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Potentials and barriers of cycling tourism as a tool for regional development:

The case study of Eurovelo1 in the region of Tromsø and Finnmark

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1 Abstract

This project explores the potentials and barriers of cycling tourism in the Arctic region of Tromsø and Finnmark. The objective is to present different perspectives in relation to a future development of cycling tourism in the area: the cycling tourist/users perspective, tourism stakeholders and administrators. To achieve these objectives three main methods have been employed: a qualitative survey to gather users' perceptions, interviews to shed light on stakeholders perspectives and finally, sensory ethnographic work which led to an embodied understanding of the cycling experience on the EuroVelo 1 route which connects Tromsø with Nordkapp. The research engages with experience evaluation theories and multidimensionality of tourist experience. Finally, the intention is to add value to the ongoing improvements of the route EuroVelo1 in the Arctic region with the aims to understand users' perspectives and needs for the development of a more decisive cycling tourism strategy.

2 Introduction

In a world where ecological issues extend beyond traditional political boundaries, it is necessary to reassess our approaches to governance and decision-making, in particular in the field of management of cities and territories. With more than half of the world population living in an urban context and an expected 70% up to 2050 (WorldBank, April 2023) it is necessary to re-think the way we live in cities, as well as our general lifestyle which is creating ecological challenges all over the world. The constant population growth poses important challenges, not only for ecological matters but also regarding social inequalities and economic injustices (Silva, 2020:5).

Urban growth, economic and transport development lead at the same time to an increase of mobility, either of people or goods, and to bring to large scale the practice of tourism which nowadays, together with the transport industry, represents the 5th most polluting activity in the world (ClimateTrade, 2023). It is in the continuous growth of movement and travels that the double face of tourism appears. On the one hand tourism promotes prosperity, employment, and development of economy and infrastructure (Urry, 1995:138) and it is widely associated with the concept of “growth”. On the other hand it has also led to deforestation, destruction of

fauna and flora, and damage to local cultures and traditional values by promoting uniformity and minimising diversity; the tourism practice it has also been lead by consumerism either related to local food, goods, experiences and generally places (Urry, 1995:138).

In 1987, increasing worries about how our lifestyles and the way we move and transport impact dwindling world resources brought the World Commission on Environment and Development to publish a report where the terms “sustainable development” and “sustainability” appeared for the first time (Poppel, 2018:309).

Nowadays, these terms have become common vocabulary for political declarations, public documents and company strategies worldwide regarding economic, social and environmental development both nationally and internationally (Ibid). In 1992 another big step was taken. The Agenda 21 agreement (Local Agenda 21 - LA21) started putting the focus on local governments, in particular municipalities, in achieving sustainable development through the involvement of local communities in decision-making, policy-formation and practical action processes (Silva, 2020:1-3).

In order to understand what type of implementation was required from local government and institutions it is necessary to define what sustainable means. In this thesis, I use the same definition used by the World Commission in 1987, as it is still valid today:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987, Chapter 2.IV.1, 40).

While this definition has been employed in many different fields, this study focuses on the industry of tourism and in particular on a niche area of sustainable tourism in one of the areas most critically affected by environmental changes: the Arctic.

2.1 The Arctic and the changing environment

When it comes to addressing the consequences of climate change, the Arctic is often seen as particularly vulnerable. In this region, continuous temperature rises are three times the global annual average, leading to several changes in ice and snow levels, length of seasons and average seasonal temperatures. (Arctic Council, 2021; Marshall, 2018:198) While the causes of climate

change in the region may in part be caused locally, it is undeniable that global transport, particularly related to tourism, has a much more significant impact in this region. An increasing number of studies have already demonstrated the human influence on the hydrological cycle in the Arctic and the increased warmth since the middle of the twentieth century (Marshall, 2018:206) - tendencies which will become even stronger in the future (Ibid:207).

In 1989, in Rovaniemi (Finland), an international cooperation was initiated to protect the Arctic environment and indigenous people that led to the creation of the Arctic Council (Poppel, 2018:311). The creation of an Arctic sustainable development program was a political opportunity to protect and enhance the environment and the economies (Ibid:312) but it ended up being a mere political strategy where no real and detailed strategies/policies were elaborated (Ibid:317) or at least not in a common ground. In effect the eight members of the Arctic council have each developed their own policies with different methodologies, objectives and priorities, thus undermining the initial unifying goal of the Arctic Council (Ibid:318).

Since 2005, public attention to climate change and the fear of disappearing polar species and landscapes has brought, not only the interests of researchers, but also economic interests and tourism flows. Researchers have described *Polar Tourism*, as a tendency to seek for alternative and remote destinations (Stewart, 2018:363). Arctic has been marketed and communicated for tourists through tropes the of “wild” and “untouched”, where nature plays a fundamental role. There is even talk about “Arctic magic”! Landscapes, sea and fjords that are wrapped in a “veil” of enchantment” (Guneriussen, 2012:235). The combination of adjectives such as “white”, “vast”, “wild” and “magnificent” (Ibid: 241) seem to fit the description of Arctic landscapes perfectly. For this reason, they should be the object of particular attention and awe (Guneriussen,2012:241). For the tourism industry, the Arctic is now associated with nature, landscapes and natural phenomena like the northern lights, but also with strong emotions associated with winter tourism in the Arctic. In addition, Arctic nature is associated with a kind of religious idea or “spiritual powers” (Guneriussen, 2012:243), sensations, intense experiences, impact and adrenaline kicks (Ibid). The Arctic becomes an escape from the reality of urban contexts where nature tends to be the exception and everyday routine does not give rise to strong emotions.

2.2 Slow Travel: A Win-Win Solution for Tourism and Climate

Faced with the dual ecological and climate crises, local tourism industries and policy bodies must address difficult questions like "how is it possible to navigate the complexities of mobilities in tourism industries while addressing ecological issues?", and "how can governance mechanisms prioritise ecological well-being alongside human needs?"

A precise answer that may be given to these questions is *slowness* identified, with Paolo Pileri's words (2021:V) *as the tool that has much to teach about urban practice and planning*. In the last century travel has become faster and faster, not allowing people to have time to do other things and instead filling their time with more and more travel experiences (Dickinson, 2012:69). In terms of sustainability, however, reducing travelling slowly is equal to using less energy and demanding less from the environment. (Ibid:70). Often, the easiest modes of tourism access are car use and flying compared to slow travel modes, simply because the physical structures that have evolved together with tourism make flying and driving the easiest and most obvious choice (Ibid:62). But it has not always been like this.

Into the world of walking, which dominated for centuries, the bicycle came at the end of the 19th century as a revolution in mobility patterns. It was not only used for daily errands but also recreationally. Second, only to the railway network, the bicycle played an important role in long-distance mobility, allowing people to travel to farther destinations (Dickinson, 2012:135). However, it didn't take long before the advance of technology and the advent of cars and rural buses signalling the decline of the bicycle in the 20th century (Ibid:136). The succession of events just described refers only to European countries and does not describe the situation of other realities. In the 21st century it is mainly in France and Austria where people are still using bicycles mainly for recreational use whereas all over the world governments invest heavily in car provision for private use and highways (Dickinson, 2012:145-146).

The role of slow travel, in this context, connected with the choice of the means of transportation when it comes to holidays, switches to an identity matter. Both Dickinson (2012:70) and Urry (1995:169) show how modes of transport define the self-identity of the traveller and how it is linked to social status and different narratives of oneself. But not enough studies have been undertaken on the role of cycling in the tourism industry. Through this thesis, I hope to deepen insights on this matter, in order to better understand cycling and its link to climate change and social challenges in the Arctic region, and why it is introduced as a valid alternative for sustainable regional development.

2.3 The Health and Environmental Benefits of Cycling Tourism

Cycling tourism is here presented as the actual act of cycling, as the movement, as part of the tourist experience which includes riding from place to place, where the cycling action is the main motivation pursued during holidays (Dikinson;2012:137). Despite this definition, there are many discrepancies and differences between them since the scale and the scope of the holiday is difficult to determine (Ibid:138). The one considered for the purpose of my research is the one addressed by Ritchie quoted in Ciascai (2022:3) where the cycling tourist is “the person who is away from their hometown or country for a period of not less than 24 h or one night, for the purpose of a vacation or holiday, and for whom using a bicycle as a mode of transport during this time away is an integral part of their holiday or vacation. This vacation may be independently organised or part of a commercial tour and may include the use of transport support services and any type of formal and/or informal accommodation”.

The bicycle as a means of transport for holidays not only highlights the idea of the concept of *slowness* but also allows us to tackle two main problems of society today: the environmental issues previously mentioned and health issues, in particular, related to sedentarism and lack of exercise in everyday life. Walking, together with cycling, are key means of transportation and enable engagement in regular physical activity on a daily basis (WHO, 2018:7). The two issues, the environmental and the one related to public health are intertwined as here mentioned:

“Regular physical activity is proven to help prevent and treat noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and breast and colon cancer. It also helps to prevent hypertension, overweight and obesity and can improve mental health, quality of life and well-being. In addition to the multiple health benefits of physical activity, societies that are more active can generate additional returns on investment including a reduced use of fossil fuels, cleaner air and less congested, safer roads. These outcomes are interconnected with achieving the shared goals, political priorities and ambition of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.” (WHO, 2018:6)

The Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, a modern version of what was started in 1987 by the WCED, provides a series of systems-based approaches, guidelines and recommendations to follow in order to address environmental and health issues without presenting a singular policy solution. Considering the complexity and the multifaceted elements contributing to these issues making a single-solution approach impossible (WHO, 2018:8). One of those guidelines

highlights the necessity of all stakeholders to promote and implement actions that increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour considering the associated benefits to all sectors, at all levels (WHO, 2018:43). This leads to an obvious conclusion that the promotion of active holidays such as cycling tourism is an efficient way to tackle public health issues, make the tourism industry more sustainable, contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emission and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (WHO, 2018:51; Petrescu, p46)

The economic, social, and environmental values of bicycle tourism and leisure cycling have led policymakers to implement a series of actions such as financing, planning, and developing bicycle-related infrastructure in order to promote tourism (Chang-Fei, 2014:844) The level of implementation can vary from regional, national and pan-european and has been received, unevenly throughout the European continent. The ideal situation would see central and local governments cooperating and working together to promote sustainable development in the form of cycling tourism as a fitness activity, sport and recreational activity thanks to the development of bicycle-friendly infrastructure and a dense network of bicycle trails at different geographical levels, from regional to national (Ibid:845).

An example of a well-developed cycling tourism strategy is Germany. Thanks to a consistent communication model and a capillary cycling network that ensures safety, visitors are growing year by year (ADFC 2019). Pileri (2021:132) highlights how the success of Germany's strategy is due to the structural and infrastructural investments allocated by policymakers. Only after these goals are achieved is touristic marketing put into place. As a result, 84% of cycling tourists in Germany organise their holidays without the support of any tour operator. The success of this national and regional approach comes from the fact that first, the infrastructure has been developed, and *then* advertised - not the other way around.

The regional planning process in cycling tourism is directly addressed by The Cumberland County Bike Trail Study (2000) with a list of concrete actions to put into place such with different elements as the creation of alternative bicycle routes, clean roads, low traffic for a more safe experience, the availability of grocery stores, restaurants, camping facilities along the route, the presence of an easy to understand info displays and maps are just some of the most recommended (Chang-Fei, 2014:846). All these listed elements are also strictly linked with economic and social benefits for local residents while having a reduced ecological impact,

for this reason, it is extremely important to involve local stakeholders in the design of the tourist destination since they can contribute with ideas and products that might generate benefits both for the tourists and for the destination and the community living and working there (Kovacic,2022:11). Literature review in this matter has highlighted the lack of studies related to the co-design or intervention of local stakeholders and residents of the region. The host community plays a fundamental role in regional cycling tourism development, either offering services to cycling tourists or contributing to the integral quality of a destination's offering and the tourists' experience (Kovacic, 2022:9) that nowadays tourists call “authenticity” and they are eager to seek when it comes to travel experience.

Finally, the development of cycling tourism in a regional level is not only helpful for demassification of tourism flows, reducing gas emissions and overall improving public health but it is also directly linked with the progress related with the SDG 8 which refers to *Decent work and economic growth* and locate the promotion of sustainable tourism as a tool to create new jobs and boost local culture and products. (WHO, 2018:51)

2.4 Eurovelo cycling network and AtlanticOnBike

It has explored earlier the importance of local policy-making in relation with the promotion of cycling tourism but it seems necessary also to introduce the pan-European entity, The European Cycling Federation (ECF) that has elaborated The EuroVelo network, with the aim of promoting cycling tourism for sustainable mobility, public well-being, and economic development (European Cyclists' Federation, 2009). This extensive cycle network spans across Europe and plays a fundamental role in facilitating sustainable and leisure travel experiences.

EuroVelo consists of 17 long-distance cycling routes, covering an impressive total of 90,000 kilometres, when complete. (European Cyclists' Federation, 2022). Approximately 66,000 kilometres of these routes are already established on the ground and follow best practice guidelines like the emblematic signage and a series of attributes that are guaranteed by the standards of Eurovelo. The network is continuously evolving and it integrates already existing infrastructure at a local and national level with a bigger vision extended throughout the whole European continent. The extensive network and most importantly the amount of data collected throughout the years, has led ECF to elaborate a realistic estimation of yearly annual revenues generated by cycling tourism which is estimated to be approximately 5 billion euros. This

projection includes 12.5 million holidaymakers spending around 4.4 billion euros, as well as 33.3 million day trips contributing 0.54 billion euros, representing gross revenues (European Cyclists' Federation, 2009).

The major challenge for the EuroVelo network remains securing the necessary funding to support the delivery and maintenance of this expansive continental slow travel tourism network. Policymakers and stakeholders must work together to overcome this obstacle and fully realise the potential of EuroVelo (Dickinson, 2012:145-146). In the majority of the cases ECF has a so-called NECC which stands for National EuroVelo Coordination Centre which corresponds to those who are responsible for the design and build of cycle routes and networks. In the specific Norwegian case the assigned NECC is Statens Vegvesen which is located in the roads and highways department and their primary responsibility is to provide for utility transport (Dickinson, 2012:143-144). It is extremely rare that is existing a coordinating group that is mainly focus on cycling.

In Norway it is possible to enjoy the standard of Eurovelo in three routes but the focus of this research is going to put the attention on the Atlantic Coast Route that from now on will be indicated as EV1 (EuroVelo1). This particular route stretches for 10,674km of which 2675km are in Norway (EuroVelo 1 – Transnational Route Evaluation Report and Action Plan 2023) and for this particular study only the last 584 km (or first, depending from which direction it is crossed) that connects the city of Tromsø with the North Cape, crossing the remote county in the Arctic region of Troms og Finnmark will be taken into account and explored.

Earlier it was mentioned that only cooperation between policy makers and stakeholders can bring the development of EuroVelo to the next level and the project AtlanticOnBike is a clear example of it. The joint research and collaboration led the 6 countries involved to deploy the same survey along the route to assess the level of the development and in the future equalise services, signage and generally EuroVelo standards through all the length.

Once framed the benefits of cycling tourism related to economic, social and environmental matters (Ciascai, 2) as well as introduced the intergovernmental role that ECF and EuroVelo play in the achievement of sustainable development goals connected with in with environmental protection, public health and regional economic growth and how these benefits can improve local communities in remote regions, it seems appropriate to finally introduce the research questions that will be tackled in the study case.

2.5 Research Questions

Research question: Which are the potentials and barriers for cycling tourism in the region/county of Troms and Finnmark for a sustainable regional development both from the perspective of users, local and national stakeholders and European organisations?

Sub-questions:

1. Which factors influence the development of cycling tourism in the region?
2. What are the impressions/perceptions of the cycling tourists in the region?
3. Which role the route of EV1 plays in the region for a more sustainable development of it?

