

## Second city travelling

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<p>The consumption of tourism as a leisure activity has increased dramatically in the past 70 years. As a consequence, both the tourism industry and tourist destinations suffer from environmental impact issues of over-tourism. In recent years, tourism-related businesses have tried to develop solutions to these problems. The second city travelling trend could be a future solution to the problem of over-tourism.</p> <p>The objective of this thesis is to discover if second city travelling will prevail in the near future. It also concentrates on finding out how much travellers know about the concept, whether they consider the positive and negative impact they can have when choosing a destination and if they are willing to take a second city travel approach in the future.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of this thesis consists of the definition of second city travelling, the possible origin of the concept, and the current state of the tourism industry. Moreover, it covers the impact of second city travelling, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of this travel trend in particular. The research was conducted with a quantitative research method, a questionnaire survey.</p> <p>Based on the results of the research, second city travelling as a concept is still quite unfamiliar, but the majority of people believe that they might have done it in the past without knowing. The author has categorised travellers' motives into two different groups, altruistic reasons and egoistic reasons. The main finding in this thesis was that travellers would be more likely to consider taking a second city travel approach for egoistic reasons rather than altruistic ones. The results give a thorough overview on the thoughts of travellers regarding the concept of second city travelling.</p> <p>This thesis was written in November 2020.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> second city travelling, overtourism, sustainable tourism, authenticity	

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# 1 Introduction

Since the beginning of time, people have tried to predict the future. They want to know how life will be in one year, five years, ten years, or even fifty years. In other words, people want to be prepared for what is coming next. This desire to predict the future is part of human nature.

Thanks to technological advances and analysis methods, predicting the future has become a little easier. Nowadays, trend analysts or forecasters have replaced crystal balls and tea leaves, responsible for identifying new trends and predicting how those trends will change the industries (unsurprisingly the latter is also more reliable). This applies to the fashion industry as well as to the tourism industry. However, predicting trends is easier said than done: "Forecasts in the industry are nowadays rarely focusing any longer than three to six months ahead of time, since the future ahead of that is marked by too great of an uncertainty" (Nordin 2005).

The reason behind this is the following: while the medieval farmer on his field did not even know the word "trend," and even if he did, he would have been too busy to care about it harvesting crops for some spoiled monarch, the situation today could not be more different. Nowadays, trends change faster than a Finn can say the word sauna. This makes it incredibly hard to predict events or things in the far future, as usually a lot of things are happening very quickly. Even though the means of prediction have increased significantly, so have the speed and precision with which these predictions are demanded.

In conclusion, we do not live in a society of modern fortune-tellers. Predictions are being made quickly, and because of that, they are usually uncertain.

Rather, the world or the industries are always in need of more accurate trend predictions, especially on topics of high relevance but not very well researched. This is where this thesis comes into play.

In 2019, Booking.com, one of the world's leading digital travel companies, commissioned independent research on travellers. A total of 22,000 respondents were polled across 29 markets to predict the top travel trends for 2020. "From identifying these 'second cities' to fighting over-tourism, to offering personalised travel recommendations and ensuring the most diverse selection of accommodations for guests from around the world, travellers want to be prepared and supported for what's to come in 2020 and beyond," explained Arjan Dijk, the company's senior vice president (Booking.com 2019).

The survey shows that these trends are of the utmost importance for travellers and the tourism industry which wants to provide attractive offers for their customers. Due to the novelty of this more ecological way of thinking of modern-day tourists, besides the survey mentioned above, information on this topic is more than sparse. This is why the researcher decided to get out the crystal ball and try to get a glimpse of the future.

## **1.1 Research problem**

This thesis focuses on second city travelling and its future as a travel trend. The main research question in this thesis is:

- Is second city travelling going to prevail in the near future?

Moreover, the sub-questions in this thesis are:

- What is the most accurate definition for second city travelling?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of second city travelling?
- Do people know about the concept of second city travelling? If so, are people aware of the positive and negative impact of second city travelling?
- Are people willing to take a second city travel approach in the future?

This thesis has no commissioner. However, the information of this thesis and its research results are relevant for both travellers and tourist destinations. Travellers will be able to decide where and how to travel by learning about the positive and negative impact their trips can have. On the other hand, tourist destinations will be able to put together new strategies best to accommodate the potential tourists' needs and wishes.

## **1.2 Scope and choice of the topic**

The scope of this thesis is travelling people who travel at least once a year. Modern-day travellers have high expectations when it comes to their future travels. More people are looking for authenticity in their tourism experiences, and on the way, they want to reduce overtourism and protect the environment. With certain elements such as technology and infrastructure developments, it is possible to meet these more demanding expectations.

The author became interested in second city traveling when researching 2020's travel trends. After reading about the topic, the author realised to have unconsciously done second city travelling at least once in the past. Instead of travelling to a better-known beach destination in Mexico, such as Cancún or Tulum, she has travelled multiple times to Holbox, a small island in Quintana Roo. The author was decisive about finding out more

information regarding this under-researched topic and to help others learn about second city travelling by sharing the following discoveries.

## **2 Second city travelling**

Last year, second city travelling was selected as one of the top travel trends for 2020 by Booking.com. Since then, this concept has had increasing spotlight. The number of people talking about it has been slowly growing. However, the author believes that with time, more companies, travel gurus and travellers will embrace the concept of second city travelling and they will bring more awareness to it. (Booking.com 2019)

According to Booking.com's survey, more than 54% of worldwide travellers want to be part of reducing overtourism, and 51% would change their original destination to a city that is lesser-known but is still similar to their first choice if they knew it would make a smaller environmental impact (Booking.com 2019). By looking at the figures, it is clear that for modern-day travellers the protection of the planet is and will be an increasingly important priority.

Nevertheless, minimising the negative impact is not their only wish. They also want to positively affect the local community of the destination they are travelling to. They want to boost these smaller cities' economies, and they want to integrate into the culture. (Booking.com 2019; Prescott 2020; Windy.App 2020).

Second city travelling involves these aspects mentioned in the survey above and more: This travel approach has some additional benefits such as the possibility of having a crowd-free vacation, lower travel expenses, and being treated better as a tourist. (Bertrand 2020). However, the effects of second city travelling are not purely positive. These points will be discussed further in chapter 4.

In the following subchapters, the author will introduce the concept of second city travelling, the history of city travelling, and the current state of the tourism industry.

### **2.1 Definition of second city travelling**

The term "second city" is generally used to mention a city with the second-highest population in a country. A second city is not usually the first and most obvious choice for a foreign tourist when travelling. However, it still offers the culture, food, and other local attractions in large quantities (Lifestyle Desk, 2020). For example, if the traveller is thinking of visiting countries like Italy, France, or the Netherlands, they will most likely consider travelling to Rome, Paris, or Amsterdam. Nevertheless, if this traveller wants to avoid over-

crowded cities, they might want to go to a second city in these countries like Florence, Lyon, or Utrecht (Bui 2020).

Like any new concept, second city travelling does not have an official definition yet. Nevertheless, Booking.com and most websites define it in the following way: "Second city travelling is the exploration of lesser-known destinations in a bid to reduce over-tourism and protect the environment" (Booking.com 2019). According to this definition, this travel trend's focus helps to mitigate the negative effects derived from mass tourism.

Dia Adams (2019) proposed another simpler definition of second city travelling. She defines second city travelling as travelling to a destination that does not immediately come into mind when a country is mentioned. (Adams 2019).

However, second city travelling entails other matters besides over-tourism and the environmental impact. The author believes that the most used (Adams and Booking.com) definition of this concept could be more clear and complete by adding what a second city is. The suggested definition for second city travelling would be the following: second city travelling is the exploration of lesser-known destinations to reduce over-tourism and protect the environment. A second city can be any lesser-known destination that might not be the first or most evident choice for foreign tourists but still offers the culture, food, and attractions one seeks when traveling abroad.

## **2.2 History of second city travelling**

To understand the possible origin of second city travelling as a travel trend, it is first necessary to discuss the origin of mass tourism, since that is what started the emergence of second city travelling.

Mass tourism began during the Modern Era (1950-onwards). In the first half of the 20th century, an American entrepreneur and inventor created the paid vacation, thinking that the annual break from work for employees would boost productivity. At the beginning of the 21st century, nearly all industrialised countries' workers and middle classes chose their vacation time to travel (Cook, Hsu & Taylor 2017).

Mass tourism increased after World War II (1939-1945). Millions of people encountered different and exotic locations during their military service, and they were longing to share their experiences with their family and friends on their return home (Cook, Hsu & Taylor 2017).



In the 1950s, hotels and motels expanded quickly with the recently embraced concept of franchising. Another development introduced in the 1950s was jet travel, which became more popular in the 1960s, consequently increasing domestic and international travel. The credit card's birth in the 1950s made travel a more worry-free experience since travellers did not have to carry cash anymore. They could purchase anything they wanted without worrying about the currency exchange. Up to the present time, credit cards are the most chosen method for paying all the expenses regarding travel (Stainton 2020a).

In the 20th century, mass tourism brought two different groups of travellers. The first is the group of mass tourists who purchase packaged tours and follow an agenda prepared and organised by tour operators. The second group is the individual mass tourists. This group visits famous attractions independently but utilises tourism services recommended in the mass media. They want to be fully immersed in the destination's offerings and give back to them when they are capable of (Cook, Hsu & Taylor 2017).

The tourism industry has always brought many opportunities (employment generation, volunteer tourism, establishment of nature reserves) and challenges (overtourism, infrastructure cost, increase in prices). With time people have created new forms of tourism as an alternative to these challenges.

Even though there is no completely accurate information regarding the origin of second city travelling, this new form of tourism most likely appeared as an alternative to issues like overtourism and mass tourism. The concept of overtourism was created and later trademarked by the internet travel website Skift in 2016 (UNWTO 2018). Nevertheless, as many researchers on overtourism have stated, this phenomenon has existed for a long time in specific touristic destinations (Dodds & Butler 2019). Thus, it is very challenging to give an exact date or time of the appearance of second city travelling.

However, it can be assumed that second city travelling came into existence during the late 20th century and the early 21st century, as this was the time when overtourism became more imminent. By then, second city travel was still an unnamed and scientifically undiscovered approach to travelling, but it existed in the shadows and ever so slightly became more popular until it finally got more and more attention by researchers and tourists alike in the past couple of years.

### **2.3 The current state of the tourism industry**

By now, the devastating effects of COVID-19 on the tourism industry are clear. Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, published a report containing data provided by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to measure the mortifying impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had and still has on global tourism (UNWTO 2020a). The report states that up to 120 million direct tourism jobs are at risk and estimates a loss of US\$910 billion to US\$1.2 trillion in exports from tourism (international visitor's spending) this year, returning to levels of 20 years ago (UNWTO 2020b).

The World Tourism Organization stated in the World Tourism Barometer publication (2020c), "UNWTO calls for the need to reopen tourism in a responsible, safe, coordinated and seamless manner, as travel restrictions are lifted. Restoring confidence and trust in the sector remains crucial". The situation is seriously affecting most tourism-related businesses, causing many to close for an undetermined period of time, which puts them at risk of bankruptcy. To avoid this and the dismissal of many people, several companies have decided to reopen their doors but are taking many precautions to reduce possible infections.

The publication shows different scenarios for 2021-2024. It estimates a sturdy recovery of 50% of pre-pandemic tourism in 2021 based on the presumption of the pandemic's positive evolution, notable advancement in traveller's confidence, and a significant lifting of travel restrictions around the middle of the year. However, returning to the 2019 international arrivals levels will take between two and a half and four years (UNWTO 2020c).

Based on these numbers, Asia and the Pacific were the first regions to suffer the impact of COVID-19 with a decrease of 72% in arrivals in the first half of the year. The second region was Europe, with a 66% decline, followed by the Americas with -55%, Africa and the Middle East with -57%. The pandemic hit especially hard in Europe since it is the world's most visited destination. (UNWTO 2020c). The World Travel and Tourism Council (2020a) has predicted in August that the lack of travellers would cause many European countries to lose billions of euros this year. The United Kingdom is expected to lose £22 billion, France could lose €48 billion, Spain €40 billion, and Germany over €38 billion (WTTC 2020a). As a continent of first world countries, Europe has more ways to cope with the situation than other continents.

However, following UNWTO's seventh report on travel restrictions, since September, 115 destinations (53% of global destinations) have softened their travel restrictions for international tourism. It was a growth of 28 destinations compared to July 2020.

