

# (Mis)Understanding Overtourism and the Cruise Business 'The Zen of Cruise Management'



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9<sup>th</sup> Kreuzfahrtkongress  
Hamburg (Germany) – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019



Cruise Research Society

# Overtourism and Cruises

## The Media Coverage...

SPIEGEL ONLINE **SPIEGEL**

Alle Texte | Anmelden

Spiegel | SPIEGEL+ | Kreuzfahrten: Luftverpestung, Ausbeutung, Menschenmassen - der Wahnsinn



Luftverpestung, Ausbeutung, Menschenmassen  
**Der Kreuzfahrt-Wahnsinn**

**SPIEGEL** Exklusiv für Abonnenten

Die Schiffe verschmutzen Luft und Ozeane, selbst abgelegene Küstenstädte werden von Kreuzfahrern überrannt. Wer zahlt den Preis für den vermeintlichen Traumurlaub? Lesen Sie hier die SPIEGEL-Titelgeschichte. Von Dinah Deckstein, Ullrich Fichtner, Felix Hutt, Martin U. Müller, Max Polonyi

10.09.2019 | 15:08 Uhr

**Cover-Check: "Der Spiegel" stellt eine neue Kiosk-Jahresbestleistung mit dem "Wahnsinn Kreuzfahrt" auf**



*It feels like cruiseships are the poster-child of everything that is wrong with tourism... But... Compared to shipping and to tourism, cruises are small!*

# Time to see things in perspective...

## *Cruise growth and its effects are comparatively small!*

| Global Capacity              | 2017                                         | Number of Units               | Cruise Fleet / Sector as a % of... | Data Source      |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
|                              |                                              | Cruiseships                   | 369                                |                  |
|                              | Airplanes                                    | 24,400                        | <b>1.51%</b>                       | Statista (2018a) |
|                              | Merchant Ships                               | 52,000                        | <b>0.71%</b>                       | Statista (2018b) |
|                              | Hotels                                       | 184,449                       | <b>0.20%</b>                       | STR (2018)       |
| Global Economic Contribution | 2017                                         | Direct Contribution (mil USD) |                                    |                  |
|                              |                                              | Cruise Sector                 | \$61,020,000                       |                  |
|                              |                                              | Tourism Sector                | \$2,036,000,000                    | <b>3.00%</b>     |
|                              |                                              |                               |                                    |                  |
|                              | 2017                                         | Employment (Jobs /FTEs)       |                                    |                  |
|                              |                                              | Cruise Sector                 | 1,100,000                          |                  |
|                              |                                              | Tourism Sector                | 118,454,000                        | <b>0.93%</b>     |
|                              |                                              |                               |                                    |                  |
| 2017                         | Direct Contribution per Arrival / Port Visit |                               |                                    |                  |
|                              | Cruise Sector                                | \$445.82                      |                                    |                  |
|                              | Tourism Sector                               | \$1.538.93                    | <b>28.97%</b>                      |                  |

‘If you were to close the cruise industry tomorrow, it would make zero difference to overtourism issues.’  
(David Dingle, Carnival U.K.\*\*)

"The cruise industry goes to about 1,000 places. The vast majority want more tourists from us, not less."  
(Adam Goldstein, vice chairman of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd)\*\*

“Venice alone attracts 24 million tourists annually, nearly the same number of people the entire cruise industry carried in 2017. So I mean we are quite small”

(Carnival Corp. CEO Arnold Donald)

# THE 'OVERTOURISM SURPRISE'

*Did we Over-Sleep Tourism Development?*



# Did I 'Oversleep' the 'Overtourism Debate'?

## *A Researchers' Journey in the Overtourism Debate...*

In September 2017, **I was invited** as a keynote and asked if I could speak about 'Overtourism'.

My initial thought was that the organisers were referring to '**Overcrowding**' in the Cruise Context.

In my preparation, as usual, I started doing my **scientific literature research** on 'Overtourism'...

The more I read, the more I was **unable to clearly scope / define** 'Overtourism'

It seemed that 'overtourism' **meant many things**, for many researchers, in many contexts.

# A Scan through a Scientific Database (Science Direct DB)...

## *Did Science 'Over... Sleep' this Development?!*

6 papers  
since 2018

### Overtourism Research:

- Search String: ("Overtourism") in title, abstract and keywords
- Nothing before 2018
- Currently, only 6 Publications

### Cruise Overtourism Research:

- Search String: ("Overtourism") in title, abstract and keywords
- Nothing before 2019
- Currently, only 1 Publication

1 paper  
since 2019

96 papers  
since 1986

### Overcrowding Research:

- Search String: ("Tourism" AND "carrying capacity") in title, abstract and keywords
- Since 1973 (1 paper that year)
- Currently, 96 Publications

### Cruise Overcrowding Research:

- Search String: ("Cruise" AND "Carrying Capacity") in title, abstract and keywords
- Since 2002 (1 paper that year)
- Currently, 8 Publications

8 papers  
since 2002

1955  
papers  
since 1996

### Tourism Sustainability Research:

- Search String: ("Tourism" AND "Sustainability") in title, abstract and keywords
- Since 1996 (25 papers that year)
- Currently, 1955 Publications

