Introduction

There is no doubt that the ‘Arctic is hot’ (Roussel and Fossum 2010: 799), and it is now believed that the Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the globe (IPCC 2014). Political and economic interests in the circumpolar North are rising due to the quest for exploiting the region’s natural resources. Advancements in technology in addition to increased access to land spur new investments in extractive facilities and infrastructure, while container and cruise shipping benefits from a prolonged ice-free season (Dodds and Hemmings 2018).

Increasing global interests also include the transformation of Arctic Europe into a global playground for adventure tourists (Pedersen and
Viken 1996; Müller 2011; Müller et al., 2019; Lundmark and Müller 2010). In the context of globalization, peripheries are often identified as potential destinations for tourists (Müller 2015). Even in Sweden, public stakeholders have put substantial effort into promoting tourism development, simply because access to pristine nature has been seen as an advantage in the competition for tourists in a global economy. The effects of globalization are so extensive that ‘even the most remote spaces are exposed to global competition and are forcing firms, localities and regions to react and adjust to the new economic conditions’ (Pike et al. 2006: 4).

Tourism is a significant force in today’s globalized world as ‘one of the largest industrial complexes and item of consumption in modern Western economies’ (Britton 1991: 451). The rapid increase in international tourist flows, particularly in the last twenty years (UNWTO 2019), has become a reason for concern. Statistics from Eurostat (2019) claim that within Europe (EU 28) the number of overnight stays increased by 27% between 2004 and 2017, which is most likely an underestimation of the real numbers since day-trippers, cruise ship travellers, people visiting friends and relatives (VFR) or stays at privately organized accommodation, such as Airbnb, are not included (Ioannides et al. 2018; Oskam 2019). This trend has also been seen in Arctic areas that experience not only increased visitation but attempts by national, regional and local governments to expand the sector. For instance, Sweden’s and Finland’s Arctic strategy documents address tourism as a target sector that can foster growth and employment in sparsely populated Arctic areas ridden by economic problems and outmigration, while also boosting the countries’ image as legitimate Arctic players (Government Offices of Sweden 2011; Prime Minister’s Office Finland 2013). Both countries therefore encourage investments in the tourism infrastructure and support through public funding for tourism research and development. However, this common conception of huge possibilities for economic revenue and social and community development through tourism is increasingly questioned (Lundmark and Åberg 2019), particularly as issues around overtourism are likely to emerge as tourism continues to intensify in the delicate natural and sparsely populated areas in the North. One recent event involved a tourist entrepreneur taking tourists out on dogsled rides being attacked
by a reindeer herder who had had enough of tourists around the reindeer (svt news: Politikern jämför turister med terrorister).

Previous studies on overtourism do not address rural areas that touristsically are relatively unknown and unexploited but to which a significant amount of people travel to. This proliferation has happened because (1) geographic distance has decreased both through organization of tourism services and geographical imaginations, (2) improved accessibility in terms of infrastructural development as well as social and economic possibilities for larger groups of people availability and (3) people’s choice of destination is not only guided by traditional media and travel agencies anymore but via social media. Departing from the assumption that remote and sparsely populated areas should rejoice at the prospects of new opportunities for tourism growth, this chapter addresses the myth that there can never be too many tourists in remote and sparsely populated places.

