



Department of Tourism and Northern Studies

## **The paradigm shift from destination marketing and management to community governance**

A systemic approach to the destination as a service eco-system

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## **Abstract**

Due to increased mobility, digitalisation and globalisation, the old value chains are disrupting and the boundaries between the roles in the markets are blurred; enterprises, customers and residents are both marketers and actors of tourism experiences, creating a context of service eco-systems, where value is co-created in networks that are directly and indirectly interacting with each other. These eco-systems are shaped by institutions and institutional arrangements that the actors are familiar with and act upon. However, the values that are co-created in the network, are not necessarily symmetrical for all actors, and neither are the institutions people follow the same. Hence, unbalance, misunderstandings, and dissatisfaction among the actors, rather than social wellbeing and satisfaction, can grow and flourish in the tourism destination. This thesis explores how a deeper understanding of co-created value processes in destinations can support the achievement of sustainable destinations. The study contributes to the literature by studying the implications of sustainable tourism within the framework of S-D logic. With a systemic approach to destinations as service eco-system, this thesis explore how S-D logic can be used as a framework for sustainable destinations. The main findings from the work are that destinations are dynamic and social systems where all stakeholder acts upon each other's resources and co-create value for themselves and for others. Destinations cannot be marketed, developed, and managed into sustainability. Instead, destinations' policy makers need to consider the value co-creating processes and the long-lasting advantages of all the actors that are interacting in an eco-system and use tourism as a means to create sustainable local communities. This requires a holistic methodological stance and a shift of the mental models of tourism from marketing and management to sustainable community governance, where stewardship, collaboration and involvement are integrated key elements.

**Keywords:** tourism, sustainability, S-D logic, institutions, service eco-systems, value co-creation, marketing, destination governance

## Foreword

Tourism has been a big part of my life and my career has been a personal and value laden journey for me. When I started working in tourism, 35 years ago, Northern Norway was known for the midnight sun and little else. One of my main motivations was to develop tourism in Northern Norway to an all-year round economic activity for the benefit of local communities. During my career, I've come to realize the complexity of tourism. The environmental issues of global tourism are obvious. How the phenomenon of tourism has implications for the social life in the communities, for good and for bad, is an issue that I find to be even more complicated and interesting to explore. While working with this thesis, I have had many epiphanies, and I am grateful for my new knowledge and insight.

This master thesis marks the end of a 7 year long academic journey. With family and full-time work, I have studied part-time. It has been difficult, and I do not think I can recommend this method to anyone. On the other side, the combination of my job in a DMO for Northern Norway and the academic advances has given me the opportunity to reflect and mature, and I can now admit that my ontological and epistemological position has changed quite a lot during these years.

My thanks go to my numerous lecturers at UiT during these years. Many grateful thoughts go to my supervisor, *Bård Tronvoll*, who has guided me through the thesis with patience and knowledge. A special regard goes to my old lecturer *Arvid Viken*: I should have listened to you and finished this master thesis 25 years ago, as you said! Big thanks go to *all my respondents*, for taking their time and sharing their honest and open reflections.

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# 1 Introduction

Before the world was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, tourism was said to be one of the fastest growing industries in the world (Croce, 2018). The pandemic temporarily put the industry on hold, but late statistics show that tourism is recovering. In a report made in 2021 on behalf of the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, the forecast for the global tourism industry is an increase of 3-5 percent per year globally. (Jakobsen, Iversen, Nerdrum, & Rødal, 2021).

Unlike many other industries, tourism takes place in existing social contexts. Subsequently, tourism has the potential to transform and cause change. Thus, tourism development has the ability to influence peoples' lives and identities (Viken, 2014; Viken & Granås, 2016a). This can occur through marketing that brings out pride for local places and culture, and through new services that benefit both visitors and local inhabitants. The flip sides of tourism are potentially negative impacts on the environment, as well as on the social wellbeing of residents in destinations. Many destinations worldwide have experienced fatigue among local inhabitants because of tourists. Well known examples include the resistance to tourism in, amongst other places, Barcelona, Venice and Amsterdam (Hospers, 2019). Even some places in Norway are potentially facing tourism fatigue. Hence, tourism is a field of paradoxes and complex relationships that should be considered using a broader perspective than merely tourism as an economic activity (Viken, 2020).

In Northern Norway, commercial bed nights increased with more than 40%, from 2010 to 2019, of which commercial bed-nights from foreign markets increased with nearly 80%, based on data from Statistics Norway<sup>1</sup>. Tourism is spoken of as the new, big economic sector for Northern Norway, and expectations are high for the future of tourism in the north. Tourism's role in regional development is often seen as positive and is evaluated in terms of employment, revenues and visitor flow (Saarinen, 2013). Hence, tourism development and marketing have been heavily supported by politics and public funding to stimulate attractiveness. In many places, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) are engaged to increase destinations' competitiveness in the markets. Traditionally, marketing has prioritized

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ssb.no/en>

a transactional view and the fulfilment of short-term needs of visitors, without considering how to support and secure a sustainable destination.

Today, customer behaviour is changing, and the power of official marketing actions has decreased (Egorova, 2013). Marketing actors lose control to the “people generated” marketing, and tourism can grow without the governance of strategies and facilitation. Marketing becomes a co-created task, where everyone can participate. Additionally, due to digitalisation, globalisation, and increased mobility, new lifestyles and disruptions in markets occur. Tourists adopt the local living in their urge to become “temporary locals” (Copenhagen, 2017). Residents are influenced by visitors’ activities and adopt new ways of using nature or see their own culture in a different light. The difference between tourism and community become blurred. Accordingly, it can be argued that tourism marketing today is less about creating attractiveness and more about community governance (Ouimet & Oates, 2019).

One emerging theory that has tried to deal with the changed conditions of marketing is the Service-Dominant logic. S-D logic points at co-creation of value as the core purpose of society, claiming that marketing is about *creating value through exchange*, rather than about the *techniques of marketing* that lead to exchanges of goods or services (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). According to S-D logic, value co-creation is not happening in a vacuum, but rather in networks, or service eco-systems. Using S-D logic as a framework in terms of tourism, allows us to comprehend destinations as eco-systems of service exchange where multiple actors act as resource integrators in co-creating value. (Altinay, Sigala, & Waligo, 2016; Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang, & Koo, 2015; Vargo, 2021). However, few scholars have studied the intersection of S-D logic as a framework for understanding sustainable destination development (Font, English, Gkritzali, & Tian, 2021; Tregua, Carrubbo, Iandolo, & Cosimato, 2016; Vargo & Lusch, 2016). In this thesis, I explore the opportunities for sustainable destination achievement through a service eco-system lens. I argue that destinations’ policy makers need to consider the needs of all stakeholders involved in the eco-system of tourism and take a systemic approach to sustainable governance of destination, where destination marketing and management are integrated parts of the stewardship of the community. This implies a new ontology of tourism; one which is guided by collaboration, partnerships, and involvement rather than competitiveness, and a new set of indicators, measuring success in thriving communities rather than volume and market shares.



My research question was:

How to achieve sustainable destinations, using a systemic approach of destinations as service eco-systems.

## **1.1 Structure of the thesis**

In *chapter two*, I commence with a review of theoretical understandings of the concept of a “tourism destination”. Two main academic distinctions are discussed; the destination as a unit of attractions for tourists to consume and the destination as a social construction of networks and interactions. The two perspectives can be described as tourism as an industry versus tourism as a social force (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). Further, I discuss the theoretical evolution of marketing; from an industrial oriented goods-dominant logic to a service-dominant logic of marketing. Within the first paradigm, marketing is viewed as techniques to enhance exchange of goods and services. The latter paradigm offers an alternative framework for marketing in terms of service-for-service exchange, where the application of knowledge and skills represent the source of value and the purpose of exchange. (Stephen L. Vargo & Robert F. Lusch, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2011). In the S-D logic, value is co-created in service eco-systems where all social and economic actors are resource integrators. I explain how the actors’ norms, rules, and unwritten conditions for social behavior, as well as positions and roles, shape the interactions and the service-exchange in the service eco-system.

Subsequently, it is argued that the tourism destination can be understood as a service eco-system where multiple actors contribute to the process of value co-creation within a destination. A systemic approach to the destination is a prerequisite to the achievement of sustainable destinations. I investigate the theoretical evolution of sustainable tourism before I move further to how S-D logic embraces a bottom-up approach to sustainable destinations where all stakeholders should be involved. In the end of the chapter, I discuss the role of the DMO as an agent for the achievement of sustainable destinations.

*Chapter three* explains my methodological stance, ethical considerations, and the methods I used in conducting my research. My selection of respondents is explained, as well as how I conducted the interviews and structured the material into a coding structure which distinguished three aggregated themes: The destination as an eco-system, co-creation of value in a destination and service-for-service exchange in a destination. The aim of this chapter is to

enhance credibility and validity towards my research process and my findings which follow in chapter four.

*Chapter four* is a review of my empirical findings. Drawing on my coding structures, the aggregated themes are analysed and supported by relevant quotes from my respondents.

In *chapter five*, I discuss the empirical findings according to the literature review presented in the second chapter. The discussion is structured within three transformational turns for the achievement of sustainable destinations. Each transformational turn is related to one of the three aggregated themes. The notion of destinations as service eco-systems indicates that destinations need to move from an industry-centred development to a community-based orientation. The acknowledgement that value is co-created suggests that destinations should change their key performance indexes from growth to sustainability. Finally, the theme of service-for-service exchange in destinations argues for a paradigm shift from marketing and management to stewardship. In my final remarks, I suggest that to achieve sustainable destinations, there is a need for an ontological shift and a change of philosophy, where collaboration, partnerships and involvement become the core elements of the governance of tourism destinations.

Finally, *chapter six* draws conclusions related to the implications and contributions of this thesis, as well as comments on the limitations of my work and suggestions for further research.

## 2 Theoretical framework

This chapter discusses theories that helped me clarify my research question. Since the framework of the thesis is the tourism destination, I commence with a theoretical review of this concept. Additionally, I explain the theories of marketing and co-creation of value, called Service-Dominant logic, S-D logic. I draw the linkages between S-D logic and tourism destinations and explain why the former has applications for analysing tourism destinations as service eco-systems. To bridge the gap between S-D logic and sustainable tourism destinations, I briefly explain the conceptual development of sustainable tourism and argue my position for sustainable tourism. Finally, I discuss the intersection of S-D logic and sustainable destinations and how a systemic approach of destinations as service eco-systems can be of use in achievement of sustainable destinations.

### 2.1 Conceptual understanding of the tourism destination

In tourism studies, the “destination” is one of the most frequently used concepts, but different actors in the tourism industry and among tourism researchers use it very differently (Viken & Granås, 2016a). In a study of the concept, Framke (2002) finds the main academic distinction of the term between *economic and business literature*, where the destination is seen as a unit for attractions and services for economic versus *socio-cultural research*, where connections and social practice are emphasized (Framke, 2002). This can be seen as a split between two perspectives: tourism as an industry on one hand and tourism as a social force on the other hand (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Tribe, 2007; Viken, 2014). The industry perspective considers issues like profit, markets, industrialization, standardization, and growth, while the discourses of tourism as a social force studies issues like governance, community, social needs, social concerns, and welfare.

During the mid-1990s, tourism scholars within the latter perspective began to promote a systemic approach to tourism destinations. Jovicic (2019) summarized this theoretical development. She recognized that previously, Wall (1996) had advocated that tourism should be considered in the context of other systems that interact with tourism. Furthermore, Jovicic noted that Leiper (2000) had proposed that destinations were open and flexible systems, characterized by a high degree of interaction between firms, residents, local authorities and tourists. She also stated that Baggio and Cooper (2010) had conceptualized destinations as

networks of connected organizations and stakeholders whose productivity is very important for the functioning of the destination system (Jovicic, 2019). This theoretical evolution displays an emerging consideration of the complexity of destinations.

Granås (2014) describes destinations as “a place where tourists are destined to go”, hence positioning the term “destination” as opposed to the term “place”. While a place is defined by its spatial area, the term “destination” is said to be socially constructed. The concept of destination implies some expectations about the touristic qualities of a geographically constrained area. In this perspective, a destination is associated with expectations about enjoyable experiences for some and economic income for others, and notices where these expectations can be met (Granås, 2014). Customers assess their travel experience as a whole and they associate destinations with the entire range of local producers and suppliers. (Buhalis, 2000). Hence, a destination can be perceived as somewhere that is being “destinized” for tourism performance and indicates a place for commodification and consumption; a playground that is produced through the performance of tourists in certain ways that makes the place “touristic” (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, & Urry, 2017). The place is presented by its opportunities for fun, relaxation, activities, diversion etc., and eventually, the place is categorized as a destination. Accordingly, a tourist destination is not something that *is*, but something that *becomes*. Tourism development includes new representations of places (Førde, 2014), which will affect multiple local identities, and the presence of tourists will have impacts on destinations (Viken & Granås, 2016a).

## **2.2 Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing**

Most marketing scholars consider marketing to be concerned with the exchange of value for the benefit of someone. But there are different opinions as to how value is created and about the role of exchange in the value creation process (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). Marketing inherited models from neoclassical economics, which has a dominant logic based on the exchange of goods. The logic focuses on tangible resources, embedded value, and transactions, with an emphasis on how actors exchange output units. (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). Goods are the focus of exchange and services represent merely a special case of goods.

During the last two decades, theoretical studies have evolved into a new dominant logic for marketing; one in which service provision (rather than goods and services) is fundamental to

economic exchange, (Vargo & Lush, 2004). This new logic of marketing, called service-dominant logic (S-D logic), represents a departure from the traditional goods-dominant logic (G-D logic) of exchange.

### **2.2.1 The early steps into service-dominant logic**

A crucial understanding of the early discourse of S-D logic, launched by Stephen L. Vargo and Robert F. Lush in 2004, is that everything is service! The scholars argue that value is not something that is embedded in goods, but rather determined by the customer through the value-in-use as considered by the customer, and further that people do not buy goods; they buy something that creates value for themselves (Vargo & Lush, 2004). The things or services you buy are useless if you are not able to obtain some benefits from the service which they offer. Accordingly, the customer is not a passive receiver who can be seduced to buy goods or services, but rather a co-creator of value. This theoretical turn has implications for the comprehension of value evaluation; a person who is thirsty will evaluate the value of a bottle of Coca Cola higher than a person who is not. The bottle of Coca Cola is not embedded with value in itself; rather, the value is determined by the customer through his/her value-in-use. The customer's perception of value is related to whether the customer's needs are fulfilled (Vargo & Lush, 2006).

Since value is not embedded in products, but rather through the service the products render (Gummesson, 1995), a following premise is that the producer cannot promise, create, or deliver value but only offer value propositions to the customers and support the creation of value-in-use together with the customer. This requires skills and knowledge, and the ability to interact and communicate with the customers. Accordingly, customers are included in a co-created process, where marketing is the process of doing things in interaction with the customer (Vargo & Lush, 2007).

### **2.2.2 Service exchange happens within service eco-systems**

The initial contributions to an S-D Logic focused on a managerial perspective, where exchange is seen primary as a firm-customer relationship. As the theory evolved, other perspectives of resource integration, the experiential nature of value, the interactive nature of value creation and the role of institutions were appreciated (Vargo & Lush, 2016). Exchange

of service does not happen in a vacuum between the provider and the customer, but together with multiple actors in society (Stephen L Vargo & Robert F Lusch, 2006). Accordingly, value is created through the integration of resources, provided by many sources of private and public actors within social contexts (Vargo & Lush, 2016). Resources and service-exchange in different contexts are complex and variable since each actor in the context has different links to other actors and networks. *How* actors draw upon each other as resources depends on the contexts in which they are embedded (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). Hence, context influences value co-creation and markets through its influence on resources. Further, this implies that resources can be valuable according to the context which frames the exchange. Each context provides conditions where resources will be valuable to a various extent.

