumental view on the tourist, too. Such a view is based on an epistemological interpretation that presumes both a linear time perspective, and a contrasting prospect of home and away, before and after, tourism and everyday. By contrast, the use of serendipity opens up for an understanding of tourism as a dynamic and permeable system. It permits an openness to change, as there is room left to be filled with unplanned ideas. In this way, tourism is a spontaneous activity far from always having a means to an end. It opens up for tourists to comprise what may come along. Plainly, the chances of having a good journey grow, as do the possibilities for serendipitous endeavours.

Mieli and Zillinger (2020) found that the postponement of information is increasingly common, combined with a special serendipitous element called "*planned serendipity*" (37). Planned serendipity indicates that spontaneity and planning do not stand in contrast to each other, but exist in parallel. This parallel existence is enabled through current information technologies, such as smartphones and an almost ubiquitous access to the internet, which makes en route planning easy. In a sense, one can understand planned serendipity as the tourist's plan to include room for spontaneity during travel. This spontaneity includes information search that is not only easy, but also place-specific. In other words, it may be impossible to receive it somewhere else than at the destination. Often, it is a part of the mere tourist experience and thereby includes eudemonic elements. Such an understanding of tourist behaviour, information search, planning, and spontaneity is far from earlier perceptions of information search as

being utilitarian and not more than necessary. Overall, this development implies a redirection of travel information search, as it not only postpones the mere activity, but also puts other kinds of qualities to it.

This chapter shows that new technology influences tourist behaviour on a system level, because it affords people to be more spontaneous during their travel. The prospect of spontaneity opens up because tourists do not run serious risks if they act in unintentional ways: they will not get lost, because they have Google Maps, and they will not get very hungry either, because they can search for the nearest restaurant or shop on their phone. In this way, their journey becomes an "*evolving itinerary*" (Huang *et al.* 2015, p.173). This does not mean they are aimless. Mieli (forthcoming a) shows that tourist often plan *what* to do, but not exactly *when*. In this way, serendipitous experiences (with an element of surprise) differ from completely new experiences (similar to complete novelty). What we see now is that technical devices open up for planning and spontaneity to coexist (Mieli forthcoming a). In other words, instead of a dichotomy between planning and spontaneity, there seems to be degrees of these behaviours. This is an important change in our empirical and theoretical view on tourist behaviour that needs further research in order receive a more nuanced understanding. Such research should be done either without the dependence on theories of planned behaviour, or by including non-planning as an element therein.

7 What's new about the tourist experience? Smartphones change the prerequisites.

There is a long research tradition on tourist experiences, and its perception has altered through time. The story about the origin of tourist experiences goes like this: Some fifty years ago, MacCannell argued that people live inauthentic everyday lives. This called for a wish for authentic activities by means of tourist experiences. Some years later, Cohen (1979) argued that tourist experiences occur in a situation that is distinctive from everyday life. But just like those scholars have challenged the basic separation of tourism and the everyday, they have questioned the separation of experiences in everyday life and in tourism.

What are the effects of smartphone use? Dickinson *et al.* (2014) state that tourists are more informed now than they have been before. Wang *et al.* (2016) describe travellers as being more connected and more effective decision makers. Anaya and Lehto (2020) absorb such observations and ask the relevant question whether travelers have been worse decision makers before the advent of contemporary technology. In their empirical study on bloggers' travel experiences, they study the relationship between humans and technology, within the context of tourism mobility. They acknowledge that contemporary technology such as smartphones affect tourists' consumption of place, their social desire to travel, and their sense of empowerment and impairment. The use of contemporary technology will, the authors state, influence how tourists move in time and space, and they will influence their connection home, their choice of attractions, and experiences. The general question would be: If everything is made easier and more accessible by holding a smartphone in your hand, will the tourist experience still be the same? Or would tourists be enabled to omit all efforts, strains and struggles connected to travel? What, in the end, do smartphones mean for the perceptions of tourist experiences?

There is a peculiar neologism in German language, where mobile phones are called "handies". What sounds like an English expression is in fact incomprehensible outside German speaking countries. I can however understand the argumentation here; mobile phones have become ubiquitous in the world not least because they are small, easy to carry, and overwhelmingly practical. In tourism, they are used for facilitation of travel, access to information, communication with others, and entertainment (Dickinson *et al*. 2016, Mieli & Zillinger 2020). Smartphones influence experiences in several ways: i) in relation to activities, ii) to individuals' perceptions thereof (Wang *et al.* 2016), and iii) in relation to the time when they take place. Mobile phones provide both functional and emotional support and people are likely to equate this technical device with

social relationships to friends and family. Hence it is clear that they bring along hedonic values (Lalicic & Weismeyer 2016), in addition to the often cited utilitarian ones. With such a wide usability, they add value to experiences in the whole tourism system.

Tourist experiences are strongly influenced by the advent of modern technology. In particular, smartphones have radically transformed tourism practices as we know them (e.g. Salehan & Negahban 2013; Lamsfus, Wang, Alzua-Sorzabal, Xiang 2015; Kang, Jodice, Norman 2019; Mieli, forthcoming a, to name a few). They are used in many ways. Communication, social activity, information acquisition, entertainment, and facilitation are some examples. The individual engagement and interactivity with this mobile technology implicates substantial changes in people's lives. This is true for all age groups, but for adolescents in particular. And in analogy: this is true for all mobile devices, but for smartphones in particular. Today, they are fully integrated into travel, as their use in everyday life is extended into the travel context. This transfer is called *spillover effect* and can be understood as the transmission of habits from one situation to another. In other words, if smartphones are used in specific ways during everyday life, they will likely be used in similar ways during travel (MacKay & Vogt 2012, Tan & Lu 2019).

Tourist experiences involve connections that "*render everyday life and vacation time mutually influential*" (Pearce & Gretzel 2012, p. 27). The term *digital elasticity* describes this situation. It describes tourists' possibility to link themselves with their home worlds while travelling. What scholars describe here is the blurring of space by means of technology. So due to the pervasive connectivity of the internet, tourism and tourist experiences can actually be re-articulated, and tourist experiences can be de-exoticised (Hannam, Butler, & Paris 2013). Such arguments can be understood in several ways. For example, smartphones can be used for tourism-related habits like information search with the potential to make the search an experience for the user. In this example, hedonic value is added to an undertaking that otherwise could be understood as merely utilitarian. Smartphones can also extend existing experiences. Think of a person that visits a concert, which may for many be understood as an experience on its own. Using the smartphone as a tool to film, collect information, photograph, or connect to friends somewhere else can enhance the value of an experience in many ways. The latter is a perfect illustration of a phygital experience by the way; an amalgamation of an analogue and a digital practice.