**Arctification**

The increasing visitation to Arctic rural places has many reasons, but one that has increasingly gained importance is the role of Arctification. Saarinen and Varnajot (2019) point out that Arctic tourism not only may refer to the physical visitation of the region above the Arctic Circle but can be approached through produced and experienced dimensions, which are intrinsic to tourism. The produced Arctic refers to the creation of tourism products or destinations that draw upon cultural signs and meanings linked to the circumpolar North, while the experienced Arctic denotes subjective place experiences of travellers (Saarinen and Varnajot 2019). This extended idea of Arctic tourism also resonates with the notion of ‘Arctification’ in Nordic tourism. Müller and Viken (2017: 288) observe that this process entails not only the production of specific tourism experiences which are based on coldness, winter or the aurora borealis, but the creation of ‘new geographical imaginations of the north of Europe as part of the Arctic and consecutively new social, economic and political relations’.
Climate change has been and can be expected to be an important driver for tourism development. As is discussed in Box 18.1, melting sea ice is creating new opportunities and obstacles for tourism in the Arctic. Partly, public attention for the Arctic, and its vulnerability to climate change, has increased tourist interest in visiting this region, a phenomenon that has been described as ‘Last Chance Tourism’ (Lemelin et al. 2010). Partly, political actions such as taxes on airplane fuel, in combination with increasingly unpleasant temperatures in lower latitudes, are expected to entail a regionalization of tourism, making Arctic Europe a convenient intervening opportunity for the European market (Hamilton et al. 2005). This development can be seen as double amplification of Arctic tourism.

The recent growth of tourism allowing more people to access even remote places has led to new challenges characterized as overtourism (Muler Gonzalez et al. 2018). This materializes in an Arctic context on a place-based microscale, where small communities can experience relatively large numbers of tourists often for a very limited time period. In Box 18.2, two examples of cruise tourism are given showing different cases of negative and positive effects of tourism in small communities. In the case of the Arctic and the intrinsic association with ice and snow, visitation sometimes peaks during the winter season (Rantala et al. 2019). Depending on the profile of a destination, Arctic tourism as a specific product adds on to an already existing product, as in the case of Santa Claus tourism in Finnish Lapland, or creates a new season as in destinations of northern Sweden and Norway which promote sights of the Aurora Borealis as their main attraction. For example, aurora tourism has turned Abisko into a hotspot during the winter season, while only ten years ago, many tourist facilities shut down during the same period due to darkness and low temperatures.

Arctification in Nordic countries has been driven at a macro level, referring to interregional cooperation between public and private stakeholders, as well as at the micro level of individual tourism companies. An example of the former is the Interreg project Visit Arctic Europe, which ran between 2015 and 2018 with the aim to establish a unified cross-border destination for year-round tourism in Northern Norway and Swedish and Finnish Lapland (Visit Arctic Europe 2020). Altogether,
€6.5 million were invested in order to cope with challenges related to long distances, a strong seasonality and limited company resources. Within the project, efforts were made to coordinate transport solutions to and from, as well as within, the region. For more information on this, see Box 18.3. Marketing efforts targeted the German-speaking market, the Benelux countries, UK, USA and China. Finally, the products of many small- and medium-sized companies in the region were packaged resulting in cross-border offers spread over the entire year. The project has been a success, with another €5.3 million being invested in the second phase until 2021. Overall, the project initiated the creation of an Arctic Europe brand.

An interesting example of adaptation to this new Arctic image at the local and individual firm level is the opening of the Icehotel 365 in 2016, which offers a perennial version of the traditional Icehotel (Fig. 18.1). Located at the same spot in Jukkasjärvi, Sweden, the hotel provides a stereotypical Arctic experience to tourists from all over the world. To a certain extent, it can be speculated that the year-round version of the Icehotel has added to the region’s tourism revenue and reputation.

![Icehotel 365 in September 2018. (Photo: D.K. Müller)](image)

Fig. 18.1 Icehotel 365 in September 2018. (Photo: D.K. Müller)
Icehotel is a response to the recent popularity of the Arctic. An implication of such development is the inflow of tourists who lack adequate competencies and knowledge of the destination, requiring entrepreneurs to apply greater adaptive capacity in order to provide ‘softer’ adventures to their customers (Rantala et al. 2018).

In summary, the Arctification of northern tourism leads not only to growing tourist numbers but to the influx of more diverse travellers, including a greater share of people unable to handle experiences in winter conditions on their own. As a result, individual tourism previously dominating in the region is increasingly accompanied by more collective forms of tourism. Furthermore, while previously dominated by domestic tourists, Arctic destinations now attract an increasingly global market, particularly during the winter season. This shift seems to imply a spatial and temporal concentration of tourists to a few iconic attractions, a situation that local communities may experience as overtourism.