Chandler and Vargo (2011) explained the exchange process in different contexts using a multi-level conceptualization of micro-, meso- and macro-contexts: Context at the *micro level* frames the direct service-for-service exchange among individual actors, where actors draw on its resources and competences in a co-creating process of exchange. The *meso-level* frames the indirect service-for service exchange that occurs between two actors with the aid of one or several intermediary/ies. The context at the *macro-level* frames exchange in complex networks where both direct and indirect service-for-service exchange processes are enabled. The *meta-level* is the overall framework that represents how the levels of contexts evolve simultaneously and become institutionalized as routines, practices, activities, or processes joined together as a *service eco-system* (Chandler & Vargo, 2011).

A service eco-system is defined as: “*a relatively self-contained, self-adjusting system of resource integrating actors connected by shared institutional arrangements and mutual value creation through service exchange*”(Vargo & Lush, 2016)p. 10-11). The recognition of value co-creation in service eco-systems represents a turn from a dyadic view of value co-creation between the customer and the provider to an acknowledgement that all economic and social actors act as resource integrators in the value co-creation process which takes place in networks (Chandler & Vargo, 2011; Frow et al., 2014; Vargo & Lusch, 2011). Hence, S-D logic provides an alternative framework to address concerns that have been raised by service marketing scholars regarding the nature of service and value creation. The conceptualization of service in S-D logic extends the context of service beyond specific types of exchange encounters to that which frames all exchange encounters (Vargo et al, 2008).

### **2.2.3 Roles vs positions**

In 2011, Edvardsson, Tronvoll and Gruber contributed to the expansion of S-D logic by complementing central aspects of S-D Logic with key concepts from social construction theories (Edvardsson, Tronvoll, & Gruber, 2011). Social construction theory is a framework that helps to interpret the social world and to enhance understanding of how actors on a societal level create, realize, and reproduce social situations and structures (Edvardsson et al., 2011). The authors argue that value co-creation follows social structures and takes place within social systems where people are influenced by societal norms which they also produce and reproduce in their interaction with other people. Actors who interact in a social system form “mental models” of each other’s behaviors over time that eventually become habituated into reciprocal roles and positions that the actors play out in relation to each other, thus reproducing and institutionalizing social interactions. Social structures are both the conditions and the consequences of social interaction.

According to Edvardsson et al., social systems, as contextualised within the social construction theories, have similarities with the S-D-Logic concept of service eco-systems. By integrating social construction theories to S-D Logic, a deeper understanding about the “social consensus” that shapes the perceptions and interactions within a social system, or a service eco-system, can be explored. Like social systems, service eco-systems adapt and survive through interaction and the integration of resources that are mutually beneficial (Edvardsson et al., 2011). Value co-creation is dependent on the skills and knowledge of the actors who are acting in networks embedded in service eco-systems. Hence, the process of co-created value will not only involve the exchange of knowledge and skills, but also involve issues of social positions and roles in service systems, as well as the institutions that people act upon, through which social consensus is formed.

While a position determines the connection between the actors, a role provides an individual with a complex set of identities that can fluctuate according to changing social structures and contexts (Edvardsson et al., 2011). Roles are the source of individual interpretations of social situations. In the traditional G-D logic, the roles of “provider” and “customer” are determined through transaction. A theoretical assumption of the extended S-D logic is a turn from parties with pre-designated roles to generic actors. Value is co-created during interactions between beneficiaries through the integration of resources and the application of competencies. Transactions will be inputs of resources in a value co-creating process where all economic

and social actors adopt the role of resource integrators (Edvardsson et al., 2011). This will imply that value co-creation depends on the social structures and the social systems in which the actors play, as well as the positions and roles the individuals possess *in* the social system. An S-D logic approach embrace an actor-to-actor (A2A) orientation (Akaka & Vargo, 2015), saying that all actors are engaged in the process of benefiting their existence through benefiting the existence of other actors in a service-for-service exchange – directly or indirectly.

#### **2.2.4 How institutions and institutional arrangements affect value co-creation**

Referring to Anthony Giddens' (1984) terminology in understanding social structures, Edvardsson et al. (2011) argue that there are three dimensions of social conduct that directly influence on human activities: signification (meaning), role clarity (control) and transparency (moral rules) (Edvardsson et al., 2011). These rules of social conduct are the core of social interactions and are learned and reproduced in social structures. Hence, social reality and social forces are socially constructed in social systems where actors draw upon unwritten and written rules and resources and reproduce them. The existence of social structures and systems means that individuals have many things in common and are often guided by similar social forces that can have mayor impacts on value co-creation and on how value is defined and perceived. Value is not only determined by the individual perception of value-in-use, but also by wider social perceptions that are being continuously reproduced and modified.

This implies the need for mechanisms to facilitate all of this resource integration and service exchange through the coordination of institutions and institutional arrangements (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). Institutions can be formally codified laws, informal social norms, legislations, regulations, conventions, or any other routinized practices that provides a “shortcut” to cognitive actions, communications, and judgements. In practice, they typically exist as part of more comprehensive, interrelated institutional arrangements (Chandler & Vargo, 2011).

Since humans' cognitive capacity and ability to act rationally is limited, institutions are representing more efficient and effective ways to reduce thinking, and thus enable actors to accomplish higher levels of service exchange and value co-creation when under time and cognitive constraints. Institutions are shared by actors, and the more institutions are shared,



the greater the potential coordination benefits to all actors. From this perspective, institutions can play a central role in value co-creation and service exchange (Vargo & Lush, 2016).

However, value co-creation is not always symmetrical; not all actors will be treated equally (Frow et al., 2014) and there are no mechanisms to assure that value co-creation in a service eco-system, is beneficial for all actors. Neither is value static; in a tourism context, tourists and the other actors in the tourism industry are interacting and co-creating value together with the local communities guided by institutional arrangements that are not necessarily equal between the stakeholders/actors. As institutions and institutional arrangements offers the ability to “perform without thinking” ((Vargo & Lush, 2016), institutions can also be linked to acting without necessarily evaluating how appropriate the institutions are for the actual context. Consequently, institutions can lead to ineffective ideologies and dominant logics or inappropriate behavior (Vargo & Lush, 2016).

In a study of how the complexity of social context is largely based on intersecting and overlapping institutions, particularly across different cultural groups, Akaka et al (2013) argue that; *“when similar institutions guide the actors entering an exchange encounter, the interaction is more likely to be successful. However, if institutions differ between actors (which is often the case in cross-cultural exchange), the likelihood of a successful interaction, in which both parties derive value, may be reduced”* (Akaka & Vargo, 2015), p. 457. This notion is relevant for tourism as it points toward institutions as a critical factor not only in the co-creation of value and evaluations of experience, but also in the potential negative co-creation of value.

### **2.2.5 Institutions and institutional arrangement’s role in service eco-systems**

A service ecosystems view suggests that all exchange-related experiences are service experiences that are co-created through the interactions among firms, customers, and other stakeholders in the service context. The service eco-system becomes a *“value creating system that operates as a complex web of interdependent relationships between actors”* (Frow et al., 2014), p. 333. In a tourism context, this implies that value is co-created in a network of multiple actors that are interacting and exchanging services according to a complex set of institutions, social backgrounds, and emotional motivations. Adopting a service ecosystem

approach to the service context requires the consideration of how social processes (like institutionalization) shape service experiences and vice versa. This approach also suggests that the experiences are continually reconstituted through the enactment of practices as well as the reconfiguration of institutions and systems over time.

## **2.3 Understanding destinations as a service eco-system**

Saarinen (2013) has argued that destinations are not stable, closed systems, but dynamic, historical units with specific identities, constantly produced and reproduced through complex social and discursive practices. The impacts of tourism can affect both tangible and intangible aspects of a society (Saarinen, 2013). Accordingly, the destination is an amalgam of the products, the people, and the resources in the destination (Buhalis, 2000). Within the expanded theoretical framework of S-D logic, a tourism destination - with all its actors, its social structures, policies, laws, norms etc. - can be interpreted as a service eco-system. Such a system is represented by a collection of both professional and personal interests of all the people who live, work and visit in the area, and where all actors collaborate to create value for themselves and others through the stakeholders' mutual exchange of knowledge and skills (Boes, Buhalis, & Inversini, 2016; Tregua et al., 2016). Interactions and interrelationships between these different actors form a specific whole (Boes et al., 2016) where the tourists, and the tourism providers, as well as the local population, government, organisations and environments in the destination are a part of this context. Hence, in terms of tourism, local inhabitants are not passive receivers or service providers for tourists; they are also an active part of the tourism experience and participants in their own experience of being a host population. Accordingly, the tourism experience is co-created by tourists, tourism providers *and* the host community in a service eco-system, where the actors are influenced by different institutions and institutional arrangements (rules, regulations, norms, social habits etc), as well as their socio-historical background that shape their behavior and the encounters in destinations. Comprehension of how value is co-created through the influence of institutions, can be a precursor to making better strategic decisions for sustainable development and marketing of tourism destinations.

## **2.4 Conceptual development of sustainable tourism**

The concept of sustainability has its roots in the environmental movement that evolved during the 1970s, when negative impacts of tourism became evident (Viken, 2014), and was first highlighted by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in 1980 (Liu, 2003). In 1987, the Brundtland Commission released the report “Our Common Future”, which addressed the needs for sustainable policies and aims. During the early 1990s, sustainability was built into tourism development (Saarinen, 2013) and topics of sustainability has increasingly been on the agenda in research, politics, and management all over the world.

Achievement of sustainable tourism in practice has been difficult, due to the complexity of the concept. Tourism development always has impacts, which leads to the critical question of which impacts are “objectively” acceptable and to what degree (Saarinen, 2013). The World Tourism Organization has defined sustainable tourism as “(...) *tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities*” (Saarinen, 2013). This implies that sustainable tourism requires a holistic framework where both a sustainable contribution to the economy and society, and the sustainable use of resources and environment are equally balanced. To find this balance is not easy without facing conflicts between the parameters, as well as between local and global dimensions (Korstanje & Babu, 2012; Saarinen, 2013; Telfer, 2012). In the negotiation of interests, tourism policy-makers and enterprises have, in general, been more concerned with creating economic growth than environmental and social sustainability (Wickens, Bakir, & Alvarez, 2015), leading to an imbalance between the elements of sustainability (Saarinen, 2013). Critical voices have claimed that sustainable tourism is a concept mainly concerned with sustaining tourism itself (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Wickens et al., 2015). Some even argue that sustainability can only be achieved by a regenerative turn (Ateljevic, 2020; Glusac, 2020; McEnhill, Jorgensen, & Ulrich, 2020), or by a degrowth orientation in tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, Carnicelli, Krolikowski, Wijesinghe, & Boluk, 2019).

### **2.4.1 What kind of tourism is sustainable?**

Initially, debates about sustainability circled around what kind of tourism could be characterized as sustainable (Telfer, 2012). To meet the challenges of sustainability, the tourism industry launched alternative tourism forms, like eco-friendly tourism, responsible

tourism, small-scale tourism, or community-based tourism (Abram & Lund, 2016). These alternative forms are based on the principles that tourism should be practiced as a cooperation between tourism businesses, authorities, tourists and local people in order for tourism to benefit the environment and communities (Abram & Lund, 2016)). Using these principles, large-scale mass tourism is considered as a non-sustainable kind of tourism, though this has been widely debated. It has also been argued that eco-tourism risks being the only “legitimate” way of travelling for elite tourists (Abram & Lund, 2016). The arguments have evolved into numerous discourses on sustainability within all kinds of tourism, including development of tools like sustainable tourism indicators and guidelines, codes of conduct, certifications, planning tools, measuring tools etc (Telfer, 2012). Thoughts of how to increase the positive impacts and mitigate the negative impacts of tourism have emerged from discourses on sustainable tourism development.

In 2003, Zhenhua Liu wrote an article where she described the debate of sustainable tourism development as “*patchy, disjointed and at times flawed*” (Liu, 2003), p. 459) and that little research had been conducted to determine the deeper meanings and implications of sustainable development in tourism. Though nearly 20 years have passed since then, sustainable frameworks still seems to be unable to address the challenges of tourism (McEnhill et al., 2020). The concept of sustainable tourism is said to be vague and difficult to put into practice (Saarinen, 2013). It has also been argued that focusing on one sector, like tourism, is a perspective too narrow with respect to the holistic, multisectoral and global conditions associated with sustainability (Telfer, 2012), for example other industries, environmental issues and climate changes. Research has focused a lot on preservation and conservation of natural environments, perhaps since nature is one of the foundational resources of tourism (Liu, 2003). This, in turn, has led to critical voices decrying “greenwashing”, since environmentally sustainable practices does not necessarily lead to a holistic sustainable attitude (Andersen, 2021). In addition, social, cultural and environmental aspects are difficult to measure and evaluate (Wickens et al., 2015). Since the UN’s launch of 17 sustainability goals in 2015<sup>2</sup>, scholarly and managerial development strategies for the implementation of sustainability in practice have evolved in many industries, including

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<sup>2</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

tourism with an increased emphasize on the triple bottom line (people, planet and profit/prosperity) (Andersen, 2021).

#### **2.4.2 Three academic traditions related to sustainability in tourism**

Based on existing studies, Saarinen (2013) identifies three academic traditions in sustainability in tourism discourses. *The resource-based tradition of sustainability in tourism* focuses on finding the carrying capacity for a destination. The idea is that the limits to growth and impacts of tourism on environments should fit into the original natural and socio-cultural environments as they were prior to touristic influences. The challenge of this theory is to define original “non-touristic” conditions. *The activity-based tradition of sustainability in tourism* reflects the needs of the tourism industry and promotes the idea that tourism will contribute to sustainable communities, due to economic growth. Limits of growth has been based on tourism enterprises’ capacity or incapacity for economic development. This perspective has been challenged due to its skewed perspective on behalf of the industry and alleged conflicts with other conditions, like environments, culture, and communities. *The community-based tradition of sustainability in tourism* aims to empower and involve different stakeholders, like various actors and local host communities. Through a bottom-up approach, negative impacts of tourism should be mitigated, benefits from tourism are shared and tourist destinations control development. Sustainability in tourism development should be primarily connected with the needs of people, (not a certain industry), and natural and cultural resources should be used in a way that will secure human needs and provide for quality of life in the future. However, there are challenges to this kind of approach as well: the destinations and companies’ emphasis on sustainability might only grasp what is visible at the local level while ignoring more global issues, it might be difficult to put sustainable ideals into practice, and it can be challenging to address responsibility for sustainable practices. It would also be challenging to measure the maximum level of impacts that can be accepted by the local community without negative impacts (Saarinen, 2013). Although Saarinen’s categorization illuminates the complexity of sustainable tourism, a bottom-up approach to sustainable development seems to have gained ground within academic and operational bodies of tourism. This thesis investigates how a community-based perspective of sustainable tourism is compatible with a service eco-system approach to sustainable tourism destinations. From this perspective, a systemic approach to the destination as an eco-system will shed light on the

complexity of the context and create a more holistic foundation for future discourse on sustainable destinations.

## **2.5 The DMO as an agent for sustainable destinations**

As tourism's role in regional development is often seen as positive and is evaluated in terms of employment, revenue and visitor flows (Saarinen, 2013), destination marketing is frequently facilitated with public funding to destination marketing organizations – DMOs – at local, regional, and national levels. In many of the destinations where DMOs are working, changed conditions within traditional industries have resulted in communities with fragile economies. Tourism has been considered as an alternative opportunity and has been a prioritized area for development, supported by public funding, due to its apparent premises for economic growth, new livelihoods or ways to maintain traditional livelihoods (Abram & Lund, 2016).

