Challenges to reconciling the interests of residents with those of visitors

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Coping with overtourism in Europe

Workshop

10th - 11th November 2022 in Kleve/Nijmegen

HOCHSCHULE
RHEIN-WAAL
Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences

Radboud University

Agenda

1 I still call it overtourism:
   Discourse on carrying capacity (limits)

2 Vulnerability & Resilience as key factors

3 Traditional Destination Marketing and Management (DMM)

4 Challenge: address & involve the citizens

5 Holistic approach
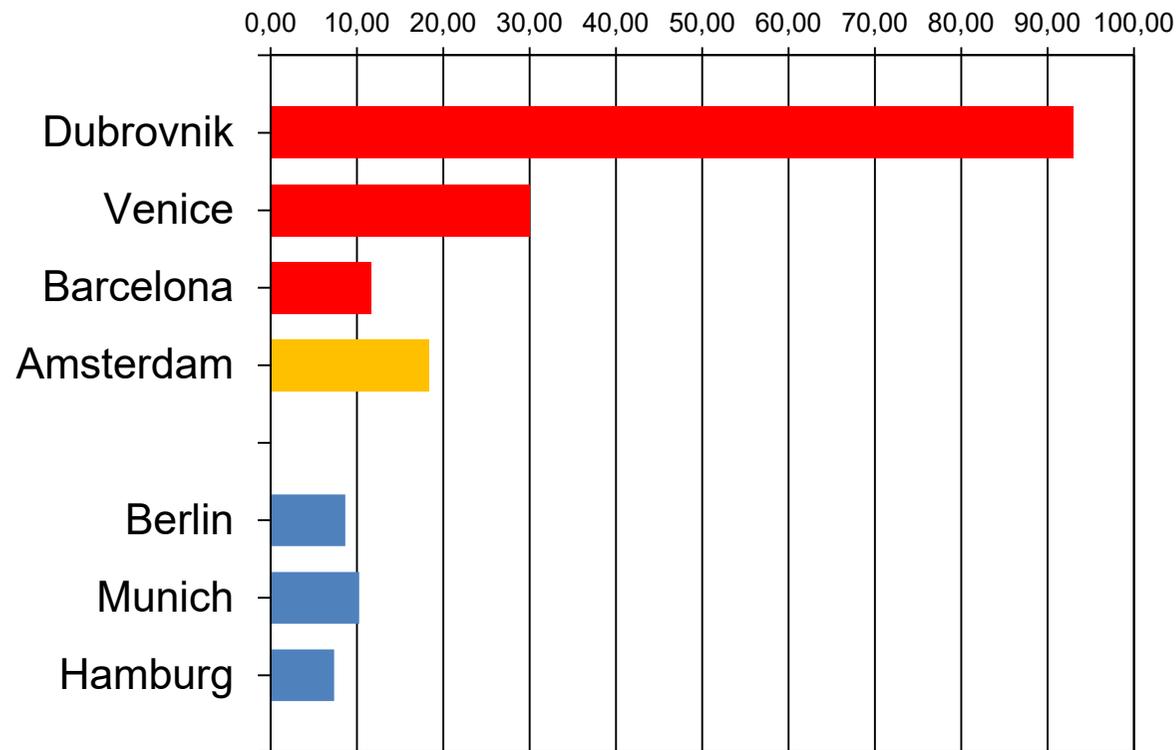
Medial Overtourism Discourse

DUBROVNIK

VENICE

BARCELONA

ARTE: Tourist Go Home (2017)

Tourism Intensity
(overnight stays/residents 2017)

Source: *ZEDNIK* 2018 & *STATISTISCHES AMT FÜR HAMBURG UND SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN* 2018

Implications from studies in Berlin & Munich

- Almost the same tourism intensity (exposure)

- But quite different reactions:

