"If not now, when then? Reimagining great tourism or inevitable decline"

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15 - 16 November 2021
Theses and key questions

1. **Growth**: indispensable, but *where* is *meaningful growth* coming from?

2. **Sustainability**: *social* sustainability first and begins with *moderation*

3. **Entanglement**: „You can‘t remember what you can‘t connect“ (E. Musk). Connected and interdependent tech = increased vulnerability, and the battle for resources and commodities

4. **Ephemerality**. Every day a new world. Future shock → Present shock. *New needs and wants grow faster than new solutions* → more cultural and economic adaptation stress (energy, food, productivity, mental pressure)

5. **Soft Power**. Europe becoming more a tourist and agriculture hub, in sum a winner (but: no hard power, only little smart power).

6. **Narratives**. *Who controls the narratives? Who really acts? Who has the lead? What political entities create order? Who else?*

Source: IMF, Reda Cherif, Marc Engber, and Fuad Hasanov
November 2020
Growth narratives 1978-2019

Figure 12. The “Washington Constellation” Narrative

Source: Authors’ calculations.
“Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.”

Edward Abbey, Natural Scientist, Author (1927-1989)

... as it is with debt for the debts sake.
Debt imperialism is the new expression of colonialism.
Consumer model 2030: Challenges in the W.I.R.E.D world of growing complacency, immoderateness and overindulgence.

1. The right definition of convenience (nearly) always wins
2. Non-consumption (or just less consumption) is unsaleable
3. Total consumption is on the rise even with stagnant/declining population and more conscious consumption.
4. Dematerialisation not happening. Digitization is magic, but no solution to energetic challenges. Digitization = new industrialization + more energy consumption
“Consumer spending dropping by 25% today would just bring us back to 2010“

JB McKinnon, The Day the Worlds stops Shopping: How ending consumerism saves the environment and ourselves. 2021
European tourism / hospitality business: Still great assets and what’s at stake

1. Soft power +++      Smart power – –      Hard power – –

2. Four visions needed:
   Coastal, urban, and alpine, enhanced by visions of virtual tourism
General Covid-19 learnings & some confirmed long-term trends

1. **Remote everything**: Life, Work, Production, Shopping, Shipping

2. **Social Distancing & Dedensification**: Danger of physical encounter, “Unbundeling” of sensuality, reduced to “seeing” and “hearing”

3. **Alone together**: more weak ties, but also more solo living → communities?

4. **Infodemic**: Zoomers, live-tickers, breaking news, real time orientation. “Total sensory overload” – decreasing ability to differentiate, faster imitation & mimicry

5. **“Placelessness” and comeback of localisation**: Humans are “residing beings”, spatially anchored and “at home”. Do we need roots?

6. **“Generation Covid-19”**: Living without personal touch with peers
Retreat to small, virtual, and closed spaces. We’re becoming an indoor species, cavemen again. Private physical-digital lockdown & hallucinogenic everyday live
“The finding that emerges is that we are basically an indoor species. In a modern society, total time outdoors is the most insignificant part of the day, often so small that it barely shows up in the total.”

Wayne R. Ott, Stanford University, Dept of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Source: GDI©Research 2020, pictures velux.ch/de/indoorgeneration
2 Monopolies: Cloud & Platforms and Land & Concrete. Construction: going up – but also going down

- 3D replacing 2D life with narrow focus street / rail
- From Google Maps to *Mirror World* (David Gelernter)
- Vertical Cities, Vertical Airports
- Underground Shopping & Logistics

Positioning of the Alpine World – Radical Authenticity as the ultimate luxury in climate change times:

Moderate climate, air quality, sense of freshness, morning coolness, touching water, smell of snowfall – can you make an unforgettable experience out of that?

How much civilization does that need?
What is about to peak now?

- Peak *freedom to do, to be, to go* wherever you want (except if you’re a billionaire)?
- Peak *frictionless travel*?
- Peak *regular work*?
- Peak *staff*?
- Peak *all you can eat buffet*?
- Peak *role central bank money*?
- Peak *cheap*?
- Peak *peace*?

Source: GDI©Research 2021
Lessons learned for tourism & hospitality

1. End of seasonality as we know it – what makes sense, what doesn’t

2. More indoor people – retreat in different kinds of caves

3. Mental mood challenged – Interior design for our soul

4. Nature is fully indifferent against us – enjoy it differently (from your windows)

5. Blur and hybridity – entangled eco systems and habitats (love microbiomes)
Long-term studies and sustainability for nations: Happiness $\rightarrow$ small, rich, safe, cool . . . and (quite) old . . .

Ranking Happiness 2020

1. Finland
2. Denmark
3. Switzerland
4. Iceland
5. Norway
6. Netherlands
7. Sweden
8. New Zealand
9. Austria
10. Luxembourg
11. Canada

Source: World Happiness Reports, Sustainable Development Solutions Network, UN
Who are the change agents?

1. Quality of governments 2030? State of democracy?
2. Markets / strong entrepreneurs plus what kind of externalities?
3. Techno-Optimism (Gates, Bezos, Musk etc.) ok, but don’t be politically naive
4. More basic research = necessary. But needs a lot of time.
5. More regulation inevitable, but might kill innovative initiatives
6. Rich nations challenged: Less consumption over a certain period of time?
7. Experts? More experts inevitable, but overall just zero sum games?
List of recommendations (based on my personal experience)

1. Tourism is primarily a social event, time spent well and experience of places and spaces, preferably with humans.
2. Life is the art of clever repetition. Not the endless new new thing. There’s no better experience than coming home. Good arrival is slow.
3. Go for a longer stay. The further away, the longer the stay.
5. Below urban 5* Hotels = still a lot of differentiation possible.
6. „You can’t fix the city as long as the souls are a mess.“
7. Tribes of different kinds will determine the coming years. Regular customers will be more appreciated. But regular customers need regular staff.
8. Too much convenience is damaging. People who come should be prepared to experience sthg – at least a bit.