Though there is no fixed organizational framework for DMO's, they have in common that they are a type of policy tool used to stimulate tourism growth (Dredge, 2016). Traditional tasks for the DMO have been sales- and marketing activities, like advertising, representation at tourism fairs, hosting FAM-trips<sup>3</sup> and press-trips, promulgating tourist information, and being the general mouthpiece for the tourism businesses in the region. While driving destinations' competitiveness is still an important task for DMOs, there is growing recognition towards the DMO's responsibility to practice a more mindful stewardship of destinations (Morgan, 2012; Pedersen, 2020). DMOs are urged to take on the responsibility not merely for destinations marketing to boost the enterprises' profitability, but also for destinations management. This request is due partly to an increase in tourism and partly to the emerging trends of adventure tourism, where people go in active exploration of natural or cultural environments (Viken, 2014), which has impacts on social and natural environments . The entire landscape upon which the tourism industry has been created, has shifted dramatically the last two decades. Specifically, the marketing influence of DMOs has

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<sup>3</sup> The term [FAM](#) stands for Familiarisation. The Tours – commonly known as [FAM Trips](#) – are trips organised by travel providers (can be a Tour Operator, an Airline, a [Hotel Chain](#), a Tourism Board or other DMOs representing a Destination, etc.) with the purpose of educating about their products and services and promoting them (<https://www.xotels.com/en/glossary/fam-trip>)

decreased due to the empowerment of consumers (Morgan, Hastings, & Pritchard, 2012; O’Hern & Kahle, 2013), who are increasingly influencing travel decisions through social medias. Negative impacts of tourism are frequently in the news headlines. Disruptions such as peer-to-peer booking platforms have changed traditional value chains. Hence, consultants and scholars argue that to keep up with these changes, DMOs need to comprehend the ever-evolving eco-system in which they work (ATTA, 2019). DMOs are required to not merely strive to get “heads in the beds”, but rather take the role as strategic leaders in destination development through coordination and management of activities and to apply tools for sustainable marketing. Sustainable marketing has been described as “*the application of marketing techniques so that a destination, a resource or a product serves the needs of the visitors and residents today, and has the possibility to do so in the future*” (Font & Serra, 2017) p 3). DMOs are urged to take on a *management and marketing* role and take care of the stewardship of a destination (Ouimet & Oates, 2019), where multiple stakeholders’ interests, activities and interactions need to be considered (Pedersen, 2020).

The recognition of sustainable development anchored in the UN’s 17 sustainability goals is highlighted in many public strategies. In the new national tourism strategy for Norway, *Big impact – small footprint* (2020), Innovation Norway<sup>4</sup> recognized that tourism development is going through growing pains, and emphasized the need for more control, regulations, and frameworks, as well as a holistic perspective where tourism is adding positive value to all stakeholders. They accentuated that “*A tourist industry and growing tourism that are not managed will impose “third party” stress on vulnerable nature areas, wildlife and cultural treasures, residents, voluntary organisations, or emergency response agencies. This is why the overall interaction in the ecosystem provides the prerequisites for long-term sustainable development of destinations and business activity*” (InnovationNorway, 2021), p 31). This kind of approach to sustainable development of destinations requires the need to secure that all stakeholder interests are identified and taken into account (Byrd, 2007; Trunfio & Lucia, 2019) and find collaborative tools for efficient stakeholder engagement (Peceny, Urbancic, Mokorel, Kuralt, & Ilijas, 2019).

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<sup>4</sup> the Norwegian national organization of innovation and development of industries and enterprises  
<https://www.innovasjon Norge.no/en/start-page/>

### 2.5.1 Stakeholders in sustainable destinations

To better understand the stakeholders and the institutions that are influencing their attitudes and behaviors, it is crucial to identify them. According to Byrd (2007), the identification of stakeholders can be found already in the definition of sustainable development in the Brundtland Report from late 1987; “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”. Based on this definition, both present and future users are stakeholders. Byrd has identified four distinct groups of stakeholders applied to tourism: the present and future visitors and the present and future host community. The host community is further divided into sub groups, like residents, business owners and government officials (Byrd, 2007). An illustration of the stakeholders in a destination is presented in figure 1.



Figure 1: The stakeholders in the sustainable eco-system of tourism (Peceny et al., 2019)

### 2.5.2 Label for sustainable destination

To maintain ambitions for sustainable tourism in Norway, Innovation Norway, has developed a management system for sustainability in Norwegian destinations in collaboration with the municipalities. Municipalities are required to take an active role in the strategic planning for sustainable destinations and to assure the establishment of united destination management to embrace all three dimensions of sustainable development; environmental, social and



economic. (Prøven, 2021). The program is based on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and advocate for a foundational and holistic view of tourism; local value creation, environmental aspects and consideration of residents and communities, with ambitions to mitigate and remove the negative consequences of tourism, as well as improve and highlight the positive impacts.

Through a process that normally takes two years, Innovation Norway offers tools for planning, implementation, and measurement of efforts towards increased sustainability in Norwegian destination. According to Innovation Norway, the process should engage a range of stakeholders within the destination (entrepreneurs, enterprises, local inhabitants, and local government) to work closely together with the destination's challenges and opportunities and find solutions for planning and management of tourism development. After approval, destinations need to work on improvements and monitoring of these to be able to re-qualify for their approval every third year. (InnovationNorway, 2021)<sup>5</sup>

Many of the destinations in Northern Norway are – or are soon to be – labelled as a Sustainable Destination according to the program of Innovation Norway. Evaluation of the program claims that improved cooperation, especially between a DMO and the municipality, is one of the most approved aspects for participation. Further, awareness of sustainability has increased due to the program. Hence, it can be argued that the work of sustainable destinations is working as a catalyst to amplify the transition of DMOs from destination marketing towards destination management (Prøven, 2021).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.innovasjon Norge.no/no/tjenester/reiseliv/merket-for-barekraftig-reiseliv/>

### 3 Methodology and methods

There are different ways of knowing and different methods to choose from when studying social phenomena. Research can be conducted in different ways, thereby creating differing kinds of knowledge. Methodology is the study of how we acquire knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Often, the choice of research methods can tell something about the researcher's ontological and epistemological attitude. While the ontological position is about the researcher's conception of what is real in the world, his or her "worldview", the epistemological position will represent the researcher's philosophical standpoint towards knowledge. Consequently, methods will have implications on the knowledge production (Banyai & Glover, 2012; Moses & Knutsen, 2012).

In this chapter, I overview and discuss how my research was carried out along with the methods I used to collect and process my data. I commence with a review of methodological paradigms and situate my work within the methodological landscape. I also address the role of reflexivity and research ethics in my research. Then, I present an overview of the methods I utilized, before concluding with a visual presentation of the coding structure that I used to organize my data.

#### 3.1 Methodological paradigms

There are two central methodological paradigms within science: naturalism/positivism and constructivism. **The positivist methodology** tries to discover and explain patterns that are assumed to exist in nature and is based on observations, facts, statistics, and direct experiences. Within social science research, there has traditionally been a strong belief in collecting and processing data to guide the researcher into valid knowledge according to grounded theories and hypotheses. This idea is based on the assumption that through empirical observations, we can find law-like patterns that will provide us scientific knowledge based on facts that can evolve into generalizations (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Moses & Knutsen, 2012). Accordingly, researchers should be objective and independent from the investigated subject (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The investigations should be "value-free", as values can affect the objectivity of an investigation. From this perspective, methods have been mainly seen as technical or practical matters largely detached from theories and philosophies that have relevance for our understanding of methodological practices. (Alvesson, 2011).

**The constructivist methodology**, on the other hand, also called interpretivism, sees the world of study as being socially constructed and does not expect to see objective (and verifiable) patterns of social phenomena existing naturally in the social world. The objective of social studies is to interpret and to understand - not to predict! Another foundational premise of constructivism is that observations depend on the perspectives that we, the researchers, bring with us. We are not neutral to what we are studying. One line of argument is that unlike objects in the natural world, people think! Social science is occupied with social activities performed by people in different contexts (Moses & Knutsen, 2012). Another basic argument is that knowledge cannot be separated from the knower since data and facts are the results of interpretations (Alvesson, 2009). According to this view, the relationship between the researcher and the object(s) of the research is complicated and neutrality in social science research is impossible. The “cultural apparatus” of the researcher and the object(s) of research will always impact on how the research is conducted and how the results are interpreted (Moses & Knutsen, 2012). Whether intended or not, research will promote certain values, as research is a human activity. A certain ideology will always underly any research and researchers always bring their own culturally embedded assumptions into the interpretation of their findings (Baert, 2005). This stance requires that researchers need to be aware of what kind of interests they serve in conducting their investigations; they need a high degree of reflexivity in their research.

### **3.1.1 Reflexivity as a qualification of constructivist research**

Being reflexive means that we try to interpret and understand the hidden meanings and underlying aspects/patterns. How we interpret phenomena are always perspectival and contextual. We should be open and honest towards our surroundings regarding who we are and which cultural apparatus, personal values, and theoretical standpoint we bring into our research. The researcher must critically investigate her own standpoints and empirical knowledge, situatedness, cultural context and positionality within research contexts and be able to include these reflections as a critical and analytical tool within the research design (Radel, 2018). The ideal of reflexivity is to be aware that there is more than one way of understanding something. We need to take a sceptical approach to what seems to be reality on the surface and open ourselves for further understanding and alternative meaning, rather than establishing "truths" (Alvesson, 2009).

### **3.1.2 Methodological stance**

This thesis was conducted within a constructivist paradigm. The purpose of my thesis was to investigate if a systemic approach to a destination as a service eco-system could be useful in the governance of sustainable destinations. It was important for me to approach the topic within established scientific practice, whereby my empirical findings would build new understanding based on theory. The aim was to interpret my data and gain increased insight into my research question, rather than to verify or falsify a statement. Still, as it is my empirical knowledge that led me to the theoretical interest of my thesis, I was aware that my knowledge could shape the research in a certain direction. I tried to take a neutral position and talked about my position with the respondents. They were all familiar with my background and knowledge, and they appreciated my aim to be trustworthy. I had to maintain an awareness of my own position throughout the interviews, as I sometimes wanted to express my agrees and disagrees with the respondent. Eventually, I allowed the interviews to assume the character of a discussion, but I always kept my attention on this, to avoid any risk of influencing their responses.

I am aware that the topic could have been explored from different angles, within other methodological stances and through alternative methods. That being said, it was and is my intention that my research will make a small contribution to existing theories of sustainable destinations.

### **3.1.3 Ethical considerations**

To preserve confidentiality, the respondents have been anonymized to the extent that they are not revealed by names or positions. The destinations that they represent, other destinations and places, third-party organisations or individuals that may have been mentioned during the interviews have also been significantly anonymized. However, through their answers, it may be possible for others to indirectly identify a respondent, which all respondents understood and acknowledged.

The project was submitted to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data and approved, according to their guidelines. A letter of consent was sent to the respondents together with the interview guide. Additionally, all respondents were informed about their right to withdraw their consent at any time during the project. All information (signed letters of consent,

interview recordings and other information the respondents may have shared) is stored for my personal use only and will be deleted at the closure of this project.

As the interviews were conducted in Norwegian, all the material was transcribed “verbatim” in the original language (Esfehani & Walters, 2018). Only the codes according to the coding structure were translated into English. In the text of this thesis, quotes are translated in English and written as close as possible to how they were articulated. I am aware that there is a risk that some underlying meanings and key messages may have been lost during translation.

## **3.2 Methods**

For the interpretation of my empirical findings, I chose a qualitative research design, within thematic analysis approaches. Thematic analysis is used for identifying patterns within the empirical material through a process of identification and bundling of related themes so they can be analysed accordingly (Esfehani & Walters, 2018).

### **3.2.1 Abduction**

Primarily, two models have dominated the methodological field: induction and deduction.

The principle of **induction** is to start with a single observation and proceed from several single cases to a conclusion that is assumed to be a general law. Induction can be seen as a bottom-up approach. (Moses & Knutsen, 2012). **Deduction**, on the contrary, can be perceived as a top-down approach, as it takes a theoretical starting point – a hypothesis – and tests it to prove the evidence of a theory. (Moses & Knutsen, 2012). However, according to Alvesson and Skjöldberg (2009), in many research practices, a combination of these procedures is applied. This is what they call abduction (Alvesson & Skjöldberg, 2009).

**Abduction** is explained as a logical procedure, where you go back and forth between induction and deduction where the aim is to look for an underlying meaning. The research alternates between theory and empirical facts, where both are reinterpreted in the light of each other. The difference from induction and deduction is that the main purpose is to obtain a

deeper understanding of the phenomena, and not purely explanations (Alvesson & Skjöldberg, 2009).

In this thesis, abduction was used to achieve understanding of my theoretical and empirical material. Working back and forth between the interview material and the theories, allowed me to gain an evolving insight into my research question.

### **3.2.2 Selection of respondents**

Within an analytical perspective of destinations as service eco-systems, all social and economic actors are co-creating value for the benefit of themselves and for others. These actors often have conflicting interests in, and different perceptions of, sustainability and their behaviors are shaped and affected by different norms, habits, and “rules”. To explore how they act as resource integrators of value co-creation, an identification of the actors is needed (Byrd, 2007). Though my work included the identification of stakeholders, the full attention to all stakeholders’ role as resource integrators would be too complex for this thesis.

My selection of respondents grew from my knowledge of destination organisations in Northern Norway. I found them to be an interesting and appropriate sample to study, since they are often, and increasingly so, an intermediary between the commercial interests and the community-based interests of a place. While they used to be the general marketing body for the tourism industry in their destination, they now find themselves in a position where they are supposed to be both marketer of the tourism industry and manager of a service eco-system with a range of stakeholders, who are all contributing to the image of the destination (Prøven, 2021). A sample of other stakeholders, like inhabitants, tourists and representatives from other industries, organisations, or public government, would have provided different findings. Consequently, this thesis only portrays a limited point of view. However, I found my respondents had an analytical and reflexive awareness of stakeholders in their destination.

Nine of the respondents in the sample represented a DMO in the traditional sense. Three of these operated as a commercial actor and had an online booking engine for tourism services. Two of the respondents represented a project organisation; one that was financed by the local government, and one was mainly financed by private companies through a local tourism

association. For simplification, I use the abbreviation DMO for all the destinations' organisations represented in the thesis.

### **3.2.3 Interview guide**

Preparing for the interviews, I made an interview guide. I conducted two interviews according to the original interview guide, and then adjusted a few parts before I conducted the rest of the interviews. I did not want my interview guide to be too strict, as my aim was to conduct semi-structured interviews that would feel more like a dialogue, with open-ended questions (Adams, 2015). I divided the questions into four main focal areas. The first section, the respondents' organisation and position were not included in the coding process, instead it was used as a categorization for the interviews. The second section was about the attitudes towards tourism and tourists in the local community and the local communities' norms, values and/or other institutional arrangements that shape the communities. The third section drilled down into different types of tourist segments, tourist behavior and the interactions between the local society and visitors. The fourth section focused on the respondents' considerations about sustainable tourism and how their organisation works with sustainability in marketing and development. In total, 13 sub-questions were added to the main themes.

The interview guide is included in appendix A.

### **3.2.4 Data collection**

As I knew all the respondents professionally and personally, it was easy for me to obtain appointments for conducting the interviews. All respondents received an e-mail request for an interview. I had 13 respondents on my list. Two of the respondents declined due to personal time limits, which left me with 11 respondents, who participated in an interview. Although the two declined interviews would have been valuable, there is also a chance that I would have reached a level of redundancy in my data. Due to my time limits, I concluded that the 11 interviews would yield sufficient data for this thesis.

One interview was done *in situ*, while all the others were done digitally, on *Teams*, as the geographical distance to the interviewees in question prevented me from meeting them face-to-face. The interviews were recorded and transcribed according to the articulated conversation.

The interviews lasted between 45 to 90 minutes. I was aware that my respondents had busy days and I tried not to spend more time than necessary. All the interviewees had the same questions, but they would sometimes be asked or answered in a different order than the interview-guide proposed. Sometimes, I would step in with some observations or arguments, to generate a more relaxed form of dialogue to the interview. Some of the respondents were extremely efficient in their answers, while others were more talkative and made a lot of side-comments and reflections during the interview, which prolonged the actual interview. I tried to follow the energy of interviews, and whenever the respondents' engagement was high, I allowed for the respondents to elaborate their views, but I made sure to return them to the interview topics to ensure we did not run out of time

### **3.2.5 Data analysis**

Though the respondents represent destinations that are all in Northern Norway, the communities they represent all differ from each other regarding tourism seasons, dominant tourism segments, local traditions, other industries and how each destination is organized and managed. As such, the respondents had different opinions within the topics that we discussed. This made the coding process difficult. The structure of the interviews was loose, and I had to carefully analyse the transcribed material to find suitable codes. All interviews were put into an excel spreadsheet. I read through the interviews to get an overview and tried to look for latent themes. At this phase, I did not pay too much notice to the literature but tried to identify what the text was about. Often, I could identify several topics within one sequence of the text. Hence, I noted down different emerging topics as the first phase of my coding process. In the next phase, I recorded all the transcribed interviews into one spreadsheet and identified around 450 quotes that related to my research question. These were categorized into 50 first-order codes based on repeated topics. By identifying the relationship of the first-order codes, the second-order codes were reduced to seven themes related to the literature review. Finally, I arranged second-order themes into three aggregated themes, which involved a higher level of analysis. I went through the first-order themes and second-order themes to ensure I had used the appropriate terms and inserted all the codes into a thematic map (figure 2).