  – Berlin: heavy protests since 2011

  – Munich: very little indications of pressure
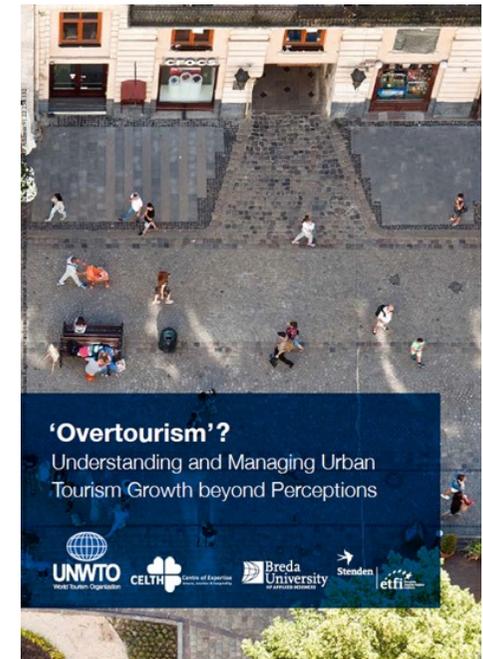
AUMSTADTION.TUMBLR.COM 2016

STORS 2012

Overtourism

- ## Physical carrying capacity limit (CROWDING)
  (just too much)

- ## Direct negative effects of tourists (ENCOUNTER)
  (congested infrastructure, noise, disturbance, irritation)

- ## Indirect effects (LIVELIHOOD)
  (structural change through tourism, competition for use)

Following: KOENS & POSTMA 2017, p. 9

UNWTO Management Approaches

1) Dispersal of visitors within the city and beyond
2) Time-based dispersal of visitors
3) Stimulate new itineraries and attractions
4) Review and adapt regulation
5) Enhance visitor's segmentation
6) Ensure local communities benefit from tourism
7) Create city experiences for both residents and visitors
8) Improve city infrastructure and facilities
9) Communicate with and engage local stakeholders
10) Communicate with and engage visitors
11) Set monitoring and response measures

Source: UNWTO 2018, p. 27 et seqq.
Koen & Postma (2017, p. 33 et seq.) and Postma & Schmücker (2017, S. 152 et seq)

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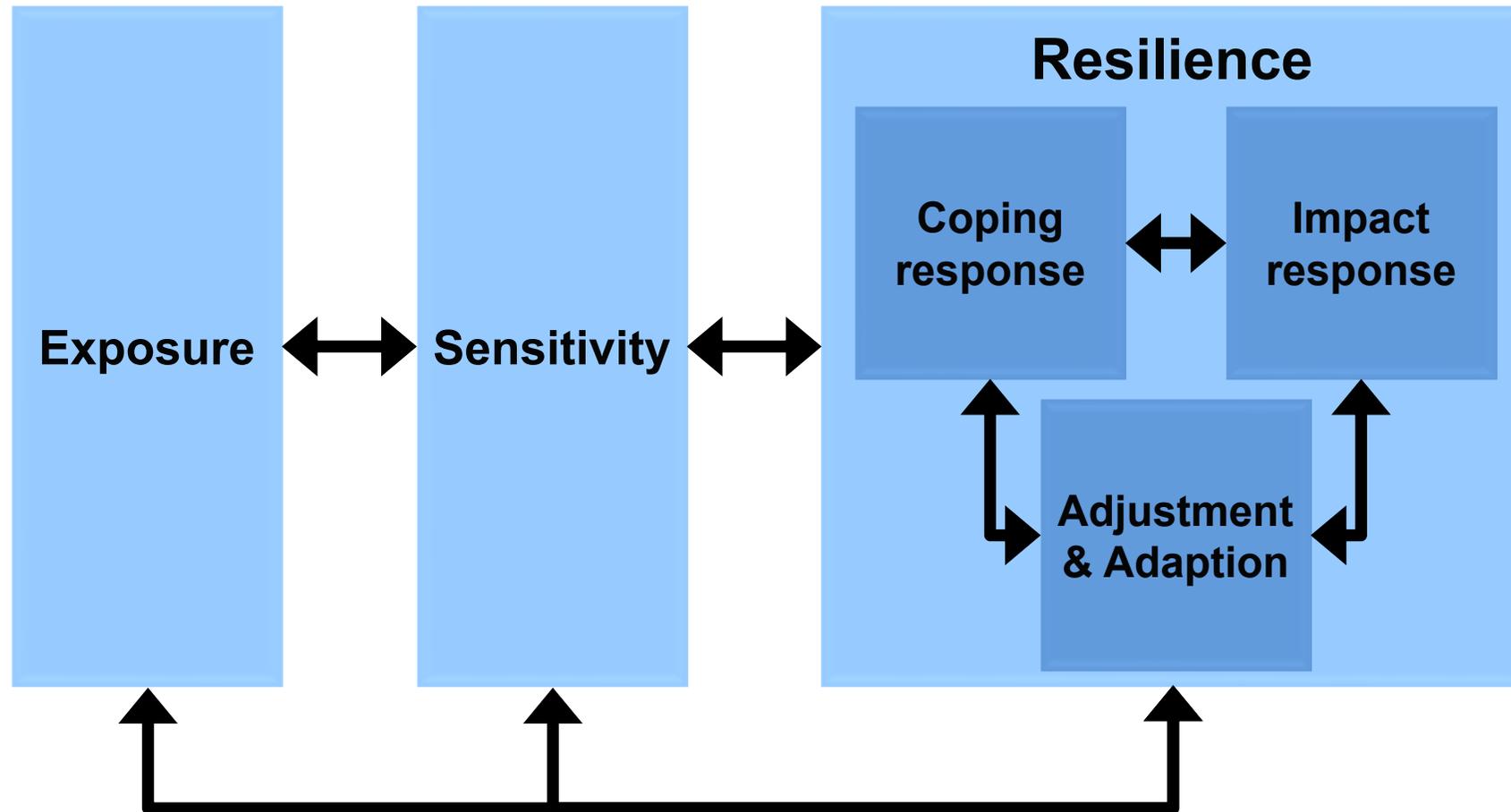impact on crowding

