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From disaster to resilience: a case study analysis of tourism
policies and strategies in New Orleans following hurricane
Katrina

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Abstract (English)

In the recent years, regional development and sustainability were two terms that gained attention in almost every sector and field of study. However, the term resilience has gained even more attention since it is an interdisciplinary framework that is used to fight against a particular challenge in a system or environment. It also helps to determine how any system responds to unwanted change, uncertainty, or even crisis. This Master Thesis executes a qualitative analysis approach in order to see the (un)successful approach of post-crisis regional response. The main focus is on the case study that hit New Orleans, USA- Hurricane Katrina and its sustainable tourism practices, policies and strategies. Therefore, this research consists of an analysis that focuses on the pre-crisis and post-crisis regional policies and media discourse in the tourism sector. Throughout such analysis, this case study's main focus is to understand the sustainability strategies and goals that were adopted in the region in the tourism industry of New Orleans. The analysis is done through the perspective by both governmental bodies and local newspapers. Main goal is to examine how effective these measures and policy frameworks were in terms of local community engagement and sustainable development.

Keywords: transformative resilience, sustainability, crisis, tourism sector, recovery measures, policy response, media discourse

Zusammenfassung (German)

In den letzten Jahren haben die Begriffe regionale Entwicklung und Nachhaltigkeit in nahezu allen Sektoren und wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen erheblich an Bedeutung gewonnen. Der Begriff der Resilienz hat jedoch noch größere Aufmerksamkeit erlangt, da er einen interdisziplinären Analyseansatz bietet, der dazu dient, spezifische Herausforderungen innerhalb eines Systems zu bewältigen. Zudem ermöglicht Resilienz eine fundierte Einschätzung darüber, wie ein System auf unerwünschte Veränderungen, Unsicherheiten oder Krisensituationen reagiert. Diese Masterarbeit bedient sich eines qualitativen Forschungsansatzes, um die (un)erfolgreichen Strategien regionaler Reaktionen in der Nachkrisenzeit zu analysieren. Im Mittelpunkt steht die Fallstudie von New Orleans (USA), insbesondere der Hurrikan Katrina und die daraus resultierenden Maßnahmen im Bereich des nachhaltigen Tourismus – darunter politische Strategien, Programme und Praktiken.

Im Rahmen dieser Untersuchung werden sowohl staatliche Politiken als auch mediale Diskurse im Tourismussektor vor und nach dem Hurrikan Katrina analysiert. Ziel ist es, ein vertieftes Verständnis der in der Region implementierten Nachhaltigkeitsstrategien und -ziele zu gewinnen. Die Analyse erfolgt aus der Perspektive staatlicher Akteure sowie lokaler Medien, insbesondere durch Auswertung politischer Dokumente und Zeitungsartikel. Das übergeordnete Ziel dieser Arbeit besteht darin, die Effektivität dieser Maßnahmen und politischen Rahmenwerke im Hinblick auf die Einbindung der lokalen Gemeinschaft sowie die Förderung einer nachhaltigen regionalen Entwicklung kritisch zu hinterfragen.

Schlüsselwörter: transformative Resilienz, Nachhaltigkeit, Krise, Tourismussektor, Erholungsmaßnahmen, politische Reaktionen, Medienberichterstattung.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CRMC	Climate Resilience Measurement for Communities
EEG	Evolutionary Economic Geography
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
LO	Learning Organisation
LTD	Learning Tourism Destination
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NOLABA	New Orleans Business Alliance
NOTMC	New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation
PKEMRA	Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act
PPPs	Policies, programs, and plans
SDM	System Dynamics Modelling
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
T&T	Travel and Tourism
TTDI	Travel and Tourism Development Index Framework
USA	United States of America

1. Introduction

During the recent years we have been facing many unexpected crisis and disasters that have occurred worldwide, so it is not surprising that terms such as *resilience* and *sustainability* became one of the key discussed topics among societies. The main reason why these terms became particularly popular topics in the 21st century is because they are significantly important when it comes to providing solutions to any type of crisis (whether the crisis is economic, psychological, geographic, political...). Therefore, the aim of this Master's thesis will be to contribute to the existing literature of resilience on a regional level in the aftermath of a disaster. More specifically, the main goal of this research will be to analyse the success (or failure) of post-crisis regional response. Building on that, since we are in constant need of sustainability now more than ever, the focus will be on the promotion of sustainable resilience policies within the tourism sector in a specific region.

As for the theoretical part, the main framework will consist of the concept of transformative resilience. It is important to consider and explore the main aspects on how resilience theory can provide a guidance into the ability of a regional system to absorb shocks as well as to adapt to a post-crisis situation. Given this situation, the emphasis will be on the environmental, social, and economic aspects. Thus, the theoretical part will distinguish the importance of transformative economic resilience and it will provide description on how the region can be either “bouncing back” or “bouncing forward”. Regarding the time aspect, this research will describe mainly the concept of sustainable tourism development efforts after the particular region has been hit by a crisis. One more point is that it will focus on the main factors, such as how resilient recovery policies adapted in the tourism sector and how they can play a part in the long-term economic stability and sustainability in the region. Undoubtedly, the tourism sector is important for the economic recovery of the affected region after crisis, since it creates significant opportunities for the implementation of sustainable practices. It can also provide many ways on how to thrive and bounce forward. Afterwards, this can improve the contribution to the regional development of the local communities living in the area as well.

For the empirical part, a case study of the role of tourism in urban resilience and regional development after hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, USA has been selected.

From my point of view, the region of New Orleans is so specific as the city is located between lake Pontchartrain and river Mississippi. It has a very unique colonial history mixed with Spanish and French culture and so both the geographic location and historic aspect persuaded me to choose this location as a case study. It goes without saying that the region was unfortunately affected by an enormous damage with economic and social consequences in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina. Without any doubts, natural disasters and hurricanes in particular, always shape not only the economy as a whole, but also its sectors, such as tourism. New Orleans was no exception. Nevertheless, before Katrina hit the region, tourism sector was one of the main contributors to the local economy, as the whole economy was really dependant on it. Over the horizon of 20 years from pre-Katrina period in the year of 2004 to post-Katrina in 2024, there is still a research gap on whether the tourism sector was resilient or no.

Another thing worth mentioning is that of course there were many challenges the region faced- mostly concerning the engagement of the locals. These challenges were ranging from building trust within the local community to creating opportunities which would help them to actively participate in the tourism sector on a regular basis.

Considering this position, the primary research question for this study is as follows: **How were the initiatives and policies implemented in tourism sector in New Orleans able to balance economic growth alongside with sustainable tourism practices, particularly in terms of local community engagement, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?** A comparative case study of the role of tourism sector initiatives in urban resilience.

In order to better understand the effects on the region, this research is aiming to provide an answer for the following sub-questions:

- How did the local communities and stakeholders participate in the tourism sector's recovery fight after hurricane Katrina?
- How did the policies change in the tourism sector in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina?
- What was the view of the media on the recovery of New Orleans' tourism sector? How did the media describe development of the tourism sector?

- Was the tourism sector in New Orleans resilient? If yes, in what ways?
- What can be learned from the resilient initiatives adopted in New Orleans' tourism sector and what can be therefore applied to other region that has gone through the same path as New Orleans?

Moreover, this Master thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 2 explains the literature review used in this Master thesis. It shows how data was collected and analysed.

Chapter 3 discusses the used methodology in the analysis and provides a depiction of the data. The methodological approach consists of single-case study design, triangulation of data, media discourse analysis and policy document analysis which are described in this chapter in more details.

Chapter 4 provides a theoretical aspects of economic resilience, including the definition, concept, model, measures challenges and critiques of the resilience theory.

Chapter 5 focuses on the tourism sector as it provides an insight into the stages of travel and tourism development in the specific region and its interconnectedness to resilience and sustainability.

Chapter 6 discusses the empirical work of the analysis of tourism development, strategies and policies before, during and after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. The media discourse and policy document analysis is introduced to critically examine the resilience work in tourism sector. It is divided into subchapters, consisting of the pre-shock regional development, vulnerability and exposure to shock, depth of reaction to shock and post-shock regional development.

Chapter 7 provides a discussion on the comparative analysis of the tourism policies adapted in the region. This chapter answers the main question as well as sub-questions shown in the introduction. It also describes the framework driven analysis, key actors and stakeholders. Furthermore, this chapter shows the limitations of the case study and recommendations for further research, too.

Chapter 8 concludes the case study.

2. Literature Review

For the theoretical part about the concept of resilience in the region affected by a crisis, relevant literature has been reviewed. This includes examination of existing literature,

including academic books, journal articles and newspapers. While a literature review is an effective method used for synthesizing the findings of the research, at the same time it also identifies gaps where further research is necessary (Snyder, H., 2019). Building on that, it can be said that literature review is a first stage in developing theoretical frameworks and conceptual models (Snyder, H., 2019).

The first step needed for the collection of data for the literature review of this master's thesis was to search primarily through online databases. Online engines such as Scopus, u:search (which is a search database from the University of Vienna) as well as Google Scholar were used. Online libraries like these offer access to an extensive selection of research papers and academic literature which was necessary for the start of the literature review. In Scopus, I conducted a search using the input *resilience AND tourism AND hurricane* to find the existing literature on the resilience strategies, tourism industry, impact of the hurricanes and regional response. The search was conducted within the fields of *Article Title, Abstract, and Keywords*. Afterwards, the search has shown 38 documents, that describe resilience in the tourism industry in the context of hurricanes. These articles and academic documents included theoretical analyses, empirical research and already existing case studies. So, it makes sense that it provided a first deep insight into how potentially tourism sector can adapt and recover from the disasters events, such as hurricane.

Regarding the theory of resilience, there are various academic authors that describe the concept, such as Wildavsky (1991), Rose A. (2007), Kong, J. et al. (2021), Patel et al. (2017). Resilience theory guides the investigation into the ability of the studied systems to absorb shocks and adapt in the aftermath of crises. Then, it highlights the region's capacity to sustain its established state, as described by Berkes, Fikret et al., (1994), Pendall R. et al. (2007), Martin R. et al. (2015). In addition, Hill E. W. et al. (2008) provides set of arguments of path-dependence and the importance of considering systems perspectives and long-term institutional dynamics in the assessment of resilience impacts. On the other hand, according to the research work of Shamsuddin, S. (2020), the implementation of resilience theory poses not only successes, but also challenges in practice.

The second theoretical part covers the tourism development and Butler's Tourism Life Cycle framework (Butler, 1980), which is used to understand the evolution of tourism destinations written in the work of Rodrigo et al., (2023). This was done by typing key

words related to tourism resilience into the online search engines (u:search and Google Scholar). Key words included *tourism resilience*, *tourism development after crisis*, *tourism development model*, *tourism sector in disaster*. Next, an extensive number of articles have been displayed and for this particular part and I have analysed 24 sources that hold a relevant academic credibility. According to Weidenfeld et al. (2010), Dinçer, F. C.Y., et al. (2024), Schianetz K., et al. (2007), Butler's Tourism Life Cycle framework is widely used in the tourism studies, because of its strong analytical principle and an integration of both economic and spatial dimensions of tourism growth. Moreover, the tourism sector and the Tourism Life Cycle model are afterwards linked with the concept of resilience and sustainability, as introduced by Tamanine R., et al. (2023) and Cohen E. (2022). These authors describe the challenges faced by tourism destinations at each stage of their development.

Then, another focus of the literature review is on qualitative analysis in order to understand the policies' content, context, and implications. The selected case study draws insight into a theoretical framework that integrates elements of resilience theory and policy change to examine the extent to which post-crisis tourism policies in New Orleans, USA, after Hurricane Katrina, contribute to economic resilience, community adaptation, but mainly to sustainable practices in tourism. This brings us to a document policy analysis and media discourse analysis, which has served as a foundational component and at the same time it has involve an extensive review of policy papers, documents, reports, and literature references associated with the targeted region in post-Hurricane Katrina situation in New Orleans. Sites as government official websites, local and national newspaper archives were used to collect data on recovery policies in the tourism sector. Next, quantitative data from the tourism sector and hospitality statistics were used, such as number of visitors, hotel occupancy, revenue from the tourism industry and its contribution to the GDP. I chose this approach in order to see the impact on the tourism and economy as well as its resilience in the region. After, I analysed the results via using the software Maxqda to identify key themes and research gaps. This case study draws attention on the importance of resilience as a guiding principle in disaster recovery and policy development. Hurricane Katrina serves as a prime example of a shock to the New Orleans' system. By focusing on resilience, policymakers and regional stakeholders can ensure that communities are

better prepared for the future, so improvements can be made in (not only) the tourism sector.

3. Methodology

For the purpose of this master's thesis, four research methods have been used in order to explore the role of resilience in the tourism sector in recovery efforts after New Orleans has been hit by the hurricane Katrina. Firstly, a single-case study design was chosen, specifically focusing on New Orleans as a significant example of a recovery from disaster. Secondly, a policy document analysis was conducted to gather relevant information from policymakers. The point here why I have chosen this methodological design is to provide an analysis of tourism policies and strategies that were implemented by the governmental bodies pre-Katrina (2004) and post-Katrina time period (until 2024). Thirdly, it is clear that in order to have a different and critical perspective on resilience and tourism sector development, another lens needs to be taken into account- this is the why the role of the media is used as a third method. To achieve this, a systematic media discourse analysis was conducted by providing insights into the perception of local media newspaper and the way how it has shaped public's opinions and reflected policy nuances. For the fourth method, a mixed method approach was used, or in other words the so-called triangulation of data. It was applied in order to explore validity and reliability by interconnecting findings from the literature, policy documents and media discourse. In the following section, each methodology is going to be explained in more details so there is a clear understanding of the research design and its contribution to the study.

3.1 Single-case study design

Firstly, it is important to distinguish that there exists two types of case studies: holistic single- case study and multiple case-study design. For the purpose of this master thesis, a holistic single case study design was chosen, since the tourism sector in New Orleans is being studied as a whole and as one unit of analysis. According to Yin, R. K. (2018), the holistic single case study design, includes key questions to guide the research process. A single case study design model is based on six interconnected phases, such as prepare, plan, design, collect, analyse and share phase. For each

phase, a specific guiding question is introduced. These questions help to have a structured research process, as introduced by the academic work of Yin, R. K. (2018) and Strumińska-Kutra, M. & Kołodkiewicz, I. (2017).

The Prepare phase set the basic foundation by identifying the research problem. Once this step is completed, the question "How is data collected and selected?" in the second phase addresses the identification of reliable sources and takes care of the process that relevant data is gathered in a right way. The Design phase focuses on organizing the collected data systematically. This is then followed by the Analyse phase, which determines the next approach of how will the data be analysed. The Plan phase put these aspects all together with the question "What is the overall research strategy?" to achieve an approach that goes hand in hand with the goals of the study. The last phase concludes the case study design with a question "What key messages or recommendations should be highlighted?". This phase can be characterized as a conclusion since it focuses on the importance of clear findings of the study's results. Such approach ensures that each phase of the case study contributes to the effectiveness of the research.

All in all, there are various definitions of a holistic single-case study design. For instance, Yin, R. K. (2018) provides a description, saying that *"a case study is an empirical investigation that provides a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, more specifically in situations where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined."* Another description of the term is written by Schramm (1971), who said that *"the essence of any case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that its purpose is to clarify a decision or a significant number of decisions: answering the questions why they were chosen, how they were executed, and what was the result"* (Schramm, 1971).

3.2 Policy document analysis

Second method used in this research is policy document analysis, since policy documents served as a main source of description of the resilience efforts and initiatives in New Orleans. In total, 23 documents were analysed in this study, uncovering how different institutions approached the consequences of hurricane

Katrina. These policy documents were found from different governmental bodies and operated across different levels of governance. Firstly, I needed to analyse which institutions and governmental bodies were involved in policy-making processes in New Orleans. I found out organisations like FEMA, Congress, Department of Defence, The City of New Orleans, National Park Service, New Orleans & Company, U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board were the most active in introducing and shaping the policies in the region. This matters because it shows us that the adopted policies in New Orleans were implemented on all levels- local, state and federal. Thus, I differentiated the policies, initiatives, strategies and reports from the actors who were involved in the decision-making processes based on the timeline of their implementation- either before, during or after Katrina. Then, I searched the mentioned stakeholders online. On their Internet websites, all of them had various reports/ documents available. Then, I typed 'tourism' into the searched box and it showed me the reports that I needed. I did this approach for each stakeholder that was relevant for policy-making decisions. Next, a software Maxqda had been used to provide a qualitative understanding of the policy documents. I started the process by selecting relevant codes, such as *after*, *during* and *before crisis*. Systematically, each document was coded and then organized into a table by using Maxqda. From there, it could have been clearly seen which document was associated with which code (based on color-coding). The findings from such policy document analysis have helped to shape the picture of resilience in New Orleans before and after hurricane Katrina. It has also shown the importance of policy analysis, mainly in the area of the assessment of the ability of governmental bodies to adapt to unexpected events that can occur in the region, such as New Orleans.

3.3 Media discourse analysis

As a third method for this master thesis, a systematic media discourse analysis was undertaken. It is clear that by systematically reviewing newspaper articles, a new different perspective can be achieved. An additional depth and context to the case study of resilience in New Orleans can be shown, too. To put it simply, the media discourse design in this thesis involved a detailed review of newspaper articles, specifically focusing on local media coverage written by local reporters and authors that were connected to resilience efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Almost

all of the analysed articles in the case study were from the online archives of a renowned local newspaper in New Orleans called *The Times-Picayune*. This local newspaper of Louisiana was also rewarded with a Pulitzer Prize for its reporting initiatives and efforts during and after tremendous time of hurricane Katrina. Using the publication's online archives, this study explores how resilience was perceived in public and by locals who lived in the area. Apart from the local newspaper *The Times-Picayune*, articles from *New Orleans Magazine*, *The Independent*, *The Seattle Times*, *Buzzfeed* were analysed. Additionally, the media involves also video reports and that is the reason why I have decided to include one in this research in order to provide an objective lens of the engaged people. In the final analysis, a total of 30 sources from the media were used. When the media sources were selected, I applied the same approach as the one in the policy document analysis. I searched the online archive of the local newspaper and typed "tourism" into the search box. However, in the case of *The Times-Picayune*, it showed me more 150 archived articles related to tourism in New Orleans. Because of such a huge number of articles, I corrected my search by adding the keywords, such as "tourism before Katrina," "tourism during Katrina," and "tourism after Katrina". By doing so, it showed me around 30 articles respectively for each search. Then, I reviewed these articles and chose the most relevant ones for this case study. Afterwards, software Maxqda was used and articles were coded based on their timeline- after, *during* and *before crisis*. As a direct result, a table clearly indicating which media articles belonged to each time period was developed to support comparative analysis. To put it simply, the table has helped to visualize shifts in media framing over time. By including a different lens on how to look at the resilience response in New Orleans, another issues that might not be immediately visible can be detected. For example, missing areas of consensus between stakeholders (policymakers with locals) that may not come into view through other methods. Looking at the bigger picture, the main reason why media discourse analysis was chosen in this analysis is that it provides a critical insight of local perspectives on the issue and contributes to a broad comprehension of the regional responses to hurricane Katrina.

3.4 Triangulation of data

As a fourth methodological design for this case study, a triangulation of data has been used. This design serves as a key strategy in a specific case study research, as it

combines multiple sources. In this particular case of New Orleans, multiple sources included media articles, governmental policy documents, reports and strategies. Put another way, triangulation of data supports the principle of examining and understanding phenomena from diverse perspectives (Baxter, P., Jack, S., 2008). What it really means is that in any research, validity can be challenging because of the difficulties in establishing strong support for inferences, which is why a triangulation of data is a key way on how to solve such problem by using multiple data sources (Chowdhury, A., Shil, N. C., 2021). That is why we see that triangulation allows the study to cross-validate the final findings, reduce potential biases, and provide a multidimensional exploration of the particular problem in the study (Baxter, P., Jack, S., 2008). Having said that, it is therefore essential to use such principle in this case study of hurricane Katrina, because it includes multiple viewpoints. Triangulation of the data in this specific case study is done by combining media discourse analysis with policy document analysis, literature review and single case study design. In the *Figure 1*, a graphic representation of a triangulation data in this research is shown:

TRIANGULATION OF DATA

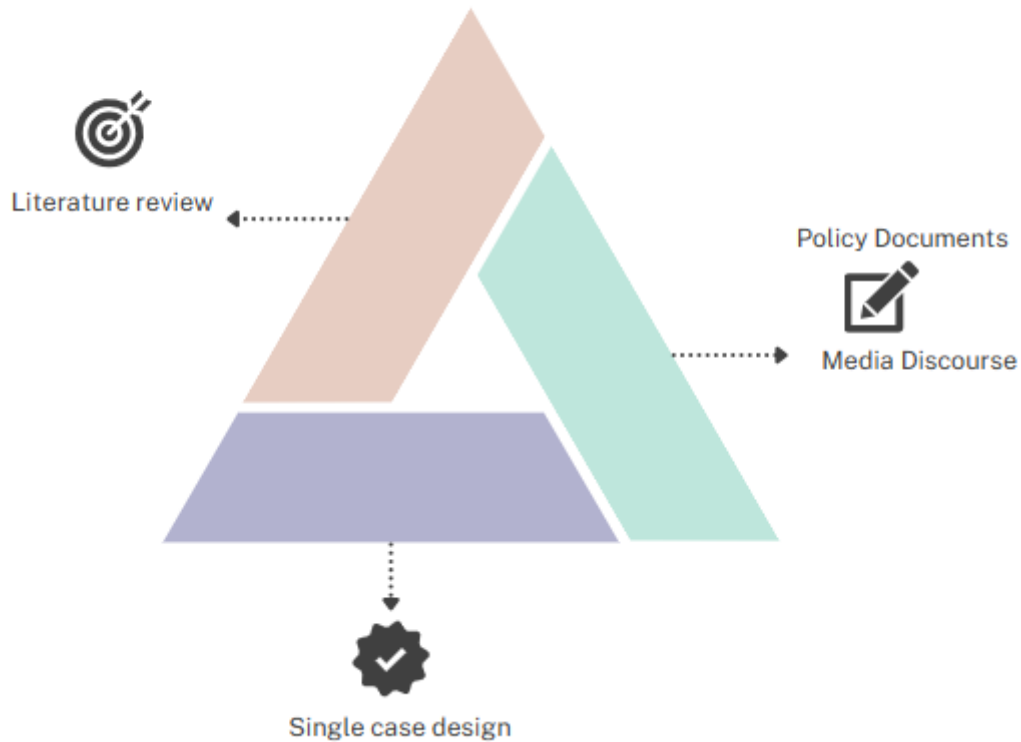


Figure 1: Triangulation of data (Source: own representation)

4. Resilience theory

Nowadays, the importance of economic resilience is slowly, but surely becoming more and more recognized in many different disciplines in academia as well as in public and private sectors. Nevertheless, academically speaking, there has been a few debates about the precise definition of the concept. With that being said, it is firstly worth to notice what the term 'resilience' actually means and look at the theoretical framework through different lenses and perspectives. This chapter will look at the meaning of resilience, its theoretical concept, model, measurement, challenges and critiques.