Box 18.1 Melting Sea Ice: A Curse or Blessing for Arctic Tourism?

Marta Bystrowska

Myth: The melting Arctic sea ice contributes to cruise tourism development due to better accessibility of remote destinations.

In October 2019, media reported that a recently launched Mosaic expedition, the biggest Arctic research project in recent years, was struggling to find sea ice thick enough to set up a floating camp: some ice floes were only 30–40 cm thick—too little to support the icebreaker’s fastening to it. Though threatening the success of the research project, the disappearing sea ice is, however, considered by many scientists and the wider public as a contributor to cruise tourism development in the Arctic. In the last decade, many destinations, such as Svalbard or Arctic Canada, experienced growth in cruising numbers, less ice considered one of the reasons. It is true that melting sea ice contributes to better accessibility of Arctic destinations. Without that, the luxurious cruise liner Crystal Serenity would not have been able to complete its first traverse of the North-West Passage in 2016. But it was also sea ice that made the cruise liner to give up the journey in the following years—the ice was too challenging to sail.

(continued)
Even though decreasing, Arctic sea ice is still unpredictable and conditions change from year to year. Regional differences play a role too. For example, on Svalbard, which is one of the most popular cruise tourism destination in the European High North (Bystrowska and Dawson 2017), sea ice plays a less crucial role than in Arctic Canada. There, the conditions are usually good in the summer, as warm Gulfstream waters make the western coast of Svalbard practically ice-free. However, even on Svalbard, a few ships in 2017 were stopped by the ice in the North and had to give up their circumnavigation trips (Bystrowska 2019). Sea ice unpredictability makes Arctic cruising a rather risky business. And melting sea ice may have in fact adverse effects on Arctic cruises. The ice is, together with iconic mammals such as polar bears and walruses, one of the reasons for people to visit the Arctic. Once they are disappearing, some operators on Svalbard already consider moving to other locations due to declining attractiveness of the destination as well as overcrowding. Whether climate change would turn out to be a curse or a blessing for tourism depends largely on cruise operators. It is they who decide where to take tourists, which places in the Arctic are best to see and what to show when the ice is gone.

Box 18.1 (continued)

Overtourism: What Is It?

Overtourism, albeit a concept widely used and seemingly straightforward, has so far not been clearly defined in terms of what the word includes, what kind of phenomena it refers to and how it could be studied (Koens et al. 2018; Peeters et al. 2018). At the heart of the concept lie some inherent issues of overcrowding and spatial conflicts, which indicate that there might be geographical dimensions also including rural areas and populations. Nevertheless, most thematically relevant publications examine the dynamics and the consequences of tourism growth in cities and at mass-tourism destinations. In this vein, overtourism is used to describe particular problems at destinations that occur as a result of high and increasing numbers of visitors. Goodwin (2017) provides an early definition of the concept in which he states that:
Box 18.2 Cruise Development in European Arctic Communities

Julia Olsen and Grete K. Hovelsrud

Domestic and foreign cruise tourism is a fast-growing industry in the European Arctic. Unique nature, landscapes, cultural and historical sites present the main attractions for the visitors. The cruise development comes with certain socio-economic benefits, but also with negative consequences through social and marine life disturbance and pollution. To ensure the sustainability of the cruise operations, multiple regulations, rules and guidelines are implemented in the pan-Arctic governance system. The International Marine Organization’s Polar Code for vessels, the Search and Rescue Agreement of the Arctic Council, the heavy fuel oil ban in Svalbard waters and expedition cruise industry guidelines are just some pieces in this complex Mosaic. In addition, our studies highlight that locally developed responses present supportive mechanism for local shipping governance.

