In this final chapter, we return to the overarching question raised in the Introduction: How can societies navigate the relationships between extractive development and attractive development in ways that contribute to social-ecological wellbeing for coastal societies and oceans? First, we elaborate the key similarities and differences across countries and regions of the North Atlantic to develop general insights for living with the oil-tourism interface. Second, we discuss the theoretical generalizability of our results beyond the oil-tourism interface and the North Atlantic regional context. We speak to how our analysis helps us better understand the complex networks of interactions among players involved in environmental issues and conflicts. We also speak to how our analysis advances our understanding of the ways in which culture, governance, and contentious politics are connected—or disconnected—in the environmental field. Third, and finally, we focus on lessons learned for building social futures in coastal societies. Here, we address tensions between different development pathways in a carbon-constrained world that requires low-carbon transitions. Climate change has been in the background throughout much of the book. We conclude by bringing it into the foreground, as the oil-tourism interface is also about climate
change and the need for coastal societies to find development pathways that work in an increasingly carbon-constrained world.

Towards an Integrative Approach to Conceptualizing Environmental Issues and Conflicts

To synthesize our results, we return to the direct and indirect contact points that make up the oil-tourism interface:

- Energy as a tourism attractor.
- Conflict over energy exploration and extraction.
- The threat of energy extraction promotes tourism.
- Energy sector funding supports tourism development.
- Energy sector infrastructure supports tourism development.
- Tourism is fossil fuel and carbon intensive.
- Tourism environments are impacted by climate change.

Our results show signs of all these contact points to varying degrees, except for the notion that the threat of energy extraction promotes tourism. In other research, sociologist Patricia Widener (2011) found that the threat of oil development increased tourism flows to parts of Ecuador that were in the path of proposed pipelines. Tourism flows were shaped by the desire to see these landscapes before they were disrupted by imminent oil development. However, even in cases of controversies and conflict over oil extraction, this does not emerge as a notable theme in our analysis.

Conflict Over Energy Exploration and Extraction

Looking at direct contact points, we see examples of conflict over oil exploration and extraction. Across cases, these conflicts are episodic and exceptional, rather than an ongoing feature of the eco-politics of oil and tourism development. The ongoing mundane operation of oil extraction
across the North Atlantic proceeds without a great deal of opposition. Across our case studies, the oil sector is viewed positively in terms of their social and economic contributions to host societies, while governance regimes are largely viewed as ensuring safe and environmentally responsible resource extraction. Rather, conflict emerges in specific cases where new oil exploration or extraction impinges on established, valued tourism and fisheries landscapes and seascapes. As noted in Chapter 1, there are three key facets of social-ecological relationships with oceans as travel pathways, natural resource pools, and sites of ecological problems and political contestation (Hannigan 2016; Longo and Clark 2016; Urry 2014; Widener 2018). Based on our research, conflict is more likely when different orientations to oceans as natural resource pools and as pathways for tourism and leisure travel come into direct contact. In these cases, social movement players align with tourism interests to help increase their political efficacy against the power of the oil sector. This is most apparent in controversies over oil development in the Lofoten Islands region of Norway, or around onshore-to-offshore hydraulic fracturing and offshore oil exploration in the Gulf of St. Lawrence near Gros Morne National Park in western Newfoundland (also see Dale 2016; Dale and Kristoffersen 2018; Kristoffersen and Dale 2014; Smith 2016). Others have documented friction in parks governance between protecting ecological integrity and economic development models of maximizing visitation (Campbell 2019). However, in our study, we also see how parks and protected areas, such as Gros Morne, become important leverage points for opposition to oil development. Nature gains political standing and voice from environmental groups and tourism sector interests because it can be translated into economic value for tourism host communities. This is consistent with other research on tourism-oriented opposition to oil in sites such as Belize and Ecuador (Gould 2017; Widener 2011). We also see examples of opposition to Arctic oil development in Norway and Denmark. However, this is less based on concerns about impacts on tourism economies, but is rooted in concerns about ecological values and the discourse of a global Arctic: an Arctic that is represented as the object of global environmental change, scientific inquiry, and political concern (Bravo 2009; Stoddart et al. 2019).
Energy as a Tourism Attractor

