Planning for sustainable tourism in the Nordic rural regions

Cruise tourism, the right to roam and other examples of
identified challenges in a place-specific context

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1. Introduction

In the newly published Nordregio report '[Planning for sustainable tourism in the Nordic region](#)', over 100 tourism development plans (TDPs) from rural areas of the Nordic countries were collected, coded and analysed. The mapping of these documents – which are formulated at the lowest geographical level – provide an insight into how the regions and define themselves in relation to tourism, what their strengths and focuses are, where they see opportunities, what they consider their main challenges, and how sustainability concerns are – or are not – integrated into the tourism plans. The process of thoroughly mapping, coding and analysing the TDPs revealed some common challenges in tourism development and tourism planning which are shared among many Nordic regions while other challenges are more place specific.

Among the shared challenges are e.g., the management and coordination of tourism and tourism planning, securing local benefits from tourism, seasonality and extending the tourism season, increasing profitability and investment, environmental concerns, providing the necessary infrastructure and securing competence development. Further analyses, national comparison and more detailed data about the challenges and opportunities identified in the regional and municipal tourism strategies is available in the [aforementioned report](#). The following focal chapters however provide insight and examples of how some of these topics are discussed in the rural TDPs. The examples come from all five Nordic countries as well as the three autonomous regions.

Other important challenges, but not as widespread, were also identified in some of the analysed material. Cruise tourism and 'the right to roam' (also called 'the right of public access') are two subjects that have gotten considerable attention in the academic literature on Nordic tourism, sometimes even attracting media attention and being part of the public debate regarding tourism development. Still, these topics are not necessarily widely discussed in TDPs across the entire Nordic region. These two examples are however, where relevant, much debated issues and key topics that must be addressed for the future development of tourism. Therefore, one of the following chapters is devoted to discussions on cruise tourism in the Nordic rural TDPs, while another chapter presents discussions on 'the right to roam'. The remaining eight chapters however focus on a specific topic, identified as a common challenge in the Nordic regional TDPs and those chapters present how that topic is addressed in the TDP of a certain region.

This report is a part of the '[Rural tourism in the Nordic region](#)' project, which is conducted by Nordregio under the Nordic Thematic Group for Sustainable Rural Development. For further information and detailed results of the analyses of the entire TDPs gathered for this research on sustainable tourism planning in the Nordic rural regions, we refer to the main report of the Rural tourism project, '[Planning for sustainable tourism in the Nordic region](#)'.

Both residents and 'leisure-time residents' are among the target groups in the municipal tourism strategy of Gribskov municipality in Denmark.

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2. Focal case of Denmark: Involvement of guests in place development and place branding

2.1 Introduction

The Danish case of Gribskov municipality examines how the municipality and tourism actors engage with a large and growing group of so-called leisure-time residents (in Danish 'fritidsborgere'), a voluntary, temporary population. Both residents and 'leisure-time residents' are among the target groups in the municipal tourism strategy, together with tourists and businesses. The 'leisure-time residents' are a voluntary temporary population who own or use a summerhouse/cottage and feel a strong place attachment to the area, where they have often visited for generations, despite not living there full time. For many, this motivates a strong engagement in the development of the municipality as their second home. The 'leisure-time residents' are included in a long list of local actors engaged in tourism development, and with whom the municipality commits to a mutually binding collaboration. This focal case thus illustrates how a non-urban municipality can engage and collaborate with resourceful summerhouse owners, typically from the nearby capital area of Copenhagen, to help strengthen the local economic and social benefits from tourism, as well as its branding.

2.2 Blurring of the tourism–resident dichotomy: Leisure-time residents or voluntary temporary populations

Few TDPs share a common feature. They highlight participatory approaches to place development and show synergies and overlaps between rural place development and destination development and between abandoned dichotomies such as resident vs. tourist and place-maker vs. place consumer, using a fuzzy integration of these concepts. They typically consider tourism and residents together and discuss about creating attractive places and quality experiences, as

well as stays, for both. They also view day tourists as potential new summerhouse owners or residents, and are typically interested in the contribution that tourism and the visiting guests make through the connections, networks, branding and innovation.

This focal case presents a coastal municipality in Denmark that works strategically with the involvement of 'leisure-time residents' for strengthening not only the tourism economy but also the development of local place, cultural activities, entrepreneurship and branding of the municipality. We chose this case to highlight how tourism planning that involves residents and the voluntary temporary population can be used strategically to strengthen regional development perspectives.

Gribskov works strategically with the involvement of 'leisure-time residents' for the development of local place, cultural activities, entrepreneurship and branding of the municipality.

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2.3 Welcoming the leisure-time residents

Gribskov municipality, with 34 km of breathtaking coastline towards Kattegat, is located in the northern part of Zealand, less than an hour's drive from Copenhagen. It also offers diverse, rural hinterlands, including part of the largest lake in Denmark; Arresø; farmland; forest and small towns and villages. It has a resident population of approximately 41,000 inhabitants (2017) and a population density of 147 inhabitants per km², which is just above the national average. It is part of the capital region and is one of the municipalities in Denmark with the highest density of summerhouses relative to the resident population. According to a recent Nordic study on the impact of second homes and seasonal tourism on spatial planning (Slätmo et al., 2019), Gribskov municipality has the second-highest 'community impact' of second-house users in Denmark, meaning that it has many summerhouses that are frequently used, thereby creating a high temporary population relative to the resident or permanent population (see Map 1). When including the summerhouse users, the population of the municipality increases by a factor of two to three. It, therefore, may not be surprising that the importance of the voluntary temporary population who visit the municipality to stay in their summerhouses is highlighted in the municipal tourism strategy (Gribskov kommune turismestrategi, 2016-2020). However, as this is far from the case in all TPDs, even those with large second-home settlements, Gribskov is an interesting example to highlight.

Recognizing the role of second-home mobility and use, recent studies argue that seasonal

population (number of people in the area during high tourism season) and annual average population (average number of people present in the area, accounting for all seasonal variations) are concepts that are important to take into account, rather than just focusing on the resident population, to understand territorial dynamics and rural development conditions (Adamiak et al., 2016). Map 1 shows the ratio between annual population relative to the resident population (Slätmo et al., 2019). Recent research on voluntary temporary population in the Nordic countries indicates that the use of second homes is increasing in the Nordic countries, and that close to half of the population has regular access to a second home, either as owners or through relatives or friends (Slätmo et al., 2019). Research also shows that such second homes are increasingly used year-round (Adamiak et al., 2016; Back & Marjavaara, 2017; Slätmo et al., 2019).

Map 1. Community impact by second-home users (2017).

Map from Slätmo et al. (2019).

In the introduction of the tourism strategy, the Mayor of Gribskov underlines that in addition to the economic importance of tourism for the municipality, tourism possesses a potential for creating additional local growth and development: *"We must create quality-focused growth starting from the place-bound potentials of the municipality, thereby improving life for residents, leisure-time residents, tourists and the business sector"* (Gribskov kommune turismestrategi, 2016-2020).

'Leisure-time residents' is the term that the municipality consistently uses to describe those who do not live permanently in the municipality, but who come there regularly, often in relation to a summerhouse or leisure-time cottage, and spend time in the municipality, although their permanent address is elsewhere. Using the term 'resident', their engagement is invoked by the municipality, and an invitation is extended towards them for involvement in the municipal, and local, development and with other residents and leisure-time residents.

"The many summerhouses in the municipality create value economically, and through branding. Many leisure-time residents have a strong attachment to their summerhouse, which often has been owned by the family in generations. The summerhouse is the second home of the leisure-time resident which creates engagement in the municipal development. An increased used or renting out of the summerhouse an extra weekend a year can contribute to creating additional value."

Gribskov kommune turismestrategi, 2016-2020.

This quote reflects the tourism strategy's focus on the place-bound qualities and development and the communalities or synergies between those who live in the municipality year-round and the so-called leisure-time residents. They are an asset to the municipality, because of their economic purchasing power and the money they spend locally, and show a development potential through their engagement and involvement in the branding of the area - a branding that is relation-based, participatory and authentic. The potential of voluntary temporary populations in place branding is also being recognised in research on place branding in Nordic

contexts (Broegaard et al., 2019). Several of the other Nordic municipalities with high second-home populations are aware of the potential of this group of (voluntary temporary) population and employ different strategies to engage and involve them (Slätmo et al., 2019), e.g., through meetings, targeted information and ear-marking of funds to carry out physical improvements proposed by the voluntary temporary population. In other places, local authorities may be aware of the importance of the seasonal population and the considerable development potential they represent, but do not address them systematically (Topsø Larsen et al., 2018; Topsø Larsen, Broegaard, & Havtorn Larsen, 2019). The voluntary temporary population may be a somewhat 'invisible' population in receiving municipalities, as they are not easily captured in registry data and our ordinary perception of 'residents'.

Gribskov municipality intends to develop and brand its tourism through 'strong narratives and place-bound experiences' (Gribskov turismestrategi, 2016-2020), which requires co-creation and collaboration with many actors - here, they also specifically mention authorities, leisure-time residents, networks, organisations and business organisations. One of the ways they approach this is through the organisation of workshops for leisure-time residents to 'strengthen the attachment to Gribskov municipality' (Gribskov turismestrategi, 2016-2020) as well as find ways to increase the use of second homes year-round (including through rental activity). Another workshop for leisure-time residents is planned to strengthen their involvement in cultural events and institutions and their development in the municipality. Thereby they also aim to extend the cultural networks available for such development activities, by involving and engaging leisure-time residents and their networks, not least in relation to local attractions.

Gribskov tourism strategy highlights a concept of co-development responsibility in their collaboration with actor [forpligtende samarbejde], i.e., they are responsible for and engaged with the broad array of actors, with whom they collaborate for tourism development, from tourism organisations and public institutions to business associations, civic organisations, volunteer groups, residents and leisure-time residents (Gribskov turismestrategi, 2016-2020). In 'Invitation to co-create' (Gribskov kommune, 2017), a short version of a recent strategic plan, coordination and collaboration is seen as an important strategy by the municipality. It presents innovative ways of connecting the hinterland with its more immediately attractive coastline, to increase the attractiveness of the entire municipality and to 'improve living conditions' for 'residents and leisure-time residents, businesses and tourists' (Gribskov kommune; SLA København; Smith Innovation, 2016). This plan was part of a national strategic planning project to support local place-bound development in rural municipalities in Denmark (Erhvervsstyrelsen et al., 2017).

Among the actions highlighted to achieve such increased attractiveness and connectivity, one is directed specifically at making obtaining an overview of the activities and offers from organisations and engaged civic groups easier for leisure-time residents, residents and tourists (Gribskov kommune; SLA København; Smith Innovation, 2016, p. 24), thereby stimulating their involvement. The leisure-time residents are also highlighted as 'a huge resource for the municipality to which they have a strong attachment' (Gribskov kommune; SLA København; Smith Innovation, 2016) in relation to biodiversity and actions to strengthen it.

Gastro-tourism, local food production and the involvement of leisure-time residents are also mentioned in both the tourism strategy and the new strategic physical plan. Gribskov has many smaller part-time or hobby farms with organic farm shops, and this matches the increasing demand for locally produced food items among the resourceful leisure-time residents. It also matches a strategic focus on gastronomic experience tourism and gastro-entrepreneurship (Gribskov kommune; SLA København; Smith Innovation, 2016) to create more local jobs and year-round gastro(tourism) activities (Gribskov kommune, 2016). Consequently, authentic food narratives are a strategic focus mentioned in the new strategic plan, presented as an existing strength, characterised by strong organisation among food producers and through the food network 'The taste of Northern Zealand'. 'Foodies' stand out among engaged voluntary temporary populations in a recent study on translocal development (Topsø Larsen et al., 2018), and gastro-tourism is an increasingly important element of place identity, place branding and rural tourism (see also Gyimóthy, 2017).

2.4 Voluntary temporary populations as translocal interconnectors

The leisure-time residents contribute through their economic activity in the locality where they have their second home to the economic turnover of local private services and stores, which might not have sustained otherwise (Slätmo et al., 2019), and they contribute both as consumers and producers of place and cultural activities (Topsø Larsen, Broegaard, & Havtorn Larsen, 2019). They help create jobs and engage in and enable place development and diverse activities, often contributing through networks, knowledge and resources, which would not be present (to the same degree) within the resident population alone (Broegaard et al., 2019; Robertsson & Marjavaara, 2015; Topsø Larsen, Broegaard, & Havtorn Larsen, 2019).

The strategic involvement of Gribskov's leisure-time residents suggests that urban and rural areas are tied together in ways that also blur their distinction. Voluntary temporary populations, who live and engage in more than one place, function as interconnectors between these places, often urban and rural, and bring together knowledge, experience, resources and values (Gallent, 2014). This has implications for how we understand places, also the rural ones, and their interconnected character. The municipalities with high numbers of voluntary temporary populations and awareness about the strategic importance therefor are able to evoke translocal resources through the engagement of the leisure-time residents and their networks, thereby contributing to important local place development (Topsø Larsen, Broegaard, & Larsen, 2019) and relational and participatory place branding (Broegaard et al., 2019).

However, the high number of 'leisure-time residents' relative to the resident population also presents challenges. For example, it is challenging to adapt to the welfare system and services to these large flows of voluntary, temporary inhabitants. Currently, many public services are financed through the income tax paid by the resident population, while these services are enjoyed by everyone who needs it during the (temporary or permanent) stay in the municipality. Consequently, large temporary variations in the population may present challenges to the municipalities with large seasonal populations but a small number of residents. This challenge, identified by Slätmo et al. (2019), is unsurprisingly omitted from the TDPs, which present a positive outlook of tourism. Another challenge, also not addressed in the TDPs, is a potential for unequal influence on local place development, between resourceful and well-connected, engaged voluntary temporary population and the most immobile and least resourceful resident citizens (Topsø Larsen, Broegaard, & Havtorn Larsen, 2019). As mobile lifestyles increase and the use of second homes becomes even more frequent, including for 'working-from-home' extended stays, these aspects demand attention from municipal planners and decision makers.

Close to half of the population of the Nordic countries has regular access to a second home.

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Forests in Finland.

Photo: Unsplash.com

3. Focal case of Finland: Parks and World Heritage - sustainable conservation while securing development outcomes

3.1 Introduction

The Finnish case of Kvarken aims to look closer how active destination management is used to balance the positive and negative externalities from tourism at a World Heritage (WH) site. It presents the challenge of governing a natural ecosystem and protecting it from risks of overuse and possible environmental degradation while at the same time allowing usage. The Kvarken case introduces the dilemma of balancing the two aspects and how tourism management in a protected area has been used as a tool to achieve sustainable conservation and development outcomes.

3.2 Challenges regarding the development of tourism activities in World Heritage destinations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) WH sites are areas having cultural and/or natural characteristics of 'outstanding universal value' according to international criteria and 'tests of integrity and authenticity' (Hall & Piggin, 2002). While these sites are considered world-recognised tourist attractions in their own right, they are also protected areas and living environments for local people (Svels, 2015). WH sites are hence influenced by both global and local interests, which may contradict each other (Becken & Job, 2014). Whereas WH designation tends to increase the number of domestic and international visitors significantly (Hall & Piggin, 2002), it also restricts tourism developments within and nearby WH sites since increasing tourism may hamper conservation purposes (Buckley 2018).

The purpose of this focal case is to present how tourism management is used as a tool to

develop sustainable tourism products in the Kvarken Archipelago WH site in Finland. According to a survey conducted in 2011, the residents in the Kvarken area have a positive view when it comes to tourism. Yet, the locals feel that they should be provided more opportunities to contribute to the WH site management as it may be difficult to strike a balance between the local needs and the WH conservation aspiration (Svels, 2015).

3.3 World Heritage designation of the Kvarken Archipelago and its impacts on tourism developments

The WH Convention was ratified in Finland in 1987, and there are seven WH sites in the country per September 2020. Kvarken Archipelago is the only Finnish WH site based on natural criteria, and together with the High Coast in Sweden it forms a transnational serial WH site that was designated owing to its geological values (Svels, 2011). While the High Coast received its WH legitimacy in 2000, the Kvarken Archipelago obtained its designation in 2006 (Svels, 2015). These two sites are located on the coastal area surrounding the narrowest part of the Gulf of Bothnia, more explicitly in the region of Ostrobothnia in Finland and Västernorrland in Sweden (Svels & Åkerlund, 2018).

The WH status of Kvarken Archipelago is based on the continuous process of land uplift and other geological processes that originate from the latest Ice Age when the area was covered by the continental ice sheet. Due to the rising land, the landscape of Kvarken is transformed constantly, and the WH site's land area increases by 100 ha every year (Meriruoho, 2011). This emerging land has constituted an increasingly important resource for the local people since it is managed as a common-pool property for recreational use and a large share of second homes built on leasehold plots (Svels & Åkerlund, 2018). The natural features of the Kvarken Archipelago also include a variety of moraine ridges and rocky areas, and a high biodiversity - including seabirds, fish species, seals, and forest vegetation. The islands are scarcely populated, and most of the residents are Swedish speaking. The local cultural heritage is characterised by typical handicrafts and building style, sheep farming, fishing and forestry activities. The tourism activities provided include fishing, health promotion, locally produced food, sailing, rowing, tour canoeing, cruises, skiing, riding a kicksled, tour skating, birdwatching, nature photographing, bouldering, hiking, camping, geocaching and learning about the WH values (Meriruoho, 2011).

The WH site of Kvarken is situated in the municipalities of Korsnäs, Malax, Korsholm, Vaasa and Vörå. The site's total area is 194,400 ha, of which around 15% constitutes of land area, while approximately 50% of the WH site's area is owned by the Finnish state, of which 99% constitutes of water. Most of the land area is thus owned by 'private persons, village associations, municipalities and enterprises', creating a fragmented land ownership structure, which can be challenging in regard to the establishment of new infrastructure (Meriruoho, 2011, p. 14). Over 50% of the total area of the Kvarken WH site is included in Natura 2000 network (Hallantie & Ollqvist, 2009).

The Kvarken Archipelago is not considered a national tourist attraction (Svels, 2011; Vuoristo, 2002), and the conventional tourism flows have been concentrating in other parts of the region and the city of Vaasa, which is the regional capital of Ostrobothnia (Svels, 2015). Since there have been some uncertainties concerning the visitor statistics of Kvarken, it has been difficult to estimate if the WH designation has increased the site's attraction level (Svels, 2011). Whereas the area's WH status has been used by the authorities and other stakeholders in order to increase tourism activities, 'one-sided management practice' and some internal conflicts between the different stakeholders have been impeding local tourism developments (Svels, 2015, p. 195).

Kvarken is considered a world-recognised tourist attractions in its own right while also being an protected areas and living environments for local people.