Trends

The cruise tourism trends vary across the Barents region. This is exemplified by findings from two coastal communities: Longyearbyen on Svalbard and Solovetsky in Northern Russia. Both communities have experienced growth in the number of ship calls and passengers during the past decade (Fig. 18.2 a, b). Given the increasing tourism attraction to Arctic destina-

![Graph](image-url)

**Fig. 18.2** (a and b) Number of passengers and ship calls for the period 2008–2016 in Solovetsky (left) and Longyearbyen (right)

(continued)
tions and the extension of the navigation season due to changes in sea ice conditions, cruise tourism is projected to increase further.

Though the cruise season, lasting from June through September, has been stable on Solovetsky, it has been extending on Svalbard. Nowadays, the port of Longyearbyen hosts expedition and local cruise vessels from March/April and throughout late autumn.

Impacts of Cruise Tourism

Working closely with the two coastal communities, our research has identified a set of positive and negative impacts from the cruise industry. On the one hand, it clearly contributes to local value creation, employment opportunities and infrastructure development. On the other hand, the local population is concerned about the seasonal nature of the industry and that locally generated income does not necessarily stay in the community (e.g. Olsen and Nenasheva 2018). The increasing number of tourists leads to overcrowding (Fig. 18.2 a and b), creating social wear and tear and with a major impact on the natural environment (Olsen et al. 2000).

The Role of Local Communities

Our studies indicate that local stakeholders and community engagement in adaptive responses are important components in further development of the cruise industry. The visitor management strategies in both cases, based on a network of local tourism operators and related industries, represent a great example of how communities cooperate to increase the benefits from the cruise industry, while limiting the negative impacts. The examples of such practices are locally developed community guidelines, dissemination of relevant information via local media and social media, and mapping of opportunities and threats from growing trends. The residents of the Longyearbyen community also participate in search and rescue operations (Fig. 18.3).

(continued)
Fig. 18.3 Mein Schiff has more passengers and crew members on board than the whole Longyearbyen community. (Photo: Julia Olsen)

Overtourism describes destinations where hosts and guests, locals and visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably. (Goodwin 2017: 1)

Another definition is provided by Peeters et al. (2018: 15) who say that:

Overtourism describes the situation in which the impact of tourism, at certain times and in certain locations, exceeds physical, ecological, social, economic, psychological, and/or political capacity thresholds.
Hence, the concept has strong subjective and qualitative connotations since experiences of residents and visitors are at the core of the issues raised. Yet, problems to measure and respond to overtourism in ‘objective’ terms have been voiced, and in their report to the European Parliament, Peeters et al. (2018) try to come to terms with that. Based on a statistical study, they identify eight factors connected to increased risk of overtourism: tourism density (tourists/km²), tourism intensity (tourists/capita), Airbnb’s share of accommodations, closeness to cruise ports, air travel intensity, air travel growth, tourism’s share of GDP and closeness to World Heritage Sites. The diversity of factors points to the complexity and to the dynamic character of the phenomenon. This is also how overtourism differs from its related concept of carrying capacity. Carrying capacity is generally viewed as the maximum number of visitors a destination can accommodate, but the numbers differ depending on whether the estimated restraints are built on physical, infrastructural, environmental or experiential capacities. However, ‘the concept of carrying capacity of tourist destinations is mainly discussed in relation to the quality of the tourist experience’ (Marsiglio 2017: 633).

With respect to empirical investigations, carrying capacities have mainly been used in studies of natural areas, islands and designated tourist destinations, and less in urban contexts (Butler 2019). Overtourism therefore adds the possibilities to address subjective supply and demand aspects of tourism as an economic activity in rural areas and not only mere considerations of the quality of the tourist experience. Furthermore, the concept also includes aspects of the tourism system that are usually not mentioned in carrying capacity discussions, referring to tourism-generating areas and social media as a platform that creates new flows of tourists. There are also political dimensions that are not discussed in the concept of carrying capacity due to its origin in natural sciences.