Another direct point of contact is that oil can also serve as a tourism attractor. This is not prevalent across our cases. However, most sites do have examples of tourism and educational sites such as museums or science centres that include exhibitions and displays about the oil sector. These sites, such as the Esbjerg Maritime Museum (Denmark), Geocentre (Newfoundland and Labrador), Norwegian Petroleum Museum (Norway), and Aberdeen Maritime Museum (Scotland) often enact narratives about oil and its social and economic importance for host regions. For the most part, the oil sector is presented in a positive light for visitors, with few examples of reflexivity about the limitations or social-ecological challenges of oil (Davidson and Stedman 2018). The most notable exception is arguably the Norwegian Petroleum Museum, which provides space to explore the climate change implications of oil and for the presentation of environmental movement voices. Scottish sites, including museums and science centres, similarly bring in the notion of the “energy trilemma,” or the need to balance economic sustainability for oil host communities, growing global human development and energy needs, and the imperative of responding to climate change. In the Scottish case, we also see how historical episodes of conflict over offshore oil—particularly the Brent Spar conflict—have become memorialized as a critical event that is shaping contemporary oil sector practices around sustainability and decommissioning. These examples provide more nuanced and complicated discussions of the role of oil, including occasionally offering space for dissenting voices. Museums and science centres serve as physical spaces where visitors encounter narratives about oil and its impacts on host regions. They offer a glimpse into the narratives that oil host communities create and promote as part of creating a regional identity.
Energy Sector Funding Supports Tourism Development

In his writing on Shetland Islands, Andrew Jennings (2015) notes that oil development was leveraged to support nascent tourism development. Though this is marginal in our data, we see some examples of flows of resources from oil companies to support tourism development. Most often, this takes the form of funding and corporate sponsorships to sites like museums or science centres where there are specific oil-oriented exhibits. However, we also see supports for other cultural events and facilities, as well as sponsorships for outdoor recreation infrastructure like hiking trails. These are not solely tourism oriented. Rather, they serve multiple roles as local community amenities that benefit from oil sponsorship, as well as being integrated into the tourism infrastructure and visitor experience of these places. However, these contact points have the potential to become contentious. For example, social movement players have raised provocative questions about the role of oil sector sponsorship for arts institutions like the Tate art museums (United Kingdom) because of climate change concerns (Motion 2019).

Energy Sector Infrastructure Supports Tourism Development

Direct contact points between oil and tourism are infrequent, but show how the sectors come together through conflict, collaboration, or flows of resources. Shifting our attention to indirect contact points, one idea that comes up occasionally is that infrastructure to support the oil sector also benefits tourism development. This theme comes up in discussions in Aberdeen (Scotland) and Esbjerg (Denmark) as evidence for the positive spillover effects of oil development. Greater flight connectivity, as well as hotel and restaurant development, serve the needs of both oil development and tourism travel. For several participants, this supports the idea that oil and tourism can work as complementary development paths.
Tourism Is Fossil Fuel and Carbon Intensive

Another indirect contact point is that tourism itself is carbon intensive. Flows of oil ensure the multiple modes of travel that provide tourism mobility, including airplane, car, and bus travel, as well as the various aquamobilities of cruise ships, ferries, and boat tours. These carbon-intensive mobilities are deeply woven into tourism and come up repeatedly across cases. However, this is generally not problematized, but is taken for granted as part of the background infrastructure of tourism travel and experience. The carbon intensity of tourism mobilities is a particularly difficult problem in achieving the objectives of sustainable tourism (Cohen et al. 2011; Peeters et al. 2019; Young et al. 2015). However, across cases there are few signs of critical engagement with this issue. Environmental reflexivity about the carbon intensity of tourism travel is more evident in our interviews than in other data sources. The Icelandic case appears to show more reflexivity about the carbon cost of tourism. This may reflect the experience of the rapid tourism boom in the region, coupled with Iceland’s status as a remote destination that relies on airplane access for virtually all of its tourism market (Lund et al. 2017). Here, tourism is more often viewed as relatively sustainable, but the carbon footprint from plane and car travel is an issue to be addressed. Across several of our cases, participants and website data point to specific projects that are emerging that attempt to reduce the carbon intensity of tourism by experimenting with the electrification of car, bus, or boat travel. These localized experiments have the potential to be scaled up and become positive tipping points in shifting towards lower-carbon tourism mobilities.