impact on encounter

impact on livelihood

Source: UNWTO 2018, p. 27 et seqq.
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Vulnerability/Resilience

Vulnerability influenced by

- Exposition

- Sensitivity (tolerance) and

- Resilience

    - Capacity to response

    - Capacity to cope

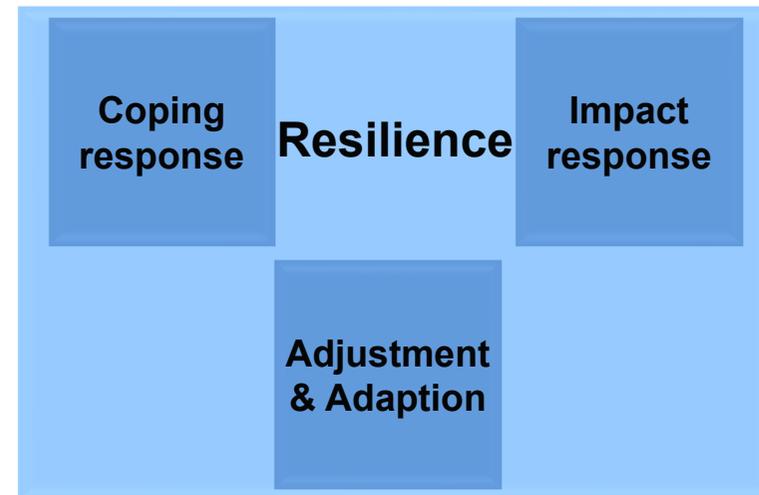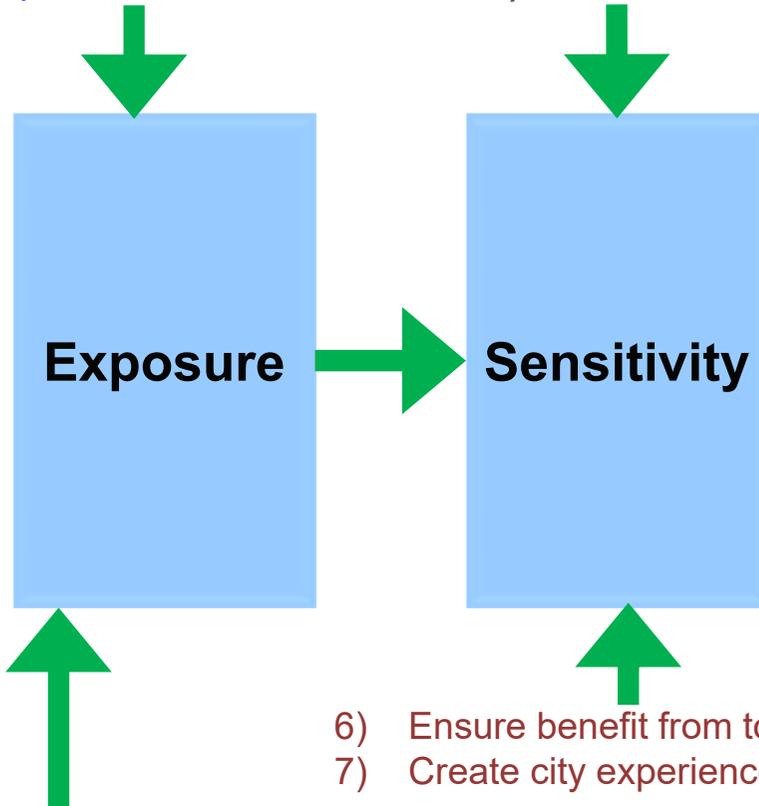   - Capacity to adapt / learn