Ideologically, the development of overtourism has been attributed to the dominating neoliberal economic paradigm focusing on a good business and investment climate while leaving the civil society as the remaining resistance to injustices caused by the ruling paradigm (Higgins-Desbiolles et al. 2019). Within this neoliberal realm, there are
also frictions with respect to property rights. Plichta (2019: 687) views overtourism as ‘a typical management problem of the public and private property rights, e.g. between tourists’ and residents’ right to use common space, […] a manifestation of excessive consumption of goods to which property rights remain unallocated’.

Research has also highlighted that the growth of tourism-related problems is often associated with improved accessibility by air through low-cost carriers and decreasing air-fares, in addition to an increasing supply of low-cost accommodation, for example, Airbnb (Rončák 2019). However, Airbnb is not only a way to concentrate tourists to popular destinations. It has also become a means of spreading out tourism accommodations from traditional tourism areas in cities into urban residential districts. Being located ‘off the beaten track’ means that their appeal does not lie in representing a traditional tourist attraction, but instead it is the atmosphere of everyday life that attracts visitors. This is not only the case in large cities like Berlin (Novy 2018) or Paris (Gravari-Barbas and Jacquot 2017) but also in middle-sized cities like Utrecht (Ioannides et al. 2018).

Overtourism, as presented in media, often relates to problems in the relation between locals and tourists, including conflicts and resistance. Spatial concentrations of tourists might lead to cultural clashes and disturbance caused by inappropriate conduct when local customs are violated (Koens et al. 2018). Inappropriate conduct may also cause unease and anxiety among locals.

Departing from previous studies on the concept, nothing in the definition of overtourism would exclude rural areas from the phenomenon. On the contrary, given the concept’s subjective elements, assessments regarding too much tourism are made by every person individually. Thus, someone on the King’s Trail in northern Sweden meeting someone else that day could lead to the sentiment that there is overtourism—paradoxically, an assessment made by someone contributing himself to the problem.
Arctification and Overtourism: An Issue of Supply and Demand?

Like the majority of destinations on the globe, Arctic regions follow the traditional growth paradigm to tourism development, based on expanding particularly long-haul markets (Árnadottir 2019). The Regional Council of Finnish Lapland, for instance, crafted its first tourism strategy in 2003, which has since been updated at regular intervals, but the main focus of tourism planning has always been on spurring the growth of the sector, on enlarging the amount of international travellers and on diminishing the strong seasonality (Lapin liitto 2019).

Another pillar of Lapland’s tourism policy and planning has been a resort-based development approach, which has been refocused in the latest strategy document, published in December 2019, towards a greater emphasis on tourism zones (Lapin liitto 2019). Indeed, tourism in the Arctic, in general, has developed in an uneven manner. Places like the North Cape, the Icehotel in Jukkasjärvi, Rovaniemi with the Santa Claus Village in Finnish Lapland and several winter sport resorts can be considered mass destinations while other regions receive almost no tourists but strive for growing their visitor industries (Müller and Viken 2017). Kauppila (2011) highlights that resorts in Finnish Lapland represent ‘cores in the periphery’, and investments and economic gains of tourism remain usually highly localized. Zone development might foster a more even distribution of the economic benefits of tourism. Finnish Lapland’s tourism strategy document refers to this new development direction also as ‘smart growth’ that seeks to counteract overtourism. Given the strong seasonality and the popularity of some tourist centres in Lapland, there have been temporal but spatially limited negative effects caused by too many people visiting a small community with a narrow infrastructure (Lapin liitto 2019). Making more places attractive for tourists, plus encouraging summer tourism development, might divert pressure from overrun areas.

Nonetheless, these actions do not solve all problems caused by overtourism. Finnish Lapland’s current tourism strategy acknowledges this, for example, by addressing that the growth of tourism also affects public
services, such as health care and rescue services, and requires additional resources (Lapin liitto 2019). Arctic tourism has led to a noteworthy increase in rescue missions (Tiihonen 2019), also because of an unskilled tourist not able to manage harsh climatic and natural conditions (Rantala et al. 2018). The peak of rescue missions for fire departments has shifted from summer to the winter months, which represents the main tourist season in Finnish Lapland (Tiihonen 2019). Moreover, many municipalities in the north face economic difficulties and austerity policies that commonly affect the health sector. More tourists in need of medical services add negatively to the already poor accessibility of health care for local populations and the workload of understaffed wards. For the municipality of Inari in Finnish Lapland, the pressure of tourism on medical services and the lack of financial resources became so acute that the local government is considering to sell public health care to a private provider (Miettunen 2019).