Before the advent of ubiquitous ICT, the physical and the digital/virtual were understood as opposites: the real was opposed to the simulated (Gretzel, Zarezadeh, Li, & Xiang 2019). The term phygital integrates the physical and the digital and thereby surpasses the perceived mutual dependencies. A phygital

reality creates something completely new because it blurs the lines between the physical and the digital. In that way, a phygital approach has the potential to augment the tourist experience, instead of merely substituting it with a digital ditto. The tourist can be entirely immersed in this phygital reality, with several senses involved (Ballina, Valdes & del Valle 2019). In a way, this argument resembles the notion of flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikzentmihaly 1990), a term much used some decades ago. Numerous technologies are involved for this, such as applications, AR, VR, QR codes, Bluetooth; all this apart from the main technological device, the smartphone (Mieli 2021). Digital devices do not just extend experiences that would happen anyway. Rather, they have the potential to create new kinds of experiences placed at the core of tourism. Future research should look closely into the types of experiences. Who offers such experiences, and what are the underlying values that support this development?

Smartphone users increase en-route planning and the sharing of experiences. At the same time, they plan less before travel, and travel more once they are on tour. Smartphones intensify tourists' connections to people and place. Users are also more informed, more flexible, and feel more convenient than without this technical device. In their empirical study on international visitors in Europe, Lalicic and Weismayer (2016) found that tourists predominantly use their mobile phone with the aim to augment their experiences. Their respondents did not aim for strong connection to social media, but rather to be immersed in the experience. In their study on smartphone applications, Dickinson *et al.* (2014) came to similar results: Smartphones can enhance temporal alignment between people, attractions, and places. This is done by providing easy-access information which itself may enhance the experience at the destination, like for example opening hours, or restaurant menus. Smartphones also provide their users with spatial tools and awareness, which again results in knowledge-rich visitors. In its extension, this means that smartphones have the potential to evolve tourists' understanding of time, and their relationship with place.

Even before smartphones, mobile phones assisted tourists in easy access to information before, during and after the trip, and offered a sense of staying close to home (Höpken, Fuchs, Zanker, & Beer 2010). Smartphones act even more as social buddies for specific features that are connected to the device (Tussyadiah 2014; Lalicic & Weismayer 2016). Tourists have become utterly dependent on this tool, which triggers even more the increased, societal network practice. Smartphone use has invited to more spontaneity, which again brings with it a new understanding of space: less reliant on the Cartesian tradition, and more reliant on instant internet connection. The use of smartphones clarifies that places are defined in relational terms, in networks of social relations rather than as Cartesian objects. I think Doreen Massey would have enjoyed this development (see e.g.

Massey 1993). Ultimately, this new situation changes tourists' understanding of tourist experiences, products, and services. The ubiquitous access to information, places, and people offers an augmented fluidity, which in turn enables serendipitous moments.

Opponents argue that mobile devices may cause disengagement as well, a kind of opting out of experiences that would otherwise have been possible. In this argumentation, smartphones bring along a number of negative values. The constant use of a mobile phone may lead both to a deficiency in one's sense of place, and a lack of interaction with those who are physically around (Dickinson, Hibbert & Filimonau 2016). As in all technical turns in history, there is likely to be a counter-argument that meets up the development that is welcomed by many: the rebellion of a smaller group of people who refuse to accept the prevalent values allocated to the development. The often implicit assumption that mobile technology contributes to tourism in positive ways is questioned by its critics. This countermovement has many names, with digital detox (Lay 2014) and digital switch-off (Gretzel 2014) being two of them. In 2010 already, Gretzel argued that mobile devices may cause rather disembodied experiences that go hand in hand with a deficiency of sense of place, and a lack of interaction with fellow travelers. These negative effects are caused by digital elasticity, goes the argument.

Dickinson, Hibbert and Filimonau (2016) have measured digital connection on camping sites and conclude that up to 50% of study participants have some desire to digitally disconnect. The argument catches the dilemma that the tourists see: On the one hand, they want to get away from it all, on the other hand, they see a strong value of connectivity, which in the end helps them to increase experience value. Smartphone owners and social media users were more inclined to stay digitally connected than were others in this study. The desire to disconnect is highly related to personal interests and the context in which the holiday takes place. Zillinger *et al.* (2018) came to similar results when empirically studying German tourists in Sweden. While generally all participants saw a value in using digital devices while travelling, many of them were longing for a digitally free time, in which they could feel more as a group and concentrate on the here and now. This digital free zone gave opportunities for other kinds of experiences: personal relationships, an intense feeling for the place, or getting in touch with themselves.

This chapter shows that digitalisation, and especially smartphones, have the potential to change the quality of experiences. Smartphones cannot only increase the number of possible experiences, but more importantly, can change their quality. Smartphones highlight the relative experience of a place, instead of emphasising the location in a Cartesian perspective. They enhance time-spatial configurations between people, attractions, and places and they underline the importance of

hedonic values in tourism. This is what I would call a game changer, if the term were not so worn out in these connections. Research needs to take a comprehensive approach to this situation, as the studies that do exist are still uncoordinated. There are empirical studies, in different places, with different foci. The next step will be to connect them to each other and base them on a collective body of literature. Studies on tourist experiences in the digital age could preferably be connected to similar studies aimed at everyday leisure experiences at home. The spillover effect from everyday to tourist behaviour has already been stated, so why use two parallel ontologies, if the ontology can be shared?

8 What's new about the definition of tourism?

The above argumentation has shown that our understanding of tourism is shifting, because the world as we know it is shifting as well. Globalisation continues to trickle down to more and more places, the consumption of services is exceeding that of products, mobility is increasing, and tourist gazes are argued to be not so different from a more general urban gaze (Stors, Stoltenberg, Sommer, & Frisch, 2020). Digitalisation is re-positioning the borders between tourism and the everyday. In parallel, the number of reasons for tourist travel is growing, including activities such as visiting museums, visiting friends and relatives, staying in one's second home, learning new languages, and many more. One question may be whether travelling people are all defined as tourists. Another question is whether they perceive themselves as tourists. The individual staying in a hotel at a tourist destination might consider herself a tourist, but it is questionable whether a guest at her sister's wedding would, only because the wedding takes place beyond her usual place of residence. Such questions are important, because they influence how we think about tourism, what and who is in- and excluded, and who is responsible for the development of this broad societal progress.