According to recent surveys, people are still willing to travel after the COVID-19 spring restraint. Nevertheless, when they choose a destination, they look for low tourist density and high sanitary conditions. They prefer destinations with outdoor activities and contact with nature, far away from the big cities (DNA 2020).

Jane Sun, the CEO of Trip.com Group, identified three key trends on how travelers are approaching their journeys now (BBC 2020a):

1. People are very prudent about health guidelines. They work closely with their partners to ensure that hotels and airlines are safe partners.
2. People prefer to travel within smaller groups, such as family or good friends because they feel safer.
3. While people used to prefer traveling abroad over traveling to domestic destinations, this preference is now reversed: Journeys within one's own country are perceived to be safer as opposed to a potentially risky and infectious trip abroad.

Most industry experts are talking about the "new normal" and how the hospitality and tourism-related businesses have and still need to change to make the customers/travellers feel safe when travelling in the future. The World Travel and Tourism Council, in collaboration with governments, health experts, and other industry associations, are working together to reach effective recovery protocols by creating action plans that improve the sector's recovery efforts. "The protocols align the private sector behind common standards to ensure the safety of its workforce and travellers as the sector shifts to a new normal." (WTTC 2020b).

Moreover, the World Travel and Tourism Council has also created a "Safe Travels" stamp that enables travellers and other travel and tourism shareholders to recognize destination authorities and companies worldwide that have implemented health and hygiene protocols consistent with the WTTC's Global Safe Travel Protocols. Restaurants, hotels, airports, tour operators and other tourism related businesses can use the stamp once they have implemented the health and hygiene protocols provided by WTTC. In this way, travellers can experience "safe travels" (WTTC, 2020c).

According to several industry experts and researchers, many of the changes that have been implemented since the Covid-19 outbreak will most likely stay (BBC 2020a; BBC 2020b; Politico 2020). They believe that even if a vaccine would be made tomorrow, these

changes will not go away. Some examples are contactless check-in at hotels and airports, virtual tours of museums, and virtual experiences (BBC 2020a).

The tourism industry has suffered severely from the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of jobs have been lost and millions more are at risk. While there are new concepts being developed to match the rapidly changing situation, they will by no means be able to avert the tremendous crisis that the industry has just begun facing. In order to restore travel to (almost) pre-pandemic levels, here needs to be an innovative concept. Second city travel has the chance to fill this gap and at least aid with the Sisyphean rescue of the tourism industry.

### **3 Impact of second city travelling**

Second city travelling can positively impact both first and second cities. It is believed that this travel trend could be a good solution to overtourism, which has been a major problem in several big cities worldwide. Also, second city travelling could be associated with what we know today as sustainable tourism.

On the other hand, second city travelling can also negatively impact both first and second cities. This approach of travel could bring economic challenges in first cities and structural and cultural changes in second cities.

This chapter will focus on those possible impacts that second city travelling could have on first and second cities.

#### **3.1 Overtourism**

Second city travelling could be one possible solution to the problem of overtourism. However, before a deeper look into said potential solution can be taken, it is essential to understand the concept of overtourism.

The World Tourism Organization (2018) defines overtourism as "the impact of tourism on a destination or parts thereof, which excessively influences the perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors' experiences negatively". At the same time, Harold Goodwin (2019), an academic on the sustainable tourism field, describes overtourism as the "destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably". He also explains it in the following way: "overtourism is the opposite of responsible tourism, which is about using tourism to make better places to live in and better places to visit". Overtourism is not a phenomenon that is only happening in Europe, it is also in Asia and several developing countries. (Goodwin 2019).

According to Harold Goodwin (2019), there are various causes of overtourism. The first one is the emerging middle classes who are consuming more travel. These people want to see and experience how other people live. The second cause is the low cost of travel. Nowadays, it is more affordable to travel due to the increase of low-cost airlines and affordable trains and coaches. Next, he mentions the disintermediation and peer-to-peer platforms like Airbnb. These platforms have made travel more accessible for people since they are a more economical option than other types of accommodation. However, these

accommodations are usually located in residential neighbourhoods, which results in a series of problems. Specifically, the main consequences in the real estate sector are increasing rents, the dislocation of people with low incomes and the disturbing effects on residential neighbourhoods. (Goodwin 2019).

The fourth cause is that public spaces are free, which means that tourists do not pay taxes for the maintenance and repair of the places they visit like the citizens of those destinations do. Another cause is the strategies to distribute tourists. These strategies tend to disperse tourists to less-visited residential neighbourhoods, increasing tourism impact on people's homes (crowding, queuing). The sixth cause is the seasonality clusters of tourism and the concentrated numbers. Some businesses in certain destinations want to extend the season. By doing this, both businesses and communities would not have a break from tourists. Finally, Goodwin talks about the huge number of people employed. Tourism industry businesses and associations proclaim the economic importance of tourism and they generally show the number of people employed. Nevertheless, tourism and hospitality-related jobs are usually low paid and perceived as temporary, casual, insecure, and without a future. (Goodwin 2019).

The eighth cause is the honeypots, trendy places that are hard to demarket. Tourists want to see the cities' main attractions and take pictures of them. The people who market the destination use these attractions to get more tourists, and later on, to get rewarded for it. Lastly, he mentions the carrying capacity of the means of transport. Presently, transportation can carry more travellers and travel more often, making it more difficult for destinations to control the masses. (Goodwin 2019).

The World Travel & Tourism Council and McKinsey & Company (2017) studied the effects of overtourism. The results were summarized into five challenges related to overtourism. The first challenge is alienated local residents: Destinations' residents are worried about tourism's negative effects such as higher rent prices, noise, rearrangement of local retail, and modifying the neighbourhood's personality. Next is the challenge of a degraded tourist experience: Many tourists' experiences have gotten worse because of queues and crowding. The third challenge is the overloaded infrastructure: Visitors create challenges in energy consumption and waste management since the infrastructure is also used for other non-tourism related activities. The fourth challenge is the damage to nature: Tourists also impact the environment of the destinations. Some examples are pollution, overuse of natural resources, harm to wildlife and poor waste management. Last is the challenge of threats to culture and heritage: Some of the world's cultural heritage sites are being damaged by tourists who misbehave, for instance, the vandalism caused by tourists in the ruins of Machu Picchu. (WTTC & McKinsey & Company 2017).

By taking a second city travelling approach, the number of visitors in big or first cities would most likely decrease significantly, helping with the challenges mentioned above. Consequently, the number of visitors in the lesser-known or second cities would increase. Eventually, there could be overcrowding or overtourism in second cities if visitors' numbers exceed the tourism maximum capacity. The UNWTO (2018) defines tourism carrying capacity as "the maximum number of people who can visit a tourist destination simultaneously without causing destruction of the physical, economic, and sociocultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction."

The goal that can be achieved through second city travelling is to divide tourism more evenly and over more destinations. Second city tourism strives to enable even bigger cities to not exceed their tourist maximum by making other cities and locations more attractive to travellers, thus drawing them away from the stereotypical tourist magnets.

In conclusion, if second city travelling will not only prevail in the future, but also become a trend supported and practiced by a considerable amount of travellers, it will solve or at least partially solve the problem of overtourism.

### **3.2 Sustainable tourism**

Second city travel is a way to practice sustainable tourism. The UNWTO defines sustainable development as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities." To make tourism more sustainable, it is important to take these impacts and needs into account in the planning, development, and operation of tourism. It is a constant improvement process applied to both business and leisure tourism (UNEP and WTO, 2005).

In 1991, the Worldwide Fund for Nature and Tourism Concern indicated ten principles for sustainable tourism. The first principle is using resources sustainably. It is essential to use all types of resources in a sustainable way to conserve them. It also helps businesses in the long-term. Then, there is the principle of reducing over-consumption and waste. By reducing over-consumption and waste, destinations are able to save costs of restoring long-term environmental damage. It also keeps the quality of tourism. (Stainton 2020b).

The third principle is about maintaining biodiversity. It is crucial for long-term sustainable tourism to maintain and promote natural, social and cultural diversity. Additionally, it produces a resilient base for the tourism industry. The next principle is to integrate tourism into planning. Destinations that incorporate tourism development in their strategic planning

framework which tackles environmental impact assessments have longer-term viability of tourism. (Stainton 2020b).

The fifth principle is supporting local economies. When tourism assists many local economic activities and calculates the environmental costs and values, it protects the economies and evades environmental damage. The sixth principle is involving local communities. The quality of the tourism experience gets better when local communities are fully involved in the tourism sector. (Stainton 2020b).

Next on the list is the principle of consulting stakeholders and the public. The tourism industry, local communities, institutions and organizations can work together to solve future conflicts of interest. The eighth principle is training staff. The quality of the tourism experience advances when businesses train their staff with sustainable tourism practices. (Stainton 2020b).

Marketing tourism responsibly is another principle. Both customer satisfaction and respect for the destination's environment increase when marketing gives responsible information to tourists. The tenth and last principle is undertaking research. The industry is constantly conducting research, collecting data and analysing it to resolve problems and benefit the destinations, the customers and the industry. (Stainton 2020b).

Second city travelling and sustainable tourism share similar principles. The first one is principle number five on the list mentioned above, supporting local economies. By taking a second city approach to travel, tourists support or boost the lesser-known cities' economy. For example, consuming several products or services during their stay. Principle number six also applies to second city tourism. The smaller the community, the easier it is to involve them and make not only the big investor's voice, but also the voice of the fisherman and the farmer heard. The point shared by sustainable tourism and second city travel is principle nine, marketing tourism responsibly. Tourism industry companies could use their marketing channels to give information regarding the possible impact, either positive or negative, travellers can have to those destinations.

It is impossible for a travel trend to share all the principles laid out above. Some of them are meant for companies (such as number eight), some for the tourists (number two) and some for the authorities (number four) participating in the process of tourism. Second city travel, however, shares basically all the principles with sustainable tourism that it can based on its nature as a trend.

In conclusion, second city travelling ought to be considered a sub-form of sustainable tourism and as an approach to doing more sustainable tourism practices.



### 3.3 Economic challenges in “first cities”

Second city travelling could affect big or first cities' economies, especially in destinations that strongly depend on tourism. One of Italy's most touristic cities is used as an example of over dependence on tourism. The city of Venice is one of the most touristic cities in Europe. Every year more than 20 million tourists visit the city, contributing \$3.3 billion a year. Of its 250,000 inhabitants, approximately 50,000 residents live in the city centre, and 25,000 work in the tourism industry. (Momigliano 2020).

The city of Venice is famous worldwide for its weeklong Carnival. The Carnival is considered the most important event of the year for the city's economy, attracting three million visitors and bringing more than three billion euros in revenue each year. However, this year's Carnival was cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak in the country. This was considered the start of the economic crisis for the city of Venice. (Ghiglione 2020)

Another example of the impact tourism has in big cities is Barcelona, the most visited city in Spain. In 2017, the city of Barcelona had over 30 million visitors. The University of Girona estimated that the aggregate turnover for tourism lies between 8 billion euros and 9.7 billion euros, representing between 10% and 12% of the city's GNP, and generating between 96,000 and 120,000 jobs, 14% of total employment in the city. (Goodwin 2018).

This year, due to COVID-19, the tourism sector has lost 850 million euros over the course of six months. Around 75% of Barcelona's hotels are closed due to the restrictive measures regarding the coronavirus pandemic. Only 25% of hotels were opened in Barcelona during the summer, which had an occupancy rate of only 10%. In August, approximately 3,200 customers stayed in hotels every day, compared to 58,000 in August of 2019. Hoteliers in Barcelona have been asking the authorities for financial support. Jordi Mestre, the head of the Barcelona hoteliers Association told the reporters: "The situation is dramatic, tragic one. The hotel sector is on the verge of survival." (Shishlo 2020).

What is happening to Venice and Barcelona's cities also happens in other big or first cities in the world. The problem is that these cities and even some countries are highly dependent on tourism. In the examples mentioned above, the cause of the decrease in tourism was the coronavirus's spread. Nevertheless, the same problem could flourish in the future as a consequence of second city travelling. If millions of people suddenly changed their original plans to travel to a second city instead of a first city, the tourism sector in those first cities would decrease drastically. Millions or billions of euros would be lost, thousands of people would lose their jobs, and many businesses would have no other choice than to close their doors forever. It is crucial to find a balance between no tourism and overtourism in cities around the world.