### Cruise Sustainability Research:

- Search String: ("Cruise" AND "Sustainability") in title, abstract and keywords
- Since 1996 (5 papers that year)
- Currently, 166 Publications

166 papers  
since 1996

17495  
papers  
since 1996

### Tourism Social Responsibility:

- Search String: ("Tourism" AND "Social Responsibility") in title, abstract and keywords
- Since 1996 (222 papers that year)
- Currently, 17495 Publications

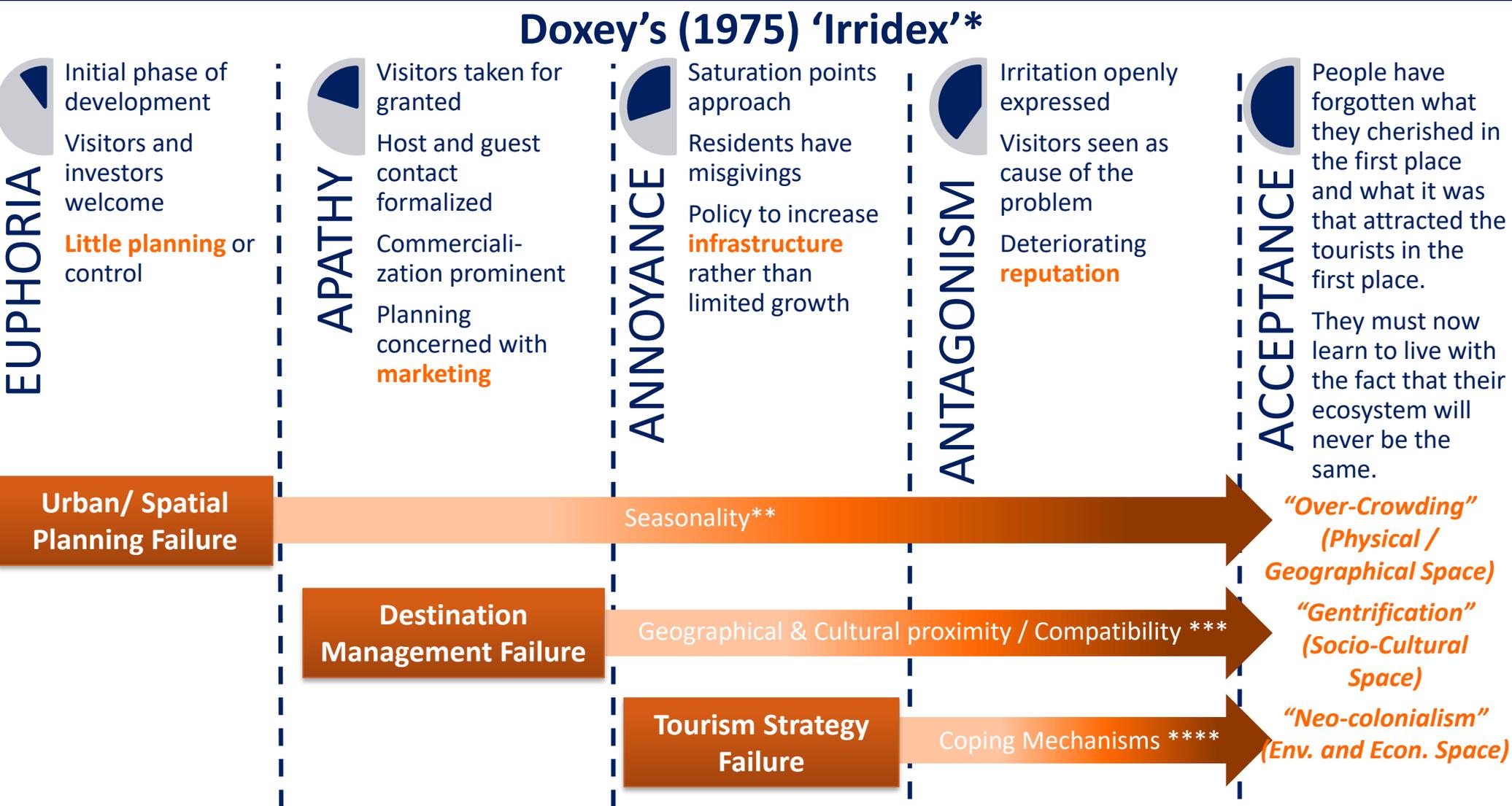
### Cruises & Social Responsibility:

- Search String: ("Cruise" AND "Social Responsibility") in title, abstract and keywords
- Since 2004 (1 paper that year)
- Currently, 4 Publications

4 papers  
since 2004

# Overtourism has been a concern since the mid-70s!

## Evolution of Tourism-related Sentiment and Overtourism Dimensions



\* Doxey, G.V. (1975) A causation theory of visitor-resident irritants: Methodology and research inferences. In Travel and Tourism Research Associations Sixth Annual Conference Proceedings (pp. 195-98).

\*\* Faulkner, B & Tideswell, C 1997, 'A framework for monitoring community impacts of tourism', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 3-28

\*\*\* Harrill, R. (2004). "Residents' Attitudes Toward Tourism Development: A Literature Review with Implications for Tourism Planning", *Journal of Planning Literature*. 18(3): 251-266.

\*\*\*\* Ap. J. and J. Crompton (1993). "Residents' Strategies for Responding to Tourism Impacts", *Journal of Travel Research*. 32(1): 47-50.

