

# Meatless gastronomy: a threat or an opportunity for tourism development?

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Meat overconsumption by tourists is one of the key issues in the sustainability of tourist destinations. The objective of this paper is to assess the impact that a promotion of meatless gastronomy and its actual increased availability would have on the attractiveness and visitation of a popular European urban destination.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The research uses an innovative foresight approach that combines environmental scanning and scenarios. The authors formulated the scenarios using the Delphi technique and working with 27 scholars whose insights into the topic were enhanced through theses that resulted from the environmental scanning. They provided their insights into how a promotion of meatless gastronomy would affect a destination. Subsequently, the authors synthesized their insights and formulated the scenarios.

**Findings** – Based on two defined scenarios, the authors found that a meatless image represents an opportunity for the future development of an urban European destination. A long-term growth in visitor numbers can be achieved while ensuring environmental, economic and socio-cultural sustainability providing that relevant stakeholders are involved in the promotional activities.

**Originality/value** – Management of tourists' unsustainable eating habits is currently an unexplored issue. The present research addresses this topic and provides valuable insights that will help to address sustainability issues while making tourism destinations more attractive.

**Keywords** Meatless gastronomy, Tourism development, Sustainability, Scenarios

**Paper type** Research paper

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## 1. Introduction

Food is what represents today's tourism and a push towards gastronomy is further stimulated by, among other things, its role in modern society and post-modernist world, as well as the importance it has for authenticity, identity-building and tourists' exclusivity-seeking (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2016). Tourists globally consumed 39.4 million tonnes of food in 2010 and this amount is expected to almost double to 82.0 million tonnes by 2050 (Gössling and Peeters, 2015). Consumed food naturally has its environmental implications, namely 24% of the world greenhouse gases (GHG) (Lenka *et al.*, 2015), the occupation of more than one-third of the land (FAO, 2023) or the hormone and antibiotic pollution from livestock farming (Bartelt-Hunt *et al.*, 2011). In general, the negative environmental impacts of food production are primarily associated with animal products and dietary change can yield greater positive environmental impacts than from food production (Poore and Nemecek, 2018).

According to Gössling *et al.* (2020), the COVID-19 crisis was a vital opportunity to reform the tourism industry and to implement measures that would reflect sustainable development goals. Bertella (2020) further elaborates this assumption specifically in association with catering and states that this topic has not been covered by a sufficient number of authors, even though she perceives sustainable diets as one of the greatest challenges for a better future.

As far as we know, a few authors recommended to implement measures towards sustainable diets in tourism that would lead to a reduction in the consumption of dishes with a high environmental

footprint (Gössling *et al.*, 2011; Li *et al.*, 2020; Li, 2018; Zhang *et al.*, 2017). For instance, Gössling *et al.* (2011) consider catering establishments as one of the key actors in the environmental sustainability of a destination as tourists move around a limited area that only offers a limited number of catering establishments. In order to mitigate the negative environmental impacts, they propose a so-called food management, which involves a cut in the proportion of beef and an offer of at least one vegetarian alternative on the menu. Li *et al.* (2020) who found in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa that more than 22,000 hectares are needed to provide food for tourists, with 84% of it needing to be reserved for animal-based food production, also advocates for the management of tourists' meat consumption.

A question arises as to what impact the systematic promotion of meatless gastronomy would have on the development of a destination as such measures could threaten it. A relationship between a promotion of meatless cuisine and attractiveness of a tourist destination should be thus assessed. We address this issue seeking to answer the following research question: How would a promotion of meatless gastronomy and its actual higher availability affect the development of a destination?

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Food tourism, destination attractiveness and development

Based on academic literature, we consider attractiveness to be a multi-layered concept that differs from one destination to another. However, in general, a better ability to meet tourists' needs increases the destination attractiveness (Ma *et al.*, 2018). Thus to enhance its attractivity, a destination must offer diverse services that would together create a multi-dimensional profile of the destination increasing its competitive advantage (Cracolici and Nijkamp, 2008) and its clients' satisfaction, which would, in its turn, improve the likelihood of tourists revisiting the destination (Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin, 2017). This indicates that marketing organizations in a destination should strive to expand the range of local services to satisfy different types of consumers, including meatless gastronomy seekers.