From literature reviews to interviews to content analysis, this research brings together a variety of different methods that are estimated to be the most appropriate to gather the data necessary to answer the above research questions and produce new knowledge on the case study chosen. The research focused on understanding the overall travel experience of cycling tourists in particular through expressing the satisfaction degree towards certain destination attributes and on understanding stakeholder reception of the cycling tourism market in the region of Tromsø and Finnmark. In order to attempt filling the literature gap in the specific case study related to the 584 km connecting the city of Tromsø with the landmark of North Cape, an online survey has been conducted to cycling tourists that experienced them and interviews have been held with relevant stakeholders.

In the first place the research will address the necessity of understanding the dimensions of the tourist experience of a better approach to urban planning regional urban planning in relation with cycling tourism; In a second moment, the methodological approach is explained in order to be able to analyse the data gathered through its application. Right after the data gathered through the survey, interviews and sensory entographic method will be analysed. Finally, preliminary conclusions will be drawn together with the limitations of the research and it will highlight the wide possibility for a deeper and much needed investigation on the topic.

3 Theoretical Framework

The theory section of the project is based, having the definition of cycling tourism and related benefits for regional planning as background, on experience evaluation theories and the multidimensionality of the tourist experience. This last concept is used to evaluate attributes allocated to the EuroVelo cycling routes. Next, I look at the multidimensionality of the tourist experience through Cutler (2010) and Agapito (2013) lenses, together with social practices perspectives from Dickinson (2012) and the tourist experience model that stand as fundamentals for the application of the methods in order to support my research questions.

The novelty of tourism experience in the research field arose in the second half of the 20th century (Culter, 2010:4) when tourism started becoming mass tourism. If initially it was only theorised, it is only at the end of the same century that the first based approaches of tourism experience appear in order to understand what tourists were experiencing through diaries and interviews (Ibid). At that time mainly three dominant perspectives were used: the definitional approach, the post-hoc satisfaction approach, and the immediate approach. While the first had a limited use in research, the second approach is the one initially adopted by the researcher and found the most relevant since it examines motivation and satisfaction degrees and overall assess the experience even after a distant time from the very experience. The third approach, the immediate one, “examines the nature of on-site real-time” and it has been the strategy used by AtlanticOnBikes were cyclist, during their trip, were invited in dedicated corner, called the Cyclist Corner, “with chairs, table, free coffee, flyers, and a Cyclist Diary” where they could leave their thoughts about their experiences, on-site. The idea recalls the Norwegian tradition, “hyttebok” (Cabin book) and it has been translated to the cycling tourism field (ECF, Work Package 6).

Literature reviews tell us that experience is much more than a three separate moments of experience and instead it reflects the complexity of our society and the human being itself and uses a more multisensory approach, considering that also humans experience their everyday life through the lenses of different senses (Agapito, 2013:62). The influence of psychology in the field of tourist experience has also brought to elaborate that we are not only experiencing with senses but we are also made of our experiences, values, believes that make us live the

world in different ways (Agapito, 2013:63) so that the experiences are not only multisensory but also multidisciplinary. A great visualisation of this is the tourist experience conceptual model of influences and outcomes (Cutler, 2010:8) that clearly shows how little the “travel experience” itself, on-site, could tell about the actual experience and how the new theoretical approaches allow a broader understanding of it.

3.1 The influential realm

When it comes to urban and regional planning in the field of tourist experience, the influential realm constitutes all the *physical aspects, social aspects, products and services*(Cutler, 2010:9). These factors easily translate to what could be, for example, from the perspective of policy-makers, a better provision of services related to mere infrastructures like segregated cycling paths, the presence of fountains, rest areas or shelters etc. But it also translates to geographical features, such as the beautiful sceneries can be found in Norwegian territories or the maintenance of cleanliness and tidiness and generally what refers to the aesthetics of an environment (Ibid, 10). In front of such a structural element, It appears clearly the importance of influencing these elements from local, regional or national governments as well as stakeholders providing services related to the tourist experience.

It is also thought that providing the same services, for example segregated cycling paths, will not generate the same experience outcome to all the tourists because of another extremely important element of the tourist experience: the personal realm (Cutler, 2010:11). In the provided example, for a person coming from Denmark or Netherlands where exists a long tradition of cycling infrastructures and better know-how, the experience of it might not be perceived as satisfactory as someone who comes from a place where there is a lack of segregated cycling infrastructures.

3.2 The personal realm

The personal realm acknowledges the multidimensional way humans experience the surrounding environment. It is divided into three moments that can influence the overall travel outcome: the moment previous to the on-site travel experience where elements such as motivation and expectations are created; the moment during which the travel experience is made where elements such as knowledge, emotions, self-identity, memory and perception play

an extremely important role (Cutler, 2010:9). For example, the researcher acknowledges as a woman the impact that hormone cycles have on her emotional wellbeing and how depending on that even her personal travel experience could be somehow different. Finally, the last moment is related to the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the experience that can also vary and change with the time. A sense of what this last elements is, it can be found in these words of the author Agapito (2013:67):

“After returning home, these perceptual images can be modified, since stories are created, told and compared with those of family, friends and conveyed by other sources of information, such as advertising, websites or social networks. This is a dynamic process leading to long-term satisfaction and loyalty. In fact, many tourists continue to enjoy the pleasure of their experience”

The travel experience does not end with the travel itself, it continues with the memory journey and it can also be influenced by later reflection and introspections as well as media.

3.3 A Social Practice perspective

The complexity of the human being and human perception is amplified by the virtual reality and social media, which nowadays can not be excluded from any analysis when it comes to social behaviour (Urry, 1995:130) Not only, the capitalist approach and the consumption attitude towards every aspect of our lives couldn't save the sustainable tourism industry. The social practice perspective comes in handy since it engages not anymore with the individual choice but on the collective practice (Dickinson, 2012:47). The research does not focus directly on what motivates travellers, but on how the travel is experienced and therefore it seems logical to acknowledge the relationship between identity and consumption that considers how tourism travel choices are a reflection of identities which individuals wish to project. (Ibid:48)

The innovation of social practices perspective, related with regional planning, is questioning the ‘consumption as choice’, which means questioning the choice of slow travel as a result of rational decision based on cost-efficient considerations. When it comes to choices related to slow travel different criteria get involved such as the ethical choice connected to the commitment to society and the choices based on preferred mobility means of transport. (Dickinson, 2012:49)

In summary, the social practice approach connects the individual perspective with the structures available in society. These structures can vary from physical transport infrastructure to social rules which reproduce particular social practices (Dickinson, 2012:58). Finally it does not affirm that individuals have are not ability to choose but it only reaffirms that this ability is delineated by social rules and practices available (Ibid). This last element it is crucial to understand the importance of regional planning practices to tackle local and global challenges such as global warming and mass tourism.

These former categories or characteristics are relevant to analyse the travel experiences of cycling tourists on the EuroVelo1 route between Tromsø and Nordkapp and are also fundamentals to introduce the methodological tools used to respond to the main research questions.

4 Methods

In order to find answers to the research questions, it is found necessary using different methods. Since it seems necessary to collect data first-hand and the multiplicity of methods apt to achieve this goal, it has been estimated to use the methods that more often are used in the field of urban planning: surveys, interview and field observation (Li, 2022:54).

It has been experimented with the application of different methods for each perspective used: Interviews for institutions and stakeholders, a survey for cyclist travel experience and ethnographic work/field work for the researcher perspective of it. The fundamental process of data collecting provides the researcher the dataset to analyse and provide possible answers to the research questions. In the case study analysed, it has been necessary to create the whole data set including both quantitative and qualitative data (Li, 2022 :38).

As mentioned previously, there is a lack of data related to the study since it is quite a new research field, above all the one related to cycling tourism, yet an economically underrated tourist experience. The importance of collecting primary data has the advantage of revealing a deeper connection between variables as well, the process itself often helps the researcher to connect deeply with the project (Li, 2022:54).

4.1 Ethics

The acquisition of data through the different methods has been following legal and ethical aspects. Starting from the survey, the respondents have been informed in the anonymity of the recollection of the data, in effect no recollection of email was established and no question has been asked so that the answer could identify directly the surveyed. Therefore the thesis does not contain any personal or confidential information, names or references to individuals.

The interviews have been held with the consent of the interviewee and in the fase of “cleaning” in the transcription, all the information regarding individuals have been omitted to assure the anonymity of the data collected. Interviewees agreed ahead in sharing the answers given since they don’t contain any confidential information. Finally, the content of the thesis does not contain any document, material or information protected by copyright, the main aim of the researcher has been to create her own dataset and where it was not possible, the intellectual property has been acknowledged through the corresponding reference to it.

4.2 Survey

Questionnaire surveys are a systematic method of collecting statistical empirical data. In order to conduct the survey and gather data research, it is necessary to elaborate a map of concepts and definitions that connect every question to the theoretical framework. The key concept map will help identify the element needed to answer the research questions (Li,2022:55). For this reason a survey guide has been elaborated and attached in the annex.

Using a surveying software resulted to be the most practical way to design the survey in order to simplify and speed the process since online surveys are the most common, due to advances in technology and internet. The application used for its elaboration is Google Forms

(Li,2022:58). Thanks to the extensive use and distribution of social medias and app, I used Facebook as a main tool of distribution, in particular cycling traveller groups which allows the researcher to save time and target qualified respondents (Li, 2022:57-58). This procedural process would lead to get reliable and valid answers. Nevertheless, the mere fact of targeting possibly interested respondents is not connected to their willingness to participate in it (Ibid).

When it comes to the elaboration of the questions, the survey has a mix of open-ended and closed ended questions. Concerning the open-ended questions, it has been used where the answer expected is short (i.e. Nationality and time of the year when the cycling trip has been experienced), except for the final one (“Feel free to add any other consideration it has not being taken into account in the survey”) where the respondents are asked to add any other detail they find necessary to share that was not included in the survey.

When it comes to the close-ended questions, they have been designed with multiple choice option or, when it comes to share their degree of satisfaction, with Likert Scale where their preferences are ranked with a scale of agreement that goes from the value 1 (generally associated with the lowest grade, for example “very dissatisfied”) to the value 5 (associated to the highest possible experience such as “extremely satisfied”). The Likert Scale has been selected in between the different ones such as Guttman scale or Thurstone since it was found to be more appropriate to understand people's experience and memory about their trip and for having an extensive use in planning and related research (Li,2022:56).

The following methods presented have been chosen on the basis that, in the words of W. Miller (1999:89) “*Seeing, listening, and touching are primary sources of information about the world*”. The interviews for stakeholders have represented a valuable way to gather scientific knowledge through the interexchange and co-creation of verbal viewpoint, together with the field work that allowed to use the researcher’s senses to be the tool for information recollection (Ibid).

4.3 Interviews

It becomes understandable that there are no general standards or procedures and strict rules on how to apply the interview method (Brinkman, 2015:173), after all, as affirms Muller (1999:105) “There is no one way of doing depth interviews. It is a craft”. Despite that, the researcher has followed three specific phases: the preparation and elaboration of a script to follow, or interview guide, running the interview and finally the transcription process.

The research interview presents itself as an interpersonal situation, as a sort of conversation between two persons about a theme of mutual interest (Brinkman, 2015:149). The conversational character of the interview doesn't come associated with spontaneity, instead it requires preparation and stage setting with an appropriate elaboration of an interview guide. (Ibid)

During the process of elaboration of the script, considering the will to have a semistructured type of interview, the guide is divided by topics that want to be covered and with suggested questions (Brinkman, 2015:156). The questions follow a conversational flow where first the interviewee is asked to introduce himself and explain what he does and how his/her work is related to the topic considered. It is a strategy to make the interviewee comfortable, talking about himself. Once the trust and intimacy in the conversation increase, more difficult and relational questions are asked (Miller, 1999:105). In order to be able to find answers to the research questions, the interview guide has been elaborated differently depending on the interviewee but with keeping in mind the coverage of the same topics. As per the survey, the last question is an invitation to add whatever information is considered relevant and it has not been touched during the conversation.

The most adequate approach for the research is found in the use of a semistructured interview which allows to follow a sequence of questions prepared and at the same time provides flexibility, depending on the answers given (Brinkman, 2015:150). In the interviewing process, once immersed in the real situation, it has happened that the interviewer instead of focusing the attention on the interview guide, has been asking different questions to deepen the knowledge from the answer received (Brinkman, 2015:165).

Another critical aspect of the interviewing process lies on the acknowledgement of the issue related with the language used, despite english being a vehicular language it is not exempted to misunderstanding since it is a second language for the interviewer (Brinkman, 2015:167). Most

probably formulating and speaking the language of the interviewee would have put the person in a more comfortable situation. (Ibid)

Finally the researcher proceeds with the transcription process, which involves the process of translating from oral discourse to written language. It is recognised as a limit to this process since what is translated into words can never capture the reality and the non-verbal language involved during the interview (Miller, 1999:106). As per the choice of the interview as a method, also the transcription style can vary. Approaches are numerous and the researcher decided also on this occasion to seek help in the advances of technology, since actual transcription can approximately take between 4 to 6 hours for every 1 hour of interview (Ibid). The use of Word - Dictate as part of the Office 365 package allowed the researcher to have the transcription in the first place, afterwards a work of revision and correction has been done, re-listening to all the audios and correcting the missing elements or misspelt ones. The interview has been “cleaned up” and formalised, without including pauses, emotional expressions or intonations, since they don’t seem to be relevant for the research (Ibid).

Transcriptions of the interviews have been included and reported in the analysis chapter.

4.4 Sensory ethnographic observation

When it comes to engaging with senses and research on users' experiences in the field of regional planning, and in particular when it comes to cycling tourism, it is obvious to use ethnographic observation as a method for deepening the researcher's understanding of the topic. In recent literature Pink (2022:5) elaborates better the meaning of sensory ethnography practice that engages with the relationships between memory and the senses.

Since the thesis investigates the aspect of cycling tourism that refers directly to the study of flows, movements and in particular cycling tourism experiences, it feels necessary to use, as well, mobile methods to investigate (Büscher et al. 2010; Fincham et al. 2010 quoted in Buscher,2020:212).

The sensory ethnography is based on experiencing, knowing and emplacing the body together with multisensorial embodied engagements with others (Pink, 2022:4) Experiencing the route from Tromsø to Nordkapp from the researcher perspective represents a clear example of applied

sensory ethnography. The researcher moved to the study location to observe, take notes and picture and note down any element that could be helpful to answer the research questions. Indeed a similar work could have been done using modern advice and technology like Google Maps or Google Earth, as well as GPS tracker. But it is, without doubt, extraordinarily valuable having the experience and the point of view of a traveller in motion, that can allow the researcher to see things from the traveller perspective rather than the perspective of a camera or pictures (Li, 2022:59).

In order to be able to research the tourist experience as theorised from literature, and being able to investigate the experience of cycling tourists. The sensory ethnographic method has been the most appropriate to experience first hand the travel-to-site, on-site activity and travel return experience in the region of Tromsø and Finnmark. (excluding the “travel-to-site” moment since the researcher was already in the place)

The use of sensory ethnography deepens the experience and understanding of users’ world for empathy and insight for future planification and it is a great methodology for design and planning (Bruce, 2012:60).

Finally the sensory ethnographic methods focus mainly on movements and embodied encounters with/in spaces and places, and use field notes as a tool to share experiences and perspectives. Ellington (2020: 40) , in addition, defines this nomadic writing as an opportunity to “open up possibilities...for seeing and sensing differently through accidental encounters”.

4.5 Multimodal fieldwork: fieldnotes and photography

Hereby the researcher fieldnotes are presented divided by day and represents what Ellington (2020:15) define as “rematerializations, creating alternative forms of material discursive entanglements”. This field notes might be taken repeating the same action of other travellers surveyed but will never describe “*the same kind of event, will differ, depending upon the choices, positioning, personal sensitivities, and interactional concerns of the observers*” (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 9 quoted in Ellingson, 2020:18). The researcher acknowledges that due to the physical effort, the tiredness, the lack of proper physical training the feelings and personal impressions presented are not at all representative and can not be generalised but are just the mirror of a single experience. Overall fieldnotes represent a flexible and playful form of data collection (Ibid:19).