# The issues described by 'overtourism' have been around for decades... Well-researched and documented!



The terms “overtourism” and “tourismphobia” became the **buzzwords** of 2017 and have since evolved from what could be viewed as a **sensationalist** and oversimplified media narrative criticizing the impacts of tourism not always objectively addressing the **real drivers** of the phenomenon

*(Milano et al, 2019)*

# Hamburg Kreuzfahrtkongress 2011...

## My Presentation – Advising the Business to address the Critics!



### Globalisation at Sea: Cruise Sector Growth and its Externalities



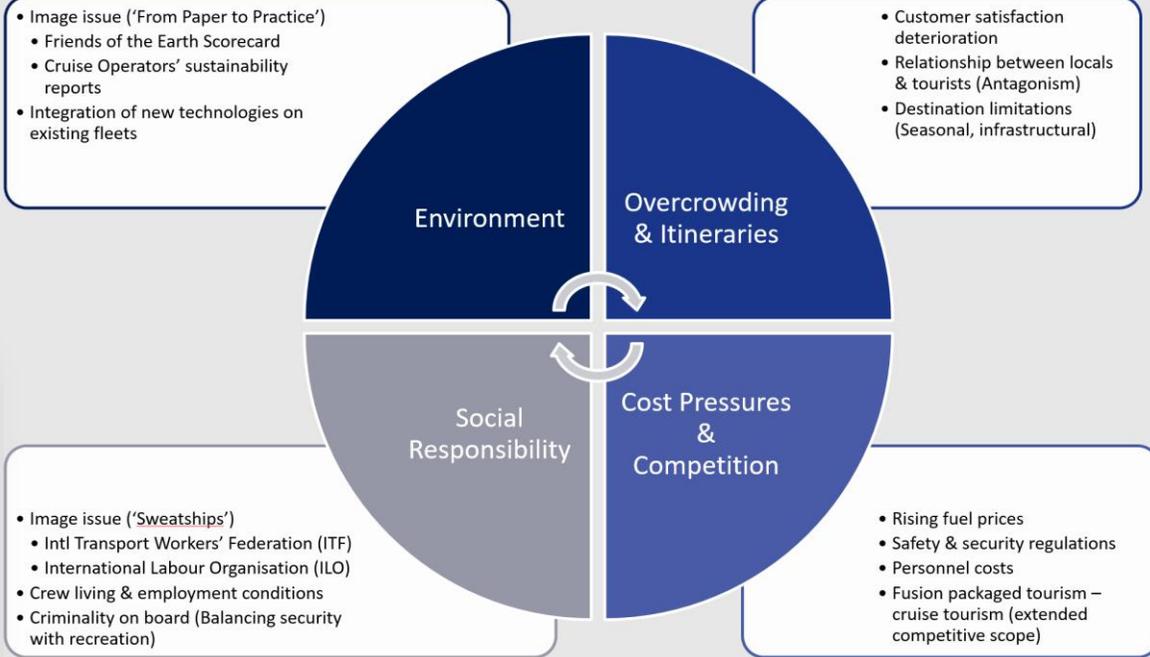
Prof. Dr. Alexis Papathanassis

Kreuzfahrt Kongress 2011 – Hamburg - 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011

### Table of Contents

- ▶ Cruise Sector Dynamics & Structural Trends
  - Growth forecasts
  - Capacity Developments
  - Concentration
- ▶ Globalisation at Sea?
  - Externalities: Overcrowding, Environmental Pollution, Employment Conditions