Efforts to conceptualize attractiveness have a long history. Studies generally agree on the need for relevant indicators, among which gastronomy has its crucial position (for example, Lee *et al.*, 2014; Boivin and Tanguay, 2019), especially in the sense of providing local gastronomy through, for instance, gastronomic festivals (Reitsamer *et al.*, 2016; Reitsamer and Brunner-Sperdin, 2017). However, the importance of individual indicators seems to vary in individual destinations as literature suggests. Some authors refer to gastronomy as a secondary determinant of attractiveness which together with people-related factors only complements the main attractions, whether historical or natural (Vengesayi *et al.*, 2009). In specific contexts, the role of gastronomy may be marginal, for example at nature-based sites (Lee *et al.*, 2009; Islam *et al.*, 2017) or in domestic tourism (Pompurová *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, Mikulic *et al.* (2016) refer to the role of gastronomy as a hybrid issue since gastronomy can significantly harm (in the case of low quality) but also enhance tourists' experience regardless of its significance for the given destination.

In view of the positive impact gastronomy can have on attractiveness, so-called *food tourism* has emerged, the commonly used definition of which is: "visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a specialist food production region are the primary motivating factor for travel" (Hall and Sharples, 2003). Literature mostly agrees on links between gastronomy and local heritage. For instance, according to Ellis *et al.* (2018), food is first and foremost a cultural experience, the most important factor being its authenticity which cannot be separated from heritage because it represents local traditions, practices and symbols.

Food tourism can positively contribute to a sustainable tourism development as the following authors suggest. Besides attractiveness, the local food is a generator of jobs and income, prevents authentic exploitation and empowers the community. The key to a destination's success lies in the use local food, promotion of attractive and unusual dishes, speciality restaurants and other

gastronomic products (Rand *et al.*, 2003). A positive relationship between food tourism and sustainability is also confirmed by Everett and Aitchison (2008): it strengthens regional identity, fostering environmental awareness and preserving traditional heritage. These positives, however, indicate that local stakeholders need to be involved in the promotion of a destination and such a premise is confirmed also by Ellis *et al.* (2018).

## 2.2 Gastronomic tourists' motivation

Studies mostly agree on a classification of tourists in relation to food, although every author approaches the issue from a different perspective. Mainly, the definition of tourists with the most positive attitude towards food is in accordance with the definition of food tourism. This means that tourists travel to taste. Tourists in general may perceive gastronomy and food either as a peak or supporting experience (Quan and Wang, 2004). The difference between a peak experience, which is the motivation of their travels, and a supporting experience is its relation to the tourists' daily routine. In the case of a peak experience, the relation is of a significant contrast (food consumption is akin to a museum visit) while in the case of a supporting experience food consumption is just an extension of the tourists' daily routine. Besides Quan and Wang's (2004) approach, these observations were confirmed by several other authors.

For instance, Levitt *et al.* (2019) also emphasize the daily routine issue. They argue that highly motivated food tourists (i.e. for whom food tourism is a peak touristic experience) are open to experimentation and escaping from a daily routine. So do dynamic foodies defined by Getz *et al.* (2015): food is an important factor in determining where they travel. Although passive foodies mostly do not travel to taste, food can still significantly influence their holiday experience. This refers back to the aforementioned view that gastronomy is a hybrid issue (Mikulic *et al.*, 2015), highlighting the role of gastronomy in tourism development: even though tourists are not motivated to travel for food, it is still an important satisfaction determinant.

It is the escape from daily routine that might be an obstacle to a promotion of meatless gastronomy. This is because tourists often do not adopt the same sustainable habits they practice at home, and also because of a greater flexibility and above-average spending (Wu *et al.*, 2021). In particular, although Generation Z is aware of sustainability and ethical food choices, their consumption is less sustainable when they are travelling. This is influenced by time and budget (Orea-Giner and Fusté-Forné, 2023). Alternatively, restaurants located in the tourist centres have no need to offer sustainable food (Huang *et al.*, 2022; Lochman, 2023) and secluded restaurants are only visited by existential food tourists (Hjalager, 2003). A negative impact of prices on tourists' intention to purchase was also confirmed in the Indian tourists' case study (Ma *et al.*, 2018).