In methodology literature fieldnotes are addressed with epistemological integrity which often leads to avoid “*contaminating them with biases, sentiments, or personal perspectives, assumptions, and expectations*” (Ellingson, 2020:18). But it is not the case of the notes and field work presented here, since the main reasons why it has been chosen to use sensory ethnography is to put the researcher in the same position as the user and get notes and observation on the route that are mainly related with feelings, impressions and senses in general. Travelling is always connected with elements such as sense of place, imagination, affective recall, and sensory memory which works as fieldnote and as data for the research (Ibid:21).

Despite the researcher might put into doubt sometimes the value of the ‘field note’ as data methodology literature confirm the role of field notes as per a “less purified research practice” (Ellington, 2020:40). The focus on experience in sensory ethnographies makes the researchers focus on the concept of sensory exploration and embodied experience (Pink, 2022:2) that translate in acquiring learnings and knowledge through her or his whole experiencing body (Pink, 2022: 3). Therefore the fieldnotes related to this process of “embodiment” are more than a reliable dataset in the field of planning in general and in research related with active tourism which also refers to cycling tourism and travel experiences studies.

The use of technology has been extensively used in this research since, together with other methods used, also these field notes presented are not anymore handwritten as they used to be, but they have been elaborated directly on a computer. Not only, they include digital photos and videos (Ibid:22). This multimodal fieldwork that integrates writing with photographing results to be ideal since it creates a sort of complementary element for both modal methods (Harper, 2003 quoted in Ellingson, 2020:28).

When it comes to the use of photography in this research it is due to his popular appliance in mobility research as descriptive complement together with the written description and also in this case “*Photographs are used with a representational aim in order to provide a visual glimpse into the research matter*” (Vannini, 2020:213).

Monday 28th of August 2023

I'm writing this first impressions of the trio while I'm on the ferry from Breidvik to Svensby. I'm not alone and all the fears about not finding anyone on the way are almost gone. I'm on the ferry with 3 other men, two from Germany and 1 from France. They are all coming from further south and as it always happens, we talk about personal life as if we were best friends but we always forget about asking each other's names. I'm thinking about the first 47km I cycled to get to Breidvik and the first thing I have to say is that probably I needed more time to train and I'm bringing with me too many things. When I left the city centre, where I started my trip from, I decided to take some pictures of the bike with some symbols of Tromsø. I came across some new graffiti so there I stopped and came across a bike sign. I decided to follow it, putting myself in the same place of a traveller that would explore around. There is a sign but no symbol of the Eurovelo route, as well as no indications of possible destinations. The sign makes me pass from the Polar Museum of Tromsø and cross the new district of Vervet (possibly I know all this information just because I've been living in the city but I'm not sure a tourist would be aware of it). I keep on following the sign that brings me to The Arctic Cathedral of Tromsø and officially I leave the island. From there I notice another sign that gives me an indication of possible destinations I can reach: Solligarden and Nordkjosbotn respectively at 5 and 71,4 km. This sign also comes with the number 1 and 11 which I imagine indicate cycling itinerary or skiing ones. I'm not aware of the meaning of number 11 and probably the number "1" stays for EuroVelo1 even if the usual symbol has a blue background and a star circle all around it. On the way to take the ferry it was not always clear where it was possible to avoid to cycle on the E8. I found it extremely dangerous due to the high speed cars and above all trucks were driving. The experience was overall positive also due to the enchanting landscape around me and the weather, which has been sunny and fresh, perfect for cycling around. Due to the limited timetable of the ferries, that changed on the 20th of August, there are less ferries available so I have to wait to take the one at 15 in order to be able to cycle to Lyngseidet and take the ferry there at 17.55. The summer schedule would have been extremely more comfortable, taking the ferry at 16.55 would allow me the chance to cycle a little bit more. At the harbour there is a comfortable toilet, which also means the possibility to refill the bottle with water. The weather was nice so waiting there was not a problem but in case of rain I wouldn't have found it comfortable to wait in the rain, since there is no waiting area or a shelter where to cover.

- *Second part -*

As a first day, I didn't want to push myself to much and I stopped where I could. The next camping available it is 10km away and after the 98km already cycled I decided to stop and ask to put my mattress and sleeping bag into the covered porch of a local person, who kindly accepts and this is where I'm writing from at the moment. I was in no hurry but the late ferry messed up a little with my schedule. I feel extremely happy though that ferries, at least, are free for cyclists. At the second harbour, in Lyngsteited, is where I had the last chance to go for groceries and toilet, since after that I have to wait to get to Storslett. I'm checking the weather and starting in few hours it should be raining so tomorrow the overall experience of the trip might be influenced by that. Today it has been amazing, a mix of excitement for the experience and adrenaline in the body for the physical effort makes me loving it all. The landscape is stunning and the only thing taking over my body is joy.

Tuesday 29th of August 2023

I'm writing from a wooden cabin in a rest area on my way, right before a tunnel. It has been raining all morning and it is making it a little bit more challenging than I thought. Yesterday the guys I met on the way continued cycling after I stopped and today I haven't met anyone yet. Today the route it is a little bit more challenging and I have the impression that this route could be regularly just for cars and campervans. In the resting area there is not even a rack where to park the bike. Before getting to the rest area I cycled towards the tunnel to check how it worked, I see that there is a sign, so cycling and walking it is not allowed in there and there is the old road that goes on the left side of the mountain.

- *Second part -*

I'm writing this from a small fishing cabin I found nearby the harbour because I was too tired to cycle the next 2km uphill where there was a camping place so I decided to stop here. I met two local fishermen that I talked with and were in the cabin as well, they left to go on their

mission and I'm here trying to find energies to cook something and use the common facilities. Apparently it is a parking lot for campervans and thanks to an automatic machine you can pay and get a code to access different facilities like a toilet with a warm shower and a fully equipped kitchen with even a washing machine. The fee to pay only for the facilities is 50NOK which I find surprisingly cheap. Today I only cycled 65km and arrived to Oksfjord bathavn with decent weather. During my ride I was surprised at how many stop areas there are either for trucks and for cars but there is no possible reference or small detail to welcome cyclists or something that acknowledges the presence or passage of cyclists in the area.

I'm also reflecting on the fact that today I passed by the only bike shop I saw after Tromsø so if something would have happened in between, it would have been difficult to seek help. It was in the village of Storslett where there was also a proper cycling path and locals and children were cycling in it. Today I noticed more trucks than usual, hopefully almost everyone was extremely respectful with the speed while passing, and I would also say that the majority of time the distance is also respected. From my personal point of view I noticed that Norwegian plated cars are more respectful compared to foreigners.

Wednesday 30th of August 2023

I'm writing for the first time in the morning, I'm starting lacking of motivation mainly for the tiredness and the weather. I've been already travelling by bike and it takes time to get used to the rhythm, above all when I know that the day of today is going to be extremely challenging. It's 11am and it is starting raining again. I'd better start cycling.

- *Second part -*

Taking notes after the first big hill of today. On my way another cycling traveller is passing me, we briefly talked and he is also on his way to the North Cape. He comes from Germany, exactly as the other three men I met on the ferries two days ago. He goes faster so we don't have much more time to talk. Within the same hour I crossed my path with another traveller, this time a girl, only one year older than me, travelling with the five-years-old son. Incredible. They cycled

all the way from Germany to reach the northernmost point of the European Continent. We decide to stick together for the rest of the day and keep on cycling together to share some talks. We are actually now taking a break together and sharing a meal and a proper talk seating at the benches and table at Matkroken Sorstraumen. We are only half way from our destination of the day. We also agreed on sharing a cabin for the night to split the costs since we both found pretty expensive accommodations in general. Now that I think about it, I haven't had much opportunity to share a talk, except for the fishermen of yesterday or simple conversation at the markets. Landscape is stunning and desolate so I feel like loneliness has been a good companion these days.

- *Third part -*

The day started with heavy rains and ended with a beautiful and stunning sunset. This day ended with only 68km cycled but was quite tiring. I feel extremely not physically prepared for the trip. Tomorrow is going to be the first day where we will have to avoid 6 tunnels so this means we are going to avoid traffic, which feels great. I'm sharing the cabin with my new travel companion and her son. Again I keep on thinking that we didn't find many references to the Eurovelo1, on the other hand, there is only one road that brings to the North Cape, but I feel it would be nice to have some references with at least the kms missing to our final destination.

Thursday 31st of August 2023

Right after a few kms we stop for public toilets. There is a parking spot with public toilets. Again I feel it is only meant for cars and campervans, it would have been nice to have some bike racks where to put the bike while going to the toilet. I think it is a small detail that can make cyclists feel like they are being taken into account. Small sami shop on our way, touristy.

On the way we have to turn to the left to take the first k old road of the day to avoid a tunnel, which is extremely unsafe due to the length, the lack of visibility for the cars and the lack of ventilation. Cycling on the E6, I know that I have to turn to the left and pass through the village

of Storsadnes but there is no sign for cyclists. Again on the way to another touristy souvenir shop. I find this road extremely beautiful and the lack of traffic makes it even better. I'm writing from Talvik where we are taking a break. We also asked for information to a norwegian lady that kindly told us that the alternative road that passes from Melsvik unfortunately it is not possible to pass through it because it is fallen. So we have to pass from the tunnel and since the lady has also two children she suggested to take the son of the girl cycling with me and drive behind us so that cars will drive slower.

- *Second part -*

Arriving in Alta was spectacular, probably because of the red sunset or because waiting for me there was a cozy and warm place. The experience we had with the lady "escorting us" through the tunnel was incredible. I felt protected despite the dark and noisy environment of the tunnel. All the secondary roads that we took in order not to go in the tunnels were just breathtaking and made the effort and tiredness go away. At the end of one of those alternative road, which are actually the old ones, there is a "Resteplass" that took my attention because of the nice details and design. Still I felt like it was meant only for campervans and cars and no attention for the cyclists despite the cycling path pass through it. I noticed only arriving to Kafjord that there are brown bike signs where we can find written the distance to get to Alta. Beautiful landscapes but the most incredible thing was to cycle in a proper cycling path already 10km before approaching Alta. The road was lit up and it just felt great. In Alta I had the chance to stay at a person that lives there thanks to the app Couchsurfing, that allows travel to stay at locals. The person living there was a student but foreigner as well, but still she has been living there for 4 years so, somehow a local. I arrived in Alta at around 9pm so all the attractions that I saw, like Alta Museum or the NorthernLights Cathedral were already closed and not possible to visit.

The weather forecast for tomorrow doesn't look promising and my body needs to rest, so I ask my host if I can stay an extra night in order to recover energy.

Friday 1st of September 2023

Rest day in Alta - I use this day to reorganise my bags on the bike and the post office so that I can send back some of the clothes I overpacked and were taking space and making my trip more heavy. Alta seems to be the last “city” available for that on my way to the North Cape.

Saturday 2st of September 2023

Once I started cycling from Alta, I notice again that the brown signs start appearing again, but no indication on how far the last destination is and no reference on North Cape or similar. Today it is going to be an intense day, I have to cycle 110km to get to Olderfjord. There is no camping available in between and no other facility in between Rafsbotn (from where I am writing at the moment) and Olderfjord. There should be something in Skaidi but all the campings and accommodation services are all booked because of “Skaidi Bike Festival” with MTB and off-road competitions. I was not aware of it and I haven’t seen any advertisement of it anywhere. It is 11am and I have to get to Olderfjord before the camping reception closes at 8pm.

- *Second part -*

I’m in a gas station in Skaidi, there is a super great atmosphere and so many people and cars parked on both sides of the street. It looks like the competition it is happening in the forest, so me cycling there and with a different bike set- up creates curiosity and people are waving at me. It is 6.30 pm and I have only little time to get to my destination.

- *Third part -*

I made it right on time and also today I’m sharing the cabin with the other cycling traveller and son. Today it has been incredible: the most remote area I’ve ever been, it was only me and a lot of reindeer, and of course car traffic. I noticed that there are no more trucks up here, so

probably the commercial routes only lead to Alta, so even cycling with only cars passing by was more comfortable. I have no words to describe the landscape of today, It only comes to my mind that if something would have happened I would have been stuck in the middle of nowhere. The silence, the autumn colours turning in, and the desolation of the landscape were the best of the day. Today more cyclists passed me but no one stopped to talk. (A couple and a solo male traveller). I also noticed that the landscape changed a bit, I was not cycling anymore with the seaside next to me and this aspect influenced my perception of the day.

Sunday 3rd of September 2024

I have in front of me another intense day, possibly I will get to the North Cape if I'm able to, even if I have to cycle 127km in one day. Today it is sunny and tomorrow it is going to rain all day. I'm starting cycling alone today because I wanted to experience this last part by myself. My writing from one of the most surprising spots I've run into. It is called "Nordkapp Beach" and apparently it is a whole new area on the beach with 3 covered shelters with an incredible view and access to toiletry and possibility to stay with the campervan. I have the same impression as the other rest areas but this time, the fact that it is right after a tunnel where there was a whole cycling path in it, makes it different. Actually the feeling in the tunnel was a complete different one and indeed having my own space, clearly separated, made me less scared everytime a car was passing and the sound of it was amplified by the tunnel. From here I only have very little left, but still a great challenge: The North Cape Tunnel. I've heard and read so much about it that to be fair, I'm extremely scared about it.

- *Second part -*

I'm in Valan, I managed to cycle in the tunnel but only thanks to the moral support of a fellow cyclist that waited for me at the entrance so that we could cross it together. We met in the last part of the day. Before entering the tunnel, we get ready and cover up. The tunnel is almost 7km long and it reaches steepness between 8-10% which was extremely difficult for me. The most surprising encounter though, I did it also right before entering the tunnel: two cars stop and

they were by my former boss and working colleagues. What a coincidence. I would have never expected such a meeting since we mainly worked in the area of Tromsø and Lofoten. Wow. This meeting gave me a lot of good energy and gave me the feeling of familiarity and a less remote area. Done with the greetings, me and the other german cyclist we start entering the tunnel, the first 3kms downhill, the temperature from 15°C drops to 6°C and it starts feeling cold. Where we cycle, on the right side of the road, where the water drops, there are bumps of ice, the sound of the car passing us is extremely amplified and I'm just glad it is illuminated and every few hundred meters there is a "resting area" where I can stop and focus. I found it difficult to breathe. The last km uphill my legs had no strength at all and I had to push the bike, I was freezing. The natural light and the warmer temperature changed my feelings right after getting out of the tunnel. I made it. It meant only one thing, I had less than 50km to my final destination. I decide to keep on cycling and see where my legs take me. I keep on cycling, it is 9pm and I reach the Nordkapp camping, 26km away from The North Cape. There is an extremely steep hill in front of me, I start cycling it and when I get to half of it, I start calling my boyfriend and ask for some support. I was willing to get to the final point but my body was asking me to rest and my mind as well. I was not ready to cycle the last 26km, the most difficult and challenging of the whole trip, alone and in the darkness. I cycle back and reach again the camping, where I'm now writing from. The reception it is closed so I have no place to stay. Another guest come to talk to me and she invites me to share her room since she had to beds. I happily accept and cry because of the kindness, the tiredness and the fact that I feel like I failed myself not having pushed myself to cycle all the way there. Today, despite the cold wind, the sky is clear. But from tomorrow heavy rain and wind will take care of me on the way and I didnt really want it. The guy that cycled in the tunnel with me told me that he would wait in Honningsvåg until better weather conditions come. I didn't not have all this time available so unfortunately I have no other option then cycling in the rain tomorrow morning.