4.1 Resilience definition

The term "resilience," originally comes from the Latin word "resilire," and can be translated as "to rebound" or "leap back" (Modica, M., and Reggiani, A., 2015). The term resilience was firstly used and introduced by Webster in classical physics in 1824, where he defined the term as material's ability to revert to its original size and shape after deformation caused by compressive shock. (Modica, M., and Reggiani, A., 2015)

From the historical perspective, the principle of resilience was further presented by Holling C.S. (1973), where the scientist connected resilience with the stability of the ecological systems and their ability to absorb change. Since 1970s, the concept of resilience has been used more metaphorically, with regards to the description of a system that experienced a pressure and has the capacity to recover as well as revert to the initial condition. (Klein, R.J.T. et al., 2003) Many authors believe that some of the academic interpretations of resilience used in ecological, economic and sociological research are so broad that they make the term meaningless. Afterwards, regarding the long-term concept of resilience, Handmer, J.W. et al. (1996) introduced what it is and how it is linked with the development of decision-making and management methodologies- which should be able to function effectively despite a high level of risk and uncertainty. On the other side, Bruneau, M. et al. (2003) describes the topic of resilience in the context of hazards that occur when natural disasters (earthquake, fire, tornado or tsunami) hit a region. His focus is on the response of a system on a short-term basis. The perfect example of this kind of response of a system is the European Union, which has recognized the importance of resilience-based policies in responding to unexpected events like the COVID-19 pandemic. (Banica A. et al., 2024).

That being said, now looking at the meaning of the word resilience, there are various scientific definition of the term as a whole. For example, Wildavsky (1991, p. 77) described resilience in his academic work as *"...the capacity to cope with unanticipated dangers after they have become manifest, learning to bounce back."* This brings us to another scientific researcher Rose A. (2007), who describes resilience as *"...the ability of an entity or system to maintain function (e.g., continue producing) when shocked. It is thus aligned with the fundamental economic problem—efficient allocation of resources, which is exacerbated in the context of disasters."* Another definition of resilience is according to academic work of Kong, J. et al. (2021) who sees it in a

different way: *"In contrast to conventional risk-based approaches that emphasize the plan, prepare withstand and absorb phases to identify, assess, and prevent threats, resilience serves as both a philosophical concept and a methodological approach highlighting the significance of post-disaster recovery as much as absorption of a threat and its consequences."* According to Hamzah, A., Hampton, M. P. (2013), resilience of a specific region refers to the ability of a system to recover quickly, while also emphasizing that *"If something is resilient, it will require less time to return to normality or regular operation"*. At the same time, Patel et al. (2017) emphasizes that resilience can be characterized as *'an amorphous concept that is understood and applied differently by different research groups'*.

4.2 Resilience theory concept

Other than a term, resilience can be characterized as an interdisciplinary theoretical concept, since it is used across various disciplines and fields of study- from psychology to engineering, economy, ecology and many others. What is more, is the fact that in every discipline these days, resilience is linked with sustainability. Still, it is important to notice that considerable academic effort has been dedicated to defining the concept of resilience, while also criticizing the vagueness of the terminology, that raised many questions about its usefulness and practical use (Shamsuddin, S.,2020).

The character of resilience is interdisciplinary, which allows a holistic approach of the concept while also including various dimensions across diverse contexts. When reviewing the meaning of resilience, social scientists *Pendall R. et al. (2007)* identifies four overarching themes linked to the concept of resilience, such as equilibrium, path-dependence, use of a systems perspective, and a long-term perspective.

When understanding the resilience concept, we must address whether regions function as equilibrium systems as well as if the regions demonstrate singular or multiple equilibria. Many scholars, such as *Pendall R. et al. (2007)* believe that these questions cannot be resolved abstractly, although they cannot be avoided in the research analysis either. After considering whether region is resilient, the subsequent question needs to be asked: "What specific aspect of the region demonstrates resilience, and in the context of which disturbance?" So, it makes sense that only through this lens it can be determined whether the viewpoint of equilibrium is suitable.

The linkage between equilibrium and regional resilience from an economic perspective may be most intuitively understood as the capacity of a regional economy to sustain its established state, which is often presumed to be an equilibrium state when faced with an external shock (Hill E. W. et al., 2008). When taking into account the equilibrium approach, one initial interpretation of resilience is centred around the stability within an constant condition, when system is able to withstand disruptions and quickly revert to its equilibrium position- the so-called engineering resilience (Berkes, Fikret et al., 1994). In this context, the state of systems characterized by a single equilibrium is emphasized.

Secondly, path- dependence is another part in the theory of resilience. Historically, it is known as a so-called “lock-in” approach, which is mainly based on the ground that a regional economy covers multiple equilibria- although some may not be efficient (Hill E. W. et al., 2008). Over time, the accumulation of decisions can lead to a regional economy becoming locked-in in a suboptimal level or trajectory of economic performance. Equilibrium and path-dependence are concepts in the regional economic resilience that concentrate only on single measure of the economy. Thirdly, systems perspective alongside with long-term perspective are on the other hand approaches that would highlight the enduring structure of relationships among macroeconomic variables and the influence of economic, political, and social institutions that shape this structure over extended periods of time (Hill E. W. et al., 2008). These perspectives also highlight the emergence, durability, and eventual decline of the institutions which is pivotal to maintain long-term regional economic development.

When looking for an answer whether the region demonstrated resilience following the situation after crisis, many scholars and researchers are seeking indicators of outcomes that are anticipated to either return to their pre-shock levels or their pre-shock trajectories (Pendall R. et al., 2007). It goes without saying that the idea behind resilience appears highly relevant for analysis covering the topics on how regions and localities respond to shocks as well as how they recover from them. Consequently, it is essential to understand the impact these shocks might have had on the growth of the economy and its spatial dynamics with the development during specific period. (Martin R. et al., 2015)

4.3 Division of resilience

In order to understand the concept of resilience even better in various contexts, crucial part involves understanding of the different dimensions and categories of resilience. With this regards, many researchers in various fields of study have proposed several frameworks for categorizing resilience, each highlighting different aspect of this multifaceted concept. Based on the scholar work of Masik G., Grabkowsk M. (2020), they have identified 3 capacities of resilience, such as:

- adaptive resilience
- absorptive resilience
- transformative resilience

Detailed categorization of these three types of resilience can be seen in the model shown below in *Figure 2*.

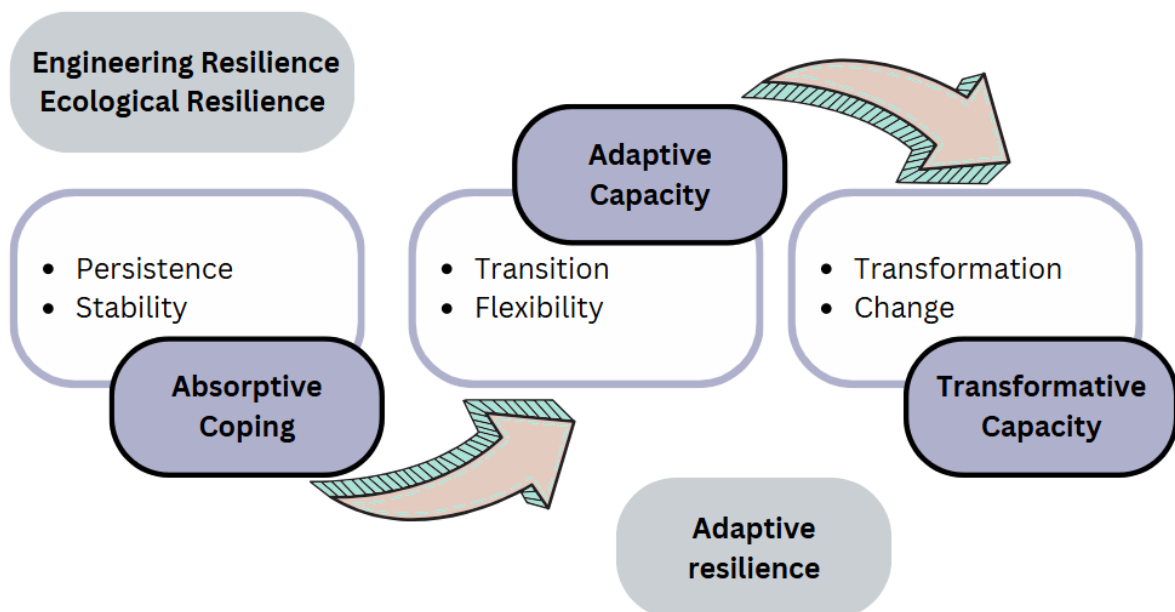


Figure 2: Model on how socio-economic system reacts to external shocks. (Source: own compilation based on Masik G., Grabkowsk M., 2020).

Firstly, absorptive resilience refers to the ability of managing climate variability during and after a disturbance in a system. In other words, adaptive capacity refers to the ability of social systems to adjust to numerous potential threats associated with the climate change as well as to learn and make necessary adjustments, after the area is

hit by a disaster (Slater, R., Ulrichs, M. 2017). Main principles include stability and persistence.

Secondly, referring to adaptive resilience, Goldstein et al. (2013) suggest that the basis of adaptive resilience lies in the capacity to change in response to evolving circumstances. Afterwards, when it is necessary, to take a step forward to transformation. Thus, the adaptive capacity includes transition and flexibility.

Thirdly, transformative resilience can be characterized as a complex, evolving, and location-specific concept that requires an understanding of its progression across different periods, sectors, and contexts (Asadzadeh et al. 2022). The core principle is therefore transformation and change.

4.4 Resilience model

While examining the perspective of exposure within vulnerability and resilience theory, it is essential to look at various spatial scales. In addition, it is important to differentiate between several factors, such as socio-economic stability, recovery via social networks and above all, its transformation. Some scholars have different approaches on the models of resilience. According to Tsao C. et al. (2016), when taking into consideration integration of the frameworks of vulnerability and resilience, these independently-evolved theories, provide unique perspectives into the topic of resilience. Analysing the implications of these three viewpoints yields an integrated framework that looks at the temporal process, the interplay between structure and agency, and the basic significance. This significance facilitates understanding of how communities react to disasters across three dimensions: sensitivity-stability, maladaptive capacity-recovery, and transformation. (Tsao C. et al., 2016)

Then, there is the question of models of the resilience theory- they are essential instruments for various reasons. For instance, they provide an important framework for the conceptualization of the theory and its potential vulnerabilities and weaknesses. One of the model of resilience theory is the framework within an adaptive Panarchy cycle model, firstly introduced by Holling and Gunderson (2002) which can be seen below *in Figure 3*.



Figure 3: Four stages resilient Panarchy cycle framework of system adaptation. (Source: own compilation based on Holling and Gunderson, 2002)

A fundamental unit for comprehending complex systems, ranging from the simplest units such as cells to more sophisticated units like ecosystems and societies, is suggested to be an adaptive cycle model. Why? Because it is characterized by prolonged phases of resource aggregation and transformation, alongside with shorter intervals that offer opportunities for innovation (Holling and Gunderson, 2002). This model outlines a cycle of ongoing adjustment with four main stages: Reorganization phase, Conservation phase, Exploitation phase and Release phase. In every phase, three key dimensions of change are included: the capacity of resources which are available to the particular system, the interconnectedness between system actors or attributes, resilience as a measurement of system vulnerability to unexpected events. Thus, if the resilience element in the significant phase is high, it corresponds to innovative and adaptable response of the system. (Pendall R. et al., 2007)

Furthermore, studies concerning Panarchy adaptive cycle model focus on the sustainability of ecosystems. This is mainly based on the capacity of ecosystems for

ongoing adaptation to achieve equilibrium or even multiple equilibrium states when there is a situation of severe shocks and external fluctuations. (Boyer, J., 2020)

4.5 Measurement of resilience

A system that is resilient can be described by the following three aspects: decreased likelihood of failure, diminished impacts of failures in terms of loss of life, damage, economic and social outcomes, and shortened duration for recovery to restore systems to their typical degree of effectiveness (Bruneau, M. et al. 2003). Nevertheless, when it comes to measurement of resilience, only a few scholars have identified two main barriers. The first barrier is conceptual one, as a precise measurement requires a clear understanding of what is being assessed (Brunetta, G. et al. 2021). Simultaneously, the definition of resilience does not facilitate this concept. What is needed is an essential initial starting point in order to establish a shared understanding of what resilience in fact is, taking into account its dynamic nature and departure from equilibrium concepts. Consequently, a singular numerical measurement or outcome cannot adequately capture resilience. (Brunetta, G. et al. 2021).

The measurement concept of resilience introduced by Bruneau M. et al. (2003) can be seen below in *Figure 4*. Based on this measurement model, resilience is consisting of four interconnected aspects: technical, organizational, social, and economic:

- *The technical dimension* of resilience distinguishes to the capability of physical systems and its connections in order to maintain desired level
- *The organizational dimension* of resilience comprises the ability of entities overseeing critical infrastructure and disaster-related functions with a main outcome- so decisions can be made. Furthermore, it is also focusing on the implementation of the actions that promote resilience properties such as robustness, redundancy, adaptability, and speed.
- *The social dimension* of resilience includes strategies which are mainly aimed at mitigating the adverse impacts experienced by disaster-affected communities and governmental bodies due to the disruption of essential services.

- *The economic dimension* of resilience focuses on the ability to minimize both direct and indirect damages to the economy that have formed from the shock.

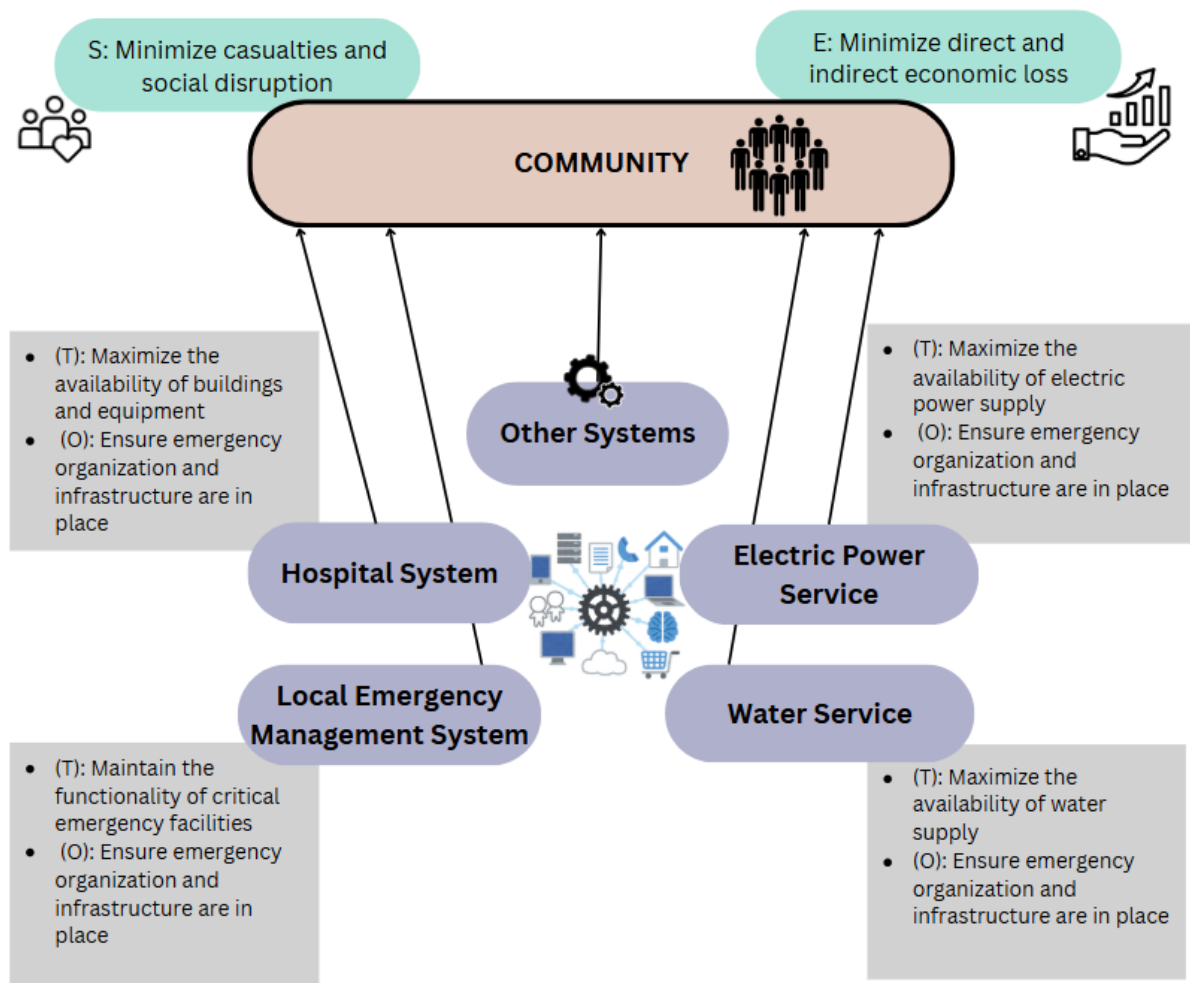


Figure 4: Quantitative model for the assessment of resilience of communities. (Source: own compilation based on Bruneau M. et al., 2003)

All together, these four dimensions (technical, organisational, social and economic) focus on the essential infrastructural elements of the community, including electric power, water services, healthcare systems, and community-level emergency management systems. At the same time, they maintain a degree of interdependence, as one system cannot function without the other (for example, power is necessary for water delivery, while hospitals rely on water) (Bruneau M. et al., 2003). Thus, those dimensions provide the key answer why resilience should be measured- in order to assess vulnerabilities, risks, allocation of resources and evaluate interventions.

On the other hand, the Climate Resilience Measurement for Communities (CRMC) is a comprehensive measurement framework introduced by Zurich Flood Resilience

Alliance (2023) and proposes four properties of a resilient system, as can be seen below in *Table 1*. It is describing the 4Rs: robustness, redundancy, resourcefulness and rapidity and the following examples that arise from the flooding situation.

Four Rs:	Description	Example
Robustness	capacity to absorb an unexpected event	housing and bridges constructed to cope with situation, such as flooding.
Redundancy	functional diversity	possessing numerous evacuation routes
Resourcefulness	capability to take action under pressure	a team within the community with the ability to rapidly organize to convert a community center into an emergency flood shelter
Rapidity	Effectiveness in decreasing impacts and recovering swiftly	rapid access to funding sources to aid in recovery

Table 1: Four Rs, (Source: own compilation based on Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, 2023)

Creating measures of resilience enables researchers and different stakeholders to assess the performance of different regions when they are faced with identical shocks. This capacity for comparing responses enables us to delve into potential reasons for the discrepancies among responses, potentially leading to suggestions for improving resilience through specific economic development strategies (Ringwood L. et al. 2019).

4.6 Economic Resilience

Even though the resilience concept has been used across numerous academic disciplines for quite a while, it was only after the global financial crisis in the year of 2008 that the regional resilience experienced a gained interest in the field of economic geography (Lemke L. et al., 2023). Nevertheless, among researchers working across different disciplines, there is no existence of a single accepted definition of regional resilience (Bristow and Healy, 2020). On the one hand, many theories concentrate and pay attention to how regional economies and industries can recover, or in other words, how they can bounce back (return to their state before a crisis) (Tripl M. et al., 2023). On the other hand, other researchers suggest to see economic resilience as a

"bouncing forward" strategy, focusing on the ability of a region to adapt, change direction, reorient and undergo structural transformation in response to a crisis (Martin et al., 2016). Thus, regional economic resilience is often described as a capacity of regional economies to withstand, adjust to, or transform in response to disturbances, and right after recover in a way that sustains or enhances their economic performance prior to the shock level (Sutton J. et al., 2023). As of now, the concept of resilience as system transformation, or the so-called "transformative resilience," has been introduced in the economic geography (Martin and Sunley, 2020). Therefore, transformative resilience refers to the capacity of regions to change towards a new, more sustainable way in the response of sudden shocks, disturbances or crisis.

In the academic work of Tripp M. et al. (2023), the authors recommend to understand concept of transformative resilience as: *"the ability of regions to leverage sudden shocks and crises to strengthen the challenge-orientation of their innovation systems, allowing them to address urgent place-based sustainability issues, demands and needs."*

This idea behind the transformative economic resilience emphasizes the region's ability to not only recover but also develop by making more efficient usage of the physical, human, and environmental resources that can be found in the particular region (Tripp M. et al., 2023). According to Martin and Sunley (2020) suggestions, transformative resilience goes beyond simply returning or "bouncing back" to pre-crisis levels, as it involves restructuring economic and social systems in a way that promotes long-term sustainability, productivity, and fair conditions. By implementing this approach, region ensures the capacity to be better equipped to face future potential challenges and uncertainties that might occur (Martin and Sunley, 2020).

Nevertheless, there is an ongoing debate among researchers from various fields, stating that the concept of regional economic resilience is unclear and is difficult to use in real case studies. The reason behind this view is that different academic groups have conflicting views, using various research methods, and are coming up with inconsistent results (Lemke L. et al., 2023). According to Lagendijk (2010), in his academic work he highlights that emerging, fuzzy and ambiguous concepts, like resilience, evolve and become well-defined and rigorous over time as researchers actively participate in academic discussions, along with conducting thorough conceptual reviews.

Thus, taking into consideration these perspectives, the conceptual model of regional economic resilience, introduced by Martin and Sunley (2020), provides an overview on how various elements, factors, and dimensions are believed to influence the functionality of regional economic systems facing disturbances over specific period of time. The regional economic framework suggests that after a disruption in the region, there is a potential to develop a new sustainable economic path by reconfiguring and completely changing the structures, which should be in line with the idea of viewing crises as opportunities (Lemke L. et al., 2023).

