



TOURISM IN A CHANGING WORLD: AN ACTIVE AGENT FOR GOOD?

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

34TH NORDIC SYMPOSIUM ON TOURISM AND
 HOSPITALITY RESEARCH
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About the Conference

Each year, [NORTHORS](#) organizes the Nordic Symposium on Tourism and Hospitality Research. The Nordic countries take turns hosting the conference, which typically attracts 150–200 delegates from across the Nordic region and beyond.

The aim of the Nordic Society for Tourism and Hospitality Research (NORTHORS) is to provide a platform for academic debate and development in the field of tourism and hospitality in the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – and surrounding areas, seen in a wider European and global context. The society has more than 500 members and focuses on the development of tourism and hospitality research and research training. Beyond the promotion of collaboration between the Nordic partners, NORTHORS also has an international orientation. It aims at making the Nordic research visible in the international arena and encourages international participation on the symposiums and other events organized by NORTHORS.

The Journal of Arctic Tourism

[The Journal of Arctic Tourism \(ArcTour\)](#) is pleased to support the 34th Nordic Symposium on Tourism and Hospitality Research. We encourage scholars working on Arctic and northern tourism topics to submit session proposals and papers to NS34, which may open up opportunities for special issues in ArcTour.

ArcTour is an international, peer-reviewed, open access journal published exclusively online. The journal is freely accessible to readers, and no publication fees or article processing charges (APCs) apply for authors.

The Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism

[The Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism \(SJHT\)](#) has a long-standing relationship with the symposium and grew out of this vibrant scholarly community. The journal and the symposium share a common commitment to advancing critical, high-quality research in tourism and hospitality from Nordic and international perspectives.

As a Taylor & Francis journal published in five issues per year, the SJHT is an international, English-language outlet for both conceptual and empirical research. It aims to stimulate dialogue among academics, industry professionals, policymakers, and other stakeholders across the public and private sectors. In addition to peer-reviewed research articles and book reviews, the journal includes debate and commentary addressing timely and pressing issues in tourism and hospitality research.

The journal warmly welcomes original research submissions as well as proposals for special issues, particularly those building on themes, discussions, and collaborations emerging from the Nordic Symposium and related scholarly networks. Editors and Associate Editors of the journal will attend the conference and welcome opportunities for informal discussions with authors and prospective contributors. Contributions offering innovative, critical, and interdisciplinary perspectives on tourism and hospitality are especially encouraged.

Keynote Speakers



Arnar Már Ólafsson has served as Director General of the Icelandic Tourist Board since 1 March 2023. He was also recently elected Vice-President of the European Travel Commission. He brings extensive experience from across the Icelandic tourism sector, having held a range of senior positions in marketing, business operations, and product development. Prior to his appointment, he served as Head of Marketing at Icelandia and earlier held key roles with Icelandic Mountain Guides and Iceland Rovers. His professional background also includes many years of field experience as a hiking and glacier guide, providing him with deep insight into Iceland's nature-based tourism offerings.

In addition to his industry experience, Arnar Már has a distinguished academic profile. He holds a DESS degree in International Marketing and

Tourism Studies from Université de Savoie. He has served as Assistant Professor and Director of Tourism Studies at the University of Akureyri, lectured in tourism studies at the University of Iceland, and was the inaugural Director of the Icelandic Tourism Research Centre during its formative years.

In his current capacity as Director General, Arnar Már's priorities include advancing sustainable tourism development, strengthening research and analytical capacities within the sector, and ensuring that tourism growth remains consistent with Iceland's environmental, cultural, and social carrying capacities.

Keynote presentation: Tourism in a Changing World: From Growth to Stewardship

Tourism is being reshaped by global change, from geopolitical uncertainty and climate pressures to technological and societal transformation. Yet it remains a powerful force for economic development, cultural exchange, and human connection.

Drawing on Iceland's tourism journey over recent decades, this keynote explores how tourism can become an active agent for good in a rapidly changing world. Iceland's experience highlights both the opportunities and challenges of tourism growth and underscores the importance of evidence-based decision-making, community engagement, resilience, sustainability, and stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

The keynote argues that the future success of tourism will be measured not only by visitor numbers or economic performance, but by its ability to create value for residents, strengthen communities, protect destinations, and contribute positively to society. By reflecting on Iceland's experience and emerging global trends, it will examine how tourism can help shape a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive future.



Henna Konu is a Professor in tourism business at the University of Eastern Finland, Business School. Her research background combines tourism management, consumer behaviour, and experience design with a special interest in nature-based and wellbeing tourism. Her work addresses core topics such as transformative tourism experiences, designing experiential services, sustainable business models, and the role of tourism sector in maintaining its operational environment.

Her current research explores nature connection as a driver of wellbeing, the role of tourism firms in safeguarding ecosystem services and biodiversity, and future directions for tourism and wellbeing. She is actively involved in international and national tourism research and

development projects such as [Regenerative Nature Tourism](#) (REGGAE), which aims to develop tourism products that foster regenerative tourism and promote a regenerative mindset among entrepreneurs and customers, and [Visitor monitoring and management in protected and recreational areas: new challenges, novel solutions for the Anthropocene](#) (VIMAS), where she leads a work package focusing on the economic and social benefits of improved visitor monitoring and management.

Keynote presentation: Can tourism give more than it takes? Regenerating places, empowering entrepreneurs, renewing experiences

Tourism operates today in a world shaped by ecological pressures, social expectations, and rapid change. In this context, the question is no longer only how to reduce harm, but how tourism can actively contribute to the wellbeing of places, people, and nature. This keynote explores regenerative tourism as a place-based and systemic approach, where thriving destinations form the foundation for entrepreneurial activity and meaningful visitor experiences. Drawing on research in nature-based and wellbeing tourism, the talk considers how a regenerative mindset can guide tourism development and what it would mean, in practice, for the field to give more than it takes.

Conference Theme

Tourism in a Changing World: An Active Agent for Good?

Tourism is a multifaceted phenomenon which increasingly shapes our communities and environments. Yet it operates in a world in constant flux which calls for actions and sound understanding of the tourism landscape and its role in a changing world. As the world grapples with climate change, geopolitical shifts, digital disruption, and growing demands for social justice, tourism must evolve responsibly.

The 34th *Nordic Symposium on Tourism and Hospitality Research* invites researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from various disciplines and backgrounds, as well as community voices to explore how tourism can serve as a driver of positive transformation. How can the field contribute to a more equitable, sustainable, and regenerative future? We welcome critical perspectives, innovative practices, and grounded solutions that engage with tourism's responsibilities in an era of profound global change.

Topics include but are not limited to:

- How can tourism mitigate climate change rather than contribute to it?
- Can tourism support geopolitical stability, or is it inherently vulnerable?
- How can wellbeing for staff, tourists, residents, and nature be measured, managed and integrated into tourism policy and development?
- What role can AI play in making tourism more inclusive?
- How can destinations be developed in ways that benefit all stakeholders equitably without compromising the environment?
- How can diversity, equity and inclusion be embedded into tourism development?
- What makes a tourism experience regenerative for communities, environment and visitors?
- What opportunities and challenges arise when considering tourism degrowth?

Alongside traditional paper presentations, we encourage innovative and creative contributions designed to provoke thought and inspire dialogue. If you have ideas for formats beyond the traditional paper presentation, such as outdoor sessions, workshops, or other creative setups, please get in touch with the conference organisers.

Join us in reimagining tourism as an active agent for good.



34th Nordic Symposium on Tourism and Hospitality Research



RANNSÓKNAMIÐSTÖÐ
FERÐAMÁLA

ICELANDIC TOURISM
RESEARCH CENTRE

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Session 1: Resilience for whom? Tourism, vulnerability, and adaptation in Nordic and global settings

Organisers: Siamak Seyfi and Jarkko Saarinen

Affiliation: University of Oulu

Description

Contemporary human–environment systems across both the Nordic region and the wider world face accelerating and unequal pressures. The Anthropocene, understood as a phase in which human actions have planetary consequences, shapes environments and societies in ways that remain difficult to predict with confidence. These pressures are clearly visible in Nordic settings where Arctic warming transforms ecosystems, mobility patterns, and long-standing livelihood practices. Similar processes are evident in regions affected by extended fire seasons, prolonged drought, rising seas, and political instability. Tourism operates within these global and Nordic changes and moves through circuits of extraction, mobility, and disturbance that define this period. As visitor flows extend into fragile Nordic landscapes and crisis-prone regions worldwide, questions arise about how communities respond and whose resilience is emphasized in policy narratives. This situation has encouraged growing reliance on resilience thinking in tourism research, planning, and governance. Resilience is often associated with the ability of individuals and communities to absorb shocks, reorganize, and continue functioning. Yet this framing raises important questions. What kinds of disruption are communities expected to accept? Who defines resilience and for what purposes? How are responsibility and risk allocated across institutions, tourism industries, and local residents? Which political and economic decisions shape exposure and protection? Against this background, this session examines how tourism and community resilience are shaped and questioned across Nordic and global settings under Anthropocene conditions. The aim is to challenge assumptions that present tourism as an automatic route to recovery and to examine cases where resilience is framed as a community obligation rather than a shared institutional responsibility. Contributions may ask whose futures are prioritized in tourism development, which groups are expected to adjust to ongoing pressure, and what forms of social and ecological care are possible when tourism growth takes place alongside climate stress, political instability, and economic uncertainty.

This session welcomes both conceptual and empirical contributions. Studies using qualitative, participatory, or collaborative methods are particularly encouraged. The goal is to support grounded discussion on whether current tourism pathways contribute to fair and ecologically viable futures, or whether they reinforce existing social and environmental strain.

Title: Resilience Thinking in Nordic Tourism: Critical Connections with Growth and Sustainability

Author: Jarkko Saarinen, University of Oulu

Resilience has become an important approach in understanding, analyzing and managing change in Nordic tourism. It is also seen as a tool how to transform the industry towards sustainability (Cheer & Lew, 2017). However, the relationship between resilience and sustainability is highly contested in literature and it is not clear how resilience thinking can contribute to sustainable development (see Lew & Cheer, 2018; Saarinen and Gill, 2019). In general, resilience refers to the capacity of a unit or a system to prepare for, respond to, and recover from adverse events and shocks, while maintaining their capacity to function and develop (Folke, 2016). In this respect, it is often seen as a condition but not sufficient for sustainability (Derissés et al., 2011). Furthermore, in tourism development contexts, the constantly transforming nature of tourism and tourism destinations challenges the idea and process of recovery back to a pre-shock status or development path. On one hand, from an evolutionary perspective, resilience thinking could be seen as a multiscalar process involving a transformation or a transition towards a more sustainable basis of tourism development. On the other hand, resilience building may serve the industry's growth needs. This paper discusses critically the notion of resilience in tourism and its' operational scales and connections with growth and sustainable development in tourism. in the Arctic contexts.

Title: Second-home Dwellers' Perception of Tourist Flows to Stockholm Archipelago Islands: A Research Idea

Authors: Saeid Abbasian, Södertörn University, and Gustaf Onn

Recent research on overtourism in rural areas worldwide has also included islands and archipelago environments in Northern Europe (e.g., Abbasian & Onn, 2025; Tverijonaite & Sæpórsdóttir, 2024).

This research aims to study the perception of second-home dwellers in Stockholm Archipelago concerning the tourist flows there. Second-home dwellers, as important stakeholders, have not been visible in earlier investigations. They can be considered a part of the problem; they visit the islands mostly during the peak season and through inviting their relatives and friends to the island contribute to more overtourism. Their attitude to the issue is therefore of relevance to the research community and the islands themselves.

Based on this research idea, the researcher did a pilot study consisting of two participant observations during the peak seasons 2024 and 2025 and an interview investigation with 10 second-home dwellers, both on Utö island. In the suggested project, the researchers aim at including between 20-30 second-home dwellers from other islands in the archipelago and get deeper insights into the issue.

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Title: Coolcation as an Emerging Discourse in European Summer Tourism: A Conceptualisation and Analytical Perspective

Author: Jana Brehmer, Mid Sweden University & Dalarna University

Coolcation has recently emerged across tourism stakeholders' marketing, lifestyle journalism, and non-tourism outlets as a term associated with travelling to cooler regions instead of the traditional *sun, sand and sea* destinations in Europe that are facing increasingly heat extremes (e.g. SAS, 2025; Strawberry Hotels, 2025; Freeman, 2025 for Lonely Planet; Welt, 2025; Visit Sweden, 2026). Despite its widespread, the term and concept remain underexplored in academia. This paper presents a conceptualisation of how the term *coolcation* is being used, what kinds of discursive elements it relies on, and which broader assumptions about climate and European summer tourism are embedded within it. Reviewing how different stakeholders of the tourism system (Leiper, 1979) use and engage with the term *coolcation* the paper asks: *Who employs the term, in which contexts, and for what purposes? How is climate (especially heat versus coolness) discussed in shaping summer travel choices, and how do these narratives suggest which European regions may appear more desirable than others? What imaginaries of Northern and Southern Europe are produced or reinforced through this narrative?*

Drawing on an initial qualitative discourse analysis, the paper critically reflects how *coolcation* as a developing discourse (1) claims a travel trend before it is statistically proven, (2) shapes expectations of climate and weather comfort in Northern regions which however, same as Southern Europe, face weather extremes (Wilcke et al., 2020), (3) legitimates growth via a climate change adaptation behaviour while further contributing to the climate crisis (Font & Hindley, 2017), (4) reinforces the Northern European power system (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022; Rastegar et al., 2023) by promotion Southern destination disposability and (5) neglects mobility inequalities (Sheller, 2018). By framing *coolcation* as multi-layered socio-political discourse the paper aims to open a research discussion for critically examining climate-related tourism discourses, their implications for European tourism and their meaning beyond the tourism sector.

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Title: Temporary Employment and Financial Performance: A Global Comparative Study of the Hospitality Industry

Author: Dengjun Zhang, University of Stavanger

This study examines the relationship between temporary employment and financial performance in the global hotel industry, using a large dataset of 6,010 hotels across 90 countries from the World Bank Enterprise Surveys. Temporary employment is measured as the proportion of full-time equivalent (FTE) temporary workers relative to total employment. Financial performance is captured through profit margin and sales growth over a three-year period. The results reveal that the impact of temporary employment varies significantly across country groups. While no overall effect is observed in baseline models, the modified models show that higher reliance on temporary workers is associated with improved profit margin in some contexts, particularly in high-income settings. Conversely, in low- and lower-middle-income countries, temporary employment tends to negatively affect both profit margin and sales growth. These findings highlight the importance of institutional and economic environments in shaping labor strategies and their outcomes. Overall, the study contributes to the literature by providing global evidence on the heterogeneous effects of temporary employment in the hospitality sector, offering important implications for managers and policymakers seeking to balance labor flexibility with financial performance.

Session 2: Reworking Inclusion in Place Branding: Power, Ethics, and Transformation

Organisers: Jörgen Eksell, Maria Månsson, Emma Björner, and Eva Maria Jernsand

Affiliation: Lund University, Gothenburg University

Description

Tourism and place branding have long been criticised for their exclusionary tendencies, privileging dominant actors, simplified narratives, and human-centred imaginaries. These dynamics are produced not only through governance and planning practices, but also through communication, including branding narratives, visual representations, storytelling, media discourses, and digital platforms. In response, research on inclusive place branding has emerged as an ethically grounded field concerned with representation, participation, co-creation, and the distribution of benefits. Recent work conceptualises inclusion not as a fixed outcome but as a relational, communicative, and political process, shaped by power, positionality, and responsibility, with implications for more equitable futures.

This session invites transformative contributions that move inclusive place branding beyond managerial or instrumental framings and critically interrogate how inclusion and exclusion are communicated, negotiated, contested, and materialised through branding practices. We particularly welcome work that understands inclusion as an ethical principle and examines who (and what) is included, how inclusion is enacted through communicative practices, and which voices, bodies, knowledges, and relations are marginalised, silenced, or rendered invisible. Aligning with broader critical, communicative, and posthuman turns in tourism and place studies, the session explicitly encourages critical, decolonial, feminist, posthuman, and multispecies approaches. We seek papers that explore how places are branded, narrated, lived in, and governed through entanglements of discourse, materiality, and more-than-human relations, including non-human animals, ecosystems, technologies, and infrastructures. Such perspectives open new questions about justice, care, vulnerability, agency, and responsibility in place branding and place communication.

Overall, the session aims to create a space for theoretical, methodological, and empirical work that treats inclusive place branding as a communicative site for transforming places, identities, imaginaries, governance arrangements, and more-than-human relations, rather than as a purely normative or aspirational goal.

We welcome conceptual, empirical, methodological, and experimental contributions, including critical reflections, speculative or provocative pieces, and work-in-progress. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches are particularly encouraged.

Title: Inclusive Place Branding as Contested Practice: Insights from Hammarkullen

Authors: Emma Björner, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg, and Eva Maria Jernsand

Inclusive place branding is often framed as a response to exclusionary representations of place. However, much of this work remains focused on strategic intentions rather than on how inclusion is actually negotiated in practice. This paper examines inclusive place branding as a contested and uneven process shaped by local power relations, everyday practices, and competing place narratives.

The paper draws on an exploratory case study of Hammarkullen, a neighbourhood in Gothenburg, Sweden, characterised by strong community engagement and a rich cultural life. Focusing on the Hammarkullen Carnival and related local initiatives, the study builds on interviews with key actors and observations during events. It explores how residents, organisers, and local associations contribute to shaping how the area is presented, experienced, and made visible.

The analysis shows that place branding in this context is not governed by a single narrative, but emerges through multiple, sometimes conflicting, practices such as guiding, food cultures, music, and storytelling. While these practices enable alternative representations of place, they also involve processes of selection, translation, and simplification, where some voices, histories, and expressions are amplified while others remain marginalised or difficult to communicate within dominant frameworks.

The paper argues that inclusive place branding should be understood not as a goal or outcome, but as an ongoing, contested process. By linking empirical insights to critical perspectives on place, representation, and regeneration (Bellato & Pollock, 2023; Duxbury et al., 2025), the study highlights the tensions and limits of inclusion in practice.

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Title: More-Than-Human Inclusion: Rethinking Place Branding Governance

Authors: Jörgen Eksell, Lund University, Maria Månsson, and Marlene Wiggill

This paper advances a posthuman perspective on place branding by reconceptualising branding as a distributed governance practice that extends beyond human stakeholders. While the governance turn in place branding has foregrounded coordination among institutional and social actors, it remains largely anthropocentric, treating nonhuman entities as passive resources rather than participants in territorial processes.

Drawing on posthuman theory, particularly Rosi Braidotti's relational ontology, the study explores how place branding reorganises relations among humans, nonhumans, and material environments. Through an exploratory case study of Visit Romagna's dog-friendly positioning, the analysis examines how symbolic recognition of dogs translates into spatial planning, infrastructural adaptation, service standards, and regulatory practices.

The findings show that branding operates as more-than-representational governance: it not only communicates identity but also actively shapes access, behaviour, and coexistence across species. Branding alleviates multispecies relations by redistributing responsibilities through proxy governance, in which human actors act on behalf of nonhuman interests within planning and management systems.

The paper contributes to place branding research by expanding its ontological scope and reframing governance as relational responsibility embedded in more-than-human assemblages. Practically, it highlights the need for policymakers and destination managers to align branding narratives with spatial design and regulatory frameworks, fostering inclusive and ethically attuned territorial development that integrates multispecies considerations.

Title: Locals Inclusion for Destination Development – New Paradigm New Model

Author: Peter Björk, Hanken School of Economics

Traditional destination development has long prioritized growth and visitor volume, often at the expense of local quality of life although the concept of co-creation has been brought into the discussion. This research explores a paradigm shift where the inclusion of local residents is viewed not as a byproduct, but as the very foundation of sustainable tourism. By integrating community voices, local entrepreneurship, and cultural integrity into the planning process, destinations can become more welcoming and the resources of the locals for tourism development released. The aim of this research is to develop a model for how to elevate locals' interest and engagement in tourism destination development, as there is scant of research on how community-based tourism is to be practiced. The voices of the locals living in villages in the Kvarken World-Heritage area, Finland were collected by the means of a survey and interviews. The findings give reason to believe that the communities can host more tourists on condition the development is powered by the locals to the extent that a shift in paradigm is called for. Community development in support of tourism development. Furthermore, mechanisms for how to transform locals' interests in support of destination development are still lacking, calling for an operational model. The Engaging and empowering model developed in this research has four integrated dimensions, Listen and learn, Collaborate and plan, Support and train, Implement and promote, and two fundamentals, Build trust and inclusion, and Create pride and ownership.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism development, Local residents, Part-time marketers, Engagement, World Heritage site

Title: Rewriting the Arctic Through Neurodiverse Perception: Toward Inclusive Sensory Place Branding

Author: Hazel Gant, University of Portsmouth

Place branding in the Arctic has traditionally centred on the traditional visual iconography of ice, wilderness, and the Northern Lights yet this narrow framing overlooks the diverse ways people perceive, process, and connect with place. This paper proposes a reimagining of Arctic place branding through the lens of neurodiversity, arguing that sensory-inclusive “sensespaces” can create more meaningful and accessible brand identities for northern regions. Building upon emerging research in sensory geography and experiential branding, the study explores how Arctic destinations already offer rich multisensory cues, such as acoustic stillness, textural snow variation, thermal contrast, olfactory markers of sea ice and tundra, that could be intentionally integrated into new place narratives.

By conceptualising the Arctic as a sensory brand rather than a visual spectacle, the paper highlights opportunities to design branding strategies that resonate with neurodiverse communities, especially those with autism and ADHD. These strategies include co-creating sensory maps with neurodivergent residents and travellers, and reframing Arctic identity around embodied experience rather than aesthetic consumption. The paper also addresses ethical considerations, emphasising the need to avoid sensory overload, tokenism, and extractive branding practices.

In summary, this work positions neurodiversity-informed sensespaces as a pathway to more inclusive, authentic, and sustainable Arctic place branding whilst inviting practitioners and researchers to rethink how sensory experience shapes belonging and to imagine Arctic futures that embrace a wider spectrum of perceptual worlds.

Session 3: Tourism Innovation for Regenerative Futures

Organisers: Olga Høegh-Guldberg, Dorthe Eide, and Lars Fuglsang

Affiliation: Nord University, Roskilde University

Description

Tourism is increasingly expected to contribute positively to societal and environmental well-being. The capacity of tourism to act as “an active agent for good” depends not only on innovative ideas, but on the enabling conditions that allow innovation to thrive across organizations, communities, and destinations. This session explores such enabling conditions, drawing on insights from the forthcoming *Handbook of Research on Innovation in Tourism Industries*, which examines emerging approaches to innovation across several domains, including open and collaborative innovation, experience-based innovation, sustainable and regenerative innovation, and innovation driven by digitalization and new technologies.

The book highlights the growing need for innovation that responds to wicked problems, climate-related challenges, shifting visitor needs, cross-sector tensions, and transformations at organizational, destination, and societal levels. Against this backdrop, the session invites contributions that address enablers of tourism innovation such as relational and network conditions, resource configurations, competencies and capabilities, governance and policy frameworks, contextual drivers, and broader systemic factors.

We particularly welcome submissions on collaborative or network-driven innovation, regenerative destination practices, digital enablers of new business models and experiences, and the governance structures that shape innovation capacity. The session aims to foster knowledge exchange, stimulate interdisciplinary dialogue, and offer insights relevant to advancing regenerative and transformative futures in tourism.

Title: Comparing Innovation Capabilities in Mountain Destinations: An Analysis of Management Systems' Properties

Authors: Stine Lien, University of Inland Norway, and Kelvin Owusu

This study investigates how destination management systems shape innovation capabilities in mountain tourism destinations in south-eastern Norway. Drawing on a qualitative, multisite comparative design and cross-case analysis, the paper examines four purposively selected destinations to capture variation in governance, ownership, and organisational configuration within a regional context. The literature review synthesises six analytically useful management-system properties—coordination, ownership and governance, organisational culture, knowledge and learning, leadership, and networks—and frames innovation capabilities as the capacity of resource bundles to perform problem-solving, value-creating activities in context-dependent settings. Empirical findings show that corporately dominated, centrally coordinated systems can mobilise investment and rapid knowledge transfer, but risk narrow seasonal portfolios; fragmented, community-based constellations foster local embeddedness yet struggle to mobilise collective innovation; and hybrid systems occupy intermediate positions. Leadership emerged as a key micro-foundation: personal attachment, long tenure, and deliberate experience-building by destination leaders enhance learning, reduce transaction costs, and enable cross-actor coordination. The study refines theoretical understanding of destination innovation by linking specific management-system properties to observable capability outcomes and by highlighting contextual contingencies that moderate these relationships. Policy and managerial implications include designing governance arrangements that balance coordination with local entrepreneurship, investing in leader development and knowledge infrastructures, and promoting bridging ties to external knowledge sources to diversify year-round offerings and strengthen long-term competitiveness.

Title: Recreation as a Catalyst for Sustainable Tourism Innovation: Insights from the Recreation Cluster in Innlandet, Norway

Authors: Anne Jørgensen Nordli, University of Inland Norway, Monica Breiby, and Flemming Sørensen

This chapter's aim is to examine how the concept of recreation can serve as a transformative framework for fostering sustainable innovation in the tourism industry. While conventional tourism often focuses on consumerism and hedonistic experiences, recreation emphasizes healing, health, wellbeing, immersion and quality of experiences. Recreation invites slower, more intentional interactions with destinations, where visitors and locals alike are participants in a shared ecosystem rather than mere consumers.

By focusing on recreation in tourism innovation, planners and stakeholders are required to think beyond short-term economic gains to address both visitors' and local residents' needs. This includes protecting natural resources that holds value not only for visitors but also for local communities who depend on these environments for their own recreational activities. Recreation, therefore, fosters deeper connections between people, places, and purpose, enabling a more sustainable and inclusive approach to tourism innovation.

The chapter uses the Recreation Cluster (Rekreasjonsklynga) in Innlandet, Norway, as a case study to explore how recreation has been actively implemented as a central concept for driving sustainable innovation through collaboration in the cluster. The cluster brings together diverse stakeholders—including accommodation providers, experience operators, cabin developers, municipalities, and financial organizations—to innovate sustainable recreational offerings. Through its focus on recreation, the cluster has fostered cross-sectoral partnerships that transcend traditional silos, encouraging innovation of recreation offerings that take care of nature, the environment, and the local community.

The analysis highlights the cluster's organizational structure, strategies, and key initiatives, with a focus on the opportunities and challenges of sustainable innovation. It also discusses how recreation-driven co-creation requires a design shift: from designing products for consumption to designing for purpose, such as sustainability and shared value creation. Findings from this study demonstrate how recreation can catalyze sustainable transformations in tourism by aligning stakeholder interests and integrating local communities into tourism planning. The chapter argues that placing recreation at the heart of innovation processes not only enhances visitor experiences and gives the destination competitive advantages. It also enhances local community resilience by creating regenerative, inclusive, place-sensitive and community-driven tourism models that share sustainable value and reinvest profits locally.

Keywords: Recreation, co-creation, sustainable tourism innovation, cross-sectoral partnerships, and local community resilience

Title: Competence Gaps in Tourism and Hospitality: A Structured Literature Review for Navigating Future Skills Development

Authors: Ove Oklevik, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Timo Halttunen, Christian Dragin-Jensen, Carlos Ferreira, Susanna Saari, and Grzegorz Kwiatkowski

The tourism and hospitality industry is undergoing a profound transformation driven by sustainability challenges, technological change and evolving stakeholder expectations. These developments increase the need for competencies that enable organisations to innovate and support more sustainable and regenerative forms of tourism development. However, research addressing competence development in tourism remains fragmented, often focusing on specific skill areas in isolation. This study, therefore, provides a structured overview of competence gaps discussed in tourism and hospitality research.

The study applies a structured literature review methodology to analyse research on competence development in tourism and hospitality. Using the Web of Science database, publications were identified through a multi-stage search process focusing on leading tourism journals. The final dataset includes key contributions addressing competence and skill gaps in the sector.

The analysis identifies five core competence domains discussed in the literature: (1) green transition competencies, (2) transferable competencies and adaptability, (3) artificial intelligence (AI) and digital competencies, (4) intercultural competencies, and (5) leadership competencies. The findings suggest that competence gaps arise not only from shortages of specific skills among employees but also from broader organisational capability challenges. In many cases, relevant competencies exist but remain underutilised due to organisational structures, leadership practices, or limited opportunities for learning and knowledge integration.

The study contributes to tourism research by synthesising fragmented research streams and proposing a systemic perspective on competence development. The findings highlight that sustainable and regenerative innovation in tourism depends on integrating multiple competence domains rather than developing isolated skills. Addressing competence gaps, therefore, requires coordinated competence development, supportive leadership and organisational structures that enable learning, collaboration and innovation across the tourism sector.

Title: Digital Hospitality and Socio-Technological Practices: Enabling and Challenging Regenerative Tourism Futures

Author: Petra Paloniemi, Lapland University of Applied Sciences

This research examines how digitalisation acts as a driver of innovation and reshapes hospitality practices in tourism, with particular attention to its implications for regenerative futures. As tourism becomes increasingly mediated through digital platforms, hospitality encounters extend beyond physical settings into socio-technological environments where hosts, guests, locals, and technologies co-create experiences. Addressing a gap in tourism research that has largely prioritised technologies and firms, the study focuses on innovations related to digitally mediated hospitality practices and their implications for value creation, participation, and governance in destinations.

Drawing on practice theory, innovation is conceptualised as emerging from socio-technological practices formed through interactions among humans, digital platforms, and place-based contexts. An in-depth qualitative case study of Rovaniemi in Finnish Lapland explores how platform-based models and innovations, such as Airbnb and virtual experience platforms, reshape hospitality encounters, redistribute roles among hosts, guests, locals, and technologies, and extend tourism beyond traditional institutional structures. Empirical materials include interviews, focus groups, platform correspondence, and written reflections.

The research highlights digital platforms as both enablers and disruptors of innovation, shaping new business models, experiences, and networked collaborations. At the same time, it underscores the need for adaptive governance and context-sensitive policies to align these concepts with regenerative destination development. The research contributes to tourism and marketing debates by foregrounding digital innovations and socio-technological practices as central to regenerative futures. The study is supported by the EU-funded project: New Horizons in Luxury Service Innovation (ERDF).

Keywords: tourism, digital platforms, socio-technological practices, innovation, regenerative tourism futures

Title: Innovating Sustainable Food Experiences through Retrovation in Tourism

Authors: Gunhild Wedum, University of Inland Norway, and Jonas Åstrøm

Retrovation is defined as innovation rooted in tradition, involving various combinations of material and immaterial resources, as well as new and old elements. This research offers an empirically grounded answer to the question: What characterizes retrovation of food experiences in tourism? The study contributes to innovation by developing an analytical framework that improves understanding of value propositions and their components and subcomponents. It also provides a theoretical contribution to innovation by exploring how forgotten or old resources can be used effectively. It is argued that integrating service innovation theory with retro-marketing can enhance the theoretical understanding of retrovation.

The empirical foundation of this chapter is based on extensive data, including interviews with various actors in the local food industry and a case study of a tourism company focusing on sustainable food experiences.

An analytical framework has been developed to increase knowledge about the relationship between different types of resources in the innovation of value propositions. Six components of new or improved value propositions that characterize retrovation of local food have been identified: 1) The local food and the experience of it, 2) The brand and visual identity, 3) The story and storytelling, 4) Place identity, 5) Production, and 6) Distribution.

This research highlights resources that have been largely overlooked in innovation contexts: craftsmanship, historical knowledge, and traditional production techniques. Such insights can be valuable for individual actors as well as larger tourism stakeholders in the development of sustainable food experiences in tourism.

Keywords: Retrovation, service innovation, local food, value proposition, tourism

Title: Innovating with Care: Sustainability, Resilience, and Values in Philippine Diving Tourism

Author: Hindertje Hoarau-Heemstra, Nord University

Tourism is increasingly expected to contribute to societal and environmental well-being, yet the conditions that enable such innovation in practice remain underexplored, particularly in small-scale and peripheral contexts. This paper examines how a small-scale diving operator in the Philippines acts as an agent for good by innovating at the intersection of sustainability, resilience, and values. Rather than treating innovation as a technological or market-led activity, the study asks: *how do small tourism operators innovate through everyday practices while balancing ecological care, community relations, and business viability?*

Conceptually, the paper draws on practice theory, sustainability transitions, and resilience thinking to understand innovation as a relational and socio-ecological process shaped by values, competencies, and contextual conditions. Empirically, the study is based on qualitative fieldwork with a dive operator managing two resorts in coastal communities. The data include semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and netnographic analysis of online tourist reviews.

The findings show that innovation is enabled through a configuration of relational and contextual factors, including close ties with local communities, the mobilization of local ecological knowledge and marine science, and the integration of cultural narratives into diving experiences. Sustainability is enacted both as a set of regenerative practices—such as reef protection, waste reduction, and community collaboration—and as an experience-based innovation that communicates care and responsibility to visitors. Resilience is expressed through adaptive responses to climate-related disruptions, extreme weather events, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Across these practices, values of stewardship and custodianship function as key enabling conditions, shaping how innovation unfolds and how the operator positions itself within broader social-ecological systems.

The paper contributes to debates on tourism innovation by highlighting how values, relationships, and place-based resources enable regenerative and transformative practices in small tourism organizations. It speaks directly to the session's focus on enabling conditions for innovation and offers insights relevant to advancing sustainable and regenerative futures in tourism.

Title: The Future of Luxury Hospitality: Mapping Regenerative Pathways in Finland and New Zealand

Authors: Tracy Harkison, Auckland University of Technology (AUT), and Riina Iloranta, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

As the global tourism sector transitions from a ‘do no harm’ sustainability baseline toward a net-positive regenerative paradigm, the luxury hospitality segment finds itself at a critical juncture. Traditionally associated with high-resource consumption, luxury providers are increasingly reimagining high-end travel as a vehicle for ecological and social restoration. This study presents the initial phase of a two-phase exploratory research project investigating - how cultural attitudes, tourism policies, and legislative frameworks influence the adoption and operationalization of regenerative practices within the luxury hospitality sector in Finland and New Zealand?

Using a qualitative multiple-case study approach, the research analyses four distinct luxury operations: Octola and Hawkhill in Finland, and Kohutapu Lodge and Mahu Whenua in New Zealand. Preliminary findings reveal that while both nations pursue net-positive outcomes, their pathways to innovation are deeply place-based. New Zealand’s approach is ontologically driven by *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world view), where regeneration is an expression of *Kaitiakitanga* (guardianship) and *Whanaungatanga* (relationships), turning the guest into an active participant in community and ecosystem recovery. Conversely, Finland’s pathway is characterised by Nordic pragmatism and technological stewardship, utilizing systemic efficiency, carbon-negative construction, and sustainable aviation to engineer restoration into the physical product. In this study, innovation is conceptualised as place-based regenerative innovation, rather than as novelty, technology adoption, or market differentiation. Innovation is understood as a contextually embedded process through which luxury hospitality providers reconfigure practices, meanings, and material systems to deliver net-positive ecological and social outcomes.

The paper contributes to innovation research by challenging universalist and scalability-driven models of innovation, which dominate much of innovation and management scholarship. Rather than treating innovation as a transferable set of best practices, the study demonstrates that regenerative innovation is locally excavated—emerging from historically rooted cultural worldviews, governance structures, and human–nature relationships. By comparing Finland and New Zealand, the study shows that: similar regenerative ambitions lead to fundamentally different innovation pathways, and innovation outcomes cannot be separated from their ontological and institutional conditions.

Title: Regenerative Experience Design in Tourism

Authors: Olga Høegh-Guldberg, Nord University, Dorthe Eide, and Lars Fuglsang

Rural communities increasingly face challenges related to attractiveness, vitality, and long-term development. In response, regenerative approaches have emerged as a promising alternative to conventional sustainability perspectives by emphasizing place flourishing, community wellbeing, and positive systemic change. Despite growing interest in regenerative tourism, limited attention has been paid to how regenerative principles can be translated into tourism innovation and regenerative experience design.

This conference paper explores the concept of regenerative experience design and its relationship with tourism innovation. Drawing on insights from a review of regenerative tourism, innovation, and experience design literature, combined with empirical illustrations from two tourism-related cases, the paper identifies key principles and practices associated with regenerative approaches. The cases include a regenerative vegan farm and an outdoor cultural theatre, both of which seek to create meaningful experiences while contributing to broader community and place-based outcomes.

The paper argues that regenerative experience design extends beyond visitor satisfaction and environmental impact reduction. Instead, it seeks to facilitate learning, value creation, and positive transformation among visitors, local stakeholders, and host communities. Furthermore, the analysis highlights how regenerative approaches differ from both market-oriented and conventional sustainability-oriented experience design and discusses how regenerative principles may inspire new forms of tourism innovation. The paper concludes by discussing implications for tourism destinations and community development and outlining directions for future research.

Title: From Ambiguous Ideals to Situated Practice: Innovating for Regenerative Tourism

Authors: Julie Bønnelycke, UCL University College, Lars Pynt Andersen, UCL University College, and Julius Stephan, Duale Hochschule Schleswig-Holstein

Tourism is increasingly called upon to contribute to socio-ecological well-being, yet the enabling conditions that allow innovative, transformative practices to take root remain poorly understood. Drawing on insights from the cross-border Nurturing Nature project in Denmark and Germany, this paper examines how regenerative tourism innovation emerges through the interplay of relational, organizational, and systemic conditions. Regenerative tourism is frequently promoted as a radical alternative to sustainability, but its conceptual vagueness presents challenges for practitioners seeking to enact it in concrete destinations. Building on care-based, multispecies, and situated theoretical approaches, we conceptualize regeneration as an iterative practice of nurturing relationships within living systems, requiring long-term attentiveness, contextual sensitivity, and collaborative learning among diverse actors.¹

Empirically, the study is based on co-design workshops involving tourism businesses, NGOs, municipalities, and nature professionals. These workshops revealed both the possibilities and frictions that shape innovation capacity: expectations of linear tools and measurable indicators, tensions between ecological care and commercial viability, and the constraints of project-based governance. In response, we developed the Four Seasons of Nurturing Nature, a processual framework that functions as an alignment device rather than a prescriptive model, supporting stakeholders in navigating complexity, co-creating regenerative initiatives, and fostering multispecies sensitivity across innovation processes.

The paper contributes to the conference theme by highlighting the need for combining collaborative infrastructures, care-oriented practices, and context-responsive frameworks to strengthen tourism's capacity to act as an "active agent for good" within dynamic socio-ecological systems.