Photo: Kvarken destinations

3.4 Tourism development plan as a tool to develop sustainable nature-based tourism in the Kvarken Archipelago

The Finnish Forestry Board (Metsähallitus), functioning as the WH mandate holder of the Kvarken Archipelago, published a Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy (STDS) in 2011. This TDP had the objective of developing the WH site into a sustainable nature tourism destination by guiding how recreational and tourism activities can be promoted without harming the natural¹, cultural and social characteristics of the Kvarken Archipelago. It hence aspires to "support the opportunities for obtaining a livelihood within the archipelago and the vitality of the villages" (Meriruoho, 2011, p. 7). It also aims to reinforce the integrity and authenticity of the WH site, according to the principles of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Meriruoho, 2011; see also UNESCO, 1972). The TDP refers to the vision for the Kvarken Archipelago 2020 (Meriruoho, 2011), which was originally presented in the Kvarken WH Site Strategic Management Plan (see Hallantie & Ollqvist, 2009): "The Kvarken Archipelago, due to its geology and landscape values, is a unique and widely known WH site, which offers its residents a pleasant and attractive living environment as well as genuine experiences for visitors" (Meriruoho, 2011, p. 33).

The STDS is based on the concepts of sustainable tourism and nature-based tourism. While these theoretical concepts have been defined in various ways in the literature, sustainable tourism is understood in the STDS as "tourism which is economically viable but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and

1. The natural characteristics include both geology and biodiversity of the WH site.

the social fabric of the host community" (Meriruoho, 2011, p. 9; see also Swarbrooke, 1999). It is also mentioned that ideally such approach of sustainability should be included in all tourism development planning from the very beginning, considering both short- and long-term effects (Meriruoho, 2011; see also Saarinen, 1998). The STDS considers nature-based tourism in accordance with the definition used in the Development Programme for Nature-based Tourism and Recreation, which was launched by the Finnish Ministry of the Environment in 2002:

"Sustainable nature tourism means all tourism which is based on nature. A somewhat narrower definition for nature tourism is tourism which involves people relaxing in nature. Nature tourism combines recreation with tourism in nature. In nature tourism, nature is the main attraction or operational environment. Nature tourism encompasses all recreation which does not reoccur daily in nearby surroundings. In other words, nature tourism also includes the use of holiday residences and related recreation."

Meriruoho, 2011, p. 9.

The planning process for simultaneous tourism developments and WH management is divided into three parts in the STDS: 1) general aims of the STDS and information on the area, operational environment and the current status of the WH site's tourism activities are presented; 2) the site's tourist attractions are described, and the sustainability of the prevailing tourism activities is analysed; and 3) the goals for the year 2020 are defined, including how to reach this target state. The participation process to create the STDS was inclusive since both tourism operators and different interest groups were participating, in addition to the Finnish Forestry Board's senior advisors, Ostrobothnia Natural Heritage Services' personnel, the Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Steering Committee members and the steering committee's marketing working group (Meriruoho, 2011).

A dog sitting by the water in Kvarken Archipelago.

Photo: Kvarken destinations

3.5 Identified strengths and threats within the Kvarken WH site, and the aimed target state

Based on the results of a visitor survey conducted in 2009 and an enterprise survey carried out in 2010 regarding the prevailing demand and supply of tourism services, a SWOT analysis was used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the Kvarken WH site. While the site's WH status, uniform logo, certified WH guides, good accessibility, authenticity and locality among other factors were considered strengths, several aspects could be developed further, such as increasing visibility, implementing winter tourism activities, providing closer networking between the service providers, creating new products, improving public transport connections and highlighting the WH values. In order to maintain the authenticity and the unique characteristics of the Kvarken Archipelago, without exceeding its carrying capacity, the tourism products should be focusing on the site's genuine features. To counteract overlapping activities and short-sighted tourism expansion, the local residents' participation is encouraged, and roles of the different actors are clarified (Meriruoho, 2011).

In order to develop tourism activities in the Kvarken Archipelago according to the desired direction, nine principles of sustainable nature tourism describing the site's target state were launched by the Finnish Forestry Board in 2004: 1) Natural values are preserved, and the activities promote nature conservation; 2) Environment is subjected to as little pressure as possible; 3) Local culture and traditions are appreciated; 4) Customers' appreciation and knowledge of nature and culture are increased; 5) Improved recreational facilities are provided for visitors; 6) Customers' mental and physical well-being is strengthened; 7) Local economies and employment are promoted; 8) Communication and marketing are high in quality and responsible; and 9) Activities are planned and implemented cooperatively. All involved actors - including the service providers, service users and local interest groups - are required to seek to achieve the target state according to the principles, regarding all tourism operations - as well as planning, marketing and communication of such operations (Meriruoho, 2011).

According to the STDS, a special method is used to monitor and evaluate impacts of tourism on the WH site in a systematic manner - considering the ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainable nature tourism. This tool is planned to be used both during the planning phase and at the implementation stage of tourism products, and to monitor effects of the use of the Kvarken WH site in a constant and systematic manner. In this way, possible negative effects can be noticed early enough to enable intervention and preventive measures (Meriruoho, 2011). In addition, the Limits of Acceptable Change method and visual sustainability evaluation will be applied in Kvarken (Meriruoho, 2011; see also Stankey, Cole, Lucas, Petersen, & Frissell, 1985). While the STDS action plan particularly mentions the important role of the local village societies and associations in the development of tourism and recreational activities (Meriruoho, 2011), it is essential to truly enable participation of the locals in the Kvarken WH site governing 'to make them feel a shared responsibility', which would be beneficial for the conservation ambition (Svels, 2015, p. 192).

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Despite recent tourism boom in Iceland the visitor economy of the country is still highly seasonal.

Photo: Vaida Ražaitytė

4. Focal case of Iceland: Seasonality, transport and infrastructure

4.1 Introduction

Tourism in Iceland showed unprecedented growth in the past decade before the global Covid19 pandemic. The distribution of tourists during this growth phase was however very uneven among the regions of the North Atlantic island because of extreme seasonal differences. Before the massive increase of foreign tourists in Iceland from the year 2010, seasonality was high, but overall it has since decreased substantially. This is mainly because of the change in overnight stays in the capital area in past years (Óladóttir, 2017). The same has not happened in other regions of the country where seasonality is still high. The Iceland case reflects how the TDPs of regions in North and East Iceland have addressed the challenges that arise in tourism development that can be related back to the uneven distribution of tourists across territory and time. Distributional and seasonal peaks and lows are addressed as key challenges in the DMPs of both North and East Iceland as well as by interviewees in the regions. These challenges are commonly connected with insufficient transport infrastructure.

4.2 Case description

Austurland is the easternmost region in Iceland, sometimes referred to as the East fjords or East Iceland. It is characterised by small villages, coastlines and narrow fjords, waterfalls and mountains, and vast highlands, and is also the home to major parts of Vatnajökull, the largest glacier in Europe. The population is just over 10,000 people, while geographically it covers over 15,792 km². There are several municipalities within the region, and Fljótshálsa is the largest, with some 2,899 residents (Hagstofa, 2020; Fljótshálsa, 2019).

Norðurland is the region in the northern part of Iceland. North Iceland has a population of 36,000 people, including Akureyri, a town of little less than 20,000 people, which is Iceland's

largest town outside the capital Reykjavík (Hagstofa, 2020). The region has many other smaller municipalities and many nature attractions spread over the 36,000 km² area. A large section of Vatnajökull National Park lies in the region, and there are many interesting places to visit in the park such as Dettifoss, Europe's most powerful waterfall, and Mývatn, an active geothermal area that also is home to multiple bird species.

Both regions are located at a fair distance from the capital area, where 99% of tourists enter the country. They are geographically large relative to their population, and transportation in the regions can be difficult, especially during the winter months.

4.3 Seasonality in East and Northern Iceland

Seasonality is generally considered the main challenge in rural tourism development, and the issue of uneven distribution of tourists over both space and time is a common theme in most of the TDPs from the entire Nordic region. Despite recent tourism boom in Iceland, the visitor economy of Austurland is still highly seasonal, with the summer period from July to September accounting for 85.3% of total guest night stays in Iceland in 2016 (Óladóttir, 2017). The same survey shows that of the total number of tourists who visited Iceland in 2016, only 50.2% visited the North, while the proportion was 95.6% for the capital area. When looking at the winter of 2015–2016, the proportion of tourists who visited the North region was 17.3%, while 96.7% travelled through Reykjavík, and 55% visited the South region. In addition, there are large fluctuations within the different regions in Norðurland, and according to the Icelandic Tourist Board's data on overnight stays based on postcodes, the division between different areas in the Norðurland region was from 9% in some areas to up to 55% around Akureyri (Óladóttir, 2017). The distribution is therefore very uneven between regions and within them (Sæþórsdóttir et al, 2020).

Tourists in Iceland.

Photo: Vaida Ražaitytė

4.4 Collaborating on planning and identifying key challenges

When taking a closer look at why tackling seasonality is prioritised, it is quickly revealed that most regions see seasonality pivotal to the development of sustainable communities. The peak season can put pressure on the hosting society, its infrastructure and environment, while the low seasons can mean the closedown of facilities and interruption of service. Seasonal work is an accompaniment in such a situation, making it difficult to secure a competent workforce with permanent jobs and attract new residents. It is stated in the Destination Management Plan for Austurland that “Austurland has all the right natural assets but needs to take full advantage of them and become a sustainable all year around destination... By developing year around tourism, we can keep services open and have more staff working within tourism permanently. This would also mean that we can attract more people to move to Austurland, since we would be able to offer more full-time job opportunities within tourism” (Austurland, 2018-2021), and a similar view is shared by the neighbouring region of Norðurland.

In order to make the tourism season longer, it is also stated that more professional work with strategic destination management and development is needed, meaning actively involving all stakeholders and collaborating across sectors. While many regions estimate that they could host more visitors during their high seasons, they often lack the infrastructure and resources. Since such investments are expansive, both public and private actors are often hesitant to finance expansions since much of the facilities could be unused for a large proportion of the year. Seasonality, therefore, involves some dilemmas that can be hard to handle. However, in the North and Eastern region of Iceland, some key factors have been identified under the participatory process of creating regional Destination Management Plans (DMP). These key challenges are viewed as essential to overcome in order to further develop tourism in the region, securing a more even distribution of visitors, making the tourism season longer and thus creating more balance.

While tourism can be a complex field with often conflicting interests of different stakeholders across many sectors (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019), collaboration through active destination management has become more prominent and often considered best practice in addressing major current trends and instruments for sustainable tourism development (Øian, et.al., 2018). Such processes took place in the Icelandic regions, spanning over three years from starting with the mapping of stakeholders, establishing a destination management organisation (DMO) to finalising the DMP. During the process of developing a DMP for both the North and East regions, key challenges have been identified.

“This Destination Management Plan helps us to better understand our preconditions for development, where we are now, where we aim to be and how we are making progress”, the DMP of Austurland states, which further adds that the DMP also stakes out the path to take action in the coming years. In addition, TDPs from both North and East Iceland repeatedly address more and closer coordination and access to better data. “To be able to estimate the contribution of tourism at a defined area it is necessary to create regional data”, the TDP from northern Iceland states, while their neighbours add, “Developing experiences starts with knowing more about our visitors. The more detailed customer information we got, the deeper will our understanding be of our visitors’ travel values, social values and travel behaviours” (Norðurland, 2018-2021 & Austurland 2018-2021).

4.5 Seasonal issues, transport and infrastructure

In both Norðurland and Austurland, similar key features are brought up as prerequisites for minimising extreme seasonal differences. First, transport issues are mentioned in both TDPs as vital. “The region is far away from the main gateway to Iceland; the country is a relatively expensive destination and the lack of domestic transport infrastructure and distances restrains the flow of guests across the country” is stated in the Destination Management Plan of

Austurland, while Norðurland states: "One of the basic preconditions for achieving these goals [addressing seasonality and secure longer stays] in the near future is establishing regular direct international flights" (Norðurland, 2018-2021).

Both regions have airports that can accommodate international air traffic, and the occasional flights are scheduled directly to Egilsstaðir in the east and Akureyri in the north. In Akureyri, numbers also show that those arriving directly to the region's airport tended to stay longer in the region than others (Norðurland, 2018-2021). Emphasis on direct connections and increased access has therefore been prominent in past years. Winter tourism in the two regions is considered to have great potentials, and since main attractions of both regions are nature sites and uninhabited wilderness, which are not easily accessible outside the summer months due to harsh weather conditions, other transport infrastructural improvements are also considered necessary.

Recent surveys among inhabitants in Iceland towards tourism development also show that while the majority of the population in the two regions considers there to be room to accommodate more tourists in their region and that increased tourism has had positive effects on their home region, both economically and societally, there are some concerns. Most concerns are regarding pressure on existing infrastructure; especially, traffic and traffic safety were high on the minds of residents (Bjarnadóttir, 2020a; Bjarnadóttir, 2020b). In addition, other literature and interviews conducted for the research show that in some municipalities within the two regions, people consider the lack of both housing and labour to accommodate more tourism to be a challenge (Interviews & Bjarnadóttir, Jóhannesson & Gunnarsdóttir, 2016).

Goðafoss is a popular tourist attraction in Iceland. The waterfall is one of the attractions which have been connected and made accessible to other key sites in Northeast-Iceland. The area is now marketed as "the Diamond Circle".

Photo: Ágúst Bogason

4.6 Increasing accessibility

As a way of addressing some of these issues, two new initiatives were developed with the cooperation of the local DMOs, the municipal authorities, while the main funding came from the national government. The so-called Arctic Coast Way was opened in the summer of 2019 and has been marketed as a unique way to leave the common routes behind and go off track to discover some of the most remote places in North Iceland following 900 km of coastal roads close to the Arctic Circle (Arctic Coast Way, 2020). The Arctic Coast Ways is, however, almost exclusively just accessible by cars under best weather conditions. The second initiative is named the 'Diamond Circle', which connects five key destinations in the region by a new road system. Hopes are that the new route will become a north-eastern alternative to the much better known 'Golden Circle' in the South, located right outside the capital area. The Diamond circle includes historic and unique nature sites, e.g., Lake Mývatn, Ásbyrgi canyon, Goðafoss and Dettifoss - which is the most powerful waterfall of Europe. Until the Diamond Circle's opening in the fall of 2020, some of its sites were poorly connected as well as only accessible by jeeps or modified vehicles. Now, those main attractions in the region have been made accessible by a 250 km road system, accessible by normal cars for larger parts of the year.

The new road system is the final phase in the initiative of connecting key sites in the northeast and making them more accessible. Previously, facilities and structures at some of the sites had been improved to accommodate larger tourist numbers, protect the area and increase safety. Hopes are that those investments will now come to better use and be occupied for larger parts of the year. What effects the new 'Diamond Circle' will have on the overall tourism and seasonal variations in visits are yet to be seen. It is, however, a good example of many smaller regions coordinating their tourism development by merging many small areas and sites into a functional tourism region in good cooperation with the state while meeting the needs of locals for better and safer transport and securing better access for visitors. Expectations are that the Diamond Circle will contribute to a longer tourism season in the region, that it will eventually have positive effects on other tourism-related businesses, and that it is only the first of several actions to try and secure a more even distribution of visitors over time.

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** Interviews were conducted with a local DMO representative, tourism operators and local inhabitants.*

Lofoten, Norway.

Photo: Unsplash.com

5. Focal case of Norway: Social tolerance of tourism - challenges in Lofoten regarding common goods

5.1 Introduction

The Norwegian islands of Lofoten attract staggering numbers of tourists each year from all over the world. The locals living on the island chain have in recent years been faced with the question of how they can strike a balance between encouraging tourism and preserving the natural beauty that draws the tourists in the first place. The Norwegian case therefore looks in more detail into challenges in Lofoten regarding the public access to common goods, and how 'the right to roam' affects tourism in the region, and thus the social tolerance of both locals and visitors. Furthermore, with the growth of tourism, Lofoten cultural heritage has become more and more commodified. We explore why and how external investments and housing and accommodation available for tourists are less locally and regionally embedded.

5.2 Case description and key challenges

One of the frontiers of Norwegian wilderness is overwhelmed by the tourists during the summer months, and various social media and other media have expressed fear for irreversible damages to both the physical environment and the reputation of Lofoten (Mandrik, 2017). Key selling points of this region are fresh seafood and coastal specialities, thriving coastal culture, the unique landscapes and natural phenomena, and nature-based activities (VisitNorway 2012). Both the tourism growth and the seasonal variations are unevenly distributed among different geographical areas in northern Norway. In total, Nordland County to the south, where the Lofoten Islands are found, has considerably higher tourist numbers than the other two counties of northern Norway, and Finnmark County to the northeast is the 'little brother' of North Norwegian tourism, with numbers that are less than half of those of Nordland. When

differentiating among the three counties of northern Norway, we also see that, in Nordland, the summer season is a peak season (Rantala et.al., 2019).

More individualised behaviour of tourists has put what by locals is felt as high pressure on the fragile environment from individually organised travelling, where tourists 'wild camp' in exits and picnic areas, thereby littering and causing more damage to nature than was intended (Nordland reiselivsstrategi, 2017-2021). For Lofoten, the infrastructure is also under high pressure due to the influx of tourists, and residents feel they face traffic problems and shortage of waste disposal facilities and public toilets. Some of the most visited beaches are already suffering from erosion, and a small wood near a popular climbing spot is called 'forest of shit' among the locals (Henley, 2016). Lofoten has the reputation of being among the best driving experiences in terms of horizon and beautiful landscape views rivalling the 'Atlantic Road' (between Molde and Kristiansund). Lofoten, which hosts various coastal communities on several islands, draws its name from old Norse word for foot and the old Swedish word Lo (which means lynx = lodjur). The largest habited islands are Austvågøya, Gimsøya, Vestvågøya, Flakstadøya and Moskenesøya - to the farthest west in the sea lie two small and popular destination islands, Værøy and Røst. The archipelago around Lofoten has around 24,500 residents and up to 1 million visitors annually (2017).

5.3 Commodification, keeping control or invasive tourism

The island village of Reine in Moskenes island, a community of 305 inhabitants, is one of the most famous sights in Lofoten, simply because of the sheer number of photos in circulation on the internet. The geology of the islands is a moment of attraction since Lofoten lies on the oldest bedrock (2 billion years old) on Norwegian ground, a feature that this unique landscape owes to glaciers in the ice age that shaped the characteristic contrasts between lowlands and high mountains and edgy peaks that from afar look like a mountain wall. Lofoten is marketed as the untamed islands - referring to the pure and unspoilt wilderness, and its wilderness is in the form of sea and mountains. While Lofoten draws cruises to its beautiful shores, it also offers adventure tourism (e.g., hiking, fishing, heritage adventure tourism, surfing and other nature-based activities), which among many is seen as a feasible form of tourism to develop, thus changing unhealthy practices of mass tourism.

One way to solve this issue has been to publicly campaign for better and more responsible behaviour of tourists. A code of conduct like the ten amendments to good and environmentally responsible behaviour among visitors has been developed (Lofoten friluftsråd & Visit Norway, 2020).