### **3.4 Structural and cultural changes in second cities**

Second city travelling could cause structural and cultural changes in second cities, since a meeting and maybe mixing of potentially different cultures might not be without consequences. Shahzalal (2016) identified seven ways, tourism might impact a culture: acculturation effects, hybrid culture, cultural commodification, cultural preservation, building institutional infrastructure and motivating collectivism.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2020) defines acculturation as "the cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture." As an example of acculturation effects, Shahzalal describes what happened to the Pokhara-Ghandruk community in Nepal. Their traditional fashion, behaviour, and lifestyle of young Gurungs have been affected by tourism. Young Gurungs are wearing western modern dresses instead of traditional Nepali clothes and caps. They prefer western hairstyles, and they are involved in love-marriage instead of arranged marriage, among other things, much to the worry of the elderly of this community. (Shahzalal 2016).

Second, there is the hybrid culture. Cultural hybridisation is the process that occurs after the mixing of two different cultures (Gaxiola). Shahzalal (2016) uses Pefkochori in Greece as an example. There, the people added artificial elements and included them to their traditional dance, music, events, and activities; they serve hybrid cuisine instead of their traditional salads; in their evening show, they serve now three-course meals instead of appetizers; and they have opened bars and discos. (Shahzalal 2016).

The third impact is cultural commodification. Lara Hill (2006) defined the commodification of culture as "the production of the tangible facets so they can be consumed by people outside of the cultural group they are visiting." This is an example of what Menon (1993, in Shahzalal 2016) found out in Jaisalmer, India. He discovered that the local arts and crafts are not completely produced locally with local stone. The potters use materials from another territory to make goods glossy to attract tourists. (Shahzalal 2016).

According to Smith (2009, in Shahzalal 2016), tourism financially supports the maintenance of cultural heritage, gives back cultural pride, strengthens customs and traditions and opens the door for cultural sharing and learning. For instance, Cole (2007, in Shahzalal 2016) found out that villagers in Indonesia were proud of tourism because it has strengthened their cultural values. The villages' children brought up local customs to create a strong and authentic base of cultural components to attract distant tourists. This is known as cultural preservation. (Shahzalal 2016).

Another example of the preservation of local traditions was found in Hawaii, where the tourism industry derived the demand for native Hawaiian culture in hotels. They decided to restore and maintain native Hawaiian cultural themes because they believed it would benefit the industry. Nowadays, native Hawaiians express that tourism gives them the space to share something beneficial to the world that can contribute to human wellbeing. (Shahzalal 2016).

Tourism builds some institutional infrastructure, which increases awareness of cultural components (e.g., traditional arts and crafts) among the local people who are not entangled with them. An example of building institutional infrastructure was the "Community Tourism Alliance" project by Counterpart International, a non-profit organization, during 2006-2012. This project empowered women through entrepreneurship development in several folk arts, carvings, and pottering goods to protect the Maya culture. (Shahzalal 2016).

Sometimes, through social contact caused by tourism, people come out of their self-absorbed position and transform it into collectivism. A case study done by Singla (2014, in Shahzalal 2016) showed that the people from the city Jaipur were self-centered, but the intervention of tourism social contact between people grew to show a right image to tourists. This social interaction helped to show morality, honesty, and hospitality to strangers. (Shahzalal 2016).

The cultures of the second cities could be affected by the aspects that Shahzalal has identified as the positive and negative impacts of tourism on culture. If second cities have many tourists, the residents could adapt and borrow traits from the tourists' cultures. Another possible issue would be if second cities went through the process of cultural hybridisation. Second cities could lose part of their culture by getting mixed with other cultures. Second cities might also start selling arts and crafts such as paintings, textiles, carving, and weaving that were produced by people outside of the second cities to increase sales, becoming a cultural commodification.

Furthermore, if the number of arrivals increased in second cities, infrastructure development would be needed. Infrastructure plays a significant role in the travel and tourism competitiveness, from air, ground, port infrastructure to tourism services like hotel rooms and car rental services. The World Economic Forum's 2019 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report stated that infrastructure must be developed to keep up with the other 400

million arrivals forecasted by 2030. (Soshkin 2019). Developing infrastructure can increase the efficiency of production and distribution of tourism services, and in certain circumstances, increase the supply of tourism services (Ilic & Jovanovic 2016).

One of the reasons why travellers might not be very enthusiastic about doing second city travelling is the potential lack of infrastructure in those cities (though admittedly this might be the very reason for some people coming there). If second cities want to attract more travellers, they will most likely need infrastructure development. Infrastructure developments will make second cities more accessible to people, consequently increasing the number of arrivals. It will also make the tourism sector in those second cities work more efficiently. On the other hand, infrastructure developments would be a significant expenditure for second cities.

All in all, the changes caused by tourism in second cities can neither be described as positive nor as negative. They both come with up- and downsides. The merits of each must be judged by the individual case.

## **4 Reasons for and against second city travelling**

While the previous chapter focused on the advantages and disadvantages of second city travel for first and second cities, this chapter will look into possible up- and downsides of this trend for travellers themselves. In the end, travellers are the deciding factor when it comes to whether a travel trend prevails. Hence, it is of significant importance to look over the different possible motivations or demotivations for them.

### **4.1 Authenticity in tourism experience**

Today, travellers seek out more authentic experiences during their travels. The online travel agency Expedia released a report that gives insight to millennial generation travel trends. According to the report, millennials value authentic travel experiences, but these experiences need to be recognised by their peers, or else it loses its value. The results showed that 2 in 3 millennials desire authentic holiday experiences more than anything else when travelling. (Steedman 2016).

There are different definitions and ways of seeing authenticity. When it comes to travelling, people often assume that they know how authentic an experience, a destination, or a culture is. So, the meaning of authentic is mostly based on the person's perceptions, expectations, and previous exposure to the culture, which usually does not match with the reality. (Beck 2017).

Wang (1999), states that in certain tourism types such as nature, landscape, beach, ocean cruising, adventures, family, and visiting friends and relatives, tourists look for their own authentic selves and intersubjective authenticity, and the problem of whether toured objects are authentic or not is not relevant.

An example of travellers looking out for authenticity was the Chinese tourists in the English village of Kidlington. During the month of June of 2016, tour buses with groups of 40 Chinese tourists were spotted in one of the UK's largest villages. Apparently, Chinese agencies were marketing the village of Kidlington as a beautiful English village on the way to Bicester Village shopping centre. The tourists were knocking doors, asking the locals for selfies, and admiring the houses and gardens. According to a Chinese tour guide, they were looking for the "true sense" of the country. (Chapman 2016).

Tim Fryer, UK Country Manager of STA Travel, the world's largest youth and student travel company, said "the second city travel trend is for people who want to do and see new places, experience different cultures, local cuisine and traditions." (Prescott 2020).

As it was mentioned in the beginning of this subchapter, more people, especially millennials and Gen Z, value authenticity more than sights and experiences. Traditional destinations (e.g., Paris, Madrid, Rome, etc.) make it more difficult for travellers to get the real sense of the local life, while second cities are often as genuine as it gets (Bertrand 2020). Popular cities tend to take advantage of the immense number of tourists who visit them by selling them an image that is not usually the authentic one, but it is the one perceived by tourists. Second cities travelling increases the travellers' chances of integrating into the culture and having these authentic experiences (Kimble 2020).

#### **4.2 Travelling to second cities during pandemic times**

One of the challenges that the tourism industry will face in the future is the traveller's fear of COVID-19 after the pandemic. A survey conducted by Mower, an independent marketing, advertising and public relations agency, showed that only 16% of U.S. adults would travel by plane within the country and only 12% of Americans would be willing to fly internationally on that on the first day after all-clear sign is given (Reed 2020). This reveals that a significant number of people will be afraid of travelling for a long time, even with the green light of the countries' authorities, delaying the recovery of the travel sector.

After COVID-19, countries will need to find a balance between public safety and economic recovery. Several countries are trying to accomplish this balance by limiting international tourism and focusing on domestic tourists. Once border restrictions are raised, isolated locations with limited access will be the perfect settings for uncrowded vacations. (Ridgley 2020).

Andrea Grisdale, chief executive of the destination management company IC Bellagio, predicts that travellers will have the tendency to go to some remote, isolated destinations around the world (Khan 2020). If Grisdale's predictions become true, this could significantly increase the number of people doing second city travelling in the future. Travelling to second cities could make people feel safer and consequently, help the economy and tourism sector in those cities.

### 4.3 Missing out on the main attractions of major cities

One reason why travellers might not be very willing to do second city travelling is the fear of missing out on major cities' main attractions. However, doing second city travelling does not mean that travellers have to miss out on the main attractions or activities in the big cities. It is about choosing to visit destinations that still have a lot to offer but are not on the edge of being ruined by overtourism. (The Travel 2020).

Travel FOMO is one reason people book their international flights to the same few destinations around the world. FOMO is an acronym which refers to "fear of missing out". It is considered to be one of the more negative aspects that social media has brought to our society. People with cases of travel FOMO are more unhappy with their travel choices. They are constantly thinking about what they are supposed to do and what they see others doing. (Hake 2017).

Larry Dossey (2014) defined FOMO as "a form of social anxiety, a compulsive concern that one might miss an opportunity for social interaction, a novel experience, or some other satisfying event, often aroused by posts seen on social media sites."

Studies in several countries (USA, UK, Canada, India, etc.) have found that FOMO is positively related to the level of social media engagement. Thus, people who are anxious because they are not experiencing everything are more active on their phones and computers. Research conducted in France discovered that people under 25 and have more time are more anxious about missing out. (Renate s.a.).

Cynthia Zaiatz, the head of psychology at the Sanatorio Modelo de Caseros in Argentina, uses mindfulness therapy with her patients to counteract FOMO's effects. The practice of mindfulness is a therapy where the person intentionally focuses on the current moment actively, trying not to judge what they feel or perceive at each moment. From focusing only on the current moment and on what really matters, a new concept was developed called JOMO. JOMO is an acronym that stands for "Joy of Missing Out," which is the pleasure of missing things. It invites people to live different experiences without thinking about the number of likes they will have or share something related to the topic. One of the first people to use this term was the writer Christina Crook in 2014. She published a book called "The Joy of Missing Out: Finding Balance in a Wired World." In her book, Crook states that being always connected can have negative effects and that instead, living with alternative options can bring rewards and positive attitudes in our day-to-day life. (Infobae 2019).

Practicing different therapies such as mindfulness and JOMO can help travellers who suffer from Travel FOMO to become more adventurous and enjoy the wonders that second cities offer.

To sum up, sometimes second cities travelling could make travellers miss out on top attractions typically mentioned in tour guides. Thus, travellers might have to seek out things to do, for instance, by asking around or having conversations with locals. However, taking this travel approach could also encourage travellers to embrace a “go with the flow” attitude in their trips. By visiting these smaller, lesser-known second cities, travellers may get a better sense of the place. (Bertrand 2020).



## 5 Data and methods

This chapter covers the research method's choice, the chosen method's characteristics, planning of research, data collection, and data analysis.

This thesis focuses on second city travelling and its future as a travel trend. So, the main research question is if second city travelling is going to prevail in the near future. Another research question is if people know about the concept of second city travelling and its impact.

Research methods are usually divided into two different categories: qualitative research and quantitative research methods. Qualitative research relies on emotions, feelings, words, sounds, and other non-numerical and unquantifiable elements. Information is considered qualitative if it cannot be analysed with mathematical methods. On the other hand, quantitative research describes, infers, and resolves problems using numbers. It focuses on collecting numerical data, summarising the data, and making conclusions from the data. (Business Research Methodology s.a.).

Quantitative research is very effective at answering the "what" or "how" of a given situation because its focal point is on data that can be measured (Goertzen 2017). This thesis aims to discover if travellers are familiar with the concept of second city travelling and if they are willing to take this travel approach in the future. Quantitative research is the most appropriate method to conduct this thesis's research with, since it is a very effective and efficient method to collect information about people's opinions from a large sample.

In quantitative research the usual data collection methods are questionnaires, interviews, observation and records. An interview for quantitative research requires verbal communication between the researcher and the participant. The researcher's goal is to collect numerical data. The interviews can be structured or unstructured. Observation is a structured way to collect data by observing people in natural situations or settings. Even though it is usually used to collect qualitative data, observation can also be used for collecting quantitative data. Observations can be simple or behavioural. Records or external data are numbers and statistics that institutions use to trace activities, for example a country's census. (Bhatia 2018).