Tourism Environments Are Impacted by Climate Change

The final contact point is that high northern tourism environments are impacted by climate change, which in turn is driven by fossil fuel extraction and consumption. Where climate change is discussed in our data, this is usually broader than impacts for the tourism sector.
Climate change concerns orient around coastal erosion, sea level rise, flooding, melting glaciers, and extreme weather. There is also concern that these ecological and landscape changes are amplified in the high north (Callison 2014; Cunsolo and Ellis 2018). Climate change has spill over effects on tourism economies by altering coastal landscapes through coastal erosion or destruction of infrastructure (Hall et al. 2009). This poses challenges to tourism development in general, but also has specific impacts on practices like hiking and boat tours, which are key tourism activities throughout the region. Shifting seasonal weather patterns can also impact tourism, for example by posing challenges for winter activities and attempts to extend the tourism season. Conversely, there is also material in our data about how climate change is also opening new avenues of tourism activity in the high northern reaches of the North Atlantic. With less sea ice and longer ice-free seasons in the Arctic, there is increasing cruise ship travel, as well as increasing interest in Arctic tourism that draws visitors that want to experience these places before they are irrevocably transformed by climate change (Hall 2010; James et al. 2020). The notion that climate change will re-shape possibilities for tourism in northern oceans demonstrates the interactive and evolving nature of the relationship between oceans as travel routes (e.g. Arctic cruise tourism) and oceans as sites of ecological issues (e.g. climate change and melting sea ice).

**Living with These Contact Points**

In terms of living with offshore oil, we argue that Norway and Denmark serve as positive models for oil sector host communities in a climate changing world. Both Norway and Denmark use government intervention to maximize the social-economic benefits of oil for host communities, as well as to support wind power development. In both cases, we see more evidence of environmental reflexivity around the tensions between oil development and living in an increasingly carbon-constrained world, which necessitates renewable energy transitions (Davidson and Stedman 2018). It is striking that these regions offer similarly positive models,
given their differences in their political economy orientations and evaluative repertoires. Norway is relatively high-oil, low-tourism in its political economy orientation, while the industrial order of worth is more prevalent in our data. By contrast, Denmark is relatively low-oil, high-tourism in its political economy orientation, while the ecological order of worth is more prevalent in our data. At the same time, both countries are positioned at the consensus-oriented and corporatist end of the political spectrum (Lijphart 2012). Both countries are also characterized by coordinated market economies (Hall and Soskice 2001). These deeper political and economic characteristics likely help explain the similarities we see around managing oil development, planning for renewable energy transitions, and environmental reflexivity.

By contrast, the Scottish case highlights issues around decommissioning oil infrastructure in post-peak fields (McCauley 2018). This emphasizes the need to take a long view of oil development and to plan for how host communities can successfully transition away from oil sector dependency. This echoes energy justice research, which argues that planning for energy transitions needs to be attentive to distributional issues related to the risks and impacts of energy development, as well as procedural issues related to the meaningful engagement of host communities in decision-making and planning (Jenkins et al. 2016; Le Billon and Kristoffersen 2019; Sovacool et al. 2017).

Environmental reflexivity is often provoked by social movement players that challenge the expansion of oil development. Here, we highlight the constellation of Norwegian social movement players as an important factor. Norway is characterized by social movement players that include national chapters of international organizations, Norwegian national organizations, and local grassroots groups, which operate in arenas of an open political culture. Movement players draw attention to the Norwegian paradox of expanding oil development while claiming to work for decarbonization. For example, Greenpeace Nordic and Nature and Youth have used the courts as an arena to challenge the Norwegian government over oil exploration and extraction in the Barents Sea, which translates into greater public attention to these issues.

The Icelandic case, which like Denmark is more oriented towards an ecological order of worth, shows that oil prospectivity can move in and
out of public and political visibility. Interest in Arctic oil exploration waxes and wanes in response to global oil prices and current global price volatility makes the region less desirable. We argue that it is important for policymakers, social movements, and civil society to engage in discussions of how offshore oil development may (or may not) fit into visions for social-ecological futures, rather than waiting for a rebound in the economics of Arctic oil exploration before this re-emerges as a subject of public and political discussion.

Turning to nature-based tourism, across much of the region tourism governance is not viewed as a political priority but emerges in a reactive way once the social and environmental challenges of success become apparent. While a great deal of resources goes into promoting tourism destinations and attempting to increase visitor flows, less attention is given to how governance can help ensure sustainable tourism for host communities. Particularly in the Icelandic case, but also in Lofoten Islands (Norway), tourism governance did not arise as a priority until the negative impacts already became apparent. As parts of Norway are experiencing the tensions of overtourism, one response is to shift tourism promotion to the idea of “all of Norway, all year round” to diffuse tourism beyond the most popular hubs (VisitNorway 2019). Recent developments in Iceland also raise questions about the economic and social sustainability of the tourism sector (Shaban 2019; Statistics Iceland 2019). The tourism boom has softened in the wake of the 2019 bankruptcy of the budget WOW airline and in response to the rising Icelandic Króna and cost of living. The drop in tourist numbers raises concerns that the tourism sector may not be economically sustainable in the long term but may also entail challenging boom and bust cycles. We argue that tourism governance should be developed in parallel with tourism promotion and marketing to ensure that tourism development is managed for the social-ecological wellbeing of host communities. This approach to tourism governance should also incorporate the meaningful participation and expertise of civil society and social movement players, who often promote tourism as a sustainable development pathway and alternative to resource extraction. This will help ensure that tourism governance is used to proactively structure tourism development to better
meet the environmental, economic, and social needs of host communities. Among our cases, Scotland is closest to this model, with a good flow of dialogue between tourism sector organizations and government, which connects tourism promotion with policymaking and visioning how the tourism sector should develop to meet economic, social, and environmental sustainability goals. By broadening the perspective on tourism to include economic, social, and environmental sustainability goals, Scotland also goes beyond common notions of ecological and inspirational worth to “value” tourism in terms of market and civic worth. This opens tourism governance to a broader range of players.