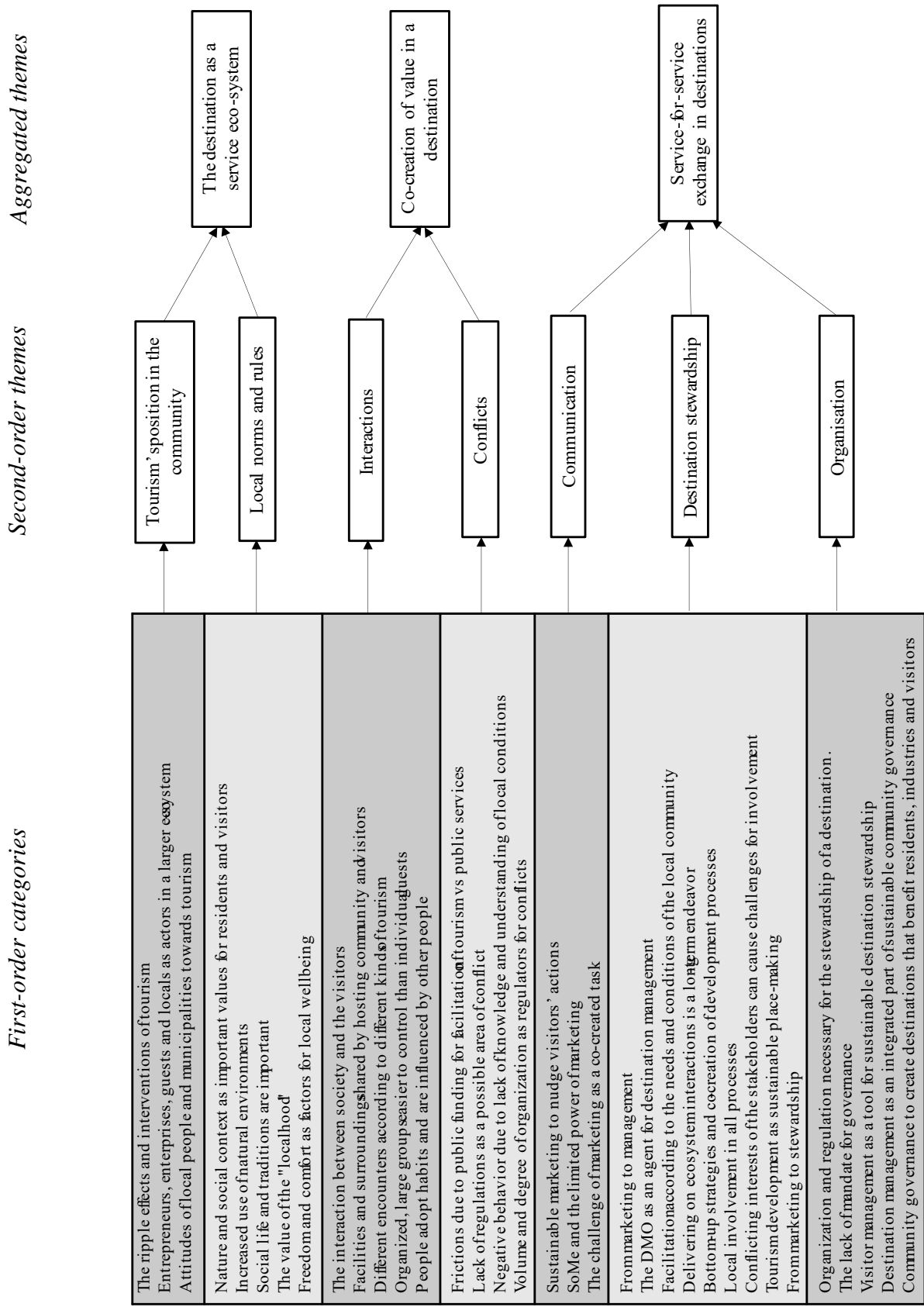


Figure 2: Coding structure

## 4 Findings

Following the order of the aggregated themes in the coding structure (Figure 2), I will describe my findings in the following sections of this chapter.

### 4.1 The destination as a service eco-system

In Norway, while there are high expectations for the tourism industry, it is still considered to be a minor economic sector compared to fisheries, aquaculture, petroleum, construction, mining, trading, research and development, education, and public services. Even though tourism has a high employment rate, many employees are part-time workers with low incomes. Tourism is not regarded as a major part of economic income in societies. People live their daily lives, mainly in rather small communities, where being close to the nature is of great value. They appreciate the freedom, safety, and calmness that their community provides, as well as the social life and the “easy-going” culture of their community. The Norwegian term “dugnad”, voluntary work, is a strong value in Norway, often to create services that are not done by the public authorities. Cultural traditions are strong and are often enhanced through festivals and events.

#### 4.1.1 Tourism’s position in the community

Although all the representatives emphasized tourism’s importance in their destinations, some respondents commented on the lack of engagement from, cooperation, or standing with the local government or other industries. Other respondents turned the attention towards themselves and recognized that as tourism actors, it was their responsibility to communicate their value to others.

*“I wish we had more commitment and collaboration (...) I wish we had managed to involve other industries more in what we do. Like the fisheries, for example.”*

*“Tourism IS a very important economic sector for our municipality, but we have not been good at visualising, or at talking about how important tourism is for the local community and for other industries.”*

The lack of engagement could be grounded in the somewhat blurry boundaries between tourism as an industry and how tourism also interferes within general local activities, as well as how tourism can be a difficult sector to understand, since the activity does not take place in a factory or at a special place, and it is not always easy to see who the beneficiaries of tourism activities are.

*“It has to do with the ecosystem of tourism. For example, we have a plastic industry that produces pipes and boxes and everything. They sell well and you hear nothing negative. But they have their production factory. That’s it. You know what’s happening there. It’s clear, and people understand that they produce plastic. But when we talk about tourism, it’s a bit unclear where the production and “moneymaking” takes place. In addition, tourists use infrastructure that is not paid for or designed only for tourism companies, but for everyone - for the public, for society. And this infrastructure is often established through the work of local associations and volunteers, and then it is difficult to understand why tourists should use these “goods” without paying for it.”*

However, nearly all respondents mentioned how the pandemic brought an increased awareness towards the importance of the hospitality industries. When everything closed, the local communities were without any services and lost their “vibe”. People became more aware of the local services and how crucial they are for the community. Projects were started to give the local community the opportunity to “discover” the local hospitality services, and to increase awareness of the use such of local services.

*“(....) have realized that, especially after the corona, how important it [tourism and hospitality] has been in relation to value creation, tax revenues and the number of employees, the pure numbers, you know. But in addition, you also see the ripple effects it has in relation to the services; the number of shops, the number of restaurants, the number of flights, that Hurtigruta [The Coastal Express] is still running and all the things that make it nice to live here, but that are available only because you get the extra income from the tourism industry. There is a stronger awareness around this.”*

One of the main features for tourism is that it creates jobs! Tourism is not an industry that can be outsourced or moved to another place; production and consumption of the “tourism products” happens on the spot. Albeit virtual reality has been launched as an alternative to

physical travelling. Employment was mentioned as one reason why tourism should have an important position in municipalities.

*«I believe tourism is considered as important for our municipality. It creates many jobs in the region and many of the inhabitants are directly connected to the hospitality industry through their job.»*

The importance of employment was particularly mentioned to keep small, rural communities alive. As nature is the main attraction in the north, rural areas there have the resources to develop tourism.

*“We must make sure that people have jobs in the districts because what else is there? (...) It is not attractive to work there.... You are often alone. It is far between the good jobs. It is not easy to live in the countryside. But the guests want to experience the districts. The cities are not their main goal. The main attraction is nature, which you find in the countryside. Therefore, I think that tourism can be incredibly positive for the districts because it can ensure that there is still a life to be created for people.”*

Due to seasonality, many of the employees in the tourism industry are part-time workers, which implies that they do not pay taxes to the municipality where they work. This can be challenging for the social system in small communities

*“(....) the tax system makes it difficult (...), with lots of employees who do not live here. This applies to other industries as well, but especially to tourism. (...) You do not move here only for 3-4 months. Today's tax system does not suit today's society. One should look at the issues associated with temporary residents and how to pay taxes to a municipality where you only work for parts of the year, because part-time workers impose a social burden on the municipality in many ways.”*

Collaboration between tourism entrepreneurs, cultural institutions and local producers of food was mentioned as a tool to create activities in destinations that could attract new target groups as well as create jobs and increase local income. Others mentioned examples of projects where co-creation was used as a model for product development, for the benefit of inhabitants and visitors. This could involve collaboration between private enterprises, volunteers, and

organisations to create hiking trails, build a barbeque hut, establish parking spaces or facilitation of other “non-commercial” products in natural environments.

*“And then there were some people who joined forces and created a network, and they have, (...), been involved in developing hiking trails. The sports club had initially made hiking trails with small signs written in ink. Then (a tour operator) came and said that there was a need for more activities: Kayaking, hiking, cycling, etc. A hiking project was started (...). It was decided that the sports club would still be responsible for the hiking trails, but the network paid for signs according to national guidelines. Then the municipality took responsibility for the parking spaces. (...) They took hold of a resource and turned it into a product, in collaboration with the sports club, local businesses and a network of tourism companies.”*

Occasionally, conflicts of resources or areas occur between tourism and other industries, like fisheries.

*“Other industries may not think that tourism is an equal value creator in economic terms. We see this in relation to fisheries and aquaculture versus tourism. Maybe especially fisheries. It means that you suddenly get some area conflicts and then you start measuring the value of the various industries against each other. How much value does each industry contribute to the local community?”*

Other examples of contradictions between tourism and other industries were mentioned, especially with agriculture. However, nobody mentioned the bigger, more politically laden issues that have been circulating in various medias, like the request for exploration of oil and gas, or disagreements with reindeer herding families.

Since tourism is seen as an opportunity for economic growth, increased investments and employment, tourism development and marketing are often supported by public funds. This can lead to discourses regarding allocation of money to public services versus business development.

*“The local population can get hung up regarding fundamental services that should be in place and set these things up against business development initiatives supported by the municipality. “*

*“What can be heard is that ... (...) is a small municipality with a minor administration, and the politicians have decided that they will finance a full position, which is me, who will work only with tourism. But they do not have an HR manager in the municipality, they do not have a finance director, they do not have a school principal. (...) And the public health care center needs refurbishment. When other parts of the municipality have problems, a scapegoat is needed. We experience some friction in relation to the municipality prioritizing tourism, but they do not prioritize their own employees.”*

However, all respondents claimed that the inhabitants’ attitude to tourism was positive. In general, the respondents’ opinion was that people are flattered to get visitors and take pride in being good hosts for the tourists. The increase in tourism has strengthened local identity and pride.

*“The locals think it’s nice that someone comes and visit us.”*

*“But beyond that, there has been a lot of positivity, increased tourism and investments have contributed to local pride. We notice this well among the locals. By and large, it is a positive approach from all bodies; inhabitants, the municipality, or other types of policy instruments at the municipality's disposal.”*

Several mentioned population surveys that they had conducted as a part of the process to get labelled as a Sustainable Destination (InnovationNorway, 2021)). The population survey facilitated statements regarding positive attitudes to tourism

*“People are positive to tourists, they are positive to the development, the growth that has taken place in recent years. We have conducted a population survey through the process of sustainable destinations.”*

Tourism is now something that is planned for, and not “just happening”. This strategic approach is given credit for a more professional tourism industry, which is also approved by the local community.

*“There have been investments in tourism for many years, but there was no strategy until 2016-2017. (...) And what was noticed, which is perhaps common all over Norway, was that*

*tourism as an industry has been given a completely different status. One has begun to see the value that is created in the local community. The local pride has increased along with the popularity of the destination, which also results in a different kind of recognition among the local population.”*

#### **4.1.2 Local rules and norms**

When I talked with my respondents about local values, i.e., what makes life worth living in their community, nature was the overarching factor. Being close to nature and being able to spend time in nature for recreational matters, seemed to be very important for the local inhabitants in the region. I found it a bit strange that nobody talked about nature as a place to reap. Being from the region myself, I know the importance of knowledge about the best places for fishing, berry picking, or hunting. Though I tried to ask about this, my respondents were more occupied in discussing how nature is appreciated for “new” kind of recreation, like hiking, biking, Randonnée, dogsledding, etc. Perhaps this is because of the way recreation is getting closer to a touristic form, where nature is appreciated more as a playground than as a pantry?

*“Naturally, we are fond of our nature, freedom, being able to use the nature, and for peace and quiet as well.”*

*“And that is exactly what tourists come here for. So, these are the same values we live for, that we try to sell to others.”*

It was also mentioned that during the pandemic, the value of being in nature had increased. Since people did not have opportunities to go elsewhere, they appreciated the easy access to recreation in natural surroundings even more.

*“We have learned to take advantage of the opportunities we have to a much greater extent than before Corona, because that was what was available. When we couldn’t travel anywhere, when we had a home office and home school, we hiked in the mountains nearby. I think we will continue to do that after Corona, both winter and summer. And we have become more tourists in our own region”*

In addition to nature, safety was mentioned as an important value for people in the North of Norway. This was especially so for the smaller societies. Wherein the level of criminality is low, people know each other and take comfort in living in a peaceful and quiet place, where you have a lot of space. It was also mentioned that social gatherings, like festivals, sports events or other cultural activities contribute to the local identity and positive feelings about their places. In some places, people are very attentive to their history and traditions, and take pride in talking about it, like the war history, the cross-cultural identity of the North, the Sami culture, or the coastal fishery culture. The folklore, the general hospitality, and the “easy-going” kind of socialising in the north of Norway were also some of the values the representatives talked about. To summarize, according to the respondents, what seemed to be most important for people living in Northern Norway is “the good life”; to live in peace and quiet with friends and family, have fun and relax, meet people, and spend time in nature.

*“We have many good values. We feel that (...) is safe, in the sense that you do not lock the car, you hang your jacket in the wardrobe, leave your shoes in the hall, and leave your house unlocked when you go out.”*

Another issue that came up regarding people’s values was the Norwegian word “dugnad”; voluntary work to get a job done. Often this kind of work is done by associations, to create something that benefits members or people in general.

*“And there is a very, very big culture for everyone to contribute. It is very common, I think, for smaller societies, where one cannot expect others to come and do something. If you want something, then you must contribute in one way or another. And in relation to outdoor life, there is volunteer-based preparation of fat bike tracks, for example, or if the kids are going to ski or play handball, it is also volunteer-based. It is expected that everyone will show up. If we get more visitors that will use the same facilities, I think conflicts can happen. We need to plan for this in advance.”*

The local confidence and how suppliers and people in the destinations want to be considered as authentic and “real” was also described by several of the interviewees. Especially in the smaller destinations, it seems to be important that tourists should appreciate and acknowledge the local culture. They take pride in not being “artificial” and welcome guests who are



genuinely interested in their local culture. When this is not the case, suppliers can be hostile towards these kinds of guests.