Monday 4th of September 2024

I made it. If someone would ask me what I like most about this last 26km I won't be able to answer properly. The fog, the heavy rain and the wind made me cycle with my head down. I was not able to see the landscape 3 metres away from me. This last part was extremely challenging, but I'm thinking that only for me probably since I started recently and I didnt have a proper training. I believe people that have thousands of km in their legs, might find this the

perfect challenge before getting to their destination, if eventually North Cape is their last one. I struggled because there were a lot of tourist buses on the road which was rather narrow. Two campervans could not drive at the same time and due to the reduced visibility they were breaking last minute or not caring at all. I was feeling extremely cold. It took me 5 hours to cycle 26km. I don't even know how I managed because I don't remember much except shaking and cycling in the fog. I see every now and then some sign with the km missing to Nordkapp. I would say that there were more km where I pushed the bike than cycling. My wet feet and legs were not helping. The last km I pushed the bike crying but without knowing exactly why. An overwhelming feeling is pervading me, above all when big buses and cars pass right next to me extremely fast. I do not feel safe, even if I had lights and a visibility vest. There is a last sign, it says "Nordkapp 500m" right around the corner. It is not clear where to go though, I see only "CARS" and "BUS" signs painted on the road and I'm confused where to go exactly. I take the way of the cars, and there are some sort of offices/room with a window open and a person that welcomes you when you arrive. Apparently when you arrive by bike or by walking you can enter for free. So the guy at the counter gives me a free sticker and I proceed to the Nordkapp Hall. I get inside with the bike and a girl runs immediately into me to say that I'm not allowed to get inside with the bike, though I'm pretty sure there was no sign of it outside. It was not possible to get in with food, own drinks, with dogs but there was nothing about a bike and bar on it. I proceed to park it outside in the rain, yet there is no bicycle rack on any side of the entrance, which makes me a little sad considering that people that come here walking or cycling make a bigger effort to reach this point. There is a souvenir shop, a restaurant, an open area with a huge glass window and a foggy view. I can barely see the globe. I'm freezing and shaking so I just sit in, drinking a warm coffee trying to warm up. Seated next to me, one of the German guys that passed me in the previous days. We talk about the overall experience and the meaning of the trip. I took the picture with the famous globe, but unfortunately I was not able to enjoy the view and the landscape since the fog, the rain and the wind were still extremely strong and I was just freezing. I managed to find some other people I worked with and I asked for a ride back to Honningsvåg since I get to know that the only public bus available it is at 14.20 and it might not accept bikes on it. I asked around and no one really knew anything about it or how it was working with the bikes. The same for Honningsvåg, apparently since the season was over, they reduced the amount of public transport that connects this part of the region with the biggest cities or the closest airport. In my mind I was just keep on thinking how could have been possible that the season was over, autumn was just turning in and everything looked so spectacular on my way, something that other countries call "foliage experience" or "ruska"

in Finnish which is enjoying the change in the colours of leaves and bushes. And the autumn in the Arctic was just about to start and I had the luck to enjoy it. Not only, I've been lucky enough to witness the first northern lights, now that in the evening it was getting dark enough to see them. I just found it the perfect time of the year, not too hot nor too cold. I'm now writing from the Hurtigruten that I just took from the harbour of Honningsvåg, I found it the most enjoyable and easy way to reach another point, since the routes are fixed, the bike can get onboard without doubts and I could use also a student discount, which considering the expenses I had during the trip, it was nice to have some reductions. I can not explain overall how I feel at this moment and my trip only lasted a couple of days. I have plenty of consideration to elaborate but I think I need a couple of days to put into words general points and feelings about the whole trip.

5 Analysis

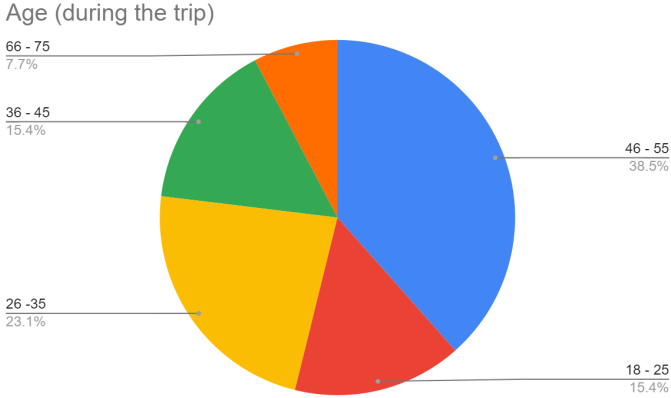
In this section I develop the analysis based on the results of the survey integrated with the fieldnotes of the sensory ethnographic in order to understand the importance of the tourist experience and therefore cycling tourist experience. In a second moment the content analysis of the interview transcription will be developed in order to understand stakeholder perspectives in relation with the future development of cycling tourism in the Arctic region of Tromsø and Finnmark.

5.1 Overview on the demographic and general information

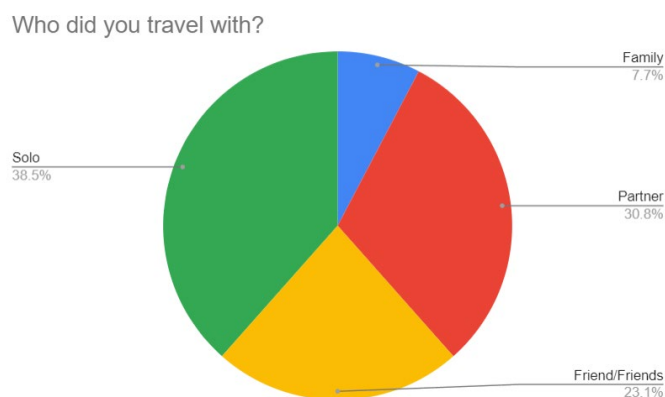
The survey has been held online and received only 13 answers from respondents. The gender distribution of the respondents has been the following: 10 (76,9 %) respondents were men and only 3 (23,1%) were women. Asking for the gender was not relevant for the study itself but it can be a perspective used for further studies. The results are in line with what was experienced by the researcher that during her trip came across only two women and seven men.

The age distribution of the surveyors was heterogeneous, even if the majority of participants are aged between 46 to 55 years old. On a larger scale it would be interesting to understand the reasons that motivates cycling traveller of the age between 18 to 25 to cycle. The researchers

suppose that the scarcity of people of the age between 66 and 75 might be related to the physical difficulty that cycling in Norway may represents.



The values related to the geographical distribution of the respondents were the following: 3 from Denmark, 3 from Germany, 3 from Norway, 2 from The Netherlands,, 1 from Italy and 1 from France, in general all from the European Union which appears to be understandable due to geographical proximity. Another aspect to be expected from the results is the period of the year when the tourist decide to experience it: they all chose to travel in the area between the summer months of June to August. The reasons seem to be connected to the extreme weather conditions of the geographical area and the “light/sun” element that in summer is present for more then 20h/day and represent an additional element contributing to the “safety feeling”. But who did they choose to travel with? When it comes to travel companions, “solo” travel leads the way and “with partner” is second to that. The chance that cycling with the family might not be in vogue might be connected again to the challenging aspect of cycling conditions. Despite this might be the immediate thought, the researcher met a single mum travelling to Nordkapp with the five-years-old son and it didn’t seem like it was difficult at all for none of them.



Continuing with the introductory questions of the survey, it has been asked the length of the trip in the stretch taken into account for the research. This was one of the questions that has been elaborated “open ended” because the answer to receive was expected to be short. If in the most cases (11) respondents answered with the effective number of days, in 2 cases the respondent felt the necessity to elaborate more with answers like “8 cycling days and 2 off the bicycle” and “Olderfjord->Nordkapp->Honningsvag: 2 days cycling. Then between Honningsvag and Oksfjord: Hurtigruten ship 1 day. Then from Oksfjord to Tromsø: 6 days cycling”. Overall the time spent to complete the route from Tromsø to Nordkapp ranged from 3 days to 14 days, similar to the time taken for the sensory ethnographic method. The previous extended answers made the researcher realise, despite having cycled on the route, that the question was not properly formulated because it didn’t take into account the possibility to separate between how long it took considering the days where the tourist was effectively cycling or the total length of the journey with included rest days or in general days to do some other activities.

Finally the first section of the survey ended asking the respondent with which kind of bike they experienced the trip. The closed-ended question gave only two possibilities: “own bike - including sponsored ones” or “rental”. The totality of the respondents answered having used their own bike. The results cross checked with the field notes of the second day of the trip where the researcher noted that “today I passed by the only bike shop I saw after Tromsø so if something would have happened in between, it would have been difficult to seek help” : the lack of bike shop and bike rental places would explain the decision of the cycling traveller to experience the trip with their own bike. It would be interesting to investigate more if in the presence of different kinds of services like bike rental and luggage transfer, the cycling traveller would opt for that option rather than bringing his/her own bike.

5.2 Cognitive attitudes

In this part of the survey the researcher, as per survey guide, wants to tackle the cognitive attitudes of the respondents in relation to the reasons why they chose to experience that particular route and how it is linked to the one of EuroVelo1.

In the very first place the respondent is asked with an open-ended question which are the reasons to experiment that particular route. Through the technique of coding I grouped the answer based on elements that were repeated with more frequency:

- Nordkapp/North Cape: referenced 6 times, since to represent a reference point for cycling traveller, probably for the remoteness and the geographical location;
- Nature/Landscape: referenced 6 times and included terms referring to “scenery”, “mountains” and “West Coast”;
- Eurovelo: referenced 3 times and it is of relevance since it has not been mentioned before in the survey;
- “Part of NPL” and geographical proximity have been other two reasons worthed to mention that have been referred only 1 time each.

The following question refers to the criteria that give priority to a route choice rather than another one: first of all, only 12 answers have been received and of these 2 were not related with the question but with the choice of cycling in Norway such as “It is the most beautiful place in Europe that I know” of and “I just love Norway and have done many trips there before”. The sintaxis of the sentence for a clear interpretation is questioned and whether it could have been formulated in a better way. Again through the topic coding process, the following results have been gathered:

- Landscape/Scenery/Nature: referenced 7 times;
- Cycling safely: referenced 6 times with elements such like “traffic” and “established cycling routes”, “small roads, few cars”;
- Wild camping: referenced 2 times;
- “Eurovelo”, “interesting culture and people”, “not so hilly” and “less mosquitos” are elements that have been referenced only once.

In the next two questions of the same sections it has been referred to the EuroVelo network: in the first case asking respondents if they had a previous knowledge about the route cycled being part of it and secondly, if they knew what the EuroVelo network was. In both cases the totality of the respondents had previous knowledge about it. In relation, instead, to EuroVelo1 as the main reason to choose the route and to if they would do it even without EV1 we can find different situations: 6 people agreed and 6 others didn't, with one person that answered that EV was source of inspiration; in the case EV wouldn't be there instead, 76,9% of the respondent would cycle the route anyways. Three other people answered correspondingly "No", "I don't know" and "Only if there was a Norwegian cycling route from Oslo to Nordkapp". An interesting fact is that the answer related to the possibility of not experiencing the route if it was not associated with the Eurovelo cycling network are women. The researcher wonders if somehow the answer could be related to the different mobility patterns that men and women have and that numerous studies on gendered mobility have highlighted above all when it concerns to safety and security (Loukaitou-Sideris,2014);

5.3 Tourist experience

5.3.1 Influential realm

Herby will be presented the results in relation to the levels of satisfaction with the 32 sector-specific destination attributes of which 28 are pre-identified in the sector and 4 of them have been added considering the facilities in the study case. The order through which they are presented it's not related to any criteria but they are in the same order they have been presented to the surveyants. Next to it, it's also presented the average score obtained and will be the object of reflections.

Crossing the ferries	4,30	Crossing tunnels	2,92
Segregated cycling path	2,69	Access to drinkable water	4,07
Access to food/groceries store	3,76	Access to public toilets	3,53
Access to restaurant	3,38	Beautiful scenery	4,38

Farmers markets	2,76	Natural ecology	3,79
Cultural and historical sites	3,30	Signs of attractions	3,07
Comfortable climate	3,38	Connection of bicycle routes	3,38
Connection-oriented transport	3,23	Bicycle hire/repair shops	3
Wayfinder and directional signs	3,30	Public rest areas	3,15
Connection with major roadways	3,53	Lighting systems	3
Events, festivals and activities	3	Visitor centers	3,20
Police stations	3	Overnight accommodation	3,46
First-aid stations	2,92	Variety of terrain	3,69
Distance signboards	3,30	Provision for cyclists	3,38
Bicycle parking	3	Weather report message boards	3
Traffic flow and density	3,23	Road surface and pavement	3,76
Seating: table and benches	3,15	Shelters	2,69
Bike rentals and connected services (only if used)	2,92		
Bike box access (only if traveled with own bike)	2,84		

The highest satisfaction was expressed for the attribute «Beautiful scenary» with an overall average of 4,38; to follow we have «Crossing the ferries» and «Access to drinkable water» correspondingly 4,30 and 4,07. On the other hand, the attributes that received the lowest satisfaction ratings are «Shelters» and «Segregated cycling paths». A first reflection of it, except for the element of «Crossing the ferries» that can reflect the policy of allowing cyclist and people walking to use the ferries for free, the other two attributes cycling tourists were most satisfied with are connected with two natural elements, therefore no action has been put into place to achieve that result.

The overall average of tourist satisfaction survey for this attributes is 2,69 which can be described as an unsatisfactory one. Another important reflection is connected with the majority of the attributes that round the value 3: as simple as it sounds it is difficult to evaluate something that is not present in the area; not only, the survey has been taken by respondents that have experienced the route in the past five years, so the time passed from the survey being taken and

the trip might be too long to remember certain details. As per fieldnotes, also during my personal experience I noticed the lack of cycling infrastructures and shelters, above all during the long rainy days. Regarding one attribute specifically I personally thought that would be necessary to install before cycling the last 25km on the way to Nordkapp: considering the extreme weather conditions of the area, the presence of a weather report board would be a great detail for the tourist.

The next couple of questions are connected with night accommodation and overall expenses. At first it was inquired «Which kind of accommodation did you use during your trip?» to which four possibilities were given and surveyee could choose between “Free camping” (38,5%), “Camping places”(23,1%),“Hotels/BnB”(7,7%),“Staying at locals/Couchsurfing/Warmshower” (7,7%) and, in addition, it was given the possibility to write freely the type of accommodation not mentioned or the combination of them that was not included in the choices. A combination of all the above types of accommodations was referenced so to represent the 23,1% of the cases. It does not surprise the fact that “Free camping” it is the most chosen option, since the summer season, when it seems most of the people have been cycling on that route, allows local and visitor to get advantage of the *Allemannsretten* (translated in everyman’s right), that grants anyone the individual right to freely roam on private and public land, and to engage in a range of recreational activities, such as free camping. On the other hand, the other choices were to be expected as well since the extreme weather conditions are likely to have cyclist travellers repaired from wind, rain and cold temperatures in camping areas or having the possibility to choose depending on the weather and opt for mixed accommodation services. As per experience of the researcher, a mixed typology of accommodating was used, between staying at locals thanks to the use of the online community of Couchsurfing, unexpected local hospitality: “*I decided to stop and ask to put my mattress and sleeping bag into the covered porch of a local person, who kindly accepts*”(fieldnotes from Monday 28th of August 2023); Alongside, free camping has been experiences, together with camping sites.

The following two questions were open-ended questions related to the average expenditure per night and per day(including food and accommodation). Two main mistakes have been detected in the formulation of the question, where it did not specify the currency to use and in addition the information gathered was not directly related with the research questions since there was no intention to elaborate an economical assessment of cycling tourists in the area. On the

contrary, the aim of the question was connected with the fact that cycling tourists's level of expenditure is higher than the average tourists due to the fact that it is in great need of additional services, activities or transportation (Petrescu, 2013:48). Starting collecting data on the average expenditure of cycling tourists in this area is extremely important to assess the economical impact of the bicycle and consequently the potential it has for the development of cycling tourism in the region. Overall the expenditure per night has a range between 12 and 65 euros per night, instead the overall expenses that cycling tourists were having per day is ranging from 15 euros up to 100 euros per day. The importance of data has been emphasised also by the company EcoCounter that thanks to a series of counters installed along the route, was able to generate approximately the economical benefits of cycling tourism around the EuroVelo1, which rounded the 200 million euros. Due to the lack of counters in the northernmost part of the route, the calculations are estimated; despite that, the average expenditure per day of 72€ is in line with the answers received in the survey (EcoCounter, 2020).