The concomitant question is how we perceive, understand, and define the phenomenon of tourism today. The definitions in use are in part many decades old. They were stated in times before digitalisation and intense globalisation. It might be that this fact matters for how we talk about tourism, and how we plan and conduct it. For this reason, the working paper contains a minor literature review to outline definitions of tourism. It starts with the seminal work by Leiper (1979), in which he compiled a number of definitions that had been used up until then. This was done from three perspectives: economic, technical, and holistic. Out of these outlooks, Leiper built a new definition of tourism, because he stated that "*a definition suitable for general tourism scholarship has not yet emerged*" (p. 391). Leiper criticized the economically based definitions because they left both human and spatial elements aside. Former definitions were generally criticised due to their vagueness.

Leiper's definition is based on five elements are included in what later came to be known as *The Tourism System*: the geographical regions home, destination, and transit region, plus tourists and a tourist industry. Leiper defines tourism as a "*system involving the discretionary travel and temporary stay of persons away from their usual place of residence for one or more night, excepting tours made for the primary purpose of earning remuneration from points en route*" (p. 403-404). In other words, he speaks about i) the voluntariness that is basic to every tourism travel, ii) the temporal delimitation, iii) the travel from one's usual places of residence, i.e. one's home, iv)

the need to be away overnight, and v) the exclusion of trips that aim for paid work. Due to transport innovations, the need for a night away is today questioned among several actors. Many trips can be done smoothly within one day, for which you previously needed more time. Moreover, the usual stay of residence may be unclear, as in the cases of second homes that offer their owners the possibility of having two homes, of which only one is defined as the principal residence. Even the exclusion of business trips is remarkable, and would be understood differently today.

In the *Encyclopedia of Tourism*, Jafari (2000) reminds the reader of the multidisciplinarity of tourism. He points at a vital change within tourism studies, that were focused on economic contributions through the 1960s, to understanding tourism in a holistic way, some decades later. Through the years, tourism came to be treated both as an industry and as a phenomenon. This is an important shift in the understanding of what tourism ontologically is, and can be. As the understanding of tourism became more holistic, Jafari writes, this influenced the definition thereof. In 2000, tourism is defined as "*the study of man (the tourist) away from his usual habitat (…), of the ordinary (where the tourist is coming from) and the nonordinary (where the tourist goes to) worlds and their dialectic relationships*" (p. 584). All in all, the study of tourism became more systemic. Jafari describes a shift from a unilateral view on tourism to a general understanding thereof. This may not be a complete shift away from an economic understanding, but rather an addition of various concepts from the social science tool box. This includes aspects such as geography, sociology, psychology, and ecology, to name a few. This development may have been a consequence of the quantitative growth of tourism. Most probably, it was also a consequence of research taking place in ever more departments, published in ever more journals.

It is interesting to note Jafari's emphasis on the opposition between the ordinary and, as he writes, the nonordinary. One can comprehend the ordinary as a tourist's home, and the nonordinary as the destination. These opposites are described as two different worlds. If one looks up synonyms for "ordinary", one finds words such as normal, commonplace, usual, familiar, and everyday. Understanding one's home in such terms is probably not so challenging; many people recognise their home as the common place to be, in a familiar surrounding. The question now, in 2021, is whether the destination should only be understood as the counterpiece of home: as something exceptional, unfamiliar, and extraordinary. Of course, a destination can be all of this. Such notions are related to thinkers such as Said (1979), who would consider destinations as the other, as compared to one's home. The question is whether it is now time to extend the definition of tourism, by removing notions of counterparts between the ordinary and the nonordinary. Rather, one should be open for destinations to be defined in many different kinds

of ways, including the familiar. In that way, tourism would include the ordinary as well.

The OECD (2001, webpage) has defined tourism as comprising "*the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes*". The need to be outside the region of usual environment is still innate to the definition, but business travels are now integrated, which is an important step towards touristifying work that is done in other places than home. Such an integration however is not consistent, as seen in the definition of a tourist by the dictionary Norstedts (1998): "*en person som reser (långt från hemorten) i nöjes- eller avkopplingssyfte*". Here, work is not included in the definition of the tourism concept.

Searching for newer definitions of tourism in current databases results in more specific definitions like wine tourism, halal tourism, smart tourism, or dark tourism, to name a few. Such specialisations have emerged from the basic definitions in the seminal works of Leiper, Jafari, MacCannell, and Cohen. In a way, such a specialisation shows that the importance of, and research about, tourism is growing, leading to the development of subfields. Tillväxtverket publishes its *Turismens begreppsnyckel* regularly and in the 2016 edition, tourism is defined as follows: "*Turism omfattar människors aktiviteter när de reser till och vistas på platser utanför sin vanliga omgivning för kortare tid än ett år för fritid, affärer eller andra syften*" (p. 6). Again, the usual environment is mentioned, just as the 1-year-level. Both business and other activities are included.

The question is what happens to the tourism definition if we accept that our so-called usual environments are not necessarily equalled to a firm and stable place. When usual environments are both Alingsås and Arjeplog, Motala and Malaga, or Stockholm and Sydney, because you live part time in these places, have a second home, work from different places, or because you visit your family for long periods of time? How do we define a destination, when a tourist is physically present, but digitally somewhere else, via online communication? What is an attraction that has previously been defined as the "relationship between a *tourist*, a *sight* and a *marker*" (MacCannell 1979, p. 41), when suddenly, the tourist does not travel to, or is drawn to, the attraction anymore? But when instead, a site becomes an attraction, simply because it is named and appointed by a digital application, and is located close by the tourist, where s/he is right now?

The aim of this working paper is not to find all the answers to such questions that are both rooted in practical and ontological perspectives. Instead, the paper aims to serve as a notional impetus for future research to discuss this further, both

on a conceptual and on an empirical basis. I am arguing for the importance and the topicality of such a discussion. I am supported in this argument by Larsen (2008, p. 30), who some years ago asked for an open understanding of tourism and the tourist, in order to allow for more "*complex, dynamic and contextual accounts*" of tourism theory. Based on this stance, we can contribute to future development based on a wide range of social science theories. I invite future critical scientists to study and describe i) differing reasons and motives behind preferred definitions, ii) the groups that benefit most by them, and iii) the power relationships linked to changing definitions over time. Such are important study aims in a wider sense than has been conducted here.

9 What's new about DMO's use of digitalisation towards tourists, and towards regional tourism actors?
An empirical observation.