Clustering might be a rather significant generalization as tourists enjoy several aspects of (local) food consumption. It is a multidimensional construct that includes: exciting and/or authentic experiences, an escape from a routine, pleasure, health concerns, cultural experience, socialization, prestige and status, as well as the appeal of traditional food (Park *et al.*, 2022). An overlapping multidimensional approach was defined by Savelli *et al.* (2022): tourists perceive healthiness as the most engaging and attractive product feature of typical local foods, followed by geographical indications and sustainability. These findings are in accordance with Su *et al.* (2020), who argue that stakeholders "should create a variety of different food-related products and services to offer a package of benefits for food tourists" (p. 583). In other words, this would mean that access to both meatless and meat-based cuisines could be an opportunity for tourism development because it satisfies both groups of consumers. The aforementioned observations are reflected by Pompurová *et al.* (2023), who also address the issue of food variety and recommend incorporating a vegetarian menu in catering establishments. Moreover, such a spectrum of various food services may contribute to the creation of a destination's multidimensional profile that would increase its competitive advantage and attractiveness as mentioned above (Cracolici and Nijkamp, 2008).

Socialization repeatedly appears among the most important food tourism aspects (Getz *et al.*, 2015; Su *et al.*, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, a meatless gastronomy promotion is more likely

to be successful if it is combined with various group events such as food festivals and markets. With such a strategy, a target group should be selected to make the promotion successful: food tourists are usually young and educated people with high income (Getz *et al.*, 2015; Levitt *et al.*, 2019).

### 3. Methods

To answer our research question, we decided to use the method of foresight – a field that originated in 1945 with the emergence of Project RAND (research and development), the objective of which was to identify future weapon systems (Hines, 2020). We define foresight as “a structured way to anticipate and project long-term social, economic and technological developments and needs” (Fernández-Güell and Collado, 2014, p. 84).

We divided the anticipatory process in two main parts: environmental scanning and scenarios. The objective of the first part was to provide a background to the issue of meat consumption and to identify key drivers that could influence tourists' attitudes towards meatless policies. We presented the results to the experts who, in the second part, through the Delphi approach, defined illustrative scenarios for the development of a European urban destination after the launch of a meatless diet promotion.

#### 3.1 Environmental scanning

It is somewhat difficult to define environmental scanning as every author defines it in their own way: the name of this method is sometimes considered as an alternative name for horizon scanning (UNDP, 2018), while some authors stress that horizon and environmental scanning are two different methods (Rowe *et al.*, 2017). Nevertheless, an initial understanding of the system is an essential part of any foresight study (Horizon Scanning Canada, n.d.). We define it as a systematic examination in order to better understand the current state and key drivers of future development.

We ensured systematic research through the STEEG approach, which stands for the following fields of interest: social, technological, environmental, economic, governance. For each aforementioned area, through Desk Research and based on an expert evaluation approach addressing our previous experience with the issue, we collected relevant articles and data that could give the experts working with the Delphi method an insight into the issue, compiling a list of key theses that arise from the papers. We sought to ensure that the theses represented both perspectives, i.e. the view that meatless gastronomy is a threat, as well as the opinion that meatless gastronomy is an opportunity for further development.

We identified 25 theses, with most of them (17) arising from socially oriented articles (see Supplementary material appendix). We perceive such an amount to be sufficient as it does not overwhelm the respondents or discourage them from continuing with the questionnaire, but it also gives them enough insight into the issue.

#### 3.2 Scenarios

To answer the research question, we employed the scenarios method, which the IPCC (2007, p. 86) defines as: „a plausible and often simplified description of how the future may develop based on a coherent and internally consistent set of assumptions about driving forces and key relationships“. The form of the scenarios can vary from cartoons to quantitative models depending primarily on the available data and their purpose (Bezold, 2010). Our scenarios are exploratory as they “start from the present and explore the impacts of various drivers, trends and interactions from now into the future” (Wiebe *et al.*, 2018, p. 547) and based on qualitative data. The narrative, descriptive form proved to be appropriate for the exploratory type of scenarios (Kok *et al.*, 2011).

Rather than developing a specific strategy, the scenarios present perspectives, expectations and hypotheses about the investigated issues (UNDP, 2018). The relevance of the scenarios for our

objective can be confirmed by a frequent use of the method in tourism research, for instance: [Pongthanasawan et al. \(2018\)](#), [Lennon and Yeoman \(2007\)](#), [Clark et al. \(2022\)](#). Although the current literature contains several other examples, [Scott and Gössling \(2015\)](#) argue that it should be used more.