Vulnerability

Source: own design following TURNER et al. (2003, p. 8077)

Emphasis on direct exposure reduction

5) Enhance segmentation
8) Improve infrastructure

9) Communicate with local stakeholders
11) Set monitoring

Exposure → **Sensitivity**

Coping response **Resilience** Impact response

Adjustment & Adaption

6) Ensure benefit from tourism
7) Create city experiences for all

1) Dispersal beyond the city
2) Time-based dispersal
3) New itineraries
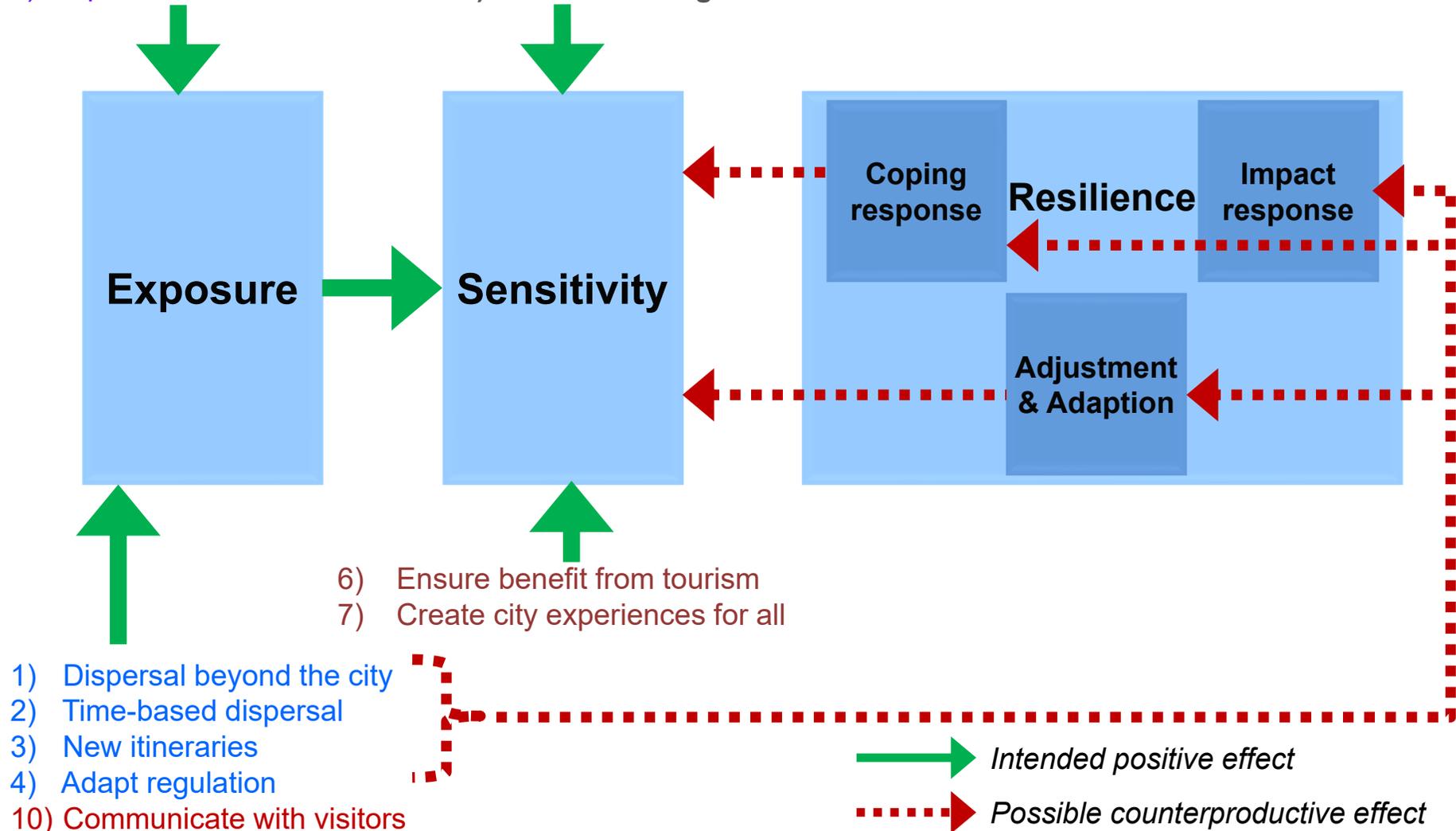4) Adapt regulation
10) Communicate with visitors