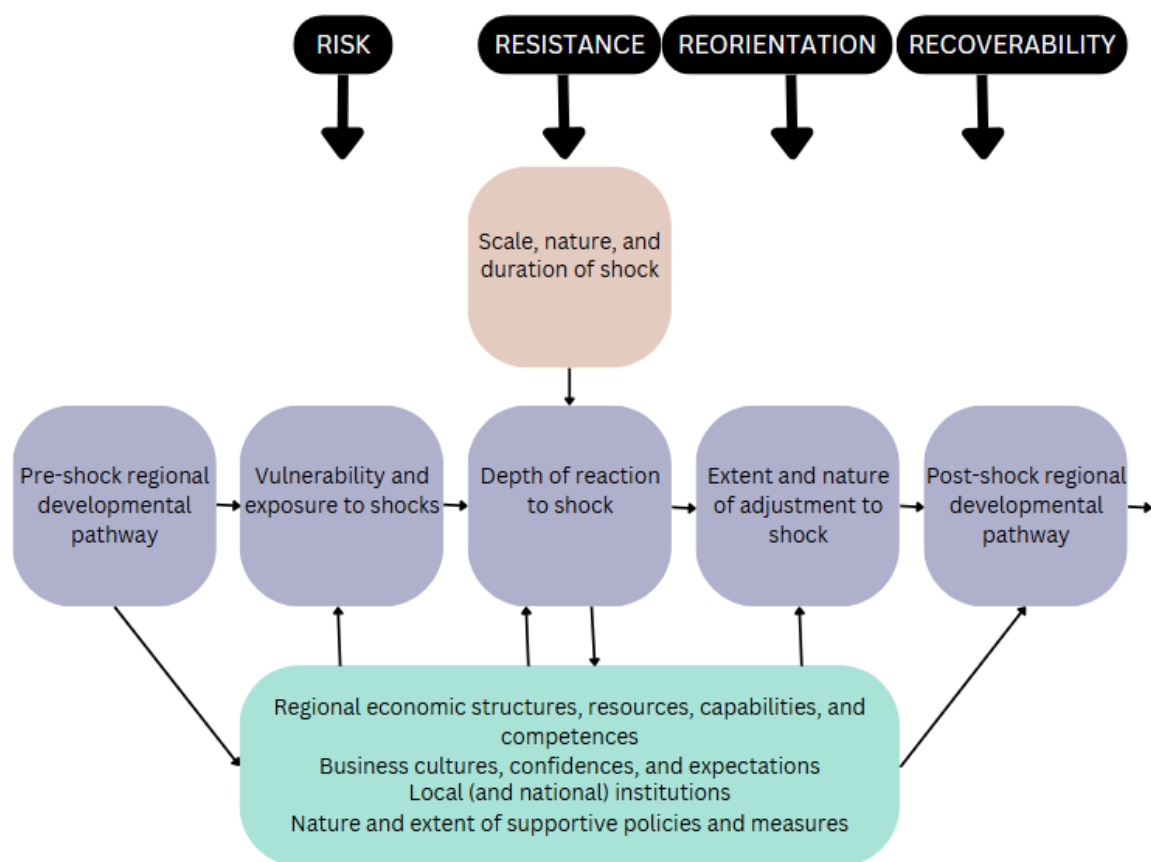


Figure 5: Model of regional economic resilience. (Source: own compilation based on Martin and Sunley, 2020)

As depicted in *Figure 5* above, the conceptual model of regional economic resilience consists of four key areas: risk, resistance, reorientation and recoverability:

1. **Risk** is understood as the weakness of businesses and employees to a certain type of shock.
2. **Resistance** is distinguished as an immediate effect of the shock on economy in the region.

3. **Reorientation** is understood as a way on how firms, workers, and organizations can modify and adapt in response to shocks.
4. **Recoverability** describes not only the nature of how regions recover from shocks, but also its extent (Martin and Suncley, 2020).

4.7 Challenges and critiques of the resilience theory

As in every theoretical framework, it goes without saying that there are challenges of the implementation of a concept of the resilience theory. The implementation of resilience theory requires extensive coordination between governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as different stakeholders involved in the region and the ability to adapt to evolving social, political, economic, and environmental conditions (Shamsuddin, S. 2020). As a result of this action, there are often mismatched time horizons between the implementation period and the expected threats and a variety of outcomes that need to be still assessed. These challenges come on top of the usual effects of securing resources, political will and achieving adoption. According to the research work of *Shamsuddin, S. (2020)*, he introduced four main challenges of the implementation of the resilience theory in practice, as can be seen in *Figure 6*:

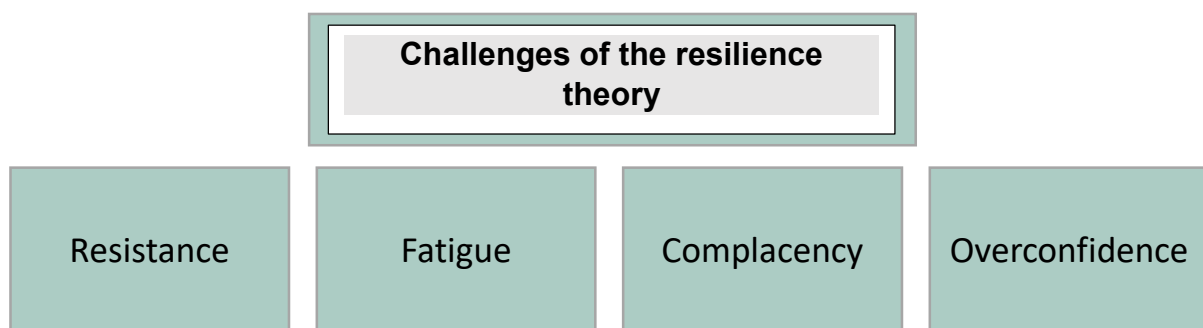


Figure 6: Challenges of the resilience theory (Source: own compilation based on Shamsuddin, S., 2020)

Resistance to resilience, as a first challenge according to *Shamsuddin, S. (2020)* arises when governance systems create barriers to achieving urban resilience through their routine operations. So, these obstacles, both organizational and psychological, increase the difficulty of resilience-oriented goals in a system (Tanner, T. et al., 2017).

Fatigue is a phenomenon happening when stakeholders from government institutions, partner organizations, non-governmental organizations as well as public become tired of discussions about implementation of the resilience policies. There is a possibility

that these different groups of people can get fatigued due to continuous policy announcements, directives and talks.

Complacency occurs often during the implementation phase, particularly when implementation is deemed effective. Complacency can require a level of concern regarding the issues resilience policies aim to tackle. Through the implementation of the resilience policy, policymakers, governmental bodies and the public may have a mistaken sense of security (Shamsuddin, S. 2020). This might result in beliefs that the threat is no longer a significant issue (Shamsuddin, S. 2020).

Regarding overconfidence, if excessive positive optimism with regards to present and future policy results prevails, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as people in the community might wrongly assume they are fully equipped to face a threat or disaster. Moreover, this overconfidence could cause stakeholders to feel that further effort and preparations are unnecessary.

Furthermore, when it comes to the economic resilience, there are several critiques of this concept, particularly concerning the static and technical ways in which resilience is often measured and conceptualized (Fastenrath S., et al., 2019). To top it off, the key criticism is about the current resilience frameworks, which often lean towards the so-called technocratic "solutionism," offering short-term fixes for complex problems without addressing the underlying systemic issues. Rather than that, the emphasis should be put on the understanding of the governance structures, decision-making processes, power dynamics and learning mechanisms (Fastenrath S., et al., 2019). The concept of transformative resilience is presented in various scholar work as a general framework for analysing regional responses to crises, but it often lacks consideration of how regional contexts- such as historical, cultural, economic, and social factors- can have a huge impact on the ability to achieve transformative resilience (Trippi M. et al., 2023). Additionally, the potential difficulties in implementing policies, such as opposition from already established interests and the need for bottom-up strategies that strengthen local stakeholders should be recognized as well, when implementing economic resilience in the region (Trippi M. et al., 2023).

5. Travel and Tourism Development

According to Klykov A., (2024), disasters caused by human activities- such as terrorist attacks, civil wars, escalating geopolitical tensions can threaten the safety of tourists in the specific tourist region. Similarly, natural disasters- such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, wildfires can affect travel plans, damage functioning infrastructure (airports, roads, communication networks) and devastate local communities. These kinds of unpleasant and unexpected events may lead to bigger security measures, restrictions in travelling and in the worst-case scenario, even an evacuation of tourists from dangerous locations. Therefore, there is a high vulnerability in the sector of tourism when it comes to an occurrence of unexpected crisis. Thus, there is a need for a good crisis management as it can help with continued operation of tourism businesses as well as sustainability (Dinçer, F. C.Y. et al., 2024). In addition, it often leads to the creation of uncertainty and fear which is discouraging tourism to potential travellers and disrupting the local economy. Both types of crises (natural and man-made) can lead to long-lasting effects on the tourism industry and local economies. (Klykov A., 2024). As introduced by the World Economic Forum and the University of Surrey (2024), Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) is like a tool for countries so they can better assess if the tourism economy is well-prepared (or not prepared at all) to tackle unexpected challenges that can occur. This model is connected with the resilience theory as it supports an approach of building strength in the tourism industry. The main idea behind TTDI is that countries are ranked based on their strengths and opportunities for growth within the tourism sector. By ranking the countries, we can have a better insight on countries' preparedness and resilience. According to the World Economic Forum report and University of Surrey (2024), the Travel and Tourism Development Index Framework (TTDI)

“seeks to inform policy-makers, companies and related stakeholders by providing insights into T&T economies' strengths and areas for improvement, and by examining the interdependent nature of the internal and external factors driving this complex sector.”

In addition, the TTDI framework's main goal is to offer context and foster dialogue among multiple stakeholders in the tourism industry, allowing them to gain a better understanding on the growing trends and risks in international tourism sector. By doing

so, it supports policy development, operational practices, and various investment strategies. The framework consists of five dimensions (enabling environment, T&T policy and enabling conditions, infrastructure and services, T&T resources, T&T sustainability), 17 pillars, and 102 individual indicators organized across the various pillars, as can be seen in the *Figure 7* below:

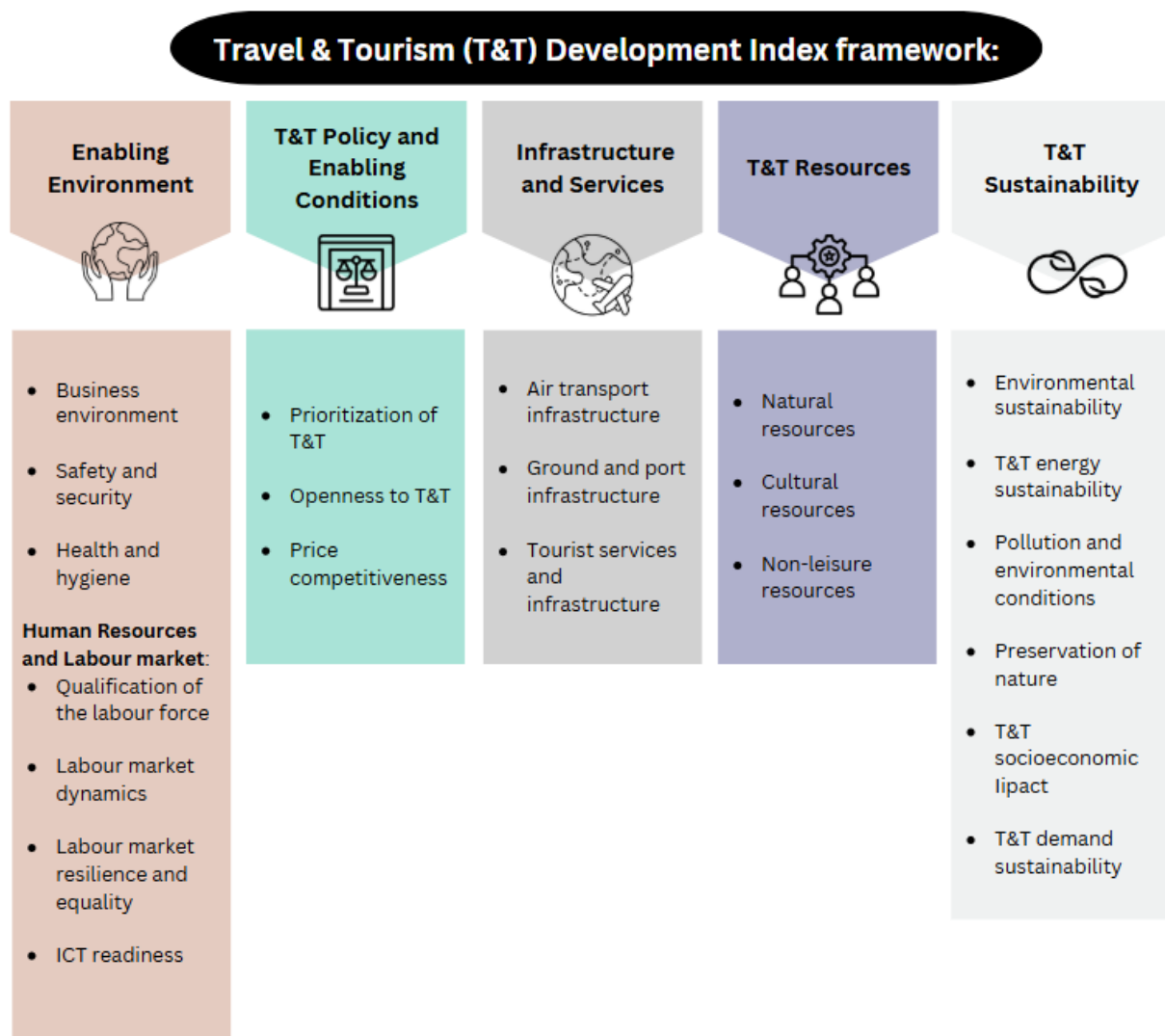


Figure 7: Travel and Tourism Development Index Framework. (Source: own compilation based on World Economic Forum, 2022)

In this section, the theoretical model of Tourism Area Life Cycle introduced by Butler (2008) is described in details, alongside with the concept of resilience and sustainability in the tourism sector.

5.1 Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle

Butler's tourism area life cycle is a helpful model that has been widely discussed among scholar works and is recognized as a conceptual heuristic model for interpreting the development of tourist spots (Rodrigo M., et al., 2023). The main aim of using Butler's tourism area life cycle is to gain a better overview on the effectiveness of strategies which promote economic, social, and environmental benefits in tourism-driven economies. Another reason is to gain a better overview of the dynamics of sustainable tourism development and how it can enhance resilience in tourism locations. As shown below in *Figure 8*, Butler's model suggests that the development and growth of a tourism destination follows an S-shaped life cycle.

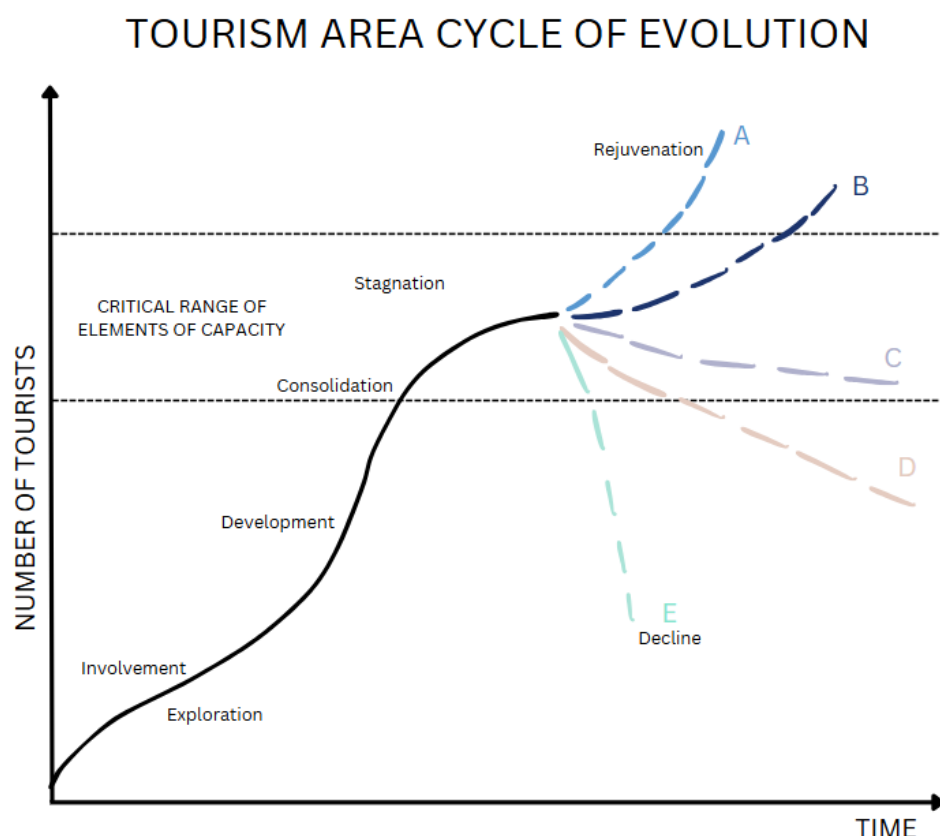


Figure 8: Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle. (Source: own compilation based on Butler R., 2008)

It consists of the following phases: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and the post-stagnation phase results either in rejuvenation or decline (Butler R., 2008). Firstly, the exploration stage is known for visitors who come to an area in limited numbers, whereas tourism has minimal impact on the area's

environment and social atmosphere (Butler R., 2008). Meanwhile, the presence of tourists has only a little effect on the economic and social lives of local citizens (Butler R., 2008). Secondly, there is a phase of involvement that happens when a certain area gains recognition as a tourist destination, especially thanks to its advertising and promotion campaigns that try to attract more tourists locally and worldwide. Without any doubts, as the popularity of the region grows, stakeholders, such as investors and travel agencies identify many opportunities for gaining profit (Rahman M., 2023). As a consequence, additional cultural attractions and hospitality facilities, such as hotels, restaurants, bars, tourist centres are established to the region (Rahman M.,2023). There is a possibility that tourists outnumber the local residents especially during the peak season (Rahman M.,2023). Thirdly, the development stage is characterized by a clear tourist market, mainly influenced by heavy advertising, growth of tourism, number of tourists exceeding the local population, loss of local control over development, replacement of local facilities by larger, modern accommodations from external stakeholders (Butler R., 2008). Consolidation is the fourth phase and it occurs when visitor numbers surpass the number of local residents in the area. This leads to the stage when tourism is the main driver of the local economy, with businesses pushing for further expansion of travel attractions (Rahman M.,2023). Nevertheless, the influx of new visitors is likely met with provocation and dissatisfaction among permanent residents- mainly the ones who are not directly connected with the tourism industry (Butler R., 2008). Stagnation, known as the fifth stage can be described when the number of visitors will have peaked, reaching or exceeding capacity limits across various areas. It results in challenges in environmental, social, and economic spheres. Despite a strong reputation among travellers, the location may no longer be trendy and natural and cultural attractions are replaced by artificial, imported facilities (Butler R., 2008). After this, there are two possible directions for the area- decline or rejuvenation. As for the decline direction, the area can no longer compete with new attractions and is characterized by a shift towards weekend and day trips (Rahman M.,2023). Another potential outcome is a rejuvenation phase. As for the rejuvenation to happen, there are two ways: the introduction of new man-made attractions or the possibility of the tourist attractions to leverage previously untapped natural resources in the region (Butler R., 2008).

While the evolution of tourist locations can be understood in a consistent concept, it is crucial to acknowledge that not all tourist areas go through the cycle's stages as clearly as others, as it really depends on the region and it differs from region to region (Butler R., 2008). Thanks to the strong analytical insight, adaptability, effectiveness in planning, relevance in addressing growth cycles, integration of both economic and spatial perspectives of tourism, this model remains a key contribution to the analysis of the tourism industry (Rodrigo M., et al., 2023). Regarding the current trends influencing the Butler's tourism area life cycle framework, there are three key trends. According to Butler R., (2024), these three trends are as follows:

- continued evolvments in sustainable tourism management,
- implementation of path dependency concepts,
- interconnectedness between development concepts and evolutionary economic geography.

In the tourism industry, path dependency was previously overlooked in the Tourism Area Life Cycle model. Only until Brouder et al. (2017) recognized its huge importance on how historical decision-making processes have an impact on the growth and transformation of tourism destinations. In his work, Brouder et al. (2017) gives insight into how past decisions, patterns, and structures shape the development of a travel destination over specific period of time. Afterwards, these structures impact the ability of locations to adapt to new evolving trends, pressures from competitors and, lastly, sustainability requirements. He is also emphasizing how processes and institutional legacies contribute to the long-term improvements and resilience of tourism destinations in the Tourism Area Life Cycle model.

What is more, is the interconnectedness between the concept of Evolutionary Economic Geography and the Tourism Area Life Cycle model. It is clear, as EEG's focus on spatial and temporal economic dynamics corresponds with the Tourism Area Life Cycle model's view of destinations as dynamic, evolving products (Butler R.,2024). Furthermore, the Tourism Area Life Cycle model benefits from the principles of EEG, with the main emphasis on the process (Weidenfeld et al., 2010). In other words, how destinations develop through agglomeration and clustering (Weidenfeld et al., 2010). As can be seen in the article reinforcing this approach written by Weidenfeld et al. (2010), the authors are demonstrating that clustering in tourism improves

competitiveness, innovation but above all, resilience. Therefore, the applicability of EEG is in providing an understanding into the destination development stages within the Tourism Area Life Cycle model. In addition, in the book written by Brouder (2017), the author is making a suggestion that the concept of sustainable development can be used as a critical lens on the evolutionary economic geography in tourism studies and it can serve also vice versa. This might be significant especially for the Tourism Area Life Cycle framework.

5.2 Resilience in tourism

Tourism industry faces a strong vulnerability as much as any other industries. Additionally, it is exposed to crises like unexpected natural crisis, political disruption and even health crisis. According to World Tourism Organization, natural disasters and catastrophes, such as floods, hurricanes, fires, and volcanic eruptions can sometimes lead to a damage of a certain destination's reputation more severely than its physical infrastructure (WTO, 2003). Changes in public perception can result in a significant decrease in demand for travelling, as travellers are choosing to go to destinations they consider to be safer (Zhang F. et al., 2024).

On the one hand, there is a traditional risk management applied in the cities that are typically emphasizing the reactive provisional responses. With such approach, cities are overlooking the drivers of weaknesses and so they are missing on the opportunities that can be applied for a better and most importantly long-term resilience in the tourism sector (Jaruda et al., 2023).

On the other hand, a region that applies the implications of resilience can be distinguished by reliable infrastructure, a relatively stable economy and a healthy environment (Zhang Y. et al., 2024). Resilient region can adapt swiftly to external shocks (Zhang Y. et al., 2024). Additionally, when adopting resilience in the region, it helps with the approach of maintaining the operation of tourism infrastructure and services which support tourism growth even after the unexpected events. According to Zhang Y. et al. (2024), when the tourism sector is hit and impacted by a crisis, the key essential solution to recover is to adapt the concept of urban resilience. Understanding the connection between urban resilience and tourism sector is extremely valuable for shaping recovery policies that are focusing on the tourism's positive impacts and sustainable development.

As Zhang F. et al. (2024) highlights in their studies, it is important to understand that an effective governance is focusing on the ability to recover from sudden natural disruptions. Furthermore, governance in tourism industry, usually established within legally binding guidelines, is beneficial for the correct implementation of the recovery policies in the aftermath of natural or human-made crisis. Secondly, a functioning governance is important for facilitating the resilience and sustainable restoration of the affected regions (Zhang F. et al., 2024).

5.3 Sustainability in tourism

What is important to highlight in sustainable tourism, is the concept of environmentally responsible consumer behaviour. Not only it safeguards the environment, it also provides a long-lasting advantage for society as a whole (Han Heesup, 2021). By including the concept of sustainability in the tourism sector even more, Schianetz K. et al, (2007) talks about a suggestion that it requires strategies that promote collaboration as well as learning processes among stakeholders at both the organizational and regional or even destination level. The learning part is essential at the regional or destination level in order to address sustainable development challenges that extend beyond the scope and responsibility of non-governmental organizations, private sector institutions and local authorities. In addition, Schianetz K. et al, (2007) provides a framework that interconnects the Learning Tourism Destination (LTD) concept with tourism sustainability. It is done through collective learning, supported by the Learning Organisation (LO) model which is aiming at continuous adaptation, systems thinking (ST) that recognizes the interconnectedness within a system, and lastly, there is a system dynamics modelling (SDM) that simulates interactions and behaviours over time. Moreover, the analysis recommends that the effectiveness of SDM in sustainability assessment can be enhanced by integrating it into the core of the framework of LTD. For a better understanding, in terms of hierarchy, the concept of Learning Tourism Destination (LTD) is at the top, as it is an overarching main goal of improving sustainability in tourism. Secondly, LO (Learning Organisation) and ST (Systems Thinking) are foundational concepts that inform the LTD. These concepts also focus on the importance of continuous learning processes in the tourism sector and they recognize the interconnected nature of systems. Thirdly, there is SDM

(system dynamics modelling) which provides the tools which are needed to examine and understand the dynamics and interactions within the tourism system over time (Schianetz K. et al, 2007).