Although Finnish Lapland’s tourism strategy aims to operationalize its responsible development values through foresighted planning, monitoring, the inclusion of many stakeholder voices and critical tourism research (Lapin liitto 2019), the above-mentioned cases represent a situation where public bodies that are not directly associated with the visitor industries have to incorporate tourism into their planning in order to prevent an exhaustion of public services caused by too many tourists. The deep-rooted connection of tourism to neoliberal globalization manifests also in a compression of time and space (Harvey 1990). Tourism is not only developed at the regional or national level, but global corporations, consumer trends and technological innovations influence local manifestations of tourism at an increasing pace. A result is the so-called tourism bubbles. Such bubbles emerge from sudden and unexpected inflows of tourists in certain hotspots that may disappear just as quickly as they appear, posing considerable challenges for residents and local planning responses. Global airlines can make places quickly accessible (Milano et al. 2019), and the platform economy, led by Airbnb, provides the opportunity for locals to gain from incoming tourists, even though it might be to the detriment of the community. In Rovaniemi, where Airbnb is well represented, the case has been discussed in the regional newspaper that more and more students rent out their student
apartments, which is not allowed but difficult to control for the owning company (Kinisjärvi 2019). These consumer trends are challenging for local level planning because policy action lags behind the speed of these developments.

Such development resembles extractive industries not only in terms of its local effects, namely boom and bust cycles, but also in its understanding of nature as resource provider for industry (Byström 2019). Any previous consensus on the desirability of continuous quantitative tourism growth for the sake of maximizing the economic benefits of tourism without fully considering the side effects that can possibly be destructive to the social, cultural and ecological environments, has come under intense pressure from the civil society and local populations.

Tourism in the Arctic: How Big Is a Beautiful Destination?

The answer to the question above is of course that there is no definite quantitative number to indicate. It all depends on a number of characteristics at the destination as well as with the tourists themselves. There is a large difference in how tourism can be managed depending on where it is taking place. In destinations developed particularly for tourism that have all the tourism infrastructure and cooperations in place or in cities, an increase in numbers of tourists might only mean higher revenues. What is apparent though is that, as a consequence of the above discussion on overtourism and Arctification, tourism is taking place not only in those destinations but also increasingly in other areas, also noting that the Swedish north, in comparison to Finland, is relatively less-developed in tourism, and public debates around (over)tourism have been comparatively limited. Because of the less-developed character of those places and less-experienced communities, it is more difficult to plan for and manage an increasing number of tourists who arrange their travel itineraries themselves and, thus, are not part of a transparent, known, organized or established tourism flow. This concerns both private as well as public actors across the tourism sector. Thus, more in-depth or locally based case
study research in terms of where bubbles are likely to emerge is needed. One way of managing the effects of relatively large flows of tourists presented here is the possibility to find ways to direct the tourists according to a prepared route, as suggested by the examples presented in Boxes 18.2 and 18.3.

Box 18.3 Enhancing Interregional Cooperation and Competitiveness Through Diverting Tourists on ‘The Arctic Route’

Dorothee Bohn

Consolidating cross-border regions has been a central integration policy in the European Union (EU) since the beginning 1990s. The aim is not only to diminish discrepancies between neighboring countries but to mobilize regional public and private actors and resources more effectively through cooperative initiatives. Tourism as a specific development strategy for cross-border regions has gained more significance at EU level within the past decade due to the growing economic importance of the service industries. Public funding, especially the European Structural and Investment Funds, represents the main instrument for supporting various tourism development projects and public-private partnership initiatives (Prokkola 2011). Many destinations and tourism companies join interregional networks in order to enhance competitiveness and visibility on international markets.