## **5.1 Survey as a method**

Questionnaires are the most popular way to collect quantitative data. Surveys are a series of questions either on paper or digital form. The questions are designed to collect data that will help the researchers answer their research questions. Researchers give the surveys to their sample so each participant can answer the questions. Normally, questionnaires have closed-ended questions where the participants choose an answer from the given options. Nevertheless, a questionnaire can also have open-ended questions. Good questionnaires have clear language, correct grammar and spelling, and a clear objective. (Bhatia 2018).

Survey research utilises scientific sampling and questionnaires designed to measure the characteristics of the population with statistical precision. It provides answers to questions like “How many people feel a certain way?” and ‘How often do they do a certain behaviour?’ It allows for making comparisons between groups. It gives estimates from a sample related to the entire population with a degree of certainty. (Sukamolson 2007).

A survey questionnaire is the main method for this research. The purpose of the survey is to find out if travelling people are willing to take a second city travel approach in the near future. The reason why survey was chosen as the research method is because the author wanted to collect from a big sample. Online platforms are helpful when it comes to processing and reading large amounts of data. For that reason, Webropol and Excel were chosen as the platforms for this research. The researcher wanted the survey to be online for efficiency and ecological purposes.

## **5.2 Planning of a survey**

Before producing a questionnaire, it is essential to create a list of all the topics that the researcher wants to cover and get information about. It has to include everything that is necessary to answer the research question. This phase is key since it is not possible to change the questionnaire once the data collection starts. (Oxfam Research Network 2019).

The survey included 18 questions in total, including the background detail questions. Since most of the questions were closed-ended questions, the survey was not too long to answer. Moreover, most of the questions used a Likert's Scale, where respondents indicated how much they agreed or disagreed with the question's statement. With that number of questions, it was possible to get a good amount of data without the survey-taking too long to answer. The questionnaire's beginning mentioned that it takes between 5 and

7 minutes to fill in the survey. However, most respondents were able to answer it after 2 minutes. In other words, the time prediction was more than what people really took to answer. Having short questionnaires is crucial so the respondent does not get frustrated or bored in the process.

The survey is visualised in appendix 1. The survey questions are related to the theoretical framework from chapters 2, 3, and 4. The questions were categorised into five different groups: background details, second city travelling, safety and security, attractions and activities, and choosing a destination. They were in line with the research question and sub-questions. The survey was tested with a minimal amount of people before publishing the final version. Some changes were made, conforming to the suggestions made by the test audience. The order of the answer choices was changed to make it easier for the reader. Additionally, some typing errors were corrected in agreement with the suggestions of the test audience.

### **5.3 Data collection**

When researching a group of people, it is almost impossible to collect the data from every person in that group, so the researcher selects a sample. Samples are the groups of individuals who will participate in the research. To draw conclusions from the results, the researcher has to carefully decide how they will select a sample that represents the group as a whole. Generally, if the sample size is large, the research will be more accurate, and the researcher will be more confident about making conclusions concerning the whole population. (McCombes 2019).

The goal was to get at least two hundred responses to the survey. The survey was shared and published on different social media channels. The survey was shared on WhatsApp, posted on the researcher's Instagram profile and Facebook. Furthermore, the survey was published in three different Facebook groups; Argentinos en Suecia, Noruega, Finlandia y Dinamarca, with more than six thousand members; Argentinos en los Países Bajos, with almost two thousand members and Argentinos en Finlandia with one thousand members. These three social media channels were chosen because they represent different types of travellers, which is fundamental to get a large variety of answers to the survey. The survey was open for anyone who wanted to fill it during the week from 14th of November to 21st of November 2020.

#### **5.4 Data analysis**

Nowadays, there are various online tools to collect and analyse data, for example, Google Forms, Survey Monkey and Webropol. These programs are designed for building website forms or surveys and are very easy to use. The first two programs have no limit when it comes to creating forms or surveys for free.

The survey was designed in Webropol, and the results were transferred to Excel to analyse the data. Besides, the tools in Webropol were used to separate and analyse the data. Every question and its results were transferred to a separate Excel table. The survey results were presented in the most common way for quantitative research, with statistics and visual forms such as figures and charts. A text accompanies each graph or visual representation with the conclusions of the results. Once the results are shown, the research is continued with the analytical part and the findings' comparisons with the theoretical framework.

## 6 Results

In this chapter, the results from the second city travelling survey are introduced and analysed. The results from the questionnaire were in numerical form, and they were transformed into charts and figures. The results of the second city travelling survey are compared with other researches previously done on similar topics. This chapter is subdivided into five parts that correspond to the survey's five categories: background details, second city travelling, safety and security, attractions and activities and choosing a destination.

### 6.1 Background details

The survey collected 313 valid answers, where the respondents had answered all of the mandatory questions. The estimated time to keep the survey open and active was 7 days during 14.11-21.11. There was a varied selection of multiple-choice questions. In some of the questions, the respondent had to pick only one answer, and in some others, there was an option to pick many answers. Sometimes if the participants were not satisfied with the options given, they could write an open comment in the end. Moreover, most of the questions used the Likert Scale to measure the level of agreement, likeliness, or importance of certain subtopics regarding second city travelling for the participants.

Firstly, both aspects, age, and gender were examined. Of the 313 participants, 76% were female and 23% were male. Also, an "other" option had 2 responses and a "prefer not to answer" option had one response. There were participants from every age category. The biggest participant group by age were 15-30 years old with 51%, followed by 31-45 years old with 32% and 45+ years old with 17%.

The majority of the participants were from European countries (66%), followed by South American countries (27%) and North America/Central America and Asia shared the third position with 2%.

Most of the participants stated that they travel 1 or 2 times a year (51%), followed by 2 or 3 times a year (23%), then more than 4 times a year (14%), and lastly 3 or 4 times a year (12%). The number of times a person travels per year depends on many factors, such as available time to travel, income, accessibility, safety, etc. For example, a person who lives in South America does not have the same available means of transport and access to other destinations nearby as a person in Europe. Additionally, flying to other destinations within Latin America is usually more expensive, and the travel time is longer than a European citizen traveling to another destination within Europe.

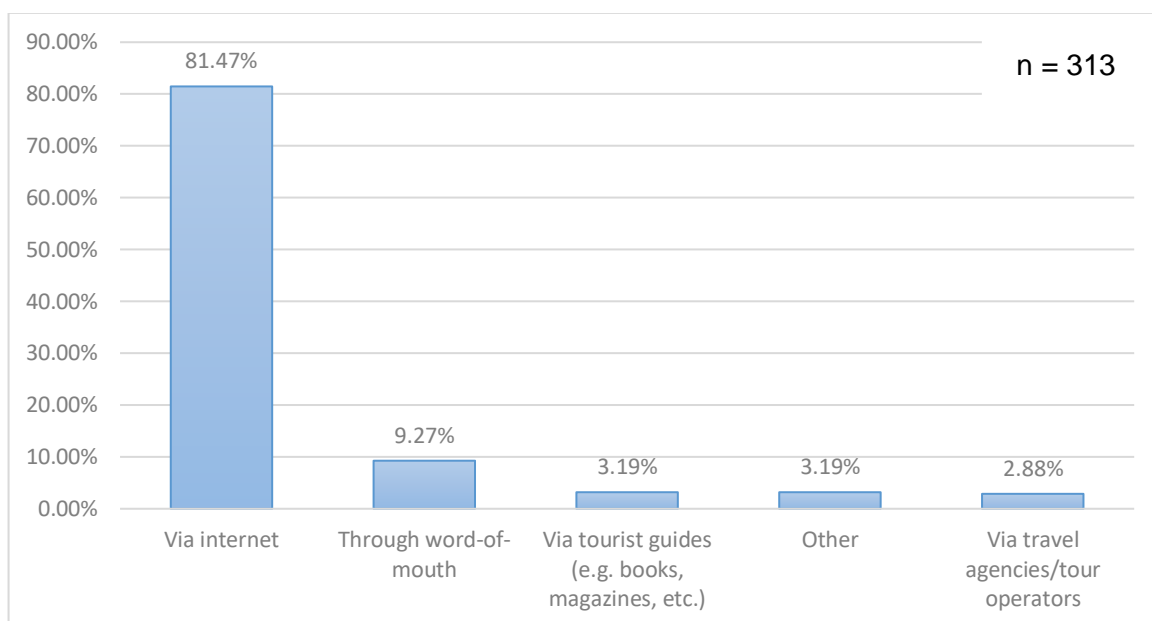


Figure 1. More than 80% of travellers uses internet to choose their travels

The participants were asked how they choose their travels. The possible answers were via the internet, via tourist guides (e.g., books, magazines, etc.), via travel agencies/tour operators, through word-of-mouth, and “other” where the participant could write a different answer. As Figure 1 shows, the majority of the participants chose their travels via the internet. Only 9% of the participants answered through word-of-mouth. The other options available had the same value (3%). Nine participants wrote their own answers.

## 6.2 Second city travelling

When travellers were asked if they were familiar with the second city travelling concept before this survey, 85% of them answered with “no”. Only 15% of the participants knew the concept beforehand. People are most likely not aware of the concept of second city travelling because it is still new, and it has not been much talk in the media about it. For the most part, people working in the hospitality and tourism industry are familiar with second city travelling.

Booking.com's definition of second city and Lifestyle Desk's definition of second city were explained after that question so participants could get more familiar with the topic and answer the following questions.

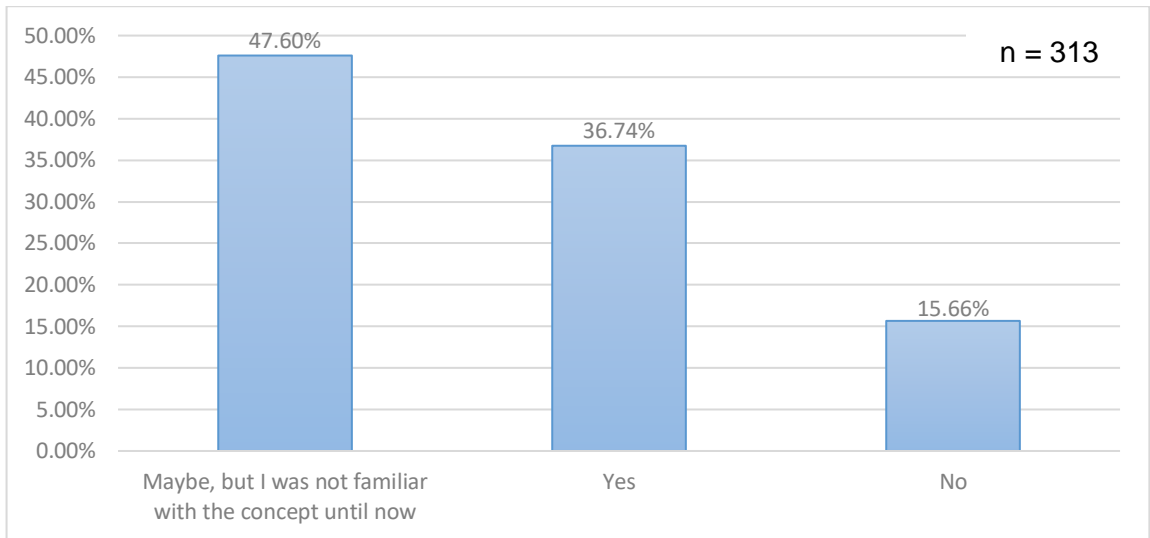


Figure 2. Almost 50% of travellers might have already done second city travelling

The bar chart in Figure 2 shows the number of people who have done second city travelling in the past. Most of the participants (47%) said that they might have done second city travelling in the past, but they were not familiar with the concept until now. It was then followed by 37% who answered yes and the 16% remaining that answered no. This implies that most participants have most likely done second city travelling in the past, whether they knew about it or not.