Session 4: City tourism destination – using a development potential in a changing world

Organisers: Göran Andersson

Affiliation: Södertörn University

Description

Urban areas are very important in our modern societies, since it is there that most of the population lives and a significant proportion of the GDP is produced. In addition, urban tourism has probably still a development potential.

It will be even more important to understand the city structure in the future. Especially concerning the borders and functions for regional centres and city centres.

New forms of destination governance are emerging, beginning with the quadruple-helix model involving various actors. These actors will also work with thematic destination questions such as transport planning and digital place marketing. An important question is how this kind of institutional governance can contribute to the common welfare of both tourists and society.

Depending on the city destination's character and the city's industry in general, different destination management organisations (DMO) can be organised. Besides, what new roles will organisations working with destination development have in securing the tourist function in a network of social and economic realities?

Regarding a new mode of urban place transformation, the concept of Smart city destination can be discussed. Especially the digital technology, such as social media and mobile phones, can transform urban planning in general and tourism in specific.

Although increased city tourism in a changing world has created new opportunities and prosperity for locals and tourists, it has also given rise to negative impacts. A series of psychosocial and ecological environmental problems can be studied when developing city tourism, such as air pollution and overtourism. It is worth considering whether city tourism development could mitigate some of these problems.

Finally, this session will examine how urban destinations can be developed in ways that benefit all stakeholders equitably without compromising the environment. However, we also welcome abstracts with related questions, such as urban event planning and destination marketing.

Title: Contested Urban Tourism Space: Heritage Struggles in Cape Town's Bo-Kaap

Author: Jayne Rogerson, University of Johannesburg

Following South Africa's post-1994 reintegration in the global economy, urban governance in Cape Town experienced a neoliberal shift prioritizing private investment, public-private partnerships, and consumption-driven development. Over the past three decades Cape Town has emerged as a leading iconic destination for international tourism, competing with other global urban tourism destination. Currently, the city manifests skyrocketing property values, deepening inequality, and exacerbated displacement pressures particularly upon inner-city spaces. The novel contribution of this paper is to analyse the impact of tourism gentrification on the inner-city heritage precinct of the Bo-Kaap in Cape Town. Bo-Kaap is a historic inner-city neighbourhood situated above the linear city grid on the slopes of Table Mountain and distinguished by its vibrant coloured houses, anachronistic cobblestone streets, and demonstrable socio-religious culture. The neighbourhood is acknowledged as Cape Town's foremost cultural heritage asset and represents a major attraction for international visitors. This analysis seeks to understand the challenges confronting heritage-rich communities in a post-colonial, developing-world context as a result of dual processes of touristification and urban redevelopment. Urban tourism space in Cape Town is increasingly contested with struggles around the conservation and management of the cultural heritage assets of Bo-Kaap. Arguably, for tourism to be an agent for good for the Bo-Kaap residents a rethinking is recommended in the current directions of heritage planning and management of the tourism sector. Current conditions can be described as chaotic, with residents experiencing many hallmarks of 'overtourism'.

Keywords: neighbourhood change; heritage; tourism gentrification; Cape Town inner-city

Title: Using Hackathons to Investigate How Visitor Attractions at the Perimeter of City Tourism Destinations Can Adapt to AI as Main Tourist Guide – A Research Idea?

Author: Gustaf Onn, Södertörn University

It has long been known that visitor attractions are the main reason for going to a city destination (Leiper 1990), and that they are an empirical relation between a tourist, a place and a guide marking (MacCannel 1976). This guide marking, for the part that is not taken from word of mouth, now usually from social media, there is anecdotal evidence of a shift going on from formerly using guidebooks, to for the past decades using search engines to now start to use generative artificial intelligence to search for information on visitor attractions. In the EU-university KreativEU a hackathon is launched in May 2026, where students shall deal with the question of how visitor attractions in a suburb to Stockholm can adapt their facilities and communication in order to get AI-visible, i.e. what measures need to be taken to be part of the tourism information picked up by AI-agents. The hackathon will have participants from eleven universities around Europe with teams of diverse student backgrounds, who are to delve into this task. Expectations are 8-11 teams competing for the award of best idea, as assessed by a jury. The results from the hackathon are then to be used as input to an investigation with visitor attractions on how they actually do adapt to AI as part of the tourism ecosystem.

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Title: Transnational Gentrifiers and Urban Transformation: The Case Study of Barcelona

Authors: Montserrat Crespi Vallbona, University of Barcelona, and Oscar Mascarilla Miró

Currently, some trendy destinations are gaining popularity among academic tourism (topuniversities.com), expats (expat.com), and digital nomads (nomadlist.com), becoming the best place to settle. The academia has analyzed the factors that determine the election of the destination to study and work –physically and/or remotely- and has also studied individuals’ characteristics that move them to go abroad to live, study, and (or) work. Although some works have addressed the impact of tourism in the city, very few studies analyze the consequences of these new migrations that have gained great momentum after the pandemic, such as academic tourism and digital nomads. The international tourist attraction of Barcelona is not new, since 1992, when the city hosted the Olympic Games, the number of tourists and accommodations has not stopped increasing. Online marketplaces such as Airbnb have revolutionized this growth and contributed to the so-called “airbnbification” process that has come into conflict with residential housing. To these international tourists, we have to add international student, expats, and digital nomads who look for a new experience in the city, which entails staying in a neighborhood and living it intensely. This ongoing research analyzes 1) the housing effects of this intense accommodation demand (short-term and mid-term rentals) in urban destinations that are touristically consolidated with high airbnbification density, 2) the changes and transformations that neighborhoods are suffering regarding commerce, social interaction, and public space caused by these new international lifestyles, and 3) the public policies to manage these flux of population. Methodologically, it is analyzed the grey literature and secondary data related to tourists, foreigner entries and their sociodemographic characteristics published by INE and those provided by Barcelona City Council and Catalan Universities. It also uses primary data collected from a survey with 150 respondents (ex-pats, acadèmic tourists and digital nomads), which has led to some preliminary results about the changes and new lifestyles in the day-to-day life of cities according to this transnacional gaze, and the challenges and concerns for the local administration management.

Keywords: academic tourism, digital nomad, ex-pats, Barcelona, touristification

Title: The Development Potential of Informal Business Tourism in the Urban Global South: Insights from Harare, Zimbabwe

Authors: Christian Rogerson, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, and Logistic Makoni

Mainstream international scholarship in urban tourism overwhelmingly concentrates on Northern city destinations. This paper interrogates urban tourism development in the resource-constrained environment of the Global South, the 'other half of urban tourism', where one of the most distinguishing characteristics is informality. Arguably, informality represents a defining feature of everyday life and existence across the African continent, most especially in its rapidly urbanising cities. Informality is a defining element also for much tourism development occurring in Africa. For sustainable development futures in sub-Saharan Africa the importance of the informal economy of tourism must not be overlooked. The analysis centres on business tourism. The most distinctive dimension of business tourism in sub-Saharan Africa relates to the economy of *informal business tourism*. As stressed by Cohen and Cohen (2015), the concept of informal business tourism builds upon the mobilities approach to tourism from 'emerging world regions'. The mobilities of only a small segment of Africa's business travellers are structured by corporate and formalised procedures similar to those in the Global North. The majority of business travel links to the mostly unregulated, flexible and improvised activities of informal actors and of informal business tourism. The novel contribution of this paper is moving beyond a Northern lens of what constitutes 'business tourism' and instead to profile the distinctive organization and characteristics of informal business tourism in African cities. Insights are provided from modern-day Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city. Research findings are anchored upon 700 research interviews undertaken of informal business tourists visiting the city.

Title: Recommend or Not? A Conative Analysis of TripAdvisor Reviews on Finnish City Destinations

Author: Peng Yang, University of Eastern Finland

This study investigates the drivers of tourist recommendation behaviors by analyzing TripAdvisor review data for two major Finnish destinations: Rovaniemi and Helsinki. While recommendation intentions are a staple of tourism research, this paper specifically focuses on detecting “non-recommendation” reviewers, those who actively discourage visitation. Grounding the analysis in the framework of rethinking conative image, this research positions non-recommendation detection as a vital supplement to traditional conative image measurement. By identifying travelers who deviate from typical “intent to return” metrics, we gain a more nuanced understanding of the behavioral components of destination image.

The analysis explores specific patterns within non-recommendation reviews, evaluating whether low ratings (Rate 1), reviewer origin (local versus international), and linguistic depth (longer sentence structures) serve as reliable predictors of negative word-of-mouth. Patterns suggest that dissatisfied reviewers often utilize more complex, descriptive language to articulate specific grievances compared to the concise praise of recommenders. By comparing these thematic patterns, the study reveals critical friction points in the tourist journey. For destination managers in Rovaniemi and Helsinki, these insights provide a strategic roadmap to mitigate negative feedback. Ultimately, understanding why tourists do or do not recommend a location allows stakeholders to refine service delivery and manage expectations, making a significant contribution to the improvement of the overall tourist experience and long-term destination loyalty.

Title: City Tourism Destination – A Development Project in the Stockholm Region

Author: Göran Andersson, Södertörn University

There is an ongoing debate in Stockholm about how urban areas should be planned in relation to future societal developments. An important starting point is that city destinations are highly attractive to visitors. (Maitland & Ritchie, 2009)

In the development project “Besökskraft” in Stockholm a new sort of destination organisation and governance is discussed at the regional level, led by “Region Stockholm”. As a companion researcher I am conducting a case study based on action research 2022 – 2026.

The research purpose is to investigate how institutional governance, Destination Management Organisations (DMO) and development initiatives can support the development of city destinations based on visitors’ reasons for travel.

The destination organisation in Stockholm use the quadruple-helix method (Popa, 2021). The Destination Management Organisation (DMO) needs to embrace and engage all public and private organisations concerned with actions that engage the industry to develop and to improve supply (Spyriadis, Fletcher & Fyall, 2013).

There are several levels of the region’s destination. Starting with several local destination organisations, which have a physical representation and working with concrete business products. There is also a regional destination organisation with a digital presence focusing on support activities for tourism.

The organisation “Region Stockholm” has identified three initial development areas: competence, infrastructure and positioning. Furthermore, tentative conclusions of the project highlight the importance of network building - using formal urban destination networks and the Regular Destination Day, which addresses key themes such as attraction. The question of sustainability has also been debated in this development project.

Keywords: Institutional governance; Destination Management Organisation; City tourism, Regional development

Session 5: Ethical and responsible tourism in a changing world: Agency, accountability and limits

Organisers: Siamak Seyfi and Michael Hall

Affiliation: University of Oulu, Massey University

Description

Tourism is increasingly framed as a potential agent for positive change in response to climate change, social inequality, geopolitical tensions, and environmental degradation. Concepts such as ethical tourism, responsible tourism, and sustainability now feature prominently in academic debates, policy agendas, and practice-oriented discussions. At the same time, critical scholarship questions the extent to which these ideas deliver meaningful change, particularly when responsibility is shifted toward individuals, travellers, or local communities without sufficient attention to power relations, governance structures, and material constraints. This session invites contributions that critically examine ethical and responsible tourism in a changing world. It asks how responsibility is defined, distributed, and negotiated across tourism systems, and how tourism actors operate as moral agents within unequal social, economic, and political contexts.

Rather than treating ethics as a matter of individual choice alone, the session encourages engagement with the structural and institutional conditions that shape ethical claims and practices.

The session welcomes conceptual and empirical papers that address questions such as: Who defines responsibility in tourism, and who gains from that definition? How do ethical tourism initiatives reproduce or challenge existing inequalities? How are local communities positioned within responsible tourism agendas? To what extent do geopolitical and economic constraints limit ethical practice? What are the structural limits of tourism as a vehicle for climate and social justice? How do digital platforms, public discourse, and governance arrangements influence ethical expectations and accountability in tourism?. Papers may also explore refusal, critique, and resistance alongside reform-oriented approaches.

We welcome contributions that connect ethical and responsible tourism to broader debates on sustainability, justice, wellbeing, political expression, and governance. Submissions may focus on tourists, destinations, communities, workers, institutions, or policy processes. Comparative and critical perspectives are encouraged, as are papers that question dominant narratives and highlight contradictions in ethical and responsible tourism practices.

Title: Relational Power in Tourism Governance

Author: Lovisa Ulrica Molin, Norwegian University of Life Sciences

This research examines how power operates in protected area tourism governance by foregrounding the relational dynamics through which visitor flows, encounters, and norms of conduct are shaped. Power is conceptualised as relational and emergent, arising through ongoing interactions among human and more-than-human actors rather than residing in formal institutions or regulatory frameworks. As such, it is shown how governance is enacted through the shaping of possible interactions between visitors and place. Empirical insights are drawn from a multi-sited ethnographic study of tourism in Norwegian protected areas. Main findings show how the Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT) occupies a pivotal position within the relational web of governance through trail marking, a nation-wide network of cabins, volunteer maintenance, and the communication of norms and expectations. These practices structure how visitors interact with landscapes by inciting, enabling, and constraining particular forms of engagement. By operationalising *friluftsliv* – a Norwegian ideal that emphasises simple, egalitarian, and environmentally responsible outdoor life – as a moral and cultural framework, the Norwegian Trekking Association contributes to promoting specific understandings of sustainability, while simultaneously facilitating increased visitation to sensitive environments. Its relational power thus perpetuates a political trajectory in which tourism growth is reconciled with environmental responsibility, despite accumulating ecological pressures. The study advances tourism research by demonstrating how cultural ideals and everyday practices function as powerful governance mechanisms beyond state institutions. While empirically situated in Norway, the research holds broader significance for protected area tourism where sustainability is pursued through soft forms of guidance, cultural narratives, and relational influence.

Title: Ethical Dimensions of AI in Digital Tourism Marketing – Insights from Finnish Lapland

Authors: Päivi Hanni-Vaara, Lapland University of Applied Sciences, José-Carlos García-Rosell, and Richa Agrawal

Recent advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) indicate that large language models (LLMs) develop internal emotional representations that are consistently activated in the specific context of selected emotion/s (Sofroniew et al., 2026). Though the process leans on mathematically activated vectors generated by nonhumans, past enquiries in this space indicate that AI models can simulate human emotions or emotional representations (Sofroniew et al., 2026), rather well. This change raises an important question about the ethics of simulated emotional interactions and encounters between humans and nonhumans (see Laine et al., 2025). As AI-powered agents and interfaces are increasingly assimilated in tourism and hospitality experiences, these systems must be designed mindfully and thoughtfully to ensure that while they enhance tourists' emotional and overall experience (Jylkäs et al., 2018), they do not give rise to ethical dilemmas and concerns.

This qualitative study explores tourism and hospitality organisations' experiences of AI emotional representations in Finnish Lapland. We intend to interview tourism and hospitality representatives, such as entrepreneurs, managers, and destination management organisations (DMOs), about their engagements and experiences with AI emotional representations. We aim to study how they observe AI emotional representation contexts and how they perceive these contexts in their daily operations and strategies. The study will help us make an objective and compelling case for the incorporation of design elements into AI interfaces and encounters to ensure the integration of AI in tourism is ethically grounded and offers safe emotional experiences.

Our study builds on past studies that examined ethical concerns in AI adoption in tourism. Earlier findings into ethical tourism have focused on ecological concerns, notably electricity consumption associated with AI technologies; authentic imagery, as being essential for maintaining credibility and the appropriate tone in destination branding; and ethical considerations in human and nonhuman interactions, emphasising that AI does not offer an effective substitution for empathy, social intelligence, and cognitive skills unique to humans.

Data will be collected in Spring 2026 through semi-structured interviews. Immediately following data collection, a thematic content analysis will be conducted to obtain preliminary findings, which will be presented at the conference. Data will be analysed to identify ethical dilemmas and concerns. These findings aim to contribute to the ongoing discourse on ethical and responsible tourism in a rapidly changing digitalised world.

The study is part of the EU-funded project "Artificial Intelligence to Support Tourism Sales and Marketing Processes".

Keywords: AI emotional representations, Ethics, Responsible tourism, Design elements, Tourism and Hospitality.

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Title: Assembling the Arctic: Technology and the Making of Arctic Imaginaries

Author: Marianna Leoni, University of Oulu

Arctic tourism is increasingly mediated, performed, and experienced through technology and digitalisation. The Arctic is no longer encountered as a remote or inaccessible region, but it emerges through a range of mediated forms and experiences that contribute to making it more visible and accessible. Therefore, technologies are changing the ways in which the Arctic, as a tourist destination, is narrated, accessed and experienced, raising questions about how responsibility and ethical representations are negotiated in tourism.

Building on the Phygital Arctic Tourism (PAT) framework, this work explores how technologically driven museum exhibitions contribute to the emergence of Arctic narratives and imaginaries, and how these are performed, engaged with and experienced by tourists. The study draws on qualitative data from museums in northern Finland and Iceland. The data includes semi-structured interviews with museum managers and field observations of exhibition spaces and visitors. Museums are considered as part of broader infrastructures of the tourist experience: in line with this understanding, the study explores how museum technologies participate in the configuration of Arctic imaginaries and how they are conveyed, encountered, perpetuated or challenged. Arctic museum exhibitions that employ technology could represent an opportunity for local stakeholders – especially underrepresented voices and communities - to change how tourism engages with local values and issues, and to counter or challenge stereotyped imaginaries. However, technologies could also strengthen those stereotypes, by promising “authentic” experiences that reflect dominant narratives in order to attract more visitors. In doing so, they can contribute to further strengthening stereotypes, reproducing existing inequalities.

Keywords: Arctic tourism; museums; digitalisation; Phygital tourism

Title: Natural Resource Management Strategies of Nature-Based Tourism Firms

Author: Pinja Leino, University of Eastern Finland, Henna Konu and Esko Sorakunnes

Nature-based tourism (NBT) firms' offerings are deeply embedded in natural environments and socioecological systems, relying on external natural resources and ecosystem services that they do not necessarily own but that are essential for service provision. These dependencies expose firms to socioecological uncertainties arising from contested resource use and interests, and environmental change. Previous studies highlight the importance of recognising such dependencies (e.g., Fossgard & Stensland, 2021), and sectoral initiatives such as *Nature Positive Tourism* emphasise tourism's reliance on nature and encourage companies to invest in nature restoration (UN Tourism et al., 2024). However, it remains unclear how NBT firms identify socioecological uncertainties and risks and how they develop strategies to address them.

This study advances understanding of natural resource management in tourism by examining how dependence on natural resources and ecosystem services shapes the strategic behaviour of NBT firms. Theoretically, the study builds on an extended Resource-Based Theory and the Natural Resource-Based View, complemented by the Natural Resource Dependence Perspective. Empirically, it draws on semi-structured interviews with 25 micro and small tourism firms operating in two UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Finland.

The findings show that firms face multiple uncertainties related to forestry and other industrial activities, climate change, declining water quality, and tourism growth. Six strategic approaches are identified: securing access to core resources; biodiversity and ecosystem services stewardship; transformative influence; eco-efficiency and sustainability; advocacy; and adaptation to environmental change. Overall, firms' strategies are pragmatic, situational, and capacity-constrained, highlighting the limits of private action in addressing broader socioecological challenges.

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Title: Tourism and Social Sustainability in a Context of Ongoing War: The Ambivalence of Local Perspectives

Authors: Johan Hultman, Department of Service Studies, Lund University, Ioana-Gabriela Denes, Syeeda Raisa Maliha, Alina Lidén, and Erika Andersson Cederholm

This presentation addresses the complex dynamics between dark tourism and social sustainability. With armed conflicts increasing globally and tourism's acknowledged potential to support social sustainability, understanding tourism during ongoing war is vital for both theory and practice. The empirical backdrop of the study is Ukraine, where tourism initiatives are emerging even in a time of war. Drawing on qualitative interviews with local residents, findings show a deeply ambivalent local stance, characterised by ongoing negotiation between perceived benefits and downsides, and between acceptance and rejection of tourism in the context of war. Rather than fully embracing or opposing such tourism, residents engage in a balancing act that acknowledges both its opportunities and challenges. Framing this analysis around the concept of sociological ambivalence offers a nuanced account of how locals navigate the complex dualities of tourism in the context of war and how such initiatives might contribute to social sustainability.

Title: Making Kin with the Hjuksån River: Rewilding Camps as Experiment in Human-River Relationality

Authors: Maxim Vlasov, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences/Umeå University, Sweden, Eva Gielen, and Jasmine Zhang

Human-river relationships are deeply troubled. The colonial-modernist reduction of rivers to controllable resources and commodities has disrupted ecosystems and displaced river-dependent communities across the world (Cohen et al., 2022). Yet there has also been a recent resurgence of Indigenous river relationalities, alongside legal, philosophical, and ethical frameworks that recognize rivers as persons and more-than-human kin (e.g., Macfarlane, 2025; Boelens et al., 2022).

This contribution examines the potential of tourism and outdoor recreation to cultivate and restore kin-based relationships between humans and rivers. It presents insights from an experiment we call ‘rewilding camps’, organized in the summer of 2026 alongside the river Hjuksån in northern Sweden and Sápmi. Hjuksån is an important tributary of the Vindelälven river and one of many waterways in the region that bear traces of the timber-floating era and industrial forestry. Following a relational and practice-based methodology (Cahoon, 2025; Rantala et al., 2024), we organized two riverside camps, one weekend-long and one week-long, where participants engaged in manual ecological restoration of trout spawning beds, riverbanks, and surrounding forest while living outdoors as a community under simple conditions. Participants abstained from phones, watches, and caffeine; learned traditional skills such as fire-making, foraging, tracking, and crafts; engaged in guided nature-connection activities; and met local elders who shared stories of the river's past.

From the unique position of a researcher-practitioner, this contribution offers insight into how the relational philosophy and ethics of kinning (Van Horn, 2021) are articulated and embodied through the design and facilitation of the camps, and how these commitments are negotiated in practice alongside conflicted ideas of wildness, comfort, spirituality, and hope. The findings further suggest that the transformative potential of the camps stems from their holistic rewilding approach, which combines ecological restoration with cultural rewilding (Bauer, 2026; Vlasov, 2025) and enables participants to develop temporary yet meaningful relationships with the river through sustained immersion in the rhythms of everyday, communal river life. At the same time, we have also found ourselves navigating the positioning of rewilding camps as a model of regenerative tourism by other actors. While this recognition signals a broader and much welcome interest in rewilding, it also raises questions about the vulnerability of such initiatives to institutional and market demands that may commodify ecological restoration and recast it as a form of environmental redemption, thereby obscuring the deeper relational and cultural transformations required for living well with rivers and the more-than-human world.

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Session 6: Place design – for responsible development

Organisers: Laila Gibson, Lotta Braunerhielm and Pernille Kristensen Andersson

Affiliation: Karlstad University

Description

In this session, we aim to exchange knowledge from research focusing on places, and how they can develop both as attractive tourism destinations and thriving local communities. Rural areas today host an increasingly diverse mix of people—tourists, hybridworkers, seasonal staff, second homeowners, digital nomads, students, visiting friends and relatives, and volunteers. As boundaries between visitors and residents blur, new opportunities and challenges emerge. Tourism is no longer solely about attracting visitors; it plays a growing role in drawing new residents, skills, entrepreneurship and innovation to rural regions. The research perspective in this session is formed around the notion of responsible development of places. In other words, a necessary transformation of places that benefits and involve both the tourism industry and other groups of local stakeholders.

We will discuss how place-based and participatory approaches can support this transformation. By working bottomup and involving multiple local stakeholders, it becomes possible to recognise and mobilise a place's material and immaterial resources and integrate them with digital and organisational innovations. When local actors contribute to defining challenges, formulating visions and co-creating solutions, the process itself can strengthen social cohesion, confidence and local ownership. Building socially sustainable communities is in the interest of both the tourism businesses as well as other local stakeholders, as these actors often are mutually dependent on each other.

The session also reflects on the role of researchers in these processes. Rather than standing outside as observers, researchers increasingly act as facilitators and methodological guides, supporting dialogue, bridging perspectives and identifying needs and possibilities. This raises important methodological and ethical considerations regarding power, responsibility and the co-production of knowledge in place development.

We invite researchers to this session to discuss for example:

- Responsible local destination and community development
- Sustainable transformation of tourism destinations
- Inclusive and collaborative research methods

Title: Destination Design of Film Tourism Location

Author: Marit Piirman, University of Tartu

The impact of films and TV series can be significant on the destination's attractiveness; however, film tourism is not a universal phenomenon that works the same way in every context. Its success depends on the characteristics of different stakeholders. Destination design will consider all stakeholders, the needs of guests and residents to co-create destination experience (Volgger et al., 2021) but also involving representatives of local government and filmmakers, therefore is a suitable concept to investigate film tourism related issues.

Järva-Jaani is a small town in the middle of Estonia where several TV-shows have been filmed. The local museums contain a wide collection of old cinema equipment. So, the local activists have an idea to develop destination called Järvawood (like Hollywood, Bollywood) that would offer different film tourism services to both TV-show makers and show-lovers. As a first step university students were involved during the Design and Development of Tourism Services course to use service design tools to develop film tourism services for Järvawood. Used tools involved study trip, observation, interviews with stakeholders and experts, persona creation, customer journey mapping, prototyping, piloting the solutions, etc. Design projects resulted in the creation of the series-related festivals, tourism routes, apps and audio guides but also a solution on how to use TV series narratives to attract people to temporarily move to rural areas with the purpose of experiencing rural life while keeping life in old farmhouses that otherwise would dilapidate and become derelict.

Title: Citizen Engagement in Sustainable Rural Mobility Transition: Insights from Geographical Transition Lab Sälenfjällen, Sweden

Author: Beatrice Waleghwa, Dalarna University

Despite being highlighted as a prerequisite for sustainability transitions, stakeholder engagement remains peripheral to research on transitions. Specifically, the question of how to engage key stakeholders, such as citizens, remains underexplored despite their apparent relevance. This paper addresses this gap by investigating how citizens can be involved in sustainable mobility transition using the case study of the newly established Geographical transition Lab Sälenfjällen, Sweden. The Lab is part of Shift Sweden's national program for developing innovative solutions for sustainable living environments. Research within the Lab focusses on the built environment and mobility sub-systems with the ambition of demonstrating how a fossil free and resource conscious transition can be achieved in a rural mountain context. This paper focuses on the mobility sub-system component. Methodologically, Public Participation Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS) constitute a central component of this study. PPGIS is employed to gather citizens place based perceptions on mobility and their aspirations for a sustainable mobility future. Previous research has highlighted the need for more innovative methods to facilitate citizen engagement in sustainability transition. Consequently, the paper concludes with a discussion on the opportunities and challenges of PPGIS for citizen engagement and sustainable mobility transitions, drawing on insights from this study, transitions literature and sustainable mobility literature.

Title: Impacts of Nature-Based Tourism in Arctic & Subarctic Islands; Faroe Islands, Finland's Archipelago Sea, Iceland, and Shetland Islands

Author: Maureen Whalen, University of the Highlands and Islands Shetland, Institute for Northern Studies

Recent growth in nature-based tourism, including cruise tourism, coupled with an awareness of its increasing impacts on Arctic and Subarctic island environments and communities highlight the need for local communities' voices and vision for tourism development in their place to be listened to, respected, and valued leading to a more sustainable and equitable approach.

My research aims to explore the complex relationships between local community groups and businesses, governmental entities, tourism providers, science entities and tourists themselves in Arctic and Subarctic Islands. With a focus on rural and coastal destinations in Faroe Islands, Iceland, Shetland Islands, and Svalbard. I'm interested in the tensions between societal and economic benefits from nature-based tourism and associated pressures on culture/infrastructure/natural resources.

How islands 'present' themselves online as places for nature-based tourism will be considered and any cross-cutting relationships identified. These cross-cutting relationships will be explored further using Participatory Action Research and Critical Utopian Action Research to engage with individuals and relevant organisations' representatives. Both methodologies prioritise the active involvement of people with lived experiences and expertise as co-researchers to identify key issues, perspectives, and envision desired future(s) reality(ies). Online surveys followed by in-person interviews/workshops/focus groups will be used to elicit a more nuanced understanding.

By listening to stakeholders and mapping these complex relationships, I hope this research will lead to a deeper understanding of the pressures, benefits, and potential futures going beyond 'extractive' tourism towards community-led sustainable/regenerative tourism.

Title: Creating a Sustainable Rural Ecosystem for Place Development

Author: Laila Gibson, Department of Geography, Media and Communication, Karlstad University

Rural areas in both Sweden and the Nordic countries are often characterised by seasonal tourism, recruitment difficulties, skill shortages, and declining populations. These challenges align with key factors identified as barriers to rural development, such as uneven distribution of economic resources, urbanisation, skills shortages, and a partial lack of viable rural areas.

Building on these identified challenges and previous research, this presentation is based on our current research project, 'Place design – the way to sustainable rural ecosystem' (PDE). The project involves interdisciplinary and applied research on tourism, geomedia, and service ecosystems, contributing to the renewal of sustainable rural ecosystems. This, in turn, supports the economic and social sustainability of vibrant rural businesses and communities. Using a place-based and participatory approach, we engage tourism businesses, manufacturing industries, and the public sector in the western and northern parts of Värmland County, Sweden.

By involving local business stakeholders, civil society, and the public sector in cross-collaboration, we introduce a new way of thinking and working to develop ecosystems—networks of actors that enable common solutions to the identified challenges. Our presentation will include results from the first year of this project, based on needs and resource inventories and interviews with local ecosystem stakeholders. This vital knowledge will inform the next phase of the project, where we collectively explore how manufacturing industries and tourism businesses can serve as resources for each other, thereby creating synergies and boosting competitiveness for local businesses and increasing the attractiveness of rural areas.

Session 7: Implementing regenerative tourism in local contexts – learnings and experiences from ‘the ground’

Organisers: Andreas Skriver Hansen and Christian Dragin-Jensen

Affiliation: Centre for Regional and Tourism Research (CRT), SEA Business Academy

Description

This session aims to share, present and discuss learnings from and experiences with implementing and applying regenerative tourism actions and activities in local contexts. The aim is a reaction to what we see as a dominating conceptualization/theorization of regenerative tourism which, so far, has characterized much of the research literature. In comparison, grounded work and experiences are much less reported, challenging a natural bridging of the conceptual and theoretical work with actual introductions and implementations of regenerative tourism in local communities. In this session, we therefore wish to take a step away from the conceptual/theoretical discussions and instead focus more on ‘hands-on’ work on and experiences (positive as well as negative) with regenerative tourism that increasingly more stakeholders at local levels are undertaking. These stakeholders include for example DMOs and various individual or group-based tourism actors, but also local citizen groups and associations, and even whole communities. Many of these local stakeholders find the concept regenerative tourism intriguing and potentially helpful, but also difficult to apply and work with in their local contexts. One reason is the notorious difficulty in understanding the at times very abstract nature of and content in regenerative tourism. Another reason is what we see as a lack of a shared knowledge base containing practical experiences, wherefrom local stakeholders can learn - both from each other and between various settings and geographies; essentially, a toolbox and best practice knowledge base. Hence, in this session, we encourage scholars as well as practitioners within the industry to share, present and discuss practical learnings and experiences from their local context. With this we hope to collect enough cases and examples across the Nordic geography and beyond to discuss a possible future Special Issue on the topic in The Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism.

Keywords: Regenerative tourism; implementation; application; practical knowledge; local contexts

Title: What Makes Tourism Regenerative? A Resident-Based Quantitative Model of Regenerative Tourism Experiences and Net-Positive Outcomes in the UAE

Author: Yuhanis Aziz, College of Business & Administration, University of Sharjah

Regenerative tourism has emerged as a compelling response to the limits of sustainability, shifting the focus from minimizing harm to actively restoring the ecological, cultural, and social systems that enable destinations thrive. Despite its growing popularity, regenerative tourism faces significant conceptual and practical challenges. Quantitative empirical evidence from resident-based remain limited. Existing research primarily focuses on visitor views, qualitative narratives, or conceptual frameworks, leaving a major gap in understanding how residents experience, evaluate, and profit from regenerative tourism practices. This disparity is particularly obvious in the Gulf region, where rapid tourism expansion combines with diverse sociocultural dynamics, ambitious governmental goals, and fragile desert ecosystems. This study addresses these concerns by developing and testing a resident-based quantitative model of regenerative tourist experiences and net positive consequences in the UAE. The study has three objectives: (1) to identify the experiential, environmental, cultural, and governance dimensions that residents associate with regenerative tourism; (2) to investigate how these dimensions influence perceived net positive outcomes for communities and ecosystems; and (3) to model the relationships between regenerative tourism experiences, community wellbeing, ecological stewardship, and future tourism support. Drawing on survey data from resident across different emirates, the study uses structural equation modelling to evaluate a context-specific framework based on living systems thinking and community-centered development. The findings are expected to contribute to theory by expanding regenerative tourism scholarship into quantitative research, advancing place-based models of socio-ecological wellbeing, and enriching community support for tourism theories with concepts such as regeneration, reciprocity, and ecological consciousness. Contextually, the study is one of the first empirical investigations into regenerative tourism in the UAE, offering policymakers and destination managers with evidence-based ideas for developing tourist policies that have net beneficial impacts on both people and the environment. By focusing on resident perspectives, this study reframes regenerative tourism as a measurable, community-based approach to transforming the UAE's tourism future.

Title: Operationalizing Regenerative Destination Development: Living Lab and Action Research in Practice

Authors: Anne Wally Ryan, Nord University, Maria Bogren, Albina Pashkevich, Jorunn Grande, and Anne Haga

The tourism industry has become increasingly dynamic and complex, shaped by the interplay of economic, technological and social drivers. This development has been accompanied by a growing shift toward more responsible and community-embedded forms of tourism development. Against this backdrop, this study explores how the Living Lab (LL) approach can serve as an effective tool for supporting a regenerative orientation in destination development, in which the social, cultural, and ecological values of local communities are placed at the core. In this context, the development of the regenerative tourism practices in our case is conceptualized as a transformative process that moves beyond sustainability by enhancing the regenerative capacity of communities and ecosystems through stewardship, co-creation, and reciprocal value creation.

Empirically grounded in a regional Norwegian context, the study applies the use of Living Lab approach with action research to enable active engagement of a range of key actors including destination management organizations, municipal public authorities, tourism entrepreneurs, representatives from voluntary organizations, and academia. The application of the action research in real-life settings helps to ignite an iterative co-creation process allowing researchers to examine the ways of regenerative principles of tourism development are translated into practice. Methodologically, this study demonstrates how the integration of Living Lab and action research constitutes a practice-embedded and transferable approach to operationalizing regenerative destination development through sustained multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Keywords: Living Lab, Regenerative, Destination Development, Norway, Action research

Title: Towards a Regenerative Future in Tourism – A Case Study from Finnish Lapland

Authors: Heidi Kaihua, Lapland University of Applied Sciences, Petra Paloniemi, and Maarit Tihinen

Finnish Lapland is an increasingly popular travel destination known for its nature, Northern Lights, and unique arctic experiences. Beyond traditional attractions, travelers are seeking more meaningful and transformative experiences. This study presents a case study in Finnish Lapland that indicates that tourism is evolving toward regenerative luxury tourism, where individual experiences are intertwined with the narratives of local communities and the region.

The concept of new luxury in tourism shifts the focus from material abundance to values such as nature, locality, and authentic encounters. Regenerative tourism extends this further by emphasizing a socio-ecological system in which tourists actively engage with nature and local communities, contributing to collective well-being. In this context, sustainability and new luxury are complementary, enabling meaningful and responsible travel experiences.

Although academic interest in regenerative luxury tourism is growing, practical examples of its implementation remain limited. This study addresses this gap by asking: *What principles and practices of regenerative luxury tourism do tourism entrepreneurs consider central in Lapland?*

Using the qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth thematic interviews and participant observation. Three managers of the tourism companies that strive for sustainable and regenerative tourism practices were interviewed. Systematic and participative observation provided additional insights into real-world practices.

The findings contribute a practical framework and identify best practices that support the implementation of regenerative luxury tourism, advancing the transition toward a more just, sustainable, and regenerative tourism future. The study is part of the EU-funded project (ERDF) “Innovation of New Luxury Service Pathways (LUPPO)”.

Keywords: regenerative tourism, new luxury, tourism companies, case study, Finnish Lapland

Title: Destination Campaigns as Enablers of Regenerative Tourism: Lessons from CopenPay

Authors: Matias Thuen Jørgensen, Roskilde University, and Jordi Vegas-Macias

Tourism destinations increasingly seek to operationalise regenerative principles, yet individual enterprises often lack the inspiration, incentive, resources, or know-how to initiate regenerative activities independently. This paper argues that destination-level campaigns can function as institutional enablers that lower the threshold for enterprise engagement with regenerative tourism, providing legitimacy, a shared platform, and a clear mission that individual enterprises are less likely to generate on their own.

Drawing on data from a broader research programme examining CopenPay, a campaign launched by Wonderful Copenhagen in 2024 that rewarded tourists for climate-friendly actions, the paper presents empirical evidence of this enabling function in practice. Demonstrating how CopenPay mobilised a diverse range of enterprises around regenerative activities through a combination of top-down coordination and bottom-up self-organisation.

At the same time, the paper foregrounds the risks that accompany this model. When participation is voluntary and commercially framed, the line between genuine regenerative commitment and sustainability performance becomes difficult to maintain. Enterprises offering discounts without integrating regenerative practices into their operations illustrate how an enabling structure can also accommodate actors whose engagement is superficial. The paper further reflects on the transferability of the enabling conditions that made CopenPay successful, given its dependence on Copenhagen's pre-existing green image and relatively low overtourism pressure.

The paper concludes by discussing what destination managers and enterprises can learn from this model, and what safeguards are needed to prevent enabling structures from drifting into tokenism or greenwashing.

Title: A National Park Recipe on Regenerative Tourism – Experiences and Learnings

Author: Andreas Skriver Hansen, Center for Regional and Tourism Research

The presentation shows the results of a community-based project on regenerative tourism development in Mols Bjerge National Park, Denmark. The national park wants to fully become a regenerative park with a focus on contributing to the responsible development of the park in collaboration with the local area and its many citizens and stakeholder groups. Results shown in the presentation are twofold: one part focuses on the applied approach – including ways and challenges – in getting the local community involved in the work (what does it take?). This includes setting up a local work group and arranging regular discussions on the topic based on local knowledge and input. The other part shows concrete suggestions on how regenerative tourism can be introduced and organized in the national park (what can we do?). This includes ideas for new regenerative tourism content and activities that benefit the local community, while it also shows different ways that such content and activities can be organized and anchored locally, and in symbiosis with existing community activities. Ultimately, the project shows how a national park in collaboration with its local community can work on regenerative tourism for the benefit of the local area. A key point here is that tourism is not the goal in and of itself, but more a means to succeed with local community goals. The project works as inspiration for other areas around the country that have the same ambitions to introduce and roll out regenerative tourism in the coming years.