*“...when someone comes along who is a little... kind of looks down on people, and nothing is good enough. You know, those who have too big Teslas and such.... I mean, thanks, but no thanks! We’ve had some of those. If you are not satisfied with what we have to offer, then this is not the place to go for you! We don’t want to be something we are not! There have been such cases. The suppliers are confident about their quality level, and if the guests do not find it good enough, then maybe they should go somewhere else!”*

## **4.2 Co-creation of value in a destination**

Formerly mainly a summer destination, Northern Norway is now a region that attracts a range of tourism segments all year round. While some destinations have their peak season in winter, others are packed with tourists during summer. Cruise ships are also an evolving segment and have become an all-year-round activity

*“We are a destination with a mix of land-based individuals and cruise passengers. We are a summer destination and a winter destination, so we kind of have everything”*

While the traditional market of touring bus groups is still present, the development of specialised tourism, like sea angling tourism, Randonnée, Northern Lights tourism, mountain biking etc. is a change from sightseeing tourism to nature-based adventure tourism.

*“Many of these are bus tourists going to the North Cape. They might stay the night in the hotels but are not so visible. Then we have the angling tourists who are not so visible either, because they stay at their camp and go out by boat. (...) we have had a large increase in individuals who come by car and are on a round trip. It is this group that has increased. (...) The individual guests are more active. Many come with a motorhome and bring bicycles.*

It was also recognized that the difference between tourists, visitors and locals can be blurry. Sometimes, it is difficult to make a distinction between the groups as everyone uses the same services.

*“The collaborations we have had with the local population were important because the local population redefined what a guest is during the pandemic. With the municipality we have had discussions about where we should have tourists and which areas should be for locals only. And then I asked how to define “locals”. (...) And then some questions arose around the boundary between guest and local population. (...) A tourist does not always come from far away. It could be me – a downtown resident.”*

#### **4.2.1 Interactions**

With increased tourism flow, encounters between the local community and visitors also increase. According to my respondents, such encounters happen everywhere; in the shops, in the restaurants, on the bus, in the shopping streets and - increasingly so – in nature. As my respondents commented, these encounters and interactions can be both positive and negative.

*“We experience more activity in nature. For example, during ski summit trips, you meet people (...) and you talk with them. It is the same in the summer season (...) Most people go on the same trips.*

People are normally happy to help and talk with visitors. As examples of positive interactions, some respondents mentioned meetings between tourists and locals that had turned into long-lasting friendships, and locals who had invited tourists for dinner.

*“In a survey we did, I think 80% said that they had, on their own initiative, helped them [tourists], told about nice places to go or where they could eat or what trips they should take, or helped them with the map when they sat in the bus and they realized that «oh, these people do not quite know where they are going » and, yes....”*

Several respondents stated that both visitors and locals benefit from the same facilities, and that interactions can have positive impacts for all involved actors.

*“The interaction happens almost everywhere. We use the same facilities and community services and meeting points. What is exclusively for locals are the very basic things such as kindergarten, school, sports hall, and so. We mainly meet in the city center, in nature, at activity spots, at museums, galleries, restaurants, shops .... and this is because many of these*

*nice service hotspots, which the locals enjoy, are a consequence of the tourism industry being one of the cornerstone industries.”*

Respondents also noted that interaction between visitors and locals can enhance the experience for visitors, as well as give positive outcomes for the locals.

*“But what you see is that it is the meetings with the locals - whether it is (...) or (...) or whether it is a waiter or someone you met in the hiking trail who just smiled at you. Those are the meetings that create the total experience for the guest, and perhaps for a representative of the local community as well.”*

However, interactions are not without implications. More people will place more pressure on social and natural environments, of which the respondents are aware of. Respondents stated that when both visitors and locals use the same environments, visitor flows need to be carefully managed.

*“We meet the tourists everywhere. The visitors are in the same places as the local community, so they become part of the local community. That is why it is necessary to be proactive to visitor flows.... to get a good flow. More and more, the guests want to do what the locals do. If you have a lot of locals in one place, the tourists will also go there, and you will have an enhanced effect.”*

Interaction with the local community is tightly linked to the level of organization. Many of the activities take place in the countryside, and not in the city center. This makes tourism less visible.

*“We do not have very many places, really, where the locals will meet tourists. Tourism is kind of invisible. But my destination has a very high degree of organized types of tourism. Much of what happens in relation to tourism is organized. At least in the winter. They have a guide with them and do not go skiing or dogsledding or on a snow scooter trip alone. ....”*

### 4.2.2 Conflicts

Though the respondents would rather emphasize the positive impacts of tourism, they acknowledged the risk of negative impacts due to increased tourism. Dysfunctional interactions occur when tourists are “in the way” and disturbs the local life due to parking issues, littering or noisy behavior.

*“The negative meetings are mostly where tourists are in the way - whether they take parking spaces or it feels cramped because many come to small villages, or when they use nature, but do not consider things that are facilitated mainly in terms of locals but are accessible to everyone. (...) but if people behave well, whether it is tourists or locals, it is not a problem.*

Accidents and dangerous behavior were mentioned, like Randonnée skiers who trigger avalanches, people who go hiking unequipped, or Northern Lights tourists who go out on the road without reflective vests. Other incidents, more annoying than dangerous, were mentioned, like groups walking in newly made skiing trails made by volunteers, children in the kindergarten being photographed, people staring through private houses’ windows or passing through private gardens, or even complete their toilet on private properties. According to the respondents, to stand in line in the shops or in the ski lift can also be annoying for locals, and while you could pop into a restaurant any day at any time, table reservations are now required in peak seasons.

*“And then they [Northern Lights tourists] come to these small coastal communities where they stay all night. There will be both noise and people, cars lighting up and rubbish left as well. They walk in the enlightened skiing trails that have been made by volunteers, because they find it comfortable.”*

Increased tourism flow create more pressure on local establishments. Most of the respondents seemed to agree that problems would increase proportionally with increased volumes of tourism.

*« (...)but we do have challenges. For example, in (...) ...it is a tiny local community, and when there are a lot of tourist buses or others, the locals get annoyed.”*

One perspective to avoiding the challenges of tourism was to increase the level of organized tourism within the tourism system of guided activities, accommodations, and attractions and to lead visitors to the “right places”.

*“We know that if a destination gets a lot of tourists, then problems arise in relation to the local population. Of course! What is special here, is that (...) most people have...they go up to (...), and do activities, have fun, and spend the night there too. Then they go down to the hotel and then they eat there, and they might go out walking a bit and taking some pictures in the city centre in the afternoon before they leave the next day. And it is a kind of tourism where there is very little room for them to make mistakes, compared to the tourists who fill the car with camping equipment, climbing equipment and kayaks and go to (...) for three weeks. (...) It is less sustainable than our tourists who just come in here and whirl around, spend a lot of money and leave.”*

Cruise ships seemed to be a challenging segment for many destinations, because of the volume and divergent customer demands.

*“It is easier to handle the smaller groups. (...) But - then there are also large groups, such as cruise passengers, which are incredibly difficult. They are complex, and on the ship, there can be several nationalities and age groups”*

Some of the interviewees talked about how the guests’ experiences were influenced by the local people’s attitudes.

*“For example, at (...) not everyone in the local community is so happy when a cruise ship is coming. The locals are hosts too. All those who visit (...) are guests in the local community and the local community becomes host. If the locals are negative, it will not be a good experience neither for those who live there, nor for those who are visiting.”*

For big groups, like cruise passengers disembarking into a small community, organized tours can prevent conflicts with the local population or wear and tear on natural surroundings.

*We have not had any trouble in the city centre when the cruise ships have arrived, because they have mostly been “stuffed” into coaches and driven out to (...) or other places for activities.*

For tourists seeking active immersion in nature, the level of organization has much to do with safety and lowering the risk of accidents or unwanted behavior in nature.

*“If you are going on a summit trip or out in nature, we want you to use local guides. It has to do with safety and risk.”*

However, according to the respondents, most tourists do behave well. They follow the rules and guidelines, and misbehavior is said to be more due to misunderstandings, lack of knowledge or lack of information from the local industry’s side rather than lack of respect or intentional rule breaking.

*“Many people use our nature. But I’m not sure if everybody thinks about the consequences. Some are not very aware of their own choices. I don’t think it is intentional.”*

*“We do not know if it is intentional or out of curiosity, but we have seen drone flying over kindergartens and over the city centre.”*

In sum, many of the statements recognized the web of actors within a destination and how they act upon each other. The notion of interactions and conflicts in the communities due to increased tourism draws attention to the local community’s role in tourism.

*“(....) because we are a piece in a bigger puzzle. All of us .... because the tourism actors, the tourism companies are only a small part of the total experience for the guests who come (....). The customer journey consists of much more than just the meeting with the tourism enterprises, (...), that is, both the meeting with the taxi driver, the infrastructure, other industries, how the locals react to the tourists. It is an ecosystem, (...) It is a big puzzle. And the tourism actors that I primarily represent are only a part of a bigger picture.”*

### **4.3 Service-for-service exchange in the destination**

Even though tourism is said to have many positive connotations, it is evident that it also comes with consequences, and sustainability is on the agenda in the destinations. Visitor flows are not evenly distributed in the region, nor are the destinations completely comparable regarding sustainability issues, but the respondents take it very seriously and are eager to work in a sustainable way. Many of the destinations are working according to the tools of the program for Sustainable Destinations and the respondents have a good picture of why they should work with sustainability issues and what they should do.

*“Sustainable tourism is about getting a positive return on investment for the communities, the guests, and the industry, without leaving too much trace. It’s about reducing the negative consequences and reinforce the positive ones. Then there are many perspectives in between.... I’s about local communities, it’s about industries, it’s about the guests, and it’s about everyone ultimately having a positive experience of visiting, living and doing business here.”*

The respondents acknowledged that the eco-system consists of multiple actors who have influence on a destination as well as the complexity of achieving all dimensions of sustainability.

*"Sustainability is to take care of the local population first and foremost. Take care of nature. Take care of our culture. Take care of the economics in tourism and other businesses. Environment, culture, local communities, and economy. And it is very difficult to balance between all of these focal areas, but that's what it means. "*

#### **4.3.1 Communication**

One of the sustainable actions with which many of the destinations were working with, was to steer the visitor flows by using techniques of sustainable marketing.

*“Sustainable marketing is the new issue; to give the guests the right expectations. (...) enabling the guest to assess which experiences they should seek, which time of the year to visit, the degree of difficulty or challenging type of trip you want, in general, to build a system which is helpful and advisory.”*

The idea of sustainable marketing is that communication and other marketing activities can be used as tools to regulate the development in the destination. The “right” target groups for your destination can be reached, seasonal instability can become more even, and unwanted tourism behaviors can be avoided through information.

*“I think that if we open to everyone .... (...)..... whether we like it or not, they (edit: the tourists) come anyway. So, I think in terms of marketing our destination, we need to be very clear about who WE want as guest. Because we cannot stop the flow .... that is, we cannot deny people to come here if they want to. We know they are coming. We know that the flow of tourists will not stop. It will rather increase. But we should be very conscious; we should have a very conscious relationship to who WE will have on visit and work towards these target groups.”*

It was also recognized that communication can be used to nudge tourists’ behavior in the right direction by playing to their consciousness.

*“I think we must make demands. We can make demands on our guests. We CAN encourage them, once they are here, to respect... to act with respect. We must make them aware that this is where we want to live, both we and our children and our grandchildren. We want to preserve this place for future generations as well. We want it to remain a good place for us to live in. It is difficult, but you can do it, if you are aware. If everyone is aware of how we should communicate with whom we should we communicate.”*

*“I think our task must be to nudge people to be responsible through our communication. The fact that you play on the sense of responsibility of people in communications more than you have done before.”*

To avoid communicating something is another method used in sustainable marketing. By not mentioning vulnerable places or unwanted activities, DMOs can steer traffic flows according to their strategies.

*We think through what we say and write in the different channels. We try to create a dialogue about wear and tear of nature, climate, and the environment. We recommend certain mountain hikes and avoid active marketing of others. We have a dialogue with, (...) who do*



*not want wild campers, so we do not communicate this. We rarely mention the places' names when we show pictures of mountains and nice beaches, to avoid sending people to this very place, because we have a lot of nice beaches and plenty of nice mountains. We are cautious about the pressure that can quickly arise in some places."*

However, there is an awareness that marketing is a co-created task, where the power of the official marketing actions has decreased with "people-generated" content on numerous digital platforms, which makes it difficult to manage traffic flows.

*"We cannot do it 100% but it is certainly possible to control traffic to some degree and it does have an impact. We see that. But we also see that for some places it is completely impossible. And that is because we are not the main marketer. It is the guest him- or herself. There is a challenge."*

#### **4.3.2 Stewardship**

It is evident that sustainability is on the agenda for the DMOs, and that they see it as an integrated part of their work. Sustainability is frequently emphasized in destinations' strategies. Environmental issues are top-of-mind, but there is attendance towards social and cultural issues of sustainability as well. The notion that tourism is a social affair that affects the local society has grown. Hence, the need to work with facilitation according to the needs of the guests, the local community *and* the tourism enterprises was recognized.

*These days, we work very much with visitor management and with citizen involvement. It is part of the action plan, to take care of the inhabitants and manage and take care of nature. Then of course we also need to support the industry."*

*"We work a lot with the combination of well-being for the locals AND for the visitors. It is connected. The services developed for the tourist is a treat for the local as well."*

The program for sustainable destinations seemed to be a catalyst for the work towards sustainability in destinations.

*“I think the program for sustainable destinations is good, because it forces us and many destinations to think systematically about sustainability.”*

However, working with sustainability in a destination where multiple stakeholder’s interests might conflict with each other, is a new task to many of the DMOs. They seemed to embrace the challenge and work according to the program for sustainable destinations and their own strategies toward a holistic perspective.

*“I think we need to work in a holistic way. It requires a lot more of us now than when we were merely a marketing actor. And these roles must be connected, I think that is the most important. We are a link between companies and operators and guests, communities and authorities and communication. It is a lot to embrace. Our challenge is to design our model that will help us solve these assignments.”*

Even though they were aware of the responsibility that they have as an agent of sustainable destinations, they pointed out that this is long-term endeavour. The work has started, but there is a long way to go. The respondents pointed to the system for Sustainable Destinations, where involving stakeholders is a mandatory task.

*“We believe that we can contribute because we have the toolbox. We can push some buttons. But what we cannot do is to deliver on eco-system interactions overnight. You will not get immediate results from us. We must be clear that this is a long-term job. To take on the principles of sustainability is a choice. We have taken a choice. We lean on some values. And we will work for a long time. This is not a quick fix. The most important thing we have done is that we have made a choice.”*

To work with sustainability implies a turn away from marketing towards management. The ideal is to work through a bottom-up methodology, where the actors in the local communities are involved and engaged in the strategies for long-term development. In practice, it is challenging to engage and involve everyone.

*“We asked ourselves about how to get the locals involved in a good way. In connection with the sustainability work, we involved the communities in the places that experienced problems. We’ve held community meetings and such. But there is no doubt that we can get better. And*

*who are the locals, anyway? We are all locals. Involvement is challenging. I would have liked to know about others who have succeeded in this. And how do you get involvement? Who should be involved? Should we involve the oldest people, the youngest people, the people who are most engaged? I do not know.”*

The respondents claimed to be determined about community involvement and saw themselves as an agent for cooperation and involvement.

*“Primarily, we involve our members, the local population - through the channels we have available - and the local authorities. They have their plans, their local community plan and want us as a partner. So, we must be ON and in those processes. Then there are the locals – we involve them by asking them and giving them answers. The companies [the tourism enterprises] are involved by their attendance in the different working groups according to our initiatives (...) and all the destinations’ representatives see the importance of involvement.”*

All the respondents claimed to take community involvement very seriously, and destinations were trying to be more attentive to the local community. They meet with politicians and invite people in for meetings, but they still felt they should have done more to create engagement and involvement.

*“In the beginning, we worked a lot with destination marketing. We were not good at talking to the locals in the beginning. (...) We have been active towards the local politicians and government. Every year I have been to the municipal councils and told what we do. We have done a lot, but we have not succeeded in involving the locals well enough. It is not good.”*

However, it was admitted that they should have been more attentive to the diverse stakeholders at an earlier stage.