The aim of this empirical chapter is to study how conceptual views on digitalisation in tourism trickle down to the daily work in the encounter between destination marketing organisations, visitors, and tourism actors. The regional level is chosen because long-term tourism planning often takes place on this geographic level. In addition, DMOs are in a central position, with links both to national decision makers, and local actors. Three Swedish regions are chosen that present themselves as prioritising digital development, and that simultaneously exhibit diverse geographical backgrounds. These are *Swedish Lapland*, in foremost rural areas in the North; *Jämtland Härjedalen Turism (JHT)*, in the middle Swedish region, marked by rural and urban areas, and *Tourism in Skån*e, an organisation that works in predominantly urban regions in the utmost South. I know: representatives from all three regions may disagree, saying that Lapland very well may have urban areas, and Skåne may be highly rural in some parts. That is true. But in relation to each other, these regions can be plainly positioned on a rural-urban scale.

The research questions in this empirical part of the paper are:

1. *In which ways is digitalisation displayed outwards, towards the tourist?* This question engages with the visibility of digitalisation in information that is displayed at the DMO webpage. This research question includes offers and information that is visible frontstage, to speak in Goffman's (1974) terms. The empirical material consists of the Visit-linked webpages www.swedishlapland.se, www.visitostersund.se, www.visitskane.se, and the interlinked www.jokkmokksmarknad.se.

2. *In which ways is digitalisation displayed inwards, towards tourism actors in the own region?* This question involves the ways in which the DMOs assist regional organisations in their digitalisation process. It includes information offers, education and training. In opposition to the above concentration on frontstage, this research question deals with backstage development. Though this information is visible to all interested readers, the education and conversation itself takes place beyond tourists' access. The empirical material consists of the three webpages

www.tourisminskane.com, www.jht.se, and www.swedishlaplandvisitorsboard.com.

The study of the first research question starts with a review of the above cited webpages. The pages are mainly built on images, so the study entails a content analysis of pictures, moving images and short film sequences. The analysis consists of the pages giving an overview to its users, and that are offering recommendations to visitors on what to do. In other words, the analysis is based on what is presented as attractions on the respective webpage. This examination consists of hundreds of images that are included in all three marketing organisations.

What's new in the presentation of a destination? No signs of outward digitalisation

Figures 1-3 below display the front pages in each regional webpage. Do the pictures resemble the usual images of tourist destinations? As the author of this report, I would say tourists all over the world are used to marketing pictures like this, no matter if in analogue of digital format. Do the pictures resemble a contrast to ordinary life, including work, school, commuting? Yes, I believe pictures showing mountain areas, fishing by the lake, and empty beaches have long been considered appealing tourism attractions, meant to invite potential visitors. Do the pictures resemble slow time, and still moments? Yes, I cannot discover any rush in these pictures, exactly what our middleclass-perceived-to-be rushed zeitgeist is asking for; after all, we are supposed to feel well when we do not need to squint at our watches.

People's everyday lives are strongly affected by digital devices, like smartphones, , tablets, laptops, and keyboards are all around us, most of the time. Some of them are linked to people's homes (e.g. keyboards or desktop computers), others are carried around wherever people go (e.g. smartphones and laptops). But do the marketing images display anything that is digital? They do not. And nor do the other images that are displayed on the three homepages that were examined. In fact, they display a world that is not digitalised at all. No telephones, no screens, no power poles, not even a digital watch. The attractiveness lies in the non-connectedness and in the opposite of digital connectedness that is so self-evidently a part of our daily lives at home. This is surprising, as one could assume that portable devices would be visible in such pictures. After all, they constitute important everyday objects to most people, who are emotionally attached to them. Buhalis (2020) claims that technology has transformed strategic management and

marketing in tourism but obviously, such changes are not visible in the images that are published for the views of their viewers.
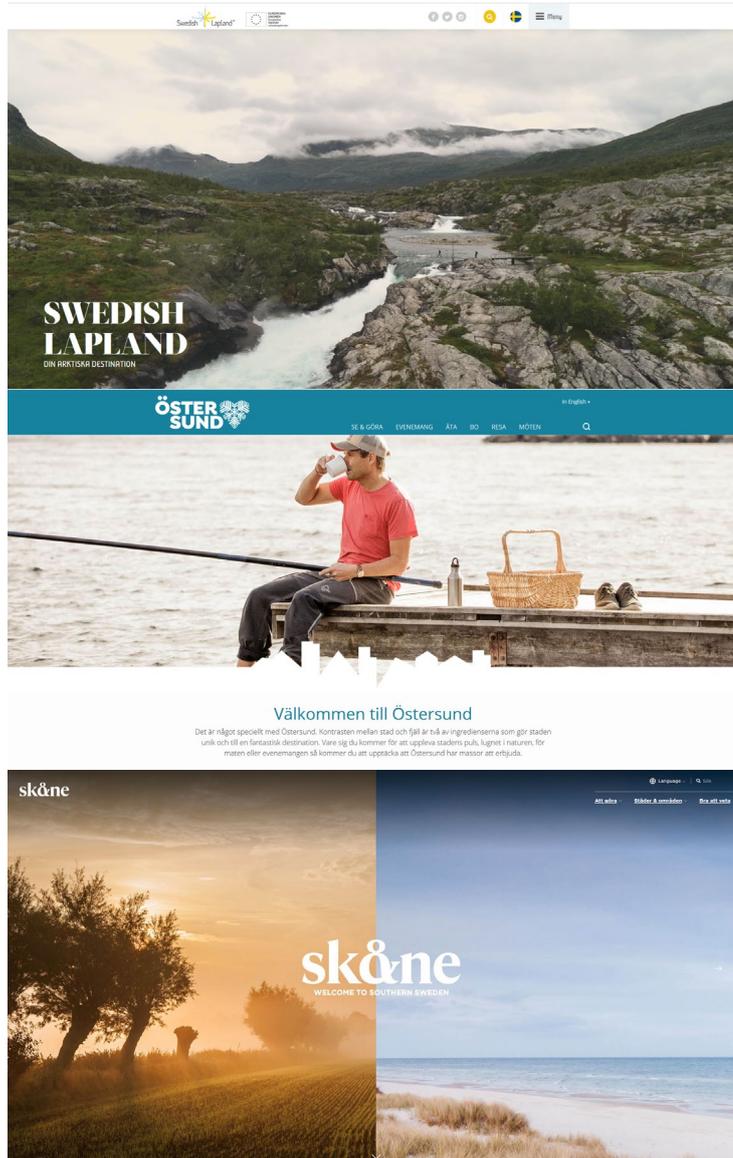

Figures 1-3: Front pages

Figures 4-6 display additional images on the DMO webpages. They display no digital development. Hence, we may ask the question: where is digitalisation in the studied marketing of tourist destinations then? The digital part of a destination may be a hygiene factor, so self-evident that it does not even have to be mentioned. Just like the hotel breakfast does not need to be discussed for its mere existence, the availability of Wi-Fi itself is not important enough to appear in marketing images. Or, the availability of medical staff is hardly adding value to a Western

destination – unless it is a spa destination or similar. It is interesting however that digitalisation does not at all appear as part of an attraction. It could well be argued that phygital experiences like augmented reality, embodied sensors, or interactive screens could be included in the images on the destination webpages. After all, experiences that offer the tourist a total immersion into the phygital reality do play a role in current tourist offers. But obviously, images of such attractions are not chosen to represent one's destination on the webpage.