Title: Implementing Regenerative Tourism in Local Contexts – Comparing Bottom-Up Community-Based and Top-Down Destination-Based Approaches

Authors: Andreas Skriver Hansen, Center for Regional and Tourism Research, and Christian Dragin-Jensen

While theoretical/conceptual work on regenerative tourism (RT) thinking has evolved significantly over the past 15 years, arguably less effort has been made to report on practical experiences with implementing RT. A consequence of this is that theoretical/conceptual discussions on RT are often unsupported in terms of their real-life applicability. A crucial task therefore is to collect knowledge on the topic to increase RT literacy among tourism practitioners and academics, who in turn can make tangible shifts towards working with RT at operational, tactical, and strategic levels.

The presentation explores the implementation of regenerative tourism (RT) in two case areas: Mols Bjerger National Park and Destination Trekantområdet (Denmark). Drawing on interviews with project-managers, it compares RT implementation processes in each area; one is characterized by being led primarily by a national park community, while the other is characterized by being led primarily by a DMO. Findings provide insight into motivations behind both approaches, revealing the context-dependent nature of RT. While Mols Bjerger emphasized community engagement and local stewardship, Trekantområdet focused on testing scalable RT products with commercial potential. Based on this difference, the presentation highlights and discusses commonalities but also important differences between the two approaches. It contributes to the growing body of RT research, emphasizing a need for more knowledge about, and thus also a better understanding of, both approaches in processes of implementing RT in different local area contexts.

Keywords: Regenerative tourism; Implementation; Community-based; Destination-based; Comparison

Title: From Exclusivity to Restoration: A Case Study of Regenerative Luxury Hospitality in New Zealand

Author: Tracy Harkison, Auckland University of Technology (AUT)

As the global luxury hospitality sector faces escalating challenges from climate change and post-pandemic shifts, a fundamental reframing of luxury is underway. Moving beyond traditional hallmarks of exclusivity and opulence, contemporary high-end tourism is increasingly defined by sustainability, wellbeing, and ecological responsibility. This paper will explore how New Zealand (Aotearoa) is pioneering alternative models of hospitality by embedding Māori epistemologies specifically *manaakitanga* (hospitality), *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship), and *whanaungatanga* (relationships) into the design and delivery of premium experiences. Using a qualitative case study approach and interpretive analysis of secondary data, this study examines how luxury properties are transitioning from passive sustainability to active regenerative frameworks.

Preliminary findings highlight diverse models of regeneration, from the ecological restoration of degraded landscapes at Mahu Whenua and The Landing to the community centric, iwi-owned wellness and cultural immersion practices at Wai Ariki Hot Springs and Kohutapu Lodge. These ventures demonstrate that luxury can function as a space for reciprocal responsibility rather than mere consumption, restoring *mauri* (life force) to both ecosystems and communities. However, the study also addresses critical tensions regarding cultural appropriation and the necessity of genuine Indigenous sovereignty over tourism narratives. Ultimately, this research argues that New Zealand's (Aotearoa) regenerative luxury model challenges dominant global paradigms, offering a blueprint for high-end tourism that prioritises environmental guardianship, cultural integrity, and social equity in a resource constrained world.

Title: Tourism as an Agent for Good: Lessons from Community-Based Practices in Morocco

Author: Bendjedid Rachad Sanoussi, Euromed University of Fes (UEMF)

Tourism in climate-vulnerable regions requires approaches that go beyond mitigation and engage with local adaptive capacities. This study examines how community-based tourism (CBT) in the Fès region integrates indigenous and local knowledge to support climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation. It argues that community-led tourism initiatives, when embedded in sustainable destination frameworks, can enhance both ecological resilience and social inclusion.

A mixed-methods design was applied. Data were collected between April and July 2025 through semi-structured interviews with tourism cooperatives, community leaders, and environmental organizations (n=25). A survey of 180 visitors and residents assessed perceptions of sustainability practices and community participation. Secondary data from local institutions were used to examine policy alignment.

Findings indicate that practices rooted in traditional ecological knowledge; such as water management techniques, terraced agriculture, and local craft systems; contribute to reducing environmental pressure while supporting biodiversity. These initiatives also generate income and increase awareness of environmental issues. However, their expansion remains constrained by limited institutional coordination and access to markets. Uneven distribution of benefits across communities was also observed.

The case of Fès shows that indigenous knowledge can inform practical pathways toward regenerative tourism. Strengthening governance mechanisms, improving value chain integration, and supporting community participation are key to scaling these approaches. This study contributes to discussions on linking local knowledge systems with climate adaptation strategies in tourism development.

Keywords: Community-based tourism; Indigenous knowledge; Climate adaptation; Biodiversity; Regenerative tourism

Session 8: Digital-detox tourism practices: theoretical approaches and managerial implications

Organisers: Erose Sthapit and Peter Bjork

Affiliation: Manchester Metropolitan University, HANKEN School of Economics

Description

Today, digital technologies have transformed how tourists plan, make decisions, engage on-site, and reminisce their tourism experiences. Mobile devices offer travelers continuous connectivity including high-speed internet access, which is embraced by many individuals during their vacations. This constant connectivity can also be seen as disruptive, potentially detracting from the enjoyment of a tourism experience. A growing number of travelers are expressing a desire to disconnect from their mobile devices while on holiday and tourism service providers are beginning to offer products and services that encourage a temporary disconnection from digital technologies - termed digital-detox experiences, wherein use of digital devices is either actively discouraged or entirely prohibited. Despite the growing body of studies on this topic, there is lack of theoretically grounded and critical studies on digital-detox practices in tourism, trigger and intended and unplanned outcomes whether individual, social or organisational including implications for tourists from subjective well-being to pro-environmental behaviour. From a managerial perspective, gaining an understanding of antecedents, outcomes and implications may allow service providers to effectively plan, design and execute digital-detox experiences that offer positive outcomes for tourists. From a broader perspective, new insights will contribute to both theoretical advancement and offer a holistic understanding of how digital-disconnection practices contribute to a better societal change and positive tourism impacts. This session invites empirical and conceptual contributions (conceptual papers, experiments, qualitative studies, critical theory) that contribute to a deeper understanding and critically analysing topics such as:

- Theoretical foundations, approaches to exploring digital-detox practices in tourism
- Antecedents and outcomes of digital-detox experiences in tourism at individual, social or organisational level
- Supply side perspectives related to digital-detox practices in tourism
- Experiential co-creation, service design and digital-detox practices in tourism
- Societal benefits, positive impacts including trade-offs and tensions of digital-detox practices in tourism
- Sustainable destination management and digital-detox practices in tourism

Title: FOMO and Digital Detox in Tourism: Contrasting Appeals and Emerging Consumer Behaviours

Author: Yuhanis Aziz, College of Business & Administration, University of Sharjah

This study investigates the dualistic psychological forces of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Digital Detox (DD) and their influence on traveller behaviour in the digital era, as well as how tourism marketers manage these opposing forces in developing promotional messages. The study's focus on these competing motivations indicates their wider importance: they influence not only individual travel decisions but also the growing market demand for both hyper-connected and digitally minimalist tourism offerings. Understanding this tension provides valuable insights for tourism marketing, destination management and the design of well-being-oriented travel products. Data will be collected online via surveys and semi-structured interviews with travellers aged 18-45 in the UAE to understand behavioural tendencies, emotional responses and perceptions of digital engagement during travel. The analysis draws on theories of self-regulation, cognitive load, social comparison, and loss aversion to explain how FOMO and DD shape decision-making. Early conceptual insights suggest that FOMO fuels socially visible, trend-driven travel behaviour, while DD reflects a desire for restoration, reduced cognitive overload, and healthier digital habits. Together, these forces create a psychological push-pull mechanism that influences how travellers interpret tourism messages and evaluate experiences. The study offers practical implications for developing ethical, culturally sensitive, and wellness-focused marketing strategies that balance digital engagement with traveller well-being. Its originality lies in reframing FOMO and DD as underlying consumer psychological dynamics rather than marketing tactics, providing an empirically grounded understanding of their influence on travel behaviour in an increasingly digital environment.

Title: Disconnected Bliss: Evaluating the Travel Satisfaction of Digital Detox Holiday Tourists (DDHT)

Author: Krishma Rana, Central University of Jammu

In the contemporary digital era, excessive use of technology is associated with various physical, mental, and social challenges. In response, an increasing number of individuals are engaging in digital detox holidays, during which they intentionally disconnect from digital devices. This study employs quantitative research, utilising purposive sampling to survey 315 participants who have undertaken digital detox holidays. The primary objective is to examine the influence of digital detox holiday (DDH) motives on travel satisfaction and subsequent tourist loyalty. The results demonstrate that motives such as mindfulness, novelty, self-expression, and escapism significantly enhance both travel satisfaction and tourist loyalty among digital detox tourists. This research highlights an emerging and underexplored phenomenon in tourism and hospitality. The findings offer practical implications for policymakers and service providers, suggesting that hotels and resorts can strategically position themselves as digital detox retreats by offering targeted digital detox programs. These insights contribute to a better understanding of the needs and preferences of digital detox tourists, enabling the development of more tailored and effective services.

Keywords: Digital detox, Travel satisfaction, Tourist loyalty, Technostress

Title: Digital Detox Tourism in Finland – A Status Review

Author: Peter Björk, Hanken School of Economics

Digital detox, unplug travel or analogized tourism are emerging forms of travel that encourage visitors to disconnect from digital devices and reconnect with nature, themselves, and their surroundings. The development of digital detox tourism requires careful planning to ensure the concept is authentic and not misused in marketing. True digital detox experiences should provide meaningful opportunities for visitors to reduce screen time, engage with nature, and participate in mindful activities such as hiking, sauna culture, forest bathing, socialization and quiet reflection. Simply labeling accommodations or destinations as “digital detox” without providing supportive environments or activities risks weakening the credibility of the concept.

The aim of this paper is to describe the status of digital detox tourism in Finland from a supply and marketing perspective answering two research questions, how many tourism companies in Finland promote this type of tourism and how do they frame digital detox tourism. Data for this study was collected in a two-step process. Destination marketing organizations in Finland were contacted and asked to list companies offering digital detox tourism or corresponding tourism forms. The identified companies were analyzed using a content analysis of their websites. Findings reveal that digital detox tourism in Finland remains very limited. Although DMOs recommended numerous nature-based operators, only four companies explicitly offer digital detox or silence retreats with clear phone-disconnection requirements. These providers frame their offerings around complete digital disconnection, silence, and nature reconnection through meditation, yoga, sauna, and forest immersion, whereas the majority of recommended experiences lack any digital detox component.

Session 10: Service Management and Marketing in hospitality & Tourism: Creating Value and Positive Impact in a Changing World

Organisers: Magnús Haukur Ásgeirsson and Þórhallur Örn Guðlaugsson

Affiliation: University of Iceland

Description

Service is at the core of tourism, shaping experiences, relationships, and value creation across destinations and organizations. As global tourism faces rapid change driven by shifting tourist expectations, digital transformation, sustainability concerns, and societal demands for responsibility and transparency, Service management and marketing play an increasingly critical role. This session invites theoretical and applied research on how service, service management, and marketing contribute to tourism as a potential active agent for good. The session focuses on how service-related perspectives can support positive societal, environmental, organizational, and visitor outcomes. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Service quality, customer experience, and value creation in tourism
- Service design, service innovation, and digital transformation
- Responsible and sustainable marketing strategies for destinations and tourism firms
- Employee experience, service culture, and organizational performance
- Tourist behaviour, expectations, and perceived value
- Branding, communication, and image formation in a changing world

The aim of the session is to provide a platform for scholars, practitioners, and students to share insights that deepen our understanding of service-driven approaches within tourism. Emphasis is placed on research that explores how service and marketing can support tourism's ability to act as a positive force in a rapidly changing global context.

Title: Value for Whom? Experiences and Transformation of the Racing Events at the Isle of Man

Author: Harald Dolles, Molde University College - Specialized University in Logistics

The Isle of Man (IoM) is renowned for being a motorcycling racing mecca. The IoM Tourist Trophy event has been held annually since 1907, while the Manx Grand Prix race event has taken place annually since 1923. The IoM Government report that both racing events together account for approx. 30% of all visitors to the IoM and approx. 40% of all spending by tourists annually. Given the history of the events and the cultural, social and economic impact motorcycle racing has on the IoM, we will address in the research presentation the experiences and values behind visiting and supporting the races by fans, volunteers and locals.

A mixed methods approach is used and includes participant observation as well as semi-structured interviews at the MGP with race visitors, local residents, volunteers, and race teams during three event visits over a period of 10 years. For the conceptualization of value, we apply the consumer's as well as participants overall assessments of the utility of the event or visit based on perceptions of what has been received and what was given.

As the event management of both races was licensed out to commercial investors by the IoM Government during the period of investigation, we also provide an analysis of the changes made and the perception of the event's transformation. In conclusion, by changing the event, the organisers are undermining the local community's support and the spectators' experience, thereby grinding on the event's foundations and the identity of the place.

Title: Exploring Experiential Value Prioritisation in Nature-Based Tourists' Sustainable Destination Choices

Author: Samudika Weliweriyage, Department of Economics, Geography, Law and Tourism, Mid Sweden University

Nature-based (NB) tourism destinations increasingly position sustainability and environmental stewardship as core elements in their value propositions. Despite increasing pro-sustainable values among tourists, their consumption choices, including destination choices, often remain inconsistent with their stated values: a phenomenon widely known as the value-action gap. While previous studies acknowledge that individuals consider multiple consumer value dimensions in destination value propositions such as social, hedonistic, economic and altruistic values, there remains a limited understanding of how their pro-sustainable values including ecological values are negotiated against other consumer value dimensions in actual decision contexts (Gallarza et al., 2017; Zeithaml et al., 2020). Further exacerbating this conceptual deficit of consumer value in destination choices, the extant literature in sustainable tourism scholarship often treats pro-sustainable values and ecological values as dominant or stable drivers of tourist behaviour and behavioural intentions, offering limited insight into how consumer value configurations shift and are prioritised in practice.

Hence building on Holbrook's three-dimensional consumer value typology illustration (Holbrook, 1999; Sorakunnas, 2024), and adopting an experiential perspective grounded in value-in-experience conceptualisations (Helkkula et al., 2012), this study conceptualises perceived consumer value in destination choice decision contexts with an experiential lens viewing value as phenomenologically constructed and dynamically negotiated among NB tourists when making sustainable destination choices. To achieve this, the study employs qualitative in-depth interviews based on the event-based narrative inquiry technique (Helkkula et al., 2012; Helkkula & Pihlström, 2010) with NB tourists who visited a sustainability-certified destination in British Columbia, Canada, the Thompson Okanagan region.

By uncovering value prioritisation patterns in sustainable destination choices, the study provides process-oriented insights into the value trade-offs that NB tourists experience when selecting sustainability-certified destinations. In particular, the findings will support destination managers in designing and communicating sustainability-oriented visitor experiences that align with NB tourists' dynamic experiential value prioritisation processes shaping their sustainable destination choices.

Keywords: Sustainability-certified destinations, pro-sustainable values, ecological values, experiential values in nature-based tourism, destination choices

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Title: The Role of Media Coverage in Post-Disaster Tourism Management

Authors: Haoxiang Xie, University of Edinburgh Business School, Ewelina Lacka, and Jake Ansell

Natural disasters are typically expected to have negative effects on tourism. Contrary to this expectation, although the 2010 Eyjafjallajökull eruption caused immediate disruption in the months that followed, Iceland subsequently experienced sustained tourism growth from 2010 to 2018. Insights obtained from the engagement with the industry pointed to the potential role of increased visibility of Iceland in the aftermath of the disaster as potential explanation. Following on this lead, this paper empirically examines whether post-disaster media coverage explain unprecedented growth of tourist arrivals to Iceland after volcanic eruption. Drawing on the Call-to-Action theory, we argue that media coverage includes actionable prompts (i.e. action-verbs) that shapes behavioural intentions, which are then converted into actions (i.e. actual visit). To examine this process, our study analyses global newspaper data from LexisNexis using natural language processing (NLP) techniques, including topic modelling and sentiment analysis. The analysis reveals a distinct action-verbs in post-disaster media narratives, characterised by words such as see, like, go, can, look, take, book, and get, as well as overall sentiment. We employ econometric modelling and examine how variation in these media narratives is associated with changes in tourist arrivals, while accounting for concurrent factors that may have influenced Iceland's tourism trajectory during this period, such as the króna depreciation and expanding infrastructure proxied by accommodation supply. Our findings demonstrate that media coverage in the wake of crisis, although characterised by negative sentiment, actively shape tourists' visit intentions through the persuasive use of action verbs. The study contributes to tourism crisis research by offering a novel explanation for how a natural disaster can become a catalyst for tourism growth: a so-called "blessing in disguise" effect.

Title: Recipe for Success – Business Success Factors from Restaurant Entrepreneurs' Point of View in Finland

Authors: Sini Kauhanen, University of Eastern Finland, Henna Konu, Jonna Koponen, and Raija Komppula

Research of success factors has largely focused in the USA and large chain restaurants, although research has also been conducted in Europe, Asia and Australia. Previous research also focuses on quantitative research as restaurant entrepreneurs' own views on success factors have been studied less. With this research we aim to fill the research gap by finding out what exactly are the success factors of Finnish restaurant industry from the perspective of restaurant entrepreneurs. Furthermore, we also studied what kind of people is behind the success and what they see important for the development of the restaurant industry. We interviewed 25 experienced and successful restaurant entrepreneurs in Finland. We found out that the keys for success consist of business idea, strategy, quality and customer understanding and also handling of financial matters, cost structure and staff. The entrepreneurs behind success are dedicated for the industry, creative, hard workers and ready to react quickly. However, restaurant industry is harsh business so entrepreneurs were also asked for development ideas. The most wanted issue was relief in taxation and cost structure, as in Finland taxation overall is strict and especially in alcohol. Restaurant business is truly a service business and needs lots of staff, which is expensive in Finland, for instance work hours in Sundays cost 100% extra. Restaurant industry has faced many external issues recently, for instance COVID-19 and Russia's attack in Ukraine, which had several effects on business like raised costs. Although the industry has many challenges, it has also possibilities for success.

Title: Service Quality, Reputation, and eWOM: Hospitality Performance in a Changing Tourism Landscape

Authors: Magnús Ásgeirsson, University of Iceland, and Þórhallur Guðlaugsson

In an increasingly digitalized and dynamic tourism environment, hospitality organizations are under growing pressure to operate not only efficiently but responsibly actively shaping positive guest experiences and long-term trust. As tourism adapts to rapid technological change and heightened customer expectations, service quality, organizational reputation, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) have become critical mechanisms through which hospitality firms can act as constructive agents within the broader tourism system.

While the importance of these factors for organizational success is well documented, their combined influence on performance variability remains insufficiently explored. This study examines the individual and collective effects of service quality, reputation, and eWOM on hospitality performance, conceptualized through customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, both essential outcomes for sustainable tourism development.

The study employs a quantitative research design based on monthly guest survey data collected in Iceland between June 2023 and June 2024. The dataset consists of 4,335 valid responses from guests staying at nine hotels operated by the same Icelandic hotel chain. The findings indicate that service quality, reputation, and eWOM jointly explain 54% of the variance in performance ($R^2 = 0.54$), underscoring their substantial influence in a changing tourism context.

Among the examined factors, eWOM demonstrates the strongest individual effect on performance ($\beta = 0.53$; $P^2 = 0.10$), highlighting the growing power of digitally mediated guest voices in shaping trust, expectations, and loyalty. Tangible service quality exhibits a moderate yet significant effect ($\beta = 0.15$; $P^2 = 0.008$), while reputation shows a smaller but still meaningful impact ($\beta = 0.13$; $P^2 = 0.01$). Together, these results point to the critical role of transparent, high-quality service delivery and responsible online engagement in enabling hospitality organizations to contribute positively to guest wellbeing and destination resilience.

Keywords: Service Quality, Reputation, EWOM, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Hospitality, Performance

Title: Capturing Value-Creation in Curated Hospitality Ecosystems: The Case of Norwegian Black Metal Festivals

Authors: Håvard Ness, University of South-Eastern Norway, Marit Gundersen Engeset, and Kåre Sandvik

We explore how the ecosystem around a focal “reason to go” actor can be activated through careful orchestration and governance to strengthen competitiveness and (collective) value creation and capture for the actors involved in creating an experiencescape. In many consumption situations such as festivals and events, the overall experience includes multiple touch points with a variety of stakeholders (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Extant literature focuses on how firms can enhance customers’ experiences through collectively engaging the various components. However, Kandampully et al. (2022, p. 324) finds that “previous research has not addressed the effect of experiencescape [sic] on other stakeholders, for example, employees, suppliers, vendors, subcontractors and so on”. Experienscapes involves resources distributed across the boundaries of single firms and depend on a (specific) activity chain in their realization. This requires coordination and some degree of resource integration between the complementary and interdependent providers involved in the activities (Adner, 2016). Thus, we address an underexplored and critical part of experiencescape realization.

We study two Norwegian black metal festivals. The analysis demonstrates that curated and flexible configurations of complementary resources and experiences rely on orchestration, governance, and shared norms among interdependent actors. The findings show that effective curation not only improves customer satisfaction but also advances collective value creation and contributes to the long-term stability of the ecosystem. We extend research on experienscapes and tourism ecosystems by elucidating how focal actors integrate complementary stakeholders, structure collaborative value creation processes, and promote conditions for economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Experiencescape, Orchestration, Governance

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Title: Plate to Perception: Key Determinants of the Restaurant Dining Experience

Author: Kai Victor Myrnes-Hansen, University of Stavanger

This study examines the relative importance of key determinants shaping the restaurant meal experience, integrating insights from hospitality research, consumer behaviour theory, and experiential service design. Drawing on established frameworks such as service quality (SERVQUAL), servicescape theory, and experience economy perspectives, the paper conceptualizes the meal experience as a multidimensional construct consisting of food quality, service interaction, physical environment, value perception, and social context. A synthesis of empirical studies consistently identifies food quality as the primary driver of customer satisfaction, functioning as a non-negotiable core attribute. However, findings also demonstrate that service quality—particularly staff competence, attentiveness, and emotional engagement—acts as a critical moderating factor, amplifying or diminishing the perceived value of the meal.

The study further highlights the importance of the servicescape in framing sensory and cognitive evaluations, while perceived value mediates the relationship between expectations and overall satisfaction. Additionally, the social and temporal dimensions of dining, including commensality and the dramaturgical flow of the meal, are shown to influence memorability and post-consumption evaluations. Building on these insights, the paper proposes an integrative model in which the meal experience emerges from the interaction between core product quality and experiential elements, rather than from isolated factors.

The findings suggest that while food quality remains foundational, competitive differentiation in the restaurant sector is increasingly driven by the orchestration of service, atmosphere, and emotional engagement. This has important implications for both hospitality management and meal science, emphasizing the need for a holistic and strategically designed approach to experience creation.

Title: Is This the End for Tourist Information Centres? Rethinking Visitor Information Services in Danish Tourism

Authors: Christian Dragin-Jensen, SEA Business Academy, Sara Guerra, Camilla Herman, Michael Park Nielsen, and Mia Post-Lundgaard

Tourist information centres (TICs) have traditionally played a central role in tourism service delivery by supporting visitor decision-making, shaping experiences, and communicating destination offerings. However, increasing digitalisation and changing tourist information-seeking behaviour are challenging the relevance of the traditional TIC model. This project examines how Danish destination management organisations (DMOs) are rethinking visitor information services and redesigning TIC functions as part of broader service management and value creation strategies in destinations.

The study draws on semi-structured interviews with 15 senior DMO representatives across Denmark. Using thematic analysis, the research explores how DMOs interpret evolving visitor expectations and reconfigure information services, service touchpoints, and organisational responsibilities within their wider service portfolios.

Findings indicate that while stand-alone TICs remain symbolically important, particularly in relation to municipal expectations, funding and destination visibility, they are increasingly viewed as an inefficient service that does not align with contemporary (or expected future) visitor behaviour. DMOs are therefore experimenting with more distributed systems in which information and service functions are delivered through networks of local businesses, local citizen ambassadors, and satellite/mobile concepts. These systems combine digital tools with physical materials and personal interaction.

Across DMOs, human interaction, local storytelling, and decision support (curation) emerge as key mechanisms for creating visitor value. The study conceptualises the future of visitor information as a decentralized information ecosystem, highlighting the importance of service innovation, partner capability-building, and cross-organisational collaboration in enabling destinations to co-create visitor value in a changing tourism information landscape.

Title: Service Orientation and Performance in Hospitality: Tourism as an Active Agent for Good

Authors: Magnús Ásgeirsson, University of Iceland, and Þórhallur Guðlaugsson

In a rapidly changing global tourism landscape marked by economic uncertainty, workforce challenges, and rising expectations for responsible and people-centered business practices, hospitality organizations are increasingly called upon to act as positive agents within society. Organizational culture plays a central role in shaping how tourism firms respond to these pressures. Service orientation (SO) as a cultural emphasis on service quality, employee wellbeing, and customer value may enable hospitality firms not only to enhance performance, but also to generate broader social benefits.

This study examines the relationship between service orientation and multiple dimensions of organizational performance in the hospitality sector, at both individual and collective levels. Drawing on the Denison organizational culture framework, SO was measured using 25 items reflecting key cultural traits, while performance was assessed across seven dimensions: sales growth, profitability and return on investment (ROI), quality of products and services, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, innovation and new product development (NPD), and overall performance.

Empirical data were collected in spring 2024 from employees and managers ($N = 45$) within a hotel chain in central Reykjavík, Iceland. The findings indicate that SO accounted for 49% ($R^2 = 0.49$) of the variance across performance outcomes collectively, underscoring the strategic importance of service focused culture in contemporary hospitality operations. The strongest relationships were observed between service orientation and overall performance ($\beta = 0.60$, $R^2 = 0.36$), as well as employee satisfaction ($\beta = 0.54$, $R^2 = 0.29$), highlighting the role of SO in fostering positive workplace experiences and organizational resilience. Weaker, yet still significant, relationships were found between SO and innovation ($\beta = 0.40$, $R^2 = 0.16$) and profitability ($\beta = 0.43$, $R^2 = 0.18$).

These findings suggest that service-oriented cultures may serve as a key pathway through which tourism organizations contribute positively to employees, customers, and long-term organizational sustainability, particularly in a changing world.

Keywords: *Hospitality, Service culture, Service orientation, Organizational performance, Employee satisfaction*

Session 11: Tourism as a facilitator of social equity and inclusion

Organisers: Marianna Preston

Affiliation: University of Eastern Finland

Description

Social equity, a characteristic of systems which facilitate fair distribution and access to resources, opportunities and representation, appears in tourism research in a variety of themes. These may include fair access to business opportunities, equal participation in social institutions and decision-making, recognition of special needs, or support for individual rights. Social entrepreneurship can, therefore, be an answer for balancing the economic and socio-cultural pillars of sustainable development in some destinations, while working on policies facilitating fair distribution and access to employment opportunities which exclude exploitation of vulnerable individuals, might be the answer for another. On a smaller scale, even “innocent” omissions of the tourism, hospitality and travel service providers might construct insurmountable obstacles to the experience of social inclusion and equity. Thus, emergency alarms using sound only would contribute nothing to the safety of those who cannot hear them, while the lack of contrast in signage prevents those with certain visual impairments from accessing vital information.

This session proposes exploration of tourism social innovation through a capability-based equity framework, where equity is viewed as fair expansion of substantive freedoms—the real opportunities people have to lead lives they value. In doing so, it will provide a platform for contributors to discuss how systemic factors, such as governance inclusion, norms and policies shape agency, cultural expression, safety and self-determination of various social and customer groups. The perspectives might include - but do not need to be limited to - stakeholders with disabilities, disadvantaged families, the elderly, or gender and ethnic minorities. With its principal objective to distinguish socially transformative innovation from initiatives that propagate existing inequalities under the language of inclusion, this session aims to enhance the understanding of inclusive tourism.

Title: Social Exclusion and Conflicts at "The Last Resort": An Inquiry of Stakeholder Stereotypes, Emotions, and Behaviors in Wellness Tourism Destinations

Author: Xiaoyue Xiao, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Wellness tourism destinations attract health-seeking tourists with therapeutic resources and environments while possibly lead to patients aggregation, resource competition, and social rejection (Wang et al., 2020). A typical example is Bama in China, a renowned wellness tourism destination fascinating masses of patients and elderly to visit or reside in. The influx of outsiders with complex and fluid identities greatly changed place dynamics, leading to escalating conflicts and compromised experiences. To decode the underlying pathways of stakeholder conflicts in Bama, this study develops an integrated analytical framework combining the Behaviors from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes (BIAS) Map model with stigma theories. It investigates how the deeply ingrained stigma towards disease, age, and rural place shapes intergroup perceptions, triggering distinct emotional and behavioral responses among key stakeholders, such as health migrants, sightseeing tourists, residents, investors, and local governments. Employing an ethnographic, multi-stakeholder approach, qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and retrieved from digital archive and social media platforms. Findings revealed that health status and locality served as key markers in shaping group identities. Migrant health-seekers were commodified as valuable economic resources while socially marginalized as intruders. Residents and investors engaged in profit-driven exploitative marketing, while governments grapple with management dilemma amid competing demands. Theoretically, this study integrates the BIAS Map with stigma theories to trace the cognition-emotion-behavior pathways underlying social conflicts and exclusion. Practically, it informs interventions to dismantle intergroup bias and offers a framework for analyzing stigma-driven conflicts in tourism communities, advancing inclusion and positive interactions in destinations.

Keywords: wellness tourism, vulnerable groups, inclusive destination, stereotype, stigma, host-guest relationship

Title: Health Risk Perception in Tourism: Exploring Technology Adoption of Diabetic Travellers

Author: Jessie Chen, University of Eastern Finland

Tourism research has increasingly addressed issues of accessibility and inclusion; however, limited attention has been given to travellers with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, whose challenges are often invisible yet consequential (Ghosh *et al.*, 2018). Drawing on a capability-based perspective, this study examines how health-related risks shape the substantive freedoms of diabetic travellers to participate in tourism. Based on qualitative semi-structured interviews with individuals living with diabetes in Finland and China, the research explores how travellers perceive and manage risks associated with diet, physical activity, medical routines, and unfamiliar environments during trips.

The findings reveal significant heterogeneity in risk perception and self-management practices, resulting in unequal capabilities to travel safely and confidently. While some participants demonstrate limited awareness of potential risks, others rely on structured routines, technological tools, or social support networks to manage their condition. These differences suggest that inclusion in tourism extends beyond physical access and depends on individuals' ability to interpret and respond to dynamic health-related situations.

Building on these insights, the study highlights the potential role of AI-enabled technologies—such as real-time monitoring, predictive alerts, and personalized decision support—in enhancing travellers' capability to manage risks. By linking risk perception to capability and technological support, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of inclusive tourism and points toward AI-driven solutions as a pathway to reducing hidden inequalities and supporting more equitable travel experiences.

Ghosh, S. *et al.* (2018) 'Diabetes and travel', *International Journal of Diabetes in Developing Countries*, 38(1), pp. 4–10. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13410-018-0605-6>.

Title: Inclusion in Outdoor Activities: Perspectives from Funded Initiatives in Sweden

Author: Parisa Setoodegan, Mittuniversitetet

In response to increased migration flows to Europe in 2015, including Sweden, municipalities, NGOs, tourism actors, and regional outdoor organizations have invested in initiatives aimed at engaging immigrants in outdoor activities. These efforts are often based on the assumption that participation in outdoor life can support integration, social connection, and a sense of belonging, particularly in a context where outdoor recreation is deeply embedded in Swedish socio-cultural life.

However, despite these ambitions, inclusion in outdoor initiatives is not self-evident. This study adopts a performative perspective, drawing on J. L. Austin, to shift attention from what inclusion *is* to what inclusion *does*. From this perspective, inclusion is understood as something that is enacted through everyday practices, decisions, and interactions within projects, rather than as a fixed outcome.

Empirically, the study draws on a qualitative approach, including interviews, observations, and document analysis across a range of funded outdoor initiatives. The findings show that inclusion in outdoors is continuously negotiated in practice and shaped by organizational structures, social norms and assumptions about engagement and participation. It also points to the need to rethink outdoors as doing, as play, through the reflexive notion of performativity rather than a predefined tool for integration.

Title: INISHBOFIN: IE-SLOWDOWN-Inspired Social Innovation

Author: Marianna Preston, University of Eastern Finland

Interreg Europe SLOWDOWN is a project focusing on improving local and regional policies to support development of slow tourism in seven partner regions. This paper analyses a concrete example of social innovation illustrated by one of the good practices introduced by the project's Irish partner region Galway - Inishbofin: A Different Kind of Tourism. The steps of policy improvement and outcomes are elucidated within Geoff Mulgan's social innovation framework. Mulgan (2012) conceptualizes social innovation as a process initiated by prompts (identification of needs). The stages proceed through generating ideas and proposals, testing & prototyping, sustaining, scaling, until, ultimately, a systemic change is achieved.

The focus of the Inishbofin initiative is generation of ecotourism experiences. This is achieved by the combination of stakeholder training, sustainability workshops, energy and circular economy awareness, and business participation in ecotourism certification (Interreg Europe, 2025). The starting point of this good practice was the need to balance tourism development with sustainability. The idea generation gave birth to a community-led ecotourism model which combined stakeholder training, certification, and monitoring systems. Governance and practices were refined in the prototyping phase and sustained through strong local participation, institutional support, and measurable benefits. The model shows great scaling potential, as it is transferable to other rural regions and promotes deeper cultural shifts toward responsible tourism. Inishbofin represents a mature social innovation, as it achieved the outcome - a systemic change - by redefining tourism governance by empowering local communities and aligning economic potential with ecological limits predetermined by its location.

Keywords: slow tourism; social innovation; Interreg Europe SLOWDOWN; good practices; Inishbofin ecotourism experiences

Session 13: Outdoor recreation and tourism in a changing world: Challenges of the Anthropocene

Organisers: Kate Dashper, Tobias Heldt, Gabriella Torell Palmquist, Peter Carlman, and Jason King

Affiliation: Leeds Beckett University, Dalarna University, Karlstad University

Description

The Anthropocene is a term used to refer to the current time period where humans have become the single most influential species on the planet, causing significant changes to land, water, environment, other species and the atmosphere. Outdoor recreation and tourism, including activities ranging from walking, hiking and climbing, to paddling, cycling and horse riding amongst others, occur within, through and as part of the natural environment which is shifting in the Anthropocene. This session invites papers that explore some of the intersections between outdoor recreation and tourism and the natural environment. Contributions may reflect on how ecological transitions and climate change, as well as the social, economic, cultural and political impacts that accompany these changes, are impacting and are impacted by outdoor recreation and tourism practices. How does this affect tourists' sense of belonging to the places and spaces in which outdoor recreation occurs? Does this impact participants' connection to nature and pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours? How does this affect the funding of recreational infrastructure? What are possible consequences for governance and management of outdoor recreational areas? What does a changing natural world mean for the sustainability and future of outdoor recreation and tourism?

Title: Interpreting Nature as Resource: Insights from Nature-Based Tourism Firms

Authors: Preston Leino, University of Eastern Finland, Henna Konu, and Esko Sorakunnas

Nature-based tourism (NBT) fundamentally depends on natural resources (Fossgard & Stensland, 2021) and ecosystem services (Margaryan et al., 2022). In the Anthropocene, this dependence is becoming increasingly visible for NBT. Especially cultural ecosystem services, such as scenic landscapes, recreational and spiritually meaningful encounters in nature, strongly influence visitor satisfaction and shape overall tourism experiences (Margaryan et al., 2022), while also being highly sensitive to human actions.

This study explores the role of natural resources and ecosystem services through a holistic resource-based theory framework, including the natural resource-based view (Clark et al., 2026). Our focus is on how tourism companies identify, interpret, and utilize these resources. Particular attention is paid to the narratives through which tourism providers make sense of their relationships with natural resources, ecosystem services, and related stakeholders.

Empirical data consist of 25 semi-structured interviews with NBT firms operating in two UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Finland. The findings highlight natural resources and ecosystem services as crucial resources for business. For these firms, high-quality natural resources are essential for creating meaningful tourism experiences and are the primary reason for operating in these locations. The results further demonstrate that experiential value creation is closely intertwined with the sustained quality of natural resources and ecosystem services, which is critical not only for delivering high-quality tourism experiences but also for long-term business continuity in nature-based tourism.

Keywords: Nature-based tourism, Small tourism firms, Natural resources, Ecosystem services

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Title: Compliance to Pay for Groomed Cross-Country Skiing Trails: An Actor-Network Theory Approach

Authors: Ioanna Farsari, School for Culture and Society, CeTLeR, Dalarna University, Jana Brehmer, and Tobias Heldt

Recreational trails are often located in nature environments. In the Nordic countries, the Right of Public Access (*Allemansrätten*) allows people to freely and respectfully access nature, even on private land. This creates a legal grey zone for trail pass systems intended to fund the development and maintenance of commercial recreational trails through user fees. Research in compliance has investigated mostly behavioural models and purchase decision-making theories, willingness to pay, or social expectations. In this research, we take a socio-material semiotic perspective to understand how compliance is constructed.

We employ Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to understand *how visitors navigate the grey zone between purchasing trail passes and exercising the right of public access*. In our research we focus on ‘translation’ as the process of how compliance is negotiated and constructed in both social and material forms. Understanding these negotiations reveals how ordering and stabilisation occur, and thus how compliance emerges.

We analysed 17 interviews with users of groomed cross-country skiing trails at Kläppen and Orsa Grönklitt in Dalarna, Sweden. Our findings show that compliance, in ANT terms, is not merely obedience with rules following signs and using QR codes. It is not only management efforts e.g. to make payments visible, or feelings of guilt and embarrassment that shape compliance. Compliance occurs when a heterogeneous network—comprising snow, grooming machinery, digital tools, spatial arrangements, organizations, signs, facilities etc—successfully orders together.

Although users often view groomed trails as a service worth paying for, our study showed that it is not just that. Nature itself acts as an influential actant, not though as questioning the trail pass system. Nature shapes users’ experiences and their negotiations around payment. Compliance emerges within a hybrid socio-material network in which roles are continually negotiated.