5.3.2 On site activities

In this section of the survey it is explored in which degree cycling tourists interacted with the environment. Similar questions were asked for the major cities on the route (Tromsø and Alta) and for the specific location of Nordkapp and in particular the North Cape Hall.

Tromsø:

- 76,9 % of the surveyed visited Tromsø, instead the 23,1% didn't and simply passed through the location;
- The most visited location will be hereby listed based on the number of time that it has been referenced:
 - City centre (3)
 - Cable car, Arctic Cathedral and Novonorsk kunstmuseum (2)
 - Mack brewery, Ølhallen, Polar museum and University museum (1)
- 46,2% of surveyant would surely come back to Tromsø instead of the 53,8% unsure of it.

Finally it was asked to elaborate more on the possibility to come back and visit in the future and here are listed some of the answers:

“I want to see a lot of other cities before coming back” (Maybe)

“Probably not since I line to travel by bike and I like to see new countries” (Maybe)

“It’s a nice little town but very far away from everything. Except maybe I would like to come back for skiing Lyngen” (Maybe)

“It is a cute city but it is very touristy and we like to be more in the nature around it” (Maybe)

“Beautiful city as a base to explore the nature from. I would like to go on a winter cycling or walking tour from tromsø” (Yes)

I would like to visit Finnmark in winter (Yes)

A general reflection that comes from the answers received is that people that would like to come back, they would choose to come and experience the area in another season (possibly winter) which also means that they wouldn’t necessary come back by bike; some other instead highlight the element of “remoteness” of the area which makes it difficult to come back by bike for a second time, the “touristy” character of the city and the fact that it can be a good base to explore and stay in contact with nature.

Alta:

- 61,5 % of the surveyed visited Alta and 38,5% didn’t and and simply passed through the location;
- The most visited location will be also listed based on the number of time that it has been referenced:
 - Alta Museum (3)
 - Peppes Pizza (2)
 - Nordlys katedralen, Shopping mall (1)
- In this case 23,1% won’t come back to Alta, 23,1% it is willing to come back for sure, instead the 53,8% of people surveyed is unsure;

Hereby listed some of the reasons of their answers:

“Haven’t yet saw the nice places there” (Maybe)

It’s a long way from anything (No)

Only for transit to a natural park (Maybe)
Very bad weather and not really interesting (No)
I have family there (Yes)

The researcher's perspective, in the case of the two cities, is not relevant because Tromsø was a residential area for the researcher and museums, cathedrals and other sites of interest have been visited on other occasions.

In order to understand the interests of cycling tourists in the area and which other complementary activities have been experienced it was asked with a closed-ended question to say if they have been doing other activities other than cycling on their trip and next, to specify which.



Most of the surveyed, with 53,8%, did not do any other activity instead the 46,2% decided to spend their time either “hiking” or “visiting museums” in between the choices given. The respondents could choose between the following options: “Visit Salmon farm”, “Whale watching tour”, “Visited museums”, “Northern Lights tour”, “Guided tour in a reindeer farm/Visited a Sami village”, “Fishing tour”, “Others”. The researcher has not experienced any other activity than cycling mainly due to the tiredness of the trip itself and the limited time available.

In relation to the northernmost point of the European continent, it was asked if the location of Nordkapp represented the final destination of the journey, in 30.8% of the cases it was not, but for more than the majority, 69,2% it represented the final goal of the cycling trip. But after a whole cycling trip trying to reach this remote destination, how long do travellers stay there to

enjoy the location? Answers received were extremely different, from “fifteen minutes” up to “2 nights” with an average of at least one day spent in Nordkapp.

Finally, the last questions of this section were related to how the cycling tourists went back home and how difficult they perceived it was to take a different mode of transportation. The most common option was “bus + plane” with either the option to fly from Alta or from Tromsø which was referenced 6 times; only two surveyed cycled back home and another one opted for the ferry “Hurtigruten + plane”. The question was not marked as mandatory therefore some of the fields have been left empty. The perception of difficulty regarding the access to the first mean of transportation got an average score of 3,66: the only way to go back to Honningsvåg is either by bus or cycling back; the frequency of buses in the area is limited to the summer season which ends on the 20th of August (based on local transport timetable) as the researcher experienced during the ethnographic exploration.

At last, the questions in the following section were also related to the overall tourist experience and their willingness to come back to explore the region of Tromsø and Finnmark or Norway in general. The average satisfaction score related with the experience at the North Cape Hall was 3,15 which cannot be considered satisfying. Right after the surveyed were asked to think about some element that they missed and could be added for a better experience of cycling tourists; the use of an open-ended question helped understanding that travellers would have appreciated the following services:

- Showers;
- Bicycle parking;
- Shelters;
- Heated seating area (not belonging to the restaurant).

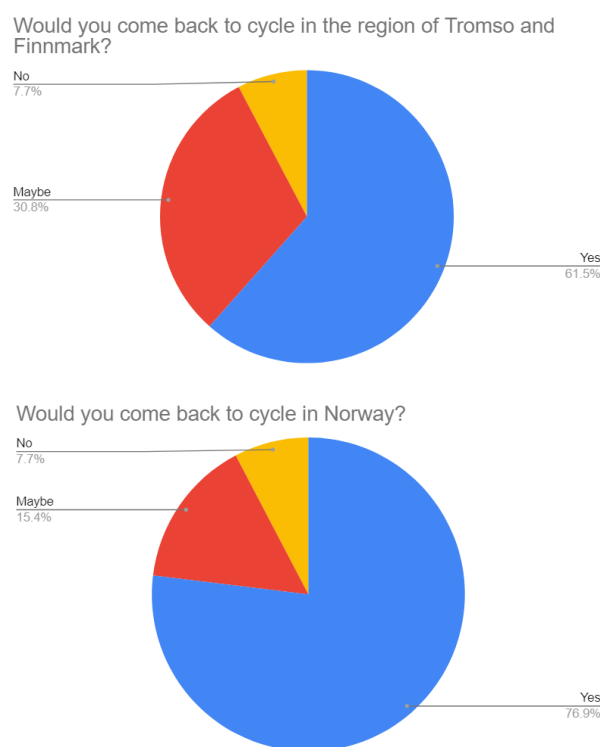
At the question “Which element did you appreciate most during your route?” one specifically seem to be taken up from all the surveyed and it is the element of “nature” in all its forms such as “the sun”, “the coast on the way up to Honningsvåg”, “the landscapes”, “beautiful scenery, of course”;

In order to stimulate the senses and the memory of the cycling travellers, the following questions was related to the first picture that comes to their mind when thinking about this stretch of the route and with no surprise also the natural element was the most referenced:

- Nature: “Cycling under the midnight sun”, “Reindeers”, “Fjords”, “Nature”;

- Self-empowerment: “yeah, made it”, “I’m proud of myself that I finished such a big distance on my bike. I also feel that I am very privileged to do such things”.

After this experience they had, it is considered relevant to know if cycling tourists would come back to cycle in the area or generally in Norway.



It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words. And so do the charts above displayed with a visual displays of numerical data (Wang, 2007:43) where it is clear that most of the people are more likely to come back to cycle in Norway as well as more people are in doubt (maybe) to come back to the region of Tromsø and Finnmark compared to coming back to Norway in general.

The “No” answers were, in addition, argued with the following explanation:

“It is not really a great cycling route. Cycling in Norway can be quite dangerous as the only halfhearted tried to build infrastructure for cyclists, which makes it double dangerous.”

For example around half of the “cyclist in tunnel”-lights didn’t work. Which makes it really dangerous, as drivers think there is a warning system, but it doesn’t work. Apart from that, the route is not the most enjoyable I have cycled. There are lots of easier, more fun, more beautiful places to cycle in the world, which at the same time are much cheaper.” and again “Too dangerous, too expensive and not culturally interesting enough” or “I wouldn’t go that far north again”.

People that , instead, would come back to the region and country would do it for the following reasons:

“like the feeling of freedom, fresh Air, few people”;

“Incredible place on the planet”;

“Beautiful part of Europe”

“Nice people, good roads, quiet (besides the campervans) and beautiful nature”

“Wild camping is legal and the nature is stunning”.

The very last question of the survey was an open space where surveyed could share any other element of reflection that has not been taken into account in the survey itself. One of the most striking comments come from a respondent from Denmark that states:

“In general in Norway, there is very little route choice for a cyclist. In other countries you will have much bigger choice if smaller roads or even gravel. But Norway have fewer roads. It’s obvious that Norway did an effort to make cycling infrastructure. But it is also very clear that they did a bad job. I believe the people who thought out the infrastructure don’t cycle themselves. It is a dangerous country to cycle. For example cycling lanes are only on one side of the road, which means that the drivers don’t know where to look for cyclists, because they are all over. It also means that the cyclists have to cross the roads very often, which is the most dangerous to do on a bike. So the poor effort actually made it much more unsafe for cyclists. I would rate Norway to be the most unsafe and frustrating country I have cycled (out of 30 countries so far)”.

And again “There are no trains in the north wich makes travelling with a bike harder”

“Some of the tunnels are “scary” to cycle through (eg the last tunnel to Honningsvåg). I would loved to be more separated from the cars)”

“Although the ferries are going frequently enough to not plan them, a nice app or website in English with al the ferry’s ands time tables would be nice”;

The results from the application of the survey method show that the experience of the cycling tourists, in the part of the EuroVelo 1 route that stretches from Tromso to the North Cape, is not far from being fully satisfactory as the average score is 3,29 but there is a great margin of improvement. Indeed the number of respondents might not appear significant, the comments of the open-ended question give a clear idea of the thoughts, memory and emotions that cycling in that area brought up into them. The feelings and thoughts during the sensory ethnography were in line with what all the other cyclists had except for the rest of individual emotions related to the physical effort, different cultural backgrounds, different weather conditions experienced, etc.

A table(elaborated by the researcher) that compares the results obtained from the feedback of the AtlanticOnBike project, that takes into account the whole segment of EuroVelo1 in Norway, and the feedback obtained by the survey related to the last stretch of it is presented here:

AtlanticOnBike	Master thesis survey
Feedback on what is working well	Feedback on what is working well
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road surface; • Free ferries; • Frequent services such as toilets and rest stops; • Nice to have a place to give feedback like this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free ferries; • Free camping opportunity; • Public toilets and water easy to find;
Feedback for improvement	Feedback for improvement

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyclist-tunnel-lights are a great idea, but most of them are not working; • More shelters for bad weather; • Places to eat brought along food; • A housing or a cyclist meeting point/camps/hotel network of a lower price; • Signage along the Eurovelo 1; • Way too many sharp turns; • Drivers need to keep distance to cyclists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycling infrastructure itself (No coherence on the side of the cycling lane which makes it dangerous for the tourist) • Fix the tunnel light/ create segregate path for crossing tunnel • Lack of signposts of the route above all when closeby a tunnel • Campervan and tour bus speed and respect for cyclists • Lack of weather board; • No alternative off-roads routes • Better connection with railways, airports • North Cape Hall: lack of showers, shelters, bicycle parking • No advertisement of local attractions/Lack of them
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The content analysis of the two interviews held, it is resumed in the following table where on one side topics have been presented and on another the summary of what it has been highlighted:

Topic	Summary
Infrastructure	General dissatisfaction is acknowledged towards the infrastructural development of the EuroVelo1(Tromso-Nordkapp) from different perspectives: lack of signpost of the route, lack of signs about “cyclist on the road”, danger in tunnel crossing and lack of shelters to repair from the rain;

	<p>Highlighted high costs of maintenance and limited profitability;</p> <p>It is not always possible to follow EuroVelo standards due to the extreme weather of the Arctic region; lack of English translation to the official website;</p> <p>Crucial importance of cyclists' feedback in order to improve them.</p>
Institutions/Administration	<p>Focus on difficulties in working with political institutions due to bureaucratic challenges, outdated approaches where there might be people not competent in the field, lack of interest or collaboration from local municipalities and government institutions, overlap of responsibilities and multiple organisms involved in the decision-making progress (generally but not for the case of the route Tromsø - Nordkapp where only Statens Vegvesen is the owner of the roads). Lack of economic resources and capabilities.</p>
VisitNorway	<p>The state-owned organisation is considered a key-resource for collaboration between county councils and for boosting cycling tourism in the region of Tromsø and Finnmark. On the other hand, due to the lack of data concerning cycling tourism and the economical impact of it in the region, there is always a negative answer for collaboration.</p>
EuroVelo1 attractiveness	<p>Beautiful sceneries, remoteness, uniqueness and the physical and infrastructural challenges that the cyclists have to face as a test of their abilities.</p>

There is a clear connection between the results of the survey and what has been brought to light thanks to the interviews: it seems that all the parts are aware of the existing challenges both

from the infrastructural point of view and bureaucratic one which at the same time leads to non-action or small changes. The monopoly, for example, of the road along Statens Vegvesen it makes the process of signposting smoother, thanks to the fact it is not needed the approval of county councils; despite that, placing signs on the route is taking more time than expected, probably for lack of funds and limited human resources. On the other hand, the private-ownership of the North Cape Hall and a possible major economical capacity is not equal to reactivity in the matter of cycling tourism since there are no services or facilities that point in that direction. In addition, during the process of acquisition of data and stakeholder for interviews, it has been received the following answer from the Hurtigruten company:

“I’m sorry to disappoint you, but we do not have intel on the expectations for cycling tourism in Finnmark and Troms. This is a very small segment in our business, and we do not (to my knowledge at least) collect relevant data. Bikes are handled as luggage, but stored during sailing in the freight facilities. We do not register this for future systematic reporting”.

The lack of data, once again is crucial for presenting a more detailed economical assessment and therefore know how and where to act more specifically, since it is already demonstrated that cycling tourism is stimulating economic development in rural areas that are not prime tourist destinations (European Parliament, 2009:18–19) For the aim of the project and as also suggested from one of the interviewees, it seems necessary the establishment of a cycling tourism organisation super partes and state-owned that is able to take decisions and actions without having to ask permissions that would also work for establishing partnerships and co-operations of different sectors.

Despite it might sound obvious, the lack of infrastructures and facilities it is not preventing travellers to come and cycle in Norway; the project, instead wanted to highlight the importance of the *quality* of the trip and to do so the travel experience approach allows to understand deeply emotions, sensations and knowledge that the cycle trip brings along. In order to do that, institutions seem to acknowledge the importance of feedback to improve but still, a shift towards innovation and keeping pace with new tools and techniques is required. Most of the time it is not even needed and simply a different approach and mindset can make things change: as an interviewee wonders, there might be a bureaucratic lacking element compared to the structure and organisation of the neighbouring country of Denmark that it is leading in the field of cycling tourism. The institutional challenges, the lack of personnel working in the field, the vast length of national cycling routes in Norway don’t seem to help with the task and in the

Arctic the weather does not even help much. But it is not all negative about the situation in the northernmost part of Europe which boasts having one of the most unique and remote landmarks and landscapes of the entire continent that appears to be the starting/ending point for three different cycling routes. The lack of facilities and infrastructure can be a chance to learn the know-how from more experienced countries and at the same time innovate and bring new solutions. Finally, in the next sections will be presented the limitations of the study and the final conclusions.

5.3.3 Limitations and future studies

During the development of the project several mistakes have been made that have impacted the results, as well as the possibility for a better understanding of cycling tourism as a tool for regional development. The main ones are related with the survey method: in first place, the survey resulted to be too long and some questions were not totally relevant for the aim of the project; the survey has been published on different Facebook groups but it has been accepted quite late and despite having received more than 600 impressions, only 23 people answered the survey. Of these 23, only the first 13 answers have been taken into account because, by mistake, the survey form was still open to the public and respondents kept on answering even if the analysis of the data was taking already place; In addition, an element that might have stopped people to answer the survey was the disclaimer message that the survey might take between 15 and 20 minute which might discourage respondents to contribute to it. Other mistakes were made in the elaboration of some questions and in the typology of the questions chosen.