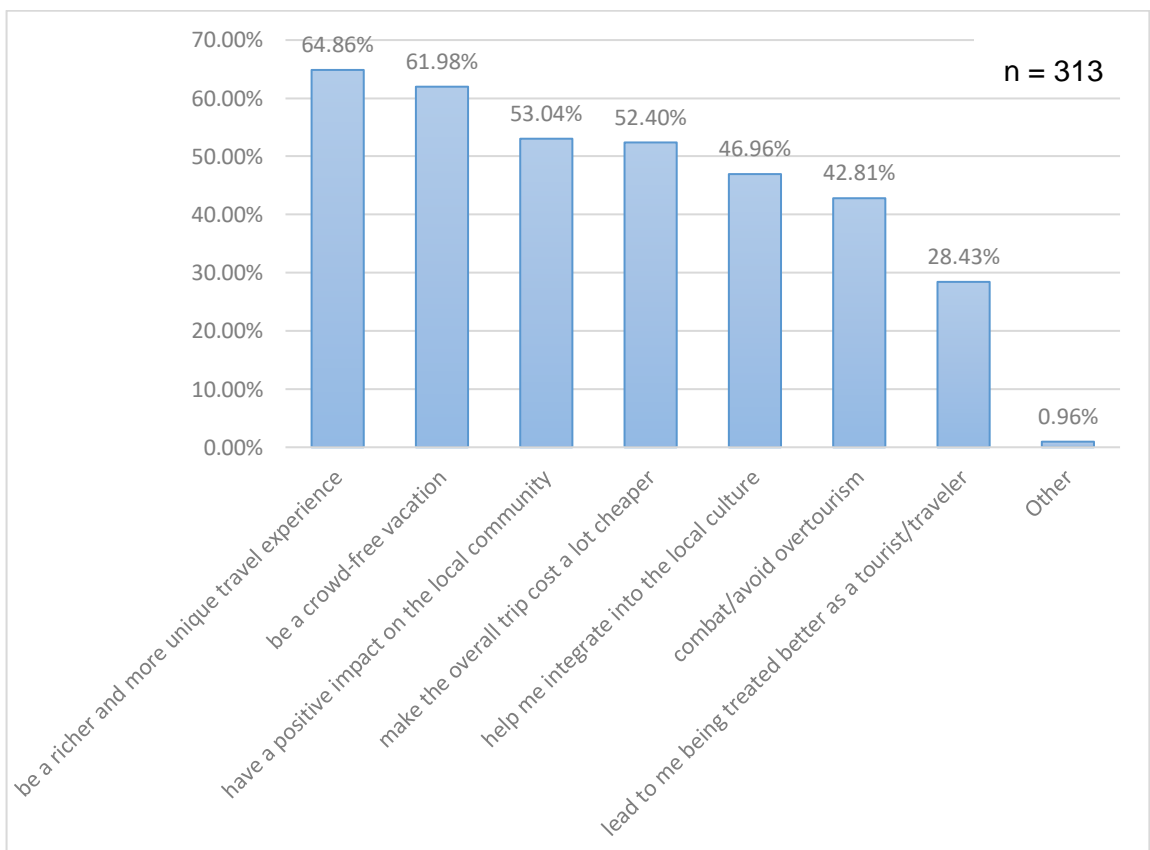


Figure 3. Travellers would do second city travelling to have a more authentic experience

Participants were asked to choose the options for why they would consider doing second city travelling. They could choose more than one option and even write another answer if they wanted to. According to the survey results, 65% of travellers would do second city traveling if that “would be a richer and more unique travel experience”. Then, 62% said they would do it “if it would be a crowd-free vacation”. After that, 53% of travellers would take a second city approach to travel “if they would positively impact the local community”. “Making the overall trip cost a lot cheaper” was chosen by 52% of the participants and “help me integrate into the local culture” by 47%. Furthermore, the last two options were to combat/avoid overtourism with 43% and to be treated better as a tourist/traveller with 28%. These results imply that travellers seem to care more about how the experience will be on their trips than how their travels will impact the local community.

### 6.3 Safety and security

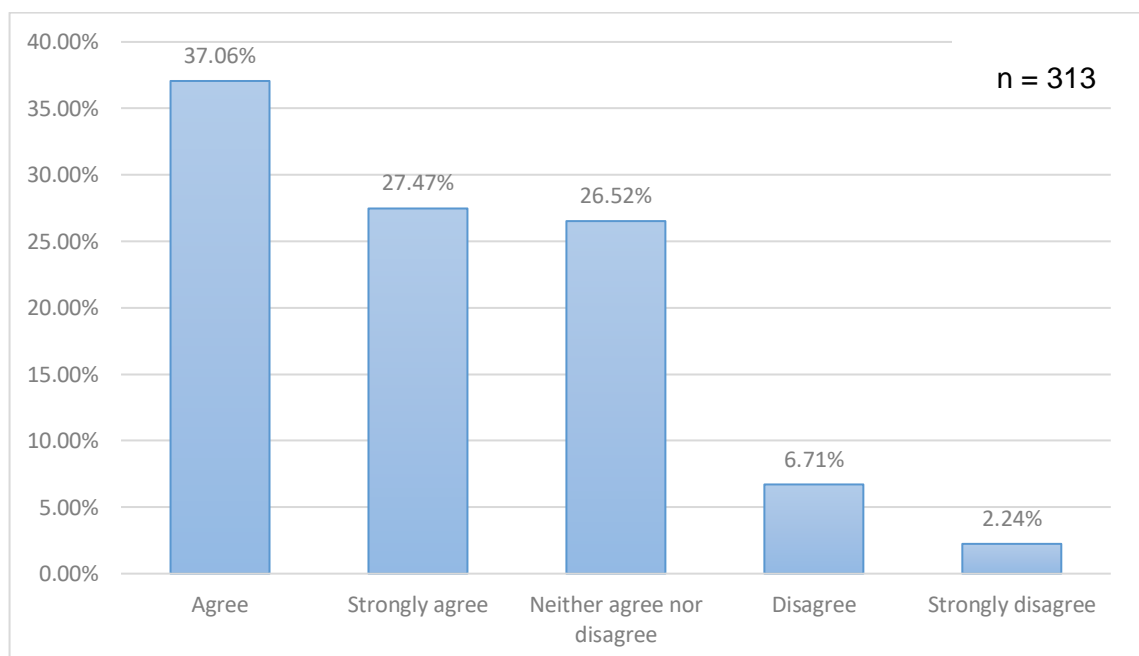


Figure 4. The majority of travellers would feel safer travelling to second cities during the COVID-19 pandemic

In part number 3, participants had to answer questions regarding safety and security when travelling. The first question was a statement saying that travellers would feel safer travelling to a smaller/lesser-known-second city if they would travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants needed to choose an option that showed how much they agreed with the statement above. The scale goes from strongly disagree to disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree, having a total of 5 options. Most participants answered that they would feel safer if they would travel to second cities during the coronavirus pandemic, 37% agree, and 27% strongly agree with the statement. As seen in



Figure 4, 27% of the participants neither agree nor disagree with the statement, followed by 7% who disagree and 2% who strongly disagree.

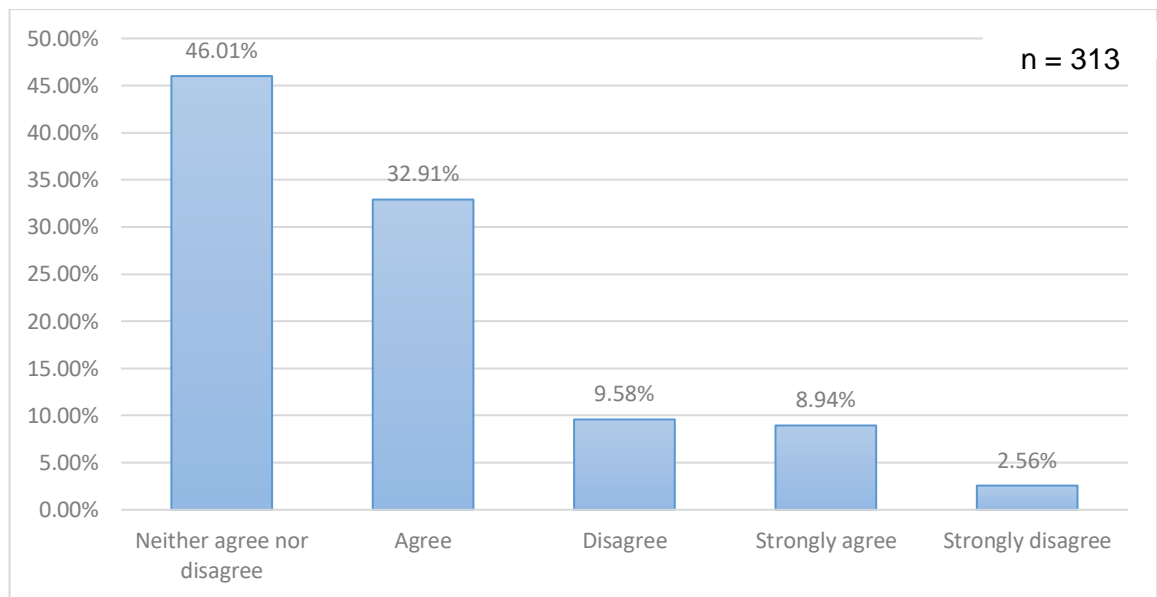


Figure 5. Travellers are neutral when it comes to the possible lower crime rates in second cities

Question 10 was also a statement where participants showed how much they agreed or not with it. The statement was: "If I travelled to a second city, I would feel more secure because the crime rates are usually lower than in the main cities." Figure 5 indicates the number of people who agreed or not with the statement. According to the bar chart, 46% of participants neither agree nor disagree with the statement, followed by 33% who agreed with it. Then, 10% of participants disagree, 9% strongly agree, and 2% strongly disagree. These figures reveal that almost 42% of the participants would feel safer if they travelled to second cities because their crime rates are usually lower than the approximately 12% who would not. In other words, a large amount of people cares about how safe the destination is.

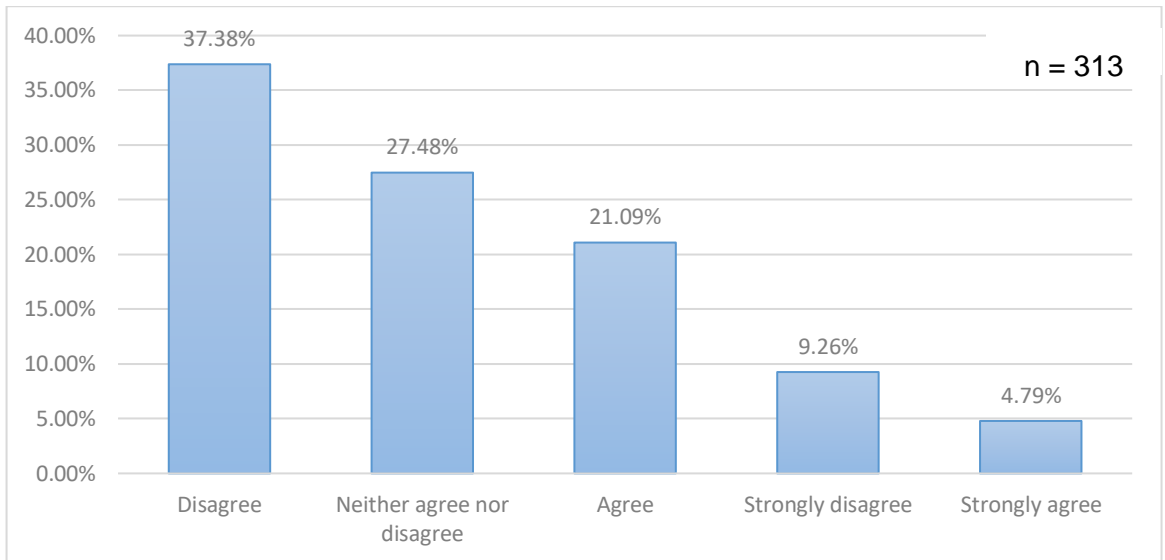


Figure 6. Almost 50% of travellers would not be afraid of the possible lack of infrastructure development in second cities

In the vertical bar chart (see Figure 6), the levels of agreement with the following statement are shown: “I would be afraid of traveling to second cities because of its possible lack of infrastructure development.” The amount of people who disagree with the statement (37%) plus the ones who strongly disagree (9%) makes a total of approximately 46% travellers who would not be afraid of a possible lack of infrastructure in second cities. On the other hand, 21% agreed with the statement, and 5% strongly agreed, making it a total of 26% who would be afraid of the possible lack of infrastructure in lesser-known cities. Also, 28% stayed neutral to the statement, saying that they neither agree nor disagree.