Title: Hiking Infrastructure Changes as a Management Measure to Steer Recreational Use in Protected Areas with Important Wildlife Habitats

Authors: Saumya Rathnayake, The Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Øystein Aas, and Vegard Gundersen

Growing recreational use in European mountains, and associated infrastructure development such as roads, trails, and tourist cabins has created significant challenges for vulnerable wildlife species. In response, national park authorities implement a range of visitor management measures aimed at influencing recreational use in specific wildlife habitats. These measures can be implemented within a broader management measures pyramid, which ranges from soft preventive and information intervention to more direct regulatory and legal measures.

Our study explores how recreationists perceive and act towards such infrastructure-related management measures through examining their behaviors and attitudes broadly. Guided by the COM-B model as the theoretical framework for the study, semi structured interviews and field observations was developed to examine how visitors' capability, opportunity, and motivation shape their behaviors through their perceptions, and how they response to management measures while engaging in outdoor recreation in intended landscapes. We choose the geographical areas for the data collection intentionally, three Norwegian national parks where outdoor recreation overlaps with vulnerable wildlife habitats, which include Dovrefjell Sunndalsfjella national park: musk ox and Wild reindeer range, Rondane (sør) national park: wild reindeer area, and Femundsmarka national park: which contains sensitive wetland bird habitats.

The findings from the study provide insight into how infrastructure-based management measures influence visitor behaviors, and through the COM B framework help explain why such measures effective, less effective or misunderstood in different recreational contexts. The study contributes practical knowledge for policy makers, government authorities, and protected area managers seeking to balance visitor experiences with wildlife conservation in sensitive wildlife areas.

Keywords: Visitor management, COM-B Model, wildlife, management measures, outdoor recreation

Title: Rethinking Places for Sport in the Anthropocene

Authors: Peter Carlman, Department of Educational Studies, Karlstad University, and Gabriella Torell Palmquist

Anthropogenic climate change has profound effects globally. If the Anthropocene signifies the decline of nature as we once knew it, how might this transformation affect sporting activities conducted in natural environments? This presentation emphasizes that the challenges of the Anthropocene extend beyond large-scale environmental issues; they are also intricately connected to everyday life and cultural practices. We adhere to the idea that climate is as much embedded in memory, behaviour, text, and identity as it is in meteorological measurements. This scenario necessitates a renegotiation not only of the future of sports but also of humanity's shared history and the individual emotions and identities associated with sports. Ultimately, changes in nature due to climate change shape sports culture and redefine the understanding of the role sports mean to us. Drawing on a sociological and cultural-geographical perspective on place and belonging, this presentation focuses on how an approach centred on the relationship between the physical environment, symbolic representation, and human emotions can offer new insights into sports in the Anthropocene.

Title: Hooves on Shifting Ground: Sustainability Transitions at Landsmót

Authors: Áskell Heiðar Ásgeirsson, University of Iceland at Hólar, Laufey Haraldsdóttir, Ingibjörg Sigurðardóttir, and Sigríður Rósa Bjarnadóttir

“Landsmót,” the national championship of the Icelandic horse, is Iceland’s largest outdoor sporting event. The 26th of this kind will be held at Hólar in Hjaltadalur from 5–11 July 2026. The week-long event attracts approximately 7,000–8,000 attendees and around 1,000 horses, and relies on the contributions of over 100 volunteers alongside more than 200 staff.

The event industry is increasingly required to address sustainability imperatives in the face of accelerating environmental change. Equestrian events such as Landsmót are embedded in and dependent on dynamic natural environments, while also generating impacts at both local and broader scales. In this context, such events can be understood as sites of sustainability transition, with the potential to serve as best-practice models for environmental management, impact mitigation, and climate adaptation.

This paper presents the design, implementation, and preliminary findings of research conducted at Landsmót. The event is approached as a living research setting to assess the real-world environmental impacts of a large-scale event and to test sustainable solutions in practice. It also examines which aspects of event planning and management are most critical for advancing the sustainable development of equestrian events.

Finally, both quantitative and qualitative studies are conducted during and after the event to explore visitors’ and residents’ attitudes toward the sustainable development of equestrian events such as Landsmót.

Title: Negotiating Everyone's Rights in Shared Landscapes

Author: Minna Nousiainen, University of Lapland

This paper is based on my ongoing PhD research, which examines how *everyone's rights* (*jokaisenoikeudet* in Finnish), or the right of public access, are negotiated within changing socio-ecological relations. In this research, everyone's rights are approached as ongoing, situational negotiation shaped by mobility practices and encounters in shared landscapes.

Everyone's rights are often understood as a cornerstone of sustainable outdoor recreation and a resource for nature-based activities, including tourism. However, changes in land use, growing visitor numbers in natural areas and shifting ecological conditions increasingly challenge the prevailing assumptions about the right of public access. These changes encourage a reconsideration of collective understanding of what is shared, by whom and under what conditions.

The paper explores relations in landscapes where access is formally open, but increasingly influenced by ecological change, socio-cultural norms and practices of formal and informal spatial guidance. Empirically, the paper focuses on Nordic cross-country skiing. Skiing on tracks offers a lens for understanding everyone's rights as commoning—the practice through which shared access is produced, maintained and negotiated—showing how access in winter landscapes is enacted or limited.

Drawing on experiences from Finnish Lapland, the paper aims to illustrate how declining snow reliability, management and governance of landscapes and related infrastructure as well as local socio-cultural norms and tacit knowledge are reflected in practicing everyone's rights.

Title: Nature First, People First, or Something in Between? Exploring the Complexities of Balancing Nature Protection and Public Access/Recreation on Nature Reserves

Authors: Kate Dashper, Leeds Beckett University, Adele Doran, and Jason King

“We’re in a nature crisis, everyone knows that.” These were the words of a site manager of a nature reserve at a workshop focused on balancing nature conservation, public access and recreation. For this individual, and many of the other site managers present, the need to foreground nature conservation above all other social and economic factors (e.g., public access, local business development) was self-evident and indisputable.

However, this is not the only crisis facing western societies. Widening inequalities, obesity, poor physical and mental health outcomes, and low levels of physical activity are prevalent, particularly amongst some ethnic minority communities, and for groups with low socioeconomic status. Government, councils, and health, social and community groups encourage people to get active in green spaces. Often, these spaces are also ecologically vulnerable, and recreation and tourism activities may conflict with nature recovery priorities.

In this paper, we draw on a two-year study exploring some of the complexities of balancing nature protection and public access/recreation on protected natural sites. We consider questions of land ownership, power, rights and responsibilities, and social justice that underpin intersecting nature and social crises, as well as opportunities for solidarity across environmental and social causes.

Title: Forests and Firewood, the Anthropocene and Protected Areas

Author: Chris E. Hurst, Northumbria University

Across the Nordic region, nature is protected via a system of national parks, sanctuaries, public lands, and reserves. Access to nature for human well-being and enjoyment is also culturally embedded, as seen in the Norwegian concept of *Friluftsliv* (“open-air-life”), and even enshrined into law as in the case of Finland’s *Jokamiehenoikeudet* and Sweden’s *Allemansrätten* (Visit Finland, 2026; Visit Norway, 2026; Visit Sweden, 2026). In Canada, nature protection involves a complex system of parks, reserves, sanctuaries, and wildlife areas. Concomitantly places of outdoor recreation, tourism, conservation, and more-than-human entanglement, protected areas are managed by federal and provincial authorities and are culturally linked to national imaginaries of northern-ness (Hurst & Stinson 2023; Morton Turner, 2002).

This paper examines human-firewood relations in two Canadian protected areas. Specifically, the paper attends to the material-affective tensions that emerge among anthropogenic resource extraction, competing park management objectives, conservation activities, acute wildfire seasons, and more-than-human recreation. For embedded within the alluring scents and sounds of a crackling campfire are also acrid smells of burning non-organic materials and distant out-of-control wildfires. Within the smoke, shelterwood logging practices and ‘prescribed burns’ (designed with the specific intent to emulate post-fire ecological regeneration and reduce the risk of actual wildfires) likewise intervene to ignite, control, and suppress different and unexpected nature transformations in the Anthropocene. Among forests and firewood, I suggest, are opportunities to *kindle* care with the more-than-human places we recreate, and with an Anthropocene that is both cause and effect of transformation in protected areas and beyond.

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Session 14: Community-centred and Place-based Regenerative Cultural Tourism in Northern and Arctic Rural, Island and Peripheral Communities

Organisers: Alöna Roitershtein, Harald Klaus Dolles, Laufey Haraldsdóttir, Firouz Gaini, Guðrún Þóra Gunnarsdóttir, Ása Marta Sveinsdóttir, Patrick Maher

Affiliation: Robert Gordon University, Holar University, University of the Faroe Islands, ITRC, Nipissing University

Description

The session will explore how tourism scholarship can contribute to a more equitable, sustainable and regenerative future. By foregrounding local voices and community priorities, we seek research that demonstrates how tourism can support fairer distributions of benefits, strengthen cultural continuity and foster regenerative relationships between people, place and environment. Comparative, interdisciplinary and practice-embedded perspectives are especially encouraged.

As part of the session, we will briefly introduce a developing initiative to form an international research network on regenerative cultural tourism and placemaking, as an early point of connection for those interested in shaping this thematic agenda.

This session invites contributions on community-centred, place-based and regenerative approaches to cultural tourism for placemaking in Northern and Arctic rural, island and peripheral communities. We welcome work examining how tourism development intersects with local identity, community wellbeing, cultural resilience, placemaking practices and environmental responsibility, as well as critical reflections on agency, representation and power dynamics in Northern and Arctic contexts.

Alongside traditional papers, we also welcome creative and experimental presentation formats, including micro-workshops, dialogue-based formats, collaborative mapping or storytelling, short provocations or demonstrations of community-engaged methods that reflect the session's place-based focus. Contributions that spark interaction or invite new ways of knowing are particularly valued.

Title: Place-Based Regenerative Action vs. National Sustainability Certification? - Case Sustainable Travel Finland

Author: Roosa Ridanpää, University of Oulu

The sustainability certification schemes persist as a tool for improving sustainability in tourism enterprises. In Finland, Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) programme guides enterprises and destinations toward more sustainable operations. At the same time, interest in regenerative tourism has grown among many enterprises and destinations as a natural step forward. While previous research has questioned the impacts of sustainability certification, STF has already included content on regenerative tourism into its learning materials. This makes it important to critically assess how the concept is being introduced to tourism enterprises in Finland and whether STF is able to align with regenerative thinking.

The study conducted 43 interviews with tourism enterprises operating in Northern Finland. The analysis revealed both challenges and promising pathways for regenerative transition within STF programme. Based on the findings, the presentation introduces three imaginary enterprises, which illustrate different rural contexts wherein enterprises operate and the role of STF for them. How do place-based regenerative action and national-level steering meet in these cases? To what extent is STF able to support the enterprises in regenerative transition in its current form, and what could be changed? The study concludes that STF and similar programmes in the Nordics have the potential to support regenerative transition, provided they are able to allocate resources for place-based regenerative action, reinforce bottom-up action at destinations, and facilitate shifts in meaning-making among enterprises, DMOs, visitors, and communities.

Title: Toward a Regenerative Sauna Framework: Governance, Cultural Depth, and Rural Futures

Author: Becky Pelkonen, University of Eastern Finland

For centuries, sauna has served as a foundational third space, a shared, community-oriented setting beyond home and work, where cultural identity, social relations, and livelihoods are sustained through embodied, tradition-coded practices of reciprocity, care, and stewardship. Today, rapid global growth threatens these relational foundations: as sauna spreads beyond its cultural origins, the commons of culture and care that sustain rural life risk giving way to commodification and external extraction.

This paper presents the early development of a *Regenerative Sauna Framework*: a model for governance and development that examines why some sauna-based rural third spaces evolve as inclusive cultural commons while others become fragile amenities, and how to move forward to support regenerative livelihoods and economic futures through a systems thinking lens. Drawing on third-space theory (Soja, 1996; Bhabha, 1994) and the Quadruple Bottom Line framework, the model positions cultural depth, the degree to which sauna practice is rooted in place-based identity, intergenerational knowledge, and biophilic reciprocity, as a decisive variable alongside governance structure in shaping sustainable tourism livelihoods.

Grounded in emerging doctoral research at the University of Eastern Finland, the framework will be tested through comparative fieldwork across rural sites in Finland, Norway, Ireland, and Canada. This paper presents its theoretical architecture and invites critical dialogue ahead of that empirical work.

By revaluing sauna as critical social infrastructure and cultural commons rather than merely a consumer product, the paper argues that regenerative rural futures depend not on more saunas, but on better ones, governed and tended in ways that regenerate culture, community, and ecological health from the inside out.

Title: Working with the Community: The Røst Tourism Manifesto

Author: Marzia Liuzza, University of Padova, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

The presentation discusses the development of a Tourism Manifesto of the island of Røst, a small fishing community in northern Norway. The Manifesto emerges from a locally grounded process aimed at defining the conditions under which tourism can coexist with an economy historically structured around fisheries and a dense relational social fabric.

Positioned at the intersection of sustainable tourism, regenerative tourism and community tourism, the case assumes that these paradigms offer complementary tools for safeguarding collective well-being. Sustainability provides the environmental and socio-economic frame; community tourism anchors decision-making in local agency; regenerative tourism extends the perspective by introducing qualitative limits, relational responsibility and the need to preserve systemic equilibrium.

Rather than promoting expansion, the Manifesto articulates locally defined thresholds that protect social cohesion, ecological balance and the productive centrality of fisheries. Tourism is framed as a complementary and stabilising activity, contributing to demographic continuity without altering the island's structural balance. The contribution of the research lies in conceptualising the Manifesto not only as a participatory output, but as a normative governance device that formalises community-defined limits and priorities. The case of Røst thus illustrates how rural and Arctic communities can actively shape culturally grounded and territorially coherent pathways for regenerative tourism.

Title: Micro, Small and Medium Food and Drink Producers: Place, Culture and Community in North-East Scotland

Author: Anne Singleton, Robert Gordon University

Developing tourism in North-East Scotland (NES) with a specific focus on enhancing the regional foodscape to grow a food tourism destination to attract visitors both locally and from further afield to meet a range of producers and hear the place and culturally based stories.

Research was undertaken to explore the micro, small and medium (MSM) food and drink producers in North-East Scotland. Interpretative mixed qualitative research based on a semi-structured interview framework involving textual and photo-elicitation method, including a novel PhotoTrail approach.

From the participants narrative there was a determined focus for the NES MSM food and drink producers to create a quality product with a strong regional provenance encapsulating place and cultural nuances. Place attachment and sense of belonging motivated some to continue to develop the enterprise with a goal to build a food or drink authentic experience in a rural community. Working in more rural areas with open green spaces individuals found benefits to their well-being and enhanced inspiration from the environment of their lived experience.

Creating an authentic product was strengthened through place, cultural narrative for inspiration, access to raw materials and developing people in the production team. A story can develop emotional connections between producer, product and customer. Pride in the product and place and having an opportunity for them to give back to the place they felt they belonged and called home was a positive achievement. NES MSM food and drink producers were able to develop cultural depth through the food and drink products they created. The work they undertake has the potential to employ local people to build the community-centred place of production. Developing associated authentic visitor experiences to connect with product and producer to hear the story related to their culture and place attachment could enrich place-based regenerative cultural tourism within North-East Scotland.

Title: Collaborative Horizons: Cross-Cultural Student Synergy and Resilient Tourism Design in East Greenland

Authors: Kelli Park, University of Southern Maine, and Tracy Michaud

In the frontier landscapes of the High North, where the rhythm of the seasons dictates the flow of life, regenerative tourism is built upon a constellation of shared stories and local resilience. This proposal highlights the new work of the Arctic Education Alliance (AEA), Visit East Greenland, and Campus Kujalleq during their Summer 2026 field project in Tasiilaq. This initiative centered on a high-impact cross-cultural collaboration between US and Greenlandic students, bridging international perspectives with deep-rooted regional expertise.

Using the Ammassalik Tourist Information Centre as a collaborative anchor, the project explored the potential for multipurpose facility design as a catalyst for year-round, regenerative tourism. Central to this experience is the "braiding" of diverse knowledge systems—integrating community-based research with Western management models and Indigenous ways of knowing. The project seeks to move away from extractive seasonal models by investigating how living community spaces can foster "Right Relations," ensuring that tourism development is co-created through reciprocity rather than external imposition.

This place-based pedagogy grounds students' understanding of leadership in a deep relationality with both the community and the environment. By honoring the interconnectedness of people and place, the collaboration provides a blueprint for professional stewardship that is culturally resonant and locally led. The presentation will share the methodological framework and grounded findings distilled from this intercultural exchange, demonstrating how land-based, relationship-centered collaborations that involve both visitors and locals are essential for the future of sustainable Arctic tourism.

Keywords: Right Relations, Cross-Cultural Collaboration, Visit East Greenland, Campus Kujalleq, Regenerative Tourism, Place-Based Pedagogy.

Title: Contextual Sensitivity Leadership in Regenerative Tourism Futures in the Arctic

Author: Heidi Kaihua, Lapland University of Applied Sciences

There are tourism enterprises in Lapland whose business practices align with the principles of regenerative tourism. I found my way to them through my doctoral dissertation research journey into the experiences of leaders. Understanding of the phenomenon emerges through leaders' experiences formed in the local context rather than through the application of predefined theoretical frameworks of regenerative tourism.

What is the significance of a leader's experiential perspective for understanding the challenges faced by tourism enterprises? The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis produced four experiential themes and highlighted the prominence of social responsibility, which prompted a more in-depth examination of the phenomenon.

The second study shifted the focus to broadens the understanding of stakeholder relations and highlights nature as a central actor, particularly in peripheral where business activities are closely intertwined with the local community and environment. *How is socially responsible value creation constructed from the perspective of a leader in a small tourism enterprise?* The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis shows that social responsibility manifests as a reciprocal interaction process in which leaders and stakeholders co-create value together. The research findings revealed care as a new dimension.

The third study took a deeper look at the leader's value base within a social-ecological system. *What role does a place-embedded and value-driven leader play in advancing regenerative tourism in the region?* Reflexive Thematic Analysis shows that leaders play a meaningful role in fostering connections with nature and other stakeholders, strengthening local identity, and promoting collective well-being and they can support a regenerative future in the Arctic.

Key words: regenerative tourism, leadership, Arctic area, stakeholder relationship

Title: Conceptualising Regenerative Storytelling: Potential Understandings and Applications

Authors: Jennifer Holman, University of Waterloo, Michela J. Stinson, and Bryan S. R. Grimwood

The purpose of this presentation is to convey the conceptual and methodological dimensions of regenerative storytelling, and how it can potentially be put to work across various case studies. Storytelling and regenerative tourism are terms the tourism industry and academy are familiar with. However, the concept of regenerative storytelling in tourism remains underexplored. Regenerative storytelling, as we conceptualise it, is the practice of sharing and co-creating place-based narratives that not only convey local cultural and ecological values, but foster reciprocal relationships and inspire actions that restore and sustain community and environmental wellbeing. This understanding has been developed from a range of literature on regenerative tourism, storytelling, narrative, relationality, and reciprocity – drawing from critical tourism, Indigenous, and decolonial scholarship. In this presentation, we draw on this conceptualisation of regenerative storytelling to show how research can be repositioned as a relational, ethical, and world-making practice. More specifically, we draw on research associated with a multi-case study project on ruination to develop an approach that mobilises counter-narratives arising from contested tourism contexts as regenerative storytelling, highlighting their capacity to reshape and redirect visitors toward relational and place-aligned behaviour. The presentation demonstrates how regenerative storytelling can be operationalised by outlining its conceptual underpinnings, illustrating congruent methodologies, and by connecting with emerging research that highlights how re-storied accounts may influence visitor meaning-making. In doing so, we position regenerative storytelling as a research approach that decentres dominant ideologies and enacts ethical responsibility for people, place, and narrative – contributing to the re-storying of destinations.

Title: Contested Identities of a Place: Perspectives of Different Stakeholder Groups

Author: Harald Dolles, Molde University College - Specialized University in Logistics

Place identity develops over time. While many studies define place identity as a form of personal identity shaped in relation to a place, another body of literature recognises that place identity is what distinguishes a place from others: its unique characteristics or imageability (well-known landmarks), and social features (events), and their usage in place-related processes. While institutions may promote an image of a place, its identity is much deeper and encompasses the meaning that its inhabitants have attributed to it. However, people ascribe this meaning based on their personal interests or knowledge, thus creating contested place identities in relation to time.

By using Åndalsnes and Rauma Municipality located in Møre og Romsdal in nord-west Norway as a case study, this research shall explore the identity of the town, as perceived by different stakeholder groups over time. The research builds upon interviews and surveys with local residents, Norwegian and international visitors, perceptions by local institutions and the image of the town, visible in marketing campaigns.

In conclusion, Åndalsnes and Rauma Municipality are described as being blessed with natural beauty (the combination of the fjord, mountains, valleys and river), but some of the so-called landmark attractions are man-made, such as Trollstigen road (opened 1936), and the gondola (opened 2021). Thus, identity is orchestrated to some extent through destination image marketing campaigns, creating mixed perceptions and acceptance among local residents. The marketing image of the place acts further as a guide to highlighted features, resulting in somehow “accepted” wear and tear. However, this opens up the possibility of saving other places and activities for local residents.

Title: From Tourism Product to Cultural Affordance: Rural Festivals, Community Building, and Place Attachment

Author: Ingunn Elvekrok, University of South-Eastern Norway, and Elsa Kristiansen

In sparsely populated rural regions, community resilience increasingly depends on social cohesion, place attachment, and the capacity of local communities to sustain settlement over time. This paper examines how community-based cultural tourism can contribute to such resilience through the activation of cultural affordances—that is, place-specific possibilities for participation, interaction, and collective sense making. Using the Motvind Festival in Rollag municipality, Norway, as a case study, the paper analyses how a small-scale, volunteer-driven cultural event functions as a resilience-building social arena both for the organizers and the hosting place.

Drawing on affordance theory, alongside perspectives from community resilience and place attachment, the paper conceptualises the festival as more than a cultural or tourism product. Through its integration of local landscape, ethical orientation, experimental music practices, and high degree of local involvement, Motvind affords forms of social interaction that strengthen bonding social capital, shared identity, and local pride. These affordances enable residents to engage as co-producers of cultural meaning rather than passive hosts, reinforcing long-term attachment to place. An additional element in the story of Motvind is that the group behind the festival consists of newcomers from urban areas who have drawn others with them. They use the term micro-urbanism, the idea of bringing parts of the city to the countryside, when explaining the success of the festival.

The analysis situates these findings within broader discussions of national total defence, where dispersed settlement and resilient local communities are increasingly understood as strategic societal assets in an unstable global context. From this perspective, culture-led tourism initiatives such as Motvind can be seen as informal infrastructures of resilience, supporting community cohesion, place attractiveness and adaptive capacity. The paper argues that affordance theory provides a useful lens for understanding how rural cultural festivals contribute to resilience at the intersection of tourism, community development, and societal preparedness.

Session 15: Northern Encounters: Grief, Landscape, and Tourism Atmospheres

Organisers: Gina Khamis

Affiliation: University of Girona

Description

Tourism literature has long privileged narratives of pleasure, vitality, and escape, often marginalising experiences of loss, vulnerability, and existential disruption. Yet tourism practices such as movement, dwelling, return, and encounter, are deeply entangled with moments of rupture that reshape how people inhabit time, space, and relational worlds. This session proposes grief not as a marginal or exceptional emotion, but as an ontological condition of vulnerability through which the affective, atmospheric, and more-than-human dimensions of tourism become particularly visible.

Drawing on critical tourism studies, affect theory, and posthumanist and non-representational approaches, the session invites contributions that explore how grief, loss, and vulnerability are lived, sensed, and negotiated through tourism practices. Particular attention is given to affective atmospheres understood as relational forces co-produced by human and nonhuman elements, bodies, landscapes, materialities, weather, and movement, that mediate experiences of travel and meaning-making in contexts of loss. Grief is approached here as durational, spatial, and atmospheric, unfolding through disrupted temporalities, charged environments, embodied mobilities, and landscapes saturated with presence and absence.

The session welcomes empirical, theoretical, methodological, and creative contributions engaging with themes such as grief and mobility; tourism and vulnerability; affective atmospheres in nature-based, memorial, or everyday tourism contexts; posthuman encounters with landscapes and nonhuman agents; and qualitative, sensory, or experimental methods attuned to affect and embodiment. Reflexive and autoethnographic approaches are particularly encouraged, including work that situates the researcher within atmospheric and relational field settings, such as ongoing autoethnographic engagements with northern landscapes in Lapland to think through vulnerability, exposure, and care in situ.

By foregrounding grief and vulnerability as constitutive of tourism rather than exceptional to it, this session aims to open new conceptual and methodological pathways for understanding tourism as a site of ontological transformation, ethical encounter, and shared exposure.

Title: With: Relational Ontologies and Ethics for Posthumanism

Authors: Emily Höckert, University of Lapland, Ana María Munar, Katrín Anna Lund, and Claudia Eger

Kin emerge between *pine*, *water*, and *place*. Their *pathos* and constant *movement* remind us that being-with questions the *borders* that our world fights to uphold as if divisions could protect us from *death* or the *apocalypse*. Instead, they invite us to engage in creative *methodology* and *translation*, to embrace *discomfort*, *ambivalence*, and *hybridity*.

This presentation is an invitation to the evolving space of the forthcoming anthology 'With: Relational Ontologies and Ethics for Posthumanism' (Palgrave Macmillan). It articulates the significance of the word *with* as a generative orientation that names the being and unfolding of relationality. By asking how to live when being is being-with, we reconfigure critical inquiry, opening it to approaches that unsettle dichotomies and the figure of the human as a self-contained and sovereign subject. In doing so, the book cultivates a plurality of responses to posthumanism's call to attend to multiplicity, difference, and more-than-human worlds in times of grief and existential crises.

The paper reflects on the journey of this volume, attending to the corporeal and messy praxis of collaborative and creative writing and reading-with. The book is presented as a postdisciplinary assemblage – a cross-fertilization of fields, generations, and ways of knowing, brought forward by scholars with diverse backgrounds in tourism, hospitality, leisure, and cultural studies. It maps the rhizomatic nature of the chapters, which explore material, more-than-human, situated, and embodied modes of knowing and becoming-with. Spanning a plurality of locations, histories, communities, temporalities, beings, languages, affects, and concepts, the contributions bring together diverse theories, stories, and methods of encountering, relating, and being with.

Title: Mourning with Landscape

Author: Bryan Grimwood, University of Waterloo

In this presentation, I draw from ongoing ethnographic research in Ontario's "near north" to explore how mourning with landscape may be a useful conceptual frame for navigating the troubles of tourism. When conceptualized relationally, mourning is a social experience of recognizing and moving through the loss of life, lands, or livelihoods. It is, in Haraway's terms (2022), a practice of living with the wounds of death and ruination which seeks not to return to some former sense of wholeness but rather to learn and enact ways of living well together as members of multispecies communities. Mourning is thus a mode of relating within more-than-human entanglements, one that is inevitably situated and emplaced and that raises questions not only about human grief in place, but about how place itself might grieve and how such grief might be sensed, interpreted, and shared.

In Ontario's near north, a landscape located roughly 150 kilometres north of Toronto and configured significantly, though not exclusively, by second-home tourism, settler colonial imaginaries of nature, and environmental change, my research is beginning to grapple with how tourism actors might come together to recognize and navigate the ruination of place. In this sense, I approach mourning not only as a response to loss, but as a relational encounter with(in) wounded landscapes that may help unsettle harmful land-based relations of extraction, commodification, and dispossession. To add texture to the presentation, I weave in stories drawn from archival materials, oral histories, personal narratives, and multisensory encounters associated with tourism in the near north; stories that help stitch together what mourning with landscape might open up for tourism as a context for learning to live well with and within damaged worlds.

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Title: Feeling Tourism Ruination at Niagara Falls, Canada

Author: Michela Stinson, Université du Québec à Montréal

Niagara Falls is an iconic northern-adjacent Canadian tourism destination. It is also a place of *tourism ruination*; it is a place in which tourism both structures and is structured by processes and conditions of social, environmental, and cultural deterioration. Processes of tourism ruination might first be recognized by their material effects, in that they result in the physical transformation of the landscape (e.g., abandonment, absence, degradation, and decay). But processes of tourism ruination are also deeply affective, as they weigh upon individuals and communities through somatic and atmospheric capacities. In this presentation, I turn to the *feeling* of ruination—in/of tourism, in/of Niagara Falls—to trace the enduring damage of ruination as a political project in its most ordinary formations (Stoler, 2008; Mah, 2014). Following the style of Gherardi's (2019) affective ethnography, I consider the effects of slow, mundane, bureaucratic, and lived-with versions of ruination that are difficult to locate (and feel) but may have profound effects on the possible conditions of life in Niagara Falls. I locate these versions through a multi-method tracing of the material-discursive history of local streetscapes and buildings variously defaced by tourism. Ultimately, I aim to make two contributions to the tourism literature: 1. I situate tourism ruination itself as multiply affective, and 2. I suggest that understanding tourism ruination requires an attention to how affects structure ordinary life.

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Title: Walking Through Loss: Grief, Pilgrimage and Therapeutic Landscapes in the Rural UK

Author: Jaeyeon Choe, Dalarna University

This study examines grief pilgrimage in the rural UK, investigating how ancient walking routes function as therapeutic spaces for the bereaved. Drawing on qualitative interviews with pilgrimage stakeholders, we explore how pilgrimage walks facilitate the processing of grief through embodied practice. Participants emphasised that pilgrimage walks create dedicated spaces for navigating complex emotions, drawing on mechanisms such as immersion in nature, physical movement, grief rituals, and social connection. Notably, parents bereaved of children experienced particularly acute grief and derived significant benefit from sharing their experiences with others who had endured comparable losses. The findings position pilgrimage walks as a holistic coping mechanism that complements clinical intervention, whilst highlighting the need for thoughtful, sensitive design that reflects diverse needs. We further examine its integration within Social Prescribing frameworks as an innovative, inclusive, and community-centred approach to bereavement support. Key implementation considerations include funding, accessibility, and the potential for reframing such journeys as 'wellness walks' to engage those who favour a secular interpretation of pilgrimage. Finally, we offer evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, healthcare professionals, and community organisations. We argue that pilgrimage routes employed in grief support not only foster individual healing, but also promote community wellbeing, heritage preservation, and rural revitalisation.

Session 16: A frightening friendship: Considering collaborations between cultural institutions and the tourism industry.

Organisers: Guðrún Dröfn Whitehead

Affiliation: University of Iceland

Description

This session will consider the global tourism growth and its effects cultural sustainability and heritage management. In the context of museum work that means reducing risk of potential damage to protected museum buildings (in Iceland, for example, turf houses), landscapes and objects, increased operating costs which come with increased tourism which require more staff, improved infrastructure (such as parking lots and toilet facilities), engagement with marketing, interpretations in different languages in exhibitions and more.

As heritage becomes commodified to serve the needs of the tourism industry, local public museums become fearful that their active participation could be in direct contrast to the foundations of museum work, to be non-profit and in service of society. In Iceland, for example, the local Museum Act 141/2011, states that the purpose of museums is to preserve Icelandic cultural and natural heritage and pass it on “unscathed to future generations”. They are not for profit, but in service of society and are to increase “people’s quality of life”. How can that be achieved within the realm of a for-profit, mostly private local tourism industry? Is there a potential for public museums to lose their professional and cultural integrity? In what way can cultural sustainability be considered when developing tourism policy and developments?

This proposed session is partly based on the organiser’s ongoing research and engages with broader academic and professional discussions on collaborations between museums and other cultural institutions and the local tourism industry. It will be a paper session, bringing together experts working within the tourism industry *and* museums, as well as academics focusing on the role of museums (private and public) within tourism. The hope is to create an academic and practical discussions of cultural sustainability and heritage commodification, and to consider the benefits of increased collaborations between the two sectors, public museums and tourism and to focus on the mounting tension between not-for-profit and for-profit stakeholders within cultural tourism. Finally, to consider how these collaborations might provide all participating agencies with the opportunity to become an active agent for good, in a changing world.

Title: Strengthening the Foundations: How to Increase Collaboration Between Icelandic Museums and the Tourism Industry?

Author: Vera Vilhjálmisdóttir, Icelandic Tourism Research Centre

Iceland's nature has been the main attraction for visitors, especially since the tourism boom in the country started 15 years ago, and nature-based tourism has flourished. However, according to a border survey conducted by the Icelandic Tourist Board in 2024, 54% of international tourists stated that Iceland's culture influenced their decision to visit. Furthermore, museums were the third most popular activity. So, despite the heavy focus on nature in Icelandic tourism, culture plays an important role in tourists' experiences while visiting Iceland.

The importance of cultural tourism, wherein museum tourism falls under, has steadily grown and become one of the fundamental pillars of tourism in Europe, drawing millions of visitors to the region every year. However, the needs and main goals of the two sectors – museums and tourism – can be very different in nature. Therefore, collaboration and mutual understanding is important for a good working relationship. Especially considering the need for the museums sector in Iceland to have a strong role and voice in the development of cultural tourism products, to ensure greater credibility and authenticity.

The paper presented is part of a one-year project, funded by the Icelandic Museum Fund, with the aim of establishing better cooperation between the two sectors by starting a dialogue through four workshops held around Iceland in 2026. Preliminary findings will be presented from the first two workshops, held in North and East Iceland in May 2026, touching upon topics such as opportunities, challenges, and how to approach strengthening the foundations of further collaboration.

Title: Between Cultural Tourism and Public Mission: What Libraries Can Learn from the Museum Sector

Authors: Jamie Rose Johnston, University of Iceland, Radoslav Hristov, and Tania Todorova

As heritage has increasingly become part of Iceland's tourism industry, museums have raised concerns about how participation in tourism aligns with their legislative mandate to safeguard heritage for future generations. Similar questions may also be relevant for libraries. According to the Icelandic Library Act, libraries are public information and cultural institutions that provide access to diverse information resources and cultural heritage collections while promoting culture, literacy, lifelong learning, and public access to cultural resources. As publicly oriented institutions serving society rather than commercial interests, libraries may face similar tensions as they increasingly intersect with tourism.

These questions may be particularly relevant for national and academic libraries, which hold significant heritage collections while supporting research and education. Although these institutions are not strongly integrated into the tourism industry, their collections, exhibitions, and cultural activities have the potential to engage broader audiences, including local communities and international visitors.

Recent research on "library tourism" proposes that architecture, heritage collections, cultural events, and organized visits may position libraries as cultural attractions. Drawing on this concept, the paper adopts a conceptual and comparative perspective to consider how such approaches might be pursued while avoiding tensions that have emerged in the museum sector as heritage institutions engage more actively with tourism. By bringing the concept of library tourism into dialogue with museum debates on heritage commodification and cultural sustainability, the paper explores how libraries might increase visibility and public engagement without compromising their public mission or subordinating cultural mandates to commercial imperatives.

Title: Playing with Integrity: Museums Between Engagement and Disneyfication

Author: Stefanie Steinbeck, National Museum of Denmark

Museums in Denmark increasingly navigate a complex landscape of expectations shaped by cultural policy, declining public funding, and growing demands to demonstrate relevance, accessibility, and public value (). Alongside statutory obligations to research, preserve, and communicate cultural heritage, museums are pressured to function as attractive destinations within a competitive visitor and experience economy. These demands complicate contemporary understandings of what museums are, whom they serve, and how cultural value is articulated.

Within this context, play has emerged at the National Museum of Denmark as part of a participatory shift in museum practice (Simon, 2010). Drawing on the author's involvement in the development project *Moving Museums Through Play*, this reflexive contribution examines how play-based initiatives respond to pressures associated with tourism and experiential appeal (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). While such approaches aim to broaden access, they sit uneasily with long-standing institutional norms of authority, seriousness, and controlled behaviour traditionally associated with national museums (Bennett, 1995).

Observations from play experiences in museum and heritage settings reveal a persistent duality. For established audiences and traditionally trained museum professionals, play is more likely to be perceived as disruptive or as signaling an unwanted convergence with entertainment culture. For new and infrequent visitors, playful formats function as low-threshold points of entry that support embodied and emotional engagement with cultural heritage (Falk & Dierking, 2013). The analysis highlights how proximity to the visitor and experience economy intensifies anxieties about trivialization or Disneyfication (Dan: Tivolisering) (Bryman, 2004), while revealing how institutional integrity is renegotiated as museums redefine their role.

Keywords: Cultural tourism, Experience economy, Heritage commodification, Institutional integrity, Play-based approaches

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Title: From Heritage to Destination: Tourism Strategies in Viking Age World Heritage Sites

Author: Helga Vollertsen, University of Iceland, National Museum of Iceland

This paper examines how World Heritage branding functions as a mechanism for attracting tourism, using the 2015 transnational serial nomination of Viking Age sites to the UNESCO World Heritage List as a case study. Although the nomination was ultimately deferred, several participating sites have been inscribed individually, including Þingvellir National Park (Iceland), Hedeby and Danevirke (Germany), and Jelling and the Danish ring fortresses (Denmark) and all of these sites use their World Heritage appointment as a selling point for visitors.

The paper argues that World Heritage inscription simultaneously creates opportunities and challenges for heritage sites. On the one hand, inscription enhances international visibility, strengthens cultural prestige, and increases tourism potential. On the other hand, it introduces significant pressures related to the preservation of authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value, particularly in the context of rising visitor numbers. These dynamics expose persistent tensions between conservation and commercialization.

Drawing on examples from the listed sites, and focusing on Þingvellir in Iceland, the paper explores how heritage management strategies respond to these competing demands. Attention is given to the role of cultural institutions, especially museums, in mediating between preservation objectives and tourism development. By interpreting, contextualizing, and managing visitor experiences, these institutions contribute to balancing access with conservation.

The paper highlights the broader challenges faced by World Heritage sites operating within a global tourism economy and underscores the importance of institutional approaches in negotiating the relationship between heritage conservation and commercial use.

Title: Between Image and Authenticity: Responding to Cross-Cultural Imaginaries in Icelandic Museums

Author: Yixuan Lu, University of Iceland

Iceland's post-2008 tourism boom has placed cultural institutions under mounting pressure—from rising operational costs and infrastructural demands to expectations of multilingual interpretation and market-oriented programming. Among an increasingly diverse visitor base, Chinese tourists stand out: arrivals grew by 136% between 2022 and 2023, and by a further 72% between 2023 and 2024, bringing imaginaries shaped by social media discourse, popular culture, and a symbolic construction of Iceland as a space of escape, purity, and emotional restoration.