*“I feel deep down that it works well with the locals. Local politicians reflect the local population to a large extent. This has been a neglected area. (...) ..., when we work with sustainable solutions, we are attentive to the environment and cultural heritage and safety, and so. We overlooked the locals for a long time. We did not interact very well with them; we didn’t involve them in the processes. Around 2017, the role of the local population in tourism became a subject of discourse. We have taken it much more seriously in recent years. We*

*have to remember that we are part of a local community. We must create partnerships, be open and honest and clear, but at the same time be service minded towards the community.”*

Even so, it was also said that it can be difficult to obtain engagement among the stakeholders *before* the negative impacts occur.

*“It is probably easier to create engagement regarding the challenges of tourism if the damages have already occurred. It is more difficult to prevent. Or... it would have been easier to be in advance of potential problems, but it is difficult to be in advance when you do not know where to start working.”*

As destinations were working with their evolving strategies, the bottom-up approach became more evident. There was a turn from tourism development strategies to sustainable community development strategies

*“When we started with the strategy document, we ended up with the strategy being about thriving communities. We did not create a tourism strategy for the tourists to have a good time. We made a strategy for the proper development of the region, together with the local population. We turned the tables- That is what we have been working on for the last five years, a good tourism strategy. It is a hint of our role.”*

It is unknown if this turn was evident also for the authorities in all the destinations.

Statements from some respondents showed that this might not have been a perspective shared by the authorities. There seems to be a long way to go before tourism strategies are integrated into community strategies.

*“The municipality has its own strategic document for community development and the tourism industry has its own masterplan. Today these two strategic documents are not integrated. They may have some intersecting points, but there is no reference to the other strategy in either of them.”*

Only one of the interviewees represented a destination where destination stewardship had been a prerequisite for destination marketing. Part of the destination is a UNESCO world heritage site, and this status has been the foundation for the development of the destination.

The destination does not have a DMO in its traditional sense, but rather a project team, financed and run by the municipality and the Heritage Center. For this destination, a bottom-up approach where all relevant stakeholders were involved in the destination development was the foundation for all actions. According to the respondent, they have regular meetings with multiple actors, like farmers, landowners, other businesses, second-home owners, local associations, and local populations. They often go back and forth over time, to find the best options and solutions for all parties.

*“Working with proper destination development is the same as working with place making. It is two sides of the same coin. Now, people talk about working bottom-up instead of top-down. This was evident for us from the start, and we have been working bottom-up with all our projects. Co-creation is incredibly important! (...) Destination marketing is part of it, but everything else is co-creation with many actors; municipal administration, entrepreneurs, someone who has an idea, the local community*

This destination takes an active approach to the stewardship of the destination and are very clear towards their guests and customers about how to behave and act when visiting.

*“We know what we want, and we say it! For example, we have decided how we want to work with cruises. They are obliged to go through us! They are not allowed to dock here and arrange anything themselves. We recently rejected a ship with 250 pax, because it was too big for us. If they cannot follow our plan, like split the passengers into two groups, they are kindly asked to go to another destination. If they want to visit, they must follow our conditions. It is a vulnerable area; we are a world heritage site. We have the know-how!”*

### **4.3.3 Organisation**

The terms visitor management and destination management were used frequently and interchangeably when the respondents were asked about sustainability. While visitor management relates to the system and tools needed, destination management relates to the bodies of authorities with mandates to implement these systems. These terms indicate that tourism is an activity that needs to be governed in a broader sense than conventional industries. There is a turn away from the industrial economic-only perspective towards the need of serving everyone’s interests.

*“In my organization, we have a new strategy where one of the most important issues is to have a holistic perspective. We will work for the best for the destination. Something has happened. Our vision used to be “A world-class Arctic destination”. Today, our aim is to be a leading partner of visitor management and destination management.”*

*“Working with visitor management is incredibly important. The understanding that we, i.e., the tourism industry, are part of a larger ecosystem, and that we are building the foundations for the future, it is very important.”*

Many of the respondents talked about the lack of understanding as to what destination management is and what it requires, as well as which mandate the destination management should have.

*“We have not reached a proper understanding of what destination management requires. We are an important part of it, but the concept of destination management must be much more comprehensive. They [destination managers] must be the ones who can coordinate and activate the local community, the municipality (...) Organisations and associations should also be activated in one way or another.”*

*“What should a destination management do, what goals and mandate and authority do you have to make changes, and do you have any impact on what you want to achieve? I think that is where the biggest challenges lie.”*

Though the DMOs saw themselves as an important agent for sustainable destination management, they saw the need for a much broader anchorage than it has today.

*“Both marketing and development are important tasks. But the DMO cannot work alone! It is about the entire eco-system, the tourism companies, organisations and associations, the local population, the municipality, the board of the national park board, and the county council. All of these must work together to develop the region in the right direction.”*

Another issue that was brought up frequently was the financial situation, related to who will pay for the management of sustainable destinations.

*“We have been given a lot of social responsibility that we did not have before. We do not have a mandate, but we are expected to take this responsibility. Especially on infrastructure. And someone needs to finance this job.”*

For some destinations, visitor management was predominantly about regulation and control of visitor flows.

*We have worked hard to increase the number of visitors and build up an industry. (...) So now, the challenge is to keep the numbers of visitors at the present level (...) We do not want to increase the numbers. Now it is about extending guests' length of stay.”*

The need for better control of tourism enterprises is another task identified by respondents:

*“But it is important that tourism companies are organized and regulated. There are no other industries where people can do what they want. In the fishing industry or in construction or in the oil industry.... It is not allowed to drill for oil everywhere or set up a house wherever you want, but in tourism you can do anything, anywhere, if you have a certificate and a licence. It is doomed to cause challenges. Especially when Norway has been marketed as a place where “everything in nature is free of charge.”*

In other destinations, where negative impacts were not yet remarkable, visitor management was about being prepared and being ahead of any challenges that might occur.

*“Which areas should be preserved for ourselves, and which areas should be made available for our guests? To be aware of the number of guests is one thing, but we also need to be aware of which kind of tourism we are working towards.”*

In particular, according to my sample of interviewees, the mandate for governing of all these sustainability issues is rather fuzzy.

*“What mandate do they place in the DMO? How much credibility do we have towards these institutions? Today, especially at the municipality level, there is no one else who has such in-depth “know-how” as the DMOs. I wish this knowledge were taken care of in a better way”*

However, the DMOs are not in position to develop any regulations. They do their best to involve and engage all the different stakeholders, but they lack authority to commit all the stakeholders in the community to strategic directions.

*“We have also involved the municipality, and some others here and there to get involved. That's it. It's not a long-term strategic work. It's more like we give them these ideas and we have involved the others, but we have never succeeded in involving the diversity of stakeholders and creating engagement. I think that is one of our biggest challenges: to involve and engage the others.”*

Respondents also argued that tourism is not only a matter for the tourism industry, but rather a community matter, which implies a need for community governance.

*“If a municipality says that it invests in tourism, what does that mean for the municipality? What do you have to have in place? And then the instrument apparatus must be linked to that type of structure”*

To summarize, visitor management is seen as necessary for all destinations, and the DMOs are aware of a turn from marketing to management, which implies a responsibility for destination management. However, while the DMOs take this responsibility seriously, they struggle with their role and position within the destination. They claim to have the “know-how”, but they neither have the resources nor the mandate to take on the task of destination governance. At the same time, they are expected by other actors (enterprises, customers, authorities) to continue with marketing activities as their primary task. Most of the interviewees revealed a certain frustration with regard to how they should work to achieve sustainability in a way that benefits all the actors in a destination.

*“(....) it is incredibly important to understand that tourism is not just about increased profitability. It is much more. And the responsibility does not only lie with the tourism industry. I know that (....) cannot take on this responsibility in the long run. (....) Ultimately, we are dependent on putting the responsibility into some kind of destination management, (....) that you have someone who consciously works .... who has both the resources and the mandate to work with these things.”*



## 5 Discussion

This chapter will discuss the findings according to the theoretical review. My data analysis identified three aggregated themes relevant for sustainable destination governance: the destination as an eco-system, co-creation of value in a destination and service-for-service exchange in a destination. These aggregated themes reflect movements, or transformational shifts, from the former G-D logic to an S-D logic of tourism, as illustrated in figure 3.

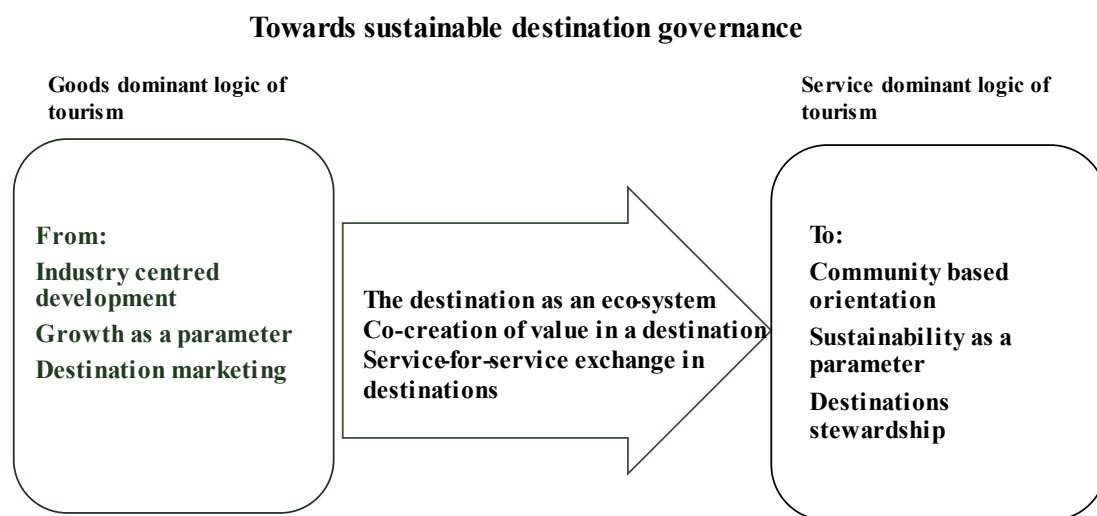


Figure 3: The paradigm shifts from G-D logic to S-D logic of sustainable destination governance

### 5.1 From industry-centred development to community-based orientation

The first shift that I identified in my findings was related to the theme of the destination as a service eco-system. This indicates how sustainable destinations need to change from a G-D logic, where development is based on the needs and demands of tourists and the tourism industry, to a S-D logic, where a destination is analysed as a service eco-system of multiple actors of whom must be considered. Subsequently, sustainable destinations will need to change their perspective from that of tourism as an industry to tourism as a matter of community-based activity.

### **5.1.1 The benefits and flip sides of tourism**

In tourism studies, the destination is a term which is just as essential as the tourist. In traditional understandings, the destination is a geographical location with attractions that make tourists visit a site (Framke, 2002). The destination is associated with tourism, which again is related to the tourism industry. Hence, when “destination” is used about a place, it indicates a way of looking at the place which is imbued with meanings related to tourism consumption (Granås, 2014; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). Within this perspective, the destination is a concept related to neoliberal, market-economy thinking, where economic growth is the key (Viken, 2014). Tourism development gives promises of a future of growth, profit, and benefits for certain actors. In general, destination development processes have emphasized the needs of tourists and the tourism industry, rather than local interests and identities (Saarinen, 2014). This often implies a commoditization of places that are inhabited by different actors with different interests, which can lead to struggles over representations, meanings, practices and materiality (Førde, 2014; Müller & Brouder, 2014).

Due to the trends of adventure tourism (ATTA), both activity suppliers, suppliers of accommodation, transport companies and restaurants have started up in regions (and seasons) previously not known for receiving tourists. In these regions, local and non-local entrepreneurs have been welcomed to establish their activities. The creation of employment is often the most persuasive factor in development plans to encourage politicians to give their approval, and is often posed as a public good worth sacrificing other benefits for (Abram, 2016). Such development has been heavily supported by public institutions at local, regional and national levels (Viken & Granås, 2016b). As places and regions are being planned for and transformed to attract tourists and investors in tourism, tourism becomes a political and socio-cultural activity (Førde, 2014; Saarinen, 2014) aimed at creating economic progress for society.

For the residents in a destination, tourism can easily become a “double-edged sword”. On one side, increased popularity brings economic income, better job opportunities and infrastructure improvements, as well as more intangible impacts, like new impulses, identity building, revitalization of culture and a communal sense of self confidence (Førde, 2014; Tregua et al., 2016). On the other side, increased tourism can easily lead to negative impacts. At a practical level, problems with littering, traffic jams, overcrowding, wear and tear on natural environments, pollution, increases in rental- or sales-prices for housing, accidents etc., will

occur if destinations are not prepared for increased traffic flow. Less tangible impacts, like undesirable tourism behaviors and eventually negative attitudes towards tourists (Oklevik et al., 2018) can be a consequence of conflicting or contradicting interests and institutions that guide people's behavior (like norms, habits, or unwritten rules of social conduct). These contradictions will hinder social consensus (Edvardsson et al., 2011) in a destination, between local residents and external enterprises (Carson & Carson, 2011) as well as between residents and tourists. Locals may change their role in the context of tourism; instead of strengthening their identity, they may find themselves on a stage, performing a role as a local (Urry & Larsen, 2011). During the process of "destinization", other identities of a place might be overseen or excluded, and there is a risk of losing sight of the plurality of a place (Granås, 2014). Within tourism, there are many relationships imbued with power, and there are asymmetries in resource allocations due to these power relations. Tourism marketing often produce destination identities representing the values and needs of the tourism industry, rather than local interests or identities. Moreover, destination development strategies reflect structures of hegemony; that is of who is or are able to frame the discourse when a destination is imbued with a certain identity. According to Saarinen (2014), this is crucial in peripheral areas where tourism often represents a development that satisfies the commercial interests of tourism businesses (Saarinen, 2014).

My findings indicate that tourism is regarded as an industry with a growing status that is recognized by the authorities as well as other industries. First and foremost, tourism is appreciated for its ability to create jobs. The Northern areas were originally developed due to their richness in natural resources. Because of deindustrialisation, tourism has been promoted as an alternative tool for regional development in these northern areas. In many places previously dominated by other industries like fisheries or mining, tourism is now one of the main professions. Hence, the destinations in Northern Norway can be interpreted as results of economic interests and combinations of modern and late-modern ideas for economic development (Müller & Brouder, 2014).

At the same time, job creation is not necessarily beneficial to the municipality. Many of the jobs offered are short-term and peak season oriented, and even tourism entrepreneurs are often characterized by seasonal operations. When visitor numbers and numbers of employees increase in peak seasons, municipalities are left to bear expenses for health care, renovation, and other wear and tear due to part-time increased population. However, these municipalities

do not get paid via taxes by these employees. Consequently, in small municipalities, the allocation of public funding for tourism facilitation can generate controversy with regard to basic public funding facilitation for residents

Several issues can also arise regarding tourism versus other industries. Specifically, the latter are not necessarily happy with increased tourism. Relatedly conflicts regarding the use of areas occur. Being a new actor in the economic field, the tourism industry may be accused of consuming resources that belong to someone else. As the industry's representatives, my respondents were reluctant to put weight on these kinds of conflicts. Nobody talked about the conflict between tourism and the discussion about exploitation for oil and gas. Neither were the discussions around Sea Angling tourism towards fisheries nor other political-laden issues mentioned. And while the medias frequently write about municipalities that struggle with costs imposed by tourism, this was not an issue in my interviews <sup>6</sup>.

### **5.1.2 Tourists and local population**

Though the term “destination” is very much associated with a place where tourists can gain memorable experiences, destinations are seldom created merely for tourism consumption. Destinations are also *communities*, where people live, work, and recreate, and where value creation is taking place in other sectors as well. Further, destinations are *societies* where other identities are being played out, where individuals are socialized through family life, education, works and leisure, and where residents, businesses and services interact with each other (Viken, 2014). Destinations are dynamic entities that must reorient their activities as tourism patterns change, but it also needs to be recognized that places reorientate as they develop into tourism destinations (Müller & Brouder, 2014). Examples of this reorientation of places due to tourism development was evident in my findings.