Living with the contact points between oil and tourism development involves other possible tensions around economic sustainability. For example, if oil development increases the cost of living in a host society, as in Norway, does this shape the extent or type of tourism development that is possible? Could oil development unintentionally crowd out tourism development, or limit it to more affluent visitors? Similarly, natural resource economies are subject to boom and bust cycles. Tourism flows are also shaped by global trends and current events, such as the 2020 COVID-19 global pandemic. Boom cycles in tourism or natural resource development may suddenly increase costs of living, which may create anxiety or resistance within host communities. Although these are not strong themes in our data, these questions deserve attention in future research, as we consider the importance of economic sustainability in building social-ecological wellbeing for coastal societies.

Offshore oil and nature-based tourism are often viewed as parallel development paths, which demonstrates how oceans can be simultaneously valued as natural resource pools and as pathways for tourism and leisure travel. While oil is primarily valued in terms of economic wellbeing (within the industrial and market orders of worth), tourism is valued across multiple orders of worth. Tourism benefits are seen as more multi-dimensional, contributing to economic, social, and cultural wellbeing, as well as contributing to rural communities more than oil development. This is consistent with our previous research on tourism development in Newfoundland and Labrador,
which finds that the perceived benefits are social, cultural, and environmental, as well as economic (Ramos et al. 2016). There is generally a broad, cross-sectoral consensus about the positive impacts of tourism as a relatively sustainable development pathway. By contrast, interpretations of oil are more heterogenous and sometimes conflictual. Where there is conflict around oil development, this often breaks into oil-government alignments versus environmentalist-tourism alignments (also see Stoddart and Graham 2018). While these sectors may share social and ecological space, they rarely share political and cultural space.

Contact points across the sectors become most visible when there is conflict over proposed new oil exploration and extraction, which happens when orientations to oceans as natural resource pools directly come up against orientations to oceans as pathways for tourism and leisure travel. Contact points also emerge where oil itself becomes a tourism attraction, or when oil sector funding helps support tourism development. Building on our arguments about evaluative repertoires and orders of worth from Chapter 3, we argue that there is space for much greater engagement across the sectors. Offshore oil and nature-based tourism represent substantially different pathways for how we live with, and make a living from, coastal areas. However, planning and policymaking for these sectors often occurs in silos rather than through engagement across sectors. Chapter 3 demonstrates that news media discussions about oil and tourism rarely intersect. Public deliberation is characterized by “cultural holes” in our collective understanding that obscure the direct and indirect contact points between these two development models. In other words, the oil-tourism interface is a cultural blind spot across our five case study regions. Furthermore, these sectors are further impacted by, and contribute to, climate change, which is also treated as a separate policy arena. As we argue in Chapter 4, there should be more regular contact points for communication across sectors that share social-ecological space, so that their divergent interests are not only visible during times of conflict. These contact points should also provide space for meaningful participation by civil society and social movement players, as noted in Chapter 5. This would help build more holistic landscape-level and seascape-level forms of environmental governance, which would contribute to greater social-ecological wellbeing for coastal communities and oceans.
Relational Political Ecology: Connecting Environmental Governance, Players and Arenas, and Culture in Action

We approached this project from a theoretical perspective we call relational political ecology. While there are multiple ways to define political ecology, there is a common emphasis on understanding the interconnections between ecological, political, economic, and cultural systems for structuring social-ecological relationships across the micro-, meso-, and macro-level of networks and processes (Bennett 2010; Escobar 1999; Latour 2004; Stoddart 2012). This perspective attends to multiple facets of social power, including political economic significance (Chapter 2), cultural visibility (Chapter 3), and access to—and efficacy within—public and political arenas of deliberation and decision-making (Chapters 4 and 5). By framing our approach as relational political ecology, we align with other complementary relational sociologies that include cultural and social network analysis, a comparative analysis of evaluative repertoires, and the players and arenas approach to social movements (Crossley 2010; Duyvendak and Jasper 2015; Jasper and Duyvendak 2015). We integrate these approaches because they provide specific conceptual tools that help us analyse culture, governance, and social movements within a relational political ecology perspective. By drawing these theoretical threads together into a broader relational political ecology framework, we emphasize the social-ecological contexts and relationships that culture, governance, and social movement players work through and within. As such, our relational political ecology approach offers a valuable theoretical perspective for future studies of how societies navigate, negotiate, or contest natural resource extraction and ecotourisms as alternative development pathways.