While the Nordland region's absolute priority is to safeguard sustainable tourism in the region's tourism development as stated in the following quote from the TDP, there are other forces at play in accommodation ownership that also challenges the local and regional embeddedness of the island ridge.

"Visitors in Nordland have to meet sustainable tourism destinations with quality in all parts of the value chain. It is a considerable challenge to develop sustainable destinations. It requires that planning and development of the sector must be seen in a holistic societal context. A sustainable experience development of Nordland means that we must ensure conservation of nature, culture and environment, at the same time as making the experience-development strengthen local quality of life, social values, local control, and engagement. Economically sustainable and competitive tourism destinations and tourism businesses which create local added value are key parts of the sustainability concept which forms the basis of the strategy" .

Nordland reiselivsstrategi, 2017-2021.

Lofoten is a popular tourist destination, with its beautiful nature and all the small 'fishing villages'.

Photo: Unsplash.com

It is a popular tourist destination, with its beautiful nature and all the small 'fishing villages'. It is common to rent out what in Norway is called 'rorbuer' for overnight stays for tourists. 'Rorbuer' are small houses that were previously used by all visiting fishermen during Lofoten fishing. Nowadays, the fishermen usually live on their boats, so now these 'rorbu' huts are rented to tourists (Rorbu holiday).

Islanders have expressed frustration over the numerous Airbnb's in housing facilities that may be owned by expats, but which anyways in the peak tourism seasons outnumber households by permanent settlers, and thereby contribute to an unfeasibly commodified staging within some of the communities. As an example, Airbnb's on demand for two persons for the community Henningsvær (with registered population 510) were 240 in late summer 2019 and 230 in late summer 2020 (Airbnb), while Reine (population 305) offered 163 facilities rooms, huts and whole apartments or houses.

The changing dynamics of endogenously developed destinations shifting from local to external ownership of the tourism service infrastructure in a rural region addresses dilemmas in terms of holding management control over feasible vs. invasive tourism. Arvid Viken, Ragnar Nilsen and Carina Olufsen (2020) describe the process of external ownership takeover in Lofoten as one where the market economy and financialisation take over the culture and local community due to its attraction value to visitors and generate a commodification of its facilities. Their research shows how commodification has established itself in the local culture and cultural landscape of Lofoten, e.g., through 'rorbueanlegg'. With an emerging practice from the late fifties of renting out the 'rorbu' huts on a small scale as an exceptional offer to few tourists who wanted to experience authenticity of the heritage of coastal fishermen and seafarers' culture, it has now become almost a standard and is under external ownership control.

The same goes for creative industries and experience economy in Moskenes (Viken, Nilsen & Olufsen, 2020). In extreme cases, this commodification process is sometimes expressed as Disneyfication, which is true for some of the incentives among visitors as they do believe that Elsa from the film Frozen is originated here, even if the fictive land of 'Arendelle' is somewhat more southbound in Norway (in Arendal). Arvid Viken claims, referring to Don Mitchell (2009) in observing rural tourism, that a post-industrial rational accumulation landscape can be identified

in Lofoten's tourism development. Commodification in the form where cultural amenities and heritage turn to become investment objective for external forces disembeds the locally driven development and may erode the local society where the heritage emerged. The only local element left is the cleaning personnel. However, as Arvid Viken points out, many different forces are at play that help re-embed tourism in Lofoten. An example is a long-term resident, a social entrepreneur, who came to live as a teacher in the eighties and later established a tourism programme for students - his initiative of supporting local competencies in favour of tourism development has, among other initiatives, led to the establishment of Lofoten National Park in 2019. An initiative that in the longer run may help formalizing code of conduct among visitors.

5.4 Financing the maintenance of public goods

To what extent the process of commodification is perceived as problematic among the permanent population has not been researched yet to any extent. Some sporadic evidence from research conducted in Røst indicates that beyond a certain level of meeting basic needs and provisioning essential public services, simplicity in life and local control over resources and surroundings was preferred over a multitude of other opportunities and services (Kaltenborn et.al, 2017). Even if the social tolerance among the permanent population may be reached during peak season, behavioural research findings among tourists in Western Norway suggest that tourists hold overly positive views of themselves generally concerning issues of environmental sustainability, and their environmental attitudes reflect perceived desirable standards (Doran & Larsen, 2014). This schism needs to be addressed. The county TDP also raises this issue, but suggests lack of local financial capacity to respond to increased pressures (see quote below from Nordland TDP). Tourism development presents paradoxes - tourism can be a tool for sustainable regional development, but its complexity level in terms of becoming a global investment objective may rob places of their original authenticity as visitor destinations. It entails both possibilities and challenges. It may generate jobs for many, but too many tourists can destroy the 'idyll' that was the attraction magnet in the first place.

According to the Nordland county TDP, "The lack of solutions for financing of common goods is most felt at the destinations with high numbers of visitors and burden on the common goods, relative to the number of residents. Lofoten is an example of such a destination. Large wear and tear on nature, litter and large numbers of visitors combined with the lack of a system and an organization makes the development unsustainable. The municipal economy is not dimensioned to handle common goods for many visitors, and the [tourism] businesses are too small to be able to support with sufficient financing" (Nordlands fylkeskommun, 2017).

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Dalarna, Sweden.

Photo: Unsplash.com

6. Focal case of Sweden: Public–private partnerships in a border region

6.1 Introduction

In Dalarna, Sweden, right by the Norwegian border, the international airport named 'Scandinavian Mountains Airport' was opened in late 2019. The development of an international airport in the region was solely done to attract skiers to the area. The airport is owned by local companies, such as ski resort owners and municipal tourist promotion companies on both sides of the border. The airport was built with the support of the Swedish government along with local counties and municipalities. The case of Sälen therefore takes a look at private–public cooperation on branding to attract more visitors and lengthen a tourism high season by further developing a 'functional tourism region'.

6.2 Thinking regional – planning local

In 2017, formal cooperation in tourism development started between the 15 municipalities in Dalarna. The four existing DMOs (Visit Idre, Siljan Turism, Visit Södra Dalarna and Malung-Sälen along with Region Dalarna) started working together under the name Visit Dalarna. Together these actors developed a new tourism strategy for Dalarna, collectively prioritising market groups, themes, identities, future goals and products (Invest in Dalarna, 2017). Dalarna, as a region, has in this way taken a closer step in developing its tourism at a broader geographical level while still emphasising local coordination of the actors in the hospitality industry. Local networks and clusters are therefore still considered important within sub-regions and municipalities in Dalarna to develop their own business and development plans for tourism at the more local level, based on the regional strategy (Dalarna, 2018-2030). Visit Dalarna therefore is an ongoing partnership of the regional development organisations (Utveckling i Dalarna holding), the 15 municipalities, the tourism businesses and other relevant stakeholders. The tourist offering in Dalarna is quite diverse but is primarily based on natural and cultural landscapes. The region currently hosts the fourth-highest number of overnight stays in Sweden

behind Stockholm, Västra Götaland and Skåne, which are also the home region to the three largest cities in Sweden (Tillväxtverket, 2020). Dalarna can in this way be viewed as the region without a major city that attracts the most visitors in Sweden per year.

Fulufjället National Park, Dalarna, Sweden.

Photo: Artūras Zelenkauskas

6.3 Planning for sustainable growth while maintaining authenticity

Dalarna's tourism strategy until 2030, which was overseen by Visit Dalarna, is quite ambitious in its goals, and at one place it states that the region shall become "...the most attractive destination within our selected themes and product areas for our designated target groups", while also highlighting the need to create new experiences and develop into a year-round industry (Dalarna, 2018-2030). The main themes Dalarna prioritises as new markets in its tourism strategy are culture and lifestyle, events, meeting and business conventions. Then outdoor activities are divided into two main categories. The first one being spring, summer and fall, while the second one is winter. "Alpine skiing is the backbone of Dalarna's hospitality industry... other activities in snow and ice have increased, and there are continued potentials", the tourism strategy states, which highlights further targeting its main user group, the skiers, while also developing new attractions and user groups during other seasons to address a historical over-reliance on the winter season.

While the strategy aims for growth and marketing itself to attract international growth in visitors' numbers in the area, it also discusses the importance of sustainable development in tourism and to retain the regions' cultural identity. "Dalarna must be a sustainable destination seen from all dimensions - economically, ecologically and socially", the strategy states, adding that for the tourism industry, sustainability is a matter of survival. "From the market perspective it is a necessity - regions, destinations and companies that are not perceived as taking responsibility for sustainable development are excluded by consumers. For our own reason, it is a matter of our tourism and experience product not consuming the resources we have in terms of the environment and cultural history, that they are long-term profitable and that the hospitality industry contributes to sustainable societal development throughout Dalarna" (Dalarna, 2018-2030).

Dalarna's strategy therefore is to keep offering authentic experiences that are in some ways viewed as an escape from everyday urban lifestyles while using this image for strategic product development, marketing and increasing visitor numbers. It is understandable that Dalarna's strategy defines the authenticity of experiencing Dalarna the way it is, since much of the limitations and barriers that are identified in the region when it comes to further tourism development are related to infrastructure and accessibility. "Experiences that are perceived as 'real', genuine and local are those who create memories. Genuine does not have to mean historical - even modern design and Dalarna's music scene is authentic", the tourism strategy states, and goes on to say, "We compete with destinations around the world for our customers, attention and money... If it is not easy to get to Dalarna and to get around between places, we risk being opted out. Tolerance for waiting times and inefficient communications that take time from experiences are low" (Dalarna, 2018-2030).

For a destination that is trying to establish itself as the leading destination in Northern Europe in its specific thematic field of tourism, not to mention in a more global context, it makes sense to define 'authenticity' this way. Dalarna also acknowledges that for its tourism industry to grow even larger, it will require 'creativity, collaboration and knowledge - but also capital'. Therefore, the quest to attract more international visitors and developing Dalarna into a more coherent 'functional tourism region' - adding the fact that Dalarna is also a cross-border region - the need of both public and private investments is seen as pivotal (Dalarna, 2018-2030).

6.4 Aims and expectations

As stated earlier, the backbone of Dalarna's tourism is the ski destinations. One of these destinations is Sälenfjällen, which has been developed as a ski tourism destination for more than 50 years (Bodén & Rosenberg, 2004). Many other ski destinations are located in Dalarna as well as just across the border, in Norwegian Trysil-Eggedal region. Vasaloppet, the world's longest and largest cross-country skiing event, is an internationally well-known event that in recent years has attracted tens of thousands of participants. In 2016, Sälenfjällen attracted over 2 million tourists, while Trysil was Norway's largest winter destination with over 1 million visitors annually (dt.se, 2016). A large part of these visitors arrive by car since they are domestic tourists (Fundin, 2014), and the high numbers of domestic visitors have outgrown the capacity of the road network. Since the official policy of both Dalarna and Trysil along with the private tourism business operators in the region has been to open the area to larger international tourism markets, a joint initiative of building an international airport in Sälen was started. This airport then opened in late 2019 under the name Scandinavian Mountains Airport, thus marketing and branding the larger Sälen-Trysil region as one Scandinavian tourism destination.

Investment for the project came from numerous private companies, EU and Swedish state funding, and municipalities from both sides of the border, and as a result the ownership structure is also complex. In addition to municipalities and companies from around the area, local and neighbouring DMOs are part owners. The initiative is expected to have significant impacts on visitor numbers, and hopes are that international charter flights will provide a similar impetus to the region as happened in the Åre mountain area in northern Sweden (Scott & Pashkevich, 2019). Improvement of the nearby road system is also necessary to accommodate the airport and expected increase of traffic along with the building of retail houses. The expected effects are that shopping and retail in the area will benefit, more efficient public services will be offered, and skills and competence will increase, while vehicle costs for commuting and time costs for tourist travellers will decrease (dt.se, 2016).

If these expectations would come true, it would mean a large increase in international tourists' arrivals from more urbanised areas of Europe seeking 'authentic' nature experiences and winter tourism while still being provided with comfortable means of travel and modern facilities. This is in line with the more contemporary definition of 'authenticity', which is perceived as 'real', genuine and local in the new tourism strategy, which was overseen by Visit Dalarna. However, at the same time, it can contradict Dalarna's longing for sustainable tourism development in regard to its policy about responsibility towards the region's environment and cultural history. The

opening of the Scandinavian Mountains Airport can also be viewed as a gateway to a limited part of the Dalarna and Østerdalen regions, mainly benefiting a limited geographical area and tourism sector, where the policy is to enhance different types of tourism in the whole region.

The high numbers of domestic visitors have outgrown the capacity of the road network near Sälenfjällen and the Trysil area.

Photo: Artūras Zelenkauskas

6.5 A functional or fractured tourism region?

The private and public partnership for the large infrastructure investment, the Scandinavian Mountains Airport, is likely to contribute to more visitors in the regions that lie close to the airport. It might therefore also contribute to more fractured tourism development in the whole Dalarna region. While the most north-western part of Dalarna will likely experience an increase in visitors to their ski resorts - largely made possible by private funding along with support from the Swedish state, Norwegian municipalities and the EU - other areas and municipalities in the region might not benefit from this. The international airport is to increase the profile of one of Northern Europe's largest winter sports regions and contribute to its further growth. While this might benefit many tourism companies and municipalities, it can also be at odds with the interest of others and does not necessarily contribute to the broader rural development issues of the entire region, which Dalarna's tourism strategy presents as a goal for the region as a whole (Scott & Pashkevich, 2019).

It must also be addressed that increasing international flights to an area far in the north as part of a sustainable tourism development contrasts its intended goal, at least from an environmental perspective, although it might contribute to a more economically sustainable tourism development, but that remains to be seen. The effects of the new airport cannot be assessed until a few years from now, since it opened just before the winter season of 2020, which was heavily affected by the Covid19 crisis. Nonetheless, the case of the airport in Sälen illustrates that public and private partnerships in tourism development can accomplish great things. Whether this particular example will prove to contribute to a cohesive and holistic regional development to the region as a whole or rather just benefit the already large tourism sector within the area only time will tell.

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Tourists exploring Faroe Islands.

Photo: Vaida Ražaitytė

7. Focal case of Faroe Islands: Encouraging growth by promoting sustainability

7.1 Introduction

The Faroe Islands stand out from many other regions in their publicly precautionary approach to tourism development. While the goal is clearly to increase international tourism on the islands, the Faroese are also determined not to experience overcrowding that may ruin the delicate nature sights and environment that most of their visitors come to experience. They have also introduced the term 'preservation', which they say is a new perspective on tourism, an evolution and a solution, with preservation at its core. The tourism campaigns of the Faroe Islands have included prohibiting tourists from visiting the islands during a specific weekend under the presumption that the Faroes are 'closed for maintenance'. By combining branding by promoting sustainability and preservation, the Faroes are trying to utilise the opportunity to shape a prosperous and sustainable tourism industry to benefit the local population. Inevitably, the question arises if it is possible to encourage growth and make it go hand in hand with preservation, or whether sustainable tourism is an oxymoron?

7.2 Case description

The Faroe Islands are composed of 18 islands in North Atlantic with a population of approximately 52,000 people. Until recently, the islands were 'undiscovered' by tourists, but in the last few years that has changed rapidly. This unspoiled place of unique landscapes and wilderness has gotten its share of international tourists. The Faroe Islands have historically had a high dependence on fishing and fish farming for its economy, and therefore international tourism has been welcomed. In the last few years, an increase in tourism has taken place, with annual growth rates around 10% from 2013 to 2019 (Visit Faroe Islands, 2019 & interviews). Growth in tourism is therefore the goal, but it is stated in the STDS for the Faroe Islands towards 2025 that "growth is only a good thing if it happens sustainably, with the unique nature and culture of the islands, and the needs of the Faroese people, as its principal beneficiaries. Instead of trying

to halt an inevitable development, tourism should be used as a tool to create a better society for all Faroe Islanders", while it is also stated that tourism increase in this way is "also about being about adding non-material value to a society and its people, and about ensuring that our country continues to develop as an interesting place to live" (Visit Faroe Islands, 2019). In 2018, the islands hosted close to 60,000 holidaymakers as well as about 50,000 short-stay cruise passengers (Føroya landsstýri, 2019). In public policy on tourism development, the Faroese DMO and the government state that the goal is to preserve nature qualities for the future generations and develop tourism sustainability - there are many challenges in the way.

Cruise tourists are a large proportion of the annual visits to the Faroe Islands.

Photo: Pipsa Salolammi

7.3 Tourism and sustainability in the Faroe Islands

Tourism is a complex and dynamic industry with many different interests and stakeholders who may have varying and even conflicting interests (Árnadóttir, 2019; Graci & Dodds, 2010). There are also several challenges to sustainable tourism development that are especially related to island destinations and other peripheral mainland areas, which are often viewed as more vulnerable because of fragile ecosystems and sensitive environments (Graci & Dodds, 2010; Holmberg-Anttila, 2004; Carlsen & Butler 2011 & Hall, 2010). Keeping locals and smaller tourism companies from being involved with tourism development has also been shown to decrease the benefits from tourism for the locals due to economic leakage and lack of influence over the development (Graci & Dodds, 2010). In addition, because of lack of legitimacy caused by little or no influence of locals on the tourism development, conflicts may arise between those who benefit directly from tourism and those who do not (Tao & Wall, 2009; Epler Wood, 2002; Fletcher et al., 2013).

Sustainability is also a complex concept that involves environmental, social and economic dimensions. Finding a balance between the three pillars of sustainability while increasing visitor numbers makes tourism management and coordination all the more important. Having a short-term vision on tourism development can also prove to cause problems, and too much emphasis on growth and economic gain can jeopardise the possibilities of future income from tourism

(Graci & Dodds, 2010). Therefore, the Faroe Islands are trying to establish effective tourism management to prevent these known problems from arising. This, however, because of the complex nature of tourism and the different interests, requires extensive coordination and collaboration across municipalities, ministries, private enterprises and the public. For sustainable tourism development to be a success, the Faroe Islands have identified a few key elements that include political action and new legislation for tourism to remain sustainable and maintain public support for the long term.

7.4 The cornerstones of growing while preserving

What the Faroe Islands have named 'preservolution' is a new perspective for the tourism industry to grow in a sustainable and responsible manner - an evolution and a solution, with preservation at its core (Visit Faroe Islands, 2019). For this purpose, four cornerstones of sustainable tourism development have been put forward as a guiding light for future development.

First, the Faroes want to value quality over quantity, which means putting emphasis on quality-conscious tourists who want to interact with locals and take part in authentic tourism experiences, and to look closer at tourism's overall contribution to society instead of volume of visitors when measuring success. Second, they want to bring tourism all year-round for all of the Faroe Islands to prevent future visitor pressure points in certain locations. This means bringing visitors to all of the 18 islands, trying to secure benefits from tourism to as many of the small communities as possible by encouraging a more even distribution of visitors over the many islands. Since the Faroe Islands are in the early stages of developing as a destination, even distribution of visitors over the many islands, according to interviewees, is lacking. Many in the more rural and smaller communities express that tourism does not add value to their area the same way as the larger ones where the tourists spend most of their time (and money). Communities in the smaller areas therefore sometimes express that they feel left behind, although many see the future potential. Some referred to positive steps that were promising towards such a development, e.g., in Kalsoy, although the initiative is in its early stages. In Klarksvík, making the place more vibrant was seen as a possibility to attract more visitors, by providing more experiences and establishing shops and restaurants that would create jobs and contribute to the local economy (interviews).