Why is this astonishing, and why does a report like this comment on this empirical result? The reason is not because there is anything wrong with this result. There is no underlying value-driven argumentation in this report that would support a self-evident and seemingly unproblematic digitalisation process in which technology somehow revolutionises the tourism industry. Far from it, the report asks the question what happens in tourism when digitalisation is developing quickly. And when at the same time, DMOs have talked swiftly and proudly about their ability to keep pace with digitalisation – whatever that means. Obviously, this does not mean that digitalisation is visible in marketing images.
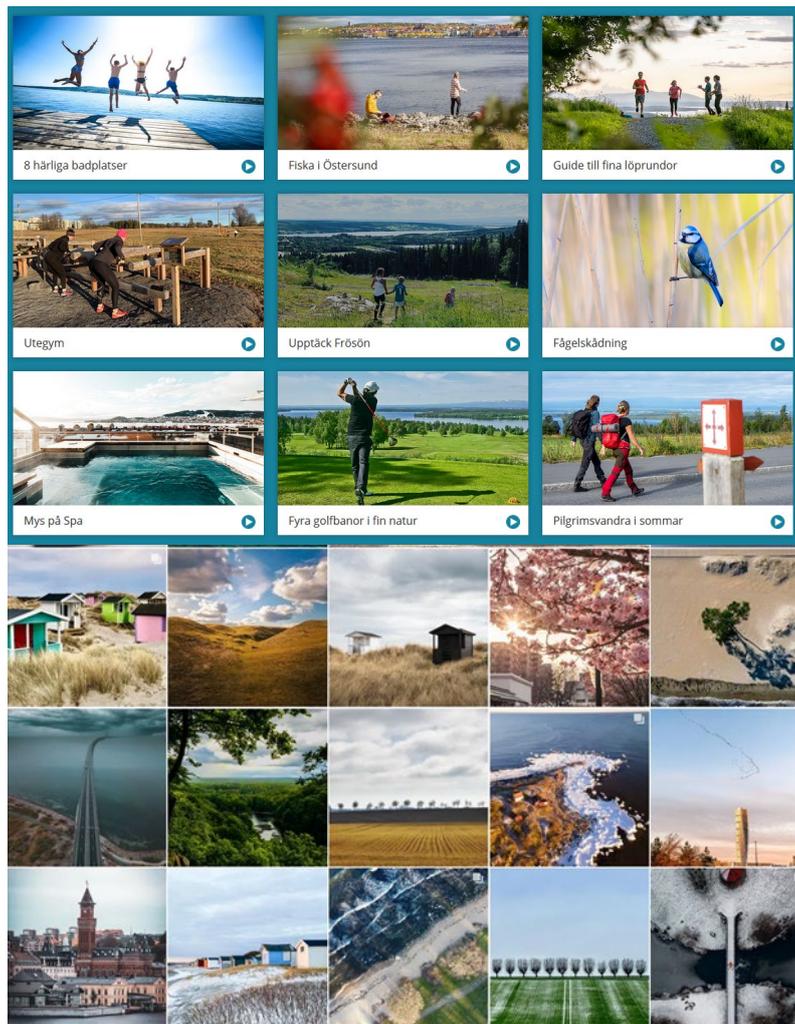
Figures 4-6: Additional images on the three destination homepages in Swedish Lapland, Jämtland Härjedalen, and Skåne

There are a few exceptions to the analogue dominance in the images of attractions. One such example is about the choice of accurate technology and competence when photographing polar lights, as in https://www.swedishlapland.com/sv/stories/hur-du-fotograferar-norrsken/. The information saying "*Så du har åkt till Swedish Lapland för att uppleva det magiska norrskenet. Här är sju enkla tips på hur du också får några bra bilder på det vackra ljusfenomenet med dig hem*" suggests technology that builds upon extra batteries and correct camera adjustments. Although the experience itself consists of the polar lights, it improves by means of i) decent technology and ii) competence on how to use it. By these means, the experience is accessible even after the holiday is over, via the photographs that were taken. Such photographs can then be zoomed and

enlarged, discussed and understood from a new point of view, influenced by another place and another social surrounding.

Another example that turns up on the destination homepages via link is *Jokkmokks Marknad* that went completely digital in 2021 due to the pandemic. Jokkmokks Marknad is a good example for the fact that destinations are eager to digitalise their offerings where they have to. It also shows the power of the pandemic to speed up innovation processes due to mere necessity. As 2021 year's event was cancelled on the spot, it was entirely transferred to the virtual world. This is an interesting example insofar as it shows how technology contributes to solving real problems, instead of being implemented due to powerful actors who go with a flow without exactly knowing why. There was a live studio in *Bio Norden*, one could buy products on a webpage called the digital market, and one could take part in exhibitions, performances, storytelling and lectures on a webpage called *Experience Jokkmokk Market* (Figure 7). The responsible actors tried to make their point in different ways, including the classic approach of alluding to senses. The below quote shows one attempt to digitalise an experience that has hitherto been merely physical in its attendance. This form of digitalisation will increase in future in all probability.

"A flavour of Jokkmokk's soul presented by Victoria, Eva and friends. Victoria Harnesk and Eva Gunnare are two cultural personalities with a love of food. In an attempt to capture the soul of The Winter Market they invite their friends to Victoria's small food and culture studio. A charming cottage in the middle of Jokkmokk. It will be lively featuring poetry, music, yoik, dance, writers telling stories, photo exhibitions and lots of local flavors. This strange year when the market goes digital. Three episodes with different guests, the content is in Swedish" (https://jokkmokksmarknad.se/en/the-program/). The broadcast of Jokkmokks Marknad is a good example of digitalisation that takes place these days. It is one example out of many that shows how an analogue concept goes digital. But the events and attractions stay the same. They are not changed apart from the fact that they are being broadcast through a webpage. In other words, the attraction itself is still the same. Digitalisation here means being transmitted so that people in other places can see it, and take part at a distance.