In the cultural dimension, both tourism and oil are valued for making economic and social contributions to host communities; in other words, oceans are valued within multiple “orders of worth” as natural resource pools and travel pathways. However, in the political sphere there is often an asymmetry that privileges oil over tourism, as in Norway or Newfoundland and Labrador, which are defined in part by their general
orientation towards industrial and market orders of worth; or where tourism is more visible than discussions around oil, as in Iceland or Denmark, which are oriented more towards ecological and market orders of worth. Even where there is more symmetry across the oil and tourism sectors, as in Scotland, the connected dimensions of governance are underdeveloped and the two sectors are treated as separate policy arenas. The connective dimension of environmental governance emerges only episodically and reactively when conflict erupts, driven by the opposition of community members or environmental movement players. By thinking of the relationship between resource extraction and tourism development through a relational political ecology lens, one of the main arguments we make is to call for more connected forms of environmental governance in order to encourage planning for relationships among multiple development paths at the landscape/seascape level. This call is in line with other strains of thinking in environmental sciences around the need for holistic landscape or seascape level environmental impact assessment, or cumulative effects analysis (i.e. Berkes 2015). A more holistic approach would resolve some of the tensions that result from the dominant disconnected approaches to environmental governance. One of the challenges to building more connective forms of governance involves navigating the economic, cultural, and political power differentials across sectors and actors. However, more holistic forms of environmental governance could provoke significant shifts in how we envision the social-ecological futures that host communities want and who has the political efficacy to enact these futures. As such, our concept of the connective dimension of environmental governance makes a valuable theoretical contribution to the environmental governance literature, which is more attentive to the vertical and horizontal dimensions of governance within particular arenas of environmental policymaking and management (Francesch-Huidobro 2012).

Throughout this book, we devoted significant attention to the role of environmental movement and civil society players in shaping the oil-tourism interface. As others have noted, social movements studies focuses primarily on peak periods of mobilization and contention around specific issues, thereby creating a “distorted” understanding of social movement dynamics (McAdam et al. 2005). Rather than taking specific movements
or controversies as our unit of analysis, we adopt a broader approach to the various ways in which movement players work in the multiple arenas of oil and tourism development. Movement players are engaged in a multiplicity of forms of action that involve conflict and collaboration with other players. Our results show that social movements exercise power through networks of contention and opposition, as is the focus of most social movement scholarship. However, we also see that movement players exercise power and generate social change through networks of collaboration with players across different sectors. These different forms of action also embody different tempos, from episodic and dramatic moments of anti-oil protest, to the everyday, less dramatic work of collaborating to build ecological literacy and social-ecological wellbeing at the community level. The players and arenas framework, which we used in our analysis, is well suited to this way of approaching social movement studies and offers a productive model for incorporating social movement dynamics into future political ecology research (Duyvendak and Jasper 2015; Jasper and Duyvendak 2015).

Though some government or oil sector players may at times view social movements as a nuisance, they play several important roles. They help shape public understandings and political orientations to oceans as natural resource pools, travel pathways, and sites of ecological problems and political contestation (Hannigan 2016; Widener 2018). They give voice to non-human nature and amplify tourism and fisheries interests where oil development creates risks to community and ecological wellbeing. As we see in the Norway case, movement players create friction against the expansion of fossil fuel development, but they also engage in collaboration around renewable energy transitions. Here, we see the value of movement players using diverse strategies of “conflictual cooperation” (Giugni and Passy 1998) with oil sector and government players depending on the specific issues at hand. Movement players also engage in projects with tourism players to help ensure that tourism can fulfil its potential as a site of environmental education. In our data, this orients around building ecological literacy for visitors to nature-oriented tourism attractions. This is consistent with other research that shows that outdoor adventure tourism and leisure helps promote environmental awareness and reflexivity about social-ecological relationships (Hanna et al. 2019;
However, we ask whether there is potential to use environmentalism-tourism collaboration to nudge visitors even further in developing reflexivity about environmental problems and conflicts? This would help translate nature-oriented tourism into a more effective social force for provoking better informed ecological citizens, thereby fulfilling the potential for nature-based tourism to work as a space of environmental education and ecological literacy. Finally, social movement players can also help push the tourism sector to engage in reflexivity about the environmental costs of tourism, to adopt pro-environmental business practices around local ecological impacts, or to address the broader fossil fuel dependence of the sector. By focusing broadly on the multiple roles of social movement players in the oil-tourism interface across the North Atlantic, we make a valuable contribution to the social movements studies literature.