Nature in Northern Norway is – and has always been - the main resource for attracting tourists. It is also highly appreciated by the locals. My findings indicate that people living in the destinations in my sample are strongly connected to nature. Being close to nature and

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.nrk.no/nordland/lofoten-kommune-har-doblet-turistutgiftene-\\_ny-undersokelse-viser-at-turister-vil-bidra-1.14677642](https://www.nrk.no/nordland/lofoten-kommune-har-doblet-turistutgiftene-_ny-undersokelse-viser-at-turister-vil-bidra-1.14677642)

being able to spend time in nature is an overarching value for people. They also enjoy the social life, the safety, and the freedom of living in a small community in Northern Norway. It is important for them that these values are maintained. While they are positive to tourism, they are also worried that visitors will change these conditions.

However, people take pride in their destinations and appreciate the vibes that tourism creates. It is evident that destinations, with their local populations, change with increased tourism. Local inhabitants appear to adopt new activities due to the influence of other people. This can be observed in new ways of using nature, new habits of living and new - or revitalisations of – traditions. The boundaries between tourists and locals are becoming blurred. Tourism is all over and transforms us into tourists and into spectators of processes through which places are turned into tourism destinations (Granås, 2014).

### **5.1.3 Tourism is more than an industry**

While it must be recognised that contemporary tourism holds the attributes of an “industry” because it is composed of businesses that create offerings sold to tourists through market mechanisms, it must also be acknowledged that it is unlike other, more conventional industries. For conventional industries, the offerings are brought to the customer, whereas for tourism, the customer is brought to the offerings at a destination, which is composed of sceneries, people, culture and activities of host communities. (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). Tourism takes place in existing social structures with inhabitants, second-home owners, enterprises and industries, private and public services, infrastructure, etc. Within the context of tourism, destinations are places containing local communities that should be analysed and understood as such (Saarinen, 2014).

By looking at the destination through the lens of S-D logic, the destination is a social construction that can be interpreted as a service eco-system, where all its actors and social structures are parts of the constructed destination. The notion of destinations as an eco-system acknowledges the networks of all the people who live, work, and visit an area. These networks are related and interrelated in micro-, meso- and macro contexts within a destination. Actors in different contexts will have different links to other actors and networks. (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). The contexts are shaped by institutions and institutional arrangements that have both material and symbolic elements. They consist of laws, norms,

formal and informal codes-of conduct and moral “rules” that define appropriate behavior among the actors in the eco-system, as well as cultural traditions and “ways of doing things” (Koskela-Huotari, Edvardsson, Jonas, Sörhammar, & Witell, 2016). This means that destinations are dynamic and will be affected by tourism through social interactions and practices. The interactions and interrelationships between these different actors form a specific whole (Boes et al., 2016) where the tourists, and the tourism providers, as well as the local population, government, organisations and environments in the destination are a part of this context.

While tourism has been considered as an industry-centred relationship between visitors and tourism enterprises, the perspective of a destination as an eco-system applies to all the different relationships, or the web of networks within a destination. This change in orientation requires a systemic approach of sustainable destinations, where all actors are considered. Since culture and people are part of the tourism product, tourism cannot simply be read as merely a business proposition. Tourism always has societal impacts (Viken, 2014), and communities will benefit from the positive impacts, but will also live with the negative consequences of tourism development. A holistic and systemic approach to the co-created tourism destination will help to achieve a deeper understanding of tourism destinations, where stakeholder cooperation and collaboration create economic, social and environmental value for all involved (Boes et al., 2016). Hence, sustainable destinations will need to take a community perspective rather than an industry perspective. A service eco-system approach to sustainable destinations implies that strategies and actions for sustainable destination development and marketing should consider all stakeholders – businesses, investors, tourists and tour operators, as well as inhabitants, indigenous people, and other interest groups (Buhalis, 2000). A transformative turn to a S-D logic approach should consider not only the hegemonic but also the challenging and conflicting discourse of a destination.

## **5.2 From growth to sustainability as a parameter**

The second shift from a G-D logic to a S-D logic for sustainable destinations relates to the aggregated theme of co-creation of value. One of the foundational premises of S-D logic is that firms cannot create value, they can only make value propositions. Another premise is that all economic and social actors are resource integrators in a value co-creating process. From these premises, it can be proposed that destination marketing can only make value

propositions. Primarily, value is determined by the multiple actors in a network through the application of knowledge and skills. Hence, to achieve sustainable destinations we should move beyond relationships with tourists and consider the needs of the multiple actors who are co-creating value within a destination (Frow et al, 2014) in order to ensure that co-created values are beneficial for all resource integrators. Such a shift infers that achievement of sustainability in a destination is predicated on a new mindset, where sustainability is prioritized ahead of economic growth. Thus, to measure sustainable pathways for destinations, there is a need for new key performance indicators that put sustainability first.

### **5.2.1 Asymmetrical value co-creation**

In general, tourism is seen as an opportunity for economic growth, employment, and welfare for the people in communities (Abram & Lund, 2016) and is evaluated according to guest nights, revenue, and employment rates. The tourism industry has been characterized by a “growth paradigm” (Viken, 2014), where marketing should result in growing numbers in all parameters. Economic wealth has been – and still is - the main purpose of tourism development. This has resulted in challenging conditions for many destinations, and actions are being taken to move towards sustainable tourism. However, there is increased recognition of the complexity of sustainability in the tourism sector, due to the relational and networked nature of tourism. According to Dredge (2016) the problem is an industry-centric ontology of tourism which maintains a framework of conditions that favor competitiveness, enhance productivity and demand industry performance. To really create a change in the organisation of tourism, we need to rethink our mental models (Dredge, 2016).

According to my findings, tourism development has been favorable for the destinations in my sample. Tourism has developed into an all-year-round economic activity, and new segments have evolved. All segments are looking for adventures in the Arctic, though in different ways. Many places are experiencing an increase in visitors all year round. The increase in tourism has brought many economic benefits to communities. New jobs have occurred, and new tourism entrepreneurs are highly welcomed in the scarcely populated region. The development of tourism services has given assignments to the construction industry, to food producers and others. Many of the facilities that evolve due to increased tourism, benefit the local population as well, and the presence of tourists creates more “liveliness” into the local societies. More intangible aspects, like encounters between visitors and local people have

enhanced the mutual value for both parties. Hence, value is not merely created by and for the tourism industry and the tourists, but distributed in a complex eco-system, where all actors are resource integrators of skills and knowledge, co-creating value, for themselves and for others (Akaka & Vargo, 2015)

However, the value co-creation is not necessarily symmetrical, and not all actors will be treated equally (Frow, McColl Kennedy et al, 2014). The actors, or groups of actors, may differ substantially in their focus of value propositions and their resource offerings. Further, there is a complex set of values sought and values offered by different actors within the eco-systems. Moreover, there are key players upon which an eco-system depends, for without their essential resources other actors would not be able to operate and some actors would be able to negotiate a more favorable value exchange than others.

My findings identified structures of dysfunctional interactions between tourists and the community. These seemed to occur when the behavior of the guests is not in accordance with the locals' norms or rules. Misbehaviors are mainly due to a lack of knowledge and not normally intended. Still, dysfunctional interactions seem to be proportional to visitor volumes. When visitor numbers are low or moderate, people welcome the guests and are eager to help or to talk with them. When visitor numbers increase to a certain extent, people tend to get annoyed by the visitors, or may even develop a hostile attitude towards tourists, which will influence tourists' evaluations of their experiences. Hence, the co-creation of value can be disturbed by negative attitudes from actors within the destination. Another dysfunctional relationship arises when the tourism industry receives economic benefits from tourism, and local communities are left with nothing but costs associated with littering, traffic jams, noise, disturbance of the nature, etc. My findings indicate that traditional indicators of successful destinations will not be able to recognize all the networking interactions at the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels that take place simultaneously in a destination, which can affect the total value creation in destinations.

S-D logic offers a framework for exploring the interaction between multiple actors that directly and indirectly contribute to value creation and the multiplicity of institutions that frame the co-creation of value as well as the evaluation of experiences (Akaka & Vargo, 2015). This implies that value creation does not only take place through the activities of a single actor or between a firm and its customers within an industry, but among a whole host



of private and public actors, interacting in service eco-systems that are influenced by a range of habits, social norms, regulations, practices and legislations (Vargo & Lush, 2016). All managerial and policy decisions are decisions that involve resources, their creation, choice, and integration. When managers and policy makers develop an understanding of the shared values, beliefs, and norms (institutions) of the constellation of resource-integrating actors, it allows decisions and policies to be better informed. Rather than focusing only on dyadic exchange and a narrow view of resources, the larger system of actors and resources (including institutions and institutional arrangements) is considered and understood. An understanding of the complexity of context, which is heavily informed by institutions and institutional arrangements, is a practical way for markets and service eco-systems to be viewed. A service eco-system is sustainable when it is built on the interactions among and between all interacting actors who are able to share their resources in order to achieve sustainable value co-creation processes. (Tregua et al., 2016). A shift towards sustainable destinations according to an S-D logic will imply that social, cultural, and environmental aspects will need to be measured and evaluated at the same level, or even higher, as economic parameters.

### **5.3 From destination marketing to destination stewardship**

The third shift from a G-D logic to an S-D logic for the governance of sustainable destinations is related to the aggregated theme of service-for-service exchange, indicating a transformation from a paradigm of destination marketing to a new paradigm of destination stewardship. The notion of *service-for-service exchange* in service eco-systems informs how large-scale social structures, systems and institutions evolve relative to the micro-, meso- and macro-levels of service exchange contexts, and how these processes directly and indirectly join multiple actors together within and across the levels of service exchange (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). A S-D logic approach indicates that all actors are engaged in the process of benefiting their existence through benefiting the existence of other actors in a service-for-service exchange (Akaka & Vargo, 2015). S-D logic assumes an A2A orientation, where the exchange process is determined through the actors' resources, i.e., knowledge and skills, rather than their role as "provider" or "customer". This means that former positions in the value chain has changed. According to a S-D logic, in order to achieve sustainable destination, I suggest that a reorientation is needed; from a top-down marketing strategy to a bottom-up stewardship approach, where all actors are involved.

### 5.3.1 Disruptions cause change

Within the traditional marketing paradigm of G-D logic, also described as the “neoclassical economic tradition”, the process of exchange is characterized by a value chain of suppliers, producers and end users (Vargo, 2021), with an aim to maximise economic output. Due to general trends of mobility, digitalisation and globalisation, the prior linear value chains have erupted, and the old models of marketing do not work as they used (Dredge, 2016).

Traditionally, marketing tourism destinations has assumed an outside-in perspective, where the destination and its suppliers offer their experiences to their markets, with the premise that value is embedded in the services offered. New trends are creating disruptions in all economic and social spheres – including tourism. Third party booking companies (OTAs) and peer-to-peer booking platforms challenge traditional value chains. Through social medias, travellers have been empowered in influencing other tourists’ travel decisions, resulting in lack of control of visitor flow. (Dredge, 2016). Tourism destinations are no longer defined by their concrete offerings and attractions, but rather by the perception of a destination based on what has been shared in digital social platforms (Egorova, 2013). The emergence of social medias has turned the tables. The power of marketers has decreased, and marketing has become a co-created task where anyone can participate. This has several implications for destinations, whose primary task is to attract visitors.

Additionally, increased mobility has changed the picture of who is a customer and who is a producer, and boundaries between residents and visitors are becoming blurred. Part time workers and volunteers are temporary locals and resource integrators in destinations (Jæger & Mathisen, 2017). “Workation” was a term that appeared, especially during the pandemic, as an alternative way of being a tourist while working.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, residents are increasingly acting as tourists within their own communities in pursuit of their recreational activities. Facilities and natural environments are used by both residents and visitors. The separation between the spheres of tourism and society is less visible. Tourism is all over and transforms us into spectators and actors of processes through which places, regions and countries become tourism destinations (Abram, 2016).

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.visitnorway.com/plan-your-trip/workation/>

### **5.3.2 The shift from marketing to management**

Researchers and consultants have argued that marketing actors, like DMO's, have a responsibility to take on a more holistic approach to tourism marketing, to secure a future that supports the needs of both visitors to and residents in destinations. It is suggested that DMOs shift their position from marketing to management. (Ouimet & Oates, 2019; Peceny et al., 2019; Pedersen, 2020). Instead of working as marketing agents, they are required to engage with processes of creating sustainable destinations (Morgan et al., 2012; Ouimet & Oates, 2019; Peceny et al., 2019). At the same time, they are expected by other actors (enterprises, customers, authorities) to continue with marketing activities as their primary task. This leaves many DMOs in a difficult and hitherto unknown position. Due to the complexity of the relationships between stakeholders and the variety of stakeholders involved in the development, production and consumption of tourism destinations, it has been argued that destinations are some of the most difficult entities to manage and market (Buhalis, 2000). Though it has been long recognized that DMOs do not control the destination product, it is also argued that they cannot even control a destination's image, since the brand of the destination is increasingly shaped by others (Morgan et al., 2012). More recently, the brand of a destination is dependent on the social consensus of the stakeholders and DMOs are urged to take a stronger position in the management of tourism. This implies a focus on involvement of stakeholders (Byrd, 2007), working bottom-up instead of top-down.

My findings indicate that the DMOs are aware of their responsibility to strive for sustainability in all three dimensions; economic, environmental, and social. They acknowledge that tourism is a social affair affecting the local society. Stakeholder involvement is embedded in the program for Sustainable Destinations, and the DMOs are aware that stakeholders should be involved to a greater extent. Stakeholder involvement is applied through meetings with the municipality administration and politicians, surveys, citizen review panels, collaboration in networks and working groups. However, due to scarce resources and lack of a mandate, DMOs are struggling to involve all stakeholders.

In most destinations, the labelling process of Sustainable Destinations is coordinated by a destination organization, which is normally a DMO in the traditional sense though other organisational forms, like project organisations, occur. The same organisations' "raison d'être" is to secure the destination's competitiveness and create economic wealth to the tourism destination that they represent through marketing activities. Destinations meet the

situation with “sustainable marketing” (Font & McCabe, 2017) to steer the visitor flows by communication and active marketing. They try to communicate “how to behave”, they avoid talking about places “off the beaten track” and enhance the places where they want people visit. Even so, a lack of control is evident. As visitors are attracted to “insta-friendly” places, conflicts between different actors occur, and the need for control and stewardship seems to be more urgent than the need for marketing, especially when the actors have different opinions of social conduct, and social consensus is weak.

According to my findings diverse transcendental changes emerging in tourism are challenging the ability to work towards sustainable destinations. Even if sustainability is easily enhanced in destination strategies, managing often conflicting stakeholder’s interests without position, mandate or resources is a challenging task. Mainly, there seems to be an urge for more regulation, more licences, and more engagement from the authorities. But the organisation and methodology of destination management is not totally clear. The need for destination management is addressed, although being labelled as a Sustainable Destination is merely a recognition of the destination’s will to work in a sustainable direction, and not a certification of sustainability. It seems like this soft approach to the label’s significance has to do with responsibilities, mandates, and positions, or rather, the lack of such authority.

S-D logic provides an alternative framework to marketing that considers the co-created, networked nature of marketing. According to S-D logic, marketing is about creating value through exchange, rather than as the techniques for marketing. Value co-creation does not only happen between the provider and the customer, but together with society. The systemic understanding of value co-creation in service eco-systems zooms out from a dyadic and output-centric view of exchange and proposes that the application of specialized skills for the benefit of other actors – is the basis of all exchange. S-D logic removes the distinction between “products” and “services” as well as “producers” and “customers” of value, arguing that all actors are resource integrators that have both the roles of service providers and beneficiaries in service-for-service exchange. These service exchanges connect actors into service eco-systems in which they co-create value for themselves and others. The notion of service-for-service exchange implies that marketing is a co-created task. Within a tourism destination, a brand is determined largely by what the stakeholders want it to be (Vargo & Lusch, 2011). The destination as an eco-system is not a hierarchy where some actors are more important than others, but rather a multiple-actor system where all actors can influence on,

and be influenced by, the contexts of exchange. (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). This implies that all actors are expected to perform a crucial role to make a destination sustainable. A sustainable destination can only be achieved by cooperating and sharing resources in a context where there is mutual social consensus, and where all actors are guided by the applicable social institutional arrangements of a destination. It is important to understand the institutions and institutional arrangements that are shaping behaviors and interactions of visitors, entrepreneurs, enterprises, and residents. A deeper understanding of the service-for-service processes can help steer the destination in a direction that supports the value co-creation processes for the benefits of all stakeholders and allows actors to be involved and empowered. Marketing strategies should be based on local interests, and private business interests should act according to these and strive for local anchoring and partnerships. This requires involvement and engagement from the stakeholders to an extent that is yet not implemented.