Overall the project is extended and each of the methodology could be a separate project itself, in particular, the economic impact of cycling tourism on the stretch from Tromsø to Nordkapp or a gender perspective of cycling tourism in the area, due to the remoteness and the physical challenging elements that might see more solo male travellers rather than female ones. Possibilities were countless, as well as the chances to deepen the research in the matter of sensory and travel experience as a tool for tourism and in particular cycling tourism in regional planning, in particular in the remote area of the Arctic.

6 Conclusions

The project has focused on highlighting the potentials and barriers of the development of cycling tourism in the Eurovelo1 route, in the stretch that connects Tromsø with the North Cape, through the perspectives of stakeholders, administration and users. In particular it has been given importance to the tourist experience to shape regional policies for the sector with the aim not only to increase the number of people coming in the region but above all the quality of the experience. The application of the survey and the sensory ethnographic method allowed us to have a clear picture of how cycling tourism is experienced in the Arctic region.

The interconnection of tourist experience theories and cycling tourism made us put our attention on the relation between services availability and their quality and therefore how they are perceived. It highlighted the multidimensionality of the factors that can influence the experience and how a major importance has to be given to the influential realm whose responsibility is addressed to administration, public institutions and private organisations of the sector. Additionally, the tourists' experiences made us understand how they interacted with the region and their will to come and experience the area again or not. It was possible to identify signposts, segregated cycling paths, safety in the tunnels and shelters as key elements highlighted both from tourists and stakeholders when it comes to having a satisfactory experience, in particular the shelters due to the changing and extreme weather in the Arctic region. The major factors of satisfaction were connected with natural elements which translate to be independent from local authorities actions in the area, on the contrary the major elements of disappointment were related with it and represent a key factor for having people willing to come back and replicate the experience or suggest it to someone else. The tourist experience survey revealed that in the majority of the cases Nordkapp represents the final destination of the journey of travellers and a landmark and symbol for having faced difficult challenges. Investigating satisfaction and in general on tourists' experience represents a starting point for a more engaged public administration as well as a tool for a more transversal participatory planning design, a real co-design process.

The survey method, in general, showed how more research has to be conducted in order to gather more data related to nationality, gender, type of travel (solo, family, etc) and develop or

create ad-hoc services. It highlights the important role that EuroVelo1 plays in the area, not only from the communication and marketing point of view but most importantly for the provision of certain quality standards related with the infrastructure. Additionally, the survey underlines the necessity of giving more visibility to the local community and the elements that create its identity and makes it special (i.e. sami culture, reindeer herding, etc).

Experiencing what cycling tourists do through the sensory ethnographic method represented the most indicated way to connect with the topic to investigate but above all with the region and what it has to offer. Given the opportunity to sense, perceive at first hand, made it easier to understand tourists' experience when analysing results of the survey. It resulted to be extremely relevant for further research and it's estimated to be an effective tool also for institutions when designing regional policies together with relying on the personal experience of local communities.

Regarding the results gathered with the in-depth interviews, it was evident the full match between results gathered from travellers' experience and the information received from the informants; The stalemate situation in regards of infrastructure is due to bureaucratic and political issues related to procedures and organisation hierarchies. Additionally, it seems that a lack of competencies in the matter and lack of resources are debilitating the development of cycling tourism in the region. In order to be able to present to tourism authorities an opportune development plan, it seems fundamental to gather resources for data collection and the elaboration of a pertinent economical assessment not based on estimation from other regions but a more ad-hoc study that takes into account the special environment of a rural area such as the county of Tromso and Finnmar in the Arctic region.

The identification of social practices theories in relation to cycling tourism and regional development makes it clear that developing an alternative tourism based on elements such as the remoteness, uniqueness are key elements to approach global challenges related with climate and overtourism.

Finally, taking into account all the above, we can conclude that focusing on cycling tourism in marginal territories like the arctic region it means improving the local economy but, most importantly, it means providing the area with a nonconformist type of tourism centred on slowness, respect for the environment and the landscape, respect for local people and their cultural identity (Pileri, 2021:5). For these reasons, it is extremely important that

administrations and local stakeholders start to acknowledge the multidimensional advantages that slow tourism provides in the area in order to start acquiring more relevant data to support a more decisive cycling tourism strategy.

7 Figures and Tables

7.1 Survey guide

Theme	Theoretical background	Question
Demographics informants	Demographics informants	Nationality
	Demographics informants	Gender
	Demographics informants	Age - during the trip
General information about the trip		When did you travel on this route?
		Who did you travel with?
		How long did it take to cycle the route from Tromsø to Nordkapp? (days)
		Which bike did you use for the trip?

Behavior choice model	Motivation/Expectations	Why did you choose this route?/ Which are the reasons of choosing that particular route?
Behavior choice model	Motivation/Expectations	More in general, which are the criteria that make you choose a route rather than another one?
Personal realm	Knowledge	Did you know that the route that connects Tromsø to Nordkapp is part of EV1?
Behavior choice model	Knowledge	Did you choose the route to cycle because of EV1?
Behavior choice model	Knowledge	Would you have done the same route even if there was no route from EUROVELO?
Travel experience	Post-hoc satisfaction approach	Likert scale Rate from 1-5 your satisfaction degree with the following attributes: -crossing the ferries -crossing tunnels -segregates cycling path - access to drinkable water - access to food/groceries store - access to public toilets - access to restaurant - Beautiful scenery - Farmers markets

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural ecology - Cultural and historical sites - Signs of attractions - Comfortable climate - Connection of bicycle routes - Connection-oriented transport services - Bicycle hire/repair shops - Wayfinder and directional signs - Public rest areas - Connection with major roadways - Lighting systems - Events, festivals and activities - Visitor centers - Police stations - Overnight accommodation (e.g. camping site, B & B) - First-aid stations - Variety of terrain - Distance signboards - Provision for cyclists at crossings and junctions - Bicycle parking and storage facilities - Weather report message boards - Segregated bicycle facilities - Traffic flow and density - Road surface and pavement
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seating: table and benches - Shelters - bike rentals and connected services (only if used) - bike box access (only if traveled with own bike)
Travel experience	Post-hoc approach	Where did you sleep during your tour?/Which type of accommodation did you use?
	Post-hoc approach	How much did you spend on accommodation per night on average?
	Post-hoc approach	Considering food, accommodation and extra, how much did you spend per day in this part of the route?
	Post-hoc approach	Did you visit Tromsø?
	Post-hoc approach	Which attractions have you visited?
Recollection	Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction + expectations	<p>Would you come back to Tromsø? YES/NO?</p> <p>Why?</p>
Travel experience	Post-hoc approach	Did you visit Alta?
	Post-hoc approach	Which attractions have you visited?

Recollection	Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction + expectations	Would you come back to Alta? YES/NO? Why?
Travel experience	Post-hoc approach	How long did you stay in Nordkapp?
	Post-hoc approach	During your trip, did you do any activity other than cycling? If yes, which ones? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit Salmon Farm • Whale Watching • Visited Museums • Northern Light tours • Guided tour in a reindeer farm/ visited a Sami village • Fishing tour • Others
	Post-hoc approach	Was Nordkapp your final destination?
Travel experience	Return	Which travel mode did you use to go back home?
	Return	Considering the remote location of Nordkapp, rate from 1 to 5 (with 1 being extremely difficult and 5 extremely easy) the difficulty to reach the first transport mode to go back home

Personal realm	Perception of the experience (Memory/Emotion) Post-hoc approach	How satisfied are you with your experience at the North Cape Hall? Rate it from 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied) Did you miss anything there?
	Perception of the experience (Memory/Emotion) Post-hoc approach	Which element did you like most during your route in that area?
	Perception of the experience (Memory/Emotion) Post-hoc approach	Which is the first thing that comes to your mind thinking nowadays about that trip?
Recollection	Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction + expectations	Would you come back to cycle in the region of Tromsø and Finnmark? Elaborate your answer
	Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction + expectations	Would you come back to cycle in Norway? Elaborate your answer
Additional information		Feel free to add any other consideration it has not being taken into account in the survey

7.2 Interview guide

Topics	Questions
<u>Introduction questions</u>	- Introduce yourself

	<p>-What is your job description?</p> <p>-For how long have you worked in your current job position?</p>
<u>Cycling Tourism</u>	<p>-How are you involved in the promotion of cycling tourism in Norway?</p> <p>-Which are the main difficulties in promoting it?</p> <p>-What/Who is helping you in the process of promoting cycling tourism in Norway?</p>
<u>Eurovelo general</u>	<p>-How is your job involved with the Eurovelo Network?</p> <p>-What is the value that the Eurovelo Network is adding to your promotion?</p>
<u>Eurovelo Troms og Finnmark</u>	<p>-When it comes to the specific case of Troms og Finnmark, related with your job, is there interest in the region? If so, what makes raise the interest in it?/Which are the element of major interests?</p> <p>-Due to the international interests toward the location of North Cape, are you satisfied with the development of the EV1 in the region? Why?</p>
<u>Institutional relations</u>	<p>-In order to do your job, do you have to deal with political institutions? If so, which ones?</p> <p>-What is your perception of the collaboration with institutions in the promotion of cycling tourism in the region?</p> <p>-What is your perception of interests from other stakeholders in your field, in the development of cycling tourism in the region?</p>
<p>Feel free to add more information it has not been mentioned here</p>	

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8.1.1 Web

Wrapping up the AtlanticOnBike project extension: a productive sixteen months

https://pro.eurovelo.com/news/2023-08-11_wrapping-up-the-atlanticonbike-project-extension-a-productive-sixteen-months

Appendix

8.2 Transcription Interview 1

Interviewer

So let's start with the first question. Would you like to introduce yourself?

Interviewee

Yeah. - omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview -

I've been living in Norway for few years and I started cycling in Norway in 2016, just as a hobby. I used to be a runner before that, but I injured my legs and I went to cycling at that period of time. The first few years I've been cycling around the outside, dayride and such. And then in 2018 I got into bikepacking, which I guess was becoming quite popular and something that has only really been around for a decade or so, where you kind of go light and..and travel very further. And I just traveled around Norway in 2018. By 2020, when the pandemic came, I was cycling as far.. everywhere in the country basically. So I end up doing. 30,000 kilometres around the country, exploring on bike. I thought this is the most beautiful country in the world to experience on bike. it's just.. there's just not one place where it's not special. I mean..you have 5 million people, quite a large country, on of the biggest countries in Europe. And and and it's it's just..It takes so many boxes for what people are after these days. People want to be more alone and away from civilization, people want to be connected to nature as we seem to be disconnected so much and the bicycle is such a great way to experience that and and there is a massive growth in in bicycle travel. We've seen that all over Europe. Now each year it's growing and growing like sales are growing and you'll see in the cities as well where people want to commute. Now by buying more, people are transporting with their children by bike. -omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview - Provide people with the information that was missing. How do you how do you cycle around knowing what information? You need to know. What about all the routes? What are the dangers involved? And for people to be able to reach out and contact me and and ask me questions in a in a way that I could answer them productively. So that was kind of the Idea and To make the business profitable is difficult because there isn't much money in cycle tourism in regards to.. Generating money, money from it. Most people just want information. They'll go off. And do it on their own you can't do cause and such, but something had the time or anything to do right now.

-omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview -

Interviewer

Thank you. I guess you went already to describe what is your job description. And for how long you've been working? So you already answer to this question. so related to cycling tourism, in which way than are you involved in the promotion of cycling tourism in Norway?

Interviewee

It's it's never like..it's never like anybody approached me and said though, can you can you promote cycling in the country kind of just.. - omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview - I don't get any support really, from any sort of government, institutions or they're right now they don't see the value in what I'm doing. So it's all just. Yeah, my own passion more than anything.

Interviewer

OK. So, elaborating a little bit more, which are the main difficulties in promoting it? In promoting what you're doing cycling.. Or transversal..

Interviewee

Well, there's no..There's no money in it. That's the first thing.

Interviewer

Okaaaay..

Interviewee

So if you want to promote a country, The government does that, you know..you have.. you have the tourism board that promotes, promotes the country and they get paid from the government and they're not the non.profit organization. I mean, visit Norway doesn't make any money, but by not directly, but by bringing people to the country, it obviously generates huge amounts of money for the for the government and In... in people spending and such, and that's that's the problem for me is that I'm promoting Norway for free, really, and thousands of.. I know this year. At least hundreds of people have come to Norway to cycle because - **omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview** - sent me messages and all the rest of it. They've spent thousands of thousands of euro. Each of these people have come and some people come for three or four months to spend, you know, ten, fifteen thousands of euro, all around the country, and that's all because of - **omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview** - but I don't get anything from that. I don't get anything from that, I don't make any sort of money from that, so it's..It's a it's a very, very difficult situation.

Interviewer

OK. May, may I ask you one thing then? Because usually in this process there are, like when it comes to decision in this matter, then it can be top-down. So institutions and like..innovation Norway or the government whenever. Then make the investments and to..develop a policy right? in this case tourism policy. But what if then there is a reverse process of bottom-up? What if it's not just you, but a group of people involved in cycling tourism or any way related with accommodations and infrastructures or activities that ask for it; and then shows that there is an actual income or money generation out of it.

Interviewee

Yeah

Interviewer

Like,Is it in your plan?... I don't know. Usually in other countries, for example, is tourism stakeholders are the ones that are pushing the government so it can be something that can happen also in Norway.

Interviewee

Yeah, I..I don't think I. Have any sort of.. I don't have the.. influence or..or any sort of standing in Norway to to make that happen, because - **omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview** - so I don't have like a farm or a hotel or something within a local community that..that that gives me some sort of..yeah you know something to be able to show to the to authorities that I require or want support. It's a very.. it's. A very strange.. I'm kind of stuck between two places.. I don't own anything or physically and at the same time I'm not an integrated Norwegian, so I'm just in the middle and if I go to *visit Norway*, - **omitted part to**

assure the anonymity of the interview - The only thing they're interested in is: what can I provide for them? Not what am I doing right now for the country, and what benefits am I bringing to the country? What can I do for them? So they want: can you get us some information about who comes the country, demographics, blah blah, blah, blah blah and *Innovation Norway* just turn around and say no all you're doing - **omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview** - There's nothing innovative about it. You don't tick any boxes we can't find You any money. So there..For me..it's the only way I'm gonna, It's if someone believes in what I'm doing. That's kind of the only way. I mean I can knock on so many doors in Norway and they'll just be slammed shut. And it's such a waste of time as well. You know, it's a population of 5 million people and it's it's it's very..You know..if you're a foreigner..You have a disadvantage. I don't know if..you've discovered that yourself living in the country.

Interviewer

Yeah, I did. But yeah, I don't want to get to that topic.

Interviewee

Yeah. Yeah,

Interviewer

But yeah, as I was saying earlier, like.. already not knowing the language, it's the first barrier. And then, yeah, we are just foreigners. Definitely.

Interviewee

Yeah.

Interviewer

Unfortunately, despite the value that you provide to this country. Then uhhh.. I will skip.. so.. Do you receive any sort of help? or.. who is helping? and you already answered to both of them from the from the positive and negative.. so is somehow your job related with the Eurovelo network? and how?

Interviewee

Just to just..to just be clear..That I do get some help. - **omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview** - Norwegian Public Administration.. there was one guy there - **omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview** - that believes in what I'm doing and he managed to get some money for my company this year. So I did get some support from the state because of one (stressed out intonation) individual who believed in me. And and that's kind of how I look at getting funding..It's you need to find people that believe, believe in you. Or .. it's difficult so there is one person, I should mention that.