## Cruise Sector Challenges & Externalities “Globalisation at Sea?”



# THE 'BAMBOO PHENOMENON'

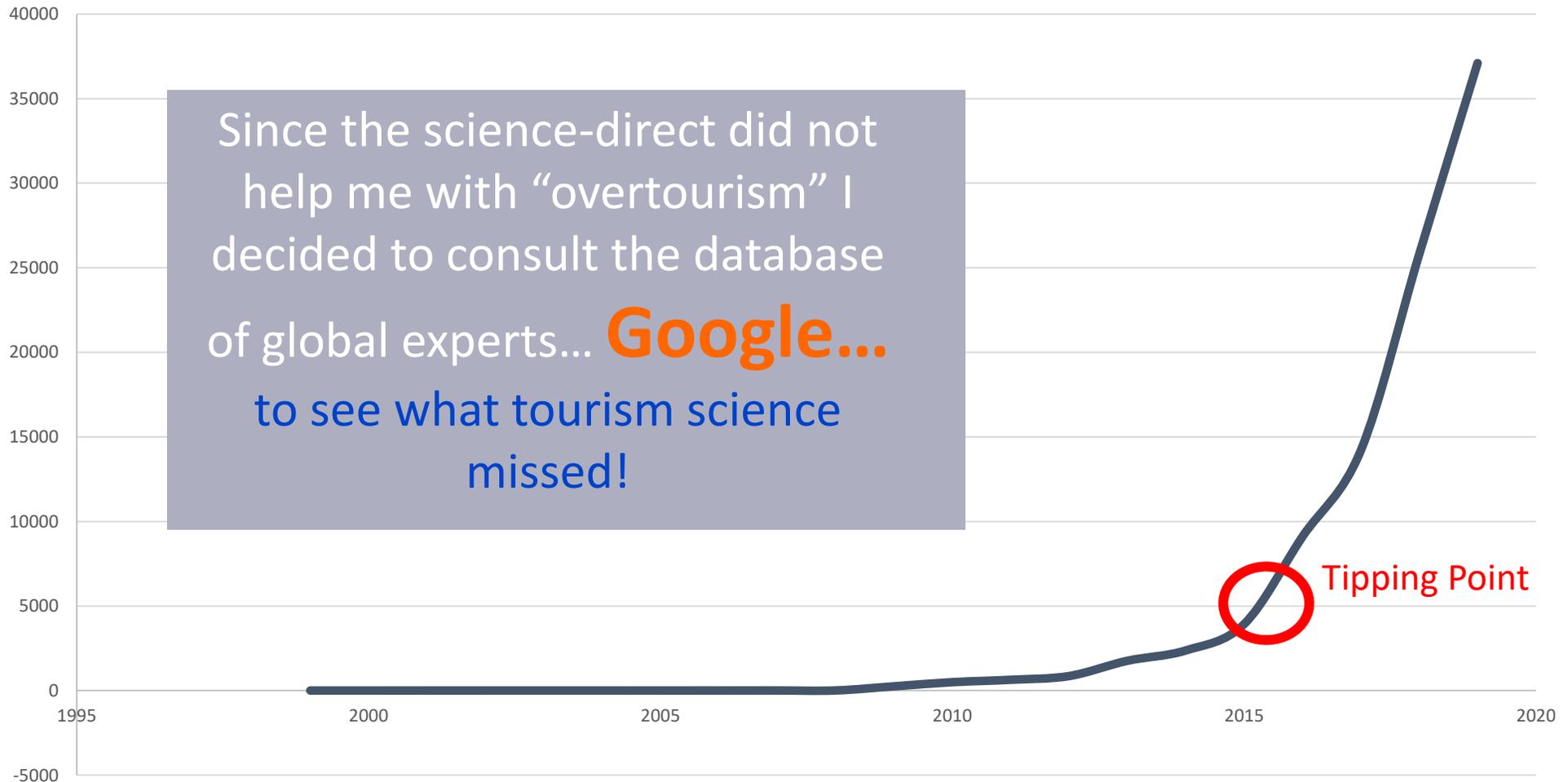
*Power Laws and Escalation*



# Did 'Overtourism' really become a problem in 2016?!

## *What happened during this period?*

'Overtourism' in the News - Crude Analysis of Google Hits  
(Search String "Overtourism" and 'News' Filter)



Since the science-direct did not help me with "overtourism" I decided to consult the database of global experts... **Google...** to see what tourism science missed!

# Power Laws: $Y = \text{Constant} * X^{\text{Power}}$

## *The Amplification Potential of Non-Linear Relationships*

- ▶ We observe this everywhere and have many names for it:
  - Emergence
  - ‘Butterfly-effect’
  - Compounding
  - Complexity – Chaos Theory
  - Pareto Principle
  - Creeping Crisis
- ▶ And every time it occurs... we are surprisingly, surprised!

“The greatest shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function.” Albert Allen Bartlett (Physics Professor)



The Chinese Bamboo Tree seeds need 4 years before the first stems emerge from the soil. In the 5th year they break the ground and grow up to 28 meters within 6 weeks. During the 4 years, and given fertile soil, the bamboo was developing its root system capable of supporting a resilient 28 meter tree.

# The origins of the term 'Overtourism': A 'Journalistic Strike' on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2016

Skift  
Take

**W**e came up with "overtourism," a simple portmanteau to appeal to people's baser instincts with an element of alarm and fear in it. That is the biggest reason why the term and its exploration by everyone has caught on.

— Rafat Ali

The industry organizations like UNWTO and WTTC and other such stasis-by-consensus bodies had been using it forever, to be brought out in conferences and annual corporate social responsibility (read PR) efforts when needed. If this was the case for the industry insiders, imagine what happened when you threw around sustainability to the travel consumers: everyone's eyes would glaze over. In other words, no one would give a shit.

Thus was also born the mini-economy around the "experts" attempting to define overtourism — nevermind our first definition of it.

The hashtag #overtourism was born and dozens of tourism consultants, consultancies and wannabe gurus jumped on it. Tourism professors and academics finally had something new to talk about since BRICS became a term. Dozens of papers have been public in academic journals and PhDs are in progress around overtourism.

Also born were dozens of panels at tourism and development conferences around the world, and even the glacially active UNWTO started talking about it at their conferences. WTTC, that old boys corporate club of travel sector, even commissioned McKinsey (McKinsey!) to come out with what they billed as the first definitive study on overtourism, 18 months after we had coined the term and explored in dozens of stories since. Tourism ministers around the world starting talking about it in their policy effort. It even created a sub-genre of derivative documentaries exploring overtourism.

There was also an ongoing parallel conversation happening at Skift amongst our editorial team on sustainable travel and our role in covering it. We had stayed away from the phrase "sustainability" since the start, because it was a phrase that had been in usage in travel for 20 years with little or no resonance in the larger travel industry

The Skift logo is displayed in a bold, black, sans-serif font on a bright yellow rectangular background.