### **5.3.3 Marketing and management integrated in destination stewardship**

Scholars and consultants are increasingly advocating for a shift from marketing to management. Following the premises of service-for-service exchange in a multi-actor destination, I argue that destination management is not sufficient for a sustainable turn. Management is about addressing the symptoms and fixing the problems (Pollock, 2019). I suggest that to achieve sustainable destination models, destinations need to shift their mental model from a G-D logic perspective, where destinations can be *managed* into sustainability, to a holistic and systemic approach of stewardship as a way of governance through collaboration or networking. Governance refers to regulation, management or steering when a multitude of actors are normally involved in the process of both decision making and implementation (Viken & Granås, 2016a). A S-D- logic approach to sustainable destinations requires a new philosophy – or a new paradigm - where the marketing *and* management of destinations should be situated within the governance of sustainable community relations, rather than the domain of business interests.

## 6 Conclusion

This thesis focused on the achievement of sustainable destinations according to a systemic approach of destinations as service eco-systems. The study drew on the theories of S-D logic as a framework for understanding destinations as service eco-systems. The literature was much based on Vargo and Lusch, who launched the term S-D logic in 2004 as an alternative framework for marketing to the traditional G-D logic (Vargo & Lush, 2004). Few have studied the implications of sustainable tourism within the framework of S-D logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2017). In this thesis I explored how S-D logic can be used as a framework for sustainable destinations, I argued that sustainable destinations need to shift their mental models. In a G-D logic, destinations can be marketed, developed, and managed into sustainability. A shift in perspective to a S-D logic, however, will imply that destination policy makers need to consider the value co-creating processes and the long-lasting advantages of all the actors that are interacting in an eco-system. This requires a turn to sustainable community governance, where stewardship, collaboration and involvement are integrated key elements.

### 6.1 S-D logic in tourism terms

According to S-D logic, it is not goods and services that represent the source of value and the purpose of exchange. Instead, it is the activities, emanating from knowledge and skills, that people do for themselves and others as well as the activities they want done for them (Vargo & Lusch, 2017). From this perspective, value is not determined by the producer/supplier, but together with both customers as well as all other actors participating in contexts that are shaped by existing and evolving institutions and institutional arrangements which inform the actors' behavior and activities. This context can be described as a service eco-system.

In terms of tourism, an S-D logic approach allows us to interpret the travel destination as a service eco-system. A systemic analysis of the destination as an eco-system will shed light on all actors in the destination and how they participate in the value co-creation of the destination. The actors' experience of the destination as a place to work, live or visit, will depend on the contexts of service-for-service exchange where they are participating, directly or indirectly. In the S-D logic perspective, the destination is not something that is promoted, made, and delivered to the markets by the tourism industry; the visitors are not passive

consumers of tourism experiences; communities and natural surroundings are not merely sceneries; residents are not extras on a stage to be gazed upon. Tourism destinations are neither an expression of local culture, nor an artefact of tourism alone, but an amalgam of multiplicity of influences. As nature, culture and people are part of the tourists' experiences, and vice versa, tourism cannot simply be read as a business proposition with a series of impacts. Tourism is a collaborative achievement which emerges as a co-creational process among diverse actors and materiality. This awareness brings forward that communities must be involved in local decision making about any development that will affect their lives.(Liu, 2003). This calls for co-creation of destinations, where not only the provider and the consumers are involved, but a stronger involvement of the local communities

## **6.2 The impacts of tourism**

The term “destination “ is often imbued with meanings related to consumption for some and income for others, which relates tourism to a neoclassical, industrial paradigm, where the focus is on economic growth (Andersen, 2021). Development and marketing are often “outsourced” to external entrepreneurs, agents and DMOs in different levels (Viken, 2014). However, unlike other industries, tourism takes place in existing contexts of communities and societies (Viken, 2014) and touristic activity influences local societies in a much wider range than any other trade. Tourism is a social and economic activity which impacts on the host communities' identity building and on daily activities of residents as well as physical surroundings. Increased visitor flows have positive impacts like employment, profit, new facilities, infrastructural improvements, trending impulses from the outside world and a general pride in local surroundings. On the other hand, increased visitor flows can cause negative environmental effects, over-tourism and anti-sentiments towards tourists (Oklevik et al., 2018).

These kinds of challenges have been visible for a long time in many tourism destinations. Calls for a more sustainable development of tourism have evolved, and sustainability is increasingly on the agenda in research, politics, and management. In many destinations, Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) are often assumed to act as an agent for sustainable destinations. The risk of this approach is that DMOs “raison d'être” is to favour the destination's competitiveness (Dredge, 2016). As a market-led activity, the tourism industry tends to focus on the economic sustainability and the social and environmental

sustainability may be overseen. Moreover, DMOs lack the authority for implementation of sustainable actions in the destination.

### **6.3 Blurred boundaries between tourism and community**

The context of this study was destinations in Northern Norway. As tourism has grown tremendously in the region, the destinations in Northern Norway are influenced by tourism, to various extent. Due to increased mobility, digitalisation and globalisation, boundaries between residents and visitors are becoming blurred, and the separation between the spheres of tourism and society is less visible. Residents are increasingly acting as tourists within their own communities in pursuit of their recreational activities. Facilities and natural environments are used by both residents and visitors. Even if inhabitants do not interact with tourists, tourism seems to influence on their own perception of the place. Inhabitants become prouder and more conscious of their natural surroundings and the presence of the tourists makes the rural areas more vivid. Further, the branding of destinations is created by multiple actors, who's stories are told and retold on numerous digital platforms. Hence, the brand of the destination is determined by what the stakeholders in the destination want it to be, not by what the industry decide it to be. Destinations are dynamic social constructs where all actors are negotiating their presence and co-creating value for themselves and others.

As an example of this kind of transformation, the evolvement of the Lyngen Alps as a destination for Randonnée skiing (Viken & Granås, 2016b) can be mentioned. Another example is how Lofoten, formerly known as a society characterized by fisheries, is now associated with numerous nature-based activities. The biggest “hype” of adventure tourism to Northern Norway, though, is the hunt for the Northern Lights, which has boomed during the last 15 years. Though the Northern Lights attracts people to the whole region, Tromsø remains the main Northern Lights destination.

### **6.4 Sustainable destinations and communities**

The impacts of tourism has led to increased awareness of visitor management and destination management (Liu, 2003) and DMOs are urged to shift their focus from marketing to management (Morgan, 2012). While visitor management refers to the tools to be used to manage the destination in a sustainable way, destination management refers to the body of



authority that has the power to implement the sustainable actions. The difficulty in this logic is that tourism is not an industry that can be managed in a certain direction on an industry-only basis, as the impacts will affect the whole eco-system of tourism. Knowledge about the tourism eco-system is needed to approach the challenges and opportunities of the future.

## **6.5 Sustainable destinations need to change their mental models**

According to my findings, this thesis suggested that achievement of sustainable destinations necessitates a paradigm shift from the traditional G-D logic to a S-D logic of tourism. The argument follows the three aggregated themes relevant for sustainable destination governance as identified from my data analysis: the destination as an eco-system, co-creation of value in a destination and service-for-service exchange in a destination. These aggregated themes reflect movements, or transformational shifts, from the former G-D logic to an S-D logic of tourism.

First, the notion of the destination as an eco-system implies a shift from an industry centred destination development to a community-based orientation. A community-based orientation allows us to analyse destinations according to actors involved, who influence each other, guided by different norms, rules, and institutional arrangements. Sustainable destinations need to consider the needs of all actors.

Second, the notion that value is co-created in the destination, implies that all economic and social actors act as resource integrators of value creation. In tourism terms this means that tourism providers, visitors *and* the local community are co-creating value for the benefit of themselves and others. A shift towards sustainable destinations will imply that tourism needs to be evaluated not by parameters of growth, which will only benefit the industry, but rather by its actions of sustainability, for the benefit of all actors.

Finally, the theme of service-for-service exchange in destinations means that all the resource-generating actors in a destination are linked together in creating utility. According to S-D logic, the notion of *service-for-service exchange* in service eco-systems informs us how the service exchange processes evolve within the service eco-system and joins actors together within multiple networks. Being a sustainable destination implies a shift from a destination marketing to a destination stewardship orientation, where sustainable strategies of a

destination inform marketing activities. This means that destinations' policy makers need to take on a bottom-up alignment, where all stakeholders are involved.

All three shifts are relevant for the governance of future sustainable destinations. A shift from G-D logic to S-D logic of tourism requires a philosophical and ontological turn, where destination stewardship, rather than destination marketing and management, is integrated in community governance.

## **6.6 Reflections, limitations, and future research**

This study focused on a systemic approach to tourism destinations as eco-systems, which represents a turn from the industrial paradigm of tourism to a perspective where tourism is seen as a social force. The empirical findings were based on 11 interviews with representatives for 9 DMOs in Northern Norway. Residents, representatives from the tourism industry and other industries, associations, visitors, or authority representatives were not represented in the sample of interviewees. I am aware that research of the complex contexts in which multiple stakeholders are interacting and co-creating value in a destination should have explored a broader sample of the range of stakeholders. Due to time limits and the limited frames of this study, I chose to collect my data from a sample of respondents who worked in a DMO in Northern Norway. In their work, they act as intermediators of the tourism as an industry and tourism's role in the community. I also wanted to find if there were any similarities or differences in how sustainable tourism was implemented in the destinations in Northern Norway, and thus if I could somehow draw the lines from the selection of destinations in my study to some general assumptions. Another way of doing this could have been to include a selection of different stakeholders in one or two destination(s) in the form of a case study.

Another limitation was the dimensions of local and global impacts of tourism. The concept of this thesis was the destination as a service eco-system. Accordingly, I chose to explore the local aspects of destinations, without including important global conditions. However, I do not ignore the global impacts of tourism, especially related to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to increasing travelling. Neither do I ignore the importance of technology in the value co-creating processes. As stated in the study, increased mobility, digitalisation, and globalisation are creating disruptions in the markets and in the value co-creation. Future research could

embrace these conditions and explore how these phenomena can be related to sustainability in a S-D logic perspective. Especially, I suggest further research on technologies' role in the service-for-service exchange, and how sustainability can be achieved on local and global levels, within the field of Smart destinations (Boes et al., 2016; Jovicic, 2019).

Despite the ongoing discourse on sustainable tourism, tourism has continued to grow. There are many cases worldwide of destinations where improper planning, marketing, and management of tourism lead to destruction of the very resources that are the foundation of tourism in an area. Numerous voices claim that tourism as it is currently practiced is highly irresponsible and heading towards a breakdown (Pollock, 2019). Saarinen (2013) and others argue that there is a need for a relocation, or a redefinition, of tourism, where tourism is seen as a tool for sustainable place making (Croce, 2018; Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Saarinen, 2013). In recent years, calls for going *beyond sustainability* have been raised. A turn that is increasingly supported, is the *regenerative* turn, which argues that sustainable growth is an incompatible concept. Rather than working towards sustainability, which can be criticized as a connotation for “sustaining” tourism, tourism should work to make things better (McEnhill et al., 2020; Pollock, 2019). The new suggested paradigm aims at a focus where the basic question should not be how to get more tourists, but rather *why we need tourism* and *what tourism can do for the local community* (Murphy, 2019). A reorientation like this is depended on a philosophical mindset that sets the priorities and finds new models for governance of the destination, where tourism is seen as a means for creating sustainable communities, that benefits both visitors and locals (Font & Serra, 2017; Liu, 2003; Morgan et al., 2012). This mindset requires that researchers and the tourism industry adopt a different approach, where tourism is seen as a social practice rather than as a business (Viken & Granås, 2016b). The paradigm of S-D logic addresses to many of these issues. A deeper exploration of how S-D logic can be applied to regenerative tourism would be an interesting assignment in the future.

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# **Appendix A: Interview guide (translated version)**

## **Your organisation**

- What is your position in your organisation?
- How many employees are working in your organisation?

## **The destination and the community**

- In general, how will you describe the attitude towards tourism and tourists among the residents, the local authorities and other business actors in your destination?
- Where are the meeting points between residents and visitors in your destination and how would you characterize the encounters between residents and visitors?
- Which values, norms, activities or traditions are highly valued or are especially important for the residents who live in your destination?

## **The tourists**

- In general, which segments of tourists are visiting your destination today (eventually, before the COVID-19 pandemic)? How are the visitor flows distributed according to the seasons?
- Did the segments of tourists or the characteristics of tourism changed during the last years (with disregards to the two years of travel restrictions caused by COVID-19)?
- How do the visitors relate to Norwegian laws and rules or other guidelines, restrictions, or codes of conduct in the destination where you work?
- Are there any problematic or challenging issues regarding tourism in the destination or region where you work?
- Are there any conflicting situations or circumstances between tourists and residents in your destination or in the surrounding regions? Why do such conflicts occur?

## **Sustainable tourism**

- In your opinion, what is sustainable tourism?
- How does your organisation work with sustainable tourism development?
- Who are involved/not involved in the development of sustainable tourism in your destination?
- How has sustainability affected your work of destination marketing?
- In your opinion, what will be the most important role for your organisation in the future?

## **Appendix B: Letter of consent**

### **Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt:**

### **Masteroppgave i Master of Tourism ved UiT, vår 2022**

#### **Bakgrunn og formål**

Prosjektet er min masteroppgave i programmet Master of Tourism ved UiT, Norges Arktiske Universitet.

Formålet med oppgaven er å undersøke hvordan man kan utvikle bærekraftige destinasjoner ved en systemisk tilnærming til destinasjonen som et økosystem, hvor alle aktører som opererer innenfor denne konteksten anses som samskapende aktører av gjestenes reiselivsopplevelser

#### **Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?**

Jeg ønsker å intervju personer som jobber i destinasjonsselskap eller med destinasjonsledelse i Nord-Norge.

#### **Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?**

Intervjuet gjennomføres hovedsakelig på Teams, dersom det ikke lar seg gjøre å møtes fysisk. Samtalene vil ha en varighet på ca 1 time og vil omhandle følgende tema:

- Reiselivsnæringen og øvrig næringsliv i din destinasjon
- Hvordan fungerer samspillet mellom turister og lokalsamfunn og mellom turistnæringen og andre næringer/interessenter?
- Destinasjonens bærekraftsarbeid
- Destinasjonens rolle i et bærekraftsperspektiv

Jeg vil benytte lydopptak og notater under intervjuet.

#### **Det er frivillig å delta**

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet.

Det vil ikke få noen negative konsekvenser for deg dersom du ikke vil delta eller om du senere skulle velge å trekke deg.

## **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

Jeg vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene som er beskrevet i dette skrivet. Jeg vil behandle opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernreglementet. All data vil oppbevares på passord beskyttet datamaskin og vil kun være tilgjengelige for meg og min veileder. Personopplysninger vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i masteroppgaven, men yrket vil komme fram i publikasjonen og sitater fra intervjuet kan bli gjengitt. På denne måten kan du identifiseres indirekte.

## **Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?**

Opplysningene anonymiseres når oppgaven er godkjent i løpet av 2022.

## **Dine rettigheter**

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

## **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra UiT, Norges Arktiske Universitet, har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS - vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernreglementet.

## Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Hilde Bjørkli – tel: 901 79 246 (Masterstudent)

- Bård Tronvoll – tel: 907 85 568 (Veileder)

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på e-post: [personverntjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17

Med vennlig hilsen

Bård Tronvoll  
Prosjektansvarlig, veileder

Hilde Bjørkli  
Student

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## Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om masteroppgaven (tittel) og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål rundt min rolle som informant.

Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- at jeg kan identifiseres indirekte i publikasjonen

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles fram til prosjektet er avsluttet

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