We formulated our scenarios through the Delphi method working with experts in food, gastronomy and culinary tourism. We searched for these three keywords through the Web of Science database and found hundreds of articles. Then we extracted their bibliometric data including the authors' email addresses and contacted all first authors to participate in our research. In total, we collaborated with 27 authors, considering this number to be sufficient for qualitative research. As participation was voluntary, there was a risk that only vegans or committed meat eaters would enrol. We asked for their type of diet in the first round of questionnaires to avoid the responses being biased by the respondents' own dietary preferences.

We refer to Delphi as “a technique that values the knowledge and opinion of a panel of experts, based on judgements and interpretations.” We adopted this definition from [Moreira and Santos \(2020, p. 426\)](#), who conclude that a combination of Delphi and Scenarios methods can be useful to explore the future and can support destination management.

The Delphi method working with experts was conducted online. They did not know about each other and they did not have access to the responses in the questionnaires. In the first round, we presented the experts with the environmental scanning theses and encouraged them to write a short essay of no more than 300 words emphasizing that the theses were intended to complement their current expertise. The essay assignment consisted in the following question: “Hypothetically, what impact would the promotion of vegan and vegetarian cuisine and a balanced offer of such a cuisine and a meat-based cuisine in catering establishments have on the attractiveness and future development of a popular European urban destination?” By “balanced offer” we mean that, in an urban destination, catering establishments expanded vegetarian options on their menus and that there is an increase in the number of vegetarian restaurants. With this, we address the findings of the previous research ([Lochman, 2023](#)) that showed that menus in catering establishments mostly lack vegetarian options and vegetarian restaurants have no access to the tourism market. Respondents considered a time horizon of up to 5 years since the launch of a systematic promotion.

After the first round of questionnaires, we synthesized the essays into two scenarios based on developmental similarities. In other words, if the essays contained similar aspects (e.g. higher popularity of a location among young people), they were considered to be coincident and merged into one scenario. However, if some aspects were contradictory, that part of the essay was included in the other scenario. One essay could thus influence both scenarios that emerged. We started with one essay and gradually expanded it including others with consistent aspects. At the point where the essay stopped to considerably overlap with the first scenario, we began to elaborate the second scenario. Subsequently in the second round, we presented the two scenarios to the respondents. They were given an opportunity to comment on both. We addressed their comments after the end of the second round and, based on the most important, recurring ones, we modified the scenarios. As it was not essential to significantly change the defined scenarios in the second Delphi round, it was also the last round.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Respondents

A total of 27 scholars participated in our research. In terms of gender and age, we obtained a relatively balanced sample: 16 men (59%) and 11 women (41%). Experts from Europe were primarily represented (48%) – these respondents are familiar with the tourism situation in Europe. However, the respondents from outside Europe brought valuable insights into the research from non-European contexts that European experts may not be as familiar with (the influence of cultural

practices of tourists etc). The majority (59%) of respondents do not perceive themselves as vegan, vegetarian or committed meat-eaters. Regarding expertise, two-thirds indicated that they focus on social issues, which is the most relevant area for this research. Another significant part (44%) is devoted to economic issues and the smallest part (33%) to environmental issues.

#### ***4.2 Scenario 1: business almost as usual***

After the promotion of meatless gastronomy, nothing significant has changed in terms of tourism development of a given destination. The image and level of its popularity have remained almost identical to the pre-policy situation. The primary points of attraction for tourists are familiar attractions such as historical sites. The gastronomic offer is more of a secondary aspect not having a direct influence on tourists' intention to visit the destination. Given the limited disruption to the status quo despite a more diversified food offer, catering establishments still serve continental cuisine aimed at the widest possible range of tourists. To a very limited extent, however, the vegetarian image has changed the structure of the incoming tourists: the destination has become less attractive primarily to older men with a conservative attitude towards their meat-oriented eating habits due to a perceived lack of pleasure during a potential visit and a strong antagonistic attitude towards meatless culture. Conversely, there has been a slightly increased interest among younger generations from developed Western countries which are not afraid to experiment with food – but this is an intensification of a very small niche market with rather long-term implications for development.