**Lessons Learned: Climate Change and Social Futures**

Climate change has been present throughout the book, though often at the fringes of the discussion, so now we bring it front and centre. Climate change is creating widespread ecological change across the North Atlantic region (Cunsolo and Ellis 2018; Rybråten et al. 2018; Shadian 2014). Environmental scientists speak of rapidly closing windows for substantial policy action and moves to decarbonization (Heede and Oreskes 2016). Environmental movements like the student strikes for climate or Fridays for the Future, Extinction Rebellion, and fossil fuel divestment are gaining media visibility and conveying the urgency of climate action through the language of climate crisis. Fossil fuel extraction, as well as the expansion of oil and gas infrastructure, are increasingly under attack by social movements. Protests over hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”), pipeline expansion, and Arctic oil exploration are a few examples in recent years (Cotton 2017; Kristoffersen and Dale 2014; Palmater 2015; Smith 2016; Stoddart et al. 2018). These campaigns are having an impact, with large institutions moving to divest from existing fossil fuel investments, or to withhold investment from new
fossil fuel projects (Rowe et al. 2016; Stoddart et al. 2019). At the same time, renewable energy infrastructure, including solar power or onshore and offshore wind, are rapidly scaling up and changing the technological and economic landscape of our energy systems (Vasi 2011). In this rapidly changing terrain, tourism does not escape blame either. Environmentalist and media attention recently turned to the carbon cost of unnecessary air travel, leading to the notion of “flight shaming.” The reliance of tourism on carbon-intensive air travel remains its most wicked climate change problem, as low-carbon technological solutions are not imminently on the horizon. Returning to the question that frames our analysis, “is co-existence possible between resource extraction and eco-tourisms,” when we consider the context of climate change and the need for decarbonization, the answer becomes even more complex. Many host communities view the coexistence of the oil and tourism development as not only possible, but also desirable and socially beneficial. However, while co-existence is possible in the short-term, the long-term trajectories of climate change, policy action, and decarbonization makes it harder to see this version of the oil-tourism interface persisting over the long term.

Furthermore, the recent COVID-19 global pandemic has significantly disrupted both oil economies and tourism economies. The economic uncertainty and price volatility experienced by the oil sector since 2014 has been amplified by the crisis due to reduced travel and energy consumption. Oil briefly reached negative prices because of concerns about limited global storage capacity. At the same time, the hypermobility and rapid expansion of tourism that has been a hallmark of globalization since the 1990s has come to a jarring pause. COVID-19 has clearly revealed the “fragility” of depending on tourism as an economic driver for island and coastal societies (Sindico and Ellsmoor 2020). Communities that depend on oil or tourism are seeing significant negative economic impacts due to this global health pandemic. At the same time, social movement players have been making discursive connections between the public health and economic crises sparked by the COVID-19 outbreak, on one hand, and the climate crisis, on the other hand. This discourse frames the post-COVID recovery responses as an opportunity to pursue lower-carbon development pathways through the redesign of cities to prioritize active and public transportation, building retrofits, and
green infrastructure. Conversely, movement players oppose emergency funding for oil and gas companies, airlines, and other carbon-intensive sectors. If movement players are successful in leveraging a post-COVID response as a pathway for decarbonization, this has implications for the future of both oil and tourism development.

Turning to lessons regarding the energy sector, we see that strong state involvement works in terms of maximizing social benefits for host communities and ensuring higher levels of environmental responsibility (also see Bryden 2015). Strong state involvement in the energy sector also builds capacity for envisioning and implementing new energy futures and grappling with the major social-ecological challenges of the twenty-first century. This includes taking a proactive and planned approach to renewable energy transitions, so that they are designed to be as socially beneficial as possible. This is particularly evident in Denmark, where public ownership in DONG Energy (now Ørsted) was leveraged to take an early leading role in wind power development. As oil price volatility has negatively impacted host communities, the Danish community of Esbjerg more successfully grappled with these challenges because of the scaling up of offshore wind power and positioning Esbjerg as a key hub for North Sea wind power installation. Furthermore, the Danish government is reconsidering the future of North Sea oil exploration and extraction in response to climate change concerns among the public (Reuters 2019). The ongoing expansion of wind energy is thus positioned as an environmental and economic solution to the need to decarbonize the Danish economy and energy system (Fleming 2019).