Interviewer

Is it - **omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview** -

Interviewee

Yeah. Yes, that's it. Yeah,

- **omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview** -

Interviewer

OK, great. Great to know. And you said so this company, not it's not a company well.. I don't know how to pronounce it, but Statens Vegvesen.. it's a national entity that takes care of all the streets. So it's a national partner. What about external? Like European, are you involved somehow with the Eurovelo network or ECF?

Interviewee

Well, through Statens Vegvesen, they work with the EuroVelo and the EuroVelo gives them money each year to promote.. the EuroVelo network in Norway- they've come through to me. So this year I did a couple of projects for them. And one of them was cycling of the Atlantic coastal EuroVelo 1. - omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview - I have done some work for Eurovelo, but it was.. I was.. I was dealing with Statens Vegvesen and Statens Vegvesen we dealing with EuroVelo.

Interviewer

Oh I see.. and as a network of cycling routes all around Europe, which kind of value is the Eurovelo, for example, is adding to your.. To your job? It's somehow giving a plus to it or it's just not related or it's..

Interviewee

Well, a lot of people know about the EuroVelo who are keen cyclists, so it's good promotion for Norway, which means it's good for me - omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview - and I try to promote the Eurovelo routes on the website, I need To do a bit more work, work on it this over the winter, but that's that's important. Obviously that's ..it's the most famous cycling network in in the world. I guess. So..does that answer your question or?

Interviewer

Yes, uh. Somehow like.. Yeah. Yeah Let's say yes. And then talking about more specific case, like a region, so Tromsø and Finnmark, which at the moment are together But next year there will be separate.. separate. Do you see.. do you receive a lot of question? Is there a lot of interest in the region? And if so, what..which are the elements that make the the interest in the region rising? Yeah..I don't know..

Interviewee

Yeah. So there's certainly in Tromsø. Finnmark is still very, very much underdeveloped in regards to cycling for a number of reasons, but this year. I think had the record amount of people visiting the Arctic first by cycling, Lofoten, Senya.. these areas were very, very popular for cycling and I heard many reports of people struggling to get a bike box to fly home with because they were..Just selling out of them at the at the sport shops, the cardboard bike boxes that you can use to pick up. So I think it's going to explode. they're going to see a large amount of people wanting to to go up and cycle there in the next..Next few years. I think. What was the other part of the question was?

Interviewer

Yes, what..which are the elements of interest in the regions of Tromsø and Finnmark concerning like cycling? Which could be and which are at the moment?

Interviewee

Well, I think as I mentioned before is one of the biggest appeals is.. when I talk to a lot of people is that.. like the Swiss Alps or you know the Italian Alps and France and such as.. this is a very,

very well developed cycling areas and there's.. there's hundreds to even thousands of cyclists going.. going there and and and it's very, very popular and It's very, very beautiful. And some people are looking for something different. So I mean, you have to look at Iceland as a prime example that in the year 2000 around 200,000 people visited Iceland and in the year 2015, two million people visited Iceland and there was just a huge Vast increase and the reason for that is that people were looking for something unique and different and they didn't mind that the weather wasn't very good. People were searching and I think that's what the Arctic is it. People want to go to places that are different and that has a massive, massive appeal. And I think that Finnmark has a Big, big potential because..Now..Whether we like it or not, it's. getting warmer up there. And it's 24 hour daylight, which is just amaaaazing for cycling, and there's so many beautiful places and there's so many places where to cycle and there isn't many people around. And that's just so appealing to more and more people. - omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview - Tromsø and Finnmark are one of the big areas to focus on in the next few years, and the issues with it is the fact that it's so far away from everywhere. You can't really get there by train. I mean, Bodo is the furnishing you can kind of go Or you can go to Narvik via Sweden. And flying there with your bike is always difficult, because I've just talked about the bike box problem. It's that they're gonna have massive problems if loads of people go up there to cycle in the future. It's gonna be very difficult for people to get back and that will cause problems so.. Yeah, it's interesting to see how it will develop of that.

Interviewer

Yeah, it's extremely interesting. So let's say that the element of, yeah, the lights, then the climate change. That will make it more, let's say..

Interviewee

Yeah

Interviewer

more comfortable temperatures to cycle, would you say also “ the remoteness”? The remote element.

Interviewee

Yeah, the remoteness is a massive draw, yeah.

Interviewer

OKay

Interviewee

And of course like..Anyways, it's beautiful. It's absolutely stunning so..

Interviewer

Okay. Then you cycled all around Norway.. and I would also put as an extra element, that I observed, the fact that the location of North Cape as itself, it's also one of the main interests..like having.. like the end of Europe, like the northernmost point, which is actually not as we know, but let's say ..there is an element, something that has been created, so this already makes it really interesting. Do you think also that.. I don't know, whatever.. Yeah. Are you satisfied with the development of the the EuroVelo1 in the in that particular region?

Interviewee

Well, it's, it's— It's not very good in a in a Lot of ways but... It's the roads aren't that busy. Those obviously camper vans and tourist traffic there. But.. I don't know. What there there isn't much development done, I mean. It's always just been... Anybody who goes and cycles up to to North Cape. They're they're very adventurous. Experienced cyclists it's a very far away place and it's, you know, say the climate there is extremely difficult at times. So you're kind of you're already a bit. Rough and ready to to... To to accept it, you know it's not cycling in, in, in France on flat, on flat ground, so. I think that's how they. Get away with it, but. There's been very, very poor development I would. Say over the last 10 years from my personal view, yeah.

Interviewer

Yeah. Thank you. And then I think we already sort of talked about it, but to do your job, do you deal with any political institutions? I've already got through it, so Statens Vegvesen, but you never.. do you ever talk or collaborate with the regions?

Interviewee

Not so much. Yeah, they're still not making. They never got in touch with me.. I've..I've done a little bit of work this for a couple of companies that are directly related to cycling in the country and they received their funding from the local municipalities. So I'm not directly dealing with municipalities or government running institutions in that way, but through a medium intermediate organization, if that makes sense.

Interviewer

Yeah, I got. and so the perception that you have of, of the willingness to collaborate. How is it? What's.. Yeah, what's your perception of it? And if it's incorrect English.

Interviewee

What do you mean? If someone wanted to collaborate with me, if the..

Interviewer

No no no.. If these institutions that there are more political, so municipalities, counties or Statens Vegvesen, but you're really answer to that, for the the big one, if they are.. which is their willingness to collaborate with you..how how do you perceive it? are they hostile? Or they listen to you? or what's their..?

Interviewee

Not, not not hostile. I would say that. They're just very large institutions and they're very structured in a in a in a very old fashioned Way that a. Individual - **omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview** - is really insignificant to them right now, and that's they're still doing things in a in a traditional way. That that maybe worked 10 years ago, but is not so working well now because of the way social media and the development of marketing has happened. So when you talk to these companies or you talk to state runner institutions, you find that the people working are perhaps not really qualified for 2023. They're like people maybe that are 50 or 60 years of age who have been working in the job for 30 years that are kind of stuck in a.. you know, in a.. in a certain mindset, and I can just give one example of obviously this is anonymous. So you know this doesn't come from my my mouth, but I spoke to one..the county and the the lady who's in charge of cycle tourism for the county. And then she was not really cycled herself, just maybe like a.. you know, a little day trip on a ebike or something. Very little knowledge about cycling. It was promoting the whole region for cycling and what she was telling me and her views and such. I was.. I completely disagreed with her and I.. I just,

I thought I could never work with this individual because she's stuck in a world that doesn't even exist and I would be very frustrated to deal with, with that sort of level of incompetence, which is, which is institutionalized in, in government run companies because, you know, they're such big entities and... and they're not innovative and..you know what I mean? Like a government run institution doesn't need to worry about making profit. It doesn't need to worry about whether they get 10 cyclists or 1000 cyclists. They just need to do something and that's okay. Whereas if you're working with a company, a product company that has to make profit..yeah, they're really on the ball to have to make sure that they sell the packages and that people do come and that things do work, because if not, they go out of business so.. Yeah, that's my view on on that.

Interviewer

OK. And and instead from.. other stakeholders or other, let's say people like you in the field, which is your perception of Their interest towards cycling tourism? For example, like sports related companies that are selling hiking tours, are they also going into cycling? Do they see them as.. do they see It as. Something that is going to boom or they're just like, no, we just do mountains because we don't bet on cycling. You know, what is there?

Interviewee

So there's two things there, like one is that obviously cycling is becoming more and more popular. People are aware of that Now .companies are definitely becoming more aware of it, more the hard part is that it's it's hard to make a profit in in cycling industry. So for example, bike rental bikes to rent bikes is very, very difficult because you rent them for certain price people ride them, you have to maintain them and they get damaged and and they cost a lot of money to to keep. And then you've also got the seasons that only available really. Between, say, June and. August. So if you're lucky, in May to September. And then the rest of the time, they just kept in the garage somewhere. So there's lots of issues. In regards to how you can make. Money in in, in. The industry the problem I I started working with a tour operator this year to try to sell some cycle holidays, not me putting them myself, the tour operator, which would do them and I would just take a small commission And I had around 150 people from all over Europe and the North America, contacted me, they wanted to book cycling holidays, but the price that these tour operators were offering, not one person booked because, for example, if you want luggage transport between your hotels, the tour operator was quoting 380.00 euros a day. Now, you're talking 70 kilometers. You could quite easily ring up a taxi and get the taxi to drive it 70 kilometers. And probably pay less than 380 euros. So this is the problem in Norway, nothing it is set up for cycle tourism like in Italy and France and Switzerland which is, you know, well run mature markets. So that's a massive issue and and and.. it's yeah.. I don't I.. It's still in between stage where it's too expensive right now and there isn't enough demand and..What will happen in the future is that the government's gonna have to step in and help out with some of the costs or I don't think any.. any private companies will be able to survive. If that makes sense.

Interviewer

I see, Yeah, I know, but I will leave my comments after the registration. Yeah. Do you have any any other information that you would like to add on this topic on this matter? That you feel like I didn't ask. And I think it's necessary that. You think it's necessary to know?

Interviewee

I was going to mention that. It's important to understand how Norway is structured and works, and I know, I'm not sure how it is in other countries, Cause I've never really looked into it, I've

looked into a. Lot more in Norway just cause it's interesting. To see. So for example, I've been trying to. Get more cycling signs on mountain passes, because if you go to, once again, to Italy, France or Switzerland. You, you, you have amazing signs, Cyclist signs and on the passes and when you get to the top there's a summit sign and we all love that. You know we all love signs as cyclists when you get Nordkapp you want a sign with you the the globe and Such that's important. A photo. These are, you know, souvenirs for you. So we're trying. To get some signs on - omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview - And what I didn't realize is that The road is not operated By one institute, But several. so we we looked at - omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview - And there's, there's two municipalities that operate It on either side of it. Then also have The company that maintains the road, the company that makes sure that it's fine and no potholes and such. And then you also have Statens Vegvesen and so. So you Have like 4 Agencies that you. Have to contact it. Gets the signs up and if one of them says "Ohh we're not so sure on this. So you know what we're gonna have to think about it". Then the process Can get drawn out for a long, long time. So what happened this summer is that I didn't do. This work but like. One of the guys that worked for Statens Vegvesen Did it and he spent huge amounts of time, you know, lots of meetings and filling in paperwork and all the rest of it. And eventually we got The go ahead in late September that the sign can go up. And that's just one small road with a few signs and when I speak to Statens Vegvesen. - omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview - says " Yeah, that's exactly why nothing gets done in Norway". And that's why, for example, the EuroVelo signs in Norway are really difficult to get up, Because you have to go through all the municipalities and there are hundreds of municipalities in Norway. So if you want to have EuroVelo signs from NordKapp down to Bergen, that is a bureaucratic nightmare and could take years and years and years and years to do. And the question is when it comes to simple things like road signs of cyclist, this is a not the smarter way to be able to do that. Shouldn't there be an overriding company, one company, that just says we have control on this and we're going to put road signs up along this roads and simplify it and right now in Norway there is not that. And I think that's a massive, massive problem with Norway, when it comes to cycling institutions. Because if you look at Denmark and you look at how incredible Denmark's system is and how it's set up, they must be doing it differently. And the question is, can Norway follow that? Is that even possible? I don't know.

Interviewer

Yeah. Then thank you so much for this last comment, because I think it was.. It's really precious to.. From my perspective..hen I will end up here the recording. And thank you so much for your time.

8.3 Transcription Interview 2

Interviewer

So.. I got permission to record this interview and everything that you will say will just be used for the master thesis

Interviewee

Yeah. okay.

Interviewer

Thank you so much.

Interviewee

The first time, it's not the first time because I have worked together with students. From some years ago and master thesis as well, yeah.

Interviewer

Always related with the EuroVelo?

Interviewee

No, it was a related to cycle tourism but not exactly Eurovelo in the in..in the northern part, so it's ..

Interviewer

OK so ..Cycle tourism?

Interviewee

Projects, yes.

Interviewer

OK. Interesting. So like I just send you like the the file that was supposed to go through and so in case you want to read quickly whhat I sent you..but yeah..so basically I will ask you now to introduce yourself. Your name and what do you do? Which is your role? What's the name of the company? The same company that you work for, what is the the job description and for how long you worked in your current job. Sorry...OK. Just to put into context, which is your, let's say your... If you've just been selected and you've been working there for two years..Or you have like a long like 10 years experience with that.. Like, just to put into context..

Interviewee

. - omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview - And I've been working with these projects since the start of Norwegian national cycle. It's back in 2002, so close to... 20 years experiencing cycle tourism and also road safety. Last autumn we were on in the Northern part of Norway, in Troms and Finnmark, studying the EuroVelo route as part of the «AtlanticOn Bike» project. It's a.. it's only track cooperation project with the other European countries from Portugal, Spain, France, Ireland and Norway. That's the situation, that's what I'm working with, yes.

Interviewer

OK, great. So related to then the Eurovelo, in in which way, since you're involved with different stuff, which is like your role related with the EUROVELO network. Like, what do you what do you actually do?

Interviewee

My job is to take part in projects to realize the Eurovelo routes in Norway. It is road safety audits, find out if the roads that we use for cycle tourism are safe and convenient. It's very good experience with scenery. You have the opportunity to stay overnight, get some food. And another services which are cyclists needs. So that's a that's a job.

Interviewer

And I did some criteria that you mentioned, the one that are like the basics that Eurovelo..are the criteria requirements from Eurovelo or like the combined with national cycling route of Norway. You have like extra standards? ..like.. how is it?

Interviewee

EuroVelo route has certain standards, we use the European standards. But it's a.. it's.. quite different conditions in Arctic areas in Northern Norway than in in Brussels and in central Europe. So we have to have to look at the criterias and see what we can use in Norway.. because.. All these areas are quite different and the other conditions. It's very long distances between.. We will choose where to buy some food.. Or you can stay overnight, so you have to be prepared in different ways when you're cycling up North and in other parts of Norway. Because when you are in the southern part of Norway, you have half of the distance of Europe. So the distance from the south of Norway to North Cape is the same distance as to the Mediterranean Sea. So actually sorry, no worries. Actually, in the middle of Europe so..

Interviewer

I know, because I'm living in Tromsø. So I know that it's really far away it takes like..

Interviewee

You're not from Tromsø?

Interviewer

No, not from Italy.

Interviewee

Yes, yes... Italy is also a long and narrow country.

Interviewer

Yeah, but it's only 1000 kilometer and..

Interviewee

We were four guys which cycled from Southern Norwat to Rome in Italy. Yeah.. I prefer the warmer part of Europe.

Interviewer

I will soon do the Lofoten part and at the end of August from here to North Cape. So, I'd like to know which is like the.. Decision progress. No, sorry. This decision making process related to the progress of the EuroVelo 1 in Norway. Like.. how do you decide which part has to be.. Are you working like as a whole or every year you focus on different areas? How does it work?