→ *Intended positive effect*

Source: own design

Emphasis on direct exposure reduction
=> Reduction of avoidance options

5) Enhance segmentation
8) Improve infrastructure

9) Communicate with local stakeholders
11) Set monitoring

Exposure

Sensitivity

Coping response

Resilience

Impact response

Adjustment & Adaption

6) Ensure benefit from tourism
7) Create city experiences for all

1) Dispersal beyond the city
2) Time-based dispersal
3) New itineraries
4) Adapt regulation
10) Communicate with visitors

Intended positive effect

Possible counterproductive effect

Implications from studies in Berlin & Munich

- Almost the same tourism intensity (exposure)

- But quite different reactions:
  - Berlin: heavy protests since 2011
  - Munich: very little indications of pressure

AUMSTADTION.TUMBLR.COM 2016

- Apart from different types of tourists and different degrees of penetration

⇒ Difference regarding frame conditions of the urban society:

STORS 2012

  - Berlin: Stress due to significant transformations and trends of marginalisation
  - Munich: quite stable and well-off ("beer garden tolerance")

➢ Level of resilience influences the sensitivity

➢ A mono-dimensional focus on mere tourism impact falls short

➢ To tackle with overtourism means we have to take the whole environmental framework into account

Let's talk about
Destination Marketing and Management
(DMM)

Destination

„Geographischer Raum (Ort, Region, Weiler), den der jeweilige Gast (oder ein Gästesegment) als Reiseziel auswählt. Sie enthält sämtliche für einen Aufenthalt notwendigen Einrichtungen für Beherbergung, Verpflegung, Unterhaltung/Beschäftigung. Sie ist damit die Wettbewerbseinheit im Incoming Tourismus, die als strategische Geschäftseinheit geführt werden muss" (Bieger und Beritelli 2013, S. 54).