This study draws on these imaginaries as an entry point to interrogate how image and authenticity are constructed and negotiated within Icelandic museums. Grounded in theories of tourism imaginaries and multi-dimensional authenticity, the research combines content analysis of Chinese social media posts with discourse analysis of museum communications, and field interviews with Chinese visitors conducted at Icelandic museums. The analysis reveals that natural landscapes substantially dominate cultural references in Chinese representations of Iceland, while cultural encounters carry a distinctive and symbolically concentrated significance, which raises the question of how cultural institutions should position themselves in relation to visitors whose selective engagements with culture reflect different aspirations and value projections.

The study maps the tension between imaginaries arriving from outside and authenticity as locally defined and institutionally protected while tourism growth generates continuous pressure to accommodate and market. This paper argues that authenticity is not a fixed essence to be defended against external imaginaries, but a relational quality that carries opportunities for museums to engage meaningfully with a diversifying world.

Session 17: From Insight to Impact: Reevaluating Visitor Understanding for Sustainable NatureBased Tourism

Organisers: Noelien Wilsnach, Zsolt Kazai, Saumya Rathnayake, Henna Konu

Affiliation: The Norwegian University of Life Sciences, University of Eastern Finland

Description

In a world where tourism is increasingly intertwined with environmental pressures, shifting societal expectations, and growing demands for sustainability and climate neutrality, the pursuit of understanding visitors has become a vital foundation for strategic and sustainable tourism development. Nature-based tourism and outdoor recreation destinations are faced with rapid socio-ecological change. Therefore, insights into visitor behaviour, motivations and experiences offer new possibilities for rethinking how nature-based tourism creates value. Nature-based tourism has the potential to support communities, offer seasonal offers throughout the year and balance this with conservation goals.

Building on these foundations, the session examines how insight-driven approaches inform the practical and strategic dimensions of nature-based tourism. A broad range of visitor insight methods such as visitor monitoring technologies, mobile or GPS-based tracking, social media data analysis, and behavioural interventions, enhances understanding of visitors and can support more purposeful service design and innovation, contributing to the resilience of nature-based businesses and the vitality of regional economies. At the same time, deeper awareness of visitor patterns and preferences highlights the pressures placed on shared infrastructures and natural assets, underscoring the need for thoughtful management of trails, facilities, and other public goods that enable outdoor recreation. Improved visitor understanding also opens opportunities to foster more responsible patterns of use: communication, education, interpretation, and engagement can encourage behaviours that sustain ecological health, respect cultural heritage, and strengthen the reciprocal relationship between visitors and the environments they encounter. In addition, the session draws attention to environmental qualities that shape restorative experiences and increasingly inform longterm stewardship and destination planning.

We welcome presentation proposals from diverse perspectives, including governmental, business, community, and individual viewpoints, to explore the wideranging implications of improved visitor understanding for naturebased tourism. The session encourages innovative and interdisciplinary insights that advance how enhanced visitor insight can support more sustainable, equitable, and resilient tourism futures.

Title: How Instagram Shapes Visitors' Relation to Wild Places

Authors: Lovisa Ulrica Molin, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Sofie K. Selvaag, and Øystein Aas

Nature-based tourism increasingly unfolds through social media and affects human–nature relations. Social media blurs the boundary between tourists’ homes and the destination: before travel, circulating images shape expectations and itineraries; during and after visits, new uploads influence others, extending engagement beyond destination borders. Physical mobility is evident in tourism activities, while digital mobilities appear as images, ideas, and emotions transgressing spatial boundaries – also affecting how visitors move, perceive, and care for the environment of a destination. Examining how a platform like Instagram mediates visitors’ relation to a place expands understandings of tourism as place-making and spatial practice. 2700 images connected to Femundsmarka National Park in Norway, were screened and interpreted using a reflexive and exploratory visual methodology with feelings as an analytical lens. Investigating feelings evoked by the images revealed ideas and ideals of wildness regenerated through digital content. A scientific sensing of these feelings related to tourism practices advances understandings of the worldmaking agency of tourism in the postdigital era. Findings illustrate how digital practices cultivate and recast feelings, influencing tourism’s role in shaping places and the relations that sustain them. Social media platforms function as interactive and creative meeting places rather than unidirectional communication channels like websites. Therefore, those seeking to manage visitors need to create and interact with digital content through an informed understanding of platform affordances. Moreover, visitor management that seeks to support ecological integrity alongside enduring, affective human–nature connections, requires continuous participation and creative labour in social media interactions.

Title: When Nature Meets Technology: Understanding Use of Digital Apps Among Outdoor Recreationists and Associated Communication Opportunities

Authors: Saumya Rathnayke, The Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Øystein Aas, and Peter Fredman

Digital applications (apps) for outdoor recreation have significantly transformed how recreationists make trip decisions, plan itineraries, navigate trails, and share their trip experiences. Empirical insight into how these apps are used across pre, during, and post trip stages is therefore essential. We surveyed 1,391 outdoor recreationists in Norway, including mountain hikers (n=760), hunters/ anglers (n=327), and summer visitors to mountain destinations (n=304). The questionnaire captured patterns of digital app use and associated behaviors. The data were mainly analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, cluster analysis, and regression-based group comparisons. The results showed that digital app use was mainly driven by practical needs and inspiration. The most common challenges were connection and network related obstacles when in remote outdoor settings. Digital apps use significantly varied across trip stages, with the pre-trip stage representing the strongest and most common point of digital engagement. Notably, biodiversity information on digital apps was rated as the least engaging and less attractive, despite its importance for promoting responsible recreation in sensitive areas. Further, recreationists occasionally share trip related contents on mainstream digital platforms, this content focused preliminarily on aesthetic aspects of the trip rather than practical information. These findings extend current understanding of digital visitor communication in outdoor recreation and demonstrate potential of digital apps as important channels for influencing visitor behaviors in sensitive nature areas. The study also provides practical guidance for protected area managers and app designers/ developers seeking to develop engaging communication strategies that both balance the visitor experiences and environmental conservation.

Keywords: outdoor recreation, digital apps, visitor management, Trip stages (pre-during-post), conservation communication

Title: Demand for Nature-Based Services: Visitor Insights from a Qualitative Study in Finland

Authors: Riikka Puhakka, LAB University of Applied Sciences, and Ursula Siltanen, University of Helsinki

Well-being and health have become increasingly important drivers of travel choices in urbanised societies. In Finland, for example, nature-based well-being services are among the key tourism attractions. While the well-being and health benefits of nature are widely recognised, urban residents may lack extensive experience or confidence in outdoor recreation, making visitor insights essential for developing accessible and meaningful nature-based services.

This study explores visitor demand for commercial nature-based services by examining how Finnish consumers perceive, value, and engage with such services, as well as the motivations and barriers influencing their purchasing decisions. The study is based on qualitative interview data (n=31) collected from Finnish visitors at Vierumäki Resort and Pääjärvi National Park. Data were gathered within the EU co-funded project *Local Nature as a Business Booster*.

The findings indicate interest in nature-based services, particularly when travelling in unfamiliar environments. Participants had most commonly used rental services (e.g. canoes), but expressed interest in a broad spectrum of activities, ranging from guided well-being retreats to cooking courses. Purchasing nature-based services enabled visitors to gain new nature experiences, discover unfamiliar places, try new activities in a safe manner, and acquire new skills and knowledge. Key barriers included price, limited availability or insufficient information, and a preference for independent nature experiences. The analysis identifies four distinct visitor types based on their level of engagement in nature-based activities and willingness to purchase such services. The findings underline how improved visitor understanding can inform service design, targeted communication, and the development of nature-based tourism.

Title: Understanding Visitor Behavior in Nature-Based Wellness Tourism: Insights from the South Baltic Region

Author: Daumantas Bočkus, Health Research and Innovation Science Center, Klaipėda University, Lithuania

Nature-based wellness tourism has gained increasing attention in the post-pandemic era as tourists increasingly seek experiences that promote health improvement, psychological recovery, and connection with natural environments. This growing interest indicates the need to better understand visitor behavior and preferences in the context of nature-based wellness tourism.

This study examines visitor behavior, motivations, and decision-making factors connected to nature-based wellness tourism in the South Baltic region. The research is based on a large-scale quantitative survey ($n = 2789$) conducted in 2025 as part of the N-B-Well project (Interreg South Baltic programme), covering Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. The survey explored behavioral patterns in destination choice, the perceived importance of natural environments in travel decisions, and visitor preferences related to physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, K-means cluster analysis, and regression modeling. The results indicate that natural environments play a central role in visitor decision-making, while interest in nature-based wellness tourism has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. Cluster analysis identified several distinct visitor segments based on their engagement with nature-based wellness experiences and travel behavior. The study contributes empirical insights into visitor behavior in nature-based wellness tourism and demonstrates how behavioral segmentation can inform the development of tourism products, including thematic cross-border wellness routes, that better align destination offerings with diverse visitor needs.

Keywords: visitor behavior, nature-based wellness, visitor segmentation, South Baltic region

Title: Knowledge Management Capabilities in Nature-Based Tourism Firms

Author: Zsolt Kazai, University of Eastern Finland

Despite the consensus on the prominent role of Knowledge Management (KM) in the business performance, empirical understanding of KM in micro, small and medium-sized nature-based tourism (NBT) firms is limited. This gap is particularly significant given that such firms differ from larger enterprises not only in scale, but also in business philosophy and in how they conceptualize success, often balancing economic goals with environmental stewardship. Such firms are significantly more exposed to global and local market effects and to environmental transformation resulting from climate change, which highlights the importance of effective knowledge management to enhance resilience and competitiveness and support decision-making processes. Hence, the purpose of this study is to increase understanding of skills and competences required in KM in micro, small and medium-sized firms, by examining the knowledge management capabilities of nature-based tourism firms and the skills these firms consider important for acquiring, utilizing, and transforming information and data in their business activities.

The study builds on a qualitative thematic analysis of 38 semi-structured interviews conducted in Finland with nature-based tourism entrepreneurs operating in various protected areas. The analysis identifies the purposes for which different forms of knowledge are utilized, and KM capabilities underpinning these practices. The tentative findings show that tacit knowledge is predominant, and that knowledge management processes rely heavily on individual entrepreneurs' human capabilities and learning capacities. Due to limited resources, these firms frequently collaborate with partners in delivering services and to outsource the acquisition and generation of new knowledge. Together, these practices shape how micro-sized NBT firms build resilience and pursue competitiveness under conditions of environmental and institutional uncertainty.

Keywords: knowledge management, nature-based tourism, micro enterprises, SMEs

Title: Financing Protected Area Management in Latvia: Governance Structures, Pressures, and Emerging Needs

Authors: İlker Gül, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Andris Klepers, and Agita Livina

Protected areas in Northern Europe have experienced increasing tourism activity in recent years (Fredman et al., 2021), driven by demand for authentic nature experiences, health benefits, and post-COVID effects (Calvén et al., 2025; Haukeland et al., 2026). These areas are also expected to maintain ecological integrity and deliver public goods. However, the alignment among management needs, visitor pressure (Weaver & Lawton, 2017), visitor experience (Zajchowski et al., 2019) and financing structures remains unclear, with funding arrangements often fragmented and insufficient (Wilkie et al., 2001). In the case of Latvia, a large part of the work is carried out by and coordinated by the Nature Conservation Agency, the State Forests organization, and municipalities, all of which are public, but some are also NGO or private led. This fragmented structure requires a more systematic examination of how governance and funding structures respond to growing visitor (Hadwen et al., 2007) and financial (Bruner et al., 2004) pressures in protected areas.

This study develops an analytical framework to examine how protected areas in Latvia are financed and whether existing funding structures adequately respond to emerging pressures.

This paper draws on initial findings from Latvia, combining exploratory field observations and rapid field trips (Eden et al., 2019) to gain a better understanding of the field. The methodology incorporates an analysis of the financial costs of protected areas alongside semi-structured interviews (Young et al., 2018) with managers from two of Latvia's four national parks.

Our study makes two main contributions. First, it proposes an analytical framework for examining protected area financing based on initial empirical material rather than relying solely on descriptive accounts. Second, it provides an empirical starting point for a broader comparative discussion on protected area financing in Baltic and Nordic contexts.

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Title: Market-Based Approaches to Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation in Tourism: Insights from Finland's Landscape and Recreation Value Trade Pilot

Authors: Liisa Tyrväinen, Natural Resources Institute Finland, and Henna Konu

Tourism in forested destinations depends strongly on high-quality landscapes and biodiversity, yet concrete market-based incentives to maintain these values remain scarce. This study examines piloting of a tourism-related payment for ecosystem services (PES) model, the *Landscape and Recreation Value Trade* (LRVT), in Ruka–Kuusamo, Finland, where commercial forestry is an important land use. The LRVT model enables voluntary contributions from tourists and tourism businesses to compensate private forest owners for managing landscapes and biodiversity that support nature-based tourism.

Through a co-design process and the use of forest data, suitable forest areas were identified based on landscape, biodiversity, and carbon storage criteria, and voluntary funding mechanisms were tested. Funds collected—mainly from tourists—resulted in modest revenue and one long-term landowner contract, while contributions from tourism firms remained limited, despite widespread recognition of the importance of maintaining destination appeal.

The pilot demonstrated the potential of PES schemes to complement EU biodiversity strategy goals by encouraging stewardship of cultural ecosystem services and biodiversity in commercial forests. It also highlights the need to conceptualize biodiversity as a multidimensional ecological property that shapes destination attractiveness and tourism value creation. Within the tourism sector, initiatives such as Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) indicate an increasing commitment to biodiversity-positive practices; however, deeper integration into business models is still needed. The LRVT approach offers an example of avenue for advancing market-driven, tourism-supported biodiversity actions.

Keywords: Nature-based tourism, PES models, biodiversity conservation, landscape management, forest management

Title: Tourism, Neoliberalism, and the Commodification of Nature in the Arctic: A Systematic Review

Authors: Jumanah Khan, Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Iceland, Rannveig Ólafsdóttir, and Anna Dóra Sæþórsdóttir

Over the past decades, the Arctic has emerged as an expanding frontier for tourism, shaped by climate change, mobility, market expansion, and intensified destination branding. In the Nordic region, including Iceland and the wider circumpolar North, tourism development is increasingly organized through neoliberal logics that privilege growth, entrepreneurial place-making, and the commodification of nature. Yet the literature on Arctic tourism remains fragmented, and the specific ways of neoliberalization are conceptualized and critiqued across Nordic and Arctic contexts have not been systematically synthesized.

This presentation reports the initial findings of a systematic literature review examining how Arctic tourism scholarship addresses neoliberal governance, nature commodification, and their social, environmental, and political implications. It also assesses the methodological and geographical distribution of the literature, with attention to whether Nordic cases, particularly Iceland, are sufficiently represented in current debates.

Preliminary findings suggest that much of the literature describes tourism growth as a process of destination-making, often justified by sustainability narratives and appeals to regional vitality. However, the review also indicates persistent gaps in attention to justice, access, local wellbeing, and the lived consequences of tourism commodification. By identifying dominant themes and unresolved questions, the review contributes to the broader Visitor Monitoring and Management in Protected and Recreational Areas (VIMAS) project and provides a critical foundation for understanding how neoliberalism shapes Arctic nature-based tourism and governance.

Title: Governing Growth: Tourism Dynamics and Sustainability Challenges in Iceland

Authors: Rannveig Ólafsdóttir, Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Iceland, Anna Dóra Sæþórsdóttir, and Jumanah Khan

Global tourism continues to expand as a major sector of international trade, driven by a model of continuous economic growth that raises significant challenges for destinations' socio-ecological sustainability. Iceland exemplifies this trend, having experienced rapid tourism growth in recent decades, resulting in increased spatial concentration, and intensifying pressures on natural environments. This study argues that dominant framings centred on overtourism and visitor numbers provide only a partial understanding of the processes shaping tourism impacts. Drawing on systemic approaches and evolutionary economic geography, it positions governance as a key mechanism shaping how tourism growth is coordinated, spatially organised, and materially supported, thereby influencing how visitor activities translate into environmental and socio-spatial impacts. Using longitudinal data on visitor flows, spatial distribution, and sectoral development in Iceland, the findings reveal persistent spatial and temporal concentration alongside growing tensions between growth-oriented development and sustainability objectives. These findings indicate that tourism pressures are structurally produced through interactions among demand, infrastructure, governance, and destination capacities, rather than being isolated or episodic. Reframing tourism impact understanding through a sustainability lens highlights the need to move beyond volume-based metrics toward systemic approaches that integrate ecological limits, socio-spatial equity, and long-term resilience. This shift provides a pathway from insight to impact, informing more sustainable governance strategies for nature-based tourism.

Session 19: Building Communities, Developing Regions: Research, Studies, and Practices

Organisers: Laufey Haraldsdóttir, Deisi Maricato, Annika Hanau, and Jessica Aquino

Affiliation: University of Iceland at Hólar, University of Iceland, University of Wuppertal

Description

Community building and regional development are the processes of making communities and regions more equitable, inclusive, and resilient through collaborative efforts towards socio-economic and environmental improvements, focusing on both healthy humans and healthy environments, which underline a holistic view of quality of life (Jóhannesson et al., 2025). Capacity building has recently undergone a change in how it is understood: what was previously seen as a one-way process of knowledge transfer is now viewed as a collective construction grounded in capacity sharing, emphasising reciprocity, inclusive dialogue, ethical collaboration, and multidirectional knowledge exchange among different actors (Mercer & Ovitz, 2023). Within this context, regenerative tourism approaches highlight learning, networking, and mobilization (Aquino et al., 2024) as central mechanisms for fostering long-term community resilience. These developments highlight the importance of dialogic networks and knowledge exchange as a path for co-creating resilient communities.

This session invites contributions that examine tourism as a relational and networked process within community and regional development. Drawing on perspectives from tourism studies pedagogy, community-based tourism, regional development, and regenerative approaches, the session focuses on how knowledge exchange, collaboration, and co-creation shape development outcomes across different contexts.

Contributions may address a range of empirical and conceptual perspectives, including—but not limited to—capacity sharing practices, governance arrangements, stakeholder networks, and pedagogical approaches to tourism and development. Culture-based tourism, creative practices, and events may also be explored as contexts or mechanisms through which collaboration, learning, and community engagement are enacted, without being treated as isolated tourism products. Overall, the session seeks to advance critical discussions on tourism's role in supporting resilient communities and regions by foregrounding relational processes, shared capacities, and networked forms of development.

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Title: Pedagogical Practices in Tourism Higher Education: A Systematic Literature Review

Authors: Deisi Maricato, University of Iceland, Jessica Aquino, and Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson

This presentation presents the results of a systematic literature review on teaching practices in higher education in the field of Tourism, with a particular focus on the educational discourses that shape knowledge production. The study aims to answer the following research question: What is the dominant educational discourse that guides knowledge production in tourism teaching practices? To address this question, a systematic review of peer-reviewed academic articles published between 2019 and 2025 and indexed in multiple international academic repositories was conducted, encompassing literature from both the Global North and the Global South.

The review included journal articles published in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Icelandic, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish, based on the author's language proficiency. The analysis was conducted in English and rigorously followed the PRISMA protocol for systematic reviews. The selected studies were examined according to their theoretical and methodological approaches, pedagogical models, and the types of knowledge prioritized in higher education in tourism.

The results reveal recurring patterns and significant gaps in the literature, particularly the dominance of specific epistemological paradigms and the limited integration of diverse perspectives. The discussion highlights the relevance of adopting a decolonizing approach to tourism education, emphasizing the inclusion of multiple epistemologies, situated knowledges, and varied sociocultural contexts. This study contributes to ongoing academic debates, fostering critical reflection on established teaching practices and identifying opportunities for pedagogical innovation that support more inclusive, reflective, and sustainable approaches to tourism education.

Title: Community-Led Tourism Governance in Estonian National Parks: Grassroots Innovation in a Centralized System

Authors: Kaisa Linno, Estonian University of Life Sciences, Tarmo Pilving, and Monika Suškevičs

Protected areas are increasingly challenged by rising visitor numbers, environmental pressures, and the need to balance conservation objectives with local community well-being. Although collaborative and community-inclusive approaches are widely promoted, national parks typically remain governed through centralized, state-led institutional frameworks. This often limits local participation in tourism development and reduces opportunities for communities to respond to changing socio-economic and environmental conditions.

This paper examines emerging forms of community-led tourism governance within Estonian national parks, which represent some of the oldest protected areas in the post-Soviet region and are among the country's most significant tourism destinations. Despite a historically centralized management system, local communities have begun to organize into tourism associations that function as grassroots, non-governmental governance actors. These associations bring together local entrepreneurs, residents, and other stakeholders, forming collaborative networks that actively shape tourism development alongside formal park authorities.

Drawing on a qualitative case study approach, the paper explores how these community-led initiatives contribute to co-created tourism practices and institutional innovation within a highly regulated context. The findings suggest that grassroots governance structures can expand local participation, enhance community capacity, and foster more adaptive and place-based tourism development. In doing so, they complement formal management systems and strengthen the resilience of protected areas in times of crisis and ongoing change.

Title: Co-Creating Regenerative Tourism Futures: Preliminary Insights from Participatory Action Research in Iceland

Author: Annika Hanau, University of Wuppertal

As tourism destinations navigate intersecting pressures of overtourism, ecological strain, and socio-economic inequality, regenerative tourism has emerged as a framework that moves beyond harm reduction towards actively enhancing community and ecological wellbeing (Bellato & Pollock, 2025; Dredge, 2022). Yet its operationalisation at the destination level remains conceptually under-specified, particularly in Nordic and Arctic contexts where place-based identities, centre-periphery dynamics, and small-scale community structures shape both the opportunities and limits of transformative approaches (Jóhannesson et al., 2025).

This contribution draws on preliminary empirical insights from participatory workshops conducted in Reykjavík and Hvammstangi, Iceland, in September 2025, as part of an ongoing PhD project. Engaging tourism entrepreneurs, municipal actors, and community representatives, the workshops functioned as arenas of dialogical learning and capacity sharing. Findings reveal that while sustainability has become an established baseline, regenerative tourism demands a deeper paradigm shift: reframing tourism as a living system that actively co-evolves with place and generates new potential, rather than merely reducing harm (Reed, 2007).

The comparison between Reykjavík's mature urban context and Hvammstangi's peripheral rural setting illustrates how regenerative capacity is shaped by local agency, governance structures, and community embeddedness in decision-making. Barriers including financial constraints, knowledge gaps, and systemic misalignment point to the need for supportive policy environments and peer learning networks rather than individual operator-level change alone. This contribution argues that participatory workshops are not merely research methods but catalysts for co-creating resilient tourism communities across contrasting destination contexts.

Title: 'Infrastructuring' Renewable Energy Transitions: Mobilities, Rural Space and the Visitor Economy

Authors: Solène Prince, Linnaeus University, Marianna Strzelecka, and Scott Cohen

Rural destinations worldwide are being integrated in renewable energy transitions to accommodate the expansion of renewable energy infrastructure. In this presentation, we argue that to be fair processes for rural dwellers, renewable energy transitions must be understood as wider socio-material reconfigurations of rural space mediated through the infrastructures that sustain the mobilities of people, information, and resources. Renewable energy transitions are as much processes of circulation as they are products of technological innovation. While existing research in renewable energy transitions has emphasized the materiality of energy infrastructures and its impact on the energy resilience of communities, limited attention has been given to the way these transitions transform the fabric of rural communities and impact their wider socio-economic resilience.

This presentation examines how the movement of workers involved in the materialization of renewable energy systems (meaning those who design, construct, and maintain them) transforms rural space by giving opportunities for regional development and community resilience. Adopting the conceptual lens of 'infrastructuring', we present the infrastructure that enables and accommodates the mobilities of these workers as relational and processual. We approach renewable energy transitions as processes of circulation that reconfigure material and social relations in rural space.

The findings come from interview with accommodation providers in a rural municipality in Sweden where wind parks and other industrial development related to sustainability transitions have been and are being developed. The findings reveal how the infrastructures supporting worker mobility generate ripple effects that intersect with the tourism economy and the intimacy of hospitality, creating new socio-material tensions and socio-economic opportunities for rural communities in renewable energy transitions. By foregrounding the interplay between mobility, infrastructure, and rural life, this presentation raises questions around a more nuanced understanding of how renewable energy transitions intersect with tourism mobilities, contribute to regional development, and reconstitute resilient rural space beyond their immediate material footprint.

Title: The Role of Entrepreneurship in Sustaining a Vibrant Archipelago

Authors: Gustaf Onn, Södertörn University, Saeid Abbasian, Maria Thulemark and Christian Widholm

The purpose of this project is to increase understanding of entrepreneurship in an archipelago context and how entrepreneurship affects the ability to live and work on Swedish islands. The research questions are

1. What does the geography of entrepreneurship look like in Stockholm Archipelago?
2. How do the archipelago stakeholders view the concept of a living archipelago?
3. What roles do entrepreneurs have in the creation and maintenance of a living archipelago and how does this connect to the place they operate in?

The project has received grants from the Kamprad family foundation and will be carried out 2027-2029.

The focus is on islands lacking a fixed link via tunnel or bridge to the mainland, and they share the rural situation with low levels of services, long transportations, limited public transport, demographic challenges, but also environments with high touristic values.

In human geography, theory deals with the meaning of places, how places construct ideas, attitudes, innovation, creativity etc. and how the places are reformed by people at them, through their thoughts, norms and behaviours.

Archipelago entrepreneurial embeddedness may also create forced place-attachment, where the limited opportunities, lack of resources, influential business connections and networks forces them to rely on the own local context and mobilise available resources to create room for manoeuvre and maintain their place-attachment. We aim to break with the traditional research on embeddedness and catch something more fluent and multilayered, where a process approach considers different degrees of embeddedness.

Session 20: Sustainable Business Models in Tourism and Hospitality: Circularity, Resilience, Governance and Impact

Organisers: Kelsey M. Johansen, Aylin Poroy Arsoy, Juanita Blue

Affiliation: Natural Resources Institute Finland, Bursa Uludag University, Atlantic Technological University

Description

Tourism and hospitality systems worldwide are facing intensifying and interconnected sustainability challenges, including climate change, resource scarcity, geopolitical instability, labour precarity, economic uncertainty, and increasing regulatory and societal scrutiny (Bramwell et al., 2017; Gössling et al., 2021; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2021). These pressures call into question the long-term viability of dominant growth-oriented business models and highlight the need for more holistic, resilient, regenerative and impact-focused approaches to value creation across tourism and hospitality ecosystems (Boluk et al., 2019; Johansen & Konu, 2025; Lew et al., 2020; McTiernan et al., 2025).

This session explores how sustainable, circular and regenerative business models can be designed, adapted and governed across destinations, hospitality providers and wider experience networks (Bocken et al., 2014; Blanco-Moreno et al., 2025; Johansen & Konu, 2025). Moving beyond a narrow destination focus, this session will explicitly include accommodation, food and beverage, cultural and creative enterprises, nature-based operators, transport actors and hybrid public–private governance arrangements that shape tourism experiences and impacts (per O'Rourke et al., 2025). Particular attention is paid to business models as systems of value creation, delivery and capture that operate across multiple stakeholders and scales (Bocken et al., 2014), and to their potential to contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation, social wellbeing, equitable value distribution and long-term resilience (Bellato et al., 2023; Iddawala & Lee, 2025).

Presentation on the following key themes are particularly welcome: circularity and resource stewardship, regenerative and nature-positive tourism, resilience and adaptive capacity, governance and institutional innovation, impact measurement and performance assessment (financial and non-financial), equity and inclusion, digitalisation and AI, and post-growth or degrowth perspectives (per Higgins-Desbiolles, 2021; Poroy Arsoy et al., 2024). The session also welcomes conceptual, empirical and methodological contributions, as well as in progress works, that advance systemic transformations towards just, resilient and regenerative tourism and hospitality futures.

Title: Virtual Nature Tourism as a Circular Business Model Innovation: Insights from the VERNE Pilot in Finland

Authors: Kelsey Johansen, Natural Resources Institute Finland, Tuomas Kari, and Liisa Tyrväinen

Tourism systems are under pressure to transition towards sustainable, resilient, and circular models, in response to climate change, resource constraints, and growing societal accountability expectations (Bramwell et al., 2017; Gössling et al., 2021; Gusmerotti et al., 2024; Manniche et al., 2021). Digitalisation and virtualisation are emerging as promising pathways for reconfiguring tourism experiences, providing memorable and meaningful experiences that reduce environmental impacts, support wellbeing, and deliver environmental and sustainability messaging (Jokom et al, 2025; Kari et al., 2024; Peruzzini et al., 2023; Singh & Kaunert, 2025; Stappung et al., 2023).

Virtual tourism has evolved from a marketing and pre-visit tool into a means of delivering and reshaping immersive experiences that supports sustainability transitions (Beck et al., 2019; Talwar et al., 2022). Within nature-based tourism (NBT), virtual experiences foster environmental awareness, support pro-environmental behaviour, and provide accessible, low-impact alternatives or complements to physical visitation, reducing pressure on sensitive ecosystems (Ball, 2023; Su et al., 2024). However, as virtual NBT becomes part of hybrid digital–physical systems, significant methodological, theoretical, and conceptual gaps remain (Bafadhal et al., 2025; Yung & Kshoo-Lattimore, 2017).

This study presents conceptual insights from a Finnish virtual NBT pilot in Nuuksio National Park, an outdoor recreation and NBT destination near Helsinki characterised by forested landscapes, pristine lakes, and proximate wilderness. As part of the EU-funded VERNE-project (2024-2027), the pilot examines how immersive virtual NBT can complement, substitute, or enhance physical tourism, reducing carbon emissions, alleviating pressure on sensitive ecosystems, and broadening accessibility. Positioned at the intersection of circular economy principles (Gusmerotti et al., 2024), sustainable business model innovation (Bocken et al., 2014), and regenerative tourism (Bellato et al., 2023), this work-in-progress highlights the potential of hybrid digital-physical tourism models to support more inclusive, circular and regenerative tourism futures.

Keywords: Virtual nature-based tourism; digitalization in tourism; Sustainable business models; circularity, immersive experiences

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Title: Transitioning to Circular Food Systems in Tourism: A Sustainable Business Model Approach from Pomurje

Authors: Aylin Poroy Arsoy, Bursa Uludag University, Padraig Gallagher, Elif Yucel, and Janja Viher

This study presents the sustainable business model developed for the pilot project implemented in the Pomurje region of Slovenia as part of the VERNE – *The One-Stop-Shop of Accessible Circular Solutions for Sustainable Tourism* project. The primary objective of the study is to develop a circular gastronomy ecosystem that reduces food waste and generates added value by integrating local producers, the HORECA sector, and consumers through the ZeroNET digital marketplace and a zero-emission logistics system.

The process of developing a sustainable business model for the pilot region is based on a phased and integrated methodology. In the first phase, stakeholders were reclassified and prioritized according to their level of importance; subsequently, the destination's current status was assessed using PESTLE, Porter's Five Forces, SWOT-CAME, and competitor analysis. Based on the findings from these analyses and interviews with stakeholders, a Three-Layer Business Model Canvas (TLBMC) encompassing economic, environmental, and social dimensions was developed, and interactions and conflicts between the layers were analyzed. In the final phase, this framework was transformed into a comprehensive, implementation-ready sustainable business model, resulting in the creation of an action plan.

The findings indicate that value in the Pomurje pilot primarily emerges through coordination, digital integration, and stakeholder collaboration. However, financial sustainability, stakeholder alignment, and digital capacity gaps were identified as significant challenges. The study presents a practical model for integrating circular economy principles into tourism destinations and offers guiding insights for policymakers and practitioners in the context of sustainable tourism and regional resilience.

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Title: Explore Engage Enjoy? - First Insights from a Food and Nature Intervention that Want the Tourists to Learn – and Give Back Something

Authors: Bent Egberg Mikkelsen, ULUND, Josefine Östrup Backe, and Michael Johansson

Over the past years new approaches to developing tourism in a way that is not only growth oriented but is taking a critical “limits to growth” approach has emerged. Approaches that has been discussed from theoretical positions contributions with less more grounded and practical insights on implementation available. So question is how can more regenerative approaches be developed and tested in practice? By the local community or by researchers? Or maybe the two in combination? In the VERNE Bornholmer Pilot study we have been having the opportunity to create an action research oriented community of practice – a virtual greenhouse where new regenerative ideas and solutions in the domain of food are growing and are being tested. The aim is to discuss the potential of an action research dialogue oriented co-creative pathway. We took a the Multi Actor Approach as a point of departure and organized the process as a researcher-led Community of Practice. We based the research design on the principles of Action Research and a qualitative data collection strategy based on open ended interviews with key stakeholders. Results so far suggests that for an effective change effective alliance to emerge between researchers and local practioners a range of different criteria are to be met. Important factors we find are trust, time, resources and a mix of participatory methodologies. In the process so far we have good experience in “taking our time”. Key requirements to success relates to: Propper identification of stakeholders. Good situational mapping of the structural context. Rigorous engagement of stakeholders. Efficient demonstration of the “Whats in it for me” value proposition. Right choice of organisational setup. Propper delivery of visibility & outreach.

Title: EcoSmart Hospitality: A Green and Digital Competence Framework and Readiness Assessment for Sustainable and Resilient SMEs

Authors: Tara Doherty, Atlantic Technological University, Ciaran O'hAnnrachain, and Juanita Blue

The European hospitality sector, largely composed of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is undergoing a dual transition driven by digitalisation and sustainability imperatives. Yet many SMEs face barriers in adopting digital tools, implementing sustainable practices and building resilience amid economic and environmental disruption. In response, the EU-funded Erasmus+ EcoSmart Hospitality project has developed an integrated approach to support vocational education and training (VET) and SMEs through Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles.

The project combines three innovations: 1) a Green and Digital Competence Framework tailored to hospitality; 2) modular training resources based on a Train-the-Trainer model; and 3) a Digital Readiness and Sustainability Assessment Tool to evaluate SME maturity. The framework operationalises GreenComp, EntreComp and DigComp within hospitality operations, integrating entrepreneurial and resilience-oriented capabilities. It is informed by 27 semi-structured interviews with academics, VET educators, sector experts and hospitality representatives, identifying priorities and training gaps.

The sector-specific model enables SMEs to assess ESG maturity, strengthen digital and green capabilities, improve resilience and translate sustainability goals into practical operational actions. DigComp informs digital readiness and data use; GreenComp supports environmental responsibility, circular resource use and sustainability-oriented values; while EntreComp introduces opportunity recognition, innovation and resilience. Together, these are adapted into ESG dimensions connecting environmental performance, social capacity and governance maturity.

By linking assessment outcomes to targeted resources and a knowledge-sharing platform, EcoSmart creates an ecosystem for continuous learning and improvement. It offers a scalable model for sustainable, digitally enabled and resilient hospitality practice across European tourism and service sectors.

Title: The Quest for Sustainability in Hotels

Authors: Magnús Ásgeirsson, Háskóli Íslands, and Gunnar Þór Jóhannesson

In a rapidly changing tourism landscape characterized by environmental challenges and increasing expectations for corporate responsibility, hospitality businesses are increasingly expected to contribute positively to sustainable development. Within this context, service quality and corporate reputation function not only as indicators of competitiveness but also as pathways through which tourism organizations can act as active agents for good.

This study examines how sustainability-related attributes, particularly environmental and social responsibility, interact with service quality to shape hotel reputation. Emphasis is placed on the distinction between guests' pre-booking perceptions of sustainability importance and their post-stay evaluations of actual sustainability performance. A quantitative research design was employed, based on survey data from 1,487 guests staying at nine hotels belonging to the same hotel chain in downtown Reykjavík, Iceland, during the summer of 2023.

The results indicate that while sustainability attributes are not among the most important factors in guests' booking decisions, sustainability performance experienced during the stay has a strong and statistically significant positive effect on perceived hotel reputation. Alongside sustainability performance, other key drivers of reputation include perceived value for money, hotel and room comfort, quality of facilities, and employee service performance.

The findings suggest that hotels contribute most effectively as agents for good not through symbolic commitments to sustainability, but through the integration of visible and tangible sustainable practices into everyday service delivery. Sustainability thus emerges as a latent yet influential driver of reputation, shaping post-consumption evaluations even when it is not a primary motivation for choice. The study contributes to debates on sustainable tourism by demonstrating how hospitality firms can operationalize responsibility and embed sustainability within service quality to support positive tourism development in a changing world.

Keywords: Hospitality, Service Quality, Sustainability, Environment, Reputation

Title: Success at a Cost: Hard Lessons from Tromsø - Soft Policy Responses

Author: Per Kåre Jakobsen, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

How can tourism destinations better balance short-term volume growth with the achievement of longer-term social and environmental goals? This work-in-progress study examines the combined effects of an ongoing, massive tourism growth, and active public policy and politics on value creation processes within the field of nature-based tourism in Northern-Norway.

Using Tromsø, as a case study and point of departure, this study is initiated from the observation that significant increases in visitation - arguably a success from a narrow marketing perspective - also entail substantial social and environmental costs. At the same time, public policy institutions provide a range of instruments and incentives aimed at fostering sustainable development and innovation.

It is questioned whether these dynamics jointly reshape how actors across the regional tourism system perceive the concepts of value and value creation, and whether this leads to an emergence of new, improved business models in use.

Furthermore, this study will explore related thematic areas such as the growth syndrome, social entrepreneurship, responsible tourism and marketing, stakeholder interests, social well-being, macro- and micro-level perspectives and public - private cooperation.

The study will adopt a qualitative case study approach, relying on document analysis and interviews.

Title: Turning Theory into Workable Models: Regenerative Tourism Model for the Public Sector and Regenerative Tourism Public–Private Partnership (PPP) Business Model

Authors: Daisy Silvennoinen, Karelia University of Applied Sciences, Keijo Koskinen, and Dr. Tarja Kupiainen

Regenerative tourism marks a fundamental shift in how destinations, particularly those guided by public-sector tourism systems, approach sustainability, community wellbeing, and long-term resilience. Research highlights that regenerative tourism should be rooted in community development, equitable partnerships, and capacity building—especially in rural and Nordic contexts. (Norreg 2025, Aquino et al. 2024). Public authorities across Europe are also moving toward regenerative principles, with EU policy agendas increasingly encouraging this shift. (Bartolozzi 2026).

The major actors in tackling the shift are both public and private sector, whose cooperation is essential. The challenge lies in effectively introducing, enhancing capacity and integrating regenerative practices. Within Northern Periphery and Arctic Regenerate Initiative (NPA Regenerate), the *Regenerative Tourism Model for the Public Sector* and the *Regenerative Tourism Public–Private Partnership (PPP) Business Model* provide practical tools that enable local, regional, and national authorities:

- Build regenerative governance structures that align policy, planning and implementation;
- Strengthen capacity and shared learning across actors;
- Apply participatory methods that ensure influence and co-design;
- Support entrepreneurs;
- Advance long-term ecological and socio-cultural regeneration as core development goals; and
- Introduce evaluation systems that go beyond conventional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assess regenerative impact.