However, interviewees reported that unemployment was simply considered too low in the Faroe Islands for people to have the incentive to create new and innovative businesses, especially in the more remote communities. This can be related directly to the third cornerstone of the sustainable tourism plan, which is to make tourism contribute to increased knowledge and professionalisation. One interviewee expressed the concern that too few students who moved abroad for university studies returned to the islands to find fitting jobs and that there was not much for them to do in the tourism industry. Therefore, one of the main challenges for tourism companies was the shortage of labour (waiters, chefs, cleaners, tour guides, etc.) needed to provide solutions to the challenges of many tourism companies. The same interviewee said that the tourism industry is not that interested in hiring academic graduates, while at the same time the graduates have limited interest in working in the tourism industry. The need for more vocational programmes to meet the requirements of the tourism industry was mentioned in interviews as necessary for further tourism growth. The second and third cornerstones aim to enable as many Faroese in as many different locations as possible to benefit from tourism all year-round and to turn tourism jobs into stable and valuable jobs. However, at the same time, the fact that tourism is still a very seasonal sector and unemployment is very low, the need and incentive in the more peripheral areas to attract visitors for economic gains is still quite limited (interviews).

The fourth and last cornerstone laid forward in the sustainable tourism plan is establishing a common legislative framework. Formally, this is an action to safeguard the main attraction that is the natural environment. The current legislation concerning nature protection and access to nature is said to be outdated and dysfunctional since it does not include the necessary tools for

sustainable regulation of nature. This is also directly connected to the first cornerstone of focusing on quality instead of quantity. Since the Faroes are a small islands community that has limited carrying capacity regarding how much pressure increased tourism can put on the environment, limiting the number of visitors seems reasonable. However, currently there are also limited possibilities for accommodation, activities, restaurants, etc., to host greater number of visitors, while public infrastructure also holds limits on how much tourism can grow. Faroese are aware of social tolerance of the population. All of the above therefore play a role in the fact that quality is preferred over quantity when it comes to tourists.

Tourist visiting rural areas in Faroe Islands.

Photo: Pipsa Salolammi

7.5 Social tolerance and environmental concerns

Small islands are characterised by geographic isolation, strong place attachment and vulnerabilities to social, economic and ecological changes (Plieninger, 2018). In the Faroe Islands, the tourism strategy takes note of this and the fact that tourism development has potential for conflicts. Although many locals acknowledge the need for new economic opportunities and diversification, concerns about negative effects on nature and society and the perceived inability to govern these developments are also present. The Faroese Farmer's Association, e.g., is highly concerned about 'the public right of access' - also called 'the right to roam' - which allows people to wander through private and public land. The farmers want to remedy this and ensure its members do not get left out of the growing tourist economy while also protecting their assets and lands (interviews). The right to roam and the effects of tourism on nature and environment even became one of the most discussed topics in the parliamentary elections in 2019, which shows the deep concern many Faroese have for tourism development.

The Faroe Islands, therefore, want to avoid limited awareness of environmental and sustainability issues among people - inhabitants, public figures and tourists. Degradation of the resources has often occurred due to over-development, and often an inevitable decline follows (Graci & Dodds, 2010). Although the Faroe Islands have not experienced over-tourism yet, they are very conscious of the development in Iceland over the past years and want to avoid a similar

situation. Thus, great emphasis has been put towards raising awareness among visitors and locals for protecting the vulnerability of the Faroese nature and culture.

These concerns, along with the lack of infrastructure to accommodate large tourist numbers combined with the apparent limitation of labour to work in tourism-related sectors, seem to put certain limits on the possible growth of tourism in the Faroe Islands. Naturally, the small island community has a limited carrying capacity, and to focus on quality over quantity therefore becomes a rational strategy. Trying to secure 'more valuable tourists' instead of increasing overall numbers is a known way that others have adopted to contribute to more sustainable tourism development (Oklevik et al, 2019; Gösslin et al, 2016). Doing this successfully has often proved difficult, although being an island society could help the local people to better control the tourism development as pointed out by Graci and Dodds (2010). Furthermore, other studies show that people who experience nature or visit a natural site are more likely to value and support the preservation of the area (Fletcher et al., 2013).

7.6 Long-term planning - first steps taken

The strong awareness campaigns on sustainable tourism development in the Faroe Islands along with a public policy to develop the tourism responsibly in regard to the cultural and natural environment are therefore an interesting initiative. The Faroe Islands have introduced a focus on long-term sustainability and human well-being as a guiding principle in all their industries (Bogadóttir, 2020), and the tourism policy is intended to help preserve the environment and the locals before nature and the local communities get irreparably affected by the surge of tourism. Limitations on the size of cruise ships allowed ashore have been introduced, while this is seen to contribute towards longer stays and a bigger economic contribution to society. Regulations for recreation- and business-related use of nature have now been developed along with the introduction of a new special environmental fee for tourists that will fund environmental and nature projects on the islands. The first protected areas have been established with limitations designed to protect vulnerable animal life and nature. While the goal is still to increase international tourism and eventually develop tourism into one of the pillars of economic activity in the Faroe Islands, the strategy is to do this gradually and in balance with the environmental and cultural dimensions of sustainable development. It seems that the Faroe Islands are sincere and devoted to creating a more sustainable version of tourism. However, whether this strategy will prove successful, if it is possible to increase the number of tourists substantially without damaging the essence of the culture of the Faroese and what indicators will be used to measure the possible social impacts are currently unclear.

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** Interviews were conducted with a local DMO, national DMO, public officials, tourism operators, a local food producer and a local tourism academic.*

Greenland.

Photo: Pipsa Salolammi

8. Focal case of Greenland: Accessibility, cruise tourism and airports

8.1 Introduction

Greenland is vast. It is the world's largest non-continental island, and large expanses of the island are entirely inaccessible, especially since much of the interior is covered by an ice sheet. This makes it practically impossible to travel from one destination to another by land due to the lack of an internal road network. International accessibility to Greenland is also limited and expensive. Greenland, however, has plans to develop its tourism industry into a major contributor to the country's economy. Access and transportation to the country's many sites are, however, a major challenge for this to be possible. Greenland is largely dependent on cruise liners, and thus tourism authorities and local population alike view cruise tourism from a different angle than many other regions in Norden. They have recently also welcomed foreign capital to development projects that might benefit their tourism growth, e.g., international airport constructions. This focal chapter on Greenland looks closer into the challenges of accessibility in a country that wants to expand its tourism activities, while the country itself and its different regions are largely inaccessible.

8.2 Access, infrastructure and connectivity

Development and planning of tourism in Greenland started in the late 1950s in South Greenland predominantly. The first charter flights started from Iceland at the end of that decade by bringing tourists to Narsarsuaq in the South or for a day trip to Kulusuk in the east of Greenland. SAS carrier then started in the mid-1960s bringing passengers to Narsarsuaq where they were accommodated in the dismissed huts left at the former base of the American Army (Tomassini, 2014). Fifty years later, several tour operators (Blue Ice Explorer, Topas Explorer, Greenland Adventure and Tierra Polares, just to mention few examples) specialise in soft adventure tours to the destinations in the South, the most visited region so far in Greenland. One of them bringing Spanish-speaking visitors has taken over these facilities for boat trips in

the stunning fjords of the South (Field Trip 2017). While that is positive, it also brings about a dilemma of an emerging enclave economy within the tourism development in the South. Everything is brought in, and not as many local multiplier effects are experienced as expected. This may crystallise a general dilemma that communities with lack of infrastructure may face when large MNCs in tourism develop a destination in remote areas. However, as an expensive destination, Greenland and its communities are in a position to maintain their position as the 'rare gemstone' for visitors.

In 1991, tourism became one of three key issues in a commercial development strategy established by the Greenlandic Home Rule Government. The intention was to diversify the economy by supplementing income from the declining fishing industry with incomes from minerals and tourism. Substantial public funds were allocated to tourism development. However, the focus in the first 20 years was predominantly on marketing and branding and less on accessibility. With the cooperation of the Danish Tourism Board, tourist numbers had reached a record of 10,000 in 1981 (Tomassini, 2014). However, after the decision of making Greenland an emerging tourism destination, expectations were not met, probably due to unsuitable marketing decisions (Tomassini, 2014). Hence, the number of visiting tourists remained quite low, and the number of tourists visiting Greenland rose from 3,500 in 1992 to 4,000 in 1993, mostly Greenlanders and Danes (Kaae, 2006). In 2001, the number of tourists had risen to 34,000, and around 84,299 in 2017 (Ioannides, 2019).

8.3 Communities trying new development options and ways to bring in revenues

In recent years, there has been a shift in focus on premises of developing tourism to benefit communities. Greenland's national tourism strategy (2016–2020) highlights the synergies that tourism-related growth can bring to other sectors. "This growth potential for additional sales and employment ...will help to spread the socio-economic benefits across the country and make tourism a major business for a large part of the Greenlandic population." The Greenland tourism authorities are thus concerned with tourism's role in securing local benefits and change in demography (attracting new population). The intersection between tourism-driven development and regional development is relatively prominent (see p. 28).

Expectations of jobs generated through tourism development are prominent and present incentives for communities to develop in that direction. However, in the last years, many of the tourism service jobs have been occupied by migrant labours from Denmark or elsewhere due to competency gap that is not sufficiently filled locally, in spite of educational supply within hospitality skills (e.g., Inuili). A contributing factor to this may also be signs of an overheated economy in recent years, so important jobs such as in cleaning industry, hotels, and restaurants lack personnel, e.g., in Nuuk and Ilulissat (Preisler, 2019).

8.4 Cruise tourism as a gateway to remote areas of Greenland

The national tourism organisation (VisitGreenland) has had a policy of strongly encouraging pleasure cruises. A substantial part of smaller cruise vessels in the spirit of expedition or Lindblad cruises sail along the Greenlandic shore, especially in East Greenland and North West (Fay & Karlsdóttir 2011; James, Olsen & Karlsdóttir, 2020). However, larger ships, with sometimes up to 3,000 passengers, have been observed trying to go farther and farther north to show tourists the most remote places and communities (Tomassini, 2012). With a sector strongly encouraged, it continues to bring more visitors led by tour operators who seek out the most impressive scenery in terms of typicality and landscape, usually in peripheral and isolated areas with small communities. Many of these communities lack the infrastructure to accommodate visitors in any number for a few hours.

As part of cruise ship itineraries in the North Atlantic and Arctic routes of cruise liners, many more communities are visited. This segment has a different pattern than land-based tourism and affects more remote coastline communities and archaeological sites. Around 19 different communities and settlements received an increasing number of calls and passengers. Most calls and most number of passengers visit Qaqortoq (South), Ilulissat (Disco Bay) and Sisimiut and Nuuk (W).

Chart 1. Number of cruise passengers in Greenland 2003–2019. Source: Grønlands statistik, Grønlands turismeråd, 2019.

The national strategy that took over from the first one intended to increase the number of tourists to 35,000 by 2005 and was strongly focused on quantitative growth of numbers and expenditure of tourists. However, the most recent TDP has shifted its vision for future tourism development in Greenland and includes sustainable tourism as a part of the national strategy, even if not predominant. In addition, in 2016 a new form of tax was implemented instead of the pr. passenger tax (PAX) of 525 DKK. Furthermore, 1.1 DKK is now charged pr. gross tonnage of vessels for each call to port. According to Visit Greenland, it has made calls for cruises to ports in Greenland more affordable for cruise liners, especially for larger cruise vessels, and has in few cases decreased the charges up to 93%. Visit Greenland considers this to be a significant stimulus (VisitGreenland, 2019).

It can also be seen in Chart 1.

Le Boreal with cabins for 400 passengers and staff (Compagnie de Ponant) sails into the fjords close to Narsaq, August 2016.

Photo: Anna Karlsdóttir

8.5 The airport investment, plans and construction and effects on tourism development

With more flexible and easier movements of labour and capital across national borders, Greenland is becoming an emerging destination. However, with fewer than 100,000 visitors, the autonomous region remains one of the least visited destinations in the western world. The mountainous coastal terrain has a limited length of runways. Several plans to expand runways to provide direct access for larger planes to the capital Nuuk and other towns have been discussed on and off since the nineties. The challenge so far has been the high cost of the infrastructure expansions, creating a barrier to boost tourism. With plans on large-scale infrastructure development building more hubs to spokes in new airports, this may change in future to come.

Despite Greenland being overflowed by most of the Transatlantic jet routes between cities in Europe and those in North America, the connectivity to the autonomous region by air has been limited. Most commonly, after millennium, there were around 5–10 weekly connections from Copenhagen to Kangerlussuaq in West Greenland and Narsarsuaq in South Greenland, with connecting flights to Nuuk and other towns. Within Greenland, transportation is by air or coastal ferries, while roads are only local. Greenland has had a total of 12 airports, 5 heliports and 42 helistops in smaller villages. Air Iceland connect has had three weekly connections from Reykjavik airport to Kulusuk in East Greenland and onwards to Kangerlussuaq and Nuuk. Once a week, flights from Keflavik in Iceland by Air Greenland provide a direct flight to Nuuk. The Great Canadian Travel operated two charter flights weekly between Iqaluit in Nunavut and Aasiat in North Greenland with connection to and from Ottawa and Montreal: and a weekly charter flight links to Kangerlussuaq via Keflavik in Iceland (Kaae, 2006). In addition, there were seasonal flights between Iqaluit and Nuuk operated by Air Greenland on and off from 1991 to 2001 and 2012 to 2014 (CBC, 2014). With these connections, which even at times are cancelled due to weather, the number of air passengers who are 'exploring tourists' is limited. It has for a long time been Greenlanders and Danes living and/or working in Greenland that make up a substantial part of passengers. High proportions of 'business tourists', which are made up of professionals both from public authorities and businesses, make around one-third of the passenger number, and Greenlanders and other visiting friends and relatives (VFR tourism) make up another one-third (Kaae, 2002, Tommassini, 2014, Greenland Statistics 2020).

Passengers to Greenland by charter and scheduled flights and by residence 2008-2019

Chart 2. Passengers to Greenland by flights and by residence 2008–2019. Source: Greenland Statistics 2020.

"The development of tourism in Greenland into a sustainable profession can only happen through a broad expansion of infrastructure. A one-sided focus on a single destination is too narrow to allow the wished-for long-term, sustained growth in the tourism sector. A sustainable development of tourism thus demands direct flights with larger airplanes to more regions in the country" .

TDP, National sektorplan for turisme, 2016–2020.

As Greenland became famous in international media, large-scale investments for the expansions caused tension in the negotiation between self-rule authorities and the government of Denmark where Chinese investors had implied a will to invest. After launching plans for three new airport constructions in Nuuk, Ilulissat and Qaqortoq, the authorities were faced with a challenge. The Danish Chairman of the Economic council criticised plans heavily and advised against them (Sørensen, 2017). In early spring 2018, the Danish authorities and competing companies in the bidding process for construction heavily criticised the prospects for state-owned Chinese construction enterprise engagement in the process (Redaktionen Sermitsiaq, 2018). In the end, the Danish finance minister got the Danish parliament to approve a bill securing state investment in 1.6 billion DKK co-investment for extension of two of the airports in Nuuk and Ilulissat with the Home rule, thereby avoiding Chinese engagement. The investment is in Kalaallit Airports Holding A/S, owned 33.3% by The Danish State and 66.7% by the Greenlandic Home Rule. The Danish decision thereby contributed to the modernisation of the infrastructure with the new international airports in Nuuk and Ilulissat (Folketinget, 2019). The Danish government and Naalakkersuisut signed and agreed on the Danish engagement in September, and the final agreement for the framework of the activities (rammebetingelser for anlæg, drift og finansiering) was settled in the Inatsiasartutlov nr.4, signed and approved in late November 2018. The Greenlandic parliament approved the smaller extension of the Qaqortoq airport (to become a regional airport with 1,500 m landing strip instead of 2,000 m) (Sermitsiaq, 2020). This was guaranteed by the Department for Housing and Infrastructure in 2019.

Airport in Greenland.

Photo: Leneisja Jungsberg

8.6 Effects and expectations

As described earlier in the report 'Planning for sustainable tourism in the Nordic region' (Bogason, Karlsdóttir & Broegaard, 2020) and as presented in the national plan on tourism from Greenland (2016–2020), the possibility of presenting Greenland as a part of a greater North-Atlantic tourism region through its partnership with Iceland and the Faroe Islands is promoted. While the example of Greenland is a special case, it shows the different scales at which functioning tourism regions can be conceived. However, smaller geographical areas are often those that attempt, or plan, to develop a 'functional tourism territory' covering several municipalities (possibly across borders) in the form of a single tourism region or destination. Our analyses of regional TDPs show that smaller and more remote areas tend to emphasise the need for developing a 'functional tourism region' more than those close to larger urban areas or transport hubs. This is interpreted as a reaction to the trend towards focusing tourism development on 'signature experiences', or basing it on a few, well-known and much-branded highlights at each destination (Bogason, Broegaard & Karlsdóttir, 2020). The connection to and from Iceland is important for Greenland as are connections to Canada and even US in order to generate travellers' markets that may boost possibilities in tourism development. The example of Iceland as an ideal in tourism development should perhaps be avoided (Ioannides, 2019) to secure sustainable tourism development.

As an emerging tourist destination, more remote locations hope to reap benefits from the ongoing extension of infrastructure development. In some communities, there are discrepancies between expectation to economic benefits and the reality of economic returns and an expressed wish that local engagement in the tourism development and local presence is feasible (Tomassini, 2014). In many cases, conditions would allow for nature-based tourism and adventure tourism that could be tailored to high paying customers who want to enjoy globally exceptional environment and culture (Hendriksen & Hoffmann, 2016). However, very remote

locations e.g., Quannaq, the northernmost community that is like the last frontier within Greenland, not to speak of as a tourist destination - did experience less accessibility in flights due to more expensive airfare tickets after the local airport was built in 2002. Understandably, the tourists did not come in any numbers (Tomassini, 2014).

Accessibility - both internationally and domestically - has for a long time been a key issue in Greenland's development and depends primarily on infrastructure and prices (Kaae, 2006, Ioannides, 2019). Price severely modifies the distance decay curve of tourism flows to Greenland. The airfare to Greenland is several times higher than, e.g., transatlantic flights overflying the country. In a vast country with many remote and small communities, strategies to secure fair airfare tickets for inhabitants while reaping benefits from more regular tourist arrivals after the new airports are ready and up and running are desirable. How that is balanced and done is easier said than done. A new strategy for tourism planning from 2021 may address this and in addition seek solutions to both upgrade competencies with the industry to secure native engagement in its development and help diversify tourist products for the benefit of the recipient communities. Greenland, as an island in the far north, depends on continued air traffic connectivity with Denmark, Iceland, Canada and US to continue to generate markets. It is crucial in securing a development that can support tourism development in Greenland.