Figure 7: Homepage Jokkmokks Marknad

What can we say about the presentation of destinations then? We observe that the ontological base in "thinking attractions" by the DMOs is analogue. ICTs do not change this principal position. What is presented as attractive in 2021, as something that is supposed to affect people's wish to visit a place, is not particularly different from webpages in 2011 or 2001. In these images, digitalisation has never taken place, neither in the attractiveness itself, nor in the lives of the visitors. It seems as if all the phones that are usually in people's hands, have disappeared. Spatial connections that are enabled by digital devices (texting friends, calling home, reading work-related emails) are not at all apparent in the images, although they play such an important role in tourist behaviour. The absence is in fact astounding and points to a disruption between existing tourist behaviour, and what is presented as desirable ditto.

Further, digitalisation appears where it has to replace the default analogue attraction – that in fact is staged as the more desirable one. I have not yet found a representation of a digital attraction that exists due to its own sovereignty over an analogue one. A digital experience, it seems, is a replacement and a substitute. Although digital devices have been a self-evident part of people's lives for decades, DMOs do not include them in the marketing of places, experiences, or attractions. Maybe, our modern lives are so complicated and fragile that we persist in longing towards simpler lives. Here is a profound value in the simplicity of an analogue attraction, whatever it is. Simple lives can be achieved with less technology, especially in tourism encounters. As this observation is building on content analysis, it cannot answer the question on why this is so. Therefore, this working paper advises future researchers to ask this question to tourism actors who decide on the selection of images, and to include the questions on what is believed to be digitally attractive – and non-attractive. Why are there no digital devices in these images; is this a question of habituation? Meaning that people habitually use

digital devices in their lives, but that this habit has not reached marketing yet? Or does marketing mirror a real wish back to analogue times? I suggest that the inbetweenness that is exposed opens up for a whole new field of empirical studies on the interception between digitalisation and attractiveness.

What's new in inward digitalisation for regional tourism actors?

Through the years, I have regularly talked to tourism actors in varying positions and on different geographical levels. When we studied incoming tourists' information search behaviour a couple of years ago, Swedish destination organisations were showing their endeavour to digitalise the dissemination of information. The education and training of individual tourism actors was an important stepping stone in this venture. In my current document for this working paper, I have studied precisely this: DMO's assistance for tourism operators in the digitalisation process. It turns out that digitalisation is discussed in all three organisations that are included in this empirical observation. It plays an important role for all three of them digitalisation is described as indispensable knowledge for a destination to survive in the harsh international competition for visitors (note that this is the rhetoric of the DMOs, not my own). The particular projects and foci however are emphasised in a different manner. There may be other projects or foci as well, but as long as they are not mentioned on the webpages of the organisations, they are not included here.

JHT runs a project on digital transformation that builds especially on education within digital marketing and communication possibilities (https://jht.se/den-digitala-transformationen/). The organisation cooperates with external consultants that are experts in the field. One basic result from the document analysis is that the digitalisation process is often equalled to the digitalisation of communication. It is the process of pooling tourists and attractions that is changed by digitalisation. In all three webpages, communication is the focal point. This is startling, because one could argue that digitalisation in tourism is and can be so much more: tourists' habitual handling of digital devices; experiences that can be analogue, digital or both; or the change in tourist behaviour due to the postponement in travel decision based on smartphones. Up to now, however, the common denominator between the three studied organisations is the emphasis on communicative processes that change tourism actors' approach to information, and to visitors. The second common ground between the organisations is that they all emphasise digitalisation as something that is of importance today, and that will only continue to grow in importance. This will have significant influences on each one of the actors, they predict, but unclear how.

There is some indication that DMOs are thinking about and planning a next step in their digitalisation, leaving the solitary focus on communication. Swedish Lapland is running a project on digital touring routes, in which they establish thematic routes in Google Maps (Figure 8). The aim, they write, is to make a bundle of attractions available to new visitor groups. One may presume that this will make an interesting offer for current visitors as well. The project is built on results by Google consumer reports, stating that more and more tourists are searching for attractions "nearby" (https://www.swedishlaplandvisitorsboard.com/digitala-touring-routes/). The number of such local searches has grown more than has the number of searches for attractions in general. The Google report also reveals that three out of four tourists making such a search for an attraction nearby will actually visit the place within 24 hours. On a more theoretical side track, this is exciting information for the discussion about the influence of digitalisation on what an attraction is supposed to be. Because if tourists are asking Google Maps about attractions "nearby", this means that not the attraction itself is the most important factor, but its relative location to the mobile tourist. In this way, MacCannell's (1976) definition of an attraction as the intersection between a tourist, a site, and a marker, may be revised. In the digital era, an attraction may be defined as the intersection between a site, a marker, and the position of the tourist. What does this mean for the concept of an attraction? It means that experiential accessibility may be a supportive factor of technology, as it identifies, communicates, and enables a kind of pre-experience of chosen points of interests. This possibility may be based, among others, on tourists' experience feedback, or again the relative location with regards to other attractions. It would be interesting to study more in this respect and to test this idea in future studies.

The above example not only shows a holistic view on tourist attractions, including a time-spatial approach to what the tourist might consider appealing. It is also an example of a phygital attraction that unites analogue and digital aspects in one experience. The tourist can drive along the recommended route and visit the chosen spots. This takes place in the destination-related area of the tourism system. But s/he can also take part in offers before and after the visit by digital devices. Places and attractions are experienced both in an analogue and in a digital way. This leads to the blurring between these perspectives. To speak in Mieli's (2021) terms, this kind of phygital tourist attraction is enabling and supporting the experience. It is not simply substituting an analogue experience with a digital one. In the end, this process is also affecting the perceived value of experiences, as the experience is becoming more dynamic and interactive. On the whole, this is a situation in which the tourist can both experience the physical site along the road, and be in interaction with it through a digital device – by buying products, learning about the place, and listening to stories or music about it.
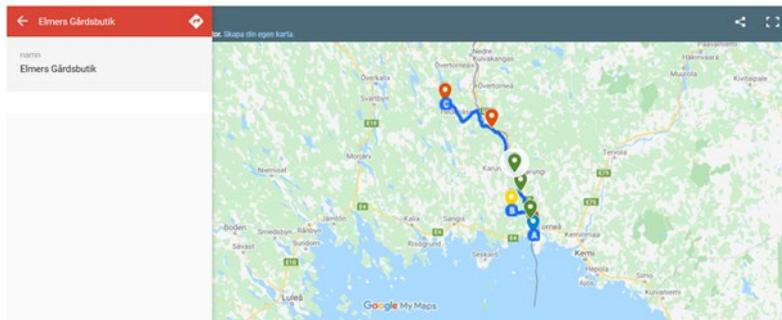
Figure 8: Digital Touring Route, Swedish Lapland