#### 6.4 Attractions and activities

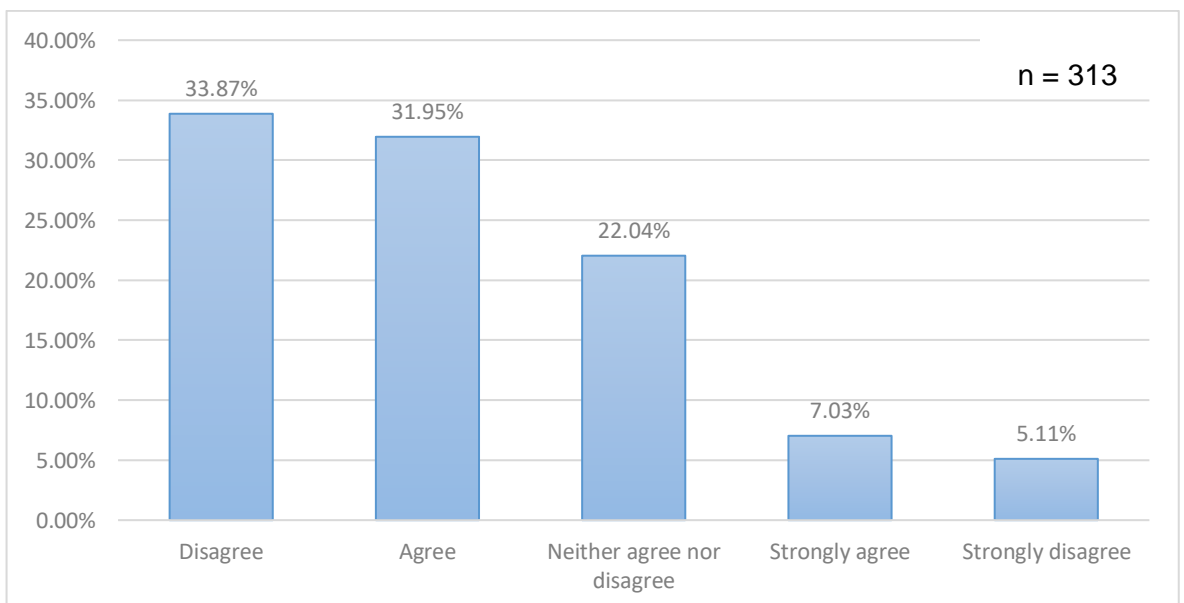


Figure 7. Half of the travellers would be afraid of missing out on the main attractions in first cities

The bar chart above reveals the percentages of people who might be afraid of missing out on the main attractions in first cities. The highest was 34%, which disagrees with being afraid of missing out on big cities' main attractions, followed by 32% who agrees with it. 22% of travellers stayed neutral by neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. The lowest were strongly agree (7%) and strongly disagree (5%). Adding up the percentages of strongly agree and agree would make a total of 39%, the same percentage as the result of adding up disagree and strongly disagree. This insinuates that half of the travellers would be afraid, and the other half would not, making the main attractions a possible key factor when deciding where to travel.

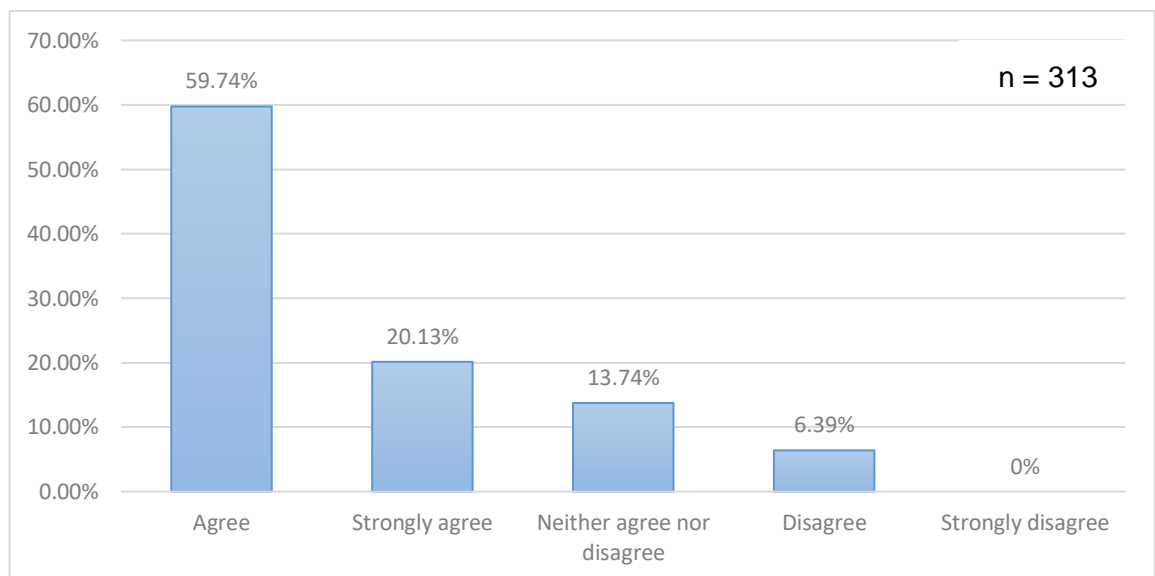


Figure 8. Almost 80% of travellers would be happy to seek out things to do when there are not obvious must-see attractions

One of the reasons why people might or not want to do second city travelling in the future is because sometimes there are not obvious must-see attractions. In question 13 of the survey, participants had to select their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement, "I would be happy to take the initiative in seeking out things to do when there are not obvious must-see attractions." Compared to other statements, this resulted in 60% of the participants saying that they agree and 20% strongly agreed with the statement. Only 14% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 6% disagreed. These results indicate that most travellers enjoy looking for things to do when there are no obvious must-see attractions.

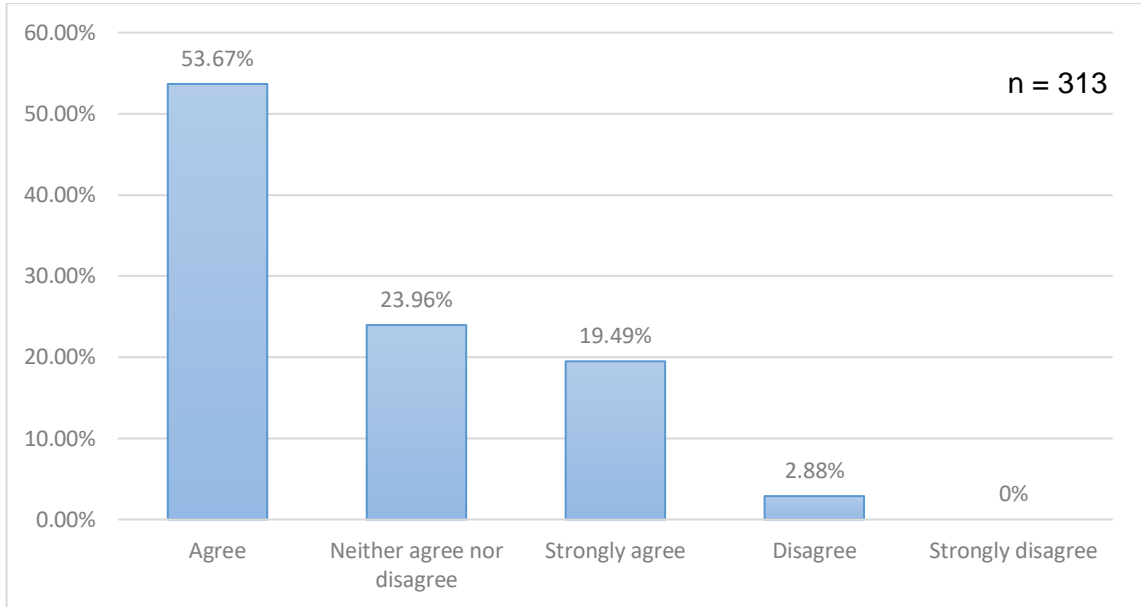


Figure 9. The vast majority of travellers believe that second city travelling can provide a more authentic experience

As seen in Figure 9, 54% of travellers agreed that that second city travelling, in general, provides a more authentic tourism experience, followed by 19% who strongly agreed with the statement. The majority of the remaining travellers neither agreed nor disagreed (24%), and only 3% disagreed with the affirmation. The conclusion from these results is that the vast majority (73%) believe that second city travelling can provide a more authentic tourism experience.

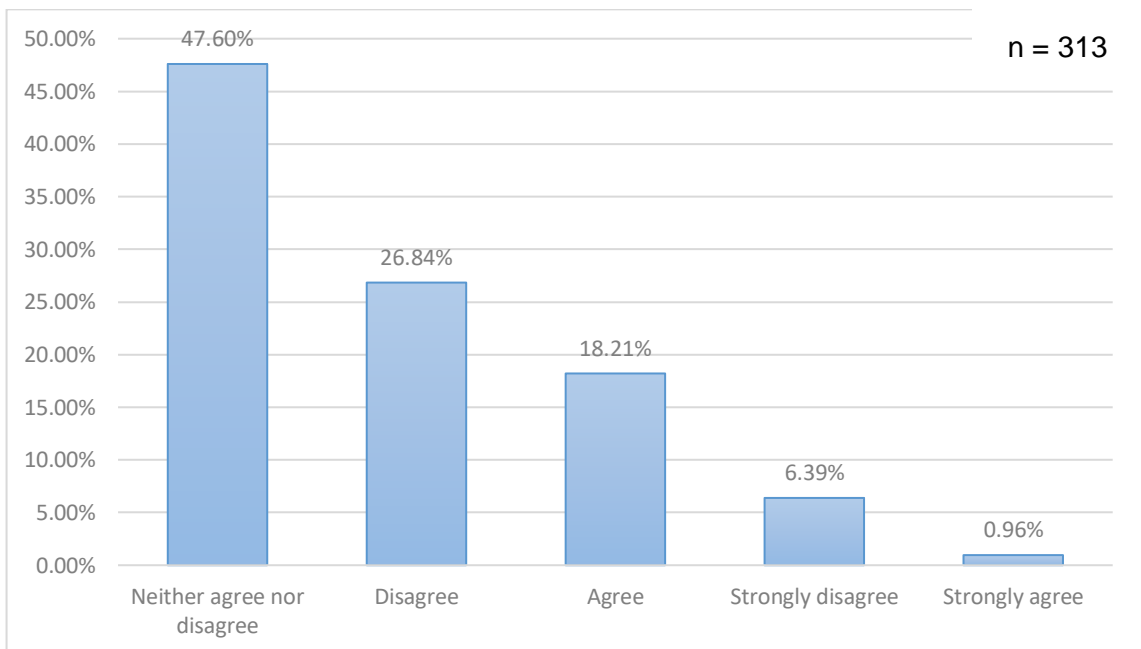


Figure 10. The majority of travellers are neutral about second city travelling making their schedules tighter

Often, travellers try to choose destinations that do not require a lot of travelling time and lets them spend most of their time doing activities in their destinations. In question 15, participants had to choose their level of agreement or disagreement with this affirmation, "I believe that travelling to a second city would make my schedule tighter." The majority of the travellers (48%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Then, 27% of travellers disagreed, followed by 18% of travellers who agreed. Only 6% of travellers strongly disagreed, and 1% strongly agreed.