However, sustainable tourism practices have earned some critiques from a few researchers. Cohen E. (2022) conducts research where he criticizes that even though nowadays sustainability is a topic that is at centre of tourism development, it requires more analysis with regards to broader theoretical and practical frameworks. He mentions that there are three critical points- firstly, the potential misuse of sustainability for advertising or justifying control over natural and cultural sites. Secondly, there is an interplay between authenticity and sustainability discourses, and thirdly, the equity challenges that arise from restricted access to valuable sites for sustainability reasons (Cohen E., 2022).

5.4 How can the model contribute to the resilience and sustainability of a tourism sector?

Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle model provides a framework that connects resilience with sustainability. It says about the natural progression of specific tourism destinations and the challenges they face at each stage (exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and decline or rejuvenation).

The long-term aspect of the tourism region alongside with the capacity to offer a unique set of experiences for travellers makes the tourism resilience even more crucial (Tamanine R. et al., 2023). The interconnectedness between the stages of Butler's Area Life Cycle model, sustainability and resilience allows different stakeholders acting in the tourism area effective implementation of resilient strategies. Next, these strategies have resilience as their core principle. For example, effective resource management or community engagement. *Table 2* describes in more detail the linkage between the different stages of Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle, resilience and sustainability:

Butler's tourism area life cycle	Resilience	Sustainability
Exploration	Plans for local community engagement via community-based tourism	Practices with eco-tourism and reduced environmental impact on the tourist destination
Involvement	Building the capacity to handle the increased number of tourists via involvement of various stakeholders in the tourism sector	Plans for long-term sustainable strategies via conservation or preservation programs
Development	Increased adaptability of the touristic area by improvements in infrastructure and public transport	Implementations of sustainable practices into real life activities (daily usage of bicycles and electric vehicles through the development of bike lanes/ charging stations)
Consolidation	Flexibility and specialty in tourism services via offers like seasonal special events, festivals	Balance between the economic and environmental goals, via implementing events that promote local culture, community input
Stagnation	Diversification of the experiences and activates in the area (developing new attractions, cultural events)	Collaboration with locals, by promoting local heritage
Decline	Focus on the shift to alternative tourism options (historical tours, culinary events)	Preservation of the remaining natural and cultural things and events in the region
Rejuvenation	Resilience of the area via innovation (digitalization of the region, usage of virtual reality/ augmented reality in tourism)	Minimizing environmental impacts by using VR/AR in tourism

Table 2: Linkage between resilience and sustainability in TALC. (Source: own compilation based on Butler R. 2008)

6. Hurricane Katrina case study

This chapter is concerning the empirical part of the case study of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, USA. It delves into the topic by providing an overview with key facts about the hurricane Katrina in order to set a context. Following this, a stakeholder mapping analysis is conducted to identify and understand the roles of various actors involved in and affected by the hurricane. The analysis is done to see which stakeholders have high power with high interest in comparison to low power and low interest in the tourism sector in New Orleans. The main reason why I chose to do the

stakeholder mapping is that it might help us to see the power dynamics in the region and provide a clearer view on the most influential actors in policy- decisions. It is conducted by reviewing 14 selected stakeholders from the articles and policy documents.

After, the pre-Katrina policies and post-Katrina policies are described as well as compared together, using the theoretical framework of transformative economic resilience and the conceptual model of regional economic resilience, as written by Martin and Sunley (2020). The analysis is based on two different viewpoints, such as governmental policies and a media perception.

Firstly, I chose governmental policies, reports, initiatives and strategies from 23 documents in order to see the perspective of policy makers. By doing so, I could see the priorities, language and objectives in the tourism sector set by policymakers. One important aspect to consider is that it can help us understand the institutional logic behind tourism resilience planning. Secondly, for the media perception, I have chosen 30 media articles and one video report in order to see different viewpoints and potentially a critique on the policies implemented in the region of New Orleans. The media discourse analysis was done mainly through the articles from local New Orleans' newspaper *The Times-Picayune*. Main reason behind this approach is to see how the policies were received, critiqued or supported by locals and other stakeholders. Interestingly, I chose the media analysis as it can uncover the concerns that may not appear in official documentation from the policy-makers. Then, the comparison of pre-Katrina initiatives and post-Katrina strategies are introduced by coding the documents (using codes like "before," "during," and "after crisis") and using software Maxqda. I have chosen Maxqda to have a structured and systematic comparative analysis. Thus, with the combination of policy document analysis with media discourse, this case study offers a multi-layered perspective on resilience in the tourism sector in Louisiana. Afterwards, the main findings of the case study are provided as well as the limitations of the analysis.

6.1 Hurricane Katrina overview

Over the past years, it is more than clear that the world has experienced various series of extraordinary and unexpected natural and man-made disasters. For instance, these

events were the World Trade Centre attacks, the Asian Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, fires in Australia, worldwide pandemic, just to name a few (Rose A., 2007). That being said, in light of the challenges arising from these disasters and managing the unexpected risks while aiming for resilience has been a core mission of any region and system (Li, Z. et al. 2023). To top it off, key part of regional resilience consists of regional sustainable development (Li, Z. et al. 2023). It is worth noting that with regards to the sustainable development on a regional level, the tourism sector is very much impacted to a certain extent. This is especially concerning regions that are heavily reliant on tourists and their travel activities. Hence, policymakers in the specific famous touristic regions have a tough work as they need to reassure the locals of their commitment to implement measures that are decreasing the risk of future disasters. (Rose A., 2007)

Whenever and wherever it is feasible, there needs to be a system of proactive measures taken in place, with the theory of resilience at the first place. All of these aspects then raises important questions to ask when undergoing the evaluation of the successful or unsuccessful response of the region. These questions are as follows: Did the region adapt 'bouncing back' or 'bouncing forward' strategy? How post-crisis policy responses led to the rejuvenation or further decline of the specific region? Nonetheless, it is also important to ask how can the recovery policies adopted in the affected region contribute to the resilience? More specifically, what was their impact on the ecological, social, and economic level? If we collect the answers, it will probably help us explain the policy dynamics in the aftermath of specific crises times in geographic, economic and cultural contexts.

From 23rd August to 30th of August in 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused a series of events that devastated the city of New Orleans located in Louisiana, USA (Cole T.W. et al., 2008). For example, these events were: flooding the area, breaking through protective levees, taking thousands of lives along the Gulf Coast, displacing more than 100,000 people who could not have returned back to their houses and put particular pressure on the resources of New Orleans as well as the federal government making policies in the area (Cole T.W. et al., 2008). Hurricane Katrina was a tropical cyclone and alongside with its aftermath resulted in the loss of over 1,800 lives (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2024). Tragically, it was considered as one of the

most expensive natural tragedy in the history of the whole USA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2024). The city of New Orleans can be described as an area, where much of the urban zone lies below sea level and at the time when the hurricane hit the region, a few federal officials initially thought the city had escaped a disaster. Although the storm's strong winds had not directly had a huge impact on the city itself, the real danger quickly became clear in the aftermath of the storm. The levee system was before Katrina intended to safeguard the city against Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borgne which are located nearby (National Weather Service, 2005). Unfortunately, it was overwhelmed by 10 inches of rain together with storm surge from the hurricane. By the time people thought the tragedy is over, the breaches in the levees dividing New Orleans from Lake Pontchartrain intensified the loss of lives and material damage which had further unexpected impacts of the hurricane Katrina on New Orleans. By August 31st, at least 80% of the area of New Orleans was under flood waters (National Weather Service, 2005).

According to Plyer (2016) and University of Rhode Island (2020), a few statistics facts and figures from the impact of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans can be seen below- from the number of deaths, to the number of displaced residents, population, damage of the houses and a total damage (in USD):

Impact	Statistics
Flooding	80 % of the area of New Orleans
Deaths	at least 986 deaths: -drowning (40%) -injury/trauma (25%) -heart conditions (11%)
Residents displacement	Over 1 million residents displaced -up to 600,000 households displaced a month later
Population	Population fell from 484,674 to 230,172 people -decrease of 254,502 people, making it over 50%
Housing damage	-more than 1 million housing units damaged -134,000 units in New Orleans left alone
Total damage	Total damages reached 135 billion USD

Table 3: Statistics of Hurricane Katrina (Source: own compilation based on Plyer A. (2016) and University of Rhode Island (2020))

What is interesting to mention is that the flood depth varied significantly across different parts of the city- in some neighbourhoods, locals experienced only minimum flooding, whereas in other parts, the water levels reached over 15 feet (University of Rhode Island, 2020). According to researchers, in a general sense, a region typically encounters 2 main types of disruption: sudden shocks and gradual, ongoing obstacles knowing as “slow burns.” System shocks, often occurring as distinct incidents, are more extensively studied, particularly in the context of disasters (Vale L. J. et al., 2005). Nevertheless, research on "slow burns," is relatively limited in comparison. In line with the work of Deryugina, T. et al. (2014) the more extended the impacts of shocks like hurricane Katrina are, the greater the economic and welfare losses become. This calls for the value of public mitigation efforts, such as investing in stronger levees. What is more interesting, is the fact that the hurricane Katrina struck during the North Atlantic hurricane season in 2005. Katrina followed by hurricanes Rita and Wilma and together it resulted in insured losses totalling to almost USD 119 billion (Schwartz Pourrabbani M. et al.,2020).

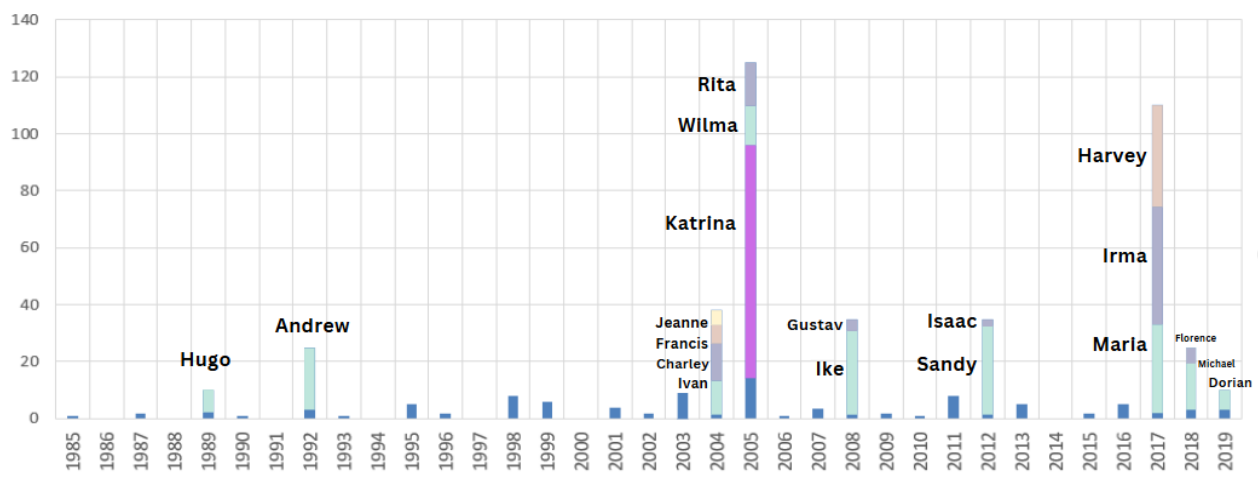


Figure 9: North America cyclones' insured losses 1985-2019 in USD billions. (Source: own compilation based on Swiss Re Institute)

As *Figure 9* shows, hurricane Katrina had the most significant impact among other hurricanes that hit North America (during the 1985-2019-time period), as shown in the insured losses data provided by the Swiss Re Institute in *Figure 9*. Furthermore, as distinguished in both *Figures 9 and 10*, it surpasses all the other hurricanes and storms in terms of insured losses. Katrina has struck to an extend and with an enormous intensity one can hardly imagine. In comparison, while major hurricanes such as Rita,

Wilma, and Harvey caused damage, their cumulative impact was not as destructive as long-term challenges brought by hurricane Katrina (Schwartz Pourrabbani M. et al.,2020). Was it all a result of the region's failure to consider resilience approach beforehand?

As already mentioned, in the *Figure 10* below, Hallegate S. (2014) provides an explanation on the connection between asset losses and output losses in Louisiana region for the impact of disasters- in this case hurricane Katrina. The author uses the Adaptive Regional Input-Output (ARIO) model, which is adjusted for the area of Louisiana in order to explore how asset losses relate to declines in output losses (in billion USD). This study finds that total disaster losses in Louisiana increase more rapidly in a non-linear pattern once asset losses go over 50 billion USD, as can be seen in the graph. On the one hand, below the amount of 50 billion USD, the number of total output losses remain at a minimal value- although it varies from sector to sector as some of them are affected more than others. On the other hand, once asset losses exceed 50 billion USD, output losses increase quickly, too. What is interesting in this model, is for instance the example if asset losses go beyond 200 billion USD, output losses are the same value as asset losses, therefore making it an equilibrium point (Hallegate S., 2014).

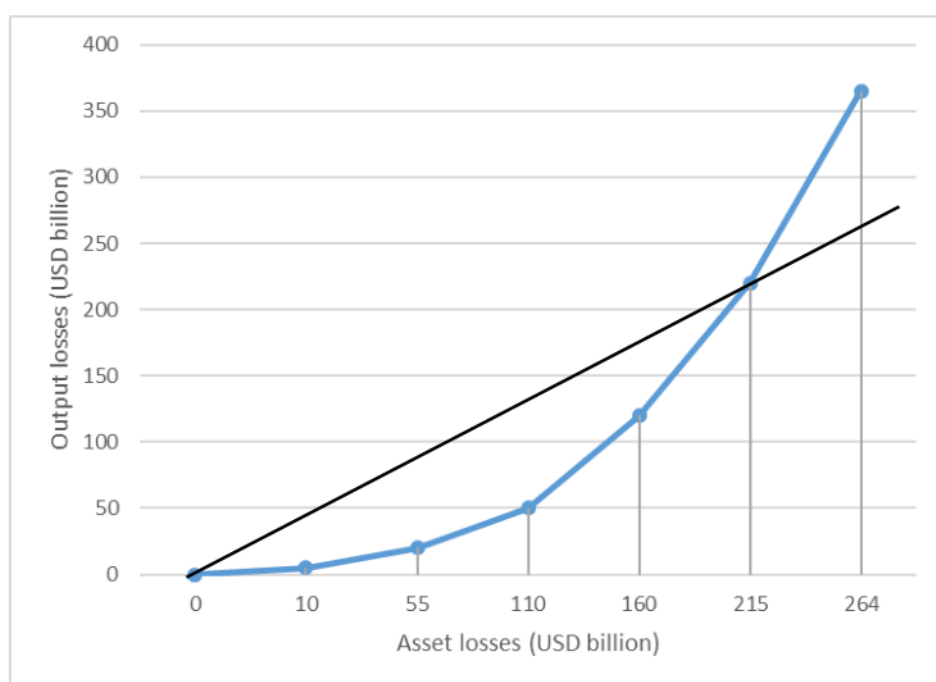


Figure 10: Relationship between asset and output losses in Louisiana for Katrina-like disasters (Source: Hallegate S., 2014)

In other words, this study suggests that in the specific sector, such as tourism in New Orleans, disaster losses increase sharply once asset losses surpass a certain threshold. Furthermore, *Table 4* below provides an overview of key tourism variables in New Orleans, based on the statistics from Gotham, K. F. (2017), Miao, H. (2023), New Orleans Tourism Statistics (2024), CABI News (2015). *Table 4* is divided into three columns that are categories which are showing 10-year difference between each other: before hurricane Katrina in 2004, ten years after the hurricane and the current state in 2024. Factors that I looked at were mostly the tourism indicators. For example, number of visitors, revenue from tourism, hotel occupancy, tourism's contribution to GDP, employment in the tourism sector, main tourism attractions, government response, local community engagement and the city's infrastructure and marketing strategies.

	2004 pre Katrina	2014 post Katrina	2024 current state
Number of visitors (in millions)	10,1	9,5	19,5
Hotel occupancy	63%	69%	75,6%
Tourism's contribution to GDP	4,9 billion USD	6,81 billion USD	8,75 billion USD
Employment in tourism sector	85,000	78,000	80,000
Tourism products	Cultural tourism (Mardi Gras, jazz, Creole cuisine), event and food tourism (Jazz Fest, Essence Festival)	Cultural preservation, reopening of major attractions	New events, culinary experiences, music festivals, sustainable tourism
Infrastructure	Limited public transport, old infrastructure	Improvements in transportation (upgraded airport)	Modernized airport, more hotels, expansion of public transport
Role of the government and policy response	Low- Preservation of cultural traditions, sites	High- focus on rebuilding tourism infrastructure	High- focus on sustainability, ecotourism, post-pandemic recovery
Marketing and communication	Limited	Digital campaigns	Focus on social media, influencers
Local community engagement	Low	Medium	High
Innovation and digital transformation in tourism management	Limited use of digital technologies	Slow integration of digital technologies	Extensive use of digital technologies (online bookings)

Table 4: Tourism development comparison in New Orleans. (Source: own compilation based on Gotham, K. F. (2017), Miao, H. (2023). New Orleans Tourism Statistics (2024), CABI News (2015))

What is essential to see from the *Table 4* is the fact that the tourism industry began to recover slowly but surely. Fast forward to 2024, New Orleans has developed into a stronger location with modernized infrastructure, an expanded range of tourism products, and a renewed focus on sustainability and locals that want to be part of the region's development in tourism. As demonstrated, the city nowadays attracts more visitors than ever (almost 20 millions) and is expected to raise even more. It is thanks to its well-established global marketing presence and a resilient tourism sector that continues to contribute significantly to the local economy via social media and music festivals (Miao, H., 2023).

6.2 Stakeholder analysis

This section dives deep into the matrix of stakeholders who are involved in the tourism sector in New Orleans' resilience and crisis response to recovery policies. The main aim is to analyse key actors involved in pre-Katrina and post-Katrina response efforts by utilizing stakeholders mapping. In the pre-matrix preparation phase, I started with establishing two main components of the stakeholders mapping: power and interest of the stakeholders in the tourism sector. I firstly distinguished 4 key characteristic areas based on which stakeholders will be analysed. These areas were: keep satisfied, keep informed, manage closely and monitor. Then, I reviewed the pre- and post-Katrina recovery plans based on the selected articles, reports, strategies, policy and media documents as mentioned in the policy methodology chapter. Afterwards, I chose key 14 stakeholders from the public and private sector as well as the local communities that were mentioned in the documents. The selection of stakeholders was done based on their frequency of mention and their relevance to tourism sector and resilience.

When it comes to stakeholders that were the most frequently mentioned in the governmental response as well as in media and local newspapers in this case study, those were for sure state and federal actors. For instance, organizations like City of New Orleans, FEMA, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Red Cross were mentioned multiple times, respectively. The city of New Orleans and its government was mentioned the most in the governmental policies due to the fact that the majority and

focus of policies were coming from this stakeholder. The city of New Orleans alongside with its mayor and government officials are the most frequently used in policy documents and reports. Additionally, city of New Orleans was also frequently mentioned in media because of the criticism of government's chaotic response to the situation the hurricane Katrina has caused. Secondly, tourism agencies, such as New Orleans & Company, New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation (NOTMC) are the main non-governmental actors that tried to get tourism back on its feet again after Katrina. So, the reason why they were frequently involved in the process is that they were responsible for restoring the image of the city as a tourist destination. Moreover, they were also important stakeholders in regards to shaping public perception about the tourism. Thirdly, national agency FEMA is a third most frequent used stakeholder, as it had a central role in the response to the hurricane Katrina and city's resilience efforts. Fourthly, the Army Corps of Engineers was mentioned also several times in media articles because of the management of the levee systems. In *The Times-Picayune* articles, it was mentioned in a negative sense and referenced as a failure because of the impact on the extent of flooding. However, the other side is concerning the stakeholders that are not that much involved in the case study. What is missing is the voice of ordinary citizens, particularly marginalized groups, who were involved only by a small percentage in the media coverage. It is mostly concerning the black communities who were not really part of the resilience initiatives and mainly the national digital newspapers covered the topic. Next, there is the private sector with corporations operating in the tourism industry, such as investors, insurance agencies which were not really a part of the policies efforts, nor the media coverage. That might be because their contribution to the tourism sector was not that high during Katrina.

Thus, I had a list of stakeholders that were mentioned in the documents by being directly involved in the tourism sector decision-making processes or they were affected by the policies. As outlined below in *Table 5*, the next step involved structuring the list of stakeholders into an Excel table and adding a description of each stakeholder based on their type- government, private sector, NGO or local business. Then, for each stakeholder, I assigned two key variables, such as power and interest on a scale from 1 to 5 so it is would be easier to map in the matrix. As soon as ranking was done, I continued to fill out the final characteristics column. Given this information, it was crucial to determine a correct quadrant for each stakeholder- manage closely, keep

satisfied, keep informed, or monitor. For instance, stakeholders ranked with both high power (5) and high interest (5) were categorized as “manage closely”. On the other hand, those with low power (1) and low interest (1) were categorized as “monitor.”

Stakeholder	Type	Power (1-5)	Interest (1-5)	Characteristics
Federal government agencies	Government	5	5	manage closely
Government of the city of New Orleans	Government	4	5	manage closely
Tourism agencies and groups	Private	4	5	manage closely
Environmental agencies	NGO	4	4	manage closely
Investment firms	Private Sector	5	2	keep satisfied
Media	Private Sector	3	3	middle
Hotel chains	Private Sector	3	2	keep satisfied
Restaurants	Private Sector	2	2	keep satisfied
Small businesses (restaurants, hotels, tours)	Local	2	5	keep informed
Environmental & conservation volunteers	NGOs	1	5	keep informed
Local community agencies	NGOs	2	5	keep informed
Local utility providers	Private	2	2	monitor
Non-tourism local businesses	Local	1	1	monitor
Short-term rental platforms (Airbnb)	Private Sector	2	2	monitor

Table 5: Stakeholder analysis preparation (Source: own representation)

Once the Excel table was finished, I was able to create stakeholder mapping in the graphic tool Canva. As illustrated in *Figure 11*, the matrix of stakeholder mapping has four quadrants divided into two parts: y-axis representing Power and x-axis representing Interest. Thus, the goal is to examine the roles, interests, and influence of various stakeholders involved in shaping policies in the decision-making processes in the tourism sector, when New Orleans was hit by hurricane Katrina. In every quadrant of the matrix, there are different types of stakeholders listed. They are

sorted according to their power and interest in relation to the tourism industry and the recovery policies.