This Model combines NPA REGENERATE project, Nordic regenerative tourism research, EU policy frameworks, and practical case examples to present a comprehensive and actionable model for governments and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) actors.

Title: Food for Thought: Reflections on Food Waste Reduction in Independent Restaurants

Authors: Adam Jones, School of Business and Law, University of Brighton, Kamila Walters, and Francisca Farache

Food waste remains a persistent challenge within the hospitality sector, with independent restaurants facing particular constraints in measuring and reducing waste due to limited time, resources, and operational capacity. This project, led by the University of Brighton in the UK, explores the application of a simplified, practice-based approach to food waste reduction grounded in WRAP's Target–Measure–Act framework.

Working with independent restaurants in Brighton & Hove, the study adopts a collaborative, action-oriented research design. Participating businesses recorded baseline food waste data, engaged in a facilitated workshop to interpret findings and identify feasible interventions, and then implemented changes within their own operational contexts. A second measurement phase enabled reflection on outcomes, including waste reduction, cost implications, and operational feasibility.

The project contributes to debates on circularity and resilience in hospitality by examining how small-scale businesses can engage with resource efficiency practices in ways that are both practical and context-sensitive. Findings highlight key barriers, including time pressures, staff engagement, and perceived complexity of measurement processes, alongside enablers such as simple tools, peer learning, and clear demonstration of cost and environmental benefits.

The research also considers governance and impact by situating restaurant level practices within wider local sustainability agendas. Outputs include practitioner guidance, and policy relevant insights to support wider sector adoption.

This paper argues that accessible, low-burden measurement frameworks, combined with collaborative knowledge exchange, can support more resilient and circular business practices in the independent hospitality sector.

Session 21: Human-Nature Relationships within Leisure Contexts

Organisers: Marianna Strzelecka, Arash AkhshikSolène Prince and Marleen Schwarze

Affiliation: Linnaeus University

Description

Outdoor leisure has long been a central arena in which relationships between humans and nature take shape and evolve. In Nordic contexts, outdoor leisure in natural environments is closely tied to shared cultural ideas about landscape, public access, and sustainability. Through leisure practices, people encounter and interpret nature in ways that influence how it is valued and cared for. In this sense, leisure becomes a setting where environmental meanings, attitudes, and even behaviors are formed. Yet human–nature relationships are being reshaped by ongoing social and environmental transformations, including climate change, energy transitions, urbanization, visitor mobilities, and the growing influence of digital technologies in everyday life. As many of the environments used for everyday leisure also function as spaces for tourism, understanding leisure–nature interactions in these spaces can offer insights relevant to ongoing discussions on making tourism an agent for good. This thematic track invites critical contributions that explore human–nature relationships within leisure contexts. We welcome work that examines how leisure practices shape the ways in which nature is perceived, experienced, represented, and governed, and what this can mean for designing good tourism. Contributions may focus on activities taking place in rural, urban, or coastal settings. Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Human–nature relationships in everyday leisure practices
- Leisure in informal, overlooked, or marginal spaces, such as urban edges, brownfields, and informal green areas
- Questions of biodiversity, conservation, and environmental conflict that arise through leisure
- Emotional, affective, and sensory experiences that shape how nature is encountered through outdoor leisure
- Leisure that takes place in natural, semi-natural, or informally used green spaces
- The role of digital technologies (apps, social media, virtual environments, and tracking tools) in shaping experiences of nature in leisure and tourism
- Governance and spatial planning of leisure in natural environments

Title: The Impact of Digital & Virtual Technology on Visitors: The Experience Economy Model Tested at the LAVA Centre Interactive Volcano Show in Hvolsvöllur, Iceland
Authors: Einar Svansson, Bifröst University, and Bárður Örn Gunnarsson

This research examines visitor experience at LAVA Centre, an interactive volcano exhibition in Iceland, through Pine and Gilmore's Experience Economy framework. As technology plays an increasingly central role in museums and cultural tourism, understanding how it mediates education and shapes visitor experience becomes essential. The research employs mixed methods combining surveys, focus groups and expert interviews. Building on Mehmetoglu and Engen's (2011) measurement scale from research at Maihaugen museum and Mesetovic's (2020) ice cave tour research, the study applies Pine and Gilmore's four dimensions to a technology-enhanced exhibition context, investigating whether technology functions as a fifth dimension or as an enabler across education, esthetics, entertainment and escapism.

Survey data from autumn 2025 reveal an exceptionally high Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 82, exceeding Iceland's national average of 76. Entertainment scored highest while escapism scored lowest yet showed the strongest correlation with NPS. Regression analysis indicates entertainment most significantly influences overall satisfaction, whereas escapism primarily drives NPS. Qualitative findings reveal technology operates as an enabler rather than separate dimension. Seamless technology amplifies learning and engagement, while technical failures create substantial barriers. Comparative analysis shows delivery medium fundamentally shapes which dimensions prove salient. Where visitors experience authentic environments directly, esthetics emerges significant while entertainment does not. At technology-mediated LAVA Centre, entertainment dominates while esthetics loses significance. Education remains consistently important across contexts.

The research demonstrates Pine and Gilmore's framework retains validity in digitally mediated environments while requiring contextual adaptation. For Iceland's volcano tourism and museums broadly, findings suggest technology investments yield optimal returns when enhancing existing dimensions rather than creating new ones.

Title: From Choice to Perception: Visitor Responses to Offshore Wind Farm Scenarios

Authors: Marianna Strzelecka, Linnaeus University, Solène Prince, Marleen Schwarze, and Arash Akhshik

The expansion of offshore wind energy is widely recognized as a key climate mitigation strategy; however, its integration into coastal landscapes raises persistent concerns about how visual changes may influence visitor destination choice. Existing research presents mixed evidence, indicating that responses to offshore wind development are shaped not only by the physical characteristics of wind farms but also by underlying values, beliefs, and environmental attitudes. This study examines how coastal tourists evaluate offshore wind farm scenarios and how these evaluations relate to landscape perception and pre-existing attitudes. A choice experiment was conducted with respondents from Sweden, Denmark, and Germany, in which participants were presented with four simulated coastal scenarios where turbine presence, distance from shore, number of turbines, and accommodation price were systematically varied. After selecting their preferred option, respondents evaluated the perceived qualities of the chosen landscape, allowing landscape perception to be analysed as emerging from choice rather than as an externally imposed judgement. In addition, measures of perceived benefits of renewable energy and climate change worry were collected prior to scenario exposure, enabling an examination of how these attitudinal orientations relate to both scenario selection and subsequent landscape evaluations. The results contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how visitors interpret and evaluate energy landscapes in tourism contexts.

Title: Participatory Mapping of Ecosystem Service Values in the Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve

Author: Marleen Schwarze, Linnéuniversitetet

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are multifunctional landscapes recognized as sources of ecosystem services and as laboratories for sustainable development. They also function as nature-based tourism destinations that integrate conservation, recreation, and local livelihoods, making them important experimental spaces for sustainable tourism development.

Participatory mapping of ecosystem services can be used to identify where different social groups value ecosystem services within a Biosphere Reserve. This approach provides spatially explicit knowledge that can support land-use decision-making and planning processes. However, knowledge about the spatial distribution of ecosystem service values in Biosphere Reserves, and the practical usefulness of such knowledge for decision-makers, remains limited.

Through the application of Public Participation Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS) in the Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve in Sweden, this study identifies (i) hotspots and (ii) bundles of ecosystem service values, as well as (iii) spatial patterns of these values across the three Biosphere Reserve management zones. In addition, the study evaluates the usefulness of PPGIS-derived knowledge by analysing qualitative data from a workshop with local practitioners.

The study contributes to strengthening an ecosystem service perspective within tourism research. The findings reveal distinct spatial patterns of ecosystem service values that reflect the reserve's management goals. Values were primarily clustered around wetlands and densely populated areas, with respondents frequently mapping places associated with outdoor recreation, biodiversity, and existential values. The results emphasize the importance of cultural and regulating ecosystem services. Practitioners considered the PPGIS outputs useful for nature restoration and spatial planning, highlighting their potential to support participatory tourism planning and help address conflicts between tourism development and conservation.

Title: Seeing Authenticity: A Photo-Ethnographic Exploration of Visitors' Lived Experiences at Niah National Park

Author: Brian Kee Mun Wong, Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus

This study examines visitors' authentic experiences at Niah National Park through a photo-ethnographic approach. Grounded in Symbolic Interactionism (Blumer, 1937), the research explores how meanings of authenticity are socially and naturally constructed through interaction, and draws on Existential Authenticity (Wang, 1999) to interpret visitors' embodied and affective experiences. Using researcher-produced photographs, supported by field observations and reflective narratives, the study investigates how authenticity emerges through engagement with natural landscapes, environmental variability, and socio-material relations.

Findings indicate that authenticity is not inherent in the site but is co-constructed through visitors' interpretive engagement with informational signage, visual cues, and the material environment. In the absence of guided narration, visitors actively derive meaning from prehistoric cave formations, wall drawings, and the visibility of traditional bird nest harvesting structures, which collectively evoke imaginaries of past human life. Simultaneously, existential authenticity is experienced through sensory immersion in the cave environment, including encounters with natural light penetrating the cave, darkness, humidity, and physical movement across long walkways. These embodied experiences foster feelings of connection, self-reflection, and temporal transcendence. The study further shows that authenticity is relational and material, emerging from interactions among visitors, infrastructures, wildlife, and the cave ecosystem, as well as from the interplay between managed access and spontaneous environmental encounters.

Theoretically, this research advances understanding of authenticity as both socially negotiated and personally lived within a visual methodological framework. Practically, it highlights the importance of preserving environmental conditions and enhancing interpretive materials to support meaningful human-nature engagement.

Title: A Sensory Ethnography of the Wintry MTB Trailscape

Author: Vesa Markuksela, University Lecturer, University of Lapland

Mountain biking on winter trails offers a distinctive setting in which human movement, technology, and Arctic environments become entangled through multisensory practice. This paper examines mountain biking (MTB) on snow-covered trails in Finnish Lapland, near the Arctic Circle. Winter riding unfolds through a human–bike hybrid integrating technology, bodily movement, sensory attunement, and rhythm, while remaining fundamentally dependent on the material qualities of the trail environment. Lapland’s “real winter” confronts riders with snow, cold temperatures, variable polar/light, and continually shifting surfaces. Together, these conditions generate a distinctive multisensory trailscape that enables, constrains, directs, and redirects biking practices, shaping movement, perception, and experience.

The study examines encounters within this wintry MTB trailscape through more-than-human practice theory, which foregrounds how action emerges through affective and multisensory entanglements among humans, technologies, and landscapes. Empirically, the analysis draws on a seven-year sensory ethnography of winter trail riding and trail building, enabling close attention to embodied movement and the interplay of the senses in the immediate environments where riding takes place.

The findings show how the meanings of winter MTB emerge through the interplay of sensory experience, movement, and control. Riders continually negotiate bodily balance, tactile feedback from snow, visual orientation, and rhythm while responding to the trail’s shifting materiality. In this process, the trail is not merely a passive backdrop but actively participates in shaping practice.

By illuminating how sensory encounters constitute the experience of winter riding, the paper contributes to discussions on human–nature relationships in outdoor leisure. In tourism contexts where leisure and tourism share the same landscapes, such multisensory engagement **supports** immersive and environmentally attuned nature-based tourism experiences.

Session 22: Heritage Ecologies: Creative Entrepreneurship for Regenerative Rural Futures

Organisers: Katrín Anna Lund and Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir

Affiliation: University of Iceland and Research Centre for Creative Industries, Bifröst University

Description

It has become a well-worn argument that the traditional separation between nature and culture in Western worldview is becoming increasingly untenable in the era of the Anthropocene and an escalating environmental emergency. At the same time, it is evident that cultural heritage development has been encouraged all over the world as a means to strengthen and revitalise rural areas without questioning the dichotomy. By bringing up the concept of heritage ecology and regeneration we aim to open up for critical approach to culture that moves beyond the traditional dichotomy between culture and nature and open up space for discussing activities and practices that embrace more-than-human relations and realities. In this context we want to think about the possibility of cultural tourism and creative entrepreneurship with a focus on earthly heritage as a creative process in destination development.

We invite papers that explore these types of possibilities from scholars as well as practitioners. We invite papers that introduce projects, practices and products that follow human actors, lone managers and other creative actors, such as localised organisations or municipalities and lifestyle entrepreneurs, driven by passions to bring out narratives that meander in the surroundings and allow visitors to get into closer contact with destination's ambience. This the panel aims at providing examples of alternative possibilities of dealing with rural development which most often has been dealt with from the point of view of purely economic terms. Although, we by no means attempt to dismiss the importance of economically driven efforts to support rural areas the aim is rather to point out that they often miss out on values that lie within the proximate relations that people have with their surroundings. By attending to such practices, the aim is to shift the discussion from supporting merely sustainable models toward recognising regenerative approaches grounded in the knowledge and experience of those most closely connected to their environments.

Title: Rethinking Rural Tourism: Heritage, Values, and Paths to Regenerative Change

Authors: Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir, Bifröst University, and Katrín Anna Lund

As rural regions increasingly turn to tourism and cultural heritage as development strategies, critical questions arise regarding which values are prioritised, whose values are centred, and what kinds of futures are being produced. This paper contributes to these debates by introducing heritage ecology as a framework for rethinking tourism, creativity, and entrepreneurship beyond growth-oriented models.

Drawing on interdisciplinary research from rural Iceland and the Horizon Europe IN SITU research programme, the paper explores how heritage emerges through more-than-human relations involving landscapes, mobility and cultural infrastructures, memories, and situated creative practices. Empirical examples include post-disaster heritage sites, community-driven storytelling and placemaking initiatives, and small-scale cultural entrepreneurship grounded in storytelling and cultural heritage. Across these cases, heritage is not merely preserved or consumed but continuously made and remade through relational practices that negotiate vulnerability, responsibility, and value at the margins.

We argue that attending to heritage ecologies enables a shift from “sustainable” tourism framings towards regenerative approaches that foreground care, relationality, and local agency, while remaining attentive to tensions, constraints, and the fragility of place-based initiatives. By situating tourism within broader ecological and cultural assemblages, the paper positions it as a potential, though contested, agent for good in a changing world, capable of supporting rural wellbeing and future-making without defaulting to extractive or purely economic narratives.

Title: Who Makes Dalir the Yule Lads' Land?: Poetry, Landscape and Community
Permission in Heritage-Based Tourism

Authors: Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir, Bifröst University, and Einar Svansson

Tourism often builds on stories already in motion - stories that circulate across texts, landscapes, and communities before they are taken up as organised place-based activity. This paper explores how folklore characters shaped through poetry are re-activated in contemporary rural placemaking and entrepreneurship. Focusing on Dalabyggð (Dalir) in West Iceland, the study traces how Icelandic figures associated with wandering and marginality were re-imagined through Jóhannes úr Kötlum's poetry in 1932 and later taken up in contemporary community-led initiatives that seek to position Dalir as the home of the Yule Lads.

Rather than assuming an inherent right to claim Dalir as the Yule Lads' homeland, the paper examines how such a claim is assembled and sustained through interactions between poetry, landscape, family practice, and community participation. The analysis draws on qualitative material developed through long-term engagement with the Erpsstaðir case, including ethnographic observation, interviews, and site-based documentation, complemented by intergenerational, family-embedded knowledge of the poet's work and its local reception. Some empirical material was generated during the Horizon Europe-supported IN SITU project on place-based cultural innovation, now concluded.

Empirically, the paper examines how the family-led dairy farm Erpsstaðir has evolved into a coordinating node for storytelling, food production, crafts, and collaborative hosting, through which visitor encounters are organised. Attention is given to how participation is invited, how responsibilities are distributed, and how legitimacy emerges through ongoing engagement rather than formal ownership. Using an actor-network sensibility and a typology of social entrepreneurs, the paper shows how narrative heritage becomes a dynamic resource for community-led placemaking and entrepreneurial organisation, contributing to current discussions on regenerative approaches to tourism grounded in local stories, practices, and relations.

Session 23: Walking towards more-than-human tourism futures - Outdoor session

Organisers: Elva Björg Einarsdóttir, Emily Höckert, Jasmine Zhang and Maxim Vlasov

Affiliation: University of Iceland, University of Lapland, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Umeå University

Participation: This outdoor session welcomes all symposium participants as co-walkers. The gathering and departure take place in front of the venue's main entrance

Description

This outdoor session explores walking as a relational practice. It consists of situated, shared, and uncertain steps with the symposium landscape of Öskjuhlíð as a participant in inquiry. Through collective movement and small-scale experimental interventions, we ask what tourism might become if it cultivated more-than-human relations rather than extracted value.

The session joins efforts within the environmental humanities and social sciences that challenge the prevailing nature–culture dichotomy by asking how more-than-human communities might coexist in creative, reciprocal, and regenerative ways. Rather than relying solely on techno-scientific solutions, we are interested in how alternative ontologies, conceptualisations, and embodied practices may help repair weakened relations between ecosystems and human sociocultural worlds. This prompts the question: what would it mean for tourism to “walk differently”?

Across the Nordic region, climate walks, ecological pilgrimages, and slow mobility initiatives are emerging as embodied responses to ecological concern and responsibility. Such practices are broadening our understanding of tourism and outdoor recreation amid the ecological crisis. Rather than focusing on what walking produces (well-being, economic value, resilience), this session explores how walking might shape relations between people, species, temporalities, places, research practices, and lived worlds.

The session consists of situated, shared, and uncertain steps with the symposium landscape of Öskjuhlíð as a participant in inquiry.

It weaves four experimental contributions into a collective walking itinerary across the nearby hill and seaside, engaging with the place's history and temporalities and the multiplicity of non-human hosts living in the area. Through collective movement and small-scale experimental interventions, the walks are guided by the question of what tourism might become when it cultivates more-than-human relations rather than extracted value.

Title: Weaving a Partial History of the Western Part of Öskjuhlíð

Author: Tarja Salmela, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

In the introduction to Öskjuhlíð at Reykjavík's official home page, many types of matter and life forms gather through a narrative ("Öskjuhlíð"). This narrative is laced with temporality yet scattered into smaller stories wherein "Geology" is differentiated from "Flora and wildlife" and, remarkably, "History". Öskjuhlíð's "History" however weaves together actors involved in the smaller stories, including ruins of an old Vikursel farm, sheep, sheep pens, rock, students, Latin School, quarry, railway, soldiers, Second World War, guns, trenches, barracks, roads, and thermal water tanks. In this intervention, I invite participants to enact in practice an embodied, necessarily partial, alternative "History" of Öskjuhlíð as we walk together in the western part of Öskjuhlíð and Vatnsmýri—a site where, according to the "Öskjuhlíð" narrative—"various structures" emerged to the landscape through the presence of British and American soldiers. Attending to what once was and what is now, and to the ways in which more-than-humanness of place emerges as weaving-together of co-composing durabilities-and-lively-presences, we enact a partial history of Öskjuhlíð that is sensitive towards the idea of the potential of visiting [here used as alternative concept for tourism] to cultivate more-than-human relations across temporalities. Our walking together takes the form of site-responsive reading, following a "three-step pause" method: three minutes of stillness at a chosen spot to notice co-presences; three minutes of slow, intentional walking while silently tracing one temporal layer (e.g., "what geology do my feet feel?"); and three minutes of shared gesture—pointing, miming, or light touch—to mark a moment of co-composition with Öskjuhlíð element (e.g. a rock, ruin of a road, a patch of grass). We will spend the remaining time for voluntary sharing of our experiences of weaving a partial history of the western part of Öskjuhlíð.

Spatial and material requirements: Competence within the group to lead us to the western part of Öskjuhlíð and Vatnsmýri.

Title: Walking with Collective Temporalities

Author: Chris E. Hurst, Northumbria University

The proposed walking intervention experiments with attending to temporalities co-mingling among more-than-human walking encounters. This walking intervention is intended to engage a small group of humans to explore how temporalities are co-experienced in tourism places and how temporalities may come to shape our embodied experience of being-with many amidst planetary-wide nature transformation. Nature transformation is posed as an ethico-relational responsibility eschewing the promises of an *original nature* to be returned to in this period of climatic change. This intervention experiments with how we might care with tourism places comprised of collectives of kin temporalities (including several geological ‘cenes’, life progressions, and temporal rhythms) overlapping and being transformed in this contemporary Anthropocene era. I will begin with a short introduction to the contents of the activity and read a passage of invitation (2-3 minutes). Participants will be asked to walk around the area choosing one individual kin member (human or nonhuman) to attend to as they move (or sit or stand) with place (8 minutes). During the walk, participants will be prompted to consider the sensory and affective experience of attuning to their chosen kin, and how this intentional *kin-ing* attention shapes and is shaped by different life courses/life progressions or rhythms coming into contact with one another. Following this, participants will gather together to debrief and reflect on their experience (4-5 minutes), considering what (if any) changes occurred through this intervention and if/how temporal interventions with kin could be used to facilitate novel ethical, responsible, or environmentally-just tourism futures.

Title: Walking the Vatnsfjörður Trail

Author: Elva Björg Einarsdóttir, University of Iceland

The *Vatnsfjörður Trail* runs through a half-century-old nature reserve in the northwest of Iceland. Formally conserved in 1975 because of its beautiful landscapes, scrubs and traditional land use with grazing, fishing, and foraging for berries and herbs. Since then, it has developed into a popular tourist destination, including establishing outdoor facilities and walking paths. Plans to elevate the area's status to a national park were halted in 2021 due to a proposed hydro power plant.

The *Vatnsfjörður Trail* was conceived during walks in the Vatnsfjörður nature reserve to raise awareness of its importance and its diverse more-than-human voices that are to be heard there. Recently the Minister for the Environment, Energy and Climate confirmed that hydroelectric development in the Vatnsfjörður reserve would not proceed. The *Vatnsfjörður Trail* is a part of the *Ecological Pilgrimage* project.

At the 34th *Nordic Symposium on Tourism and Hospitality Research* in Reykjavík, Iceland I will introduce the *Vatnsfjörður Trail* and take participants for a reparative walk focusing on engaging all the senses. The walk encourages participants to recognise that their stories are not the only ones embedded in the landscape.

Title: Encountering Extinction: Narrating Stillness with Moving Atmospheres

Author: Katrín Anna Lund, University of Iceland

At the coastal line of Skerjafjörður, close to Öskjuhlíð, sits an aluminum replica of a big bird, a Great Auk, but the two last of its kind were killed in the Island, Eldey, located just in south of Reykjanes Peninsula in 1844. It was made by artist, Salvör Nordal, for an exhibition called the coastline in 1998 but in 2000 the city of Reykjavík bought the statue and replaced it in at the same spot where it was first exhibited.

On New Years Day 2008 I took a walk with a friend along the coastline and into Skerjafjörður. I did not know beforehand about the replica being placed there but I still remember seeing the outline of it as we passed it vaguely in dusk. I was stricken by its apparent stillness in the moving atmosphere of the January sunset. Afterwards, its presence continued to linger with me and since then I regularly take a walk to Skerjafjörður to greet the Great Auk. What attracts me is the sense of stillness that becomes even stronger as it exaggerates the ever moving and vital surroundings; choreographies of earth, water, air and light and shapes the atmosphere with narratives into which one enmeshes. I want invite the participants in this session to encounter and connect to the Great Auk in Skerjafjörður to allow its narratives to linger as it can tell much about the importance of staying with, to be with and nourish the more-than-human relations we entangle with.

Session 24: Regulation of cruise tourism in relation to small coastal and island communities in the Arctic

Organisers: Antje Neumann and Helga Númadóttir

Affiliation: University of Akureyri and Stefansson Arctic Institute

Description

The session will address the regulation of potentially adverse effects of cruise tourism on small coastal and island communities in the Arctic and how the interests of these communities can be taken into account while balancing opportunities for economic development with environmental protection. Small coastal areas and islands in the Arctic are, on the one hand, especially attractive to a rising cruise tourism industry since they offer not only spectacular landscapes and unique biodiversity but also rich and distinct cultural traditions and heritage. On the other hand, they are especially vulnerable because of inhabiting highly fragile marine and terrestrial ecosystems and an often declining population that strongly depends on the natural integrity of these ecosystems for subsistence and surviving purposes. Due to these vulnerabilities, cruise tourism may, in addition to the adverse effects of climate change, pose additional threats such as air and water pollution, waste generation, physical disturbance and soil erosion, noise pollution and even increase the risk of oil spill accidents or the introduction of non-native species. While tourism regulation in the Arctic is predominantly of domestic legal nature, generally made by the central governments, the specific characteristic of small coastal areas, islands and their communities are often not taken into consideration. Moreover, tourism regulations appears not seldom attributed to economic development primarily, thus, neglecting or limiting the concern for environmental protection, nature and cultural conservation, social and cultural aspects. Against this background, the session will focus primarily on the challenges and opportunities of regulating cruise tourism at the level of small coastal and island communities, with particular attention paid to the social and economic development interests of these communities and the protection of the environment. Possible themes may include but are not limited to:

- Traffic regulations
- Rights of way
- Regulation and restrictions of tourism activities
- Protection against pollution, including waste management
- Establishment of infrastructure for tourism purposes

- Private property rights and rights of possession in relation to tourism activities
- Rights of Indigenous Peoples, customary rights and traditional rights of local people

We explicitly invite multi- and interdisciplinary contributions from various disciplines and backgrounds, practitioners, community and Indigenous representatives. Through the interactive format, the session will offer opportunities for research presentations, dialogue and continued deeper discussions.

Title: Local Perceptions on Sustainability and Governance of Cruise Tourism in Northern Iceland and Southern Greenland

Author: Élise Lépy, University of Oulu

Arctic cruise tourism has grown significantly over the past two decades. While this growth is accompanied by hopes for new income and economic diversification, there are also increasing local concerns about socio-economic and environmental risks. More recently, national and international regulations, as well as voluntary guidelines within the cruise industry, have been established across the Arctic. Yet, the effective implementation of governance initiatives for more sustainable cruise tourism remains challenging, due to, for instance, limited administrative capacities and (port) infrastructure, and the prevalent mindset and interests. The present paper is based on empirical data gathered during 2024-2026 field research in Qaqortoq, Greenland and Húsavík, Iceland – two coastal settlements of approx. 3000 inhabitants, receiving an increasing number of cruise ships. The research includes insights from a comprehensive survey of local residents and key stakeholders, as well as in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews. The paper sheds light on local perceptions of the growth of cruise tourism and the quality of its governance, capturing perceived opportunities, challenges, and regulatory shortcomings. This data is complemented by surveys with cruise passengers, to acquire knowledge on convergent or divergent perceptions and interests. Findings contribute to a better understanding of the gaps in cruise tourism governance, and hopefully, to the advancement of sustainable cruise tourism practices in the Arctic and beyond.

Title: Challenges and Opportunities for Communities in Northeast Iceland to Regulate Cruise Tourism in a Sustainable Manner

Authors: Antje Neumann, University of Akureyri, and Helga Guðrún Numadóttir

Tourism in Iceland has transformed from a niche market into a major economic sector, with bringing huge flows of passengers into the country and creating significant economic benefits. This rapid growth has raised concerns towards sustainability, particularly regarding social development and environmental protection. Especially smaller communities and islands, often qualified as primary destinations of cruise tourism, receive relatively little economic gain and are highly exposed to social and environmental impacts. This applies, for example, to the municipality of Akureyri, which includes the islands of Hrisey and Grimsey. The number of passengers at these destinations exceeds by far the number of inhabitants and puts increasing pressure on fragile ecosystems and limited infrastructure.

From a regulatory point of view, tourism in Iceland falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Industries, and the Icelandic Tourist Board administrates tourism affairs as an independent authority under this ministry. It is largely centralized and focuses predominantly on licensing for travel agencies and tour operators, while little attention is put on local communities' well-being and environmental protection.

Against this background, it is imperative to understand the role of small coastal and island communities in tourism governance, to identify the necessary prerequisites for sustainability, and to explore communities' opportunities for regulating and managing cruise tourism locally. This also includes establishing locally defined priorities instead of externally imposed standards. The planned presentation offers initial considerations and insights into this topic, based on the community of Akureyri, including the communities of Hrisey and Grimsey.

Key words: Tourism legislation and policy, Iceland, small coastal communities, social development, environmental protection

Title: Regulation of Cruise Tourism in Svalbard

Author: Julia Olsen, Nord University

This study presents how Svalbard, an archipelago in the High Arctic, with a small population, has sought to regulate cruise tourism growth in order to balance economic opportunities with environmental protection and community well-being. Drawing on a community-based approach, the study analyses how local and national actors have developed regulatory and governance instruments and institutional arrangement to influence the volume, timing, and other practices for cruise arrivals in a context where itinerary decisions are largely controlled by global cruise operators. Empirical data derives from document analysis and interviews with key stakeholders, including local population, port actors, and tourism representatives. The findings show that Svalbard has implemented a combination of formal regulations, operational limits, and collaborative coordination mechanisms to manage cruise tourism impacts, including restrictions on vessel size, limits on passenger numbers ashore, and strengthened control of landing sites. In addition, new regulations that limit environmental impacts were introduced in 2025. These measures aim to reduce pressure on fragile ecosystems and local services while maintaining social acceptance of tourism among residents. The Svalbard case illustrates how small Arctic Island communities can develop place-based regulatory responses to cruise tourism, highlighting both the opportunities and constraints of governing highly mobile tourism flows in marginal and environmentally sensitive regions.

Session 25: Transformative Tourism Experiences

Organisers: Konstantin Gridnevskiy and Sarah Seidel

Affiliation: NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences

Description

Tourism is increasingly expected to be an active agent for good in a world shaped by climate change, geopolitical uncertainty, digital disruption, and demands for social justice. This session invites papers that examine transformative tourism experiences as a pathway through which tourism may contribute to positive development — starting with the traveller and extending to communities and environments.

We welcome papers that examine transformative tourism at the individual level. The focus is on the tourist (and, where relevant, other individuals engaged in tourism such as hosts, guides, and workers) and the ways tourism experiences may trigger shifts in identity, values, emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and everyday practices. We invite conceptual, critical, and empirical research that explores transformation as a process occurring before, during, and after travel — including how transformation is initiated, facilitated, and sustained over time. We particularly encourage contributions that connect individual transformation to contemporary conditions affecting tourism. Possible topics include:

- Identifying which features of tourism experiences act as catalysts for transformation
- Exploring how travellers interpret, internalise, and apply transformative insights after returning home
- Assessing observable and measurable effects on well-being, identity development, and behavioural change
- Considering how experiences can be purposefully crafted to maximise transformative potential
- Examining whether transformation reflects profound value/belief change or primarily behavioural adjustment
- Investigating how timing (before, during, and after travel) shapes both intensity and long-term sustainability
- Addressing ethical and methodological challenges in studying personal transformation through tourism

By engaging with these topics, this session aims to refine conceptual understandings of transformation in tourism while also providing insights relevant to practice and policy.

Title: From Experience to Ambassadorship: The Transformative Role of Science in Antarctic Deep-Field Tourism

Author: Alix Varnajot, University of Oulu

This paper examines how science-tourism practices shape transformative experiences and ambassadorship in Antarctic deep-field tourism. In this study, science-tourism practices are understood both as tour operators' logistical support to scientific research and as the integration of science communication into the tourist experience. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted over four weeks at a deep-field camp in East Antarctica, the study is based on participant observation and 21 semi-structured interviews with tourists.

The findings show that engagement with science plays a significant role in shaping visitors' experiences and reflections. Science-tourism practices contribute to both operational and moral legitimacy, reinforcing trust in tour operators while providing ethical reassurance in a context characterized by environmental fragility and high carbon footprints. In this sense, science helps tourists make sense of the ambivalence associated with visiting Antarctica, often described in terms of awe and discomfort. The paper also shows how tourists prefer to engage in knowledge-based experiences during their stay in Antarctica. As a result, the paper seeks to provide practical solutions to actively cultivate on-site transformative experiences for more efficient ambassadorship.

By focusing on a niche and underexplored segment of Antarctic tourism, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions on transformative tourism by highlighting the role of science-tourism practices in shaping how visitors interpret, justify, and potentially act upon their experiences in environmentally sensitive destinations.

Title: Museum Immersion as a Catalyst for Transformative Experiences

Author: Olga Gjerald, University of Stavanger

As museums become increasingly central to cultural tourism, there is a growing need to understand how museum experiences may contribute to personal transformation. Transformative tourism research often focuses on experiences that shift visitors' emotions, perspectives, values, and everyday practices. Less attention has been given to how such transformation is initiated within cultural spaces, particularly in non-digital museum settings. This study develops a spatio-temporal framework for understanding museum immersion as a possible catalyst for transformative visitor experiences. The framework is structured around the concept of the chronotope, understood as the interrelation of time and space in experience. It examines how immersion is shaped through the “when”, “where” and “what” of the museum experiencescape: temporal configurations, spatial arrangements and material encounters. Building on existing literature on immersion as absorption, transportation and situated engagement, this research explores how visitors may become immersed through intensified presence, temporal layering, spatial displacement and material actualization. The study outlines a mixed-method research design to examine how spatio-temporal perceptions initiate and sustain visitor involvement, and how immersive museum experiences may contribute to transformative processes during and potentially after the visit. **Funding information:** This work is funded by the Research Council of Norway through the IMMERSE project, project no. 358865.

Title: Transformative for Whom? Towards Conceptual Clarity Around Tourist Transformation in Extraordinary Environments

Authors: Elizabeth Cooper, University of Groningen, Netherlands, Anna Zinn, University of Queensland, Australia, and Zdenka Sokolickova, University of Groningen, Netherlands

Visits to remote and extraordinary destinations have long been espoused, both in the tourism industry and in academic literature, as instruments for individual transformation. The transformative narrative around Antarctica is decidedly environmental; in other words, it is widely claimed that a visit to Antarctica triggers a pro-environmental transformation in tourists. In recent years, this literature has become conflated with more general literature on transformation in tourism, such that any evidence of individual transformation in Antarctic tourists is readily interpreted as evidence of pro-environmental behaviour change. An important conceptual oversight is that there are inevitably various types of transformations, some of which may benefit others (e.g. pro-environmental transformation), and some of which may only benefit the self (e.g. an alteration of perspective leading to a career change). In the current paper, we aim to disentangle different types of tourist transformations, and specifically to understand the transformation undergone by visitors to Antarctica (if any). To do so, we analyse travel journals written by 21 guests on a 2-week Antarctic cruise. Participants were asked to write about their thoughts and feelings on each day of the voyage. Through qualitative time-series analysis, we are able to understand not only the nuances of participants' individual transformations, but also how these transformations emerge and develop over time. We are currently analysing the data, but will present results at the conference. We will draw conclusions on the types of transformations experienced by Antarctic tourists, on whom they benefit, and thus bring conceptual clarity to the issue of tourist transformation and pro-environmental behaviour change in tourism.

Keywords: Transformation, Pro-environmental change, Behaviour change, Antarctica, Time-series analysis

Title: When Tourism Transforms Us: Rethinking the Valence of Tourist Transformation

Authors: Konstantin Gridnevskiy, NHL Stenden, The Netherlands, Dr. Catriona Murphy, TUS, Ireland, and Dr. Elena Cavagnaro, NHL Stenden, The Netherlands

Tourism is often associated with personal growth, renewal, openness, empathy, environmental awareness, and more responsible behaviour, which are commonly understood as beneficial or desirable outcomes and therefore framed as positive. Yet transformation is not necessarily positive. As part of a wider PhD study on transformative tourism and transformative experiences, this presentation examines valence, which is understood as the direction and nature of the outcomes that may emerge from tourist transformation.

The presentation draws on wider transformation scholarship that understands transformation as deeper than temporary alteration. For example, Feola (2015) highlights the conceptual ambiguity of transformation, while Fazey et al. (2017) suggest that it can be examined through depth, breadth, and speed. In tourism studies more generally, Tasci and Godovykh (2021) suggest that transformation is inherently framed as a positive outcome. Their evaluation reveals the potential for results to be interpreted in divergent ways pending perspectives while Carel and Kidd (2014) reinforce how transformative experiences may be positive, negative, mixed, or ambivalent.

Tourism examples illustrate why valence matters. In pilgrimage, Al-Ajarma (2021) shows how spiritual rejuvenation may coexist with fear of failing religious expectations. In volunteer tourism, Polus and Carr (2024) identify connectedness and rejuvenation, but also guilt, sadness, and powerlessness. In cultural tourism, Teoh et al. (2023) show that experiences may support self-transcendent values, yet may also reinforce self-enhancement or antisocial attitudes.

The presentation argues that tourist transformation should be understood not only in terms of its depth, but also in terms of how it is experienced, interpreted, and valued.

Session 26: Sustainable Behaviour in Tourism and Hospitality

Organisers: Sarah Seidel and Konstantin Gridnevskiy

Affiliation: NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences

Description

Tourism and hospitality are under growing pressure to respond to climate change, digital disruption, and wider sustainability and equity challenges while remaining viable and socially responsible. As tourism operates in a rapidly changing world, the sector is increasingly expected to act as an active agent for good. If tourism is to contribute to more sustainable, equitable, and regenerative futures, change must also happen at the level of everyday decisions: what guests choose, how staff act, and what managers and owners prioritise. This session invites papers that examine sustainable behaviour in tourism and hospitality, focusing on how and under what conditions individuals can be encouraged and enabled to make more sustainable choices. Nudging behaviour of individual choices can play a role in supporting the SDGs—for example sustainable consumption (goal 12), lower food waste (goal 2), reduced water consumption (goal 6), climate action (goal 13), or reduced inequalities (goal 10).

We welcome research that explores behavioural change among tourists/guests, employees, managers, entrepreneurs, and other individuals shaping the tourism value chain. Contributions may address how values and motivations (e.g., hedonic, egoistic, altruistic, biospheric) influence decision-making, and how interventions—such as nudges, communication, incentives, or digitally mediated prompts—can make sustainable options easier and more beneficial. We also encourage critical perspectives on unintended effects and ethical questions: Who is targeted by behaviour-change strategies? Who benefits? What responsibilities are shifted from organisations to individuals? And how do behavioural approaches interact with structural constraints such as cost, accessibility, seasonality, labour conditions, power relations, and broader societal transitions affecting tourism?