## 6.5 Choosing a destination

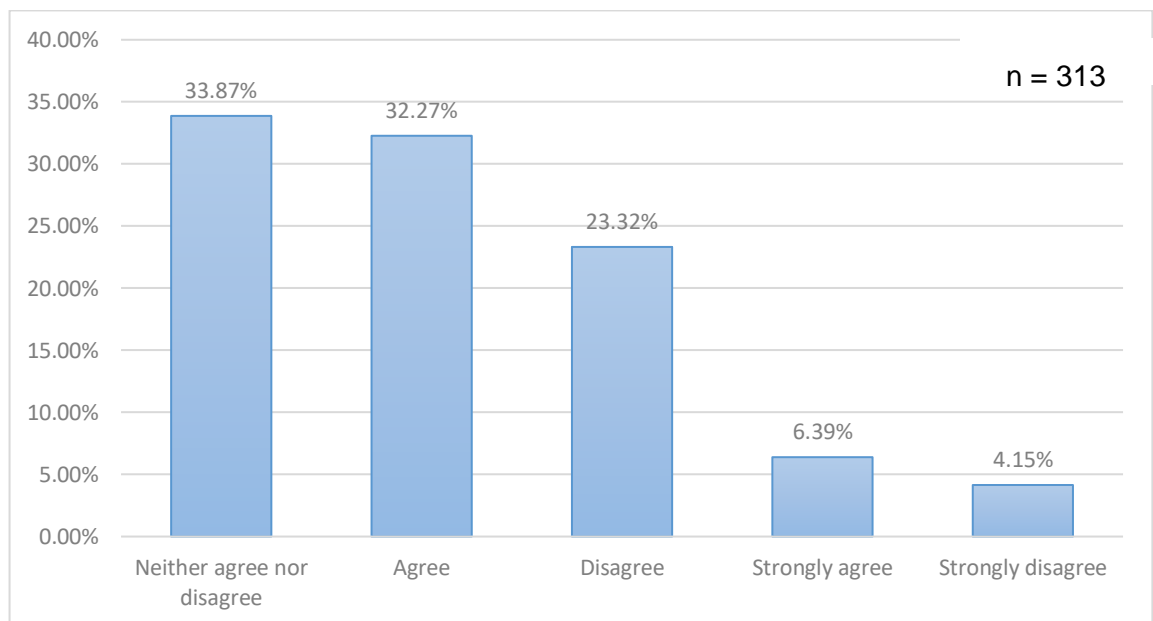


Figure 11. Less than 50% of travellers consider the positive and negative impact they might cause in the place they are travelling to

Nowadays, travellers are being more conscious about their impact on the place they are travelling to (Thomsen 2017). Question 16 in the survey had the following affirmation: "I consider the negative and positive impact I might cause in the place I am travelling to." 34% of travellers have a neutral opinion since they neither agree nor disagree with this statement. However, 32% of travellers agreed, and 23% disagreed. The lowest percentages are for strongly agree with 7% and strongly disagree with 4%. If they strongly agree and agree, percentages were added, there would be a total percentage of 39, which would be more than the sum between disagree and strongly disagree (27%). This confirms what studies in recent years say about the growth of awareness about travelling's environmental impact.

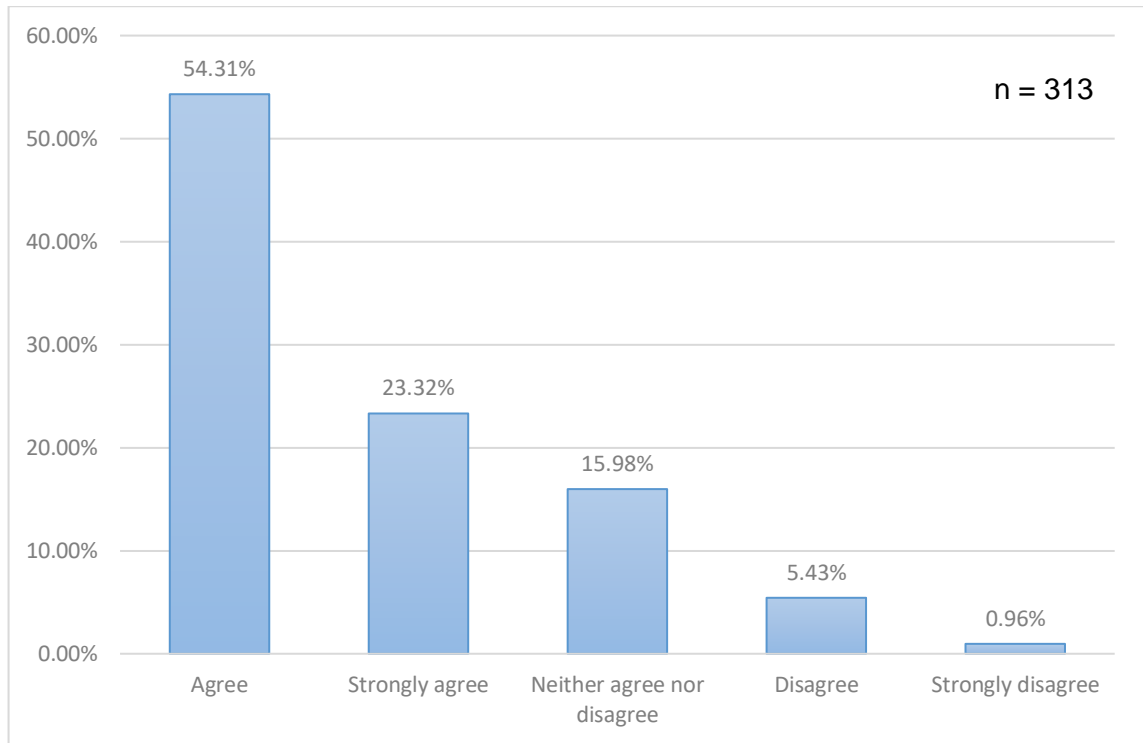


Figure 12. More than 50% of travellers would be keen to have access to a service that recommends destinations where an increase in tourism would positively impact the local community

Booking.com's survey stated that 60% of travellers would be keen to access a service (app/website) that recommends destinations where an increase in tourism would positively impact the local community (Booking.com 2019). The researcher wanted to confirm this by asking the survey's participants the same question. 54% of travellers agreed, and 23% strongly agreed with the affirmation. Nevertheless, 16% neither agreed nor disagreed, 6% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed. The results shown on the vertical bar chart above prove that Booking.com's results are true. Travellers would like to have access to a platform that could tell them which destinations would benefit from the rise in tourism.

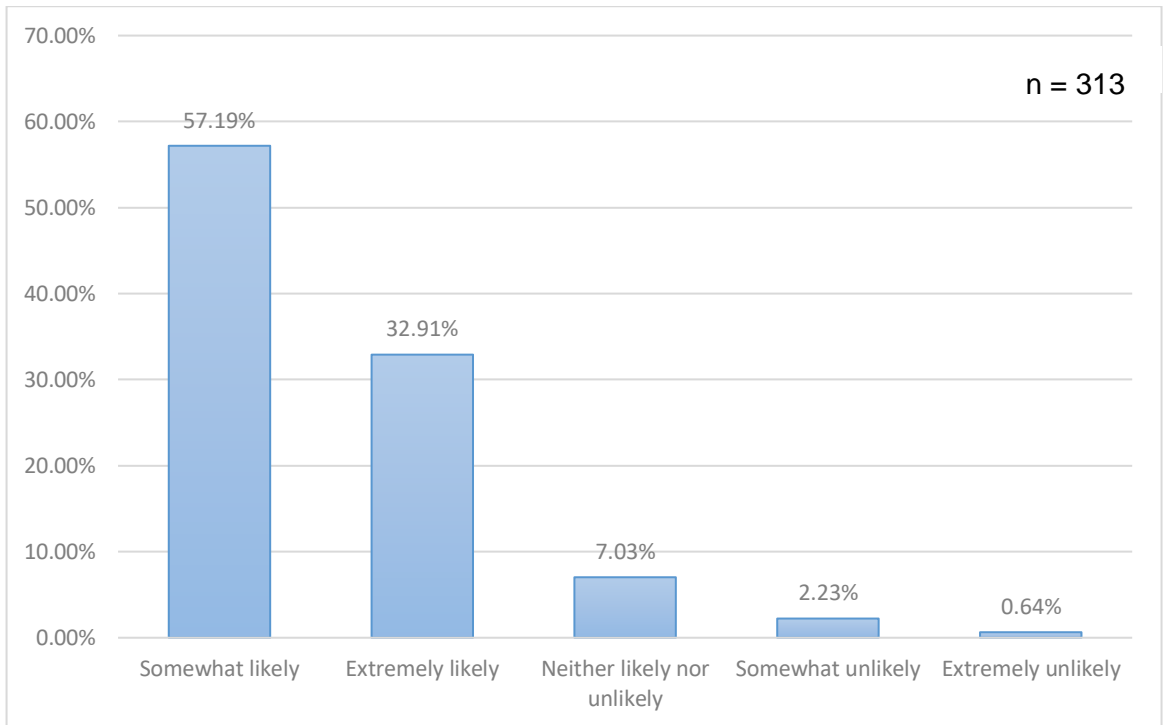


Figure 13. The vast majority of travellers are willing to do second city travelling in the future

The survey's last question was: "How likely are you to do second city travelling in the future?" The results agreed with what the researcher thought from the beginning of the research process. The vast majority (57%) said it is somewhat likely they will do second city travelling in the future, followed by extremely likely with 33%. The option neither likely nor unlikely had a 7%, the somewhat unlikely option had 2%, and extremely unlikely only 1%. When adding extremely likely and somewhat likely, the result is 90%, which means that travellers' probabilities to decide to do second city traveling in the future are extremely high.

## 7 Discussion

This chapter discusses the research findings and answers to the research questions based on the findings.

Chapter 2 focused on second city travelling in general, including the definition and history. As mentioned in said chapter, second city travelling is still a new concept that most people are not familiar with yet. The research showed that the vast majority (85%) did not know about second city travelling. Moreover, during the research, respondents answered if they have done second city travelling in the past. Almost 50% of the respondents said they might have done it in the past, but they were not familiar with the concept until now (Figure 2). These figures confirm the author's theory about the concept's awareness issue. Second city travelling might not be a very discussed topic in today's media, but it can become more popular in the upcoming years.

Chapter 2 also mentioned Booking.com's survey where more than 54% of worldwide travellers said that they want to help reduce overtourism. Overtourism was discussed in Chapter 3 as one of the possible impacts second city travelling can have. Other impacts, such as sustainable tourism, economic challenges and cultural changes, were also analysed in that chapter. The research revealed that 39% of travellers consider the negative and positive impact they might cause in the place they are travelling to. This implies that most travellers are not very conscious about the effects their trips can have on the destinations, making the second city travelling trend not very appealing for travellers who are not very environmentally conscious.

Chapter 4 addresses some of the reasons why travellers would do second city travelling and why they would not. Some of the reasons discussed in the chapter were authenticity in tourism experience, travelling to second cities during pandemic times and missing out on major cities' main attractions.

In the survey, all of the reasons were addressed under three categories: second city travelling, safety and security, and attractions and activities. After conducting and analysing the research, it was clear that there is more than one reason why travellers would take the second city travel approach. For a better analysis, the author decided to divide these reasons into altruistic and egoistic reasons. These categories do not intend to impose any kind of moral judgment on travellers. They are merely used to better classify tourists' motives.



The following are the altruistic reasons for doing second city travelling: to combat/avoid overtourism and positively impact the local community. On the other hand, egoistic reasons for doing second city travelling are having a more authentic tourism experience, enjoying a crowd-free vacation, reducing the overall cost of the trip, making the traveller being treated better and helping the tourist to integrate into the local culture (Figure 3).

As mentioned in section 4.1, two in three millennials want authentic holiday experiences more than anything else when travelling. This number matches the research made in this thesis, where 65% said they would do second city travelling if it would make the travel experience richer and more unique, in other words, if it can provide a more authentic tourism experience (Figure 3). Moreover, the majority of the respondents (73%) believe that second city travelling, in general, can provide a more authentic tourism experience (Figure 9), making it a possible key factor in the future popularity of this trend. It needs to be mentioned that, once again, it is an egoistic reasoning driving the travelers, not an altruistic one.

As pointed in section 4.2, researches have shown that a significant number of people will be afraid of travelling for a long time after the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, tourism industry experts predict that travellers will travel to remote, isolated destinations worldwide. The thesis's research results have shown that 64% of travellers would feel safer by travelling to second cities (Figure 4), matching the predictions regarding travellers' safety choices during and after COVID-19, which is yet again a selfish motive for taking a second city travel approach.

Another egoistic reason, having a crowd-free vacation, was leading travellers' motivations about doing second city travelling, with 62%. The reasons that followed were a mix of altruistic and egoistic reasons. The first one was positively impacting the local community, making it the first altruistic reason travellers would do second city travelling with 53%. This was followed by two other egoistic reasons, "making the overall trip cost a lot cheaper" with 52% and "help me integrate into the local culture" with 47%. The motive to combat or reduce overtourism, was the second less chosen reason, with 43%. The least chosen reason was to be treated better as a tourist/traveller with 28%.