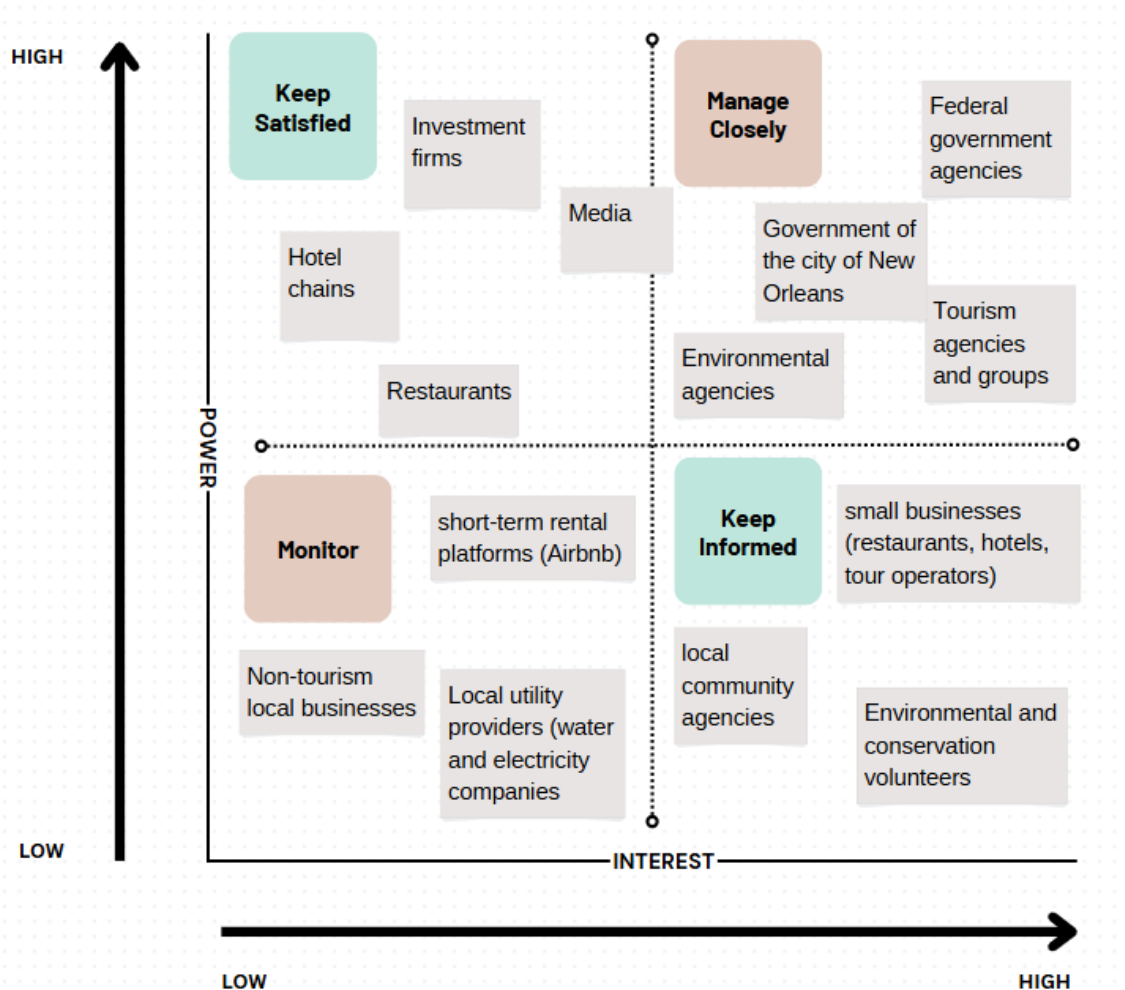


Figure 11: Stakeholder mapping in New Orleans (Source: own representation)

Figure

1. High power, high interest (manage closely)

First quadrant needs to be managed closely, as stakeholders in this field have high power and high interest. In this area, there are Federal government agencies, such as Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Louisiana Office of Tourism lead recovery policies and they have a main word in terms of directions of the financial aid and funds. In addition, they also manage regulations. There is also government of the City of New Orleans since the engagement of the city government is essential in order to manage local recovery policies and the impacts on tourism and closely monitor the flow of the tourists. Tourism agencies and groups are not falling short, as they are

equally important since they have a particular interest in the tourism sector by promoting New Orleans among tourists. They also hold significant influence in shaping the tourism policies and in decision-making processes. Environmental agencies are in this quadrant because of their regulatory role. Their role is essential for shaping the sustainable tourism policies in New Orleans and they have a key role in balancing tourism with environmental resilience.

2. High power, low interest (keep satisfied)

The second quadrant includes stakeholders that need to be kept satisfied, as they have high power in decision-making processes, but their interest is not that high, as their focus is not solely on shaping the tourism policies in the region of New Orleans. In this section, there are investment firms, since they are crucial in terms of potential sources of funding for tourism-related businesses. On the other hand, their interest is low, as they might not be willing to be engaged in daily requirements of recovery efforts unless there's a direct financial incentive. Major hotel chains are important due to their fame and reputation among travellers and thus impacting the tourism industry in New Orleans significantly. Same applies to the large chains of restaurants, as they are one of the main contributors to the tourism economy and local influence of the area. Both hotels and restaurants might have a lower interest in tourism recovery policies unless it has a direct impact on their daily business operations. Media plays a significant role too, as any form of media (whether it is a newspaper, magazine, video report, radio channel) are shaping opinions among travellers.

3. Low power, low interest (monitor)

The third quadrant is characterized by stakeholders that don't really affect the tourism recovery policies, but they are part of it. Since they have low power and low interest, they should be monitored regardless. Non-tourism local businesses, (like markets, bookstores, gyms, bakeries, cafés, pharmacies, laundry services) are indirectly affected by tourism industry. In a general sense, they have only limited impact on shaping the tourism recovery policies. Local utility providers, such as water and electricity providers have overall a very limited (almost none) interest and power in contributing to tourism policies but they also need to be monitored as their services are essential for the effective city operations and governance. Short-term rental platforms

(e.g., Airbnb, car rental companies): While short-term platforms contribute to tourism, they typically lack direct power in policy-making and may have lower interest in the recovery efforts.

4. Low power, high interest (keep informed)

Last but not least is the fourth quadrant with stakeholders that should be kept informed, since their power is not much influential, whereas their interest is high. Small businesses like family-owned local restaurants, hotels and tour operators' interest in the tourism recovery policies is very high, as it would have a direct impact on their daily operations and survival in the area. However, their power in terms of the impact in shaping such policies is very low and limited. It goes without saying that the groups of local community agencies are interested in the impact of recovery tourism policies on the culture of local communities. Nonetheless, they might not have the power in influencing the decision-making processes in tourism sector. Environmental and conservation volunteering organizations are without any doubts interested in the environmental impacts of the tourism recovery policies and they are fighting to promote the sustainable eco-tourism in the area. Hence, their interest is very high, but their power to influence is limited in comparison with the formal state agencies.

6.3 Pre-shock regional developmental pathway in tourism sector

For the effective analysis of the extent of resilience in tourism sector, it is firstly important to distinguish the pre-Katrina regional conditions and a regional development pathway in tourism sector in New Orleans. This part thus includes the overview of the tourism sector and also an assessment of how effective (or ineffective) pre-disaster preparedness and mitigation tourism measures were when it comes to reducing vulnerability and maximizing resilient capability within the tourism sector before Katrina. An understanding of these aspects helps to contextualize how prepared the tourism sector was in New Orleans. Therefore, this section is divided into two parts: initiatives, strategies and policies in the tourism sector adopted by a government of New Orleans and a part describing the role of the media and public perception of the tourism development before the region was hit by a hurricane. All in all, for the part

regarding governmental strategies and policies, 9 policy documents and reports from the official government Internet website were analysed. These documents reviewed both the local regional level efforts and the national response as well. They are from the official government documents, orders, or government-supported initiatives, directly written by the government actors or its trusted representatives. Then, 3 articles for the media analysis were reviewed. Nevertheless, the focus is on the local newspaper as it provides a detailed example of media criticism of the New Orleans' government.

6.3.1 Governmental strategies and policies

An overview of the tourism sector pre-Katrina reveals that the region of New Orleans was one of the biggest economic contributor to the local economy, as tourism was creating significant number of jobs, revenue and business opportunities to the area. New Orleans was widely known for the public as one of the most popular global tourist and convention destination with over nine million travellers coming to visit the location annually (Gotham, K. F., 2017).

After Hurricane Hugo in 1990 the Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA have assessed the response of region and advised local governmental bodies for using forecasting data to evacuate high-risk areas, which contributed to limiting the death toll in Louisiana (109th Congress, 2nd Session, 2006). The local officials had even prepared for a storm that would be more severe than was originally predicted. After four years, such approach was even more emphasised in FEMA's 1994 Southeast Louisiana Hurricane Preparedness Study, which was recommending the local governmental bodies to be prepared for hurricanes as if they could strengthen by one category before landfall. All of these concerns were because of the uncertainties that occurred in weather forecast (109th Congress, 2nd Session, 2006).

Despite these predictions, in 2004, the year before Hurricane Katrina hit the region, New Orleans reached its peak level in the tourism sector, when 10.1 million visitors came to travel to the area (CABI News, 2015). This record of visitors has without any doubts played a role in shaping the local economy. Tourism industry was therefore one of the main aspect of New Orleans' financial stability as well as cultural local identity

(CABI News, 2015). Cultural local identity was built thanks to its historical vibrant legacy in culture. So, the region was mainly reliant on various unique festivals that were organised throughout the year and historical landmarks to attract tourists. Among tourists, the city was well-known for its reputation as a city characterized by its unique cultural vibes and authenticity. The most famous touristic areas were French Quarter, Garden District and New Orleans Uptown. These parts of the city were the most visited areas by travellers thanks to their historic architecture, festivals (like marching parade called Mardi Gras) nightlife with many bars and jazz clubs. Since these cultural events generated revenue and contributed to the promotion of New Orleans tourism, local government initiatives focused on supporting them. Thanks to that, cultural events have received financial support from the local government (Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism, official website). Additionally, businesses in the hospitality sector, such as hotels, restaurants, and tour operators, were provided with tax credits and incentives to stimulate investment (Louisiana Office of Tourism, official website). To top it off, Louisiana Tourism office has been proactively promoting Louisiana as a travel destination by also highlighting its unique cuisine, consisting of dishes like Cajun and Creole (Louisiana Office of Tourism, official website). Altogether, statistically speaking, tourism generated around USD 5,5 billion in revenue, which was representing 40% of New Orleans' tax income and approximately 85, 000 residents were employed in the tourism services (Gotham, K. F., 2017).

However, when it comes to infrastructure, majority of it in the region was vulnerable and not resilient against natural disasters, mainly due to limited investment in the design of resilience. Understanding such vulnerability, alongside with evaluating the tourism sector's existing crisis management strategies sheds light on the challenges New Orleans experienced when rebuilding the city after the hurricane (Gotham, K. F., 2017).

In summary, *Table 6* below describes the pre-shock strengths and weaknesses of the biggest aspects in the tourism sector in New Orleans before the hurricane occurred in the area. Strengths included the economic role of tourism industry, high employment rates as well as New Orleans' unique cultural identity. All these elements made the city famous in front of tourists who used to come to the region in high numbers. Nevertheless, as for the weaknesses, there was a limited investment in the crisis and

risk management and disaster preparedness, non-resilient infrastructure, over-reliance on tourism sector- making the region vulnerable to natural disasters.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Tourism as an economic driver	Limited investment in crisis and risk management
Unique cultural identity and heritage	Over-reliance on tourism sector
Popular tourist area	Infrastructure (non)resilience
High number of tourists	Lack of disaster preparedness
Tourism-driven jobs	Vulnerability to natural disasters

Table 6: Strengths and weaknesses of the pre-shock tourism strategies in New Orleans (Source: own representation)

In addition, The Office of Emergency Preparedness in New Orleans, which is under the Mayor's guidance, coordinated disaster preparedness trainings, working with state and federal agencies, such as FEMA (Columbia University, n.d.). Coordination took place in order to make sure that all of the affected individuals and organizations receive the necessary disaster preparedness training in advance (Columbia University, n.d.). The main reason behind this initiative was that raising public awareness about potential hazards of the natural disaster and the protective measures are essential to tackle the smooth surviving of the crisis. The awareness is also nowadays important, as it helps residents by educating them on potential threats and risks, protective measures, and the necessary actions to take when an event like hurricane happens in the region. These disaster trainings equipped the residents and organisations with the skills needed for coordinated action and improved the response capability. Initiatives and strategies targeting to increase public awareness are important because they can swiftly provide information about safety measures and required actions in case of an emergency. In order to minimize loss rate during emergencies, these trainings require both government and non-government agencies to cooperate together.

When it comes to policies that were effective on a national level before Katrina that were applicable in New Orleans, the following key initiatives were taken into place: Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), The National Tourism Policy Act and National Park Service.

According to the official website of White House in the USA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), established by the NEPA in 1969, coordinates federal efforts to protect both public health and the environment in the USA. CEQ provides advice to the President and formulates policies on climate change, environmental

justice, federal sustainability, and nature conservation, just to name a few. Therefore, thorough and efficient environmental reviews for infrastructure projects and federal actions, CEQ prioritizes public and local community demands. (White House, org., 2024)

Additionally, The National Tourism Policy Act of 1981 was established to provide a comprehensive framework with a main aim to promote tourism as an important sector for economic growth in the USA. It focused on developing essential infrastructure, marketing the country as a renowned tourist destination and improving collaboration between the public and private sectors (Congress, 1981). Ultimately, the Act played a key role in supporting the coordination of the policies and programs related to tourism, recreation, or national heritage across various regions, including Louisiana (Congress, 1981).

As for the historic preservation, federal government provided financial support through its National Park Service (National Park Service, 2006). Its role was also concerning Louisiana, especially to preserve historical landmarks, such as French Quarter in New Orleans. The National Park Service's involvement ensured that French Quarter which is a vital area to the identity of New Orleans, was protected. The governmental support strengthened the connection to the region's cultural heritage while driving its economic growth (National Park Service, 2006).

6.3.2 The role of the media

It is necessary to combine a diverse view on the tourism development, by providing supporting and opposing arguments from the third party. For instance, critical arguments are provided by the media discourse. When it comes to media coverage of tourism policies in the Louisiana region, and especially New Orleans, only a few of the newspapers have extensively covered the topic. Some global media, particularly the ones focusing on travel news, provided valuable insights into how tourism policies have helped in shaping the perception of visitors as well as supporting the local economy.

Before the hurricane Katrina hit the region, throughout the year 2002, two authors, working in *The Times Picayune*, Mark Schleifstein and John McQuaid have made a series that was published as part of Times Picayune called "*Washing Away*" (Schleifstein M., McQuaid J., 2002). In these series, they have described their concern

and warning about the potential consequences of a major hurricane in New Orleans region. To be more precise, in Part called *In Harm's way*, they warned that "*it's only a matter of time before south Louisiana takes a direct hit from a major hurricane*," highlighting that despite there were billions spent on protection, the region's vulnerability was increasing with each day passing by (Schleifstein M., McQuaid J., 2002). In the series, they described the growing threat to south Louisiana because of the combination of various factors. These factors were mainly: sinking land and rising sea levels, which has left the Mississippi River delta significantly lower than it was a century ago, maximizing the inland reach and destructive power of hurricane-driven floods, eroding levee protections, increasing the risks to communities and critical infrastructure, increasing the likelihood of devastating floods that could capture water for weeks, and lastly, putting tens of thousands of inhabitants in danger (Schleifstein M., McQuaid J., 2002). Additionally, the authors collaborated closely with researchers from the University of New Orleans and other scientists to explore various scenarios for the region's future plans. These included recommended steps for the policy-makers with a main goal to raise levees around New Orleans to prevent catastrophic flooding and pursue a financial support (in total 14 billion USD) to restore lost marshes and barrier islands. All these steps were critical for the area's long-term survival in case a hurricane hit the region (Schleifstein M., McQuaid J., 2002). In the end of their series "*Washing Away*", they described that even though the risks of hurricane have increased and they provided a warning, the Army Corps of Engineers has not updated its levee designs for the New Orleans area, leaving some parts of the region potentially more vulnerable to flooding.

Additionally, Lynell L. Thomas, in her book *Desire and Disaster in New Orleans* (2014) outlines that the tourism sector before hurricane Katrina was also focusing on more inclusive environment for its citizens. This was done by the strategy where African American tour guides, travel agency owners and other officials in the industry have developed their own black heritage tours in order to redefine narrow perspectives in tourism (Thomas L.L., 2014).

Apart from this series, not many articles covered the topic of development in New Orleans and tourism policies, which has led to a gap in discourse on how these factors could impact the city's economy and local communities.

6.4 Vulnerability and Exposure to Shocks

This subchapter analyses key documents with its various policy initiatives. The main reason why I chose these sources is that they all offer a view on the critical discussion on New Orleans' vulnerability to shocks. As already mentioned in the previous subchapter 6.3, New Orleans' economy has been undoubtedly very much dependent on tourism. For instance, key elements including hospitality, cultural events, and unique activities have played the biggest part in the growth of the area. This huge reliance on the tourism sector made the city vulnerable to external shocks. Any disruption, ranging from a natural disaster, economic crisis, or global event, has a direct influence on the development of (not only the tourism) industry. Thus, this section provides an overview on the vulnerability and further exposure to shocks in New Orleans. It is known that regions with more robust economies before natural disasters often tend to suffer less damage in comparison to those with weaker economic foundations (Kim, H., Marcouiller, D. W., 2015).

The vulnerability of New Orleans is closely linked to its historical government policies, past acts and decisions. The intersection of suburbanization, pressure for development and the ecological degradation of wetlands in the region after the 1960s has led to challenges in economy and environment that had a big impact on the complex feedback loops (Gotham, K. F., Campanella, R., 2011). Therefore, for a better understanding of the exposure to a shock of the stakeholders involved, it is important to look at the effectiveness of response strategies that were put into place before the crisis. This can be seen on the example of the interactions between Red Cross and FEMA that were trying to help communities (Moynihan, D. P., 2009). Despite such partnership, the Red Cross has faced challenges, since the organization was regularly communicating its supply chain and logistical needs to FEMA. However, there were delays or even insufficient supplies compared to what had been beforehand promised from FEMA (Moynihan, D. P., 2009). This lack of timely and sufficient support from FEMA created obstacles and challenges, especially in managing the distribution of aid in the region. Thus, it tells us how well (or not that well) the organizations adjusted their operations to address the crisis in the real-time.

As the research by *Gotham, K. F., Campanella, R. (2011)* uncovered, those government policies were adapted at all levels (federal, state, and local) and promoted suburban expansion into very fragile wetland areas, like marshes. Afterwards, this strategy then intensified the vulnerability of communities and infrastructure to storm surges and flooding (Gotham, K. F., Campanella, R., 2011). Unsurprisingly, hurricane Katrina served as a catalyst of these long-standing systemic weaknesses, which has resulted in a huge vulnerability of the region (Gotham, K. F., Campanella, R., 2011). The main policies and initiatives has contributed to the vulnerability of the region- a summary of the three cross-scale interactions that linked local actions with federal policies and socio-legal regulations are illustrated in the *Table 7*.

Programs	Policies and initiatives	Effect(s)
Flood Control Act of 1965	Cooperation between the Army Corps of Engineers with federal, state, and local entities in order to build levees.	Safeguard the region against hurricane storm surges while simultaneously promoting private investment in urban infrastructure development.
National Flood Insurance Program (1968)	Program aiming to subsidized private insurers to provide flood insurance in at-risk areas.	Encouraged the development of wetlands by making the construction financially viable to build in flood-prone areas through insurance policies.
Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MR-GO)	Constructed in the 1960s as a navigation canal.	An increased salinity in the ecosystems of marshes caused significant ecological harm, severely degrading wetlands and their ability to provide natural protection against potential storms/ hurricanes.

Table 7: Interconnectedness between local actions, policy frameworks and socio-legal regulations. (Source: Gotham, K. F., Campanella, R., 2011)

All those steps described in the *Table 7* were firstly aiming to safeguard the region, but unintentionally escalated the vulnerability. The key issue was that they promoted development in areas likely to suffer from environmental damage and flood risk. Therefore, all the past decisions made in the region has formed the environment for what was coming.

Moreover, it is important to look at how practical tools and systematic processes can improve the response of communities and ecosystems after shock in a specific region. Thus, there are two tools that provide the legal requirements with the main aim to predict the environmental impacts of plans, programs, and projects (International Association for Impact Assessment, org., 2024). These two tools are as follows:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment, known as SEA
- Environmental Impact Assessment, known as EIA

Differences between EIA and SEA is crucial to understand in order to achieve an effective environmental planning and management in the region. According to Grid Arendal (2014), the main difference lies in their focus areas and scope: EIA concentrates on the assessment of individual projects and is more detail-oriented but least strategic, meanwhile SEA is least detailed, but more strategic and addresses strategic initiatives.

By providing information to the public and encouraging their participation in government decisions, EIA tools can improve community involvement. It can also ensure that development choices are not only sustainable politically, but also environmentally. (NEPA.GOV, org., 2024). EIA is a technical tool that focuses on specific activities and geographic locations. This tool operates reactively, mainly at the end of any decision-making procedures (Grid Arendal, 2014). EIA identifies particular environmental impacts, nevertheless, its analysis of cumulative effects is limited, which is leading to the emphasis on reducing these identified effects (Grid Arendal, 2014). What is also a big difference, is the timeline. For EIA, it is usually a specific project with a duration for one year (Envirotrain, org., 2024).

On the other hand, SEA is aiming for strategic initiatives and operates as a political instrument with broad processes and various concepts (Grid Arendal, 2014). Based on the description provided by scholars Nautiyal H, Goel V. (2018), SEA can be characterized as a systematic process established for evaluating the environmental impacts of PPPs (program, plan, or policy). The most common understanding is that SEA relates to environmental assessment for “initiatives-other-than-projects” (Annendale et al., 2001). Unlike EIA, SEA adopts a proactive approach, with the main difference that it is intervening at earlier stages of decision-making processes

(Envirotrain, org., 2024). SEA not only addresses sustainability concerns, but also provides early warnings of cumulative impacts with emphasis on the prevention which needs to be in line with already set environmental goals. Regarding the timescale for SEA, it is often 10 years (Envirotrain, org., 2024).