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Åland.

Photo: Unsplash.com

9. Focal case of Åland: Existing strengths and knowledge towards increased quality and competence

9.1 Introduction

Åland has a unique geographical position between the capitals of Finland and Sweden, making both shipping and tourism important economic activities for the islands. While Åland has a strong and quite diverse local economy relative to its size, its public policy on tourism in recent years has focused on expansion. The Covid19 pandemic of 2020 and resulting travel restrictions have had enormous effects on the important transport and tourism sectors in Åland. The closeness to both Helsinki and Stockholm, being a link between the two capital, has in past years been utilised to attract businesses and conventions while focusing on providing a high-quality product and experience. Although this was put on a halt because of the 2020 pandemic, hopes are that tourism development can continue when the situation becomes manageable. The focal chapter about Åland looks into how the islands, which have a rich tradition on innovative solutions, have aimed to use these traditions and existing strengths to reach out to new user groups and extend their traditional summer tourism season. The local food production, along with nature and outdoor activities, has played a big role to achieve this goal. Åland sees the key to success in this matter is to gain better knowledge on prioritised markets and target groups - their needs, requirements and interests. The acquired knowledge and increasing local competence then provide a basis for the industry's competence, quality and product development.

9.2 Tourism in Åland

Åland is an island archipelago consisting of more than 6,700 islands, out of which around 60 are inhabited. During the latter half of the past century, Åland developed from a peripheral agricultural and fishery-based community into a modern service economy with high standard of

living, low unemployment and a growing population (Kinnunen, 2016). The population is just over 30,000 people, with about 12,000 living in the town of Mariehamn (ÅSUBa, 2020). The most important industries are trade, banking, agriculture and food production, while shipping has historically been the key industry in Åland. The shipping industry has also provided great opportunities related to tourism, which Åland has utilised successfully prior to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic of 2020 - tourism was one of the key elements of its economy (Åland, 2020).

A large share (about 88%) of overall tourism income is generated within the sea transport sector. Annual arrivals to Åland are high, and the number is around 2 million persons per year, but of those only a small portion enters the islands, while the majority continue their trips to Sweden and Finland. Overnight stays in Åland in 2019 were 390,000, and the number of nights in accommodation has been slowly decreasing since the beginning of the century (Kinnunen, 2016). A goal of the tourism industry in Åland is to increase the numbers of those that enter the islands, focusing on the most valuable visitor groups and getting them to stay longer (Ålands landsskapsregering, 2012). According to the analyses of Statistics and Research Åland (ÅSUB), the groups that spend the most money while visiting the islands are golfers, sporting fishers and those who are there on business-related errands. Those who visit Åland for special events, bicycle tours and other nature-based activities spend less, but are nonetheless valuable contributors to the local economy (ÅSUB, 2019).

A large share of the overall tourism income in Åland is generated within the sea transport sector.

Photo: Unsplash.com

9.3 Åland's tourism strategy - local competence and quality

Åland's tourism strategy is very market focused, pointing out key tourist groups to target, but at the same time the strategy addresses the existing strengths that Åland has to offer as a tourist destination and prioritises those strengths to develop a more attractive destination for different user groups. "Marketing, distribution and sales are certainly important issues. Without attractive products and clear travel reasons, however, these resources will be wasted", Åland's TDP states (Ålands landsskapsregering, 2012). The strategy also mentions that tourism development must take place in a sustainable way "with responsibility for nature, culture and social environment

and with long-term economic sustainability". The document then defines sustainable tourism as "tourism that preserves natural and cultural resources, when the local community has accepted tourism as a desirable industry and when tourism companies are allowed to grow and develop in the long term. It also means that visitors can experience high-quality products and that the destination is not degraded due to over-exploitation".

Growth in tourism in Åland is therefore seen as vital, but at the same time its growth should not come at the cost of sustainable values. In the sustainable destination plan, which is a separate document from the tourism strategy, the discussion on sustainability is much about the attractiveness of sustainability, the value and worth of sustainable visions and positive image in the eyes of the tourists (Lundberg, 2018). The tourism strategy talks much about the island archipelago as a whole, where everybody will benefit from tourism growth, where the locals are part of the visitor's experience and where the whole island community is a valuable Åland brand. It is also interesting that the TDP from Åland also devotes a great deal of discussion on competence and further education of people working in the tourism-related industries to increase value, both for visitors and the tourism workers. In this respect, both entrepreneurs and 'the base workers' in the tourism sector are mentioned. This is considered a contribution to address common challenges in tourism, e.g., seasonality, competence issues within the local tourism workforces and sustainable rural development.

The tourism strategy of Åland also presents a clear divide of responsibilities and duties of different actors in the quest for their goal. Visit Åland handles marketing, the business sector develops jobs and product development, while the local government's main role is to develop the tourism strategy and secure its relevance and connection to the municipalities while ensuring, through ÅSUB, that relevant statistics and facts are produced as a basis for decisions in tourist development. The municipalities then try to fit the main strategy to their identities, resources and attractions (Ålands landsskapsregering, 2012).

9.4 Local food, tourism and sustainability

Åland has, in line with the values mentioned above, introduced new and innovative ways of combining local competence and resources to attract certain tourist groups that have been identified by their statistics and research institute. This is also viewed as a way to support and encourage the growth of existing industries and sectors that are already established in Åland. One territory that the targeted tourist groups share is their growing interest in a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. Åland has therefore, as many other rural regions in past years, prioritised locally produced food and drink as most desired target groups share an interest in it. Some projects highlighting the local produce have even secured significant funding support from the European Union's rural development programme (Baldacchino, 2015).

Food tourism, sometimes called gastro-tourism or culinary tourism, is defined by Hall and Mitchell as "the desire to experience a particular type of food, the produce of a specific region" (2001). The food becomes an experience and an attraction in itself instead of just something to soothe hunger and can involve visiting farms, special food events and festivals or participating in gathering and preparing the food (see, e.g., Hall et al, 2003; James & Halkier, 2014; Everett & Slocum, 2013). Food is connected to heritage and history (Povey, 2011) and is a growing phenomenon (Timothy & Ron, 2013). Gastro-tourism can also bring about benefits for local producers, farmers, fishermen and suppliers, while focusing on local food may help extend the season (Hall et al, 2003; Everett & Aitchison, 2008). This also taps into the increasing demand for more quality and more ethically produced products since their consumption is often found to be important contributors in the development of more sustainable tourism (Gössling & Hall, 2013). Historically, the Nordic countries have not been viewed as special destinations for culinary experiences, but in recent years this has started to change (Østrup Backe, 2013). For example, Åland now has a sustainable food production strategy, which highlights that local food products should be distinguished from nearby regions. The strategy also aims for the production of high-quality food for as many consumers as possible from as locally produced raw materials as possible (Ålands producentförbund, 2020).

The small nature of productions in Åland is connected to quality and sustainability, which is becoming more valuable from an image perspective when it comes to product development.

Photo: Unsplash.com

9.5 The necessity of collective branding

Like many Nordic rural tourism destinations, one of the main challenges for Åland is the high seasonality. The majority of annual visits occur over the summer months, which affects the whole production line since demand is much higher during the high season. Tackling seasonality, extending the main season and securing a more even geographical distribution of tourists over the islands are therefore important tasks and interconnected challenges. Based on analyses and prior tourists' experience, events and product development have taken seasonality into account in future tourism development.

The annual Skördefesten, or Harvest Festival, which takes place in late September, is an event that has been used to attract more visitors outside the conventional tourism season. For a few days, farms, gardens, breweries and other food producers open their doors to allow visitors to get to know the life on Åland. Artists in Åland also have a similar event in the fall, opening their galleries and studios to visitors for one week, while outdoor activities are also used to attract people in the fall. The extension of the summer season in both ends is the main goal, and therefore some events and functions in the spring and fall are most prominent. Promoting the islands as a 'Winterwonderland' has also been done but to a less extent. "The events on Åland have a major role to play in tourism development. They are partly important products in themselves, which have great potential for filling spare capacity throughout the year but events also have a market value, as they create media attention and editorial coverage of Åland", the tourism strategy of Åland states, which also aims to increase its market share in attracting conventions, conferences and other business-related visits. Being able to offer facilities for such gatherings while combining them with field trips to local sites offering local products is considered of great value. The business sector is also a market group that fits the aims of Åland very well since those trips usually take place outside of the main holiday season.

Some of the main challenges that Åland faces in its tourism development is the small-scale

nature of many of its companies. Collaboration and cooperation are therefore emphasised in its tourism strategy. Small businesses in a small market tend to compete internally while struggling in the market themselves. The cooperation of the different stakeholders in tourism - whether being farmers and food producers, restaurants, hotels and camping sites or experience-based companies - is therefore vital to authorities. A common goal of all involved to extend and increase tourism is therefore a priority in Åland's tourism strategy, which views that the goal can be best achieved with a collective branding of Åland. The small nature of all productions in Åland is also connected to quality and sustainability, which is becoming more valuable from an image perspective when it comes to product development.

9.6 A collective knowledge-based tourism policy

As mentioned before, Åland has based its tourism development on the knowledge of the market and involving as many actors as possible in the overarching goal of developing the tourism sector in a positive way for the good of the whole community: "The basic principle for coordination shall apply that knowledge of our priority markets and target groups, their travel and consumption patterns, needs, requirements and interests shall be mapped, compiled and processed in order to then be communicated further to the companies in the industry" (Ålands landsskapsregering, 2012). The strategy further states that the acquired knowledge shall form a basis for the industry's competence, quality and product development and that these data are to be translated into decision material for stakeholders. In the same way, mapping, compilation and processing of information about tourists' groups in Åland must be profiled and communicated to the market to be able to better reach the priority target groups.

"This work requires knowledge of market demand, experience in business support and coaching and consistent exercise of authority in order to succeed, which is why these issues are handled in coordination between the players. The financing of the operation and development of the tourist Åland will require an annual dialogue and division of responsibilities between the actors", the strategy further states, and ends by stating: "Åland does not need more or new organizations for the tourism issues, but a process that ensures that the actors drive the issues and make optimal use of resources and expertise."

Based on the knowledge of its existing strengths, main market groups and expectations, Åland has driven its tourism development forward. Its tourism strategy outlines a clear division of tasks between the different actors, while the policy is strongly based on evidence and facts gathered from visitors and statistical data. This has among other things resulted in a focus on extending the season, providing more event and experiences with a focus on authenticity while increasing local competence to secure the tourism industries' development towards better quality and product development. Involving as many stakeholders and actors as possible has also been viewed positively as it is in line with the principles of sustainable tourism development where locals and other involved together contribute to a long-term strategy and goals (Graci & Dodds, 2010; Bogason, Brogaard & Karlsdóttir, 2020).

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Tourist exploring rural areas in Nordics.

Photo: Artūras Zelenkauskas

10. The right to roam

10.1 Introduction

Steep growth in tourism across many rural areas in the Nordic region from around 2010 until the Covid19 pandemic in early 2020 has presented different opportunities and challenges. A collective goal of the Nordic countries is to develop their tourism sustainably. Often sustainable tourism development centres around face the question of how on-location benefits and regional development can be secured. In this regard, sustainable tourism is seen as a key to place-based benefits, and as such it means avoiding social costs, regional economic leakage and environmental degradation. The main attraction of rural Nordics is the natural environment, which is publicly available, and access to it is guaranteed through the 'right to roam', also called 'the public right to access'. At the same time, the increased visitor numbers at rural Nordic destinations are often the result of marketing by international or external commercial travel agencies, which organise, accommodate and sell these nature experiences to tourists. A part of the tourism attraction is the right to roam. This is the public access to nature areas and often pristine areas. While the experience of enjoying nature is free of charge to the visitors, the cost for the hosting society can be considerable depending on the geographical context. Whether it be social, environmental or economic, especially if these natural resources are in scarcity (Agerbo Jensen, 2020) but in sparsely populated areas with vast nature, they not only provide a needed attraction for visitors as well as locals to benefit from but also are part of an ancient practice and thus an embedded cultural identity (Sandell & Fredman, 2010; Svenning & Sandell, 2011). Large influxes of tourists can cause dilemmas and have become a management challenge for many destinations. This chapter highlights how issues related to the right to roam are discussed in the Nordic rural tourism development plans (TDPs), especially where the public right of access combined with considerable tourist growth has caused problems with crowding.

10.2 The right to roam - the right of public access in the Nordic countries

Through the past decade, the right of public access has been debated (Fredman et al., 2012; Øian et al., 2018; Robertson, 2011; Sutherland & Stacey, 2017). This debate is based on conflicting interests often between landowners, locals and nature-based tourism actors. In some instances, landowners argue for exclusion of organised commercial use, while the nature-based tourism industry wants to maintain this opportunity in combination with voluntary landowner agreements (Fredman et al., 2012). The legal situation of public access to nature and the right to roam freely², whether in publicly or privately owned land, varies among the Nordic countries. Nonetheless, the right of public access can be summed up in a simple way as the right to roam freely in the countryside. This right to roam can be traced back to medieval laws and was made partly to ensure unrestricted mobility through the landscape and partly to meet needs of the landless (Kaltenborn, et.al, 2001). However, there was always a restriction not to remove or damage anything of economic value. This right is therefore also considered to entail certain responsibilities: to take care of nature and wildlife and to show consideration for landowners and other people enjoying the same privilege. The Swedish EPA sums up the right of public access with a simple phrase: "Don't disturb – Don't destroy" (Naturvårdsverket, 2019). The Nordic countries differ mainly on how the right to roam is integrated into laws and thus defined by legal rights or limits to rights. Nonetheless, the right to roam is more extensive in the Nordic countries compared with most other countries (Øian et al, 2018) and can therefore be considered a common identity.

Box 1: Brief overview of the 'Right to Roam' in the Nordic Countries (based on Campion & Stephenson, 2014; Fredman et al., 2012; Øian et al., 2018).

Norway and Iceland allow public access to private land, except if cultivated. In Norway, there are a few cases of permitted fee charging for special areas, e.g., the North Cape. In Denmark, *allemansträtten* does not apply, but public access rights only apply to beaches and publicly owned forests. In privately owned forests, the public has short-term access rights but only on paths. Landscapes with public access, as well as roads and paths in the landscape, have been considerably reduced during the past decades, thereby restricting public access to land (Øian et al., 2018, p. 42).

In Sweden, the '*allemansträtt*' is stipulated in the constitution, but not clearly defined - but it is taken for granted that the public has access to private land, including for camping, but respecting a 'private sphere' around homes and houses. Due to a case of commercially organized canoeing in a specific place, it was made legally clear in 1996 that even organized and commercial activities could take advantage of the right of public access, as long as sufficient considerations for the landowners' interests are taken.

In an increasingly global (tourism) world, the cultural norms of 'reading' from the landscape what is appropriate behaviour are becoming increasingly problematic. Problems arising due to horse riding are also mentioned in the report (Øian et al., 2018, p. 43). In addition, in a Swedish context, Fredman et al. (2012) described how exclusive rights to land for property owners are restricted by the right of public access or the right to roam, which implies that "landowners have to accept that other people may enter their land (or water) for outdoor recreational use (including an overnight stay) as long as no damage is done to growing crops, vegetation or other natural resources" (Fredman et al., 2012, p. 294). However, as pointed out by Campion & Stephenson, "there are many limitations on where users may go and what they may do, and any serious transgression against these restrictions can result in legal penalties, including fines and even imprisonment" (Campion & Stephenson, 2010, p. 21). In Sweden, "[t]here is no legislation

2. The right to roam, also called 'right of public access' or 'public rights of access', is used interchangeably for the term '*Allemansrätt*'.

that prescribes rights or responsibilities under allemansrätt. Instead, the 'golden rule', an informal behavioural code, is actively promoted by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, regional administrative boards and municipal authorities" (Campion & Stephenson, 2010, p. 21).

Rules in Finland are similar to those in Sweden, but penalty laws apply clearly (Miljöministeriet, 2016). Here, the allemansrätten is called Jokamiehenoikeus. The public is allowed to access and cross others' private property - except by motorized vehicle. Cultivated areas may be crossed in winter, when fields are frozen, like in Norway and Sweden. "Visitors may also pick berries, twigs and branches, mushrooms, flowers and so on, except for protected species" (Øian et al., 2018, p. 44). In contrast to Sweden, tourism operators must unconditionally apply for and obtain property owners' permission for entry.

10.3 Sustainable tourism and the right to roam

The public rights of access are widely believed to contribute to social equality, welfare, well-being and public health, as well as place attachment (Øian et al., 2018). This is a recurrent theme in the literature on the subject. "Public access seems to be of utmost importance in Scandinavia with regard to quality of life linked to aspects such as exercise and relaxation, as well as emotional and social perspectives on contact with nature" (Kaltenborn et al, 2001 p. 428). Thus, participation in nature-based outdoor recreation activities is strongly linked to 'environmental connectedness' (Beery, 2013), which again is considered to be important for sustainability.

As the concept and ideology of sustainable development has moved forward in the last couple of decades, so has the sustainable development of tourism. Natural environments, wilderness, the unspoiled and 'authentic' have in recent times increasingly been viewed as an asset in tourism marketing (Pulido-Fernandez et al., 2015), while nature-oriented tourism has grown considerably in popularity, which has increased the economic viability of nature for regions and local communities (Puhakka and Saarinen, 2013). With this development, the subject of sustainable tourism has been both researched and discussed extensively where the key theme has been around basing tourism development on environmental, socio-cultural and economic dimensions of sustainability (see, e.g., Øian et al, 2018; Buckley, 2012; Mowforth and Munt, 2015; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005; Saarinen, 2006). Sustainability is now also increasingly recognised as a prerequisite for maintaining the resources that tourism businesses depend on for developing their products (Fredman and Tyrväinen, 2010; Fredman, 2012), while the main political support for increased tourism in the more rural Nordic regions is connected to rural development issues. Tourism is viewed as a means to generate economic income for local communities, but as some point out, the right to roam provides tourism operators with an opportunity to offer and sell experiences, which are secured for free through the right of public access, but which may have costs to society at local and national levels (Kaltenborn et al., 2001; Sutherland & Stacey, 2017). The influx of visitors and foreign (or simply non-local) organised tour operators has in this way intensified the question of the extent to which local communities' benefit or bear costs from the public access to nature. The right to roam therefore influences people and inhabitants, as well as visitors, tourism entrepreneurs and their businesses. It is a topic that has in some areas of the Nordic countries generated much discussion, while it has less relevance in others.

Many TDPs discuss access to nature in detail, but usually not specifically in relation to the legal terms of the right to roam or right of public access.