However, it is also important to note that renewable transitions are not free of tension and conflict. The development of wind, geothermal, or hydroelectric infrastructure produces new points of tension. For example, conflict over oil has subsided in Iceland, as exploration activity cooled in response to price declines and volatility. However, there have been tensions over renewable energy development, such as hydro and geothermal infrastructure. Opposition is grounded in concerns about the landscape impacts of these projects, which may degrade the wilderness values that help draw tourists and form a core part of Iceland’s self-image for tourism promotion. There have also been conflicts between landowners in rural Denmark around the placement of onshore wind
power, such that priorities for wind power development have shifted offshore. The Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project in Labrador has been framed as part of the provincial response to climate change. However, this project has provoked vocal opposition from the Labrador Land Protectors movement and members of Indigenous communities. There are concerns about slope stability issues and that the dam will create increased flows of methylmercury in the Churchill River, which will have significant downstream impacts on fish populations, with corresponding environmental health impacts for downstream communities that rely on traditional foods (Allen 2017).

These examples highlight that points of conflict also emerge during decarbonizing or shifting to renewable energy systems. These conflicts show that renewable energy transitions are not simply technological and economic issues but involve important social dynamics and considerations. As tensions around renewable energy highlights, there is no such thing as innocent energy. While the shift from fossil fuel-intensive energy systems to the increasing use of renewables is valuable and necessary, it is important to consider the social dimensions of renewable transitions as we think about building just and equitable energy futures in response to climate change (Jasanoff 2018).

Tourism—particularly in its ecotourism variants—is often seen by environmental groups and community members as a relatively sustainable alternative to the ecological risks inherent to fossil fuel production. Tourism is also seen as a potential contributor to meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Gössling and Hall 2019; Hall 2019; Peeters et al. 2019). The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) argues that “tourism has the potential to contribute, directly or indirectly to all of the goals,” but particularly to SDG#8: decent work and economic growth; SDG#12: responsible consumption and production; and SDG#14: life below water (http://www2.unwto.org/content/tourism-2030-agenda). Responding to the carbon intensity of tourism travel, on one hand, and localized social and environmental impacts of overtourism, on the other hand, tourism scholars have begun to engage with ideas from degrowth movements. They argue that tourism development based on continuous economic growth and expanding tourism
flows is fundamentally incompatible with ensuring the social and ecological wellbeing of host communities. From this perspective, the issue for host communities is not solely about growing tourism markets but developing alternative models of tourism development that prioritize more responsible forms of travel (Fletcher et al. 2019; Milano et al. 2019; Oklevik et al. 2019).

We have tried not to approach the oil-tourism interface with the assumptions that one of these development pathways is inherently good, while the other is inherently bad. As our results show, tourism is not an inherently benevolent or sustainable alternative to oil extraction. Tourism mobilities also depend on a variety of fossil fuel-based forms of travel, including airplane, car, bus, cruise ships, and boat tours. Plane travel is an especially difficult problem in treating tourism as a sustainable development pathway because of its carbon intensity and the lack of technological substitutes on the horizon (Cohen et al. 2011; Hanna and Adams 2019; Luzecka 2016). Solutions to the carbon intensity of tourism typically focus on changing individual tourists’ practices to reduce the number and distance of flights, to focus on holidays that are closer to home, and to use land-based or public forms of transportation (Hall 2013; Iaquinto 2018; Smith et al. 2019). However, the cold-water tourism destinations of the North Atlantic are further from dense population centres and tourism markets, so depend on plane travel to connect global flows of visitors to local host communities. As such, sustainability solutions that rely on limiting long-haul tourism air travel may be unappealing in terms of being able to make tourism development economically sustainable for host communities. This highlights the social-ecological complexity of tourism as an alternative development pathway to resource extraction.

The lesson here is that we should not naively view tourism as a panacea for the problems inherent to resource extraction, or as something that stands outside climate change concerns. Rather, tourism travel is embedded within the causes, impacts, and needs to respond to climate change (Cohen et al. 2011; Hall 2010; Peeters et al. 2019; Scott et al. 2016). Moves to decarbonize tourism practices and decouple tourism from fossil fuel extraction are increasingly important. Our work identifies examples of this, such as Icelandic operators who are moving to
the electrification of boat tours, or the electrification of the Hurtigruten coastal boat that is often used by tourists for transportation along coastal Norway. As societies grapple with climate change, these experiments will need to proliferate and become positive tipping points if tourism is to contribute to social futures characterized by social-ecological wellbeing.