In addition, according to Arts J. et al. (2005), the authors provide another differentiation between EIA and SEA with tiering as the key component, which can be seen in the *Figure 12*:

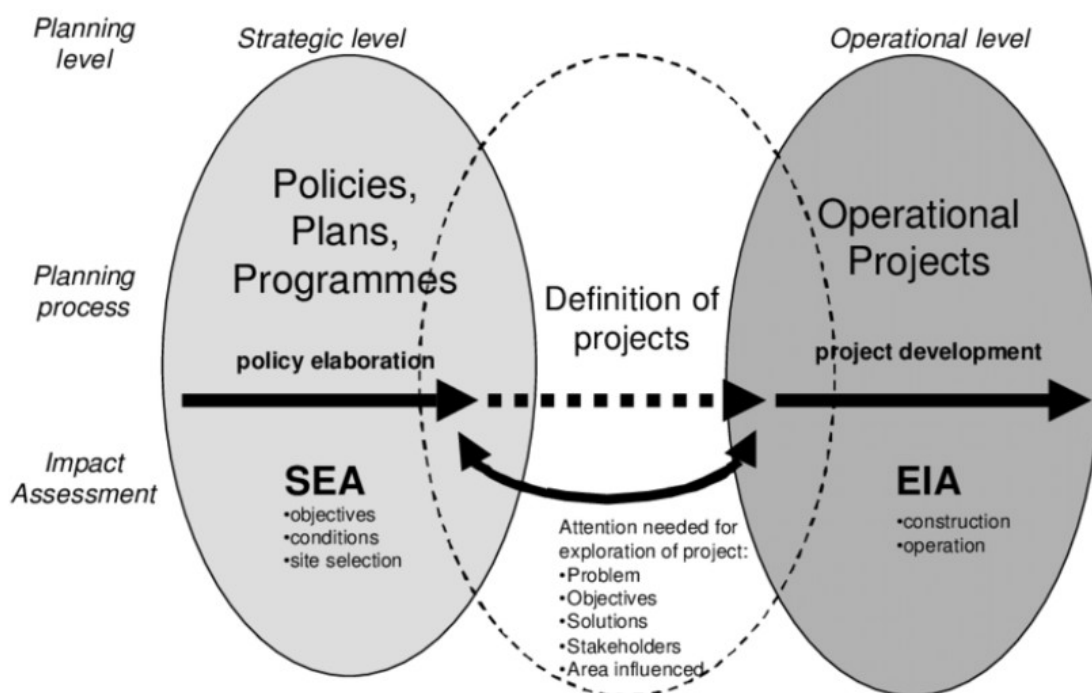


Figure 12: Link between SEA and EIA. (Source: Arts J. et al., 2005)

The authors also emphasize the critique on the connection between SEA and EIA, providing an argument that there is no interconnectedness between these two tools. This argument delves into the challenges surrounding the integration of EIA and SEA through tiering, where the authors concluded that conducting SEA and EIA at various planning levels does not guarantee their interconnectedness. It is evident that the challenge lies in effectively defining the main problem and establishing objectives in practical application. Then, a question that needs to be answered is as follows: how can plans and projects be defined within the context of a dynamic planning? (Arts J. et al., 2005).

The adoption and implementation of SEA and EIA is still at an early stage of development process with only a limited expertise in some countries in the world. Overall, SEA and EIA are tools used to integrate resilience principles into environmental assessments. Both tools require some kind of report after the implementation.

6.5 Depth of reaction to shock and the extent of tourism sector adjustment to shock

This section dives into the depth of the reaction to the shock of Hurricane Katrina as well as the extent to which the tourism sector in New Orleans has adjusted to the crisis. The immediate aftermath of the storm has left the city's tourism sector in ruins- hotels were flooded, cultural heritage was destroyed, and businesses were forced to close. In total, 9 policy documents, strategies and initiatives were analysed for the description of governmental response and the depth of reaction to shock. The main reason why I reviewed these documents is that they cover the economic impact of the disaster in details and also provide an insight into the first trend that has appeared in New Orleans' tourism sector adjustment to shock. As for the media discourse analysis, 5 articles were analysed in this section. They describe the testimonies of lives of ordinary people living in the affected area of New Orleans, which is why I find them essential for this analysis.

6.5.1 Governmental strategies and policies

According to a report written by the Louisiana Recovery Authority (2006), approximately 81,000 businesses spanning across 13 Louisiana parishes were facing direct damages or operational disruptions due to hurricane Katrina. Following the hurricane Katrina in 2006, the tourism sector in New Orleans incurred a loss of approximately 22,900 jobs and the number of travellers dropped to only 3,7 million, which was directly influencing the tourism revenue (Gotham, K. F., 2017). The statistics also concluded that the crisis has disproportionately influenced the hospitality industry, with almost 1,409 businesses permanently closing their businesses (Louisiana Recovery Authority, 2006). Therefore, the revenue generated from the tourism activities has thus dropped to USD 2,9 billion in visitor spending (Gotham, K. F., 2017).

This has impacted severely the local economy and so, the recovery plans and strategies needed to adapt to a huge contrast before pre-Katrina and post-Katrina levels. Moreover, such decline in tourism highlighted the immediate call for innovative recovery plans and strategies in order to bridge the huge gap between pre- and post-Katrina tourism levels. They needed to focus on rebuilding the image of the city as a major travel destination. It goes without saying that the main aim was attract even more tourists than before the tragic event.

What was critical were the disaster relief efforts as well as an immediate financial support to hospitality businesses and other stakeholders in tourism. Therefore, below are the main policies adopted in the region right after the hurricane Katrina hit the region and that affected the tourism sector. These policies and initiatives adopted by a local government included: New Orleans Recovery plan, Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund, New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, Enterprise Zone program, Small Business Administration, Tourism and hospitality tax relief, New Orleans Reopening Strategy, Come Back to New Orleans campaign and development of dark tourism.

New Orleans Recovery Plan was developed to guide New Orleans' recovery strategies by resource allocation and efforts in rebuilding. The main goal consisted of creating new settlement patterns and restoring vital services like healthcare, infrastructure, and housing initiatives (City of New Orleans, 2006). The focus of the Recovery plan was to make the city of New Orleans safer, more sustainable, and attractive for both residents that wanted to return as well as newcomers (City of New Orleans, 2006). The estimated timeframe was set to 10 years in order to achieve the full Recovery (as they named it in the plan report). In addition, in the Citywide plan and rebuilding of New Orleans, the government has set that this plan is contingent on two key factors (City of New Orleans, 2006). Those factors are:

1. the rate at which residents return to their homes/ neighbourhoods.
2. the ongoing risk of future flooding caused by hurricanes.

These two aspects are no less important in shaping the city's long-term resilience, but they also help in assessing the successfulness (or unsuccessfulness) of the strategy. As shown below in *Figure 13*, the timeline of the major phases of the Recovery plan is

described. It consists of recovery assessment, recovery scenarios and district plan development.

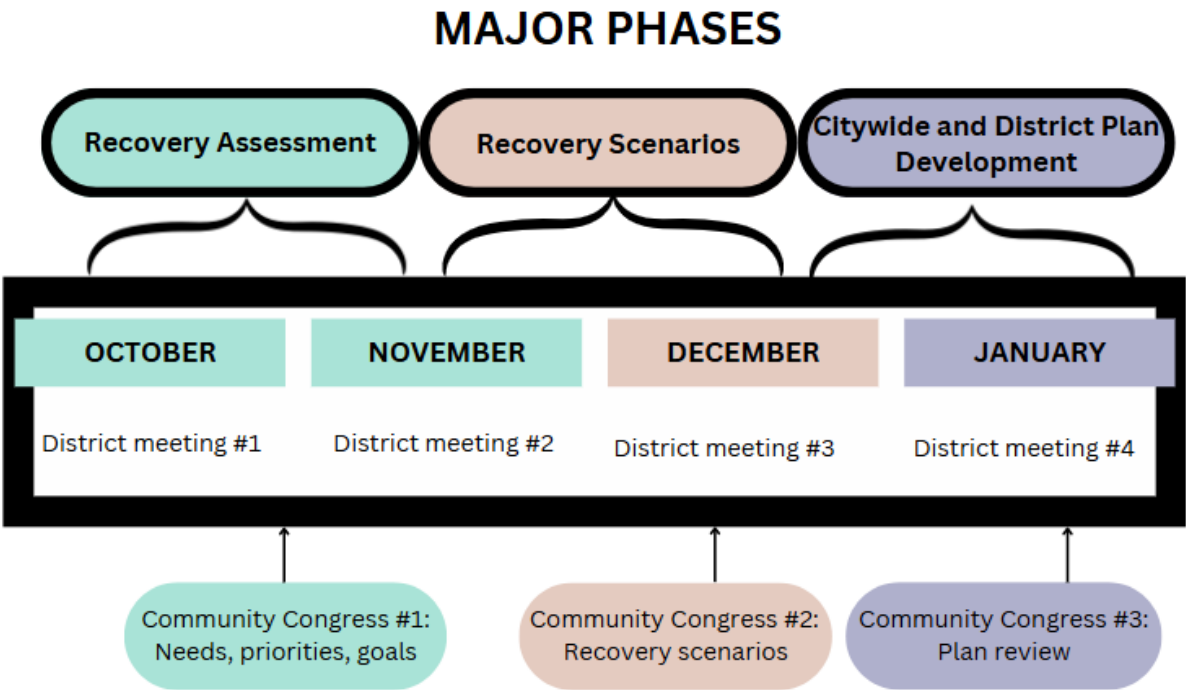


Figure 13: Roadmap of New Orleans recovery. (Source: own compilation based on City of New Orleans, 2006)

Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund: in words of Louisiana Recovery Authority (2006), the Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund was one of the main financial aspects in offering financial support to hospitality businesses, targeting at rebuilding recovery (Louisiana Recovery Authority, 2006). Even though this fund has allocated 40 million USD for the preservation and repair of historic buildings, it was restricted as only 2005 hurricane-related damaged properties were authorized for assistance (National Park Service, 2021).

The Enterprise Zone program is both a job creation and tax incentive initiative with the targeted goal that boost the local economic development (The City of New Orleans, n.d). It is a very complex program that offers a mixture of income and franchise tax credits, sales tax returns for businesses that operate within the officially selected Enterprise or Economic Development Zones (The City of New Orleans, n.d). If a business wants to participate in the program, there are two requirements for qualification. The first one is that a particular business needs to create a minimum of

five new permanent, full-time jobs within two years of the contract's effective date and at least 50% of these positions must be filled by individuals from one of four targeted groups (residents, those receiving approved public assistance, individuals lacking basic skills, people who are typically unemployable by traditional standards) so the inclusivity of job opportunities is guaranteed (Louisiana Economic Development, n.d.). Thus, Enterprise Zone program provided an essential support for not only hospitality businesses, but it also improved community growth and employment.

Small Business Administration: Louisiana Recovery Authority (2006) has established the Small Business Administration (known as SBA) in order to provide financial support to tourism-related businesses by offering them low-interest loans. By financially supporting them, important tourism businesses slowly started to show stability (Louisiana Recovery Authority, 2006).

Tourism and hospitality tax relief: Following the financial support from the government, the tourism and hospitality tax relief has been introduced. The administration has allocated substantial resources, including specific tax incentives and measures, such as property tax abatement, to help the tourism and hospitality businesses in the sector to reopen its services (U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. (n.d.), City of New Orleans, 2006).

New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation (NOTMC) is funded through the City's hotel room occupancy tax and an optional assessment voluntarily agreed upon by hotels (New Orleans & Company, n.d.). The majority of NOTMC's budget was (and still is until today) allocated to marketing campaigns of New Orleans. According to the official website of the corporation, *"NOTMC is a private economic development corporation created under Louisiana State Law to foster jobs and economic growth by developing the tourism industry in New Orleans"* (New Orleans & Company, n.d.). Furthermore, the role of NOTMC was crucial, as it was involved in restoring tourism to New Orleans through marketing campaigns, such as one called "Come Fall in Love with Louisiana All Over Again, (FQBA, 2016). The strategy of NOTMC after hurricane Katrina highlighted the city's capability to bounce back.

New Orleans Reopening Strategy was created as a response to the Hurricane Katrina by the collaborative work between the local government (including the New

Orleans Mayor's office) federal entities such as FEMA and the Louisiana Recovery Authority and other local organizations (Georgetown Climate Center, 2015). By working together, these institutions wanted to establish a common approach on how to fight against the impacts of the crisis in tourism and hospitality sector. With such intervention, they wanted to reinforce the importance of the governmental intervention in disaster recovery and resilience (Bordreuil, J. S., Tonnelat S., 2011). Content of the strategy consisted of various marketing campaigns that were aimed at restoring the city's image (Georgetown Climate Center, 2015). Efforts from the government's side aimed at the interconnectedness of policies, marketing campaigns, infrastructure and tourism development so New Orleans can become a resilient region.

Come Back to New Orleans campaign is a marketing initiative that was firstly established as part of the New Orleans reopening strategy (Georgetown Climate Center, 2015) and was one of the most famous as well as important one. By marketing the region, the main aim was to highlight the cultural richness and resilience of New Orleans- it included mainly the revival of jazz music festivals and traditional Creole cuisine. As written by Gotham (2017), the campaign Come Back to New Orleans was part of greater governmental efforts in order to stimulate the recovery of the economy by attracting not only local but also international tourists that would come back to discover New Orleans in even more depth. Moreover, thanks to this campaign, government has started to take more care on infrastructure rebuilding which then lead to significant support of the tourism sector (Gotham, 2017). Thus, this campaign is characterized as a cornerstone of the revitalization plans in cultural and economic approaches.

Dark tourism: another important aspect in terms of the depth of reaction to shock from the tourism perspective was the developing of dark tourism. Hurricane Katrina seemed to weaken the strong cultural pride that was once prevalent in New Orleans. The phenomenon, where suffering of people and the environment becomes a commodified experience for visitors, is often called by a terminology of "dark tourism (Miller, D.S., et al., 2017). In the context of catastrophes, regardless of the fact whether they are natural disasters or man-made, these destinations can ironically evolve into major tourist attractions, often even driven by the discounted rates at the affected locations (Miller, D.S. et al., 2017). By the year of 2014, dark tourism in New Orleans has

emerged significantly, with over nine million tourists contributing a record of 6.81 USD billion to the local economy (Gotham, K. F., 2017).

6.5.2 The role of the media

It goes without saying that following the catastrophic event, media coverage played a key role when it comes to public perception, view and understanding of New Orleans' tourism resilient development. This section therefore delves into the topic of the role of the media in New Orleans and perspectives of various local and global media newspapers in response of the tourism policies, strategies and initiatives. The local newspaper called The Times-Picayune provided information for the citizens living in the affected area, mainly such as disaster assistance information, government and FEMA updates, flood area updates, which locations should be avoided, updates on when federal, state, or local aid would arrive, contacts for the emergency, safe routes to leave the city (The Times-Picayune, 2005).

In the article written by Folkenflik D. (2007), who was a New Orleans coffee house owner, he shares his perspective on the critical role of local media during crisis. He highlights how the local newspaper *The Times-Picayune* provided essential information to the broad public that surpassed even the efforts of FEMA and City Hall. He also described how the newspaper helped in terms of providing guidance to affected residents. Guidelines included things like: where they could have found all the necessary things, such as food, water, clothing, and offered resources for locating missing family members after the hurricane hit the area (Folkenflik D., 2007). The role of *The Times-Picayune* is also described in the work of Calderone M. (2015), where he talks about the exceptional coverage of Hurricane Katrina's impacts. He also mentions how the newspaper turned its staff into crucial sources of support for the New Orleans' community. During the crisis, journalists overcame food, power, and communication shortages, setting up makeshift news bureaus to deliver crucial updates to residents affected by the catastrophe and eager for any piece of information. By doing so, The Times-Picayune won the Pulitzer Prize for the public service in the year of 2006 for its unique coverage of Hurricane Katrina articles (Library of Congress, NOLA). Additionally, four of its reporters were individually awarded Pulitzer Prizes for their breaking-news reporting of the storm.

From another perspective, the media has portrayed the situation to broad public and potential visitors as anything but inviting, far from the pre-Katrina tourism advertisements that highlighted New Orleans as the carefree "Big Easy" and the lively "City of Jazz," "good times rolling", "laissez-faire" region (Miller, D.S. et al., 2017).

One particular example is *Buzzfeed*, a digital media covering global issues has produced an article from a local tour guide where the critique of the tourism development efforts in the aftermath of the crisis in New Orleans was illustrated. One specific article presents the development of dark tourism in New Orleans. Isabelle Cossart, a tour guide in New Orleans and Louisiana and an author of the article called "I Was The Face Of Disaster Tourism In Post-Katrina New Orleans", wrote the critique on the tourism development policies after the hurricane hit the region. She was working as a tour guide before the region was devastated and thanks to her volunteering, she received a request from insurance adjusters and Red Cross staff, who sought to show their visiting family members the situation in the ruined area. Initially, Cossart could not understand why anyone would be interested in seeing the scenes of destruction, where houses were flooded and filled with mould and debris, cars were lodged in trees and many more hard-to-digest views like these (Cossart, I., 2015). Soon she understood the curious human nature and thus she created a tour with a name "Katrina Disaster Sites Tour," with the main aim to carefully mapping out the locations of levee breaches and floodwall failures while avoiding still-flooded areas. In addition, she criticizes and pointed out the infrastructure policy development in front of the visitors:

"I wanted to show people Katrina was not a natural disaster, it was a man-made one. All of the old earthen levees along the Mississippi River and along Lake Pontchartrain held. None of the bayous overtopped. Every Katrina failure in New Orleans occurred in man-made flood walls along our drainage canals, built — defectively — by the Army Corps of Engineers to direct tropical rain water out of the city."

However, in the following year, the New Orleans City Council passed a law prohibiting tour operators from conducting any kind of tours "east of the Industrial Canal," which included the location of Lower Ninth Ward- a part of the region where she was operating the tours. Nevertheless, it didn't stop her and she continued to offer disaster dark tourism tours, but she made sure to avoid the Lower Ninth Ward area. Her criticism further highlighted both the ethical dilemmas and the possibility of raising

awareness regarding the human-made factors that contributed to the catastrophic devastating events.

Similarly, in the article by global media newspaper *The Independent*, a reporter Young H. (2012) critiques the previous argument by disagreeing with a tourism development after hurricane Katrina, by calling the disaster tourist bus trips throughout the devastated area a “*dark tourism*”, “*making profit from loss*” and describing that the “*intersection of tourism and human tragedy is an uncomfortable one* “. That is why local residents were resisting these kind of tours and fighting against them, as the tourists were blocking the way, causing disruptions and holding back daily life. As opposed to the government, who stated that the disaster tours are recovering the economic impacts. By doing so and by attracting many visitors this way, the tours contribute to local businesses and help to generate the revenue needed for rebuilding the area (Young H., 2012).

6.6 Post-shock regional developmental pathway and recovery tourism policies

This part includes initiatives and policies in the tourism sector executed by the government in New Orleans after the hurricane Katrina. The first part will examine how the national and local government tackled the situation of rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure, and how they were trying to save the tourism industry. In this part, 14 documents were analysed. They are combination of policy reports, official documents from the government and strategies from organizations working in the region to fight the impacts of hurricane Katrina in tourism. Thus, these documents are written by various stakeholders. The second part will describe the role of the media, particularly *The Times-Picayune* and its role in shaping public opinion on the efforts in tourism sector. In total, 17 articles are reviewed, both on a local and national level. They provide very strong testimonies so the voice of the local communities could have been heard.

6.6.1 Governmental strategies and policies

In the aftermath of any disaster, regions often rely on a post-shock development pathways and targeted recovery policies made by the government to rebuild the affected economies easily. Thus, governmental strategies and policies are critical in this process, as they provide 3 key elements: framework for disaster response, growth of the economy and long-term resilience of the region revitalization (University of New Orleans,2012). Now, when looking at the employment statistics even further, by the year of 2012, job recovery in tourism, leisure and hospitality has shown particular improvement as it reflected the industry's resilience and revitalization (University of New Orleans,2012). According to the report from University of New Orleans (2012), the leisure and hospitality sector experienced a net gain of 4,300 jobs, which was a huge milestone for the sector after hurricane Katrina. Overall, the industry has achieved almost its full recovery, reaching a successful 91% of its pre-Katrina employment levels.

As already mentioned, as a response to the loss of tourists and employment in the tourism and hospitality sector, the government needed to start acting. Even though they wanted to improve the current situation in the region and promote resilience by adapting significant amount of policies, it was regarded as insufficient. For instance, the insufficient response could have been seen in addressing the collapse of the tourism and hospitality sectors. Thus, government needed to adopt more targeted policies that were aiming to rebuild these industries and put the resilience into effect in the region. As a result, the marketing agency New Orleans & Company started a collaboration with the officials from the City of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana. Their cooperation had one target: preparedness and resilience for its people (whether its citizens or tourists). The plan was called Emergency Crisis Management Plan and it consisted of real-time updates on the agency's Internet website, social media platforms, email, SMS communication (New Orleans & Company, n.d.). In addition, the Emergency Crisis Management Plan provided numerous guiding principles on early departures, shelter-in-place protocols and City Assisted Evacuation (CAE) plans in coordination with all the involved stakeholders before, during, and after emergency (New Orleans & Company, n.d.).

Nowadays, the New Orleans & Company tourism marketing agency promotes sustainability as a core principle among tourists, which is balancing the environmental conservation with cultural preservation of the area. The agency provides several sustainable tips and tricks for travellers. These recommendations are: staying at eco-friendly accommodations that reduce waste through practices (in-room recycling), using alternative transportation options (biking, streetcars, or electric vehicles), supporting local businesses, participating in initiatives like the oyster shell recycling program and participating in educational tours (New Orleans & Company, 2023). In addition, tourists can see how sustainable water management is integrated into the city's architecture so an effective management of rainwater with cisterns and bioswells is in place. This initiative is called "living with water" (New Orleans & Company, 2023).

When looking at the sustainability efforts, according to the official Internet website of the City of New Orleans (2022), they have introduced its second Sustainability report in 2022. The target is to be net zero by the year of 2050. *Figure 14* shows the potential emission reduction in selected industries, which is well-connected with tourism as well. It shows the prediction of how sectors like energy, transportation, and waste management can contribute to the city's overall emissions reduction trajectory.

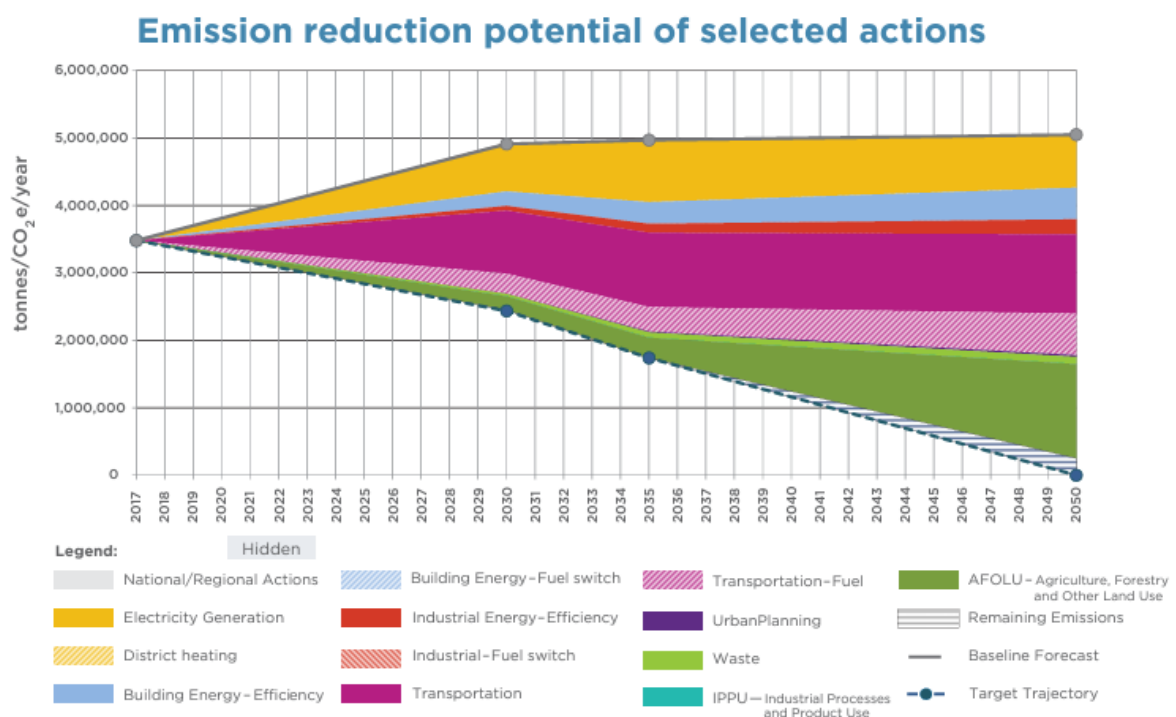


Figure 14: Estimated emission reduction of specific actions. (Source: City of New Orleans, 2022)

Out of all the actions mentioned in the report, New Orleans focus is mainly on three main targets: energy, transportation, and waste management. It goes without saying that the more sustainable New Orleans is, the more amount of eco-friendly travellers is attracted to visit the region. Among other benefits, the improvement of a city's reputation is also on the list when being more sustainable.