Photo: Artūras Zelenkauskas

10.4 The right to roam in Nordic TDPs

Generally, the TDPs present positive outlook of tourism, and contested or critical issues are often discussed in a diplomatic way. As a result, many conflictual issues, which receive much attention in the academic literature on tourism, are left out from these TDPs. The right to roam is one such theme. Clear national differences can be detected regarding whether 'the right to roam' is prominent in the research material. When looking at all the TDPs, the right to roam is not overall a much-discussed topic. In fact, it is among the most seldomly mentioned topics coded for and only weakly represented in the data. There are, however, important exceptions, and where specific discussions on the right to roam are present, they seem to be an important area of contention. While the issue is not to a great extent problematised in Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Åland and Greenland, there are more discussions on the subject in TDPs from Norway, Iceland and in the national tourism strategy of the Faroe Islands, where the issue is among the most discussed topics. Discussions on the right to roam are present in around 70% of Icelandic and Norwegian TDPs that were analysed for this study, while that number is just above 20% for Denmark and under 15% for Finland and Sweden (Bogason, Karlsdóttir & Broegaard., 2020). This does not necessarily mean that the topic is not important in specific regions of these countries; it just represents that the right of public access is not discussed to the same extent in the TDPs.

As identified in this research and several other writings on Nordic tourism, nature is the main attraction for tourism in the more rural North. Therefore, many TDPs discuss in detail access to nature, and others address carrying capacity, environmental concerns, natural resource management, nature protection and reserves. Access to nature is, however, usually not addressed specifically in relation to the legal terms of the right to roam or right of public access.

Box 2: The varying legal status of the right of public access in the Nordics

It varies among the Nordic countries that build on ancient legacy of public access to land as commons (allmannsretten) to which extent the right to roam is integrated into laws and thus defined by legal rights or limits to rights. "Alle har lov til å ferdes og oppholde sig i utmarka i Norge. Allmannsretten er gratis fellesgode og en del av vår kulturarv" (Everyone is allowed to travel and stay in the wilderness in Norway. The right of public access is a free common good and part of our cultural heritage) is probably the clearest defined law of commons in Norway among the Nordic countries where this freedom to roam and staying in the free is integrated into the 'friluftsløven'/law on leisure from 1957 (Klima og Miljødepartementet, 1957). While Allmannsretten is bound in law in Norway, there is no 'Allmannsretten' in Denmark, but in the National coastal legislation, public access is defined as a common good, and in the national forest law, objectives are explicitly expressed that the forest nature is a welfare good where the population is granted possibilities for outdoor life and nature experiences (Miljøministeriet, 2002, Miljø og fødevareministeriet, 1992). The unclarity about legal status in Sweden has led to the court. There have been verdicts that have shaped practice for boundaries of what is allowed within the frame of this cultural heritage in Sweden (Bergelin, 2010). Finland on the other end of the spectrum has the most extensive allmannsretten (miljöministeriet, 2016) but have fairly recently published public information material on which paragraphs in the existing criminal code delimit roaming: "The freedom degree to use the right are well defined in various laws (strafflagen). Many of the national tourism councils have information material on the right to roam and the commons on their website (Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Norway)".

10.5 The right to roam as increased accessibility

In the countries where the right to roam is seldomly mentioned and only minimally problematised, public access to nature is often discussed in terms of accessibility for the public, the population and tourists. Commonly, where the right to roam is not problematised in the TDPs and not thought to contribute to crowding or overuse, it is instead discussed in terms of securing greater access to nature and attracting more visitors.

10.6 Public access for business development

In other instances, the context of public access is discussed as a business-development concern, proposing further development of the use of concessions of specific tracts of areas to specific tourism companies, e.g., in order to allow "the individual actor to develop the [tourism] product without interference" (Greenland Tourism Strategy, 2016-2020). The TDP from Greenland also addresses the possibility of investments in promoting and disseminating of different sites, including places on United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage site list. This is viewed as having a dual purpose of protecting the cultural heritage and ensuring local economic benefits and job creation based on the provision of access to these sites for tourists. By securing better access, and thereby attracting more visitors, these goals are considered feasible. Provided that tourism activity concessions are obtained by local companies, this strategy could strengthen local economic and capacity development. If, by contrast, concessions were obtained by outside or multinational companies, then this strategy could cause economic leakage, possibly causing local social and environmental costs, and thereby not leading to the expected local benefits from the tourism (see an example from Alaska mentioned below).

While discussions on the right to roam are well-known in the academic literature about tourism and in public debate in certain areas in most countries, the topic is to a much lesser extent included in the TDPs of some than others. The examples mentioned above show a tendency to view or discuss nature, sometimes in connection to the right to roam, as an asset that needs to secure better access for more people to enjoy and thus attract more visitors. Then there are other regions - particularly in Norway, the Faroes and to some extent Iceland - where discussions

have addressed the right of public access as somewhat problematic, especially where increased visitor numbers have caused congestion. In general, areas with natural resources experience increased competition on land use, e.g., in the Arctic part of the Nordic countries where there are clear contradictions between land use interests and competition between reindeer herding, mining and tourism interests (Similä & Jokinen, 2018; Smed Olsen et.al., 2016).

'Right to roam' as a common goods problem

Tension can be detected in the literature on 'the right to roam' with regards to whether tourism development, especially in rural areas and those based on natural landscapes or nature as a resource, represents a conflict between economic development from tourism on the one hand and environmental concern and preservation on the other hand, or whether the different objectives really should be understood as common goals in the long term, due to their interrelation? While the right to roam in many ways forms a basis for the nature-based tourism industry's commercial activities, this setup can also provide risks of over-exploitation (as a free-for-all, or the typical 'tragedy of open access' (Feeny, Berkes, McCay, & Acheson, 1990; Larson & Bromley, 1990)), which in the long run also would affect the tourism business development negatively. The issues of possible over-tourism³ are therefore closely related to the fundamental questions on environmental management, i.e., to what extent the natural environment can be utilised sustainably without ruining its most valuable aspects. Some TDPs present similar discussions.

Often, the TDPs discuss issues related to 'the right to roam' in the broad context of 'problems of common goods'. Nature is the number one attraction in Nordic rural regions, which is environmentally vulnerable and sensitive to external physical impacts, e.g., increased tourism. Discussions in the Nordic TDPs about the use of common goods however almost never evolve around limited or restricted access to natural areas. Tourism's important economic contribution refrains stakeholders from setting limits on growth (Oklevik et al, 2016), and because of this, the issues raised are rather the provision and maintenance of physical infrastructure to accommodate visitors. Measures such as signs and markings of hiking pathways and cross-country ski tracks, as well as roads or ferries, toilets, parks or pause areas, and the financing of these measures and whether contributions from tourists should play a part in these costs are much-discussed topics in both Norway and Iceland. Several Norwegian reports discuss the need to introduce a tourist tax (Buskerud, 2016; Nordland, 2017-2021), and so does the national tourism strategy of the Faroe Islands (Ferðavinna í Føroyum, 2017). Some of the Icelandic TDPs also mention some sort of a fee on tourists while also explaining that such experiments have in recent years failed because of limited political support and strong opposition from the tourism industry (Sæþórsdóttir et al, 2020).

Some of the same TDPs also state that "common goods are extremely important because they make a destination attractive for visitors and residents alike. The more and the better organized common goods are, the more attractive the destination", as in Nordland in Norway (2017-2021). The report also points out that the financing and organising of common goods can be structured in multiple ways: from state organised to municipally organised, volunteer, project based, membership based, organised by destination organisations, etc. The report argues that more attention needs to be paid to this nationally, as individual destinations and small actors spend a disproportionate amount of energy and time to identify or develop goods systems. "The lack of solutions for financing of common goods is most felt at the destinations with high numbers of visitors and burden on the common goods, relative to the number of residents. Lofoten is an example of such a destination. Large wear and tear on nature, litter and large numbers of visitors combined with the lack of a system and an organization make the development unsustainable. The municipal economy is not dimensioned to handle common goods for many visitors, and the [tourism] businesses are too small to be able to support with sufficient

3. Over-tourism is sometimes defined as the 'overconsumption' of destination resources, but it primarily manifests itself as crowding. Crowding is then usually perceived when the socio-cultural carrying capacity is overstepped (Goodwin, 2019).

financing", the TDP of Nordland further states. The same document also addresses the need for organising national or destination systems that plan the collective financing of public goods while claiming that the most important competitors, tourism destinations in other countries, often have such systems in place through city taxes, entrance fees or differentiated access rights and prices for locals vs. visitors (Nordland, 2017-2021).

In the smaller nations of Iceland and Faroe Islands, some national support systems have been put in place to fund necessary constructions and maintenance of vulnerable and popular nature sites. However, in Iceland, some TDPs mention that although this is a positive development, the funding has not been sufficient and often limited to maintain and develop the necessary facilities at a few hot spots. From the government's perspective, the question of how to gather the necessary funds to secure the maintenance of public goods remains the main challenge (Sæþórsdóttir et al, 2020). Where visitations exceed the carrying capacity of a site, the right to roam freely and enjoying access to public goods can therefore pose dilemmas. There is however no political will to limit guest numbers but limited will to introduce fees or taxes, while at the same time considerable funds are needed to secure the necessary infrastructure to accommodate visitors without compromising the site itself.

Tourists in the mountains, Norway.

Photo: Unsplash.com

Adjusting the right to roam to today's reality

Despite the Icelandic TDPs being recently developed - and the fact that the right to roam has been a subject of some discussions and controversies in Iceland in recent years - the right to roam is not mentioned directly in the Icelandic TDPs in much detail. Challenges that are related to the issue - environmental concerns, overcrowding and carrying capacity, negative impacts, authenticity, sustainability concerns and nature protection - are very prominent, but not necessarily discussed in direct context with the right to roam. Many issues of controversy and challenges caused by tourism in Iceland are, however, related to the steep growth in visitor numbers and the strain this has caused on nature and infrastructure (Sæþórsdóttir et al, 2020). In one of the TDPs, the right to roam is mentioned as one of tourism's 'key challenges of the future' (Norðurland, 2018-2021), while all of the Icelandic TDPs clearly state that one of the intended goals of the current government is to settle "the work that has begun to resolve the

confrontation of public law regarding the right to roam and the tourism industry" (e.g., Vesturland, 2018-2021; Suðurland, 2018-2021). The right of public access is in this way considered a major challenge but at the same time not connected directly as a possible contributor to unsustainable tourism development. The uncertainty surrounding the legal status of the right to roam and how that right is supposed to be interpreted might very well be the reason for how little is directly addressed on the subject in the Icelandic TDPs. The issue simply seems to be of too much controversy, and since it is on the agenda of the national government to solve this uncertainty, those who have participated in developing the TDPs have found it most rational to mention it as little as possible.

As stated earlier, many of the issues regarding tourism that have risen in recent years in Iceland can be linked to the increased numbers of tourists. There have been disputes about the right of landowners to charge people for visiting popular nature sights within their lands as well as disputes between farmers and tour guides, travel companies and tourists. Accommodating in tents or cars on private lands, passing through lands as part of a planned tour along with the strain on delicate nature and stress on wildlife and livestock have also been the reasons for disputes (Sæþórsdóttir et al, 2020) and discussions on how to interpret the right to roam. In one of the TDPs, a passage can be found where authorities are encouraged to take the initiative and settle disputes over interpretations of the right to roam once in for all (Norðurland, 2018-2021), and the minister of tourism has also been quoted saying, "The right to roam, which has for centuries guaranteed us access to the land, cannot include the right to cause unacceptable natural damage. Nor can it be interpreted in a way that it is used unconditionally for commercial purposes through vulnerable areas" (Gylfadóttir, 2017).

It is therefore clear from the content of the Icelandic TDPs, and the statement of elected officials, that the provisions on the right to roam require revision or at least formal legal interpretation. The laws have been in place since the 13th century to secure the permission of people traveling through lands, but in today's reality with large tourist numbers along with commodification of public goods and private lands, clarifications of the provisions are needed. Despite being on the agenda of the current government, nothing has happened in the matter as of the end of 2020.

In the national tourism strategy of the Faroe Islands, the request for clearer rules surrounding the right to roam and tourists is also very prominent. Interpretations of what public access to land and public goods entails in terms of increased tourism development are addressed as essential in the Faroese plan. Many of the arguments are similar to those presented in Icelandic TDPs: the ancient rights to travel and use natural resources for survival have nothing in common with mass tourism where delicate nature is sold as a commodity that can be easily harmed by the overflow of visitors and cause locals' social anguish (interviews). In the Faroes, it is also stated that often nature tourism, unspoiled wilderness and the Nordic 'right to roam' form a selling point for tourism operators, thereby it is argued that access to nature is being sold without any of the economic benefits being left behind where the 'product is consumed'. Therefore, the need for clearer laws on the subject is addressed in their TDP to determine if access fees can be applied to tourist visits to private or public properties and under what circumstances (Faroe Islands, 2017). The right to roam and tourism even became one of the most discussed topics in the parliamentary elections in 2019, and since then some advancements have in fact been made to address the issues that have risen around crowding and the use of public goods.

Many of the issues regarding tourism that have risen in recent years in Iceland can be linked to the increased numbers of tourists.

Photo: Vaida Ražaitytė

'Right to roam' and economic leakage

The effects that large numbers of visitors have on common goods can be social, environmental and economic. The social tolerance of smaller communities can be put at test, while public goods like the natural environment and infrastructure can be put under strain. It is often pointed out that the cost associated with this is very local - not only the social and environmental cost but also the economic cost since the maintenance and investments necessary in accommodating the tourism increase are largely funded by the public. Economic leakage is also addressed in the literature about rural tourism. Several articles consider organised commercial use of nature an economic leakage, and see it as environmental, economic and managerial problem (e.g., Kaltenborn et al., 2001), while others consider foreign operators and cruise tourism as especially problematic (Sutherland & Stacey, 2017). There are cases from other similar parts of the world that present similar issues, e.g., Princess cruises enclave formation through the investment in conserved lands (Mt. McKinley, Kenai and Denali) and construction of exclusive wildlife lodges in Alaskan national parks (Karlsdóttir, 2007; Princess cruises n.d.). Some of the TDPs from Iceland, Norway and the Faroe Islands reflect this in addressing that tourism operators can offer visits to pristine nature areas, often in large scale, citing the public right of access for vindication.

"Tourism can create employment, income and contribute to the settlement and increased quality of life, contribute to increased and more diverse services, but at the same time the industry utilizes natural resources and certain social aspects in its activities that are often considered public goods" the TDP from western Iceland states (Vesturlands, 2018-2020), which also states, "There are examples of foreign operators who import both cars for passenger transport and camping equipment and take organised group trips around the country. These people often buy services to a very limited extent and even stay in public emergency shelters. Such a range of services has become too common and is also without supervision." The main benefit of tourism as a rural development tool is generally seen as increased economic activity, new job opportunities and job diversifications, which can contribute to the overall attractiveness of a region. Some TDPs do raise concerns that the increased economic activities due to growth in

tourism do not necessarily benefit the local economy nor contribute to job creation to the extent that some take for granted. A common assumption is that when public goods are commodified, it economically benefits the locality where the public goods are. However, since the general rule in the Nordic countries is that everybody has the 'right to roam' and public access to nature is free of charge, anyone from anywhere can enjoy those public goods. This includes tourism operators and companies that may have no connection to the place they operate in. Making sure that economic gains generated by tourism benefit the local economy as much as possible is therefore highlighted throughout the TDPs of the Nordic rural regions.

Organised groups in larger scales, rather than the more 'traditional Scandinavian public outdoor recreation', which tends to be more individual, have in recent years become more visible at Nordic rural destinations and nature sites. This is sometimes addressed in the TDPs as in the previous Icelandic example. The literature on the subject also identifies that larger organised tourist groups can cause different environmental problems and may potentially influence other groups or activities in the area through overcrowding or conflicts (Kaltenborn et al., 2001; Sutherland & Stacey, 2017). Along the same line of thought, Sandell and Fredman (2010) presented different uses of the right to roam (whether organised or unorganised, and whether commercial or non-commercial). According to them, mainly the use of the landscape (and thus the right to roam) for the commercially based and organised tourism activities is questioned with regards to its legitimacy. This means that, e.g., especially guided tour activities, using the right to public access, may conflict with the norms underlying the Nordic understanding of the right to public access, which again is more individually based and have deep roots in the Scandinavian culture. The Nordic cultural understanding of public access emphasises that it is not just the right to roam, but it also entails responsibilities and individual obligations to show general consideration for nature, wildlife and others that are enjoying those same public goods. A disruption to this understanding therefore can cause the environmental decline of a destination as infrastructure and image are affected, which again affects tourists' experiences as well as the social tolerance of locals towards tourists (Milano et al, 2019). Crowding and the overuse of delicate nature - made available to all because of the right to roam - can in this way have a severe impact on residents, nature and infrastructure. The costs are therefore not only economic but also social and environmental.

Right to Roam to increase access

While *Allemansrätten* does not apply in Denmark, the Danes cherish the quality of outdoor life by the sea and coast and in the forest (miljøministeriet 2002, miljø-og fødevarerministeriet 1992). Compared by landmass, natural landscapes of larger Nordic countries are fewer, and there is a stricter perception of public access to individual areas. While the public can walk on privately owned paths or roads, these may be fenced or blocked. Therefore, there is an on and off discussion in Denmark on whether *Allemansrätten* should be taken up - a contested issue in pandemic times since these natural amenities are much more sought after in the general public compared with normal conditions (Agerbo Jensen, 2020). Several tourism plans address that nature is 'open every day year-round' and has room for all. In the Danish TDP from Ringkøbing-Skjern, it, e.g., states: "We will share the good experiences and rich opportunities with as many as possible in order to attract tourists and new inhabitants" (Ringkøbing-Skjern, 2015). Often, the right to roam is mentioned in the context of a goal to increase the access to nature for the public, and to public areas, or areas where the public is allowed to roam, e.g., extending the walking or hiking paths, bicycle routes and so on (Frederiksbund, 2013-2020; Gribskov 2016-2020; Holstebro, 2013; Kerteminde, 2015-2025). Some municipalities also mention ways to provide access to islands, sandy beaches or the water in the fjords, e.g., through the establishment of mooring points and jetties (Skive, 2015-2018).

Tourism operators can offer visits to pristine nature areas, often in large scale, citing the public right of access for vindication.

Photo: Unsplash.com

10.7 Discussion

The Nordic management regimes of public access to extensive natural areas rely to a high degree on public compliance with cultural and ethical norms shaped by long traditions (Kaltenborn et al., 2001) - but the norms are increasingly challenged and contested by the public, market forces, investors and tourists. It can be seen as part of a larger process of increasing commodification of nature (Fairhead, Leach, & Scoones, 2012). At the same time, it is obvious that the public right of access is important for people's place attachment and self-identity, as well as motivation, to do outdoor recreation - and possibly also to sustainability approaches (Beery, 2013; Kaltenborn et al., 2001). As presented in the Nordic TDPs, there are cultural traditions to secure public access,

while the issue of maintaining and financing the necessary infrastructure may need to be solved at some of the most visited tourism magnets.