In the organisation of Tourism in Skåne, digitalisation is on the agenda in many ways. The organisation is proactive when it comes to the digitalisation of tourism in the region. The document analysis of their webpage shows a holistic view on digitalisation, and an awareness that there will be fundamental changes in the years to come. It starts with the assistance for regional tourism actors to increase their digital presence, including online bookings, the use of hashtags, and TripAdvisor, among others (https://tourisminskane.com/sv/verktygslada/din-digitala-narvaro). In their "seven insights on the future", digitalisation is mentioned in three of them. These are i) *virtual experiences* (virtual and augmented reality): the possibility to visit a destination from one's sofa at home; ii) the use of and competition for *customer data*, which aims to lead to better possibilities for individualised experience offers; iii) *artificial intelligence*, with its potential to handle and analyse big data and make better predictions (https://tourisminskane.com/sv/verktygslada/omvarldsanalys-och-trender/trender-mot-2030/sju-insikter-om-framtiden). There are also cooperations with Linné University and RISE, where actors can attend workshops on digitalisation, and watch short movies about it (https://tourisminskane.com/sv/verktygslada/utbildningsakuten).
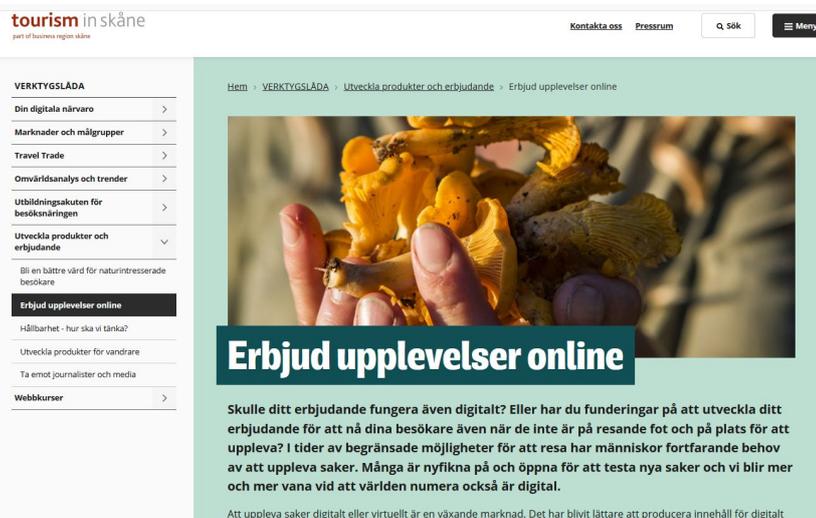
Figure 9: Plans for digital experiences, Tourism in Skåne

The organisation opens up for the development of digital experiences and ascertains that many tourism actors are interesting in this vein, and that this is a growing segment. The webpage defines digital experiences as something that is offered to tourists who are not here, at the destination, but who are online (https://tourisminskane.com/sv/verktygslada/utveckla-produkter-och-erbjudande/erbjud-upplevelser-online). Thus by this definition, a digital experience replaces an analogue one. It is not presented as something that is just as good as an experience on the spot, and hence phygital experiences are not in the mind of the DMO here. When explaining why tourism actors should invest in digital experiences, they explain: "*Du når ut till och håller kontakt med de som annars skulle besöka dig på plats men som inte kan göra det i nuläget. Det är marknadsföring för dig och din verksamhet med möjlighet att också nå nya marknader utöver dem du redan vänder dig till*". But in an extensive text, they note that digital experiences may become a product of their own, and they may play an important role together with other, analogue experiences. The example they give here is the training before a hiking tour.

Tentative empirical conclusions

What can this brief empirical observation tell us with regards to the digitalisation of tourism? It tells us that what is marketed as attractive, and as a reason to travel to a destination, is not (yet) influenced by digitalisation. Or, maybe it is: Maybe the analogue is believed to be so desirable for people, that the digital threads are expelled from the images that represent a region. One way or the other, the images are representing anything but the digital. They are generic, calm, and

yet overwhelming in one way or another. But they do not encompass everyday situations – including the handling of digital devices. Thus a conclusion to be drawn from the outward communication of the studied regional tourism organisations is that digitalisation is not visible in marketing. Attractions and attractiveness are not associated with digital devices or digital possibilities. Rather, they are a rejection thereof. The reasons behind this selection of images would be both interesting and important to study empirically, because such knowledge can say something about our perception of the interrelationship between digitalisation, attractions, and tourism.

The results are different when it comes to inward communication though. Digitalisation is of importance in all three observed tourism organisations, to varying degrees. It is obvious that future ideas about the importance of digitalisation in DMOs might go beyond the replacement of analogue by digital information and communication, as has been at the forefront up until now. Rather, the results can be interpreted as a preparation for the upcoming importance of digitalisation in the whole tourism system. I would expect many try-outs in the years to come, in order to test what works (or not); what tourists like and are willing to pay for (or not); how one can reach the right customer groups; or how the own experience offer is related to other places in the tourism system. Such thoughts have lately been generated by Fuchs and Sigala (2021), who critically discuss the strategic use of ICT in tourism. Some years before, Moreno *et al.* (2015) discussed strategic e-tourism alternatives from a destination perspective.

The high attention towards future digital possibilities tells a story of an increased importance thereof. It remains to be seen if and how this assumed change will affect the outward communication towards tourists.

10 Conclusions

When the keystones of a research area are shaking, we need to label what is happening to be able to look forward. This working paper has observed the impact of digitalisation from seven perspectives: six conceptual and one empirical. Its contribution is based on the illustration of perceptions, and on the analysis of what these perspectives mean collectively, from a systems perspective. The individual chapters have exposed how societal changes are taking place both slowly and rapidly. Although they are not always related to what we would refer to as tourism, we need to acknowledge the following: Tourism is one part of society as we know it. Understanding tourism means that we are able to understand our society. The ontological shift away from parallel perceptions of everyday and tourism is on its way. Digitalisation is an important driver of this change, as it is blurring the lines between dichotomies such as home and destination, everyday and holiday.