*"Geographical area (place, region, hamlet) that the respective **guest** (or a guest segment) selects as a travel destination. It contains all the **accommodation, food, entertainment/occupational facilities** necessary for a stay.*
It is therefore the competitive unit in incoming tourism, which must be managed as a strategic business unit"
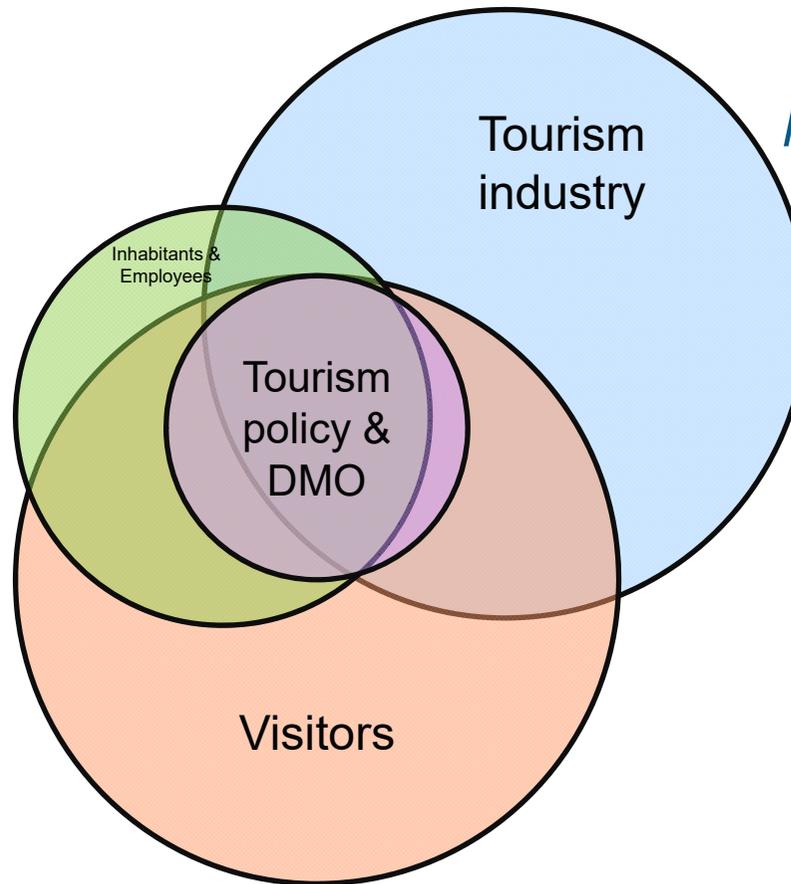
(Bieger and Beritelli 2013, p. 54).

Traditional Marketing and Management Approaches

- ## Growth oriented
  (partly mirroring the general socio-economic and political paradigm)

- ## Destinations as marketable products

- ## Focus on quality improvement

- ## Target groups as main concern

- ## Commodification of the destination: consumable product

=> Focus of the DMOs on potential visitors and the stakeholders of the tourism industry

Traditional focus

Quality of life

Quality of economic possibilities

Tourism industry

Inhabitants & Employees

Tourism policy & DMO

Visitors

Quality of experience

Source: modified following Koens & Postma 2017

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➢ vs. perception as a living environment