# So... What Happened? The Bamboo-Effect Happened!

'Overtourism' in the News - Crude Analysis of Google Hits  
(Search String "Overtourism" and 'News' Filter)



# CRUISES AND THE 'FERTILE SOIL'

*OK Boomer... Have a Nice Cruise!*

welt Abonnement Ticker Suche Login

**ICONIST**  
DAILY LIFESTYLE BY ICON

MODE GESELLSCHAFT DESIGN SERVICE BEAUTY MRICON ZUTISCH UNTERWEGS SCHMUCK UHREN FRIENDS ICONISTA

GESELLSCHAFT „OK, BOOMER“

**Mit diesem Spruch beleidigen Millennials Babyboomer am liebsten**

Stand: 11.11.2019 | Lesedauer: 2 Minuten

Von **Julia Hackober**  
Deputy Director ICONIST

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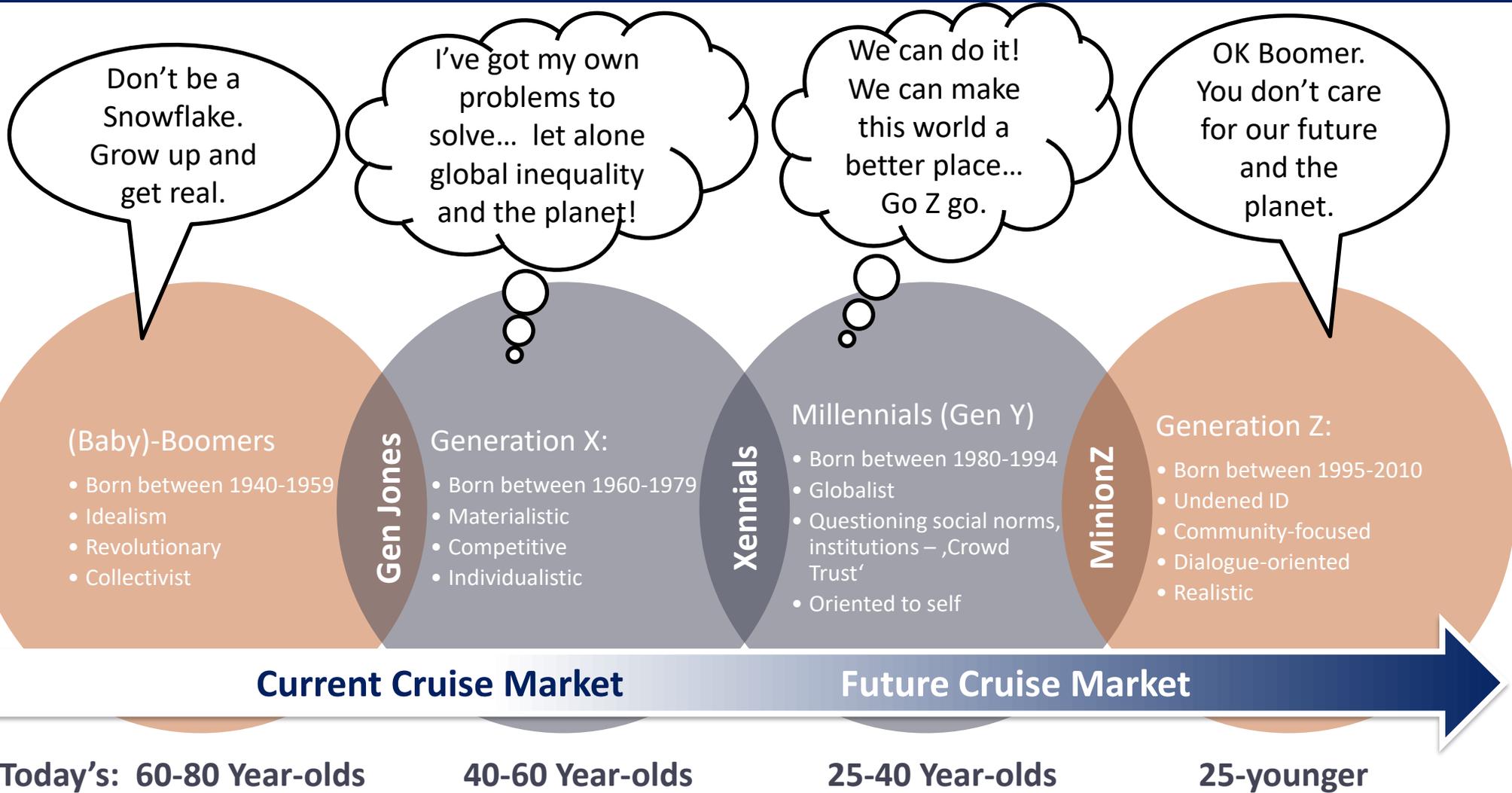
Quelle: Getty Images/Kollege: ICONIST/Jan Ross Pattigrew

Mit nur zwei kleinen Worten schicken Millennials ihre Eltern-Generation auf's Altenteil. Wie ein Spruch aus dem Internet den Kampf zwischen Digital Natives versus Nachkriegsgeneration befeuert.