I argue that the ontological development of tourism consists of three stages, seen in a time line. The first stage entails a perceived dichotomy between tourism and the everyday. These two concepts are located in two different spheres: home and destination. Globalisation is not radically influencing people's travels yet, and digitalisation is not yet an issue. In the second stage, the border between tourism and everyday is loosening up. The concepts are not perceived as belonging to extremes within the a continuum anymore. Digital devices are used (e.g. social media, maps, recommendations etc.), but this use does not transform tourist behaviour in a fundamental way yet. In other words, people still behave like before, but travels are alleviated by access to digital information. Digital possibilities are seen as nice and helpful add-ons to the life people live and the places people travel, but they do not change what people actually do.

In the third stage, the number and width of sociability at-a-distance have grown to such an extent that they permeate most people's everyday life. Global families are perceived as a norm, visitors and inhabitants have repeating contacts. People are used to being corporally in one place, while being digitally in another. Digital devices and ubiquitous Wi-Fi connections enable this. In this reality, former liminalities are relocated. There is no strict differentiation between home and destination anymore. Certain tourist behaviours cannot be attached to the different phases in the tourism system anymore. Digitalisation enables the postponement of information search. Tourists are able to work during travels, and they include a lot of tourism aspects in their everyday lives. Many of these developments are pushed by digital devices. The deferrals described here challenge what belongs to everyday, tourism, home, and destination. They challenge what these concepts ontologically *are*. In general, these developments reinforce the deferrals described

within the mobilities paradigm, and that have been on the spot for many years now.

Remains to be asked, what is the contribution of this working paper? Basically, it aims to contribute to ongoing discussions and activities in the fields of research, the tourism industry, and the encounter between the two. Research has seen an upswing of interest for the meeting points between issues such as experiences, mobility, smartphones, current technologies, digitalisation, globalisation, and other perspectives discussed in this paper. Following questions may be of interest for researchers in the near future: What is the definition of tourism, if tourism is not the contrast of the everyday anymore? This working paper suggests that we need to reformulate the definition of the phenomenon in order to adapt it to current conditions; the world is changing, and so do definitions. In this way, we can leave the normative study of tourism behind and instead contribute to the transformative discussion that already takes place in several places (cf. Gretzel *et al.* 2020). How can we model tourist information search, based on the fact that virtually all tourists have access to online information? How can we explain value shifts between different information channels, when online and offline information channels are asking for tourists' attention? In which ways do we understand the tourism system when the borders between home, destination, and the space in between is blurred? How can we define an attraction, when markers have become ubiquitous, and when smartphones place the tourist in the centre of interest, instead of placing the attraction in the centre? How can we learn from, and borrow perspectives and terms from neighbouring research fields such as information technology and technological mediation? How can we understand tourists' relation to time, space, and place, when digitalisation not only diminishes spatial distance, but deletes it? This working paper requests both an empirical and a conceptual contention therewith.

The tourism industry has a busy time adapting to the rapid developments of digital technologies. It is a major challenge to understand the potential of digitalisation in parallel with the needs and requests of visitors, and the possibilities of tourism actors to follow up on such developments while not giving up their own needs. Every place has its own needs and prospects, and this should remain most important. Consequently, visitor needs come second. This is a fine balance for tourism actors, be it individual entrepreneurs or regional/national organisations: to follow visitor needs insofar as they run a good business, and/or to pave their own way by being proactive performers. Understanding the needs of individual visitor groups is not easy. It requires an organisation size that is often not possible to finance. Another challenge is to decide whom to serve with the own work. Is it the visitors that live somewhere else and that spend their holidays in a chosen destination? Or is it the local inhabitants that sometimes permeate the

border between being residents and tourists in their own home district? The latter suggestion supports a more sustainable development, which hopefully becomes extra important post-pandemic when arguments may focus even more on economic regrowth. Another challenge may be to encounter borders between areas of accountability, for example between tourism, regional planning, urban and rural development. As this working paper shows, such borders merge more and more, a development well speeded up by digitalisation that is virtually everywhere (for similar arguments, see the empirical work by Höpken, Müller, Fuchs & Lexhagen 2020).

The third perspective that deserves attention is the encounter between the tourism industry and the academy. Research may be of help in the development of the tourism industry by offering new perspectives that have been discussed in this working paper. Researchers may also turn towards actors that are involved within neighbouring fields of tourism, such as spatial planning, labour market development, and leisure development. This makes sense in research, too. By extension, this means that the academy should increasingly turn to actors in the outskirts of tourism planning, and outside this sphere. Such a development is already happening. An example of a boundary point between tourism and public development is the interest in, and challenges of, wind energy, placed in space that has been defined as attractive for tourists. Such liminal questions may rise in importance for tourism researchers, and for actors outside the tourism field. It may become a bit of a challenge to point at the complexity of the intersection between tourism and digitalisation. Digitalisation is not only the replacement of analogue with digital information channels, as this working paper has shown. It may be a challenge to enact the study of neighbouring fields, such as the extension of experiences of digitalisation, or the benefits of including phygital approaches in ones plans. Such ideas have not yet been asked for by the tourism industry.

In conclusion, what do we see? We see a number of changes, sparked by digitalisation, that themselves generate changes on a systems level. One example is the transformed travel information search that leads to changes in tourist experiences, time-spatial behaviour, and the new conception of information search as cyclic instead of linear. Together with the insight that tourists cannot be conceptualised as rational, and the awareness that information search is not as structured as was formerly believed, there is a great need for a renewed model that takes these new perceptions into account. We need to bring comprehension into the chaotic and overwhelming perceptions that we get. A model would help us arrange and order the many individual observations that we make. By such an approach, we will be better at conceptualising new concepts, such as planned serendipity. We will also be better at reconceptualising concepts we thought were stable, like the concept of a tourist attraction, or the mere definition of tourism per

se. Along with all such developments, it has become clear that many dichotomies have played out their role, and that we need to understand concepts in terms of degrees instead. A statement like this goes back to similar views by Putnam in 2004. In this, tourism is not different to other fields within social science.

We need to open up tourism studies towards neighbouring fields such as mobilities, migration studies, or information technology. In addition, as tourism can no longer be perceived as the opposite of everyday, tourism studies would benefit from applying theories of the everyday. In return, our knowledge on everyday would benefit from conceptualisations in tourism. There are many changes going on simultaneously, and we need to systematise our understanding thereof in order to grasp its potentials. Such possibilities exist on several levels and in several perspectives. Deep knowledge on the new tourism era can help us forward beneficial changes in sustainable tourism and it can say something general about human behaviour. This working paper aims to serve as a stepping-stone towards future discussions and theory developments in this matter.

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