Involved Stakeholders

Quality of life

Quality of economic possibilities

Inhabitants & Employees

Tourism industry

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Quality of experience
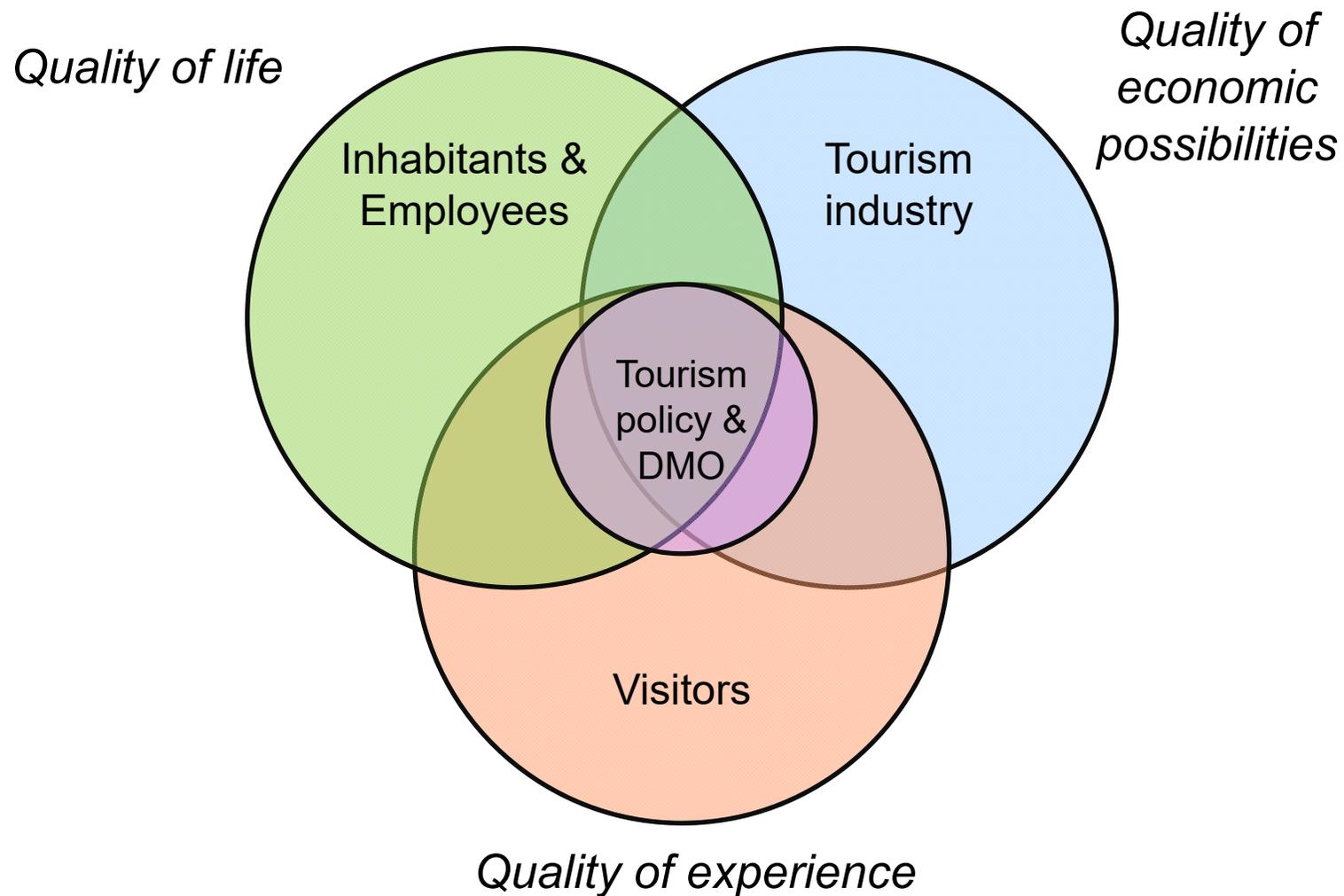
Source: Own design following KOENS & POSTMA 2017

A new paradigm for DMOs

- Abolish tourism is not an option

- Neither individual tourists nor the tourism industry to be seriously focused on the social sustainability of destinations

→ it is up to the municipal and regional DMOs to identify, consider and respect the interests of the local population in their sphere of influence, such as they have campaigned for tourism interests in the past.

Indeed, this means that the role of DMOs becomes much more complicated and extensive.

Challenge: address & involve the citizens

- Usually little interest or willingness among the population to express minor irritation or discomfort in a structured way (focus groups, round tables) as long as the situation is still regarded as "bearable"

- The local population would only express their problems and grievances once a certain threshold had been crossed (tipping point)

- However, if the local population first expresses their concern about the perceived visitor pressure and the negative effects of tourism, then the "child has usually already fallen into the well", i.e. it is usually too late to implement preventive approaches.

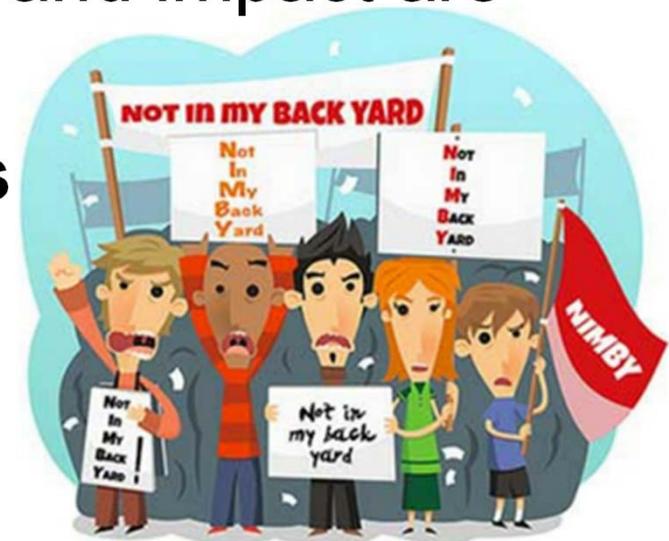# Excursus: NIMBY phenomenon

reason.com

shutterstock.com

- almost any change is often regarded as negative

- and can lead to protests

- discussion is often very emotional

- depends heavily on the perceived effects

- sometimes the objective impact and impact are exaggerated

=> don't absolutize articulations

- protests can also be prompted by a general uneasiness

•goodhousing.org

Stay on the pulse of the residents

➤ of course (traditional): systematic **quantitative surveys** to detect indications concerning irritations or sentiments of discomfort = first early warning tool
(Repeat at fixed intervals to detect changes)