In the context of the Arctic region, the EU is a major funding source for research and development (Dodds and Hemmings 2018). An example from the Arctic region for a networked tourism product that emerged out of the EU-funded regional development project ‘Visit Arctic Europe II’ is ‘the Arctic Route’. This bus route was launched in December 2019 and offers daily trips for tourists between different Arctic destinations in Finland, Sweden and Norway, including Rovaniemi, Luleå, Tromsø, Alta, Lyngen and Narvik (thearcticroute.com, n.d.). In addition to bus operators, a wide range of tourism activity providers is collaborating in the Arctic Route. Each itinerary contains several stops in smaller destinations where travellers can stay and purchase nature-based and cultural tourism services. This network amends Fennoscandinavia’s weak public transportation between the East and the West. Historically, connecting the South, where the national centres are located, to the peripheral North has been prioritized within (rather than across) nations, while interregional transit opportunities in the European Arctic are still limited. Thus, the Arctic Route improves touristic mobility, provides access to places ‘off the beaten track’ and offers tourism entrepreneurs in remote locations a greater visibility on the market. Overall, the

(continued)
Regarding the target market, the Arctic Route caters to the individual and flexible tourist who is well versed in terms of retrieving destination information online, using social media channels and booking accommodation and services through platforms like Airbnb. Nonetheless, also cooperation with tour operators is aspired. By enhancing mobility within the region, travellers might be led during the peak season from overcrowded tourist areas to other destinations, where additional visitation is welcomed. On the one hand, such actions might counteract negative effects for small host communities with a limited infrastructure while, on the other, prevent negative tourist experiences caused by congestion resulting in a bad reputation for the whole region.

One positive outcome identified is how Arctification has helped local tourism industries and communities develop increased adaptive capacity and ‘innovation systems’ in response to climate change and improved access to global flows of knowledge, investment and markets. The need for ongoing innovation and competitive tourism development continues to be a key issue for remote tourism destinations (Carson and Carson 2018; Brouder 2012), but little is known about how well different Arctic destinations are prepared to take advantage of new market opportunities and changing global trends.

As has been proposed, there might be little opportunity for small communities to respond to sudden increases in tourism flows. The problems caused by ‘tourism bubbles’ may in fact be exacerbated in locations where adaptation through swift change in economic activities is difficult, as in the case of the Arctic where sparse populations and economic structures continue to favour traditional industries (Müller 2013). In fact, tourism may be in conflict with traditional forms of land use in these areas (Plieninger et al. 2018), and the eruption of tourism bubbles may render tourism even less attractive. There are, thus, several important avenues for further research based on the real and perceived impacts of overtourism and Arctification, not least from different stakeholder perspectives. One such question concerns the extent to which these changes have created
issues around unforeseen ‘tourism bubbles’, overtourism and land-use competition. Where is overtourism happening in terms of location and socio-economic context, why is it happening, and at what time? How can the perceived impacts and conflicts be managed and mitigated by local and regional stakeholders?

In conclusion, it is clear that the future of tourism in the Arctic is still unknown, but it would be reasonable to think that the climate change debate, as well as real climate change taking place, will be important for the direction of tourism flows in the future. Current tourism trends give no reason to doubt that growth is going to continue for a while and, thus, current policies aiming at stimulating growth need to be reconsidered. There are, however, other political aspects of tourism regarding regulations and limitations that can be important for future tourism development. These might be related to increasing xenophobia, spread of diseases spurred by the aftermath of the new Corona virus outbreak or more directly be a consequence of climate change. Furthermore, there might be indications that the social support for tourism in general could change with time, not least due to the environmental engagement among younger people, the ‘Greta effect’ or ‘flight shame’ being signs of a burgeoning trend. Although this altogether makes the future of Arctic tourism uncertain, it also underlines the need for increased efforts to engage, academically and politically, in order to align its development with overarching ideas of sustainable development in Arctic regions of Europe.

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