Possible topics include:

- Behaviour in protected areas or high-pressure environments;
- Reducing food and material waste and resource conservation;
- Product and food choices and local sourcing;
- Sustainable transport and mobility decisions;
- Motivating tourism and hospitality providers to implement sustainability measures;

- The role of digital tools (including AI-enabled systems) in influencing choices and supporting more inclusive and sustainable tourism practices.

This session aims to bring together empirical and conceptual work that clarifies what works, for whom, and why—supporting tourism and hospitality in becoming more responsible and effective contributors to sustainable and regenerative development in a changing world.

Title: When Sustainability Meets Technology: How Context Shapes Guest Behaviour in Rural and Urban Hospitality

Authors: Sofia Almeida, Universidade Europeia, CETRAD-UTAD, Natalia Pacheco, Alexandre Guedes, and Lelis Espartel

The growing integration of digital technologies into sustainability practices is transforming the hospitality sector. Smart monitoring systems, automation, and digital resource management tools increasingly support hotels in improving environmental performance. However, technological sustainability solutions do not automatically translate into positive guest perceptions or behavioural outcomes. In experience-based services such as hospitality, guests interpret sustainability initiatives through symbolic and contextual lenses, including perceived authenticity and the alignment between the practice implemented and the identity of the place. This study explores how different types of sustainability practices—technology-enabled solutions and low-technology initiatives—shape guest perceptions and behavioural intentions in hospitality settings. In particular, the research examines how these practices influence perceived authenticity, satisfaction, intention to recommend, and intention to revisit. The study also investigates two key psychological mechanisms that may explain these relationships: perceived authenticity of the experience and the perceived congruence between the sustainability initiative and the hospitality context. Methodologically, the research employs two vignette-based experimental studies administered through the Prolific platform. The experiments manipulate the type of hospitality context (rural versus urban) and the type of sustainability practice implemented. This design enables the identification of causal effects and comparison of guest responses across territorial contexts. By examining how sustainability practices are interpreted by guests, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of sustainable behaviour in tourism and hospitality. The findings offer insights for hospitality managers seeking to implement sustainability initiatives that are not only environmentally effective but also perceived as authentic and contextually appropriate by guests.

Keywords: sustainability; technology; authenticity; congruence; guest responses; rural–urban hospitality contexts

Title: Influencing Sustainable Food Consumption During Holidays Among Generation Z

Author: Sarah Seidel, NHL Stenden University

Generation Z, comprising individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is emerging as a powerful consumer group shaping global trends in tourism and hospitality. This generation is often portrayed as the most sustainability-oriented, reflecting a growing shift toward environmentally conscious consumption patterns (Kara & Min, Nguyen et al., 2025; 2024; Seyfi et al., 2023). However, this perception requires closer examination. While Generation Z demonstrates high awareness of climate change and expresses strong support for sustainable choices, their actual behaviour does not always align with these intentions. For instance, they frequently engage in long-distance air travel, fast-fashion consumption, and online shopping practices that involve extensive transportation and packaging (Djafarova & Fouts, 2022; The Economist, 2023; The Week, 2023).

Beyond their role in tourism, Generation Z also shows significant concern for food-related choices (Halicka et al., 2025). Research indicates that they tend to adopt healthier diets, are more inclined toward vegetarian or vegan options, and often prefer locally sourced food. Nonetheless, convenience remains an important influencing factor (Chen et al., 2024; Kılıç et al., 2021; Orea-Giner & Fusté-Forné, 2023).

Building on last year's research highlighting the gap between stated intentions and actual behaviour, this study examines how Generation Z can be encouraged to make more sustainable food choices and how barriers to such behaviour can be reduced. Given that food consumption accounts for a substantial portion of tourist expenditure and plays a central role in cultural exchange, promoting sustainable food practices offers a direct pathway to fostering more sustainable behaviour in tourism overall (Apak & Guerbuez, 2023).

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Title: Sustainable Restaurants Toolkit – Co-Creating Sustainable Futures

Authors: Francisca Farache, School of Business and Law, University of Brighton, Adam Jones, and Julian Riano

Independent restaurants play a critical role in shaping destination identity, local economies and visitor experiences, yet they face significant challenges in adopting sustainable practices while maintaining financial viability. This study explores sustainable behaviour in the independent hospitality sector through an ongoing practice based intervention involving 50 restaurants in Brighton and Hove. Drawing on recent research that conceptualises sustainability through the interplay of motivation, opportunity and ability, the project examines how small businesses engage with sustainability under conditions of resource constraint, uncertainty and competing operational priorities.

The intervention centres on a Sustainable Restaurant Toolkit, comprising a structured checklist, a digital platform and a series of case studies designed to support incremental and context sensitive change. Initial findings indicate that while environmental awareness is present among operators, sustainable behaviour is more likely to be adopted when aligned with cost savings, efficiency gains and clear business benefits. At the same time, barriers including limited time, fragmented knowledge, supply chain constraints and inconsistent customer demand continue to shape engagement and limit progress.

This paper contributes to research on sustainable behaviour in tourism and hospitality by moving beyond attitudinal approaches towards practice oriented insights grounded in real world implementation. It highlights the importance of designing interventions that strengthen organisational capability while acknowledging the economic realities of independent operators. The study also raises questions about scalability and the role of collaborative, multi actor networks in enabling wider adoption across destinations.

Title: The Significance of Environmental Features in Airbnb Guest Experience

Author: Liv-Randi Røyset, University of Stavanger

This study explores the impact of guests' experiences with Airbnb's environmental features on review score ratings, focusing on pro-environmental behaviour (PEB). The existing research on PEB in tourism accommodation has largely focused on hotels rather than peer-to-peer accommodations such as Airbnb. This study approaches this gap by examining how environmental features are experienced and reflected in guest evaluations and overall satisfaction levels.

The analysis draws on data from InsideAirbnb for the cities Oslo and Barcelona, combining information from two datasets per city, one focusing on listing information and the other on guest reviews. The datasets include over 20,000 short-term rental listings across the two cities, spanning different accommodation types, mostly consisting of entire homes and private rooms. Reviews are analysed using a predefined set of environmental keywords to identify references to features including renewable energy, electric vehicle charging, and sustainable transport options.

Multivariate regression models are used to examine the relationship between mentions of environmental features and listing-level review scores, while controlling for other variables related to listings and host characteristics.

The study contributes to tourism behaviour research by showing how environmental features of Airbnbs are interpreted and translated into evaluation outcomes, carrying implications for how hosts design and communicate environmental initiatives to influence guest perceptions and experiences.

Title: Sustainable Tourism and Ecosystem Services in Saline Environments in Texel, the Netherlands and Maremma National Park, Italy

Author: Katarzyna Negacz, VU Amsterdam

Both the North Sea Region and Tuscany host a range of natural and human-made saline environments that provide distinctive ecosystem services. While such saline environments are often associated with biodiversity conservation and agricultural production, their potential role in sustainable tourism remains relatively underexplored. There is therefore a need to identify and map the key ecosystem services provided by saline environments and to examine how these services can contribute to strategies for developing sustainable tourism experiences.

This study analyses how ecosystem services in salt-affected areas contribute to effective sustainable tourism strategies in the North Sea and Mediterranean regions. First, the study describes the ecosystem services provided by saline environments in the Netherlands, with a particular focus on Texel Island, and in Italy, within the Maremma National Park. The assessment involves mapping ecosystem services in both natural salty marshes and agricultural mosaic landscapes. In addition, the study investigates the value of these ecosystem services from a sustainable tourism perspective through stakeholder interviews and participatory workshops.

Preliminary results indicate that a wide range of ecosystem services contribute to sustainable tourism in both Dutch and Italian salt-affected areas. In particular, the analysis highlights the added value of provisioning ecosystem services that support distinctive saline food experiences, alongside cultural ecosystem services that facilitate nature-based and experiential tourism in these regions.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, saline environments, ecosystem valuation, nature tourism

Title: Nature Guides as Agents of Change. Does Training Matter for Sustainable Tourism Practices?

Authors: Peter Fredman, Mid Sweden University, Olga Milinchuk, and Hoai Nam Dang

Sweden's nature-based tourism sector, renowned for its deep-rooted tradition of outdoor recreation and the right of public access, faces growing challenges as visitor numbers rise and environmental pressures intensify. This study explores the role of nature guides as agents of change, balancing visitor experiences with environmental sustainability. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research investigates the educational backgrounds, professional development needs, and sustainability competencies of nature guides in Sweden, focusing on how training and certification programs influence their skills in communication, safety, hospitality, and environmental awareness.

Through semi-structured interviews with experts from leading guide associations and a quantitative survey of 144 certified nature guides, the study reveals significant variability in skill proficiency across different training programs. Certified Nature Guides and those affiliated with the Swedish Tourist Guide Association demonstrate strong communication and hospitality skills, while Authorized Mountain Guides excel in safety but show notable gaps in environmental sustainability awareness. The results underscore a widespread demand among guides for further training in sustainability practices, nature interpretation, and business management.

The results highlight the need for standardized, comprehensive training that integrates sustainability principles more effectively, ensuring guides are equipped to promote environmentally responsible behavior among tourists. This study contributes to the broader discourse on professionalizing nature guiding and advancing sustainable tourism in Sweden and beyond.

Title: Guides as Facilitators of Transformative Experiences that Inspire Pro-Environmental Behaviour

Authors: Margrit Kärp, Junior Research Fellow, and Julia Nina Albrecht

Tourism is increasingly expected to act as an agent for good, yet a persistent gap remains between tourists' pro-environmental attitudes and what they actually do during and after trips. This paper focuses on interpretation and guiding as promising pathway to address this challenge. Interpretation has long been framed as an intentional, audience-centred practice, so guiding encounters are understood as persuasive rather than purely informational. At the same time, guides act as cultural brokers whose framing shapes what visitors notice, value and do. Because action is situated and meanings emerge in practice, disorienting moments—followed by reflection—can reframe perspectives and enable more durable behavioural change. Together, these approaches suggest that guide-led outdoor activities, where place, embodiment, social interaction, and narrative converge, are especially suited to catalyse transformations in environmental conduct.

We develop and apply a framework that integrates persuasion theory with transformative learning to specify how guides' message features (e.g., responsibility framing, norms, efficacy cues) and delivery strategies (e.g., storytelling, reflective questioning) may trigger transformative mechanisms such as awe, nature connection, self-efficacy and identity shift.

Methodologically, we use a comparative qualitative design (Estonia; New Zealand). Guides are recruited via a short screening survey, then interviewed using the Critical Incident Technique to reconstruct specific “turning-point” episodes where guides believe visitor behaviour changed. Interviews are complemented by targeted field observations and theory-guided abductive thematic analysis.

Expected outcomes include a typology of persuasive guiding practices associated with perceived transformation and identification of contextual boundary conditions (activity risk/effort, setting fragility, group dynamics, guide credibility).

Title: Does Environmental Concern Shape Wildlife Tourism Experiences? Evidence from Whale-Watching

Authors: Jinghua Xie, University of Stavanger, and Aaron Tkaczynski

This study examines how environmental concern, spanning knowledge, interest, and action dimensions, shapes tourist experiences and eco-certification recognition in whale-watching tourism, drawing on survey data from whale-watching tourists in Australia, analysed using a logit model.

Results reveal a clear divergence across the three dimensions. Interest and routine pro-environmental action positively influence experience evaluations, while knowledge does not. Conversely, knowledge and action are the primary drivers of eco-certification recognition, with interest playing no significant role. These patterns are consistent with earlier findings, reinforcing that intrinsic interest in wildlife is more central to the experiential dimension than environmentally oriented knowledge.

A particularly notable finding is the negative effect of clean-up participation on experience and satisfaction evaluations. We interpret this as a compensation effect: tourists who are highly engaged in environmental protection may resist experiential restrictions, expecting conservation outcomes to be achieved through management and regulation rather than constraints on visitor behavior. This tension between everyday environmental commitment and tourism experience preferences represents a substantive contribution to the nature-based tourism literature.

For practitioners, findings suggest that knowledge-focused messaging is most effective for driving eco-certification uptake, while experience quality is best enhanced by targeting visitor interest and routine environmental engagement. These insights offer actionable guidance for whale-watching operators, destination managers, and eco-certification bodies seeking to align environmental goals with visitor satisfaction.

Session 27: Pay-Per-View Tourism and the Politics of Parking Fees

Organisers: Ari Martin Laakso, Guðrun Þóra Gunnarsdóttir and Gaute Emil Svensson

Affiliation: University of Lapland, Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, UiT, The Arctic University of Norway

Description

The rapid expansion of parking fees, particularly in nature-based and high-traffic tourism areas, has led to concerns about the emergence of a “pay-per-view” model of tourism, where access to landscapes and public spaces becomes increasingly monetised. While such fees may support infrastructure maintenance, environmental stewardship and public services, they also raise fundamental questions about fairness, legitimacy and the boundary between public governance and private entrepreneurship.

This session examines parking fees as part of a broader landscape of Tourism Revenue Transfers (TRTs), including accommodation taxes, visitor levies and access charges. We explore how these mechanisms function not merely as fiscal tools, but as governance instruments emerging in periods of institutional transition. By requiring registration, enabling data collection, differentiating rates and influencing behaviour, such instruments may reshape how tourism is regulated, financed and legitimised.

At the same time, the politics surrounding parking fees reveal deeper tensions concerning ownership, access and value capture in tourism landscapes. Do parking fees and related revenue mechanisms strengthen public governance and environmental stewardship, or do they facilitate new forms of private value extraction and commodification of access to nature? This question invites critical reflection on whether revenue-based approaches contribute to more equitable and sustainable tourism systems, or risk reinforcing rent-seeking dynamics and intensifying pressure on high-value natural areas.

We invite contributions that engage with the session’s thematic focus from diverse theoretical, empirical and methodological perspectives.

Title: Pay Per View Tourism and the Inauguration of an Annual Pass to Snæfellsjökull National Park

Authors: Guðrún Þóra Gunnarsdóttir, ITRC, and Johannes Welling

In recent years, paid parking has proliferated in Iceland at waterfalls, beaches, canyons, and national parks, usually enforced through automated license plate recognition and app-based payment systems. This development has caused heated debate among Icelanders, with many expressing concern that it hampers the right to roam in their own country.

Snæfellsjökull National Park, located on the Snæfellsnes peninsula and managed by the Nature Conservation Institute, is one of the sites that now charges moderate service fees. As the youngest national park in Iceland, it was established through a locally grounded effort, and park authorities are currently developing a year pass that could play an important role for residents and other benefactors. The pass would provide access at a lower cost than individual payments, encouraging more frequent visits and strengthening connections to the local environment.

This paper focuses on the process of implementing the year pass, which is regarded as a pilot project with potential for adoption in other protected areas. The case is examined in relation to broader Tourism Revenue Transfer mechanisms (TRTs), such as fees, levies, and voluntary payment systems, as explored in the RETURN project. It is argued that the park's close proximity to local communities has created a strong foundation for cooperation, which is critical for the successful implementation of the pass. The initiative aims to improve the visitor experience and strengthen residents' connection to their local environment.

By situating this empirical Icelandic case within a broader TRT framework, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions on how tourism financing mechanisms can move beyond cost recovery toward supporting more sustainable and regenerative tourism practices. The insights are particularly relevant for protected areas in the Nordic and Arctic regions seeking to balance conservation, accessibility, and community wellbeing.

Title: From Freedom to Roam to Freedom to Pay: Pay-Per-View Tourism and the Politics of Parking Fees

Author: Ari Laakso, University of Lapland

The rapid growth of nature-based tourism in Nordic and Arctic regions has intensified pressure on landscapes, infrastructure, and publicly funded services. In response, site-specific payment mechanisms, particularly parking fees, have emerged as a widespread but uneven instrument for managing access and capturing value from visitors. This paper conceptualises these developments as a form of pay-per-view tourism, where access to nature is increasingly mediated through spatial pricing infrastructures, reflecting a broader shift from freedom to roam toward freedom to pay.

Building on a structured review of academic and grey literature, the paper introduces a governance-based distinction between two models of parking fees: (1) public-oriented tourism revenue transfer (TRT) mechanisms, where revenues are reinvested into infrastructure, services, environmental management, and regenerative measures, and (2) private revenue extraction models, where fees primarily serve profit generation with limited collective return. This distinction highlights that instruments commonly framed as public funding tools may also function as mechanisms for private value capture.

By making this distinction explicit, the paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how tourism revenue transfer mechanisms operate in practice and helps explain the emergence of pay-per-view tourism as a differentiated and uneven development across destinations. It concludes by emphasising the need to better distinguish between different governance logics in the design and implementation of such mechanisms, particularly in relation to their purpose, revenue use, and local impacts.

Title: Selling Secrets: Can Visitor Levy Help Protect Local Hidden Gems?

Author: Gaute Emil Svensson, UiT The Arctic University of Tromsø

In the age of overtourism and the commodification of natural landscapes, the tension between promoting tourism and preserving local hidden gems has become increasingly evident. This paper examines the paradoxical role of tourism revenue mechanisms—such as parking fees, visitor levies, and pay-per-view models—in regulating access to “hidden” nature sites. While these tools aim to manage visitor impact, they risk exposing and exploiting previously lesser-known locations cherished by local communities.

Drawing on Jason W. Moore's (2015) concept of the "Capitalocene," the paper critically explores how these mechanisms contribute to the commodification of nature, transforming local landscapes into economic assets. Are such tools pragmatic solutions for visitor management, or do they exacerbate the pressures they aim to alleviate? By monetizing access, do they erode the cultural and ecological value of natural spaces, reducing them to transactional commodities rather than shared public goods?

This work-in-progress draws on ongoing ethnographic research to provide grounded insights into how local communities perceive and respond to the increasing monetization of their natural surroundings. Combining theoretical inquiry with empirical case studies, the paper investigates whether visitor management strategies can protect local secrets in nature or expose and exploit them under the guise of sustainability.

Ultimately, the paper raises critical questions about revenue-based governance models and their implications for equity, access, and environmental stewardship. By situating these questions within the framework of the Capitalocene, it highlights the structural forces shaping tourism, governance, and environmental justice in the Anthropocene.

Session 29: Towards Decent Work? Dynamics of Employment in Arctic Tourism Sector

Organisers: Gunnar Þór Jóhannesson (corresponding), Outi Rantala, Jarkko Saarinen, Linda Lundmark, Cenk Demiroglu, Bente Heimtun, Patrick Maher and Suzanne de la Barre

Affiliation: University of Iceland

Description

Tourism has often been promoted as pivotal for sustainable development by generating local employment and economic growth. However, it is not without significant challenges, particularly concerning employment and decent work. Tourism is intrinsically linked to a global process of neoliberalisation, which has driven decentralisation and deregulation of markets, including labour markets, thus raising questions of how susceptible it is for building up decent work. Despite a growing interest in labour market research, there is still a lack of knowledge about how tourism employment is positioned in and affects local and regional labour markets. This gap is evident in the Nordic, and more general, Arctic countries where tourism has increased in recent years. Tourism in the Arctic and sub-arctic region is characterised by strong seasonality, distance and weak infrastructure and limited labour pools. Hence, tourism companies in those areas, often struggle to provide full time year-round jobs, decent housing, and rely on temporary workforce to considerable extent. This poses challenges for sustainable tourism development. This session proposal is related to the ongoing project Tourism Employment in the Arctic: Towards Decent Work conducted by seven universities within the UArctic Thematic Network on Northern Tourism and funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers Arctic Co-operation Programme, the Canadian Global Arctic Leadership Initiative (GALI) and Nordplus and Erasmus mobility schemes. We invite both conceptually and empirically focused papers. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Precarity and precarious tourism work
- Social dumping and modern slavery in tourism work
- Sustainable development and tourism employment
- Internationalisation of tourism labour
- Community dimensions of tourism employment
- Employment satisfaction in tourism
- Gender dimension and youth in tourism employment
- Career development in tourism and hospitality

Title: The Relationship Between Employee Satisfaction and Performance in Hotels

Author: Magnús Ásgeirsson, University of Iceland

Employee satisfaction remains a central theme in management, with substantial evidence linking it to organizational performance. This study examines the nature and strength of that relationship and investigates whether its magnitude varies across different performance indicators. Using data from 9 hotels where organization culture was assessed through the Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCs). Organizational performance was evaluated across six dimensions: growth, profitability, quality of products and services, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, new service development, and overall performance. Bivariate regression analyses reveal positive and statistically significant relationships between employee satisfaction and all other performance indicators. The strongest associations were observed for overall performance and customer satisfaction, while moderate relationships emerged for profitability, growth, and quality of products and services. Employee satisfaction accounted for approximately 53% of the variance in overall performance. The findings support the view that employee satisfaction functions both as a driver and as an outcome of organizational performance. They further indicate that the strength of this relationship is greater for human-centered outcomes than for financial indicators. Practically, the results underscore the importance of cultivating intrinsic motivation, trust, and employee participation to enhance both satisfaction and perceived performance. Future research should investigate the causal direction between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction and explore how organizational culture moderates this relationship across different sectors.

Keywords: employee satisfaction; job satisfaction; performance; customer satisfaction; organizational culture

Title: Bridging the Temporal Gap: Meaningful Work in Precarious Arctic Tourism

Author: Mari Angeria, Lapland University of Applied Sciences & University of Oulu

Tourism work in Finnish Lapland is often characterized by low wages, job insecurity, seasonality, high performance demands (Baum et al., 2016; Ladkin et al., 2023), and exposure to abusive customer behavior (Mitsakis et al., 2024). It is commonly viewed as a “transit industry” rather than offering meaningful career paths. These precarious structures pose challenges to social sustainability and decent work (Santos, 2023; Winchenbach, 2019).

This study examines how the temporal gap between managers’ long-term horizon and employees’ fragmented seasonal experiences of meaningful work shapes the conditions for decent work in precarious Arctic tourism.

The data comprises two qualitative datasets. The first dataset includes written reflections from Finnish tourism students (early-career employees) (n=31, 68 pages) who held roles ranging from housekeeping and guiding to roles as elves or Santa Claus. The second dataset comprises semi-structured interviews with tourism managers (n=31), conducted in Finnish. The datasets were collected as part of EU-funded development projects, providing long-term access to the field.

The findings reveal a tension between how meaningful work is experienced and how it is managed. While managers emphasize holistic, long-term responsibility, employees describe fragmentation and a focus on short-term survival. Managers’ visions extend over several years, but employees’ experiences are limited to the high-pressure season. Recognizing this temporal gap opens concrete possibilities: managers who become aware of this asymmetry are better equipped to create conditions that promote meaningful work and decent employment, even within the constraints of a precarious, seasonal industry.

Title: From Sustainable Tourism Knowledge to Workplace Practice: The Role of Virtual Exchange (COIL)

Author: Steve Harbert, Robert Gordon University, Scotland

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is an established form of Virtual Exchange, which brings together students from institutions in different countries/cultures to work on an assessed project. Facilitating internationalisation at home and fostering intercultural awareness are two benefits commonly associated with COIL, that make it a “natural fit” for the tourism curriculum. Additionally, COIL pedagogy is identified as supporting students in developing key workplace skills including communication, teamwork and the use of technology.

The current study builds upon two recent research studies that applied a qualitative thematic analysis to reflective accounts written by tourism students about COIL projects with a sustainable tourism theme. In 2023, phase 1 identified students’ COIL experience and development of transferrable employment skills. In early 2026, phase 2 established COIL participation to have resulted in students’ co-creation of new knowledge and understanding of responsible tourism practices and the global relevance of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water. The next phase of data collection will return to the 2023 cohort of students, who are now working in the tourism industry, to elicit their perceptions of COIL’s role in their workplace skills development. This paper will draw upon previous findings and ongoing research, to consider how the application and development of COIL pedagogy can equip tourism graduates with the skills and attributes the industry needs now and in the future.

Title: Keeping the Spirit Alive: Intergenerational Transition and Renewal in Family Tourism SMEs

Author: Verena Karlsdóttir, University of Akureyri

Family-owned tourism SMEs play an important role in Nordic and European destination development by sustaining local employment, service cultures, community relationships, and the distinctive identity of places. Yet intergenerational transition remains challenging, especially in peripheral and seasonal tourism contexts where labour shortages, digital visibility, guest expectations, and community legitimacy shape everyday business continuity.

This study examines intergenerational transition in family-owned tourism SMEs as more than a legal, financial, or managerial handover. It argues that tourism businesses transfer not only ownership and operational responsibility but also tacit place-based knowledge, destination relationships, service quality, founder-linked identity, and the distinctive “personality” of the business. Drawing on multi-stakeholder focus groups conducted in Iceland, Austria, and Slovenia as part of the Erasmus+ Next GEN Tourism project, the study explores how family tourism firms navigate continuity and renewal across generations.

Preliminary findings point to seven interconnected competence areas that shape successful transition: leadership and staff transition, ownership transfer, financial planning and risk management, strategic planning and ESG, tourism dynamics, relational-emotional dynamics, and marketing and branding. Across the three contexts, participants emphasised the need for practical, modular, mentoring-based support that fits the realities of small and seasonal tourism firms.

The study contributes to Nordic tourism research by framing intergenerational transition as a destination-embedded process in which preserving local identity must be balanced with professionalisation, changing market conditions, and future-oriented entrepreneurship.

Title: Beyond Resource Extraction: Exploring the Scope, Structure and Dynamics of the Emerging International Tourism Labour Market in the Swedish Arctic Peripheries
Author: Ekaterina Kovbas, Umeå University

Arctic tourism has been in high demand in recent decades amid growing appreciation of northern destinations. This does not go unnoticed for the local small- and medium sized tourist firms, who struggle to sustain sufficient workforce to meet the customer needs and service quality standards. In northern Sweden, this need is exacerbated by tourism market's exposure to competition with the resource extractive industries that remain the region's biggest employer. An alternative strategy increasingly adopted by tourism business is to recruit staff from abroad. Yet, little is known about actual scale of international tourism labour market, partly due to the lack of approaches to define the output of tourism employment. To resolve this ambiguity, this paper frames tourism labour as a form of human capital attributed to migrant workers, who, in the labour process, both contribute to the workplace, applying their knowledge and skills, and gain from it through learning and training. Based on labour regime analysis framework, we contextualise the reproduction and mobilisation of international workforce in tourism to measure the size of tourism-associated labour market, identify the distinguishing characteristics of tourism employees in terms of gender, age and country of origin, and trace their spatial, temporal and institutional mobilities. Empirically, the study combines population register data analysis with GIS to map tourist employment hotspots in northern Sweden and examine how they coexist and evolve alongside extractive industries, capturing overall implications of diversifying tourism employment on regional labour market dynamics.

Keywords: labour regime analysis, sparsely populated areas, resource peripheries, tourism employment, international labour mobilities

Title: Tourism Employment and Precarity in the Arctic

Authors: Gunnar Þór Jóhannesson, University of Iceland, Outi Rantala, and Pat Maher

Tourism, with its capacity to play a pivotal role in sustainable development by generating employment, fostering economic growth, and facilitating the shift towards a greener economy, is not without significant challenges, particularly regarding decent work. Although tourism has long been promoted by national and regional authorities in the high North, limited research exists on how tourism employment is positioned within, and affects, local and regional labour markets. The project *Tourism Employment in the Arctic: Towards Decent Work* aims to shed light on these issues. Funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and led by the UArctic Thematic Network on Northern Tourism, the project's first year focused on precarity in tourism employment. In this presentation, we will recount key findings and highlight commonalities and divergences between countries and regions in the Arctic in relation to precarity in tourism labour. Tourism in the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions is characterised by strong seasonality, long distances, weak infrastructure, and limited labour pools. Tourism companies, particularly in rural areas, often struggle to provide full-time, year-round employment and rely to a considerable extent on temporary workers. Our study highlights that precarity is an integral feature of the tourism industry in these regions. It is intersectional in character, as migrants, women, and youth face compounded challenges. At the same time, structural differences between regions persist, and there are notable variations in who becomes part of the precariat.

Title: Tourism Employment in Canada and Its Norths - Towards Decent Work
Authors: Suzanne de la Barre, Vancouver Island University, Dylan Soo, Natalya Brown (Nipissing University), and Pat Maher (Nipissing University)

Canada's north and its Arctic are promoted as having 'distinct characteristics' offering 'unique and unforgettable experiences' (Government of Canada, 2024). The Government of Canada recognizes tourism growth in its northern and Arctic regions as a way to foster economic advancement and diversification, and a means to support small- and medium-sized businesses (Statistics Canada, 2025). Demand for skilled labour is expected to grow in northern Canada into 2045 (Conference Board of Canada, 2025), and the Canadian labour market has been and remains heavily influenced by immigration and population growth. Despite the evidence on both the demographic and economic necessity for immigration, the sustainability of the immigration system has been challenged, and forms one aspect of the employment issues and challenges faced by tourism in this peripheral context. This presentation offers a Canadian view on the issues, challenges and solutions related to employment in its peripheral regions tourism sector, and aims to complement our Nordic partner perspectives in our ongoing project *Tourism Employment in the Arctic: Towards Decent Work*.

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Title: Toward Decent Work in Icelandic Tourism: Foreign Labour, Seasonality and Regional Sustainability

Authors: Íris Hrund Halldórsdóttir, University of Iceland, Geography and Tourism, and Magnfríður Birnu Júlísdóttir

Tourism in Iceland has grown rapidly over the past two decades and has become a key economic sector, for rural and peripheral regions. At the same time, tourism employment is shaped by seasonality, creating uneven labour demand in many regions with limited local labour pools and reliance on foreign workers. Using Iceland as a case, this presentation examines how foreign workers have become central to tourism development in the Arctic context, and what this means for decent work and regional sustainability.

The paper combines analysis of statistical data on people working in various subsectors of tourism, by regions in Iceland, as well as results from qualitative research on the experiences of working conditions of foreign workers. It shows that foreign citizens accounted for 42% of the tourism workforce in Iceland in 2024, compared with 33% in 2019, with particularly high shares in several regions outside the capital area. This rapid growth of migrant labour in tourism raises questions on decent work and living conditions of these workers. Apart from adherence to employment regulation they concern housing, access to information and public services, social inclusion, and the capacity of tourism-dependent communities to retain workers who may wish to stay.

The paper argues that foreign workers should not be understood only as a flexible labour resource for a seasonal industry, but as part of the social and economic fabric of rural destinations. A decent work perspective therefore needs to be extended to include the broader living conditions and regional variations in tourism labour demand that shape workers' everyday lives.

Keywords: decent work; migrant labour; tourism employment; regional sustainability; seasonality; Iceland.

Title: "Floating Around During [the] COVID-19 [Pandemic]": Precarity of Nationality Onboard Cruise Ships

Authors: Alexandra Yingst, University of Iceland, Gunnar Þór Jóhannesson, and Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir

When the COVID-19 pandemic was declared globally, many countries closed their ports and borders to cruise ships, stranding crew at sea for months. This article questions how precarity is experienced outside of national borders, drawing on semi-structured interviews with cruise ship crew members during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it existed among crew members before, a precarity of nationality was exposed when crew members were stuck at sea, feeling unprotected by both their countries and companies. While other migrant tourism workers have a host state to support them, cruise ship crew are trapped onboard and must rely on flags of convenience (FOC) states to look out for their wellbeing. Nationality, in addition to larger socio-political-economic factors, intersects every level of precarity and causes precarity to manifest differently in individuals. Additionally, the meaning behind the movement of crew depends on nationality. Therefore, even though all crew members experienced precariousness in employment when cruise operations halted, not all crew members can be called precarious workers. And although all crew experienced precarity of nationality, some nationalities, like Filipinos, experienced it more. This research provides a closer look at a socially unsustainable system of precarity and mobility that was cracked open by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, it highlights the need to address the unique challenges faced by migrant workers in the tourism sector, as their voices are rarely heard.

Title: Labour Precarity in Arctic Tourism: A Patchy Anthropocene Perspective

Authors: Albina Pashkevich, Nord University, Norway, and Dorothee Bohn, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland

Tourism research tends to approach the travel and hospitality workforce either instrumentally, for example, by assessing labour's contribution to regional and community development, or symbolically, by emphasising the emotional and affective dimensions of service work. This limitation is particularly evident in the European Arctic, where tourism's rapidly expanding ecological footprint, combined with the growth of platform-mediated work framed as entrepreneurship and the precarious conditions faced by seasonal workers, raises pressing questions about the sector's current and future sustainability.

To address this gap, the study draws on the notion of the 'patchy Anthropocene', a lens for understanding the uneven conditions of more-than-human liveability in landscapes increasingly governed by industrial production and consumption. Applied to tourism labour, this framework highlights how work is differently organised across fragmented socio-ecological contexts, or 'patches', thereby revealing patterns of precarity and opportunity. Focusing on Rovaniemi and Tromsø, two booming tourism hubs marketed as part of the Arctic wilderness, the study traces how precariousness and forms of resistance among seasonal, migrant, and platform-mediated workers emerge in relation to broader, more-than-human interlinkages.

Our findings suggest that dominant imaginaries of a pristine Arctic winter landscape render tourism workers part of a consumable and simplified environment. Within these tourism 'patches', precarious labour conditions are intertwined with wider patterns of socio-ecological extraction. This study contributes to a more place-sensitive understanding of labour precarity in tourism that considers not only the interplays of structure, agency, and scale within places but also its entanglements with the more-than-human world.

Session 31: Work in Tourism and Hospitality: Precarity, Power, and Possibilities for Change

Organisers: Eleonora Rossi, Maria Thulemark, Tara Duncan and Susanna Heldt Cassel

Affiliation: Örebro University, Dalarna University and Thompson Rivers University

Description

The tourism and hospitality industry employs millions globally and is frequently positioned as a vehicle for inclusive growth, regional development, and social mobility. Yet, tourism and hospitality labour is also characterised by precarity; seasonality; informality; gendered and racialized hierarchies, migrant dependence, and exposure to environmental and economic shocks. As tourism systems confront climate change, digital transformation, overtourism, demographic shifts, and post-pandemic restructuring, questions of who benefits from tourism, and under what conditions, become increasingly urgent. If tourism is to act as an ‘active agent for good’, its labour regimes, employment practices, and value distributions require critical scrutiny.

This session invites contributions on the changing nature of work in tourism and hospitality and its implications for equity, sustainability, and justice. We welcome conceptual, empirical, and methodological papers that interrogate how work is organised, governed, experienced, and contested across tourism contexts. Contributions may examine tensions between growth-oriented tourism models and decent work aspirations; or the lived experiences of workers navigating insecurity, care responsibilities, and shifting regulatory environments. We are particularly interested in research that foregrounds workers’ voices and examines how labour practices shape tourism’s capacity to contribute positively to societies.

We welcome research grounded in diverse theoretical and empirical contexts, including but not limited to:

- Decent work, precarity, and labour market segmentation in tourism and hospitality
- Gendered, racialized, migrant, and youth labour inequalities
- Platformisation, algorithmic management, and digital labour in tourism services
- Emotional, embodied, and affective labour in hospitality settings
- Unionisation, collective organising, and new forms of labour activism

Title: Leadership-Oriented and Digital Skills in High-Contact Hospitality Occupations: Evidence from Norwegian Job Advertisements

Authors: Alireza Ebrahimi, University of Stavanger, Olga Gjerald, and Tom Brökel

Aim: This paper aims to identify leadership-oriented and digital skills in Norwegian high-contact hospitality occupations, and to examine how these skills are reflected in online job advertisements.

Theory and Method: More than 10,000 online job advertisements from 2012–2018 and 2020 were analyzed. The analysis is informed by leadership and self-leadership theories, alongside the digital competency framework (DigComp). First, SBERT-based semantic matching was applied to align job advertisements with skill entries from the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) taxonomy, covering over 13,000 skills, to identify the top 50 matched skills for each occupation. Second, the top-ranked ESCO skills were analyzed to identify leadership-oriented skills based on theoretical frameworks. Third, the top matched skills were mapped to the DigComp framework to determine whether they represent digital, digitally applicable, or non-digital competencies. Finally, a three-layer keyword matching was conducted to capture explicitly digital skills not fully represented in ESCO.

Results: The results indicate a diverse set of skills, with leadership-oriented skills appearing among the top-ranked skills across occupations. In contrast, inherently digital skills are less prominent, while many of the identified skills are digitally applicable. The DigComp mapping shows that the top skills are most frequently associated with information and data literacy, as well as communication and collaboration, while safety-related competencies are least represented.

Implications: The findings suggest a gap between ESCO occupation profiles and skill demand signals from job advertisements in Norway, particularly regarding the representation of leadership-oriented skills and the linguistic formulation of skill definitions in ESCO classification.

Title: Working in the Kitchen: Labour, Space, and Inequality in Tourism and Hospitality

Author: Maria Thulemark, Dalarna University

This project examines the working conditions and labour environments of chefs and kitchen staff in restaurant settings in Sweden. Drawing on an intersectional perspective, it analyses how kitchen work is organised, managed and experienced, with particular attention to how gender, migration status and professional roles shape everyday working life. The study addresses questions concerning the factors that influence the organisation and execution of kitchen work, how workers perceive their conditions, and what shapes their experiences of power, control and well-being.

Methodologically, the study employs qualitative methods, combining working participant observation with semi-structured interviews across diverse workplace contexts. By capturing variation in gender composition and leadership, the project contributes to a deeper understanding of how intersecting power relations shape contemporary restaurant work.

Adopting a geographical approach, the project foregrounds spatiality, social position and workplace hierarchies, responding to calls for further research on labour conditions in restaurant kitchens. Empirically, the paper traces three interconnected temporal dimensions. First, it examines the micro-geographies of kitchens, where spatial arrangements and task divisions produce fluid yet persistent hierarchies. Second, it explores daily space–time rhythms, including long and irregular working hours, commuting and limited recovery, as well as the normalisation of injury and disruption. Third, it situates kitchen work within broader rhythms of social reproduction, highlighting transnational family responsibilities, migration regimes and housing conditions.

Title: Performing National Identity through Embodied Sonic Practices in Italian Restaurants in Sweden

Author: Eleonora Rossi, Dalarna/Örebro University

Hospitality venues are performative spaces where front-line workers' bodies function as material signifiers of organizational identity. While scholarship has extensively theorized the visual and affective dimensions of 'looking the part', the sonic dimensions of embodied performance, such as accent modulation and language choice, remain comparatively under-theorized. Furthermore, language in migrant work is frequently treated as a technical skill or adaptation strategy rather than a modality of embodied labour. This article addresses these gaps by examining how national identity (specifically, 'Italianness') is performed through embodied sonic practices within restaurant spaces. The study utilizes a participatory ethnographic design involving 174 hours of fieldwork as a researcher-waitress across six Italian casual dining restaurants in a major Swedish city. The findings reveal three inter-related themes: (1) voice regulation, which reveals how workers exercise audible self-discipline to remain seen, but not heard (2) accent modulation, which showcases how vocal traits are actively aestheticized and mobilized for national branding and (3) affective migrant regulation, which highlights the fragility and unevenness of these performances. Together, the findings reveal that in the context of Italian casual dining in Sweden, 'Italianness' is not an inherent trait but a spatially situated performance enacted through embodied sonic practices. By demonstrating that 'Italianness' is a spatially situated performance rather than a fixed trait, this study extends frameworks of labour research to include nationalized sonic dimensions and highlights the relational nature of identity in service spaces.