➤ Complaint analysis: e.g. letters to the editor

➤ qualitative approaches with much more comprehensive activities in order to follow the development of attitudes

   ➤ seek intensive direct and personal contact and interaction with local civil society (local NGOs, civic organisations and interest groups)

   ➤ Participate an be present at local festivities; get into informal contact

➤ early warning symptoms have hardly been systematically documented and analysed – or even really taken into account

Activate the residents

Low threshold offers (gamification)

➢ Idea workshops
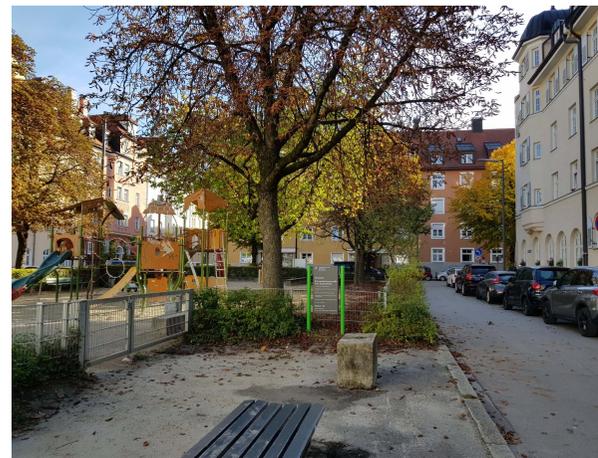
- Concrete, result and benefit-oriented
- No abstract participation
- Communicating that the local administration cares about their interests and their benefits

Promoting a holistic community discourse

The focus on mere (over-) tourism aspects is not sufficient (falls short)

- Indirect approaches targeting on local pride and identification (social capital)

- Take into account far-reaching tensions in urban society

- Stress and pressure in an urban society – e.g. due to transformation processes in other urban economic or social field – influences the resilience level

  – Housing market

  – Disruptive changes

- Start at the root of the state of mind of an urban society .

Lessons Learned

- A comprehensive Tourism Governance Concept necessary
- New paradigm: interests of the citizens
- Alternative options, retreat and privacy => coping options

- BUT: Overtourism is much more than a purely sectoral tourism problem
- Problem "housing market" => misappropriation of living space
- New approaches to address, integrate and active the citizens
- Sociocultural, economic and demographic frame conditions have to be taken into account
- ➜ part of a holistic, integrative and spatially differentiated urban development policy

Thank you for your attention ...
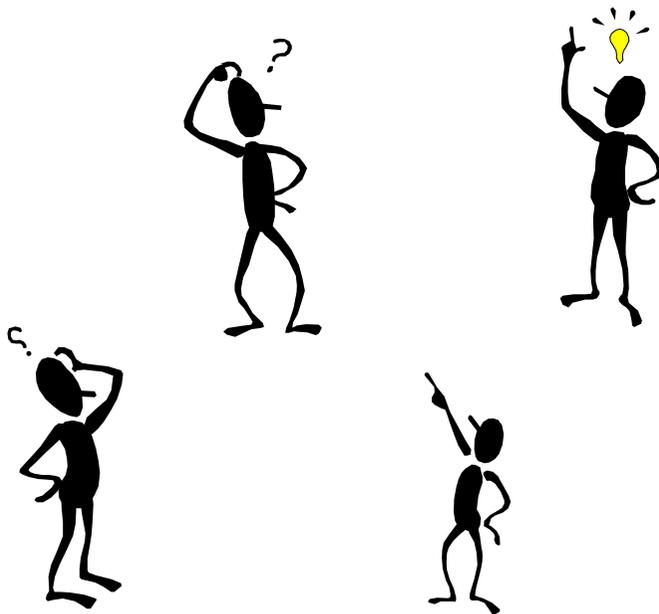
... and I look forward to a lively discussion