#### ***4.3 Scenario 2: ahead in the race***

The promotion of balanced menus offering both meat and meatless dishes has become a catalyst for further development and an opportune innovation in promotion as the given destination has gained a competitive advantage. In light of the advancing climate crisis and the environmentally friendly image, it has become a preferred location for business tourism: conferences and summits of scientists, organizations and international communities dealing with the climate change have begun to be held here to demonstrate how the organizations' practices align with their values. The initial success of the policy has been also reflected in other aspects of local development. Foodservice owners have recognised the demand for sustainable gastronomy and have begun to build and intensify supply networks with small local food producers which has also ultimately supported economic sustainability in the whole region. Moreover, they established a partnership with local destination marketing organizations to collaborate on the promotion of the destination. In this respect, owners of catering establishments have been indirectly pushed into offering authentic and traditional dishes instead of continental cuisine and quick meat-based meals that are common in all destinations. Specific and more diversified gastronomic products (both meat and meatless) made the given destination more attractive and more tourists started to arrive. The destination has become popular primarily with younger tourists from developed Western countries – the older generation, particularly baby boomers, does not care much about the vegetarian image of the destination as meat is still available on menus. The nationality structure of the arriving tourist has changed in terms of other factors: the policy has been influential in increasing the destination's popularity among groups of tourists who follow religions with dietary restrictions. As the new gastronomy has expanded the range of activities, the tourists' average spending has increased, but on the other hand, so have the prices for locals. Tourists have stopped staying exclusively in a close proximity of traditionally popular (historical) sights. There is a slight spatial de-concentration in order to seek out eating establishments. The increased interest in gastronomy has also naturally stimulated the emergence of various gastronomic markets and festivals.

### **5. Discussion and conclusion**

Catering is one of the greatest sustainability challenges for a better future in tourism ([Bertella, 2020](#)). Authors focussing on catering's environmental requirements (for instance [Gössling et al.](#),

2011; Li *et al.*, 2020) advocate for implementation of measures to reduce these requirements by, among others, lowering meat consumption. Yet, the potential impact of such measures on the development of a tourism destination has not been investigated in the academic literature. This article addresses this gap and sets the following research question: How would a promotion of meatless gastronomy and its actual higher availability affect the development of a destination?

Meatless gastronomy was not found to be a threat to tourism development but rather a certain opportunity. It would support local economic sustainability since it would create stronger links between local food producers and hospitality stakeholders including both groups in the destination's marketing. The structure of incoming tourists is likely to shift slightly towards younger generations. Tourists who do not recognize vegetarian cuisine may experience a diet change as a result of exposure to such dishes. The individual findings are further elaborated in the paragraphs below.

None of the respondents perceived higher availability of meatless gastronomy as a threat. At worst, meatless gastronomy was perceived as an aspect that would not disrupt the status quo significantly. This is also because it allows the specific destination to meet and satisfy the needs of a higher number of tourists (Ma *et al.*, 2018) as meat-based gastronomy is maintained and meatless gastronomy is also incorporated in the menus. In this regard, the given destination has a multidimensional profile that reflects all tourists' gastronomic needs and a competitive advantage (Cracolici and Nijkamp, 2008) over other European urban destinations.

The promotion of meatless gastronomy will only slightly shift the structure of tourists towards younger tourists. However, this may be quite in contradiction to the Orea-Giner and Fusté-Forné (2023) findings that Generation Z does not eat sustainably while travelling, thus making it unlikely to motivate it to travel. The reason is economic. Therefore for the scenario to occur, it must be ensured that prices do not rise significantly. Besides low prices, it must be also ensured that the meals are specific and unique in order to sustain the tourism's "escape from the reality" characteristics (Wu *et al.*, 2021). Also, the push towards an offer of traditional meals representing local culture must be significant (Rand *et al.*, 2003; Levitt *et al.*, 2019). Otherwise, we consider the higher attractivity among young travellers to be rather unrealistic.

The change in the structure of visitors also corresponds to the research of Wolff and Larsen (2019), who argue that neophobia is primarily suffered by older tourists. These findings are supported by Moral-Cuadra *et al.* (2022), who argue that the typical gastronomy tourist is young and has a medium-high income, which contradicts one respondent's assertion that young tourists would have limited financial resources. Pérez Gálvez *et al.* (2017) show that higher expenditures correspond with higher access to local gastronomy. However, a claim by Moral-Cuadra *et al.* (2022) that appreciation for a greater variety of dishes increases with age is in a partial contradiction to that. This contradiction can be understood as that appreciation is more likely to occur when a wide range of meat-based dishes is provided.