# Hey Boomer... Have a nice Cruise!

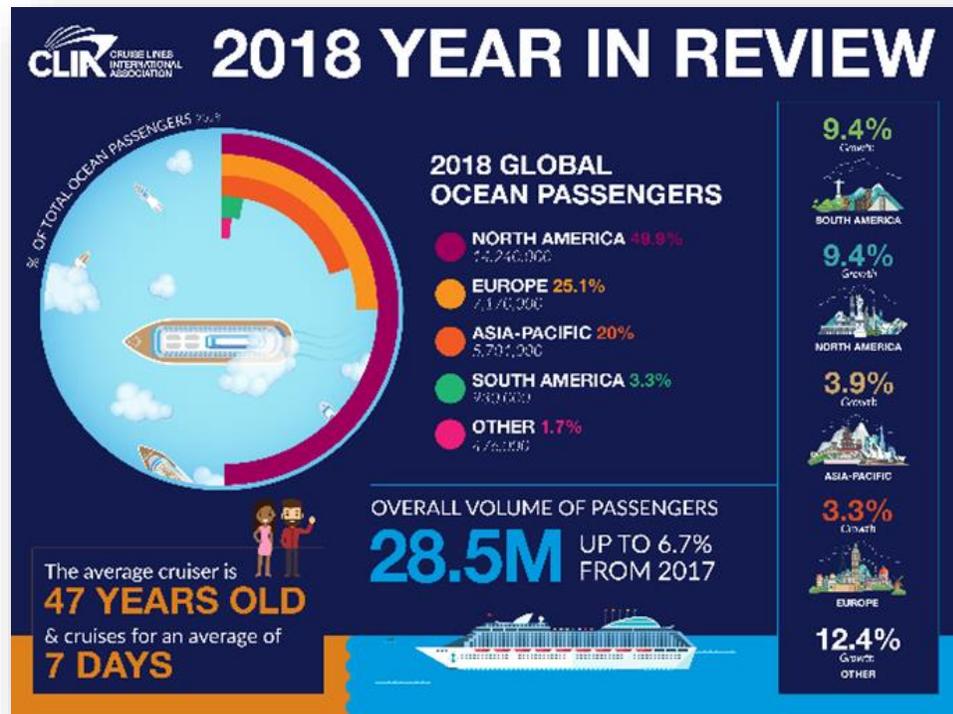
## Generational Conflict and Cruises as a Symbol for 'Intergenerational Inequity'



# 'Power of Context': A consistent narrative of growth!

► Google search:

- “Cruise Boom” (Filter: News) resulted to 228,000 hits  
— “Tourism Boom”: 7,500,000 hits (‘Cruise Boom’ Hits -> 3%)
- “Cruise Growth” (Filter: News) resulted to 4,450,000 hits  
— “Tourism Growth”: 38,900,000 Hits (‘Cruise Growth’ -> 11%)
- “Sustainable Cruises (Filter: News) resulted to 76,000 hits  
— “Sustainable Tourism”: 5,960,000 hits (‘Sustainable Cruises’ -> 1%)
- “Cruise Overtourism” (Filter: News) resulted to 27,000 hits  
— “Overtourism” 107,000 (‘cruise overtourism’ -> 25%)



*Implicit message:*

“We are big on growth, but small in sustainability!”

# 'Stickiness Factor': Scandals and Reactive PR: Dealing with the Criticisms vs. Solving the Problems!



**Cruise Ships Dump 1 Billion Litres Of Sewage Into BC Waters Every Year Causing Dead Zones**  
 Impacts include suffocating sea creatures, aquatic life dead zones, and more



**Call For Caribbean Destinations To Unite Against 'Predatory' Cruise Lines**

**Cruise ship passengers spending less than first reported**  
 A new study finds each spends under \$62 in Maine, down from a previous estimate of \$110.



Kreuzfahrt-Touristen werden immer umweltbewusster.

WWW.LAHS.DE

**BUSINESS INSIDER DEUTSCHLAND INTERNATIONAL**  
 Carnival got hit with a \$20 million fine after dumping garbage into the ocean, but it's not the only cruise line guilty of trashing the sea, an expert says

**orcs**  
 Ship Isn't The Only Thing That Stinks A Carnival: Low Tax Rate Stirs Ire  
 Carnival cruise ships more polluting than all of Europe's cars  
 Company operates seven of the 20 most polluting cruise ship lines, finds report

**New Times**  
 Miami's Cruise Industry Gave \$23,500 to Senator Who Stopped New Cruise Tax  
 The air quality on cruise ships is so bad, it could harm your health, undercover report says

The cruise industry **exceeds** international regulations by not discharging untreated sewage into the oceans during normal operations.\*



The cruise industry **recycles** 60% more waste per person than the average person does on land in the U.S.



The cruise industry will **reduce its fleet-wide rate of CO2 emissions by 40% by 2030\***



The cruise industry **partners with world class organizations** like The Nature Conservancy, UNICEF, World Wildlife Fund, UNESCO, US Wildlife Trafficking Alliance and others to **ensure the health of the oceans and communities we visit.**



The cruise industry is building reefs, collecting critical ocean data, restoring fisheries and helping **develop best practices** for coastal communities.



The cruise industry continues to make a **positive impact on communities around the globe** by sustaining 1,108,676 jobs equaling \$45.6 billion in wages and salaries and \$134 billion total output worldwide in 2017.