In some places in the Nordic countries where over-tourism that is related to the right to roam is problematised, the responsible authorities at the destination seem to acknowledge that congestion and overcrowding can result in disruption to the local community, cause excessive pressure on infrastructure, reduce the experience of visitors and adversely affect local support for tourism. In the TDPs of the places in question, it is even sometimes addressed that crowding can affect tourists negatively (e.g., Kaltenborn et al, 2001). For the tourism industry, congestion can also result in operational inefficiencies, unhelpful competition for scarce resources, increased business costs and less profitability. For those managing natural and cultural sites, congestion can adversely impact long-term conservation negatively by altering the biodiversity of a natural site or physical fabric and the significance of a cultural site (WTO, 2004). These issues are addressed in the tourism strategies of some regions where over-tourism and congestion are considered problematic.

The TDPs of the Nordic rural areas therefore portray a will to make nature accessible and to encourage visits as long as the negative social and environmental effects are minimised. At the same time, it is seen essential that tourism contributes to the regional and local economies. This does, however, not always go hand in hand, and there lies the dilemma. Public goods are free, but overuse can ruin them. Commodifying public goods therefore requires maintenance, which again costs considerable funds.

Traditions of 'right to public access' complicate the possible use of economic instruments to address this dilemma. In regards to the right to roam, the Swedish TDP of Västernorrland (2017) states that "Accessibility is about the democratic right of people to be able to move freely and participate in society", while in Småland's tourism strategy, it is also emphasised that the right of public access 'wears out' on nature, but maintenance of the public goods is difficult since there are very limited options to charge for their use (Småland, 2013). Increased tourism and organised commercial activity on both public and private lands can conflict with the ancient heritage of 'public right of access' and should be considered in perspectives of sustainable regional tourism development.

As presented in the analyses of more than a 100 rural TDPs from the Nordic countries, the right of public access is first and foremost a problem of high visitation (Bogason, Broegaard. & Karlsdóttir, 2020). Historically, Nordic rural tourism has been minimal, very individually based and without larger commercially organised groups. With larger visitor numbers in certain areas, this has changed and become more problematic, especially in the summertime when many larger-scale organised tourist groups visit the same areas. Problems related to the right to roam, congestion and over-tourism are therefore also tied substantially to the classic seasonality problem of tourism (Sæþórsdóttir et al, 2020).

Given tourism's economic contribution, possible limitations to visits to certain areas are, however, not commonly mentioned as a realistic option since authorities and stakeholders usually refrain from setting limits on growth. In the Nordic countries, instruments such as entrance fees are challenging due to both legal and political principles of public rights of access but also ideologically and culturally. Yet, the increasing pressure on the Scandinavian outdoors and public areas and increasing sentiment that how some tour operators benefit from the public rights of access and public goods is problematic have initiated a debate about who should benefit from nature attractions.

As discussed in a review of policy instruments used to balance tourism, nature and sustainability in the Nordic countries (Øian et al, 2018), the introduction of tourist tax and increased VAT on typical tourist products has been proposed in Norway and Iceland. The proposals were rooted in a desire to find ways to cover some of the expenses that increasing volumes of tourists cause, e.g., overloading existing infrastructure but also damaging fragile natural environment sites. These proposals, however, met with a lack of political support and also resistance from some larger tourism-related companies. Charging for access is therefore problematic, but at the same time securing finance to maintain the sites is one of the most urgent tasks.

A more popular approach to limit visitor numbers while also generating growth is to seek to

increase the profit obtained from each tourist without increasing the overall number of visitors to the country (Oklevik et al, 2016; Gössling et al, 2019). Many of the Nordic TDPs also address this while also emphasising the issue of the unequal spatial distribution of tourists, and as a result also the revenues and costs of the tourist masses. In their study of nature-based tourism in Iceland, Sutherland and Stacey (2017) pointed out the necessity of better dispersion of visitors on to a larger number of attractions, and this view is echoed in the Icelandic TDPs as well as those from some other regions. These recommendations are, however, not directly aimed at the challenges of public access but rather related to issues such as seasonality and crowding, although all challenges are interrelated.

An alternative proposal to deal with the increasing visitor pressure and related challenges that can arise around tourism is commonly called an adaptive management process. It is viewed as a way of enabling more people to enjoy visiting natural and cultural sites, while at the same time protecting the long-term conservation of those sites. This involves strengthening destination management organisations, involving public and private stakeholder funding and operation of attractions and destinations. This is generally done by creating destination management plans (DMPs), which are also seen as a useful tool to ensure that more economic benefit from tourism stays in rural areas, "maximising the benefits from tourism while managing its environmental and social impacts" (Sutherland and Stacey, 2017, p. 23), including by encouraging more local ownership to the tourism development. In the literature on the subject, it is sometimes considered that the DMPs may be better developed at the regional level, coupled to regional development institutions, than at municipal level, where know-how and manpower may be scarce (Øian et al, 2018).

DMP processes, with broad inclusion of stakeholders, have in recent years been quite common in many rural regions of the Nordic countries, and as discussed earlier, the strategies they produce address many of the issues related to congestion in relation to the right to roam. As presented in the main report of this research, the 'Pan-Nordic analysis of Regional Tourism Strategies for rural areas' issues related to the right to roam are not widely discussed over the entire Nordic region. However, where issues regarding the public right of access are present, they are considered vital (Bogason, Broegaard & Karlsdóttir, 2020). The same report also points out that by the broader participation in developing a tourism strategy, the strategy has a more holistic view on sustainability, including rural development issues and securing local benefits. In some instances, the TDPs pinpoint the issues related to over-tourism and the right to roam, even calling for solutions and the need for clearance of what the right to roam entails. Although the TDPs seldomly suggest specific actions or direct actions, the presence of these discussions and the call for clearer interpretations on the right to roam acknowledges that stakeholders in tourism development consider the right of public access an area of contention, and authorities and relevant actors need to address it.

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Cruise tourism in Norway.

Photo: Unsplash.com

11. Cruise tourism in the rural Nordic region

11.1 Introduction

Cruise tourism is an area of contention. It enables tourists to reach destinations that are otherwise remote and less accessible. However, cruise tourism also creates challenges. There is a growing awareness regarding the environmental consequences of the cruise traffic, affecting local water and air quality, climate, nature and local communities. Some tourism actors place their hopes and strategies on cruise tourism and plan for continued and increased growth, while others are dissatisfied and plan for regulation and restrictions, as they feel that they are the ones who bear the costs and inconveniences of cruise tourism that benefits somebody else. There is a growing acceptance that cruise tourism is 'not the most sustainable sector' within tourism (here commented in relation to Norwegian tourism, in Cruisestrategi for Vestlandet 2016-2020).

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the tourism development plans (TDPs) present a positive outlook of tourism, and if any disputed or critical issues are touched upon, they are usually presented in a diplomatic language. Consequently, one has to 'read between the lines' or look at what aspects of tourism development and community impacts have been omitted from the TDPs. Many conflictive issues, which receive much attention in the academic literature on tourism, have been left out in the TDPs, including cruise tourism and its local effects. However, one thematic TDP focusing on cruise tourism is an exception.

The Cruise Strategy for Western Norway openly addresses many of the conflicting interests, which are especially between land-based and sea-based tourism, taking much care to present conflictive views of both sides. The report mentions a heated and emotional debate, as well as the critique of some local communities that feel that "cruise traffic considerably reduced life conditions and thriving in the local community during the cruise season" (Cruise strategi for Vestlandsregionen 2016-2020). Scepticism and some critical aspects of cruise tourism are also addressed in three TDPs from Iceland as well as in the national tourism plan for the Faroe Islands.

As discussed below, many of the negative consequences are related to a large number of cruise

tourists and their concentration in time and space, and the related pressure they put on physical infrastructure and social wellbeing, questioning the distribution of benefits and value created from cruise tourism.

11.2 A growing tourism subsector

Cruise tourism has globally experienced massive growth in the past decades. Worldwide, there were approximately 24 million cruise passengers in 2016 (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandet 2016-2020). Expectations to and planning for continued growth in the cruise tourism and the arrivals of cruise tourists characterise the mentioning of cruise tourism in TDPs. Cruise tourism is mentioned in approximately a quarter of the analysed rural TDPs. This indicates that despite its impressive growth rates, cruise tourism is not a general focus of rural tourism development. However, it can be important for islands and rural coastal localisation. The cruise tourism is thus unevenly distributed, between both national areas and rural areas. For example, Norway, where especially the fjords in the west are important cruise destinations, has experienced 9% growth per year in cruise tourism from 2000 to 2014, although with varying growth rates and sudden 'jumps', e.g., 50% growth in cruise passengers in Western Norway between 2011 and 2013 (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandet, 2016-2020). Furthermore, this growth is unevenly distributed geographically, with Western Norway receiving approximately 70% of all cruise tourism in the country and expecting to receive most of the growth as well (Ibid.). The report mentions expectations regarding a doubling of cruise traffic within 25–30 years (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandet, 2016-2020).

Iceland stands out as the country with more than two-thirds of TDPs mentioning cruise tourism. This is followed by Norway, where more than one-third of the TDPs address cruise tourism in one way or the other. In addition, the national-level TDPs analysed for the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland also address cruise tourism. For Finland, a bit more than a quarter of the TDPs mention cruise tourism, while the frequency is lower in Denmark, where approximately one in every six rural TDPs mentions cruise tourism. Surprisingly, only one TDP in Sweden, for the island of Gotland, addresses cruise tourism (Bogason, Broegaard & Karlsdóttir, 2020).

Cruise tourism on large vessels demands large infrastructural investments in harbours and piers that can receive the ships. In many places, harbours and piers have specifically been constructed for receiving those calls. Often, however, for expedition ships and family ships of minor size, a predominantly industrial harbour is changed to accommodate various sizes of cruise liners and the leisure needs of passengers (Karlsdóttir, 2017). These ports can range from landing piers to cruise terminals of various sizes. Many smaller communities can only be accessed by tender boats or zodiacs. This may scare many tourists from visiting the land, especially if bordering is difficult, as claimed in the TDP from Greenland (National sektorplan for turisme 2016-2020). However, experience from Iceland shows that zodiac trips on more remote locations and to national parks and wilderness area are part of the experience too, often unnoticed, but negatively impact nature. This was the case of Westfjords Hornstrandir, which urged local authorities and the region's Nature Agency to develop a management and protection plan 2018–2028 to limit unnecessary trampling by cruise passenger in the protected area (Umhverfisstofnun, 2018).

Even if the capital ports in Oslo, Copenhagen and Reykjavik are the largest magnets of cruise calls with other cities like Bergen, Stavanger, Akureyri, Ålesund, Flåm, etc., in numbers of passengers (see Cruise Europe stats), coastal rural and remote areas have enjoyed the possibility of developing some form of tourism by these visits, which underpins the importance of sustainable development of this sector.

Cruise tourism on large vessels demands large infrastructural investments in harbours and piers that can receive the ships.

Photo: Unsplash.com

Expectations for growth and job creation

Most of the TDPs mentioning cruise tourism explicitly express aims for continued growth or plan activities to attract a higher number of arrivals and cruise tourists to each individual tourism destination. Most TDPs focus on the number of arrivals of cruise ships and the number of cruise tourists (possibly also the percentage of tourists who visit land). A few discuss the local value created and how to increase it. Even fewer discuss possible mitigating activities to prevent or reduce negative consequences from cruise tourism. This is in line with what the stakeholder organisations like Cruise Norway, Cruise Iceland and Cruise Europe do by monitoring cruise traffic (<https://www.cruiseurope.com/statistics/>).

In Norway, a visitor evaluation of cruise guests from 2010 concluded that cruise tourism has large importance for economy and employment in Norway, especially in the towns and villages along the coast of Western Norway (reported in *Reiselivsstrategi for Vestlandet 2013-2020*)⁴. Interestingly, the Western Norway Travel strategy (2013–2020) states that the job effect is largest in the smaller harbours (*Reiselivsstrategi for Vestlandet 2013-2020*) and, consequently, is important for rural job creation.

In Iceland, the annual growth rate in tourist numbers from cruise ships from 2010 to 2016 is highlighted in some regions (Austurland, 2018-2021). As reported in the TDP of the Vestfjords in Iceland, an increase of 276% of cruise ship tourists from 2012 to 2017 has also contributed to positive indirect effects of cruise tourism for the local community and businesses (Vestfirðir, 2018-2021). The TDP of the Faroe Islands discusses cruise tourism in some detail looking into the current economic benefits, as well as how to increase the possible economic revenue from cruise tourism (Faroe Islands, 2017).

4. The Western Norway Travel strategy (2013–2020) calculates an economic effect of cruise tourism of 2 Mia. Nkr/year in addition to 1,600 jobs in the tourism season and 1,100 jobs outside of the season. If indirect effects are included, the report estimates a total economic flow of 4 billion Nkr/year and 3,200 jobs in the season and 2,200 jobs outside the season (calculations based in 2009 numbers) (*Reiselivsstrategi for Vestlandet 2013-2020*).

Greenland focuses its tourism strategy on cruise tourism (National sektorplan for turisme, 2016-2020), as cruise ships are the 'highway' between tourists and smaller communities without airports and, consequently, have a number of coastal activities distributed between different destinations in Greenland (Sektorplan for havne, Grønland 2016-2026). It expects a doubling of cruise tourists (from 20,000 to 39,000) by 2040, which will then expectedly sustain jobs equal to 152 full-time equivalents.

Other destinations also report high growth rates in cruise tourism and related job creation. On the Danish island of Bornholm, calculations have been made that an expansion of the largest harbour will create possibilities for an additional 100,000 annual cruise tourists (representing a 75% increase), expecting to lead to an additional 130 jobs (Turismestrategi Bornholm, 2017-19).

One of the challenges related to cruise tourism is the low level of profitability and value creation for the land-based tourism actors.

Photo: Unsplash.com

11.3 Local benefits and disbenefits from cruise tourism

The vast majority of the TDPs that mention cruise tourism explicitly aim to attract higher numbers of ships and passengers, set goals for an increased number of related local jobs created, and sometimes also increase the spending by cruise tourists in the area. In most of the TDPs, there is no consideration of the potential negative consequences of cruise tourism or the increase therein. When looking at the entire data set of TDPs, there is a tendency towards more discussion of negative impacts in those TDPs in which cruise tourism is mentioned than in those in which it is not mentioned. Problems such as congestion, waste generation, value chains that by-pass the local economy or crowding that negatively affects the quality of life in the host communities are mentioned. In Norway, approximately a third of the TDPs that mention cruise tourism also address 'negative consequences of tourism', whereas the similar fraction is less than a tenth in those TDPs that do not mention cruise tourism (Bogason, Broegaard, Karlsdóttir, 2020).

One of the challenges related to cruise tourism is the low level of profitability and value creation for the land-based tourism actors, partly related to the lower daily spending by cruise tourists

and shorter stays (making the average land-based tourist spend almost 3½ times more during their stay in Norway than the average cruise tourist)⁵, and partly related to the business structure of cruise tourism. Cruise tourism is dominated by a few global companies of which the largest one captures almost half of the cruise tourism market. This business structure makes it difficult for regional and local tourism actors at individual destinations to negotiate with the cruise companies, due to the marked inequalities in size and economic power.

The thematic report on cruise strategy from Western Norway states that cruise tourism is among the less value-creating tourism segments compared with any land-based tourism, and that some actors call for ways to make the cruise industry contribute to the use of common goods. However, it simultaneously recognises that cruise tourism is here to stay, that it represents a part of the complete tourism picture, and that it (despite its low value creation) provides a considerable economic flow for the land-based tourism economy (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen, 2016-2020). There are differences of interest within the tourism sector: Some hospitality actors, especially in rural areas, claim that the cruise tourism and its growth increasingly weaken the tourism on which the land-based hotels are founded, thus threatening their profitability and survival. Other businesses, including some of the larger attractions and experiences businesses in Western Norway, benefit from cruise group visits and report that 20–40% of their total visitors originate from cruise ships (Cruise strategi for Vestlandsregionen, 2016-2020).

In emerging tourism destinations, like the more rural regions of Iceland, where tourist numbers have increased significantly in the past decade, the true consequences and effects of cruise tourism are largely said to be unknown. "We need to reflect on the increase of cruise ships, and measure the positive and negative impacts", the TDP of Austurland (2018-2021) states, adding that sufficient data to estimate the impacts are lacking. While in the Icelandic Vestfjords, a survey among the inhabitants of Ísafjörður, the largest settlement where the biggest share of the region's cruise ships come to harbour, shows that 60% of the population believe that cruise tourism has a positive effect on the local economy (Vestfirðir 2018-2021).

As mentioned, most TDPs report cruise tourism development in terms of the number of cruise vessel arrivals or the number of passenger days, or - possibly - the number of cruise tourists who visit land in each specific destination. However, from a rural community development perspective, the relevant measure is the value created locally by cruise tourism and the profit earned by tourism businesses and related businesses. The thematic TDP on cruise tourism from Western Norway expresses it this way: "In order to be more precise and concrete in the examination of the economic effects of cruise traffic to Western Norway, it will be important to describe the sector with elements such as value created [the economic result of a business and the salaries paid] and profitability [the economic result of each individual company]. Each of these concepts give more meaningful information than the number of arrivals and day passengers" (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen 2016-2020).

The Greenlandic national tourism strategy is an example of a TDP where the lack of numbers on local value creation shifts the focus on the number of arriving tourists. It refers positively to the tourism development in Iceland, hoping to be able to attract some of the tourists to continue from there to Greenland by developing closer (infrastructural) links between Iceland and Greenland, as well as by lowering the cruise fee below that of Iceland. The national sectorial plan for tourism argues that a higher number of cruise tourists setting foot in Greenland will increase the possibility of tourists spending money in the visited communities. However, there are no calculations of such spending, and no activities are mentioned regarding how to ensure that the local population benefits (economically) from cruise tourism. Similarly, possible negative impacts for communities receiving large quantities of cruise tourists in a short time are absent from the report (National sektorplan for turisme, 2016-2020). In general, research on the effects of cruise ship tourism on this region is few and sporadic (Karlsdóttir & Hendriksen, 2005; Kaae, 2006; Tomassini, 2012 & 2014; Ren & Chimirri, 2017, James, Smed Olsen & Karlsdóttir, 2020).

5. Numbers on cruise tourism from 2014 show that cruise tourists in Norway had total spending of 12.1 billion Nkr, and approximately 2.3 billion Nkr was spent directly in Norway, partly for the purchase of activities in-land, and partly as the purchase of entry tickets, shopping, souvenirs and restaurants, land-based transport, etc. (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen 2016-2020). Furthermore, it is calculated that a cruise tourist uses 860 Nkr/day, compared to 1,285 Nkr/day for land-based tourists, which is almost one-third less.