Moreover, another city-led policy initiative is a programme called *Resilient New Orleans*. It includes environmental, social, and infrastructure strategies to decrease climate risks and socio-economic imbalance in the city, focusing more on the sustainability and ecotourism (C40 Cities, 2017). Key aspects include investments in vulnerable neighbourhoods through programs like emergency savings accounts for low- and moderate-income inhabitants, financial incentives for homeowners to adopt risk-reduction measures, green infrastructure projects, such as parks and green spaces to promote biodiversity (C40 Cities, 2017).

As described by New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, *“New Orleans is a “tale of two cities” – although it will take many years for many neighbourhoods to recover, the tourism corridor remains intact, thriving and welcoming visitors and business travellers on a daily basis. The authentic New Orleans experience is very much present.”* (New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, n.d.).

As part of the sustainability path of New Orleans and tourism strategy, the New Orleans Business Alliance (NOLABA) has been established in order to focus on the *“efforts to unite a diverse community of stakeholders to catalyse job growth, create wealth and build an equitable and sustainable economic future for New Orleans”* (New Orleans Business Alliance, 2024). Over the past 14 years, NOLABA has been promoting sustainability through investments in blue-green infrastructure, healthcare innovation, and resilient neighbourhoods, via its programs like the Resilient Corridors Initiative and partnerships with organization, such as City of New Orleans, U.S. Economic Development Association, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and many more (New Orleans Business Alliance (2024). Through these partnerships, the city can aim for a long-term resilience by creating sustainable opportunities for local businesses that were weakened during the hurricane Katrina crisis.

One specific and very interesting insight which was presented by Kim, H., Marcouiller, D. W. (2015), states that after Hurricane Katrina, there was a substantial decline in the American oil production, which has led to a sharp increase in oil prices. Not long after some researchers started to recognize the interconnectedness between the tourism and oil sector, which was part of the broader consequences of the hurricane. In this context, Richardson et al. (2009) describe in their work different impacts of the disaster on not only the tourism, but also on the oil and gas industries in the Louisiana region. For example, the rising energy costs had significant impacts on tourism sector as it negatively affected travel expenses, tourism operations, and the overall economic resilience of the region of New Orleans. By such example, we can see the vulnerability of both industries and how sensitive they are when fighting against shared external shocks like natural disasters like hurricanes. It is a great example on how one industry depends on another, proving the connection between different sectors which is important when the region wants its local economy to thrive.

Now, looking at the **national policies** that were taking place after hurricane Katrina, there were various sources from different governmental bodies that were trying to help the region in fighting against the consequences of the hurricane in Louisiana. One of the most important was FEMA. Under its Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA), it has granted a greater authority to address gaps in response management (Federal Emergency Management Agency, n.d.). Among others, PKEMRA included the following efforts that were aiming at improvements of the tourism industry as well as support of the tourism-dependent areas. Therefore, PKEMRA:

- coordinates proactive evacuations as well as post-recovery operations.
- offers transportation support for relocating and returning persons displaced from their residences in a large-scale devastating event (Federal Emergency Management Agency, n.d.).

Several key laws allocated funding for disaster relief and recovery. P.L. 109-148 (2005) provided USD 11.5 billion (out of which USD 6.2 billion were dedicated to Louisiana) for programs aimed at rebuilding areas impacted by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, based on disaster declarations under the Stafford Act (Gotham, K.

F., Campanella, R., 2011). Another act with a name P.L. 109-234 (2006) allocated an additional USD 5.2 billion (USD 4.2 billion for Louisiana) for similar recovery efforts in the Gulf region. Lastly, P.L. 110-116 (2007) dedicated USD 3 billion to Louisiana's "Road Home" homeowner assistance program (Gotham, K. F., Campanella, R., 2011).

To sum up the post- Katrina governmental policies, the following *Table 8* provides an overview on the policies, funding allocations and initiatives that were put in place along with a detailed description:

Policy	Source	Policy challenges
Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA)	FEMA (2006)	Greater authority to FEMA was granted in order to focus on gaps in response to disasters, support for evacuations and recovery in tourism-dependent areas.
Emergency Supplemental Appropriations (P.L. 109-148)	Department of Defense (2005)	Provided USD 6.2 billion to Louisiana for a disaster relief, long-term recovery, and infrastructure tourism restoration
Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 109-234)	Department of Defense (2006)	Allocated USD 4.2 billion for Louisiana for continued disaster recovery and rebuilding efforts post-Katrina
Appropriations Act for FY2008 (P.L. 110-116)	Department of Defense (2007)	Allocated USD 3 billion for Louisiana's "Road Home" program, providing assistance to homeowners and indirectly supporting the tourism sector by stabilizing residential communities.
Resilient New Orleans Strategy	City of New Orleans (2015)	Introduced resilience strategy with 41 steps to address environmental, social, and infrastructural challenges, promoting tourism sustainability and economic resilience.

Emergency Crisis Management Plan	New Orleans & Company (n.d.)	Real-time communication strategies and preparedness plans for both citizens and tourists, improving the city's resilience against future disasters.
Sustainability Report	City of New Orleans (2022)	Target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, focusing on energy, transportation, and waste management, focus on ecotourism
Resilient Corridors Initiative	New Orleans Business Alliance (2024)	Sustainable economic growth through investments in infrastructure and local businesses, supporting tourism indirectly through neighbourhood revitalization.

Table 8: Overview of post-Katrina policies and initiatives (Source: own representation)

6.6.2 The role of the media after Hurricane Katrina

Surely, local newspapers provided different views on the development of the situation in New Orleans after the hurricane Katrina. Although there are different perspectives from different sources of media, they all look at the issue from multiple lenses. At the same time, diversification of media sources considers the broader context of social, economic, and cultural transformation. Firstly, it is important to see how newspaper other than *The Times-Picayune* covered the topic of tourism and situation that occurred after the crisis.

As written in *The Seattle Times*, a reporter Harpaz, B. J. (2015) highlights the fact that 10 years after hurricane Katrina in the year of 2015, New Orleans tourism was actually thriving, as it had not only rebounded, but also reinvented. According to a hospitality and leisure practice leader, he added to the discussion that New Orleans is not only a major leisure destination but also a prominent convention destination for the tourists. He agreed that both tourism and business travel have rebounded, thanks to the rebirth after the recovery from Hurricane Katrina and the economic recession (Harpaz, B. J., 2015). He also states that the recovery in New Orleans involved community

determination and support from government funding, private investment, media as well as the help of the rest of the world. Travellers coming to the region played a key role, because they were choosing to spend money locally- on the cultural traditional events like Mardi Gras and Jazz Festival and on the support of the city by joining service trips aiming for rebuilding initiatives (Harpaz, B. J., 2015).

According to a local *New Orleans Magazine*, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans' resilience by the local community could have been seen in the celebration of a marching parade festival Mardi Gras, which was described as "The Most Important Mardi Gras Ever" (Mardi Gras, 2020). Even despite of the ongoing devastated parts of the area, the residents of the local community decided to take part in celebration of the event. That was a proof that the spirit of New Orleans is still there and remained unbroken. At the beginning, even though some people perceived the celebration of Mardi Gras festival after the hurricane very controversial, it was an example as an event of hope. Moreover, it also demonstrated the city's determination to rebuild and become more resilient. Soon it became a key aspect of normalcy, which was helping to rebuild the cultural identity of New Orleans despite the disastrous hurricane (Mardi Gras, 2020). Nowadays, a parade group called *krewes* have updated the traditions and values of the festival, by additional fresh and innovative elements to Mardi Gras. The festival stands for showing the beauty in race, class, age, and gender within these evolving Carnival organizations (Wade, L. A., et al., 2019).

Hence, the media presents different perspectives on the development of tourism in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Some speaks of tourism as an essential driver of economic recovery, while other sources raise concerns about the influence of disaster (and dark) tourism and its potential risk to local residents' suffering. Building on this legacy of media influence on the community, local newspapers like *The Times-Picayune* continue to influence public opinion not only in times of crisis but also in their coverage of key issues like tourism policies in Louisiana region (Calderone M., 2015). According to a video report testimony from Associated Press (2009), Pat Logan, a buggy driver contributing to a tourism industry in New Orleans, said that visitors coming to French Quarter remain interested not just in the storm itself but also in the resilience and experiences of the local community. He also stated that after a few years, his

business had recovered to about 65–70% of pre-Katrina levels (Associated Press, 2009).

Now, looking at the main source of media coverage after Katrina, *The Times-Picayune*, several authors provided insightful perspectives on the status of tourism in the aftermath of the crisis. This can be seen in more details in the following *Table 9*, which is focusing solely on the articles from *The Times-Picayune*. Table is structured to present key articles from *The Times-Picayune* related to tourism perceptions post-Katrina. Each entry consists of three main columns: the source/ writer, article name, and a description of the tourism perception and challenge.

The Times-Picayune	Article name	Tourism perception and challenges
Times-Picayune (2005)	Not all tourism gets submerged by storm.	"New Orleans has always been a magnet for tourists, but after Katrina, the city has found itself a magnet for those curious about the destruction."
Florence, R. (2006)	A new beginning: City ignores No. 1 industry.	"Tourism generates the tax revenues that allow the city to provide basic services to its residents, but it was completely overlooked in the mayor's recovery priorities"
Feleman, S. (2006)	Tourism boost is the same old thing.	"The key to success is a coordinated effort to market the city's many attractions, rather than focusing narrowly on sports"
Feleman, S. (2006)	A new beginning	"The revitalization of neighbourhoods and infrastructure remains a priority, yet tourism—a critical economic driver—has not been adequately addressed."
White, J. (2006)	If you sell it, will they come?	"The return of the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center and the Superdome is critical for the local hospitality industry, still struggling to recover"
Shank, M. (2006)	Oil prices drop below \$70	"Falling oil prices, in the wake of Hurricane Ernesto, reflect broader economic shifts that could influence regional tourism and travel. "

Chapple, C. (2006)	Officials betting on Gulf Coast casinos.	"Tourism officials hope to leverage the Gulf Coast casino boom to attract visitors to St. Tammany Parish as a destination."
Chapple, C. (2006)	Strategy bets on casinos: New Orleans no longer focus of St. Tammany effort.	"St. Tammany tourism officials have scrapped a strategy focused on New Orleans and are rebranding the parish as a primary destination"
Mowbray, R. (2006)	Plans to make center larger on hold: Demand 'isn't there' for Phase IV project.	"Convention officials have put the brakes on plans to expand the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center due to insufficient tourism demand."
Zdon, J. (2006)	Extend housing into suburbs.	"The federal government's focus on mixed-income housing developments may help stabilize communities and indirectly support tourism recovery."
Rainey, R. (2006)	You've got to attract choice riders, expert says.	"The public transit system must attract car-owning 'choice riders' to make tourism and daily commutes more viable post-Katrina. "
Davis, J. (2015)	Is New Orleans' post-Katrina economy a bubble that's about to burst?	"Does our happily booming economy depend on one-time disaster relief payments, and what happens when those funds run out?"
White, J. (2007)	Post-Katrina, Harrah's profits show New Orleans is struggling to attract out-of-town visitors: Betting on locals	"The shift to relying on local customers at Harrah's Casino highlights broader struggles to attract out-of-town tourists. "
White, J. (2008)	New Orleans will be hosting fewer big conventions this fall... but more smaller corporate events are helping fill the gaps.	"Smaller corporate events are helping to bridge the gap as large conventions dwindle in post-Katrina New Orleans"
Anderson, E. (2007)	Flow of tourists forecast to match pre-storm total: But visitors aren't spending as much as before Katrina.	"The number of tourists is expected to return to pre-Katrina levels, but their reduced spending continues to challenge economic recovery."

Table 9: Media articles focusing on tourism in NOLA (Source: own representation)

Authors and reporters from *The Times-Picayune* have covered the topic of tourism from various perspectives after hurricane Katrina. For instance, they provided an overview on the resilience of the tourism industry by adapting to new forms of visiting the location of New Orleans, including controversial "disaster tourism," where visitors came to witness the devastation in the region (Times-Picayune, 2005). This action

indirectly supported local businesses that were still open (Times-Picayune, 2005). Another article provides a criticism that despite tourism was the city's largest industry and a major economic driver, it was initially overlooked in recovery plans, raising concerns about its long-term sustainability (Florence, 2006). The sector's slow recovery also impacted the local transportation system, which also struggled to go back to its pre-Katrina levels, further complicating accessibility for visitors who could not access the city and region easily (Rainey, 2006). Some authors debate that even though New Orleans' tourism industry showed strength and adaptability after Katrina, the rebuilding actions were still challenging due to its high dependence on visitors, major events, and public perception (Feleman, 2006). Nevertheless, the national programme called the Road Home that was initially aiming to support the tourism sector by stabilizing residential communities was criticised by the testimonies from *The New York Times* respondents (The New York Times, 2013). From more than 105,000 people that applied, only 56 had received the money for their new home and to top it off, the government of Louisiana was accused of being corrupted because of not being able to handle a large amount of money that comes from the federal aid programmes (The New York Times, 2013). One victim of the hurricane Katrina and a citizen of New Orleans testified in the video report that "...*(the government) said there's all this money out there, but we didn't get any of it. And I don't know of anybody that did. The state has got us wrapped up in so much paperwork, it consumed life.*" (The New York Times, 2013). There were similar concerns, illustrating that "*the frustration so many homeowners are feeling,*" and criticizing of the mismanagement: "*This process is never going to be simple in a way that would make it as fast as families would like. And for a family going through what they're going through after a disaster, it never can be fast enough.*" (The New York Times, 2013). Additionally, James Perry, the director of the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, stated, "*This story ends up being the roadmap, the instruction booklet, the how-to story of dealing with disaster. It also tells you what not to do.*" (The New York Times, 2013).

However, efforts to improve and stabilize the sector focused on reopening key touristic sites such as the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center and the Louisiana Superdome, that were covered by extensive marketing campaigns to attract visitors (White, 2006). Nevertheless, an uncertainty regarding the future demand led policy makers to stop plans for further expansion of the Convention Center, which reflected even more

challenges in the city's hospitality sector after hurricane Katrina (Mowbray, 2006). Such argument was linked to the statistic, that even though the tourism numbers were planned to return to pre-Katrina levels by 2008, spending of the visitors remained lower than before. It was an indication of slower financial recovery despite increased arrivals of the tourists (Anderson, 2007). Furthermore, a decline in major conventions led to an increased reliance on smaller corporate events, which did not fully compensate for revenue that was lost from large conferences (White, 2008). What is interesting to mention is that some areas in New Orleans, such as St. Tammany Parish, adjusted their marketing strategies to focus on positioning themselves as independent destination, so more visitors will be attracted to the region (Chapple, 2006). One significant topic that *The Times-Picayune* covered was the development and financial support for casinos in New Orleans after the disaster. For instance, the shift in gambling revenue at Harrah's Casino, where 80% of earnings came from local patrons instead of out-of-town visitors, further highlighted difficulties in restoring external tourism (White, 2007). Despite these challenges in tourism, another reporter argues that officials and policy makers remained optimistic as they bet on the Gulf Coast casino industry to help draw tourists back to the region (Chapple, 2006). Meanwhile, reporter Davis (2015) in its article disputes that the broader economic recovery of the city was alarming among citizens because they were afraid the disaster relief funds might provide only a short-term boost rather than sustainable long-term development (Davis, 2015).

In light of this view, *The Times-Picayune* has provided a projection of the development of the tourism industry within 2004-2010 time period, taking into consideration number of visitors, visitor spending (in billions USD), tourism employment (in thousands) in New Orleans as the main variables, which is depicted below in *Figure 15*. By 2010 *The Times-Picayune* projected that the number of visitors will be USD 8.8 million, showing recovery but still below pre-Katrina levels. What is interesting is that by 2010, visitor spending would expect to increase to USD 5.2 billion, surpassing the pre-Katrina level. As for the tourism employment, in 2004, 81,000 employees were working in tourism. By 2010, employment was projected to a slightly lower number, 76,000 jobs, that indicated a partial recovery but not a full return to pre-Katrina levels. In addition, it is contrasted with state-wide figures. All in all, the projection of *The Times-Picayune* showed that while visitor numbers were still below pre-Katrina levels, visitor spending

was projected to recover and exceed pre-Katrina amounts. Thus, it is suggesting a stronger economic contribution per visitor. Employment in the tourism sector shows recovery but has not yet returned to its pre-Katrina level.

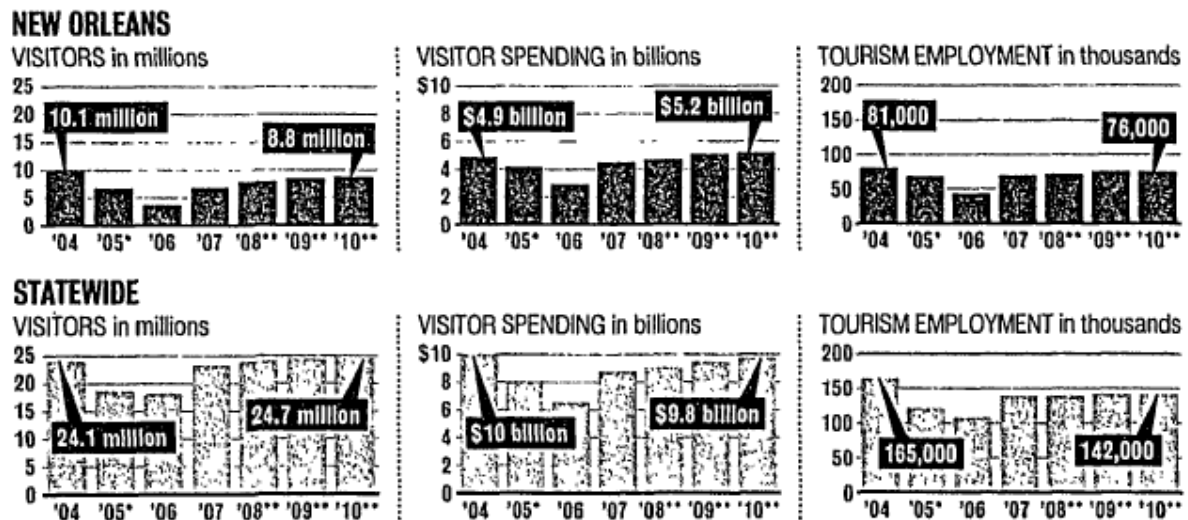


Figure 15: Visitor flow forecast. (Source: Anderson E. (2007), *Times-Picayune*)

6.6.3 The role of the media nowadays

Thus, as can be seen in the media, New Orleans today stands as a perfect example of resilience and rebirth. The tourism industry in the region has not only recovered but is now prospering and attracting visitors in every part of the world to come to experience its rich culture, festivals and friendly hospitality. This can be done by attending various local and cultural events, like the so-called "Resilience Festival," where New Orleans celebrates its journey and shows the world how it has changed into renewed strength and prosperity (Harpaz, B. J., 2015). Additionally, there are already projects like Crescent Park, the Lafitte Greenway, and new museums that are highlighting the city's resilience against hurricanes (Harpaz, B. J., 2015). The main aim of the newspaper *The Times-Picayune* was (and still is) the assurance of minimum risks associated with future floods (The Times-Picayune, 2005).

On the other hand, other newspapers highlight the comprehensive nature of the plan of Resilient New Orleans- with the main focus on the topics like both environmental threats and social challenges, such as poverty, racial inequality, and crime- it also points out the criticism based on the city's history of plans since Hurricane Katrina (Dart T., 2015). The author mentions that since "*people in New Orleans are tired of*

planning", it reflects public frustration with previous strategies that failed to produce tangible results. In other words, it is said that successful implementation remains a critical challenge still until today (Dart T., 2015).

Since recent years, ecotourism and sustainability are emerging topics in many sectors, tourism industry in New Orleans is no exception. In the press release of New Orleans & Company in collaboration with the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce and LifeCity, they have established Zero Waste Campaign which is focusing on promotion of sustainability in hospitality (New Orleans & Company press release, 2022). This campaign consists of various workshops to encourage local businesses in implementation of environmentally friendly practices. These are for instance waste disposal, sustainable transportation options, usage of solar power and water conservation system (New Orleans & Company press release, 2022).

Thanks to these diverse perspectives from media and communities, it is clear that examining the issue from multiple perspectives is crucial for understanding both the successes and the gaps in the resilient strategy. Even today, resilience is an ongoing process that develops with challenges and changing environmental conditions.

6.7 Comparison of pre-Katrina policies and Post-Katrina policies

By using software Maxqda in order to analyse the media articles that included tourism sector development, I used three codes to have a better overview on the articles: after, during and before crisis. Firstly, when looking at the articles from the media discourse, it was found that the majority of the documents (exactly 70%) focused on the period after the crisis- describing mainly recovery efforts, policy changes, and trends in the industry. A smaller portion of the media articles (23.33%) covered development and situation during the crisis, such as immediate impacts, government interventions, and resilience strategies. The proportion of 6,67% discussed the pre-crisis period, providing insights into the sector's conditions and long-term growth patterns. All analysed documents (100%) contained relevant codes, as can be seen below in *Table 10*.

Media discourse	Frequency	Percentage
after crisis	21	70
during crisis	7	23,33
before crisis	2	6,67
DOCUMENTS with codes	30	100,00
DOCUMENTS without codes	0	0,00
ANALYZED DOCUMENTS	30	100,00

Table 10: Analysis of media discourse before, during and after hurricane Katrina (Source: own representation using Maxqda)

To be more specific, a more in-depth analysis was conducted on mainly the articles from the local newspapers (mainly *The Times-Picayune*), as outlined below in Table 11. Articles in red suggest they were focusing on the challenges during the crisis, whereas the ones in green suggest they were focusing on the post-Katrina development. The ones in blue were focusing on the situation before Katrina.