Higher availability of meatless gastronomy has emerged as an opportunity to promote sustainable development (see also Sims, 2009). The specific gastronomic offer can contribute to strengthening the link between producers and suppliers, and thus to raising the economic standards of the local population and to improving their quality of life. The policy would also promote local culture through an emphasis of restaurant owners on (not only) meatless traditional food. Everett and Aitchison (2008) found that an increased interest of stakeholders to participate in food tourism correlates with the preservation of regional identity, traditional cultural heritage as well as with the enhancement of environmental awareness. We argue that higher availability of meatless gastronomy could be an opportunity only if it is capable to reflect the most important aspect of gastronomy for tourists: socialization, novelty, uniqueness, healthiness, cultural and geographical embeddedness and tastiness (Park *et al.*, 2022; Savelli *et al.*, 2022).

According to one of our respondents, exposure of carnivores to meatless dishes could increase their interest in this cuisine in the future. This could be one of the most important conclusions as it would also contribute to sustainable habits in an everyday life. Exposure to or an increased

awareness of meatless dishes and flavours have been found to be a significant factor in several studies that have examined barriers to meat reduction among consumers (Pohjolainen *et al.*, 2015; Kemper, 2020). However, Wu *et al.* (2021) argue that pro-environmental intentions of their participants on holiday do not translate into actual pro-environmental behaviour also at home.

Marketing seems to be an important factor in meatless gastronomic development. According to our findings and other papers (Everett and Aitchison, 2008; Ellis *et al.*, 2018), local stakeholders should be involved in promotion activities. Otherwise, development could be inconsistent with sustainable targets. Intensive communication between the public sphere and stakeholders was also identified as important by Woodland and Acott (2007). The main task of meatless marketing is to identify what aspects need to be emphasized so that meatless gastronomy becomes more attractive. Cheah *et al.* (2020) argue that health benefits and environmental concerns are strong motivators for meat reduction. The focus of marketing on environmental issues of food is also supported by the fact that the selection of the most environmentally challenging dishes decreases with the indication of environmental intensity on the menu (Brunner *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, the promotion and actual management should reflect the basic motives of foodies: socialization, novelty and cultural (heritage) experience (Ellis *et al.*, 2018; Park *et al.*, 2022).

Finally, the results should not be treated as universal for any destination. This is because it has been shown in several destination type examples (Lee *et al.*, 2009; Islam *et al.*, 2017) that gastronomy does not rank among the important aspects in terms of attractiveness. This research results have to be used only in the context of urban European destinations and of destinations where valuable gastronomic heritage is present. In the case of destinations without a popular food heritage, we argue that the business almost as usual scenario is more likely to happen.

### **5.1 Limitations and future research**

We perceive the respondents' structure from non-European contexts as a limitation since they are not fully familiar with the issue of tourism development in Europe. On the other hand, their representation contributed to a diversity of views on the issue reflecting their socio-cultural backgrounds. This weakness is related to another one which we consider to be the need for European contextualization of our research instead of a selected destination. However, we believe that selecting only one city would imply a significant bias in the experts' opinions as such research would require a comprehensive study of the tourism context. The general limitation comes from the nature of the Delphi method. It is a time-consuming method where respondents may agree in the second round with the results of the first round just for the convenience to avoid another iteration. The final limitation associated with the methods is that we only consider meatless gastronomy: dairy products that are part of the same industry as meat and have comparable environmental requirements were not addressed by our respondents. The findings thus cannot be fully considered in the context of plant-based (vegan) gastronomy. This gap provides a reasonable opportunity for future research.

We perceive the greatest potential for further research in the approaches to marketing for a meatless gastronomic image. In the case of an inadequate communication strategy, this image could damage the attractiveness of a destination. Also based on the relevant literature discussion, we question whether there is any possibility that meat-eaters would shift their diets slightly more towards meatless gastronomy after having spent some time in a destination with a higher exposure to such food. Furthermore, the possibility of a diet shift among meat-eaters after a holiday is another relevant topic for future investigations since we found that there is a partial disagreement in academic literature (Pohjolainen *et al.*, 2015; Kemper, 2020; Wu *et al.*, 2021). As our respondents often mentioned how the meatless image has a different impact on attractiveness among different age groups of tourists, a public survey that compares the attitudes of these groups seems to be another relevant area for follow-up research. The results of such studies could confirm or counter the conclusions of this thesis.

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### Appendix

The supplementary material for this article can be found online.

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