93% of the cruise industry has **eliminated plastic drinking straws** or only provides them on demand. Many of have vowed to dramatically reduce or eliminate single use plastics too.



# A 'Younger' Generation the Cruise Business Cannot Ignore...

## Implications for Cruise Consumption and Ports

Figure 5:1 Most and Least Used Cruise Class by Generation

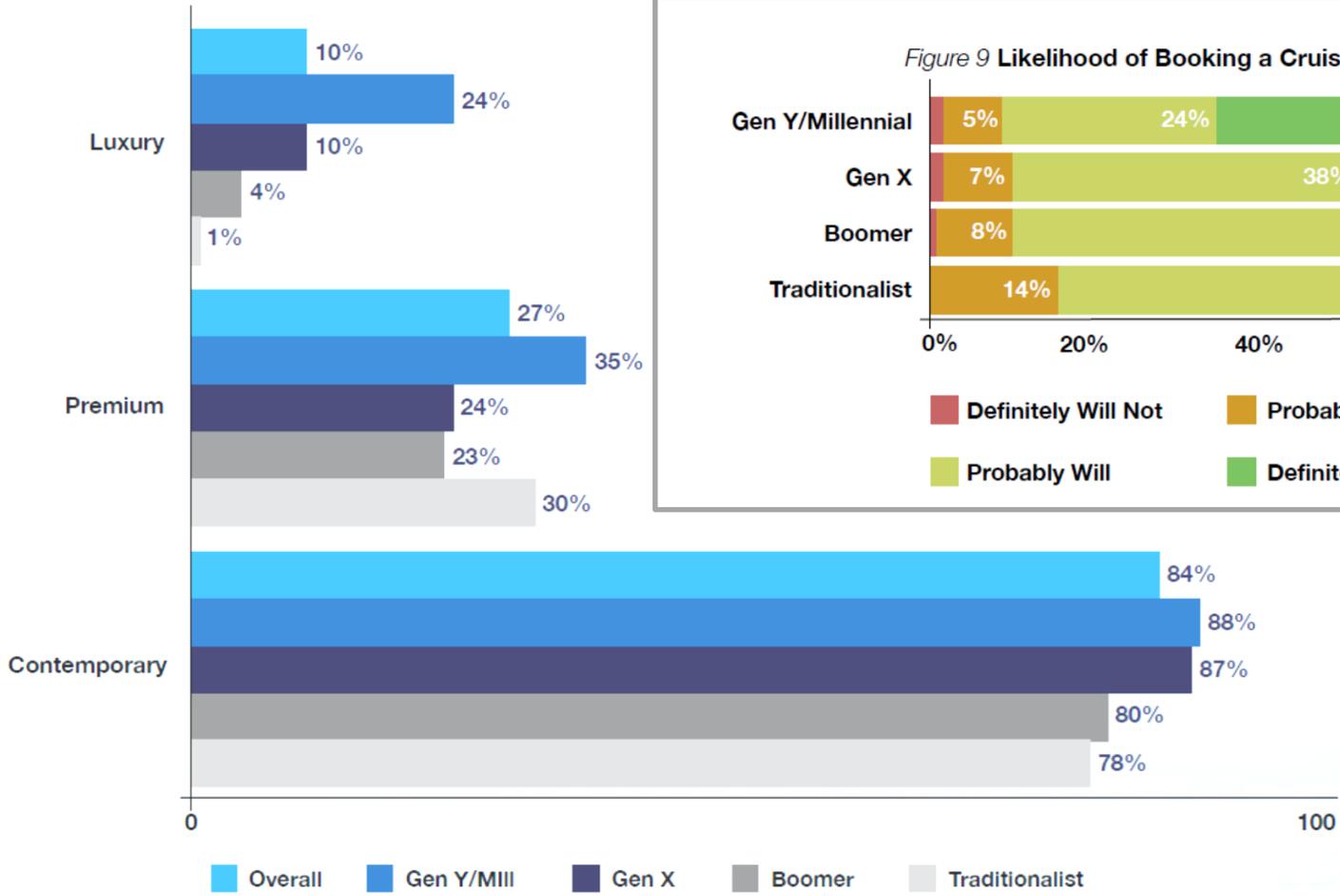
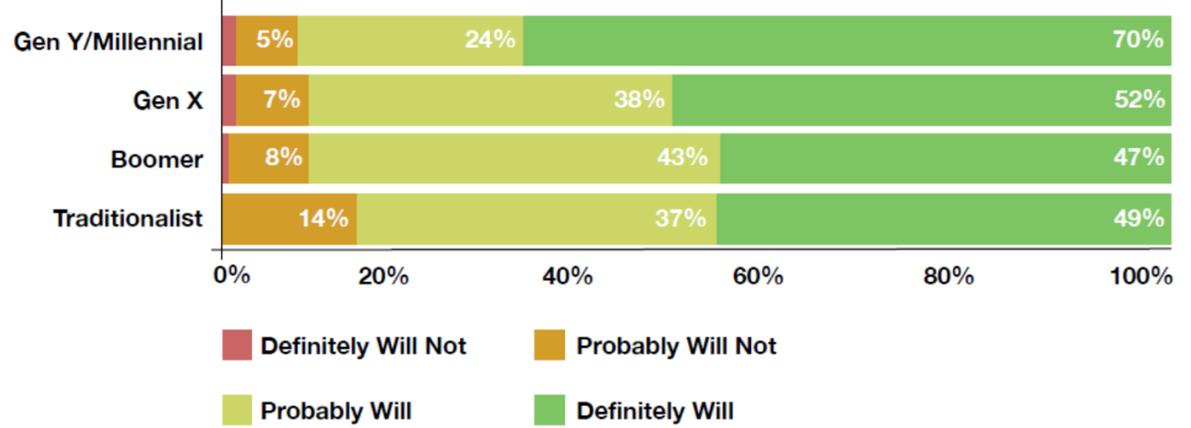