Documents media discourse	
Anderson E., (2007) Flow of tourists forecast to match prestorm total. Times-Picayune	after
Associated Press (2009). <i>Katrina Recovery: Tourism Struggles After Storm</i> , video report	after
Calderone M. (2015),	during
Cossart, I., 2015, Buzzfeed	during
Dart T. (2015). New Orleans Resilience Roadmap: A Strategy for Climate and Social Issues, <i>The Guardian</i>	after
Davis, J. (2015, September 11). Is New Orleans' post-Katrina economy a bubble that's about to burst. Times-Picayune	after
Feleman, S., (2006). Tourism boost is the same old thing, The Times-Picayune	after
Felnman, S. (2006, June 1). A new beginning. The Times-Picayune	after
Florence, R. (2006, June 1). A new beginning. City ignores No. 1 industry. The Times-Picayune	after
Folkenflik D. (2007)	during
Harpaz, B. J. (2015) The Seattle Times	after
Chapple, C. (2006, September 1). Strategy bets on casinos. New Orleans no longer focus of St. Tammany effort. The Times-Picayune	after
Chapple, C. (2006, September). Officials betting on Gulf Coast casinos. The Times-Picayune	after
Library of Congress, NOLA	during
Mardi Gras, 2020, New Orleans Magazine	after
Miller, D.S. et al., 2017	during
Mowbray, R. (2006, September 27). Plans to make center larger on hold. Demand 'isn't there' for Phase IV project. The Times-Picayune	after

New Orleans & Company (2022). New Orleans & Company Works to Promote Sustainable Practices for the Hospitality Industry	after
Rainey, R. (2006, July 14). You've got to attract choice riders, expert says. The Times-Picayune	after
Shank, M. (2006, June 1). Oil prices drop below \$70. The Times-Picayune	after
Schleifstein M., McQuaid J., 2002, Times Picayune	before
The New York Times (2013). Hurricane Katrina Aftermath, video report	after
The Times-Picayune, 2005	during
Thomas L.L., (2014). Desire and Disaster in New Orleans	before
Times-Picayune. (2005, October 17). Not all tourism gets submerged by storm. The Times-Picayune	after
Wade, L. A., et al., (2019)	after
White, J. (2006, August 30). If you sell it, will they come. The Times-Picayune	after
White, Jacquetta (2007, April 12). Post-Katrina, Harrah's profits show New Orleans is struggling to attract out-of-town visitor	after
Young H. (2012), The Independent	during
Zdon J. (2006, October 18) Extend housing into suburbs. The Times-Picayune	after

Table 11: Comparison of the media articles before, during and after the crisis (Source: own representation using Maxqda)

Secondly, when looking into the government policies and initiatives in *Table 12*, eight of them were focusing on the situation after Katrina (making it 34,80%), aiming to focus on the long-term resilience. Additionally, 11 policies were adopted during the crisis (47,80%), targeting to provide immediate relief and support for all the affected communities in tourism sector. Lastly, 4 tourism initiatives were already implemented before hurricane Katrina (17,40%), focusing on preparedness and environmental regulations.

Government policies and initiatives	Frequency	Percentage
after crisis	8	34,80
during crisis	11	47,80
before crisis	4	17,40
DOCUMENTS with codes	23	100,00
DOCUMENTS without codes	0	0,00
ANALYZED DOCUMENTS	23	100,00

Table 12: Analysis of government policies/ initiatives before, during and after hurricane Katrina

Now, looking closely at the summary of government policies using Maxqda, it can be seen that the majority of initiatives were introduced during or after the crisis, which reflects a strong focus on disaster response and long-term recovery from the government side. More detailed analysis can be found below in *Table 13*.

Documents government policies and initiatives	
Tourism and hospitality tax relief (Georgetown Climate Center, 2015)	during
Appropriations Act for FY2008 P.L. 110-116 (Department of Defense, 2005)	after
Come Back to New Orleans campaign (Georgetown Climate Center, 2015)	during
Council on Environmental Quality (NEPA, 1969)	before
Dark tourism (Miller, D.S., et al.,2017)	during
Disaster preparedness training (The Office of Emergency Preparedness in New Orleans)	before
Emergency Crisis Management Plan (New Orleans & Company, n.d.).	after
Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act P.L. 109-234 (Department of Defense, 2005)	after
Emergency Supplemental Appropriations P.L. 109-148 (Department of Defense, 2005)	after
Enterprise Zone program (The City of New Orleans, n.d)	during
FEMA's 1994 Southeast Louisiana Hurricane Preparedness (109th Congress, 2nd Session, 2006).	before
Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund (Louisiana Recovery Authority, 2006)	during
Louisiana Recovery Authority (2006)	during
National Park Service (National Park Service, 2006).	during
New Orleans Recovery plan (City of New Orleans, 2006)	during
New Orleans Reopening Strategy (FEMA and the Louisiana Recovery Authority, local government, 2015)	during
New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation (New Orleans & Company, n.d.).	during
Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (FEMA, 2006)	after
Resilient Corridors Initiative (New Orleans Business Alliance, 2024)	after
Resilient New Orleans initiative (C40 Cities, 2017)	after
Small Business Administration (U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. (n.d.)	during
Sustainability report (City of New Orleans, 2022)	after
The National Tourism Policy Act of 1981 (Congress, 1981)	before

Table 13: Comparison of the government policies and initiatives before, during and after the crisis (Source: own representation using Maxqda)

Based on these selected articles, a word matrix was created to identify the most frequently used words. The idea behind was see a more detailed insight of the important topics in tourism sector development before, during, and after hurricane Katrina. As illustrated below in *Figure 16*, words as "tourism," "city," "Katrina," "housing," "officials," "public," and "times-picayune" are the most frequently used words in the articles. These words are displayed in larger blue and bolder font, which indicate their high frequency in the articles. The second group consists of the most frequent words, such as "local," "industry," "FEMA," "recovery," "gulf," and "development". It suggests that the content focuses on the urban regional development

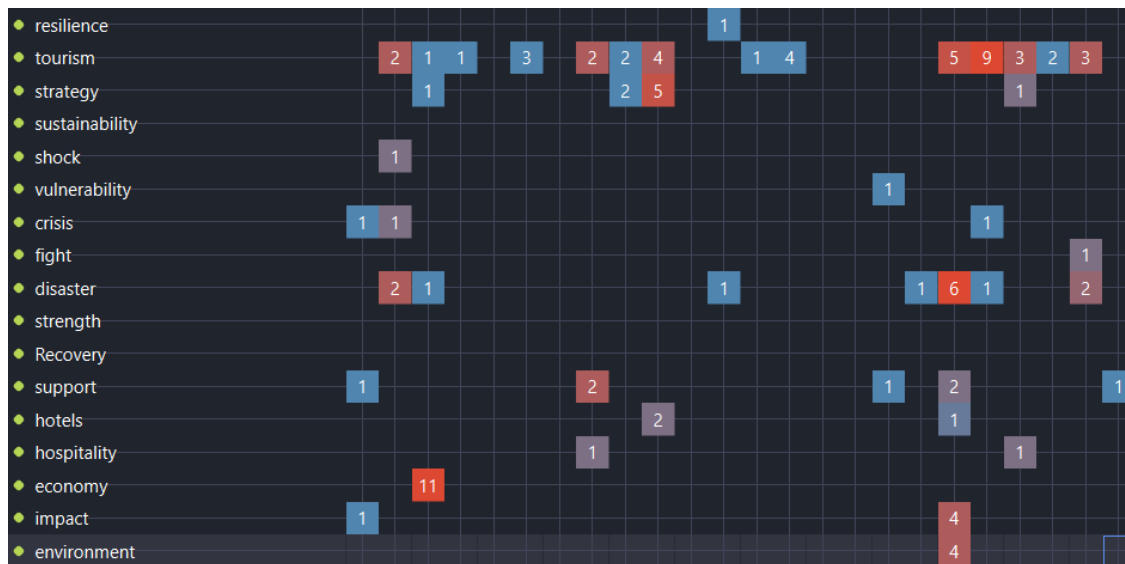


Figure 17: Word matrix: frequency distribution (Source: own representation using Maxqda)

7. Discussion

After analysing relevant documents and reports regarding the government policies and articles from the local media, this chapter will provide a discussion of the relevant findings. It will not only interpret the results in relation to the key theoretical frameworks and patterns, but also evaluate their implications in real life in New Orleans. Furthermore, the discussion will establish a clear connection between the findings and the main research question and sub- questions of this research by critically answering them.

Since this thesis aimed to explore the connection between the governmental response and media discourse in the tourism sector before, during, and after a crisis, the focus was also on the examination of the extent of resilience. This was done by using the theoretical frameworks of transformative resilience and the tourism area life cycle while choosing the example of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. This example illustrated the impact and response to the crisis.

7.1 Framework-driven analysis

This case study shows the raising issues and concerns that need further consideration within the resilience framework. This chapter will talk about the implication of theoretical aspects, such as transformative resilience and tourism are life cycle.

Furthermore, it will explore the analysis and impact of all the stakeholders that were involved in this case study. As it was shown in the practical case study of New Orleans, the theoretical framework was used to divide the case study into subchapters, more specifically: the pre-shock regional development pathway in the tourism sector, vulnerability and exposure to shock, the depth of reaction to shock and the extent of tourism sector adjustment to shock, and the post-shock regional developmental pathway and recovery tourism policies. Such division incorporated both the transformative resilience theory as well as tourism area life cycle.

7.1.1 Implication of transformative resilience

In order to understand the region of New Orleans and its ability to respond to a sudden shock, this case study looked at it through the lenses of transformative resilience. Thus, by applying the aspects of transformative resilience theory, we could have seen several characteristics that were identified in the research: absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacity. Absorptive capacity of the region was described in the government response policies in tourism sector, creation of jobs in the tourism sector and so making sure the employment rate is stabilized (or even improved than before Katrina). To help with overcoming the sudden shock, media played an essential role, since it acted as an informative tool providing details about the situation to the local communities. The adaptive capacity was shown in the post-crisis development of the tourism sector, since the decision-making institutions focused more on the long-term sustainability which lasts also until today (as can be seen in the Sustainability report from 2022). City's efforts of community engagement in eco-friendly tourism initiatives have been included in the sustainability strategy as well. This is also linked to the transformative capacity or in other words the long-term structural change of the tourism sector. It can be distinguished that the development of tourism is trying to be community- centred, by prioritizing local businesses and protecting cultural heritage. From what we can see, the current state of tourism has endured the long-term structural change because it has turned hurricane Katrina into an opportunity to a long-term development, reinforcing the status as a tourism-dependent economy. Lastly, there were still some challenges that remained and did not really align with the theory of resilience: housing crisis for the local community because of the gentrification and rise of short-term rental platforms, inequalities in recovery, where the neighbourhoods

that were poorer faced limited financial support. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, New Orleans bounced forward in response to a sudden shock, as the city absorbed, adapted and transformed itself as a result of resilient economic initiatives from all the stakeholders that were involved.

7.1.2 Implication of tourism area life cycle

In addition to the implication of the transformative resilience theory in this case study, tourism area life cycle framework was used as it provides a different lens through which the development of New Orleans's tourism sector can be analysed. In the pre-Katrina time period, New Orleans was in a consolidation phase, since the tourism sector was one of the driving forces of the economy. As soon as the hurricane hit the region, causing shock to the environment, the result was that New Orleans has found itself in the phase of decline. Decline phase in tourism was characterized by disruptions in infrastructure, displacement of local communities and tourism sector has been put on hold. By using TALC framework, the post-crisis recovery efforts showed the extent of damage as well as a potential path on how to get to the right track to achieve a rejuvenation phase. In this path, a resilient plan for the tourism sector is necessary, consisting of various investments and financial support in cultural events, (re)development of the destroyed infrastructure and above all, sustainability and eco-tourism. All of the above was included in the post-crisis recovery strategies of New Orleans. In addition, TALC highlights the interventions of policies into the tourism sector as it can speed up the process of "bouncing forward". Overall, it can be said that the implication of TALC framework has helped in understanding the post-crisis tourism sector in New Orleans in perception of the importance of rejuvenation phase to focus on eco-tourism and sustainability.

Moreover, the lesson learned is that after the sudden shock, region has two paths to choose from: either long-term decline or the implementation of transformative strategies to rejuvenate the tourism sector.

7.2 Addressing the research questions

This part will provide answers to the main research question and secondary questions introduced at the beginning of this thesis.

How did the local communities and stakeholders participate in the tourism sector's recovery fight after hurricane Katrina? The strategy to rebuild resilience in tourism sector in New Orleans has undoubtedly concerned local communities, since they were engaged in the process from the beginning. Based on the stakeholder mapping analysis, local communities have low power, but high interest in the decision-making processes and thus, should be kept informed. One particular pre-crisis resilient example included the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) that provided environmental reviews for many projects in infrastructure and merged feedback from local communities into one (chap. 4.3). Another example of local community inclusion can be seen in the efforts in the rebuilding, where statistics show that after the crisis, locals were- and still are- employed more in the tourism sector. They are working in hotels, restaurants, transportation services, as tour guides, musicians, and they are involved in the preparation of cultural events and festivals (chap. 4.6.2.). Up until today, parade groups known as "krewes" have revitalized Mardi Gras traditions by including new, fresh elements into the celebration. The festival is famous because it celebrates diversity of race, class, age, gender, and culture of the locals in New Orleans (chap. 4.6.2.). By any means, it has helped the tourism sector to recover at a faster pace after the disaster.

How did the policies change in the tourism sector in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina? Firstly, the main tourism strategy in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina included marketing efforts so more tourists will be willing to come to the region and experience its true beauty even in the post-Katrina period. This was mainly the work of city and state officials in collaboration with tourism agencies, such as New Orleans & Company (chapter 4.6.1.). Secondly, the focus of federal government has shifted to improve and strengthen the role of FEMA which could have been seen in Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA). With Resilient Corridors Initiative and financial support from the government, the plan of the city was to rebuild the devastated infrastructure so New Orleans can be again seen as an attractive destination for tourists. Thirdly, the city has changed its perspective into more sustainable and eco- tourist activities. For instance, the establishment of its first Sustainability Report with a goal to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 (chapter

4.6.1.). As a result of all these efforts, the number of tourist has increased nowadays to 19,5 million visitors (chapter 4.1).

What was the view of the media on the recovery of New Orleans' tourism sector?

How did the media describe development of the tourism sector? Media has different viewpoints on the development of New Orleans' tourism sector. Local newspapers, mainly *The Times-Picayune* has provided the criticism of the governmental response to the crisis. Its articles primarily focused on the government, which was neglecting the tourism industry, despite the fact it was one of the main economic drivers. This was done by criticizing the slow infrastructure rebuilding and slow using of financial support from federal sources (chapter 4.6.2.). Another local newspaper *New Orleans Magazine* has covered the topic of New Orleans as a resilient city in tourism because of its cultural heritage- predominantly due to cultural events and festivals like Mardi Grass, that was an important event to attract visitors after Katrina. Similarly, the national newspaper *The New York Times* described the frustration regarding failures of initiatives like "Road Home" because it delayed the stability in the local community. Surprisingly, it resulted in indirect impacts on the tourism recovery. Nevertheless, *The Seattle Times* emphasised that the tourism industry has not only recovered but also reinvented, primarily thanks to the determination of the local community engagement, funding initiatives from the government and investments which led to increasing the fame of New Orleans as a tourist destination (chapter 4.6.2.).

Was the tourism sector in New Orleans resilient? If yes, in what ways? The situation in tourism sector before hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans can be characterized by many superlative words, such as rich culture, extravagant festivals and a high number of tourists coming to enjoy the unique region. However, the city of New Orleans had only a limited chain of public transportation developed with old infrastructure (chapter 4.1). Based on the analysis, it can be said that the government was mostly focusing on preserving the cultural traditions. As soon as hurricane Katrina destroyed the region, resilience needed to become part of the tourism industry (chapter 4.3.). The post-Katrina development can be characterized by the following aspects: improvements in infrastructure, improved airport, more hotels and development as well as improvement of cultural events (chapter 4.6.). The engagement of local community in tourism activities could have been seen in their participation in festivals and cultural

events where they could show their cultural heritage and habits (chapter 4.6.). In addition, all the stakeholders are nowadays focusing more on the promotion of sustainability in New Orleans, as more and more tourists are seeking to experience it so the demand is high and is increasing each year.

What can be learned from the resilient initiatives adopted in New Orleans' tourism sector and can be therefore applied to other region that has gone through the same path as New Orleans? As it was already said, the well-known cultural events and festivals like *Mardi Gras festival* and *Jazz Fest* are still till this day attracting many tourists, even though the city of New Orleans has shifted its focus to other touristic attractions as well, such as culinary experience tourism and ecotourism. A key lesson from this is that a tourist destination can be even more resilient after the crisis, if there is a right focus on the cultural identity. Another particular lesson that can be learned from the strategy in New Orleans is the collaboration and partnerships between different types of stakeholders. For instance, The National Tourism Policy Act of 1981 that was established before Hurricane Katrina has focused on making partnerships between public and private tourism organizations (chapter 4.3.1). Another example is New Orleans & Company and its collaboration with the Louisiana state officials by making a resilient Emergency Crisis Management Plan (chapter 4.6.1). New Orleans & Company is also present nowadays in promoting collaboration for ecotourism with the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce and LifeCity (chapter 4.6.3). Moreover, a very controversial lesson that can be learned from this example is the development of dark tourism. Even though we could have seen that dark tourism attracts a lot of curious travellers, there is a moral and ethical question, whether it is right or wrong (chapter 4.5). The next lesson is concerning government intervention and support. It is established to accelerate recovery and to ensure that basic services for people and infrastructure are repaired (chapters 4.4., 4.5, 4.6.1). However, it is essential to note that the governmental policies in terms of resilience should be implemented to (not only) the tourism sector before the crisis. (chapter 4.3.1.).

Main question: How were the initiatives and policies implemented in tourism sector in New Orleans able to balance economic growth alongside with sustainable tourism practices, particularly in terms of local community engagement, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina? It goes without saying that the engagement of local communities was the one of the most important aspect when it

comes to the economic development in the aftermath of the crisis in New Orleans. The strategies and initiatives were mainly done by the government and its supporting organizations. After, they were reflected for the local communities by local newspapers like *The Times-Picayune*. Thus, locals could have gained insight into the impacts of these tourism strategies, policies, and initiatives on local economic growth and agree or disagree with them. As for the economic growth in the tourism sector, New Orleans 'government has provided local communities with the creation of jobs in hotels, restaurants, tourism agencies and many more (chapter 4.6.3). Providing funding and tax reliefs for small, family-owned businesses has brought significant economic benefits, too. Thus, it can be said that the tourism development was aiming to be community-centred. When it comes to sustainability in tourism, in its Sustainability report, New Orleans wants to regulate over-commercialization in historic sights so the cultural heritage is preserved (chapter 4.6.). It is also targeting to minimize the sector's environmental footprint by engaging and conveying communities into taking part in sustainable initiatives. Nevertheless, when it comes to the downside and economic imbalance, *The Times-Picayune* has criticized the increasing gentrification due to short-term rentals like Airbnb which is reducing the affordable housing for local communities while prioritizing tourists. All in all, it is important to highlight that the combined efforts of stakeholders involved in post-crisis economic recovery did not come at the expense of environmental sustainability or the well-being of local communities. Overall, it can be said that through the combination of governmental policies and extensive media coverage, the tourism sector in New Orleans achieved economic growth while also being able to promote sustainability and eco-tourism which is still this this day an ongoing strategy for the region.

7.3 Limitations

This subchapter focuses on the limitations of the selected case study of tourism resilience in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina. In the first place, the limitations of this case study lies in the reliance on data and academic articles from the search engine Scopus. Even though this search engine has a high level of academic credibility, it could limit the scope of the study. Regarding the theoretical part, there is a lack of the concept of resilience in the tourism sector in many academic articles, which provides a limitation to the research. Although the framework of transformative

resilience provides many insightful aspects into the economic, social, and environmental elements of post-crisis recovery, it does not fully address the specific dynamics of tourism resilience in time.

Additionally, although media discourse was included in the research to offer a broader perspective which should have been beyond academic literature, challenges arose in accessing comprehensive local newspaper archives (mainly concerning the archives of *The Times-Picayune*). To be more precise, some of these archives did not extensively cover the governmental response to the tourism sector, which made it difficult to fully understand the policy measures and strategic interventions which were implemented before, during and after the crisis. There is also a lack of publicly-available documents and reports on the governmental policy response that would specifically address the tourism industry path both pre-Katrina and post-Katrina. While various policies are available online regarding the economic recovery and community engagement, there is a lack of detailed records which makes it even more challenging to assess the long-term impact of such policies and initiatives on tourism sector. Next, the data on marginalized groups, like the black communities living in the Lower Ninth Ward is missing- neither the policies, nor the media covered that topic to a broader extend, even though they are part of the local community.

7.4 Recommendations for further study

From the economic geographic perspective, it is important to understand the interplay between space and time within the human dimension of geography. In other words, how economic activities and human behaviour evolve and change over specific period of time. Thus, from this case study I have developed recommendations for further research and study. This thesis highlights the importance of including more extensive range of data sources. Such variety of data can contain media coverage from local agencies and newspapers so a more comprehensive analysis of post-crisis tourism resilience can be developed. In order to improve the tourism resilience in New Orleans now and in the future, I recommend to focus on the qualitative research method. For instance, conducting interviews and focus groups within the group of local tourism stakeholders in Louisiana. By directly engaging and interacting with them, more of their experiences with insights can be collected on the tourism sector and its resilience. It

would also improve the status on what people who are providing with their work to the local economy feel about the governmental response and recovery efforts. By doing so, people would feel heard, acknowledged and valued. This would be very important in terms of the development of dark tourism that has been very popular in New Orleans after the crisis. It would be essential to see whether the dark tourism can work its way if it is community-led and rather than focusing on victimization, its main target would be on resilience and education purposes. Such approach can help to understand more the challenges its inhabitants have faced, the strategies they implemented on their own as well as their perspectives on government interventions. Additionally, it could help uncover the missing gaps in existing policies and initiatives.

8. Conclusion

Based on this study, the strategies and initiatives implemented in New Orleans can be divided on the basis on two perspectives- the view based on the government approach and the view the media has provided. Using theoretical frameworks like transformative resilience and tourism area life cycle proved to be a suitable method for this case study. On the one hand, it showed the tourism sector from a different lens, focusing on the sector's capacity to recover, develop and innovate in response to a crisis. On the other hand, these two frameworks also showed the vulnerabilities and limitations that could have occurred within the tourism sector. As a result of applying these frameworks, it is clear that policy support and community engagement are the most important in order to effectively fight against any current or future challenges. As at the date of this research study, the presented results show that with government support and cooperation with local communities, the long-term sustainability of the tourism sector can be achieved.

However, in this particular case study of New Orleans, the response to such challenges has not always been smooth. Many initiatives and programs, including FEMA, were criticized by locals because of the delayed financial support and unequal distribution of aid. This resulted in low-income communities, especially black neighbourhoods facing slower recovery. These inequalities highlighted the need for more effective, but most importantly fair response strategies in order to safeguard that sectors can recover promptly and sustainably.

To conclude, New Orleans serves as an example of both positive and negative possibilities on how resilience can be leveraged to tackle a natural disaster like hurricane. Lessons learned from previous natural disasters in tourism-dependent regions can assist policymakers in potential future challenges when a disaster happens. That is the main reason why this case study is important- so other regions can look at what New Orleans did right (but also wrong) and thus implement such strategies.

All in all, although the consequences of natural disasters such as hurricanes are inevitable and unpredictable mainly in the region of the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf of America) where New Orleans is located, it is always better to be prepared and have a resilient plan in place to minimize the destruction. The highlight is on the importance of constructing resilient systems (and regions) in order to minimize the recovery time in the event of disruptive, unexpected shocks or crisis. Undoubtedly, we cannot get rid of challenges, but resilience of New Orleans can serve as a successful model for other touristic region that is facing similar issues in the aftermath of a crisis. The tourism sector in the city of New Orleans is a symbol of adapting, evolving, and thriving. However, the question still remains: What is the best way to see such resilience in action? That is done by visiting New Orleans and experiencing its energy, rich culture, and friendly hospitality of the locals with one's own eyes.

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