Conclusion

Offshore oil and tourism are generally treated as separate development paths, though both are also seen to provide economic and social benefits for host communities. Our key concept of the oil-tourism interface and analysis of the contact points across sectors shows that they not only coexist but are intertwined in a variety of ways. The coexistence of these sectors is often taken for granted in host communities, until new projects for oil exploration and extraction impinge on established and valued tourism economies. This provokes conflict between different ways of valuing non-human nature and integrating it into social-ecological relationships and political economies. Periods of contention highlight the limitations within the oil-tourism interface that are often ignored. Approaching the oil-tourism interface through our relational political ecology perspective generates four major theoretical arguments.

First, nature-based tourism and oil extraction often share social-ecological space, but not cultural or political space. A comparative focus on evaluative repertoires and institutionalized orders of worth can help connect these two dimensions and shed light on the underlying conceptions of the common good that each development model speaks to (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006; Scott 2020; Ylä-Anttila and Luhtakallio 2016). When we compare evaluative repertoires across our cases, we find: (1) general talk of the environment frequently invokes the beauty of nature and is anchored in notions of inspirational worth; (2) oil development is primarily valued in terms of an industrial order of worth, and is secondarily valued in terms of a market order of worth; and (3) tourism development is evaluated in terms of an ecological order of worth, and secondarily by a market order of worth. While these associations are consistent across cases, we also find that the relative importance
of each order of worth in each case is roughly homologous with the
place of oil and tourism in the case’s political economy. Also, the public
discussion of these development models—in the form of news stories—is
heavily siloed, representing “cultural holes” in how the oil-tourism inter-
face is perceived, and therefore governed, in different societies (Pachucki
and Breiger 2010). We argue that the concepts of evaluative repertoires
and institutionalized orders of worth shed light on important differences
within and across societies, thereby clarifying the cultural and political
economic arenas that governance and social movement strategic action
are embedded in.

Second, environmental governance literature attends to the vertical
and horizontal dimensions of governance, which deal with the polit-
cical scale (local, national, international) and range of actors involved
in environmental policy arenas (Francesch-Huidobro 2012). However,
we argue that “connective” dimensions of environmental governance
need more attention. The connective dimension is about taking a more
integrative and holistic look at relationships across different modes of
development that share social-ecological space. This requires a shift in
thinking about governance on the landscape/seascape level in terms of
planning, policymaking, and environmental management. A major chal-
lenge to cultivating such connective forms of environmental governance
is that coastal and ocean environments—which include landward, shore-
line, nearshore, and offshore zones—are divided into separate political
and managerial jurisdictions (Berkes 2015). Addressing this challenge
will require a political openness to experimentation to institutionalize
innovative and transformative changes in environmental governance, as
well as a willingness to negotiate the power imbalances among different
sectors and players (Gross 2010).

Third, we argue for greater attention to the multiple roles of environ-
mental movements and civil society as players that provoke reflexivity
and change within the oil-tourism interface. Environmental movement
and civil society players also have the potential to help build social-
ecological wellbeing as they raise questions about how we value our
relationships with coastal and ocean environments (Hannigan 2016;
Widener 2018). Much of the social movement studies literature isolates
particular movements or issues of contention as case studies and objects
of analysis. Instead, the players and arenas approach is better suited to grasping the spectrum of action and projects in which movement players engage (Duyvendak and Jasper 2015; Jasper and Duyvendak 2015). In the oil-tourism interface, this involves projects of collaboration and conflict with other players, including government, the energy sector, the tourism sector, and others. Environmental movement strategic interaction also involves heightened moments of contention, as well as more mundane projects for sustainability that would otherwise pass unnoticed by models of social movement scholarship that focus on peak periods of conflict.

Finally, climate change is substantially transforming the social-ecological context of the North Atlantic. This has significant implications for the oil-tourism interface, as well as for fisheries and community infrastructure. For many host communities, the co-existence of resource extraction and ecotourism is acceptable and desirable, other than in specific episodes of conflict. However, in the context of climate change, there needs to be an increased decoupling of ecotourisms from fossil fuel resource extraction and moves to decarbonization in both sectors. This energy transition and transformation of the oil-tourism interface will come with new points of tension and conflict, as communities face the uneven distributions of costs and benefits of decarbonization and renewable energy development. Moving forward, this requires an analytical shift from the theoretical framework of the oil-tourism interface to a broader energy-tourism interface that continues to navigate the complexities of the multiple contact points between energy systems and tourism travel as coastal societies grapple with creating social futures that ensure social-ecological wellbeing.

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