Interviewee

At the moment we are involved in a specific project with the other countries. So where we want to develop a system of smart signposting. Because you have other conditions to cycle than other areas so... You have yo be prepared for bad weather, snow, wind, so you got to be prepared for long distances. So we want to have information points where a cyclist can scan the QR code to get the weather conditions and you can also scan the code to get the the road map on your mobile phone so you can navigate. Because if you got lost.. It could be long distances

going back..so..That's what we are working with now. And we want to develop the routes as part of the financial *difficult to understand* including the different projects. So but we also have to cooperate with their council because many of their national cycle routes and EuroVelo routes are along because the county roads, yes.

Interviewer

So that's actually was my one of my other questions.. it's like who is, let's say taking the final words like from the national system.. is it you that impose something on the counties or is the county that takes the final decision on what is happening on the..?

Interviewee

It's the road owner, which is responsible for their own roads. So we got ..for second *difficult to understand* council to to have a route along..that certain way.. if they don't want to cooperate *difficult to understand*. We have now a new map for national cycle routes. And we had a... we sent a letter to the different county councils and we sent to companies around Norway to give their feedback to to what we proposed as national cycle routes. We have good feedback from what we have proposed as national tracking so..I don't think that would be some changes in the north, because the feedback from Tromsø was very good, we also have included a new Norwegian national cycle routes in Finnmark because we have 3-4 different routes heading to the North Cape. North Cape is the point in Europe.. Starting point for three routes and no one else..no other places in Europe has that position as a starting point of three different routes so... I think that the Eurovelo staff also find Northern part of Norway very interesting for routes.

Interviewer

I see..And then related to the decision making process..the collaboration with the counties I got to know that there are European funds for.. that you can also apply for the development of rural regions, right? So for example, if this area, which is considered rural, if they receive some fundings and then decide to elaborate and develop a cycling tourism in their own way.. Do they have to pass from you, like you also are included in the decision making, or they can just take like all the decision by themselves?

Interviewee

Ohh..I think they can take the decisions made by themselves because we cooperate very close with them, and they have the local knowledge on the area, which is.. attractive routes, attractive for cyclists. So either we have an idea, we can talk about it and they can change and we also work with the the roads.. roads safety and if it's talking about developing other services and... facilities for cyclist, are the local councils which are responsible for tourism... They are.. they are taking care of that, yes.

Interviewer

OK. Thank you. My question now is related with what you were saying before. Like..due to the international interest towards the North Cape.. which are lik.. huge from also the sporty like more sporty events to cycling tourism.. Would you say that you are satisfied with the development of the EuroVelo1 in this area?

Interviewee

Not yet, because we don't have any sign posting yet. But we have.. we are working with plan for a sign posting that stretch from Tromsø to North Cape.... But we also have other veloroute which has to be signposted, yes.. some other routes Europe route and other other trails..close to Kirkenæs.

Interviewer

And then so except for the site, would you say that the only thing missing are the signs? Like something so like..What's what else would you improve of the route?

Interviewee

Uh..because it would be have some shelters for cyclists, where they can stop and have some rest. Thats mainly road things.. related to the infrastructure which we are working on and we can spend money on. But we also cooperate with the Norwegian National scenic route, if you know anything about that?

Interviewer

No.. not really.

Interviewee

It's a..it's a part of the Norwegian Public Roads Administration which which works with scenic routes. We have scenic routes in Senja, quite a bit.. in Tromsø a bit and.. scenic routes east from Vardo.

Interviewer

It's like a national tourist route?

Interviewee

Yes. And they also want to..to construct facilities for cyclists along the scenic routes. So I cooperate with them with the other my colleagues.

Interviewer

But they are another entity or its the same?

Interviewee

No, it's ..it's ..it's a part of the Norwegian public roads administration which I work for. So they have their own departments.

Interviewer

I see. Thank you. And so in the immediate future, is there any like, except for signs and shelters..There's like, I guess those are like planning, I don't know for how many years ahead.. Like, is there any like something that is happening right now or in the future? Immediate future in this area? that you say this needs to be done or it's always an ongoing process..and is it any way, sorry this is a long question, is it any way related to cyclist feedback? for example, let me tell you.. like that you receive.. like a request or something has happen on the road from a cyclist and then you immediately work on it or..?

Interviewee

Yeah, we have. We have got feedback from cyclists at North Cape, so yeah.. right now also, we have to analyze what the the cyclists are writing so we can see what they need or what they recommend us to do so. It's part of our work to know cyclists opinion about what's missing and what advise they can give us. Ehm.. cycling tourists are not used noise and tunnels. So we have a work to do..That we're building a new tunnel in *difficult to understand the location* in

Finnmark. It's a tunnel along Eurovelo one and they're building a separated cycle path inside the tunnels, which are only for cyclists, close to the road, so it has its own cycleway inside a rather long tunnel. You know in other tunnels we have a push button that activates an alarm with light warning to to car drivers that are cycles inside the tunnels and we also post boxes outside in which you can take a reflective vest and use it through the tunnel and then hand it over on the over side. So that's what we're working with here.

Interviewer

OK. Then..like the elaboration of the cycling corner, was it an initiative of the Atlantic on bikes? And then you've collaborated with them or was it the opposite?

Interviewee

It was our idea because.. we had also some other places where cyclists could scan the QR code and give the feedback with the mobile phones. But the response of that project was not very good we got only 17 answers. At Northern Cape in the book with handwriting we got some hundreds of feedbacks from different cyclists. And the cyclists at the North Cape are not cycling for a few days, they are cycling all the time. So they cycle 4000, 6000, 8000 kilometers coming from Africa or from Australia. Included on their routes so a lot of cycle tourists because I think they're cycling for three 4-5 days, one week, two weeks, but not so much more. In Norway it is also cycling from North to South it is also a thing.. it's close to 2800, maybe 3000 kilometers, so that's cycling for a month or so.

Interviewer

Interesting. Due to this, as you're saying, it's like a.. It's a place is really interesting for long distance cycling tourist or cycling travelers. What's your like opinion about the... do you think it's it's irrelevant to develop this kind of tourism in this area? Or you think more..Do you think this kind of tourism is like low budget is not helping a lot for the economy or you think the opposite?

Interviewee

Of course, when you're out traveling ..all the.. it has to be low budget, you know. So it's like..cycling in Norway, they are in Norway for a long time. People coming to North Cape with a plane they stay in Norway for few days two, maybe three..But cyclists are for a long time so they spend more money than tourist that come with the plane.. so.. the North Cape they say maybe they have 2 maybe 3 or 4 thousands tourist at the North Cape. And they said it does increase very much the last two years. So it's more and more. More people cycling to the North Cape. They say. But the facilities in North Cape Hall, which is run by the Scandic group, it's more directed to tourists and not to cyclists. So I think we have to discuss with them how to develop the area, also for cycle tourists.

Interviewer

What's it called, the Scandic Group?

Interviewee

It's a hotel , the Scandic hotels. OK, which have a welcome center..It's a cafe, and it's hall, a souvenir shop.

Interviewer

I thought ..It was more like.. more like a state owned or like county owned. And not like a private..

Interviewee

It's private.. Yes.. So you have to pay €30 to come inside.

Interviewer

If you come with the car, but if you have cyclists for free?

Interviewee

No, it's not for free anymore. You have to pay for coming into the center anyway. But maybe if you're coming together with forty person in a bus, maybe you've got a discount from the first company but something as a single cyclist it is rather expensive, so we can think about how to make special prices for cycle tourist, many wants to stay overnight here and there's some areas where you can stay overnight in a tent, but it's away from the center.

Interviewer

OK, so and how come then the the since it's a major, it's a point of interest there. There have not been any development on the like facilities or?

Interviewee

Not for cyclists, no no. And you also have to cycle back to worth to stay overnight. Or if you want to wild camp somewhere.

Interviewer

OK. But would you say that that's like in your in your priorities of the development or other region in Norway have more priority?

Interviewee

We made a decision because the EuroVelo1, you know, it's from Bergen to North Cape. So 3000 kilometers and we want to.. to have focus on the Northern part because it's it's the most focused part in Eurovelo because we have so many, you know, EuroVelo routes up there. And it's a starting point or ending point of many. I thought it was right to have focus on this part of this..of the route and also because we have the roads up there there are state roads which we manage so we..we can do what we want, signposting along our own roads. We will not have to cooperate with other road owners. So that's our business. We don't have to ask County Council for signposting.

Interviewer

OK. And...and last thing is like... it's about your personal impressions on.. on the interests on cycling tourism in the area.

Interviewee

Ahh..Among the local administration, locally, the administration has, I think that the administration and local companies are..are focused on tourism because you have a lot of nature experiences, skiing, hiking and cycling, kayaking. So you have a lot of opportunities to get outside to have special experiences. My impression is that there's a lot of good things going on up North.

Interviewer

OK. Well, actually this is what I'm investigating on because from my point of view, like coming from a Southern country where, Euroverlo, I think it's a little more developed..I see actually

there are not many facilities. I'm thinking for example.. if I would like cycle from Tromsø to North Cape and I'm arriving here by plane there are no facilities for, for example, boxes. Or if you want to do the opposite, from North Cape..the closest and biggest airport is Tromsø, so there are no other ones. There is Alta, Kirkenes..

Interviewee

Alta, yes and you can take local planes..But you can also use the coastal Express, Hurtigruten Yeah. Because we cooperate with them so people can come by to North Cape and Vardo as well. So you can take the boat. But you have to pay. It's not cheap, but that's ..that's an option.

Interviewer

What I meant is that ..I would expect, for example, That there is at the airport a cycling corner for, for example..Like for.. If you're coming here with a bike, then first thing you need is a pump to pump again the the tires and set up your bike and then start heading north for example... Or if you cycle, then if you're coming from the Iron Court route..and than you want to travel by plane. Then you come here in Tromsø and then have to do all the stuff and you want to pack your bike and go home then I think would be nice having a box or at least like as most shop where you can put your stuff. Something like more cycling focus or? It can either be, yeah exactly, what I've been missing here in Tromsø has been like signed where for example you can see all the distances in kilometers because it's just a detail..But signs are interesting ..For example, in North Cape having a sign that you are 10,000 kilometer away from South Cape or...

Interviewee

That..Yeah..We have to put a signpost at the North Cape because we have the different route and we have to do give information on how long it's to the end of that EuroVelo. Or maybe to, how far is it to the northern part to to Bergen? And then you have to ..so there is a signpost like that in Kirkenæs for cars and some places in Linsnes that tells you the distances to the North Cape.

Interviewer

Yeah, that's a good thing. Or I was also thinking..Just like even like a.. it's not something that is advertised here in Tromsø.. I feel like it's more mass tourism rather than developing cycling ..than developing cycling tours where I understand that the window of months in which cyclists can come and cycle without snow is really low. But there is a... There are some advantages on it, I think, and I want to understand, my aim was to understand which are the, what it's preventing or stopping institutions to boom it. To make people like.. to actually promote it.

Interviewee

What are your the main title of your thesis..

Interviewer

It's potentials and barriers of the development of cycling tourism in the region of Tromsø and Finnmark. So to have a clear idea what's.. what's there? What can we actually explored and what is stopping it to do it. If it's or like a bureaucratic or it's not of interest of for example, now I see that it's interest of the national. What about the county institutions? If they are interested in it, is it like a... Probably it's a matter of economics and finance. But what if, yeah, but what if it's just, like instead of using the money they have for other kind of tourism based, yhey started looking for cycle tours. That generates another kind of tourists, and it's also the

thing of cycling tours is that we distribute the income in like in all the region. Not just in the major cities, but also the small village can start having their own cycling shop like a small activity bike rental. Why not..or even the the option of cycling with the snow with fat bikes. And it's not just that in summer time.

Interviewee

That's right. Yes, I think that's what you're writing, what you're discovering is very interesting to us, so we would like to read what you your conclusions are, cause we need advice on how to develop our routes. And we have to rely on the services along the route. So we have to be, yeah. We need a stable services so we can rely on them. Ready for the cyclists when they come. We we are now working on our website, its in Norwegian only at the moment..at the national cycling routes.. it's.. we can't have a lot of links to different facilities like hostels or other accommodation, because the change is very often..than someone stops running their business. But when we cycled from from Norway to Rome last summer we used to booking.com to find where we could stay overnight. So I think other people that are using that tools to find out where to stay all night, like airbnb or hotels.com or other websites.

Interviewer

Yeah, I guess it's more even...

Interviewee

Well, social social medias as well..because then when we went from Holland last summer, when we biked along the Pilgrame route, But there cyclists can stay overnight at other cyclsits but they have to offer an overnight as well.

Interviewer

That's interesting, but it will be also like.. of course you can create your own marketing strategy. Like..for example a paper like a sort of a cycling passport. And then if you stop at different tourist attraction, you can get the stamp or something like this.. But it's not just about where to sleep. I think that sometimes it's also what to visit and so..I'm thinking.. I'm more focused on.. because of where I'm from..But like more enogastronomic experiences, if there's like a salmon farm. What if I'm cycling and I've never heard of a salmon farm...Then I would like to go and visit and maybe have like a small tour or there is an Arctic distillery. Why not? to go and visit or when they do the Arctic bottarga? You know..Then why not? and visit how it is created or something particular.. So it's not. Just a I'd rather, as you were saying. You can decide where to go and sleep in other ways. But then there are certain things that are extremely peculiar of this area that only Norwegians might know. Or the there is like,for example, like an old lady that is knitting something in a particular way..in an old way. Or and then something like this..yeah.

Interviewee

inaudible ... very clever handcraft from Sami culture, or some different nice making and sewing and making things out of skins etcetera.

Interviewer

But I don't see..I don't see any of this for example, on the on the route.. for example, just see the rock carvings of Alta. Or the.. some other like.. the Viking scenic route...There are or the Viking.. like the Viking church in Lofoten. But the rest..there are not a lot of interests, site of interest.. bookmarks and... From what I'm doing, I'm also sending a survey to cyclists and

hopefully I will receive thousands of answers so they can be also helpful. I can also send the results of the survey and you can get more insights.

Interviewee

Are you following the Eurovelo discussion group? You know, the Norwegian public roads administration, we are actually only a road administration only. We previously had a company running «cycling Norway».. It was a cooperation between county councils, private companies, destination companies. So they make it much better websites for cycle tourists. We are only roads administrator which are focused on the road safety and how to get there. Now what you can discover because I think..That should be visitnorway, they are using our opus and they they also write about what you can discover, where you can what you have to. You can take some detours to discover that and. You can do different things.

So I think that's the work for, for all the parties that down the road. I'm only woking with road administration, so that's I don't have the capacity to do all that stuff.

Interviewer

No, but this already says a lot, because if the road state would understand that the importance of it..Then it would and could create a team that is not just you for example..

Interviewee

So that regional recycling offices in north and the middle, North, East, West South so there were more people..they have left and they are working for the county councils now. - omitted part to assure the anonymity of the interview - So the capacity is quite limited. And we have 10,000 kilometers of national cycle routes. So I can't be detailed informed. We have to set some limits for my. So my work is to to find out where it's safe to go and where can experience Norway as a country.

Interviewer

Then OK, then the last technical question is that now talking about Norway. So basically I was exploring the website of EuroVelo. It was saying exactly screenshot that I sent you via e-mail. Uh, there was a picture of Norway and then saying 'map and list of the national EuroVelo coordinator' and then there was with the Norwegian Public Roads Administration. Great. Then if I click on the website, it doesn't go to the national Public Roads administration. But it goes directly to Visit Norway. So okay, so how come that?

Interviewee

That's because we don't have a website which you are translated to English.

Interviewer

OK.

Interviewee

So it's only norwegian websites, that was launched last september. So it's like new updated website and we're working with the translation to English which we could link to from EuroVelo. But it s a work going on.

Interviewer:

Is it visit Norway, a state owned, or is it a private owned?

Interviewee

It's a..I think it's a state owned, yes, but also owned by the county Councils.

Interviewer

OK, I see.

Interviewee

It's a.. it's a number an organization from Visit Northwest, Visit South, Visit Norht both so they're linked.

Interviewer

Thank you so much for your time. It was really nice. Can I get back to you if I see that I have some missing information?

Interviewee

It's a pleasure, thank you.