Title: Positive Practices of Multicultural Work Communities in Lapland

Authors: Sini Kestilä, Lapland University of Applied Sciences, and Minna Väyrynen

This research is part of the project Diverse Working Life in Lapland, and it is funded by European Social Fund. In this paper, we aim to emphasize positive experiences of multicultural work communities in Lapland. These positive examples can serve as an inspiration for employers that have not yet hired a person with an immigrant background or need support to operate in multicultural work communities.

In the future we must be able to work successfully with people from different backgrounds and cultures. Understanding that different cultures are an asset in the workplace may become a competitive advantage for businesses. Research has shown that investing in diversity leads to better financial performance in companies.

The data for this research was collected by interviewing employers that had experiences of hiring immigrant employees. According to preliminary results the attitudes of employers and the work community as a whole play a significant role. It is important that an employee with an immigrant background is allowed and welcomed to become part of the work community. The whole work community should be supportive towards employees with an immigrant background. This requires responsible and ethical leadership of the management level.

Title: Women Only - Women Only Networks, Precarity and Career Advancement in Hospitality

Authors: Francisca Farache, School of Business and Law, University of Brighton, Madhobi Hossain, and Adam Jones

This study examines the role of women-only networks (WONs) in facilitating women's career advancement within the hospitality sector, a context characterised by persistent gender inequality despite women's numerical dominance. While women comprise a significant proportion of the workforce, they remain underrepresented in senior leadership, reflecting enduring structural barriers embedded in organisational cultures, gendered career pathways, and unequal access to opportunities (Deiana & Fabbri, 2020; Kokkranikal et al., 2024). These challenges are further intensified by precarious working conditions, including irregular hours, low pay, and limited career stability, which disproportionately constrain women's progression (Calinaud et al., 2021; Segovia-Pérez et al., 2021).

Positioned within debates on precarity, power, and the potential for change, this research explores whether WONs can function as alternative spaces of support and resistance within a structurally unequal industry. The study adopts a qualitative approach, drawing on data generated through an interactive workshop and eight in-depth semi-structured interviews with women working in hospitality. The workshop produced 37 written reflections ("cards"), capturing participants' shared experiences of career barriers and perceptions of network-based support. These data are complemented by interview insights that provide deeper, individualised accounts of career trajectories and engagement with WONs.

Findings highlight that WONs offer both instrumental benefits, such as mentoring and access to opportunities, and expressive support, including confidence-building and solidarity (Durbin, 2016; Papafilippou et al., 2022). However, tensions remain regarding their positioning outside dominant organisational power structures, raising questions about their capacity to challenge entrenched inequalities (Hein et al., 2025; Ryan & Mooney, 2019). By foregrounding women's lived experiences, this study contributes to hospitality scholarship by critically evaluating WONs as distinct career-enabling spaces (O'Neill et al., 2025).

Title: Union Activism Against Social Dumping in Tourism in Iceland

Authors: Magnfríður Birnu Júlíusdóttir, University of Iceland, Dep. of Geography and Tourism Studies, and Íris Hrunn Halldórsdóttir

Since Iceland joined the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1994, trade unions have attempted to defend the Nordic model of universal coverage of collective agreement for all worker, in a borderless EEA market. Very high union density and collective bargaining coverage is still the case today, but with the rapid growth of tourism and migrant workers in the sector the battle against social dumping has increasingly included some sections of the tourism industry. In the paper we focus on trade union activism starting end of 2024 against union labelled as “bogus-union” set up by organisation of companies in restaurant operation, mainly active in the capital area. The activism was led by the largest union covering workers in tourism and hospitality, with over half of the members being of foreign origin. Based on analysis of media cover of this conflict and information from the trade union, the main disputes over work arrangement and wage, as well as labour rights gained in the last century is drawn out. Resurge of the battle in the 1990s, between the labour movement and neoliberal market ideologies, over the meaning of “freedom of association” is prominent. In the wider context of increased reliance on workers of foreign origin in tourism and hospitality in the Nordic countries, this case emphasises the importance of active and inclusive trade unions in resisting attempts by some companies to dismantle the labour regime of collective bargaining and capitalize on vulnerable group of workers. Many companies left the organisation in wake of the negative media coverage of this case, which was a positive move from the standpoint of the trade unions and goals of decent work conditions for all employees.

Keywords: Union activism, Unionisation, Migrant workers, Iceland

Title: Sexual Harassment in Extended Client Relationships: A Case Study of Ski Instructors

Authors: Nelli Heiskanen, University of Eastern Finland, and Kelsey M. Johansen

Sexual harassment generates substantial organizational costs while undermining employee job satisfaction, performance, and commitment (Chen et al., 2023; Zhang & Shum, 2025). While tourism and hospitality research has examined harassment in hotels, restaurants, and guiding (Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2020; Mousa et al., 2024), they largely focus on brief or group-based encounters. Ski instruction differs: instructors spend entire days — sometimes weeks — with the same clients, involving sustained physical proximity, blurred professional-social boundaries, and limited managerial oversight. These conditions make harassment more likely to occur and more difficult to interrupt. Extended client relationships can constrain disengage, tie income and evaluation to individual clients, and enable gradual escalation and normalization of inappropriate behaviour – dynamics that remain underexamined.

Drawing on the Pressure-Disorganization-Regulatory Failure framework (Knox & Bohle, 2024), and Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), this study links structural conditions to lived experience. Seasonal employment and limited oversight sustain exposure to risk, while repeated, inescapable interactions result in cumulative resource depletion, inhibiting recovery.

This study asks: (1) how harassment develops under prolonged one-on-one contact; (2) which environmental characteristic and features of ski instructions invite, increase, and sustain vulnerability; (3) how organizational practices shape instructors' responses; and (4) which organizational policies and leadership-driven interventions effectively disrupt these dynamics. A sequential mixed-methods design combines anonymous narratives (n = 50–100) with follow-up semi-structured interviews (n = 25) to identify patterns, mechanisms, and interventions through thematic analysis.

Findings advance beyond documenting prevalence by showing how temporally extended, relationally dependent interactions produce self-reinforcing harassment dynamics, and generate prevention strategies including boundary-setting protocols, structured client pairing, and support systems for low-oversight environments.

Keywords: sexual harassment; Extended Client Relationships; ski instructors

Title: Challenges in Addressing Customer Sexual Harassment of Frontline Service Workers in Scotland's Tourism and Hospitality Sector
Author: Paul Prescott, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow UK

Customer sexual harassment (CSH) of frontline service workers in the tourism and hospitality industry is a widespread and persistent issue (Dawson *et al.*, 2021). This problem is often viewed as part of the job (Hadjisolomou *et al.*, 2023), and despite the increasing awareness, particularly post-pandemic, little has changed to protect workers, especially women (Beltramini *et al.*, 2020). CSH prospers in hospitality services due to ingrained idiosyncrasies of hospitality service provision and service effort, with the nature of hospitality service fostering close involvement with customers (FolgerØ and Fjeldstad, 1995; Poulston, 2008). The customer-centric nature of service work, however, creates unequal power and gender dynamics, which normalise undesirable and distressing sexualised experiences, particularly for women in the sector (Matulewicz, 2016).

Alarmingly, research underscores the gendered challenges women face within their roles, suggesting that they are more likely to experience CSH (Bragason, 2016; Gibbs *et al.*, 2021). Despite the widespread nature of the problem, surprisingly little research has examined the role of hospitality management in supporting women who have experienced CSH.

This paper, therefore, drawing on 44 semi-structured interviews, considers how women in frontline service work experience CSH in the Scottish hospitality industry and how management reacts to this phenomenon. Findings indicate that individuals, both frontline workers and line managers, view CSH through their personal interpretive prism, which forms decision-making on reporting, handling, and addressing CSH. Furthermore, real-time decision-making and sovereignty of customers are commonplace pressures that affect line managers' judgement in dealing with the phenomenon, offering limited support to survivors.

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Title: Lost in Space: Imagining Tourism, Hospitality and Service Worker Futures
Authors: Richard Robinson, Northumbria University, Wilson, S., Newman, C., and Griffiths, E.

Space travel, exploration and habitation are rapidly becoming reality. Humanity's extraterrestrial expansion is accelerating through ventures such as the International Space Station (ISS) and Artemis programs, private orbital stations, and ambitions for colonisation – both lunar and planetary. Communication, extractive celestial mining and energy, and indeed tourism (Spector & Higham, 2025) are industries pushing these new frontiers. Discourses of work in space have revolved around astronauts, scientists, and engineers. As missions and settlements become longer-term auxiliary hospitality/service staff (e.g., cooks, cleaners, carers and carriers) will become critical. This research aims to reframe employment discourses to avoid social and legal binaries and ensure service workers do not become second-class citizens in space. While the Outer Space Treaty (1967) and subsequent agreements provide precedence, labour law is non-existent (Hogan, 2022). Much terrestrial service work is considered as of diminished value to professional occupations and is characterised by lower pay, poor conditions and precarity (Mirabito et al., 2025). Replicating such occupational inequalities is contrary to the ethos of the affordances of the new frontiers and imaginings that space offers. Conceptual framings will be informed by other extreme workplaces e.g., Antarctica, subterranean and sub-nautical environments.

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Session 32: Planning for „Good“ Tourism in the Nordic Region

Organisers: Anna Karlsdóttir and Íris Hrund Halldórsdóttir

Affiliation: University of Iceland

Description

Understanding the degree to which regional tourism strategies are used by the tourism actors, policy makers and local communities as tools has become more important. Aiming at balancing positive economic returns and social development in rural areas with the environmental or social burden of the tourism is key to a potential pathway of prosperity for involved communities. Enabling local communities to address their concerns on challenges and benefits for their regions in strategic plans has also become more common. What are the main concerns and interests in the different tourism planning documents? What visions for tourism development do they express, and what role do sustainability concerns play in the plans envisaged? Are municipalities and tourism authorities coordinating efforts or is the dialogue missing? In this session we want to address how local and regional stakeholders are addressing future visions of sustainable tourism for good. This session invites contributions that ask how tourism planning manifests in the regions the strategies aim at. We are especially interested in work that reconnects conversations often kept apart on visions, planning and/or strategies and the use of them in practice for the greater good of tourism development in the Nordic regions.

Title: Strings from Nordic Rural Tourism and from Danish and Swedish Experiences of Thinking Sustainability Beyond Economic Returns

Author: Anna Karlsdottir, University of Iceland

This paper pulls together different strings from a journey of analysing the sustainability of regional tourism strategies and destination plans in the Nordic countries. Designing the analytical framework was developed with Nordregio and Centre for regional and tourism development (DK). The Pan-Nordic focused research project was ongoing 2018-2020. This research focused on sustainable rural tourism development across the Nordic regions, analyzing over 100 tourism development plans (TDPs) from rural areas. The study identified key challenges such as balancing economic growth with environmental preservation, enhancing local community involvement, and improving infrastructure. We found that the importance of developing region-specific or local community based strategies was seen growing among stakeholders. Also that sustainable focus was prioritized and strategies were shifting from strictly economic indicators to evaluating environmental and social impacts. Work with the Centre for regional and tourism research in Bornholm and the destination management organizations in Denmark (2021-2022) led the way for this development. Further work with the Swedish regions (SKR) (2022) and the Swedish statistical office (SCB) on tourism satellite accounts and environmental accounts methodology development revealed a need to take action rather than keep talking the talk. Effective planning requires collaboration among local stakeholders, policymakers, and tourism operators to ensure long-term sustainability and inclusivity in Nordic rural tourism. This then founded the idea and realized a the Regional Research fund supported project in Iceland focusing on cooperation and coordination of regional travel plans with emphasis on the process behind drafting the plans.

Title: Planning for "Good" Tourism? Destination Management Plans, Municipal Responsibilities and Regional Coordination in Iceland

Author: Íris Hrunn Halldorsdottir, University of Iceland

Tourism policy and planning in the Nordic region are increasingly expected to integrate economic value creation, community wellbeing, environmental protection and responsible destination development. In Iceland, this ambition is reflected in the national tourism policy to 2030, where sustainability, regional development, infrastructure, safety, data and residents' quality of life are framed as interconnected concerns. At the regional level, destination management plans are intended to translate such priorities into the contexts of different regions.

This presentation explores how tourism planning is articulated and enacted across Icelandic regions. It draws on interviews with representatives of municipalities and destination management and marketing offices (DMMOs), alongside analysis of the national tourism policy and destination management plans for Reykjanes, South Iceland, North Iceland and East Iceland. The paper asks how visions of sustainable and socially beneficial tourism are expressed in policies and plans, what role municipalities are assigned, and how coordination takes place in everyday practice.

Preliminary findings suggest that destination management plans provide an important framework for shared priorities, particularly regarding infrastructure, visitor dispersal, safety, destination development and public funding applications. However, their practical role varies between regions and municipalities. In some cases, they are embedded in regular dialogue and administrative processes, while elsewhere tourism is less institutionally anchored, underfunded or dependent on individual initiative.

The presentation argues that planning for "good" tourism is not only about formulating desirable futures, but about building the capacity, relationships, responsibilities and procedures needed to make such visions actionable.

Title: Planning with Risks: Airports, Laws and Repercussions

Authors: Gunnar Þór Jóhannesson, University of Iceland, and Carina Ren

The dynamics of tourism in Greenland are changing. The building of new international airports in Nuuk (opened in 2024), Ilulissat, and Qaqortoq, (both to open in 2026) is designed to enhance global connectivity and cement the premise of this world's largest island as a tourist destination. Infrastructure not only functions to connect people and facilitate flow of resources across space but also is imbued with hopes, dreams and concerns about what the future will bring. In this presentation we will focus on how the interplay between infrastructure, hopes and fears of tourism development and efforts to plan for "good" tourism leads to a new riskscape of tourism in Greenland. The concept of riskscape underlines that risk is a relational outcome of ordering work involving a plethora of human and more-than-human actors. The effort to steer and manage a phenomenon like tourism thus enacts risk. We will focus on the period leading up to the opening of the Nuuk airport, in November 2024, in which many lingering concerns were in play, such as evident strains on accommodation, limited labour pool and local ownership and investment capacities. We ask how did Greenland actors act on the likelihood of the airport creating new, perhaps 'more' or at least 'different' tourism' and what new riskscape unfolded after its opening. The account is based on material gathered during repeated fieldvisits in the period 2019-2026. Material includes interviews with tourism stakeholders, public officials and inhabitants, fieldnotes and written policy related documents.

Keywords: Greenland tourism, risk, tourism futures, planning, tourism law

Title: Managing Overtourism in Protected Areas: A Longitudinal Study of Tourist Attitudes in Þingvellir National Park, Iceland

Authors: Anna Dóra Sæþórsdóttir, University of Iceland, Edita Tverijonaite, and Anna Helga Jónsdóttir

Increasing visitation to protected areas can challenge conservation objectives and affect visitor experience. This study examines how increasing tourism affects visitor perceptions in Þingvellir National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Iceland's most visited destinations. The analysis draws on on-site visitor surveys conducted during peak seasons in 2014, 2019, and 2024, 6,883 responses. It examines changes in visitor characteristics, travel behavior, overall satisfaction, and perceptions of service quality, crowding, and environmental impacts over a decade of substantial visitation growth. The results revealed significant shifts, including fewer domestic visitors and shorter stays. Perceived crowding increased markedly, while overall visitor satisfaction declined, despite improvements in perceived service quality and reduced perceived environmental impacts. Although service quality is the strongest predictor of satisfaction, its positive effects appear increasingly constrained by growing tourism pressure. The findings highlight the complexity of managing overtourism in protected areas the need for adaptive management strategies.

Title: Regenerative Tourism in Local Contexts – Between Fatigue & Enthusiasm in the VERNE Co-Creative Community of Practice on Bornholm

Authors: Bent Egberg Mikkelsen, ULUND, Josefine Östrup Backe, and Michael Johansson

New “limits to growth” oriented approaches to destination development are emerging, asking if local community economic growth can co-exist with sustainable communities and citizens. But how can more regenerative approaches be developed and tested in real life? Should local community or researchers take the lead? Or maybe the two in combination? The VERNE study has been able to create an action research-oriented community of practice (CoP) – a greenhouse for new regenerative ideas and solutions in the domain of food. The CoP is based on a Multi Actor Approach, the principles of Action Research and qualitative data-collection. The study uses the CoP as a method for taking advantage of stakeholders’ perspectives on sustainable and circular solutions. Although the CoP approach has been praised as a well-suited framework for co-creation, it has also limitations since researcher-practitioner collaboration need a robust project framework and resource allocation. In this paper we share the insights from the co-creative work in the VERNE project and discuss how stakeholders’ ideas for circular solutions can be developed at the same time as researchers conceptualise scalable solutions for more general use. We discuss how stakeholder fatigue can be balanced against enthusiasm and how the emerging solutions can be delivered to create sustainability of intervention. Results suggest that important elements include trust, time, resources and participatory methodologies. Important process-steps were found to be: 1/ Identification of stakeholders. 2/ Situational mapping of structural context. 3/ Engaging stakeholders. 4/ Demonstrating value propositions 5/Choosing robust organisational setups and 6/ Provision of visibility & outreach.

Title: Antarctic Scientific Bases as a Space of Social Sustainability under Increasing Tourism Pressure

Authors: Katia Iankova, Higher Colleges of Technology, Abu Dhabi, UAE, and Sonia Mileva

I will present preliminary results of a 2 years project “Antarctic Scientific Bases as Spaces of Social Sustainability under Increasing Tourist Pressure,”. The aim is to examine how growing tourism affects the daily life, work and governance of scientific communities in Antarctica. It approaches the continent as a fragile polar environment where human presence must be managed through ecological responsibility, institutional cooperation and social awareness. While existing debates often focus on environmental impacts, this project highlights the less studied social, cultural and organisational dimensions of interactions between tourists and scientists.

The research focuses on the Bulgarian Antarctic Scientific Base “St. Kliment Ohridski” as a case study. Drawing on policy analysis, field observations and face-to-face interviews with scientists living and working at the base, it explores how tourist visits influence safety and security, pollution risks, research routines, interpersonal relations and perceptions of sustainability. The scientists’ point of view is central, because they are among the permanent human residents of Antarctica and directly experience the pressures created by increasing and concentrated tourist activity.

The project seeks to identify formal and informal mechanisms that help regulate encounters between tourism and science, and to develop indicators for assessing social sustainability in Antarctic bases. Its preliminary results contribute to a wider debate on the sustainable management of fragile polar zones.

Session 33: Rural Drive Tourism: Roads as Experience, Practice and Planning

Organisers: Eyrún Jenný Bjarnadóttir, Reidar J. Mykletun and Tarja Tuulia Salmela

Affiliation: Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, University of Stavanger, Arctic University of Norway

Description

This session focuses on rural drive tourism from the perspective of movement rather than destinations alone. Instead of seeing roads mainly as access to attractions, we approach them as spaces where tourism happens, through driving, enjoying, learning, stopping, negotiating routes, encountering others and making ongoing decisions along the way.

We are interested in how routes are planned, branded and governed, but also how they are used in practice. This includes how travellers balance transport and experience, how they follow, adapt or avoid suggested routes and how navigation tools, information and in-car activities shape attention to surroundings and engagement with place.

We also welcome perspectives on safety and risk, including preparedness, driving cultures and accidents as well as everyday frictions between visitors, residents and different road users. Finally, we invite contributions that look at roads in a longer perspective: their histories, their role in regional development and how infrastructure, planning and sustainability ambitions influence mobility and experiences in rural areas.

In the context of a changing tourism landscape, rural roads also become sites of transition. Shifts towards electrification, new mobility patterns and changing expectations of sustainability reshape both infrastructure and everyday travel practices. Studying drive tourism therefore offers a concrete way to understand how tourism adapts (or struggles to adapt) to broader environmental and societal change. The session aims to bring together different approaches to better understand the road not only as infrastructure, but as a lived and negotiated tourism space.

Title: Passion at the Intersection of Drive and Car Tourism in a Rural Context

Author: Helene Maristuen, Western University of Applied Sciences

Car tourism is understood as a sub-category of drive tourism, where the vehicle itself is the primary motivation and focus of travel experience. In contrast, in general drive tourism, the mode of travel—typically the private car is central, whether the traveler has a particular enthusiasm for vehicles or not. Both forms of tourism, however, are characterized by private mobility, reliance on road infrastructure, and frequently occur within similar rural and scenic geographies such as mountain passes and countryside routes. This qualitative case study investigates how an entrepreneur via his rural hotel and associated car tourism events contributes to the development of car tourism. Data collection was done via semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, and the study explores mechanisms related to the entrepreneur, his hotel concept, car events, collaborations, stakeholder relations, experiences and marketing.

Finally, the study introduces a revised framework for car tourism, incorporating the concept of the Car Gaze as a passive mode of engagement in car events, while co-creation and practice represent active forms of participation.

This offers valuable insight for policymakers, marketers, destination managers and entrepreneurs seeking to develop drive and car tourism activities.

Keywords: Drive tourism, car tourism, entrepreneurship, destination development, car gaze.

Title: The "Unstoppable" Road

Author: Tarja Salmela, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

In this presentation, I approach the road as (1) an agential materiality that mediates and reshapes relations to place(s), and (2) a porous actant upon which narratives of tourism, militarisation, and industrial development are projected. Attending to the apparent duality of roads—particularly intensified in peripheral and rural contexts—I draw on their capacity to “elicit powerful temporal imaginaries, holding out the promise (or threat) of future connectivity, while also articulating the political and material histories that often render these otherwise mundane spaces so controversial” (Dalakoglou & Harvey, 2012, p. 460).

Empirically, I will focus on the Scottish Highlands, where I have conducted research over the past four years on the 516-mile circular tourism route, the North Coast 500 (NC500). The route connects existing A-roads and single-track roads in a loop from Inverness along the east coast to John o’ Groats, across the north to Durness and Lochinver, south to Ullapool, and back through the west coast to Inverness. As the NC500 has placed the Highlands on the global tourism map to an unprecedented degree, the road assemblage emerges simultaneously as an enabler, mediator, and a shared infrastructure mobilised for divergent interests—without the possibility of “the road” itself being stopped. I consider how the road’s (theoretically) “unstoppable” affordance shapes its character as more-than-infrastructure and as a lived and negotiated tourism space.

Literature:

Dalakoglou, D., & Harvey, P. (2012). Roads and Anthropology: Ethnographic Perspectives on Space, Time and (Im)Mobility. *Mobilities*, 7(4), 459–465. <https://doi-org.mime.uit.no/10.1080/17450101.2012.718426>

Title: How Information Shapes the Road: Self-Drive Tourism in Rural Contexts

Authors: Jörgen Eksell, Lund University, and Maria Månsson

This study examines how information logics shape self-drive tourists' search, use, and interpretation of information during rural travel, focusing on the interplay between motivation and situational factors. While previous research has primarily addressed pre-trip planning and destination-level systems, limited attention has been given to how information influences mobility in practice during travel.

Using a qualitative mixed-methods approach, the study draws on 99 ethnographic chats and 879 survey responses collected from visitors to a rural World Heritage site in West Sweden. This design enables analysis of information practices across both pre-trip and in-transit phases.

The findings identify eight constellations of rural self-drivers, differentiated by motivations, information roles, practices, and situational triggers. These constellations are synthesised into an information-logic typology comprising purpose-driven, context-dependent, and situational drivers. The results demonstrate that information is not merely a supportive resource but a constitutive element of self-drive tourism, functioning as trigger, coordination tool, interpretive infrastructure, and memory.

By shifting focus from static segmentation to dynamic information practices, the study shows how tourism emerges through ongoing interactions between travellers and information in motion. The findings contribute to self-drive tourism research by conceptualising information as a structuring force and offer practical implications for rural destination communication symposiumstrategies aligned with different information logics.

Title: Old Rural Roads as Multiplex Experiencescapes

Author: Reidar J. Mykletun, Universitetet i Stavanger

This paper explores some aspects of old and unique Norwegian rural roads as experiencescapes and as gateways to cultural and natural heritage. Norway's landscapes are mainly sparsely built-up areas with open fields, forest, rugged mountains, glaciers, valleys, lakes, rivers, 1,732 named fjords (the longest is 204 km), 239,057 islands, the world's second longest coastline (100,925 km), and one third of the mainland and nine percent of the population located north of the Arctic Circle. These landscapes seldom lent themselves easily to road construction. As most people used to live by the lakes, rivers, fjords, and the ocean, travel and transport by boats and ferries were important up to recent times. Consequently, rural cultural heritage is found near these roads that were built until the onset of the main period of industrialisation and centralisation of the society following WW2.

Researched here are two cases, protected as cultural heritage: Rv569 Romarheim - Dalseid (50 km) and two related detours of E134, Rullestadjuvet (Skromme – Rullestad, 6 km), and Madshus - Kyrping (18 km). Data were collected from document- and field-studies, and participatory observations in tour groups. Both cases allow for multiple experiences, depending on the mode of the travellers, be it transport-between-destinations mode, the mode of enjoying the movement as sports-driving, or the mode of sensing and admiring the natural and cultural heritage including the impressive monuments of skilled workmanship once invested in building these roads without today's technologies. The benefits of traversing these roads increase with relevant insights and careful planning.

Workshop 35: Turning generation Z student career aspirations into sound pedagogical solutions

Organisers: Susanna Saari, Carlos Cardoso Ferreira, and Timo Halttunen

Affiliation: Turku University of Applied Sciences, University of Coimbra

Description

Tourism continues to expand globally, yet Nordic countries face persistent challenges in attracting and retaining skilled professionals. Although travellers increasingly seek meaningful and responsible experiences, young people often perceive tourism careers as unstable or misaligned with their values. Applications to tourism and hospitality education have fallen in several Nordic regions, prompting concern that current educational structures—and the career pathways they lead to—do not resonate with Generation Z’s expectations for purposeful, sustainable, and flexible work. At the same time, contemporary working life is characterised by fragmentation: temporary contracts, seasonal roles, and diverse personal ambitions shape how young adults envision their professional identities. Higher education institutions (HEIs) occupy a critical intermediary position between these shifting labour-market realities, students’ values, and the long-term needs of the tourism sector. Their ability to re-design curricula based on credible evidence and multi-stakeholder insight will heavily influence the future relevance of tourism education.

This session draws on empirical findings from the Erasmus+ TourEdu – The Future of Tourism Education project, which investigates how tourism students describe their dreams, motivations, and expectations related to their future careers. We invite researchers, higher education teachers and industry stakeholders to discuss on an empirical, qualitative data collected from multinational student groups in September 2026 in Finland. The goal is to examine how student aspirations can be translated into pedagogical strategies, and a renewed tourism curriculum that both support personal development and strengthen the sector’s attractiveness.

How Participants Contribute

- **Researchers** bring analytical frameworks and methodological expertise to interpret student data, identify emerging patterns, and connect workshop insights to ongoing scientific debates around workforce dynamics, youth values, and regenerative tourism.
- **Higher education teachers** contribute pedagogical knowledge and curriculum development experience, helping translate student insights into concrete teaching approaches, learning environments, and program structures.

- **Industry stakeholders** provide practical perspectives on workplace realities, skill needs, organisational cultures, and future employment trends, helping assess how student expectations align—or conflict—with industry trajectories.

Through joint analysis, participants will collectively explore how education can better support value-driven career development and how the industry can respond to Generation Z’s evolving expectations.

Session Process: The session is structured as an interactive discussion workshop in which all participant groups collaborate in analysing the empirical material. Together, we will identify opportunities for curriculum innovation, workforce development, and cross-sector collaboration. The insights generated will inform the creation of a teacher guide and support further research on strengthening tourism’s appeal as a responsible and regenerative career pathway.

Objectives of the Session

- Analyse tourism students’ dreams, values, and expectations related to tourism work.
- Identify key factors influencing workforce attraction and retention across the sector.
- Strengthen collaboration between researchers, educators, and tourism industry actors.
- Co-create a dataset to be further developed into a teacher guide.
- Explore how regenerative and responsible tourism can enhance the sector’s appeal among young people.

Methodological Approach and Session Structure

- **Presentation of qualitative data from tourism students (15 min)**
Researchers introduce key themes from the TourEdu dataset.
- **Interactive small-group analysis and thematic tasks (45 min)**
Mixed groups of researchers, educators, and industry representatives analyse excerpts and discuss implications.
- **Collective synthesis and next steps (20 min)**
Participants co-identify curriculum needs, research gaps, and workforce insights.

Expected Outcomes

- A research-informed understanding of how young people perceive tourism work.
- Recommendations for improving workforce attractiveness and aligning education with student values.
- A collaboratively generated dataset to be developed into a teacher guide.
- A replicable model for interactive, student-centred educational development.

Workshop 36: Tourism & the Moving Image in a form of graphic facilitation workshop

Organiser: Marit Piirman

Affiliation: University of Tartu Pärnu College

Description

Screens play an important role in peoples' lives and films, series, TV-shows, music videos etc influence destination selection. Not all productions evoke tourism flows but there are cases where destination is ruined or started to bloom because of the film's popularity. Different impacts of film tourism have been identified by several authors researching topics related to film-induced tourism but collaboration between different parties (filmmakers, local community, tourists, DMO) could always be better and bringing different parties together thru research is crucial. Kim et al. (2019) note that film tourism is more sustainable because it does not require large investments to build special tourism attractions (the image-based familiarity is already there if filmmakers are not required to remove the sets). Or will the film props ruin the authenticity of the place? When producers or production companies select a location, local community does not have control over how their home is represented on screen (Beeton, 2016; Yoon, Kim, & Kim, 2015). Will this affect the artistic freedom if location stakeholders start dictating the content and storyline changes? Many angles to discuss the topic of film tourism and no better place than Iceland that has experienced many of the pros and cons of film-induced tourism.

In the era of rapid technological development let's take a step back and evoke our creativity by the simple technique of drawing (and yes, everybody can draw). During the 45-minute workshop all the session participants will learn basics of graphic facilitation. The workshop is followed by 3 presentations (10 minutes each) on the topic of Tourism & the Moving Image that the audience can visualise using the new skills they just learned, and 15-minute discussion to conclude the governance, sustainability, and power issues in film tourism.

- Beeton, S. (2016). *Film-induced Tourism* (2nd ed.). Channel View.
- Kim, S., Kim, S., & King, B. (2019). Nostalgia film tourism and its potential for destination development. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 36(2), 236–252.
- Yoon, Y., Kim, S. S., & Kim, S. S. (2015). Successful and unsuccessful film tourism destinations: From the perspective of Korean local residents' perceptions of film tourism impacts. *Tourism Analysis*, 20(3), 297–311.

Workshop 37: Opening the echo chamber: Reflective conversations about tourism academia

Organisers: Jana Brehmer and Eleonora Rossi

Affiliation: Mid Sweden University, Dalarna University, Örebro University

Description

Academic conferences are designed to foster exchange, yet they often reproduce intellectual comfort zones. Scholars gravitate toward familiar theories, methods, and networks, inadvertently reinforcing disciplinary echo chambers. In a field confronting climate change, social justice imperatives, geopolitical instability, and profound societal transformation, tourism research requires spaces that actively surface dissent, uncertainty, and under-articulated perspectives. This interactive workshop responds to the symposium theme *Tourism in a Changing World: An Active Agent for Good?* by shifting attention from tourism as an external object of study to our roles as researchers embedded within and shaping the field. If tourism is to act as an agent for good, its knowledge production by researchers' practices must also be open to reflexivity, critique, and epistemic diversity. The workshop employs an anonymous, participatory format designed to enable candid expression across hierarchies and career stages. Participants anonymously submit statements reflecting thoughts they rarely voice publicly, such as methodological doubts, theoretical critiques, institutional tensions, or provocative opinions/observations. These statements are shared anonymously and collectively reflected upon through structured, interactive dialogue. Participants also cast anonymous agree/disagree votes on each statement, allowing hidden patterns of consensus or disagreement to surface without social pressure. Seeing that others quietly share one's view can give contributors the confidence to voice perspectives they might otherwise withhold. Rather than centring consensus, the session treats agreement, disagreement, and ambivalence as productive material. Patterns of resonance and divergence become entry points for examining blind spots, taken-for-granted assumptions, and power dynamics within tourism scholarship. The goal is not resolution but heightened collective awareness. By convening scholars across disciplinary and career boundaries, the workshop aims to cultivate a space of intellectual courage and constructive discomfort. In doing so, it seeks to expand the range of perspectives considered legitimate within tourism research and to encourage more reflexive, critical, and imaginative engagements with tourism's role in a rapidly changing world. Creating a safe space and allowing discussion we wish all participants to join the 'game' without bystanders. So, please be expected to take part in the exercise if you join the session.

Workshop 38: Working Between Worlds: A Workshop for Tourism Researchers in the Research–Practice Interplay

Organiser: Stefanie Steinbeck

Affiliation: National Museum of Denmark

Description

Tourism research increasingly acknowledges the value of knowledge produced at the intersection of academia and practice. Scholars working in hybrid roles, embedded in tourism organisations, collaborating with industry partners, or conducting applied research, contribute insights that are both theoretically informed and grounded in realworld challenges (Tribe, 2010; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Yet despite this recognition, academic conferences often privilege universitybased perspectives, leaving limited space for researchers whose work is shaped by ongoing engagement with practitioners, communities, and industry actors. This workshop responds to that gap by creating a dedicated forum for researchers who operate in the interplay between tourism research and practice. Participants may work in consultancy, museums, DMOs, NGOs, cultural institutions, local government, or communitybased tourism initiatives, or they may hold hybrid academic–practitioner roles. The session invites participants to share experiences, dilemmas, and strategies related to navigating institutional expectations, negotiating power dynamics, coproducing knowledge, and translating research into practice (and vice versa). Such reflexive spaces are essential for understanding how applied tourism research can contribute to wellbeing, community resilience, and more socially responsive forms of tourism development (Bramwell & Lane, 2014; Pritchard et al., 2011). The workshop will be participatory and dialogic, emphasising collective learning and peer exchange. Through structured activities and open discussion, we will explore how hybrid researchers can strengthen their methodological approaches, articulate their positionality, and build supportive networks across academic and practicebased contexts.

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Tribe, J. (2010). Tribes, territories and networks in the tourism academy. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37(1), 7–33.

Workshop 39: Perceptions of polar regions as healing, therapeutic landscapes: Tourism as an active agent for good health

Organisers: Allison M. Williams

Affiliation: McMaster University

Description

In recent years, polar regions have received increased attention as tourist destinations; this newfound popularity is often attributed to the perceived precarity, novelty, and otherworldliness of Arctic and Antarctic landscapes. Although polar tourism has become the subject of a growing body of literature, little is known about how polar landscapes may influence the wellbeing of those who visit them. This session invites contributions focusing on polar regions as places of health and wellness and will proceed in the following four sections: (1) Introduction of the therapeutic landscape concept; (2) experiencing a short outdoor hike to connect to nature; (3) discussion of participants own experiences in polar regions, with respect to how polar regions have contributed to health and wellbeing: (a) physically, (b) psychologically, (c) emotionally, and (d) spiritually, and; (3) brief overview of research findings which explored how polar regions be understood as therapeutic landscapes (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10708-024-11260-x#Sec4>). In keeping with the conference theme, tourism as an active agent for good, this workshop will explore polar regions as novel places, the site of unique sensescapes, and sources of healing. The workshop will illustrate that polar regions operate as therapeutic landscapes, providing opportunities for polar tourism researchers to better unveil and understand the healing characteristics of polar geographies for tourism operators, health policy-makers, and a growing number of international visitors, while being understood within the context of the wider literature on last-chance tourism, therapeutic landscapes as places of refuge, and nature connection.

Panel Session 40: Towards Decent Work? Dynamics of Employment in Arctic Tourism Sector

Organisers: Gunnar Þór Jóhannesson (corresponding), Outi Rantala, Jarkko Saarinen, Linda Lundmark, Cenk Demiroglu, Bente Heimtun, Patrick Maher and Suzanne de la Barre

Affiliation: University of Iceland

Description

This session proposal presents and discusses the findings from the first year of the project Tourism Employment in the Arctic: Towards Decent Work conducted by seven universities within the UArctic Thematic Network on Northern Tourism and funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers Arctic Co-operation Programme, the Canadian Global Arctic Leadership Initiative (GALI) and Nordplus and Erasmus mobility schemes.

Each year focuses on a specific topic: in 2025, the central theme was precarity; in 2026, it will be internationalisation; and in 2027, community will be the focal point. The aim of the project is to gather knowledge of current challenges and potential solutions for each topic across the participating countries, identify specific research gaps and policy needs, and collaboratively work—together with tourism stakeholders and graduate students—towards bolstering decent work in tourism

The central theme of the first year of the project was precarity and precarious work in tourism. The project results point to common bottlenecks and structural factors characteristic of tourism employment in the Arctic that need to be tackled to ensure decent work in tourism. In the plenum key findings will be presented and discussed by scholars and stakeholders related to the Icelandic tourism industry.

Participants:

Jóhannes Þór Skúlason, CEO Icelandic Tourist Industry Association

Outi Rantala, University of Lapland

Suzanne de la Barre, Vancouver Island University

Kristjana Fenger, Icelandic Confederation of Labour

Ekaterina Kovbas, Umeå University

Moderator: Gunnar Þór Jóhannesson, University of Iceland

Panel Session 41: When Politics Changes Where Tourists Go: Lessons from East Asia for Small Destinations

Organisers: Juli S. Kim

Affiliation: Economic Officer – U.S. Mission to the EU

Description

Over the past decade, several East Asian destinations have discovered that international tourism flows can shift suddenly for reasons that have little to do with marketing, safety, or visitor experience—and everything to do with politics. This panel explores how diplomatic tensions have, at times, reshaped arrivals from China to South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, and what those episodes can teach smaller and more tourism-dependent destinations.

Participants:

Gary Ng, Research Fellow at Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS)

Dr Shieh Jhy-Wey, Taiwanese Representative to the EU and Belgium

Moderator: Juli S. Kim, U.S. Mission to the EU



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