Figure 9 Likelihood of Booking a Cruise for Next Vacation Per Generation



# A 'Younger' Generation the Cruise Business Cannot ignore...

## *Implications for Cruise Consumption and Ports*

More than half (57%) of cruisers extend their vacations in port cities, with a high 68% in the Millennial group who stay after their trips are over. Just over half of the older generations extend their stay, with 53% of GenXers and Boomers and 56% of traditionalists remaining in port cities for a few extra days.

Figure 2:2 Is Cruising a Good Way to Sample Destination by Generation

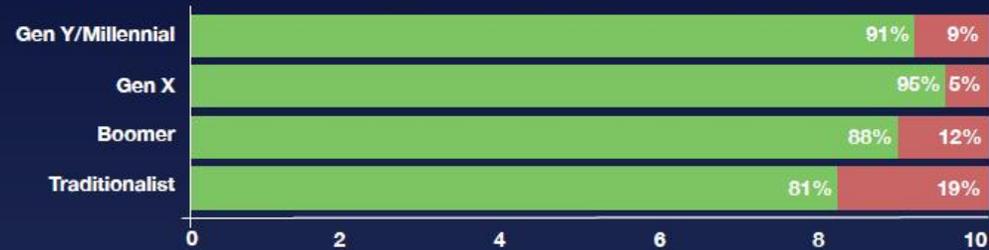


Figure 2:3 Returning to a Destination Visited on a Cruise By Generation

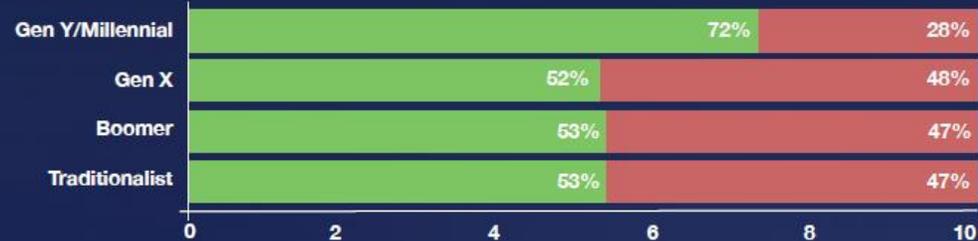


Figure 2:4 Extending Cruise Vacation in Port City by Generation



# THE WAY FORWARD...

*Zen Cruise Management... Be the Bamboo!*



# “The Bamboo’s usefulness lies in its Simplicity”

*Not general Political Correctness... But specific Causes and concrete Measures*

Specific measures, local results reporting

- E.g. “Reducing CO2 emissions in the worldwide fleet by 2030” vs. “Reducing emissions for the port of Hamburg

Some examples...

- Costa’s ‘4GOODFOOD’ Initiative and ‘Taste don’t Waste’ Campaign (18 months after implementation = 35% reduction in food waste)
- Royal Caribbean’s Relief Support (dispatching vessels) after Hurricane (Irma) in the Bahamas

Initiatives can become causes, permeating throughout the company’s entire value and supply chain

“Finally, consumers increasingly expect brands to **“take a stand.”** The point is not to have a politically correct position on a broad range of topics. It is to **choose the specific topics (or causes)** that make sense for a brand and its consumers and to have something clear to say about those particular issues.”  
(p.9)

# “The Bamboo bends, but does not Break”

## *Embrace Humility and Engage with the Critics*

### Narrative coherence

- E.g. “The industry is too small to make a difference in overtourism” vs. “We go to over 100 places and most of them want more tourists (who we bring, making thus a difference)”

### Transparency and sincerity

- Letting critics and criticisms ‘on-board’
- More engagement with science and academia

“Members of this generation therefore tend to believe that **change must come from dialogue**: 57 percent of millennials, Gen Xers, and baby boomers think they would have to break with the system to change the world, compared with 49 percent of Gen Zers. Gen Z is also more **willing to accommodate the failings of companies**. (p.06)

# Last but Not Least... Credibility is a Long-Term Commitment to Doing What You Say and Saying What You Do!



**YODA**

**DO OR DO NOT.  
THERE IS NO TRY.**

“Our study based on the survey reveals **four core Gen Z behaviors**, all anchored in one element: this generation’s search for truth. Gen Zers value *individual expression* and avoid labels. They *mobilize themselves* for a variety of causes. They believe profoundly in the *efficacy of dialogue* to solve conflicts and improve the world. Finally, they make decisions and relate to institutions in a highly *analytical and pragmatic* way. That is why, for us, Gen Z is “True Gen.” (p.2)



Hochschule Bremerhaven 59°32' N

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THANK YOU