Only a few TDPs mention product development as an important focal area to increase profitability and local value creation from cruise tourism. One of them is the Cruise Strategy for Western Norway, which specifically recommends that the land-based tourism products are developed in ways that cater to not only the cruise tourists but also other tourism segments. The report mentions an innovation project focusing on increasing the value created from cruise tourism by the land-based tourism actors. A goal is to have more cruise ships using Norwegian harbours as turning points, strengthen the land-based experiences, and develop Norwegian gastronomic experiences onboard the cruise ships (Cruise strategi for Vestlandsregionen 2016-2020). Similar proposals for tourism product development are found in the Tourism Strategy for Ytre Namdal in Norway (Reiselivsstrategi for Ytre Namdal, 2013-2020), focusing on the development of 'experience trails' and local cultural experiences related to coastal culture (see also Reiselivsstrategi for Trøndelag, 2008-2020). An example from Denmark comes from the Baltic island of Bornholm, where the ambition of the local destination management organisation (DMO) is to create ties between cruise shipping companies, restaurants and local companies within experience economy, and to focus on smaller ships with guests with strong purchasing power (Turismestrategi Bornholm, 2017-2019).

Social carrying capacity and pressured infrastructure and common goods

The term 'people pollution' is sometimes used in relation to over-tourism, including in relation to cruise tourism, signifying a too high concentration of people in time and space, which is too high for the infrastructure and the social environment in small villages to handle. This term also appears in one of the TDPs, which recognises that too high volume of cruise tourism can be a considerable detriment for the local population (Cruise strategi for Vestlandsregionen, 2016-2020). This is caused by too much congestion with too many tourists at the same place at the same time for too many days in a season, resulting in annoyances for both the local population and the tourists, e.g., queues at attractions and at day visits (Ibid.). This likely decreases guest satisfaction, especially in a region marketed as 'pure nature' and 'spacious'. The overcrowding takes place in both large and small harbours (Ibid.).

The Regional Tourism plan for Sogn and Fjordane is another of the few TDPs that mention the negative consequences, or the challenges, that cruise tourism place on the local communities. It states that "Numbers indicate that the proportion of foreign tourists is large and simultaneously that the region has a large traffic of tourism passing by. The increase in cruise tourism has pressured the infrastructure in the local communities" (Reiselivsplan for Sogn og Fjordane, 2010-2025).

In the Icelandic Vestfjords, about 30% of respondents in a survey among the inhabitants of Ísafjörður say cruise ship passengers interfere with their daily lives. Concerns are also expressed in the survey that cruise ship passengers restrict access to services, while almost 50% of respondents say cruise passengers bother them more than other travellers (Vestfirðir 2018-2021). In the same TDP, concerns are expressed that popular tourist destinations receiving large numbers of cruise passengers will as a result be considered too crowded, thus resulting in other visitors avoiding those sites. It can therefore be considered that cruise tourists can cause other tourists - who are often considered 'more valuable' since they consume much more locally, stay longer, etc. - to avoid certain attractions (Ibid.). In this way, cruise tourism is said to contribute economically to some local businesses (mainly food and souvenirs), but at the same time it can prevent other visitors from contributing to larger businesses (hotels, transport, guides, etc.). In East Iceland, TDPs include discussions on an exceeding tourism pressure on days when cruise ships are in town. It is added that this overcrowding can negatively impact other guests, making their experience feel less authentic (Austurland, 2018-2021).

Environmental concerns

Environmental issues have also been an important element in the critique of cruise tourism⁶. In Western Norway, there is concern that cruise tourism may erode the image of Western Norway as a nature-based, unique, clean destination, if it is experienced as overfilled and with unclear areas. The contamination of air and water can negatively affect the tourism product of Fjord Norway (Cruise strategi for Vestlandsregionen 2016-2020).

Some TDPs deal proactively with this. For example, Sogn and Fjordane Regional Tourism plan discusses establishing land-based electricity supply for cruise ships at the cruise quays within the region (Reiselivsplan for Sogn og Fjordane, 2010-2025). However, this important environmental element is omitted in other TDPs. For example, on the Baltic island of Bornholm (Denmark), although an expansion of the cruise quays has been on the agenda for years, and was recently carried out, land-based electricity was not part of the project. Greenland is another example of such omission of environmental concerns in relation to cruise tourism. Climate change is not mentioned anywhere in the National Tourism strategy, which discusses how to attract more tourists. The Icelandic TDPs also address the environmental impact of cruise ships, both in relation to air pollution and the possibilities of environmental disasters, like large oil leaks. A survey from Ísafjörður in the Icelandic Vestfjords and series of local meetings and conferences addressing these aspects shows that most local people consider environmental issues and pollution the most important factors to consider when planning a cruise ship policy (University Centre of the Westfjords, 2017, Karlsdóttir, 2017). Geographic conditions with narrow fjords, remote nature-protected areas and detected zodiac landings present substantial challenges that local authorities and environmental agencies have had to respond to (Umhverfisstofnun, 2018). The TDP from the region also mentions natural hazards as risk factors and that more extreme weather due to climate change can affect travel safety (Vestfirðir, 2018-2021).

Another environmental aspect of cruise tourism is that it often involves inter-continental travels - often air travels. Many TDPs mention the importance of sustainability in their introduction but continue to praise growth rates in cruise tourism and plan according to its sustained high rates, without commenting on any contradictions (e.g., Reiselivsplan for Ytre Namdal, 2013-2020). However, the exception to the rule must be highlighted: The Tourism Plan for Sogn and Fjordana (2010-2025) explicitly aims to increase the market share of the home market, to reduce climate footprint from tourism travels⁷.

Cruise tourism and local community synergies?

While some TDPs approach land-based tourism as an element that can also drive community development, e.g., by aiming to create a 'good place to visit [as it is also] a good place to live' (especially in relation to second-home tourism with long duration and much interaction between local population and guests), such synergies are difficult to imagine between cruise tourism and local community development. This is partly related to the short visits and congestion during cruise visits, and partly related to the inequality in size between local businesses and cruise companies.

The value chain of cruise tourism is a special one, characterised by mega-sized companies and a resulting value chain that tends to by-pass many local land-based tourism actors. According to the Cruise Strategy for Western Norway, this inequality influences the outcome of negotiations with the cruise sector and their agents, resulting in local operators making less money. For example, day trips sold by the cruise company to the cruise tourists onboard the cruise ship may be sold at 2-3 times the local price (Cruise strategi for Vestlandsregionen, 2016-2020). Furthermore, the report points out that cruise companies increasingly use foreign companies,

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6. It should be mentioned that a report analysing the environmental effect of cruise tourism in Norway (from a European organization on transport and environment, published June 2019) was not included in the study. However, it showed that sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide emissions from the cruise ships in Norway add up to five times the emissions for all other ship traffic in Norway.
 7. It should also be mentioned that formal collaboration is starting between several of the large cruise companies and different environmental organizations, with cruise companies committing to certain environmental goals like emissions reductions, the use of local foods, etc.

guides and bus companies to organise day trips. Increased cooperation between local land-based tourism actors and a better understanding of the market mechanisms are pointed to improve the position of the local operators vis-à-vis the cruise sector. Again, the importance of profitability over sheer volume is highlighted.

The thematic report on cruise tourism from Western Norway points to the fact that some of the regulating framework conditions for cruise tourism are very different from those of the land-based tourism, and that this may skew competition to the detriment of the land-based businesses. Salaries and taxation are highlighted as examples: Cruise shipping companies seldomly use salaries comparable to union-established salaries in the Nordic countries; they do not pay company tax in the Nordic countries, and many of their purchases are VAT exempted, as they sail under the flag of foreign nations, often so-called tax havens⁸.

The issue of destination marketing, or marketing of a country as a destination, and the lack of contribution by cruise companies in this regard are also mentioned critically by the Cruise Strategy from Western Norway. Likewise, the DMO for Fjord Norway (Landsdelselskabet Fjord Norge AS) questions the benefits from cruise tourism to Norway (relative to the land-based tourism), partly as cruise tourism does not contribute to as much local value creation as does the land-based tourism, and partly as it contaminates the greatest attraction in the area: The Norwegian fjords, which are marketed as 'untouched nature', spacious, clean and sustainable. The DMO argues that cruise strategies have to help ensure that the local land-based tourism actors make more money from cruise tourism, and that adjusted infrastructure and a controlled volume are important to ensure a positive outcome from cruise tourism.

In the national tourism strategy of Greenland, benefits from cruise tourism are expected to be seen in small settlements and remote areas where land-based tourism is impossible.

Photo: Unsplash.com

8. However, they do pay different expenses in relation to the arrivals to harbours, NOx charge and safety contribution.

11.4 Forward-looking proposals in the TDPs

Knowledge, coordination and data

The high growth rates within cruise tourism have been challenging for many land-based actors, in order to adjust and be able to benefit from them. The thematic TDP on cruise tourism from Western Norway underlines that any further growth of cruise tourism must be well planned, as the spill-over effects of increased cruise tourism for the land-based society are considerable. To be well-prepared to handle future growth, holistic, coordinated and long-term planning is required (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen, 2016-2020). Furthermore, the report argues that the tourism actors in the cruise value chain (including the land-based part) need to improve their knowledge about each other, in order to stimulate product development and local value creation (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen 2016-2020).

The report also reiterates the importance of collaboration and coordination to secure that the number of passengers fits not just the physical harbour infrastructure but also the destination communities and their receptive capacity (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen 2016-2020). Collaboration and communication are needed between businesses and different public authorities (e.g., DMOs, harbour authorities, local businesses and external actors).

In order to handle future growth and/or ensure local value creation from cruise tourism, the need for good and detailed documentation regarding the contribution of cruise tourism to local development and/or land-based tourism operations is important (e.g., Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen, 2016-2020; Vestfirðir 2018-2021). The report argues that knowledge is lacking about the impacts and effects of cruise tourism (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen, 2016-2020).

Taxation

One proposal to make cruise passengers or cruise companies contribute to the use of common goods is to introduce a special fee to be paid per cruise passenger. This might also regulate the number of cruise tourists. However, cruise taxes are an area of contention.

The Faroe Islands consider the local benefits and disbenefits of cruise tourism for the country with taxation in mind. It is recognised that cruise tourism can contribute economically to certain sectors, but at the same time it is also addressed that cruise tourists use publicly funded infrastructure and common goods. This is especially discussed in relations to who is obligated and who is exempted from paying a 'tourist tax' or 'entry fee' to the country, since cruise passengers stopping for a limited time are exempted from the fee. Challenges related to cruise tourism and the public right of access are widely discussed in the tourism strategy of the Faroe Islands (Ferðavinna í Føroyum, 2017) and were even one of the topics discussed prior to their parliamentary elections in 2019. Since then, some new regulations have been introduced to address some of the issues.

In Norway, the **introduction** of a specific cruise passenger tax is discussed as a possible initiative to regulate the cruise traffic and simultaneously ensure that the cruise sector contributes to pay the costs related to the use of common goods (such as infrastructure) and nature⁹. Some propose that the destination tax should be ear-marked to local development initiatives within the destination, and it is discussed whether this should be organised as a regional or a national initiative. However, it is a contested issue, as no other sub-segments of Norwegian tourists pay

9. One example of such a tax is from Svalbard (reported in Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen 2016-2020), where an environmental fee was introduced in 2007, obliging all visitors to pay 150 Nkr as part of their airplane or cruise travel expense. The income from this fee goes to an environmental fund for Svalbard, used to initiate projects to improve and protect the local nature. In the Cruise Strategy for Western Norway, the hypothetical example is calculated that even if the introduction of a destination fee of 150 Nkr would lead to a 20% reduction in cruise traffic, it would generate an income of 72 million Nkr each year.

separately for access to or use of nature or common goods, other than what is paid as value-added taxes¹⁰ (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen 2016-2020). It is speculated whether a destination tax would increase the proportion of cruise passenger with high purchasing power. An increase in the price level for cruise tourism will negatively affect those land-based businesses who earn a considerable part of their turnover from cruise passengers.

In 2015, Greenland's cruise passenger tax was **reduced** from a level 17 times higher than the equivalent tax in Iceland to a level lower than their tourism-attracting neighbour. This reduction of cruise passenger tax is expected to increase the competitiveness of the Greenlandic cruise product, and it is argued in the national tourism strategy of Greenland that the benefits are expected to be seen especially in those small settlements and remote areas where land-based tourism is impossible.

Challenges of cruise tourism are widely discussed in the tourism strategy of the Faroe Islands.

Photo: Unsplash.

Regulation and distribution of the number of tourists

Some actors propose a restriction on the number of cruise passengers, e.g., by establishing a maximum capacity for arrivals to the most popular ports of call, thereby limiting peaks of tourists at hotspots. Simultaneously, it might help distribute tourism towards other (smaller and less well-known) nearby harbours. By contrast, the Cruise Strategy for Western Norway (2016–2020) points out the risk in case a ship does not get access to its desired destination - the entire cruise may get cancelled/sent elsewhere, thereby affecting the other arrival harbours in the initial route. This risk must be evaluated against the social, environmental and brand benefits for the establishment of tourism ceilings.

Distribution of visitors in time and space is important to avoid over-crowding, relative to the local community (Cruise strategi for Vestlandsregionen, 2016-2020). As several of the negative impacts of cruise tourism are related to congestion and concentration of many tourists in small places at the same time, an obvious proposal is to distribute cruise tourists over time and space, as this would reduce the social and environmental negative effects of the cruises. A positive aspect of this, with regards to the rural community, is that such a distribution in time may be

10. Further discussion on this point are addressed in the previous chapter on the right to roam.

related to product development, to re-define a year-round product. In addition, this is also expected to enable more year-round jobs (Cruise strategi for Vestlandsregionen, 2016-2020). To achieve this, strengthened and holistic planning, involving many different actors, is mentioned, allowing local infrastructural limitations and quantity ceilings to help steer the number of tourists (ibid.). The report highlights the regional authorities as a key level of authority to coordinate and be proactive for the region to be an attractive destination year-round, which requires that services are open and activities available, being a prerequisite for an extension of the tourism season, which is needed if tourists are to be better distributed in time. If the cruise tourism can be a spearhead for extending the tourism season, it will benefit the entire national tourism sector.

The Cruise Strategy for Western Norway further argues that coordination, at regional and also at the national level, is crucial if cruise tourism is to be better distributed across the season. It calls for such improved coordination between many different actors involved in cruise-related businesses, and points to a need for a better understanding of related responsibilities and authorities in order to make cruise tourism part of a holistic destination development (Cruisestrategi for Vestlandsregionen, 2016-2020). Another proposal is to diversify prices to distribute people during the season and extending it, like a 'rush hour' increased price. Similar discussions are in the Faroe Islands national tourism plan and the Icelandic TDPs. They all stress the need for clearer regulation for cruise tourism and better access to data to carry out responsible long-term planning for more sustainable tourism development. Several TDPs point to the potential of cruise tourism to extend tourism seasons. This can go hand in hand with improved distribution of tourists in time and space, but requires a better regional collaboration, including between public and private actors, making sure that there is an understanding of the importance for the businesses to deliver an attractive product also outside of peak season. Avoiding a situation where ports are in competition but instead coordinate and cooperate, e.g., through national stakeholders' organisations like Cruise Norway, Cruise Iceland, etc., is an important step in a more sustainable direction. Strangely there exists no Cruise Denmark only Cruise Copenhagen. Such B2B organisations should not only act as marketing organisations but also safeguard the long-term sustainability of the destinations from which they make a living.

11.5 Summing up

Cruise tourism is concentrated in larger towns, but still also reaches rural/remote destinations, and here it can have a large impact on the visited communities. Huge growth rates have been experienced in cruise tourism, in the Nordic region, and especially in the northern-most regions. This creates some positive economic effects locally, but also comes with local costs. The size, and especially the distribution, of these costs and benefits is a matter of contention, although the contention is only very diplomatically reflected in most of the analysed TDPs.

Cruise tourism is concentrated in time, producing a risk of (temporary) over-crowding, negatively affecting living conditions for the local population and the authenticity of the experience of other tourists, who tend to move slower and stay longer. A large number of cruise tourists also lead to wear-and-tear of nature and public and social infrastructure, leading to local costs. Furthermore, there are important negative environmental consequences of cruise visits, mainly related to air and water pollution. This situation causes a debate about how to better distribute the cruise tourists in time and space, as well as how to create a system that ensures their fairer contribution to the local costs related to their visit. A lack of data and lack of understanding of the full benefits and costs of cruise tourism for the receiving communities are pointed out, but it seems that benefits are unevenly distributed, both between cruise companies and the local companies and between larger and smaller land-based tourism actors.

What future holds for cruise ship traffic in remote coastal regions of the Nordic region after Covid19 pandemic transformed conditions in spring 2020 remains uncertain. For many regions, this meant that the cruise season 2020 was cancelled with minor exceptions. Some few shipping lines resumed after mid-June to sail on routes in the Arctic and Northern Europe, e.g., Hurtigruten in Norway, SeaDream Yacht Club in Norway and Le Bellot from Ponant explorers in

Iceland. What characterised the cruise scene first for almost two decades, the ever-larger cruise vessels with up to 4,000 passengers seemed to have vanished, and small explorer vessels with a maximum of 180 passengers were sporadically calling ports. As an example of the dramatic shift, the number of passengers visiting Akureyri in Northeast Iceland in the summer of 2020 was 736 compared with around 164,000 in summer 2019 (Hafnasamslag Norðurlands, 2020). Safety issues in relation to possible outbreaks and painful experience from mass outbreaks on certain ships in spring 2020 have shaken the foundations of cruise ship growth into the future. In a way, this hard-felt experience may also be a promising time to revise strategies from the perspective of destinations and ports that have seen both the good and bad sides of over-tourism in recent years. The first golden era of cruise tourism with ocean liners in transoceanic voyages started around 1900 and lasted until the late 1950s with pauses under the two WWs in the North Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic sea (Karlsdóttir, 2008). With the introduction of the passenger jet, travellers took a break from sea tours internationally until close to millennium 2000. The golden times of cruise traffic in the North had returned but even magnified in terms of numbers of passengers and capacity of cruise vessels. It is hard to predict how and if the industry prevails with the resilience needed to survive as hitherto with both the risks it entails for massive outbreaks and the consequences or if renaissance of sea tours with cruise liners means smaller vessels as indicated in summer 2020. We will have to wait for the situation to reverse. Then there is a much-needed opportunity to focus on developing sustainable cruise tourism for the benefit of the entire region as a whole.

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About this publication

Planning for sustainable tourism in the Nordic rural regions

Cruise tourism, the right to roam and other examples of identified challenges in a place-specific context

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This report is an addition to the report '[Planning for sustainable tourism in the Nordic region](#)'. In the main report, more than 100 tourism development plans from rural Nordic regions were analysed. In this publication, a closer look is taken at some of the most common issues identified and how they are addressed in specific tourism development plans in different regions.

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