As the paragraphs above show, the reasons why one would consider second city travelling are plentiful. However, travellers seem to not give much weight to the reasons classified as altruistic reasons, instead, travellers take the highly understandable approach of maximising the joy, relaxation and fulfilment they themselves get from their holiday. In conclusion, this means that if travellers were to take a second city travel approach, it most

likely would be for egoistic rather than altruistic reasons. These numbers indicate that travellers would do second city travelling for more egoistic reasons than altruistic reasons. This was one of the key discoveries during the research process since it sincerely affects how the concept of second city travelling should be publicised and advertised best.

Other questions in the survey (Figures 6 and 8) also allow for further insight into the reasoning of travellers when choosing their destination. While there were both egoistic and altruistic motives, as seen in the paragraphs above, there, too the egoistic reasons prevail:

In section 3.4, the possible lack of infrastructure development in second cities is presented as a factor that might decrease travellers' interest in doing second city travelling. According to the research results, only 26% of travellers said they would be afraid of the possible lack of infrastructure development in second cities (Figure 6). Thus, it is not a key factor in whether travellers would do second city travelling or not.

Another factor that could decrease the number of travellers doing second city travelling is the fear of missing out on major cities' main attractions, which was discussed in section 4.3. In the research, almost 50% of travellers answered that they would be afraid of missing out on big cities' main attractions (Figure 8). This result implies that many travellers would not do second city travelling because visiting famous sights in first cities is crucial for their travelling experiences. At the same time, 80% of the respondents said they would be happy to seek out things to do when there are no obvious must-see attractions, contradicting the previous result. One logical explanation for this would be that most travellers still prefer visiting some of the world's most famous sights, even though they would not mind if they had to figure out what to do or see at a destination because it is easier to do it with tools like the internet.

This thesis consisted of one main research question and four sub-questions. The main research question was if second city travelling is going to prevail in the near future. The sub-questions were:

1. What is the most accurate definition for second city travelling?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of second city travelling?
3. Do people know about the concept of second city travelling? If so, are people aware of the positive and negative impact of second city travelling?
4. Are people willing to take a second city travel approach in the future?

The first sub-question was discussed in chapter 2, where the author suggested her own definition of second city travelling. However, based on the quantitative research results, the definition of second city travelling seems to be imperfect and requires modification. The previous definition was “second city travelling is the exploration of lesser-known destinations to reduce over-tourism and protect the environment. A second city can be any lesser-known destination that might not be the first or most evident choice for foreign tourists but still offers the culture, food, and attractions one seeks when travelling abroad.” The proposed change uses the same framework but excludes the part “to reduce over-tourism and protect the environment”.

This part adds a second layer to the definition. The first layer is the objective part, regarding where to travel. But then another part is added which requires a specific intent: The intent to reduce overtourism. Conversely, that means that someone travelling to a second city, not for ecological reasons but to, for example, have a more authentic tourism experience, would not be second city travelling. This traveller would comply with the first and objective part of the definition but would be lacking the intent required by the definition. This seems unnatural. The person would be doing the exact same thing as a person with the intent, while not falling under the definition.

The participants of the survey also seem to have picked up on this contradiction unconsciously: While only around 40% (Figure 3) would choose a second city travel approach based on altruistic reasons like combating overtourism, 90% of survey participants would be likely to practice second city traveling in the future (Figure 13). Even though the participants were provided in the survey with the original, intent-based definition, most of them cannot have applied it. Applying it, the numbers for altruistic reasons in Figure 3 and the likelihood of doing second city traveling in Figure 13 should be matching. However, they are vastly disproportionate. That the participants neglect the intent-part of the definition only supports the proposed change of removing it. That way, the definition would be simpler and more concise. In addition, it does not unnecessarily and illogically distinguish between travellers based on their intent, even if on an objective level, the same things are done, and the same goals are achieved.

Further, this definition would prove to be more useful to destinations or tourism-related businesses that want to promote this travel trend. As we have seen above, egoistic reasons are decisive for tourists who chose to travel to second cities. Including the eco-friendly intention in the definition would lure companies into using this for their advertisement. This would not significantly increase the number of travellers embracing this movement. On the contrary, if they would talk about second city travelling and how it would be a

better experience for the traveller, there is a higher chance that people will follow, prevailing this travel trend in the future. This is the most useful result of this research for companies in the industry.

The second sub-question, regarding the advantages and disadvantages, was discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, first from the destinations' perspective and then from the travellers' perspective. As mentioned earlier in the analysis of the research results, travellers would be more motivated to do second city travelling for the advantages that benefit themselves (egoistic reasons) than those that benefit others or the environment (altruistic reasons). While second city travelling comes with some disadvantages as seen in the chapters above, they are outweighed by the advantages. Not only are they more numerous, they also serve the greater good. While taking minor casualties in first cities, second cities are given the chance to flourish and discover a new side of themselves - all while being more sustainable and ecological. This view is further supported by the respondents of the survey, who have a majorly positive view of second city travelling.

Sub-question 3, that was considering the travellers' awareness of this trend, can also be answered based on the research results mentioned above. The vast majority of travellers are not familiar with the second city travelling concept (Figure 2), but almost half believe they have done it in the past (Figure 3). In addition to this, many travellers do not consider the positive or negative impact they might have on their destinations (Figure 12). This implies that either travellers are not familiar with how much they can impact their destinations, or they neglect the importance of these impacts.

Regarding sub-question 4, the research has shown that 90% of the respondents would be willing to do second city travelling in the future. Therefore, there is a good chance that second city travelling will not only prevail but also become more popular in the future. The results of the survey as well as individual feedback from respondents showed that the concept of second city travel is viewed in a positive light. The main reason holding it back from becoming a major trend is the lack of publicity and, as a result, people's awareness and knowledge about it. Nevertheless, recent developments show that second city travelling is getting a bigger and bigger platform every day, making this problem likely to vanish in the near future.

Taking all this into consideration, the researcher is of the strong opinion that second city traveling will prevail in the near future.

## 7.1 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are factors that can be questioned in almost any research. This thesis' research does not stand back in this, since certain elements regarding the sample can also be questioned. The first element is the size of the sample in this research. Generally, quantitative research collects a large number of answers. The results of this thesis research might not be very representative because the survey had only 313 respondents.

Moreover, the sample characteristics might not be completely representative of the whole population for three reasons: the vast majority of the respondents (76%) were female, more than 50% were young people (between 15 and 30 years old), and most of the respondents (66%) live in Europe. It is a scientific fact that the average woman is more empathetic, caring, and hence environmentally conscious than the average male. The misrepresentation of men in the survey could slightly impact its reliability.

Further, research has shown that the 10 countries most environmentally friendly in the world are located in Europe (World Population Review 2020). As Europeans are drastically overrepresented in the survey, this probably distorts the results slightly in favor of an eco-friendlier approach. Additionally, it could be argued that the young population will travel more than older generations; therefore, their perspective on the topic could be more valuable than older generations of travellers.

Contrastingly, this thesis questionnaire was based on a previously mentioned survey conducted by Booking.com in 2019. Thus, some of the second city travelling survey questions were similar to Booking.com's survey, making it easier to analyse this thesis research's reliability and validity. A big company such as Booking.com has, in general, more resources, better reach, and more time to do this research than this thesis's author (e.g., 22.000 respondents compared to 313). In other terms, research conducted by a company like Booking.com has more reliability and validity than a university student's research. Despite everything, the questions similar to Booking.com's survey had matching results, which means that this thesis research has a certain level of reliability and validity.

Finally, having anonymity in quantitative research methods like surveys makes most respondents feel more comfortable answering the questions based on their true opinions of the topics in question. This thesis author decided to make this thesis survey anonymous so the respondents could be honest about their perspective on second city travelling. Consequently, the use of anonymity increases the research's reliability and validity.

## **7.2 Further research**

Based on second city travelling's recent appearance in the tourism industry, further research could be both beneficial and interesting for tourism stakeholders, destinations, and travellers.

The industry's experts could conduct further research in the future regarding both the positive and negative impact that second city travelling has on the first and second cities. This would help to analyse whether this travel trend is more beneficial or harmful to the destinations.

Moreover, the world is always changing, which means that people's perspectives, global environmental issues, and impacts also change quite rapidly. The travellers who have participated in this thesis' research could change their minds tomorrow or the next week, month, or even year. In the future, travellers could be more conscious about their travels' environmental impact, or they can also choose to ignore it. The only way to know this is by conducting another quantitative research in the future and see how much the perspective of travellers has changed in that time frame.

## **7.3 Self-evaluation**

This thesis has been a challenge for the author, mainly for three reasons. The first reason was the short amount of time available since this thesis was written in a period of less than a month. On the other hand, it was a good challenge that tested the author's capacity and skills under pressure.

The second reason was the lack of available information on the topic. As it was said before, second city travelling is still a very new concept, and there is a small amount of bibliography available on it. However, it was a fascinating topic for the author, and it has increased the author's knowledge regarding this topic and others.

The third and last reason was that the author did not have much previous knowledge concerning the tourism field. In the past, the author had to follow the hospitality specialization as a part of her studies. This thesis was the author's last opportunity to follow the desire to learn more about the tourism industry during her studies.

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# Appendix

## Survey questionnaire



### Second city travelling: the lifeline of modern-day tourism or a travel trend without future?

 Mandatory fields are marked with an asterisk (\*) and must be filled in to complete the form.

My name is Antonella Vila and I am a student at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. This study examines how much knowledge travelling people have on second city travelling and their priorities in regards to the possibilities of their destination. The research is part of my thesis, which is done to complete my bachelor's degree. The purpose of this study is to find out, if travelling people are willing to take a second city travel approach in the future.

The following questionnaire is completely voluntary and will require approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Please complete the questionnaire before November 21, 2020.

The results of the study will be available at: <https://www.theseus.fi> in the beginning of December 2020.

#### Background details

##### 1. What gender do you identify as? \*

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

**2. What is your age? \***

- 15-30
- 31-45
- 45+
- Prefer not to answer

**3. Where is your home located? (if you choose "other" please specify) \***

- North America/Central America
- South America
- Europe
- Africa
- Asia
- Australia
- Caribbean islands
- Pacific islands
- Other
- Prefer not to say

**4. How often do you travel? \***

- 1 or 2 times a year
- 2 or 3 times a year
- 3 or 4 times a year
- More than 4 times a year

**5. How do you usually choose your travels? (if you choose "other" please specify) \***

- Via internet
- Via tourist guides (e.g. books, magazines, etc.)
- Through word-of-mouth
- Via travel agencies/tour operators
- Other

**Second city travelling**

**6. Do you know what second city travelling is? \***

- Yes
- No

**Second city travelling is the exploration of lesser known destinations in a bid to reduce over-tourism and protect the environment. A second city can be any lesser-known destination that might not be the first or most evident choice for foreign tourists, but still offers the culture, food and attractions one seeks when they travel abroad.**

**7. Have you ever done second city travelling? \***

- Yes
- No
- Maybe, but I was not familiar with the concept until now



**8. I would be more likely to consider doing second city travelling if I believed that it will (you can choose more than one option and if you choose "other" please specify) \***

- be a richer and more unique travel experience
- combat/avoid overtourism
- be a crowd-free vacation
- have a positive impact on the local community
- make the overall trip cost a lot cheaper
- lead to me being treated better as a tourist/traveler
- help me integrate into the local culture
- Other

**Safety and security**

**9. "If I travelled during the COVID-19 pandemic, I would feel more safe travelling to a smaller, lesser-known place/second city." \***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**10. "If I travelled to a second city, I would feel more secure because the crime rates are usually lower than in the main cities." \***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**11. "I would be afraid of travelling to second cities because of its possible lack of infrastructure development." \***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### **Attractions and activities**

**12. "If I travelled to a second city, I would be afraid of missing out the main attractions in big or first cities." \***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**13. "I would be happy to take initiative in seeking out things to do when there are not obvious must-see attractions." \***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**14. "I believe that second city travelling in general provides a more authentic tourism experience." \***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**15. "I believe that travelling to a second city would make my schedule tighter." \***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Choosing a destination**

**16. "I consider the negative and positive impact that I might cause in the place I am travelling to." \***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**17. "I would be keen to have access to a service (app/website) that recommends destinations where an increase in tourism would have a positive impact on the local community." \***

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**18. How likely are you to do second city travelling in the future? \***

- Extremely likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely