

# WORKING PAPER

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## Community care for cruises

Albina Pashkevich  
Hindertje Hoarau-Heemstra

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Nord University  
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Hindertje Hoarau-Heemstra

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## Community care for cruises



Albina Pashkevich and Hindertje Hoarau-Heemstra (Nord University)

## Foreword

This report is the result of a collaborative effort among researchers and key stakeholders in the cruise destination Honningsvåg in relation to the development of Arctic tourism, with a specific focus on cruise tourism development. This report represents a result of the conversations and observations made possible by collective involvement from all those involved in welcoming cruise tourists to the port of Honningsvåg. The dialogue we had throughout this research project allowed us to collect perspectives that look critically upon the results of recent cruise tourism development. As researchers, we remained neutral, and this report is our attempt to provide a base for continued dialogue in relation to both the benefits and the downsides of this type of tourism development.

This report represents a summary of both key actors' personal and official viewpoints, our field observations, lived experiences, conversations with strangers at the harbour, the local grocery store, the pub, on the hiking trail, and even our experiences in reaching the geographical North Cape, as well as our excursions by bus and car and as part of the cruise arrangements. Together, these experiences provided us with a more comprehensive appreciation and understanding of the challenges of everyday development both before, during and after large cruise groups arrived at the harbour.

We are immensely grateful to those who spent their time telling us their stories and about their understanding of the past, present and future for this destination. As is always the case in life, together, we understand there are several future paths and alternative paths to better development. It would be difficult for us to form this understanding without having first-hand experience and learning from experts, inhabitants and those actors who care significantly about Magerøya and what it offers. We would like to thank all of you for providing us with the possibility of borrowing your stories and perspectives to ground our understanding of this place and to be able to present it in this publication.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the financial support we received from the Research Council of Norway to the project *Sustainable Arctic Cruise Tourism Communities: From practice to governance* (grant number 301540) with Nord University as a lead partner, other collaboration partners include Nordland Research Institute, Dalarna University, Aalborg University, Uppsala University and the Icelandic Tourism Research Centre.

We hope this research publication will become useful for those interested in similar questions related to the ongoing development of tourism in Arctic destinations. This publication can be useful for different purposes, but mostly in relation to the decision-making process in the tourism industry for both practitioners and municipal decision-makers.

With sincere appreciation,

Albina Pashkevich and Hindertje Hoarau-Heemstra

## Executive summary

Cruise tourism played an important role in the development of the tourism industry of Magerøya, with the port of Honningsvåg the focal point for the distribution of cruise passengers towards a main attraction of the island—North Cape. However, the rapid development of tourism flows and increased attention to destinations from several large cruise providers have resulted in public and political debates, not least in relation to the uneven distribution of economic benefits. This case report is a result of a combined analysis of several sources of documentation—desk research, participant observations in the field and personal interviews dealing with the main issues in relation to cruise tourism development. The goal is to summarize some of the insights to help inform the future sustainable development of Honningsvåg as a destination.

The report shows that Honningsvåg has been left out in its development as a tourism destination due to the overemphasis on visits to the iconic North Cape, one of the most significant attractions in the territory of Northern Europe. The predominant number of cruise tourists is similar to that of land-based tourists willing to focus their attention only on this geographical point. Thus, the problems related to the challenges of the limited economic impact on the surrounding communities on the island, and increased pressures on environmental sustainability resulted in debates about the possible future of this development.

The key issues identified by this report related to the development of cruise tourism are the following: overcrowding resulting from the use of common resources and infrastructure by a few major tourism industry stakeholders; heavy reliance on foreign labour to meet the demands of growing volumes of cruise passenger traffic creating challenges related to quality-of-service delivery to heterogeneous cruise segment; a lack of clear organizational structure in relation to long-term planning and coordination in hosting cruise tourists resulting in inefficiencies and challenges in managing arrival, transportation, and activities at the destination; and an absence of coherent master plans accepted and supported by different stakeholders working together to provide sustainable futures for destination development.

Currently, this absence of a common agenda and vision for future development creates more imbalances in the development of the tourism industry, where actors are interested in short-term economic gains. Thus, achieving consensus on the strict regulations applied to cruise tourism is difficult given the few actors deriving the most economic profit from it. The responsibility for decision-making is shifting between the harbour leadership, municipal politicians, and, not surprisingly, the local destination management organization. Nevertheless, there seems to be a lack of engagement in finding common solutions and responsibilities for moving towards stricter regulation of cruise tourism. The need for close collaboration and long-term commitment to planning and managing more sustainable futures is a core of the approach for future destination development in Magerøya.

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## Introduction

This report is part of the Sustainable Arctic Cruise Communities project (Research Council of Norway, NORRUSS, Grant No. 301540), which explores the complexities and challenges of Arctic cruise tourism from a practice-based perspective. While cruise tourism has economic benefits for small coastal communities, it also poses social and environmental stresses (see Hoarau-Heemstra et al., 2023). Our project advocates staying close to community practices and rejecting reductionist viewpoints that oversimplify the impact of cruise tourism. Inspired by Donna Haraway's concept of "staying with the trouble," we emphasize actively engaging with the complex realities of cruise tourism. This report focuses on insights gained from the destination of Alta within the Arctic cruise tourism context.

Our project adopts an inclusive, practice-based approach that acknowledges the multifaceted nature of cruise tourism and involves diverse stakeholders, including nonhuman actors (Ren et al., 2021). It emphasizes continuous, adaptable, and open-ended research to comprehend and address the challenges and opportunities of cruise tourism. By engaging with stakeholders and local communities, we gain valuable insights for managing cruise tourism in the Arctic. The case study of Honningsvåg presented here illustrates how a practice-based approach provides a deeper understanding of the specific dynamics and challenges within a cruise community.

Previous research on Arctic cruise tourism has focused on three central themes: impacts and stakeholder attitudes, climate change and sustainability, and governance and management (Ren et al., 2021). Common impacts include environmental pollution, wildlife disturbance, cultural intrusions, and resource competition. The insights from our community-based focus in Honningsvåg help us better understand these themes and offer context-specific perspectives. Implementing practice-based approaches presents challenges. Researchers face difficulties accessing remote Arctic cruise tourism destinations, limiting in-depth observation and participation in community practices. The COVID-19 pandemic has further constrained researchers, who rely on digital and desktop research methods. To overcome these obstacles and foster insights, a potential solution is to "zoom out" and establish open dialogue and communication across multiple case studies, either through physical visits or electronic channels.

A practice-based approach to cruise tourism management offers an alternative to traditional psychological and rational-actor perspectives on policy design. By analysing the combination of materials, skills, and meanings within practices, policy-makers can identify opportunities to modify policies for more sustainable outcomes. This approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of practice bundles within and between networks, highlighting competition, interference, and interdependence. Considering these dynamics, policy-makers can foster flexibility and openness to ongoing adaptations of practices over time, leading to more effective and sustainable cruise tourism management in the Arctic.

In conclusion, adopting a practice-based approach allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities and challenges of Arctic cruise tourism. By staying close to community practices, researchers can navigate the tensions and troubles within cruise communities. This report provides the results of extensive research based on the study of Honningsvåg, a municipal centre of Honningsvåg Municipality and Magerøya Island. The current study demonstrates the necessity of a

place-specific analysis to provide a better platform for making decisions in relation to the future of Arctic cruise tourism development.

## Methods

Qualitative research methods, such as interviews, observations, desk studies, and document analysis, provide valuable insights into complex phenomena by exploring the perspectives and experiences of individuals and analysing relevant documents. During the 2021-2023 period, these methods were employed by the authors of this report to investigate the tourism community in Honningsvåg and surrounding communities on the island of Magerøya.

The interviews were a central component of the qualitative research process. The researchers engaged in 24 face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in cruise tourism development in various ways. Our interviews allowed us to better understand the everyday practices related to the experiences of inhabitants, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders in one way or another dealing with cruise tourism in Honningsvåg and Magerøya. By using open-ended questions, the researchers encouraged the participants to share their personal narratives, opinions, and emotions, generating rich qualitative data.

In addition to interviews, the researchers conducted observations during their fieldwork in August 2021, August 2022, January 2023 and August 2023. By immersing themselves in the community, the researchers were able to observe the daily routines, interactions, and practices of community members while working with cruise tourism. This direct observation provided contextual understanding and allowed the researchers to capture nuanced aspects of the community's dynamics and behaviours that might not have been revealed through interviews alone. These observations enabled the researchers to identify patterns, conflicts, and social dynamics that contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the community.

Desk study and document analysis were vital components of the research process. The researchers examined literature, reports, and relevant documents pertaining to the community. This desk study provided broader context and background information, allowing researchers to develop a comprehensive understanding of the community's history, culture, and relevant policies. This process facilitated the identification of key themes, trends, and discourses that influenced the community's dynamics.

Combining interviews, observations, desk studies, and document analysis allowed the researchers to triangulate the data and validate their findings. This comprehensive approach provided a holistic understanding of the community and its practices, challenges, and aspirations. Conducting research during both summer and winter allowed researchers to capture potential variations in community activities and dynamics across different seasons.

Within the context of our project, we have discussed the data with international researchers who have been working on other Arctic cruise cases. Our analytical framework, which focuses on cruise-related practice bundles and sustainability, allows us to compare our study areas.

## Findings

### The study area: Honningsvåg (Magerøya)

North Cape (Nordkapp) is a small municipality on the northern Norwegian Island of Magerøya with an official administrative centre and the largest population residing in Honningsvåg (2947 inhabitants as of 2022). Other settlements on the island include Gjesvær, Kåfjord, Kamøyvaer, Kjelvik, Nordvågen, Repvåg, Skarsvåg and Valan. The island is connected to the Norwegian mainland by a series of tunnels built between 1993 and 1999 (the longest being the North Cape Tunnel, which stretches 6,875 km and reaches a depth of 212 metres below sea level). The principal port and airport are located in Honningsvåg. Traditionally, the island economy relies on year-round fisheries and reindeer herding during the summer. Since the late 1950s, the main tourist attraction in the region, drawing both land-based and cruise tourism activities, has been the North Cape. The construction of the road to the North Cape Plateau, the establishment of the visitor's centre, and the installation of the landmark representing Europe's most northernmost point on the plateau solidified its status as a tourism hotspot. However, due to severe weather conditions during the winter months, cruise activity is limited to the coastal steamer Hurtigruten. Annually, approximately 200,000 tourists visit North Cape during the summer season. These visitors arrive by tour buses, with private cars, caravans and campers, bicycles, or cruise ships. Both international cruise companies and Hurtigruten operate at the destination. The popularity of the destination has increased at an average annual growth of 7% (Nordkapphavn, 2023; <https://www.nordkapphavn.no/cruise/cruise-calls/>). According to our informants, half of the tourism flow to the North Cape is composed of cruise passengers. Undoubtedly, cruise tourism plays a significant role in the region's economy.



Figure 1: Map of Magerøya Island and Honningsvåg. From Wikimedia Commons

Cruise tourism represents a small portion of overall tourism traffic in Norway, but Norway's share of international cruise tourism (3%) exceeds that of Norwegian land-based tourism (0.4%). In 2021, cruise tourism experienced a significant decline, with a 98% reduction compared to 2019. However, there was an 11% growth in this number over 2018 in Norway. Cruise ships often visit multiple destinations, resulting in approximately 3.3 million daily visits to Norwegian harbours. Germany is the largest market for Norwegian tourism, both for land-based and cruise tourism. In 2019, 37% of all cruise passengers

visiting Norway were German. British and American tourists also represent substantial markets, with these three nationalities accounting for 72% of all cruise passengers to Norway. In 2018, this number was 68%. A cruise survey conducted by Innovation Norway in the summer of 2019 revealed that 57% of the cruise guests considered experiencing Norway important, while for 39% of the guests, the primary goal was to enjoy the cruise experience.

The accessibility of the island during the winter season varies considerably due to challenging weather conditions. The only year-round public coastal passenger operator is Hurtigruten, which provides maritime transportation and offers visitors an opportunity to experience the region during the winter season through activities such as snowshoeing, snowmobile safaris, and ice fishing. Another coastal passenger and freight transportation company, Havila, also operates a similar route, resulting in increased competition for space and human resources for the service industry in the area. However, Magerøya primarily caters to cruise passengers during the summer months from June to August, as the climate can be challenging for large-scale winter cruise tourism. Nonetheless, there are indications of an extended tourist season, encompassing the shoulder months of April–May and September–October. Hosting tourists and providing experiences for an extended period of time pose challenges for operators in terms of their human resources. Guides and other hospitality workers traditionally arrive on the island during the peak summer period, but extending the season means that staff are required to work there for a longer duration.

#### **Cruise tourism destination North Cape**

The harbour in Honningsvåg plays a crucial role in connecting local society to the rest of the world, serving as a hub for cargo transport, local fishing vessels, and fish processing as well as supporting the tourism and passenger travel industry. It is the main harbour on the island and ranks as the 10<sup>th</sup> largest in the country. Situated in the centre of Honningsvåg, the harbour provides convenient access for cruise passengers to explore the town on foot. The Hurtigruten coastal steamer uses another smaller quay located closer to the fishing harbour. The fishing fleet of Honningsvåg utilizes smaller docks in a separate section of the harbour. On the opposite side of the harbour, in the fjord, there is a dedicated quay for crude oil and fuel, where container ships transporting these raw materials dock. This area is physically separated from other activities within the harbour.

Cruise tourism has a long history in Honningsvåg, and the village has been served by Hurtigruten, a traditional coastal cruise and transportation operator, since the 2000s. According to our informants, the arrival of cruise ships in towns was a cause for celebration. The local community welcomed the visitors and had the opportunity to visit the ships and enjoy a cup of coffee at the floating café. Currently, Hurtigruten visits Honningsvåg twice a day, once on its northbound journey and once on its southbound journey. The northern route typically stays in Honningsvåg for approximately 4 hours, allowing passengers to visit the North Cape. Over the years, an increasing number of operators have recognized the appeal of the North Cape as a destination, leading to an increase in the number and size of cruise ships arriving since the 1990s.

The most popular shore excursion on Magerøya is a visit to the North Cape Plateau and its visitor centre. There are various transportation options available from Honningsvåg, including buses, bikes,

walking, snowmobiles, cars, taxis and minibuses. The majority of cruise tourists opt for a bus trip organized by cruise companies and facility owners. This package includes a bus ride to the North Cape and entrance to the visitor centre. The journey is approximately 20 kilometres each way on a narrow, steep and winding road shared with bikers, hikers, cars and other bus plural buses. During the summer, buses and bus drivers are brought to the island specifically to transport tourists to the plateau. Buses booked through cruise agents are parked in a designated area in the harbour where other buses are not allowed. This means that local operators must be stationed farther from the harbour for departures to the North Cape.

One local operator offers minibus transport to the North Cape, along with a visit to a fishing village and the opportunity to enjoy King Crab. Another local provider, which operates year-round, provides regular bus service to the North Cape with or without entrance to the visitor centre. Their prices are lower, but cruise agents prefer to use their own buses. The local company receives subsidies from the regional government to offer public transport between Honningsvåg and North Cape. They primarily serve customers from Hurtigruten and cruise guests who have not prebooked an excursion through onboard agents. Tickets can be booked online or purchased on the bus if space is available. Land-based tourists also utilize these services for transportation to the plateau and entrance to the visitor centre. Many bikers who have reached the North Cape choose to take this bus back to Honningsvåg. The local bus company operates according to Hurtigruten's schedule and assures its customers that they will return to their boat on time.

The North Cape Plateau is owned by the municipality and is publicly accessible. However, the Scandic group is responsible for the infrastructure built on the plateau and has developed facilities akin to an amusement park. These include a large parking area for tour buses, caravans and private cars. In the past, Scandic charged parking fees to access the plateau. However, the municipality intervened and argued that the land is public and accessible for free to anyone under the principle of "allemannsrett" (everyman's right). This means that the areas around the building, including the Globe artwork that marks the North Cape, are publicly accessible. Scandic continues to charge a fee for accessing the café, souvenir shop, exhibition and museum housed within the building. The North Cape Plateau serves as the primary destination for the majority of cruise passengers, as it represents the main objective of many cruises in this part of Northern Norway.

Every ship utilizing the harbour facilities in Honningsvåg is required to pay harbour fees to the Nordkapp Region Harbour IKS, a harbour company owned by Nordkapp municipality. The company is particularly interested in the high volumes of both commercial and cruise traffic to the harbour. Various cruise lines, including Viking, Costa, and others, make stops in Honningsvåg. These cruise ships are typically categorized as conventional, with passenger capacities ranging between 600 and nearly 5000 passengers. For example, the largest ship, Sky Princess (Princess Cruises), is scheduled to accommodate 4610 passengers in 2023, while the smallest ship, Silver Dawn (Silversea), carries 691 passengers. Additionally, there are smaller expedition cruise vessels with capacities ranging between 100 and 400 passengers.

During the peak summer of 2022, the harbour hosted 134 ships, which is expected to increase to 184 ships by 2023 (Table 1). These ships either dock at one of the three cruise quays or anchor in the fjord and transport tourists to shore by tendering.



**Table 1. Annual cruise ship arrivals to Honningsvåg harbour (2013-2023)** (Source: <https://www.nordkapphavn.no/cruise/cruise-calls/>)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cruise calls	103	104	92	102	97	104	102	3	21	135	Expected 184

The majority of tourist traffic from the harbour in Honningsvåg travels directly by bus to the North Cape Plateau and back. Bus parking is located just outside the harbour, within a short walking distance from the quays. The duration of this tour can vary between two and six hours, depending on the time available for tourists. Longer trips may include stops at other sites, such as the villages of Gjesvær or Kamøyvær. Over the past 25 years, additional nature- and culture-based experiences have been developed in Honningsvåg and in other parts of the island. These include attractions such as Artico Icebar, Destination 71degrees North, an art Gallery/Workshop in Kamøyvær, a Sami souvenir shop in the harbour and on the road to North Cape, bird and wildlife safaris in Gjesvær, fishing tourism including a king crab safari either with the help of a RIB (Rigid Inflatable Boat or zodiac) boat or a bus transfer and hiking to explore the plant life on Magerøya. In the town of Honningsvåg, visitors can explore cultural and heritage attractions such as fishing villages, local churches, North Cape museums, and art galleries. A list of the main general and tourism stakeholders can be found in Table 2. Additionally, the local cultural society (Kulturhuset) offers a performance called “Our Northernmost Lives”, which is included in the onshore program for cruise guests.



Figure 1-2. The harbour area of Honningsvåg illustrates the practice of disembarking cruise ship passengers and organizing them into designated bus transportation for their guided activities. The second picture shows multiple uses of the harbour area, including private fishing vessels (to the left-hand side in the picture), two speed boats (to the right-hand side) and the cruise vessel Havila Capella. (Photographer: Albina Pashkevich).

### Physical Infrastructure of the Harbour

The Honningsvåg port features a total of six docking piers, including three cruise quays with lengths varying from 65 to 155 metres (Figure 3). Additionally, large cruise ships can be anchored at two tender piers. The maximum length of a cruise vessel that a harbour can accommodate is 360 metres. The port authority manages the tender dock and the availability of pilots and tugboats. Drinking water is provided by the harbour (Nordkappregionen havn) at the southern and northern quays, while waste disposal is managed by the municipality of Nordkapp. The town centre is conveniently located only 150 metres away. It is important to note there is no dedicated terminal building for passengers, nor are there crew facilities or restrooms in the pier area. Shuttle buses are arranged when contracted by ships, and public transportation options are available in the port area.



Figure 3. Structure of the harbour (figure showing the physical organization of the harbour area in Honningsvåg with the quay areas with designated numbers and other quays having assigned names to them). The geographical proximity between the harbour and the town's centre of Honningsvåg is also illustrated on this map, showing that the distance between the two is only several hundred metres apart. Source: <https://www.nordkapphavn.no/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Cruise-manual-North-Cape-1.pdf>.

### Cruise-related infrastructure

In terms of shopping facilities, Honningsvåg offers a range of options for cruise ship passengers. Several shops close to the port area, including a souvenir shop with a Christmas theme, Sami crafts, market stalls offering local sausages, and various souvenir providers. Additionally, there are occasional pop-up events involving local youth or representatives showcasing indigenous cultural experiences.

The distance from the port to the nearest airport is approximately four km, with convenient transportation options for cruise passengers. In case of any medical emergencies, the nearest medical help and emergency room are located approximately three km away. Within the town, cruise ship passengers can visit the tourist information centre or local shops and cafés or choose to join organized excursions.

Ships with more than 12 passengers are required to pay harbour taxes. In addition, these vessels can notify port authorities at least 24 hours in advance if waste needs to be removed. The captain of the ship is responsible for communicating the types of waste that will be unloaded and the preferred method of disposal. The harbour authorities are responsible for organizing the necessary capacity to handle the waste from the ships. The designated waste management company, Finnmarks miljøtjeneste AS, enforces the recycling of various types of waste.

### Principal General and Tourism Stakeholders in the Municipality of Honningsvåg

Port of Honningsvåg/harbour office	The core business of the port is related to fishing and cargo activities. Responsibilities include provision, receiving and safety of operations of the cruise ships. Other ships (then cruise ships and expedition ships) that use the port at Honningsvåg are ferries (hurtigbåt and rutebåt), fishing vessels, cargo ships, oil tankers and the coast guard.
Municipality of Honningsvåg	Municipality's interest lies in the overall support of the town's functioning entrepreneurial activities. Politically, there is also an awareness of the importance of the tourism industry and a desire to support this sector as an important contributor to the region's economy. Public programs during COVID-19 were decisive for the survival of small and medium-sized tourist and service companies in the area.
Residents of Nordkapp municipality	Indirectly, the residents of the municipality are the ambassadors of their town and this part of Norway. They are directly involved in caring for the tourists arriving with the cruise ships, both during their everyday lives (while shopping, eating at the cafes or restaurants) but also as staff working in the tourism and service industry. Lately, even the local youth has become involved in promoting the "Nordic lifestyle" in the musical called "Our Northernmost Lives", as well as being ambassadors for the community in the harbour while greeting passengers coming onshore.
DMO (Visit Nordkapp)	Marketing, information gathering and distribution, and planning for the overall tourism development. Difficulties in gathering tourism stakeholders under the same umbrella as the size of the operations are different; thus, the needs are very specific (family-owned business vs. Scandic/Rica Eiendom AS, for example). Currently, the DMO is working on the sustainable tourism destination certification for destination.



Scandic group	Operates at least three large hotels in Honningsvåg, but the most important is the ownership of the North Cape plateau. This resulted in controversies and heated public debate within the Municipality of Honningsvåg (spreading onto the DMO, tourism entrepreneurs and citizens of the municipal centre).
Cruise Norway	Cruise stakeholders' organization that overlooks the promotion and cruise services in Norway. Most businesses involved in the cruise industry in Norway are members.
Tourism experience companies	Tourism companies directly involved with cruise tourists by providing experiences (Destinasjon 71° Nord, The North Cape Experience, North Cape Tours, Fuglsafari fra Gjesvær, Nordkapp Christmas and Winder house).
Bus and driver rental	Transports cruise passengers to the North Cape, provides bus tour to and from the North Cape plateau.

## Practice bundles

Cruise tourism development in Arctic communities is influenced by various factors, such as social, political, and institutional settings, as well as their ability to adapt and respond to global changes. Researchers (Heikkinen, Bjørst, & Pashkevich, 2020; Lépy et al., 2014; Smit & Wandel, 2006) have highlighted the diverse nature of cruise tourism development in the Arctic region. In this study, we provide a detailed description of the practices associated with the arrival of cruise guests, offering an in-depth and context-specific understanding of cruise tourism and its impact on the life of inhabitants of Honningsvåg.

Recognizing the significance of local-scale responses to the challenges and opportunities presented by cruise tourism is crucial (Ren et al., 2021). Our approach focuses on the situated and dynamic nature of practices, viewing them as "open-ended, spatial-temporal sets of organized doings and sayings" (Schatzki, 2019, p. 28). We delve into the routines and often unconscious actions that shape social life, as well as the skilful execution of practices and the emotions and symbolic meanings associated with them. The voices of key stakeholders are pronounced in relation to the findings described below. We have conducted our meetings and visits throughout the period 2021–2023, which allowed us to make detailed observations in relation to the function of the cruise ships and the everyday lives of people.

## Ship handling

### Arrival and disembarking

The docking arrangements in the port of Honningsvåg are organized based on the size of the ships. Given the relatively small area of the dock, passengers have short distances to cover to reach their transportation or the city. During the summer months, when visitor volumes are high, there are generally no issues with accessibility due to poor pavement conditions or slippery roads. However, in winter, there can be challenges, such as slippery paths and gravel on the roads, which can be difficult for passengers with luggage.

One significant limitation for large ships disembarking in ports is the impact of natural weather conditions. The harbour infrastructure has been affected by the arrival of large cruise ships during storms. In 2018, strong winds caused one of the ships to damage both the pier and docking facilities, resulting in significant repair costs for the harbour. Consequently, in the case of strong winds, larger boats may anchor farther away from the harbour and use their own tender boats to transfer passengers ashore. In some cases, if the stop in Honningsvåg is deemed too risky, ships may choose not to come at all. However, due to the iconic status of the North Cape as a goal for cruise journeys, ships often decide to anchor and tender their passengers to shore.

Tendering passengers during a storm is a challenging operation that requires knowledge of the sea, the harbour, among other aspects. It also involves a different part of the crew than those typically involved in disembarking. Crew members stand on the dock to secure the life raft with ropes, and the captain of the rafts must carefully manoeuvre and dock them. Passengers may require assistance in disembarking. In 2022, even after lifting COVID-19 restrictions, all passengers disembarking in the harbour were required to wear facial masks during tender boat transportation. On a day when we experienced this practice, the wind was strong, resulting in large waves, and some passengers experienced seasickness. The crew promptly responded by providing freshwater containers and plastic mugs for passengers to refresh themselves upon arrival. Adverse weather conditions make it more challenging for passengers to reach the shore, and only those who have prebooked excursions are able to take tender transport to the city. This situation reduces the spontaneous visits to the town, impacting visits to bars, restaurants, shops, galleries, and other local establishments.

While storms can occur throughout the year on the coasts of northern Norway, disembarking in the harbour during the summer months is generally less complicated when weather conditions are more favourable. Most ships have organized procedures for the arrival of their passengers and establish temporary passages marked with ropes, similar to queue lines at airports. The harbour space appears tidy and clean, and with small fishing vessels disembarking, it gives a cosy feeling of a small village.

Upon disembarking, passengers walk quickly from the quay to the large parking space where the tour buses are stationed. The efficiency and organization of bus transport vary depending on the cruise company. Sometimes, there may be congestion as tourists try to board their buses to go to the North Cape. However, there appears to be a lack of collaboration between Visit Nordkapp and other organisations, such as incoming tour operators, to provide immediate help or services to passengers who have not purchased tours on board and who wish to arrange their own activities.

Price-conscious passengers have the option to compare excursion prices offered by the cruise agents on board with those available online, either through the destination marketing company or directly from providers. Cruise agents are typically not enthusiastic about passengers booking excursions themselves because they do not earn commissions from those bookings. The reasons cited for discouraging self-booking include health and safety concerns (especially during the pandemic) and the assurance of being brought back in time when booking through a cruise agent. If passengers choose to book independently, they are personally responsible for planning their activities onshore and ensuring that they return to the ship on time.

## Dispatching

Upon disembarking, cruise passengers find themselves immediately in the centre of Honningsvåg. The process of dispatching and organizing the flow of passengers at the harbour can appear chaotic and varies depending on the type of cruise. The cruise company that manages the affluent customer segments, such as Mein Schiff, is known for their well-organized dispatching process. The cruise companies provide dispatch teams whose main role is to guide tourists to the appropriate excursions, using visual signs to direct them to their buses.

There is a small stand staffed by the local DMO on the quay to provide information to passengers. Additionally, the DMO office, located near the harbour, remains open during the visits of cruise passengers in town. Initially, it may seem that all parties involved know exactly what they are doing and that no additional coordination is needed to manage the visitors. The port area is small, and cruise passengers do not interfere with cargo operations or other activities upon arrival. However, during the research team observations, some stress was evident among both cruise tourists and the tour operators. This stress seemed to be influenced by how well-informed the tourists were in advance by their cruise providers about what to expect onshore.

Cruise passengers have two options for exploring a destination. The first option is convenient but more expensive and involves purchasing tours or excursions through the agents on board the cruise ship. With the growing number of tourism offerings on the island, alternatives and combinations are available, including excursions to the North Cape. Upon disembarking, the main challenge for cruise passengers is to locate their excursion provider. Those visiting the North Cape Plateau must find the designated shuttle bus with the correct number and name of their cruise ship. The bus driver receives passenger lists and can easily account for the correct number of visitors.

The second option is for passengers to purchase excursions directly from local tourism providers or through the visitor centre, which is also located along the path to the buses. This can be done in advance through online bookings or directly on-site. Local providers and the DMO find it more convenient when activities and excursions are sold through the agents on board, as doing so simplifies the process for everyone involved, including the customers themselves. However, in recent years, there has been an increase in the number of “unorganised” customers who book their own excursions. Booking independently offers a cheaper option, and some cruise companies do not provide the option to book excursions through their agents. This trend also means there is a growing number of visitors who are not willing to spend money at the destination, impacting the local economy.

During our observation in August 2022, we noted that certain cruise companies bring their own equipment, such as bikes, for activities at various destinations, including Honningsvåg. In this particular instance, due to stormy weather, the equipment and tourists were transported via life rafts. The cruise passengers have the option of arranging a biking trip to the North Cape on board, and the bikes and guides are provided by the cruise company. This allows them to offer biking tours at every destination they visit. However, weather conditions must be suitable for biking; if weather conditions are unfavourable, passengers are offered bus tours instead.

Our informants mentioned that this practice is not new and that it has been observed with the increasing number of expedition cruises. These smaller vessels provide their customers with equipment and guidance for activities such as biking and hiking. However, the popularity of both activities on Magerøya, which has vulnerable Arctic vegetation, has led to increased pressure and disturbances in the local natural surroundings. Additionally, some expedition vessels bring their own RIB boats and SUP boards and make stops in or near protected natural areas. An area close to Gjesvaerstappan, one of Norway's largest bird cliffs, was specifically mentioned.

It is important to consider the potential impacts on the environment and local ecosystems when introducing such activities and excursions through cruise providers. It is essential to ensure that responsible and sustainable practices are followed to minimize disturbances to the natural surroundings. In the absence of proper monitoring, the responsibility for environmental protection often falls solely on the guides provided by the cruise operators. While guides play a significant role in managing and educating tourists about the local environment, it appears to be difficult to provide the necessary oversight and accountability to ensure compliance with sustainable practices.

### Hosting tourists

The largest volumes of cruise boats arrive at the harbour of Honningsvåg during the summer months between June and July August. The extension of the cruise season with ships arriving in September presents both opportunities and challenges for local tourism providers. Small-scale providers, such as activity operators and tour guides, may face difficulties in extending their operations due to staff availability. Since many staff members are typically students or have other seasonal jobs, their availability may be limited after the end of August, when the summer season traditionally ends. Employing staff for a longer period or finding suitable replacements can be a challenge for these providers, impacting their ability to meet the demands of the extended cruise season.

On the other hand, transportation providers, such as bus companies, have adapted to the increased flow of cruise passengers by hiring seasonal drivers from abroad, allowing them to meet the transportation demand of the extended season and ensuring a smooth experience for cruise passengers in terms of transfers and tours.

Overall, the extension of the cruise season has brought about a need for coordination and flexibility among tourism providers. Finding solutions to staffing challenges for small-scale providers and ensuring the availability of necessary services to cater to increased visitor volumes are necessary. Collaborative efforts between tourism stakeholders, including training programs, employment strategies, and cooperation among local businesses, may help to address these challenges and ensure a successful extended season.

The changing seasonality of tourism activities in Honningsvåg, with an increasing number of visitors during the shoulder seasons and even winter, presents both challenges and opportunities for the hospitality industry. Some businesses are able to capitalize on the extended season and benefit from high volumes of cruise traffic, while others choose not to participate. For those stakeholders aiming to capitalize on the influx of cruise passengers, "fast cash" can then be utilized for other activities during

the remaining part of the year. This business model may be attractive to certain stakeholders in the area.

Although the North Cape remains an attraction throughout the year, the road to the plateau may be affected by weather conditions. During the wintertime, snow ploughs are used to keep the road clear, but this can result in limited driving hours or temporary closures, impacting accessibility for cruise tourists. The development of tourism experiences on the island has been influenced by the increasing volumes of cruise tourism, particularly the rise of expedition cruises and the extension of the tourism season. The presence of major players, such as the Scandic Group, and the flow of cruise passengers have had positive “spillover” effects on smaller businesses, leading to their decision to establish themselves in the area.



Figure 4. One of the winners of increased cruise passenger traffic to North Capes are the bus companies providing transportation for visitors to the North Cape Plateau. However, even here, there are several potential issues that make the provision of safe traffic challenging due to the increasing number of less experienced drivers from other parts of Norway and abroad. This increases the risk of accidents and the level of stress for workers. (Photograph by Albina Pashkevich).

There are two opinions of the increased cruise tourism volume on the island. While it is acknowledged that cruise tourism has diversified tourism offerings and encourages innovation, smaller businesses

may find it difficult to cater to the specific needs and expectations of cruise passengers. Professional providers who already have experience and have established themselves in the industry tend to benefit more from the growth in cruise tourism. They have the capacity to handle larger numbers of people and have likely invested in equipment and resources to cater to demand. The cash flows generated from the cruise industry have enabled these businesses to make investments, such as acquiring equipment such as snow scooters, m.m.

Artisans on the island have experienced a steady flow of customers with the arrival of cruise ships, leading to a diversification in the handicraft offering. Art galleries and Sami entrepreneurs selling indigenous art have been able to attract cruise guests and showcase their work. Retail establishments, restaurants, cafes and bars also flourish during the busy summer months, primarily catering to tourists arriving by bus or car, as cruise tourists often have all-inclusive packages and may spend less on food and beverages. The municipality has provided financial support to develop tourism offerings, especially during the pandemic, which has further encouraged diversification and innovation. However, the challenges faced by small providers in meeting the specific demands of cruise passengers highlight the specialised skills and resources needed to effectively tap into the cruise market.

The second view highlights the potential downsides of increased cruise volumes on the local tourism industry. One aspect is the competition that arises among providers offering similar products or experiences. To cater to the tight schedules of cruise passengers, there may be a need to standardise existing products or develop new products that align with the preferences and time constraints of cruise guests.

An example of this competition can be seen in the case of the Christmas souvenir shops in Honningsvåg. Previously, the island of Magerøya had one locally owned Christmas house in Skarsvåg, which offered local handicrafts and limited food items such as coffee, waffles, and king crab sandwiches, as well as Christmas products. However, in recent years, a second large and modern Christmas shop was opened on the boardwalk in the centre of Honningsvåg, competing directly with the existing local business located in a more remote part of the island. The association of the North Cape with the North Pole and Christmas has led several providers on the island to capitalize on this sentiment to attract cruise guests into spending their money.

Furthermore, while the large providers of excursions for cruises, such as the Scandic group and local DMOs, have established good relationships with their traditional cruise partners, challenges arise when new providers enter the scene. The influx of cruise passengers who do not purchase tours on board but seek to order directly from local providers can create bottlenecks in the system. The local tourism office may face capacity issues, resulting in longer queues and guests being left unsatisfied if their desired experience is sold out.

The interviews reveal that small-scale tourism providers, often family-owned businesses, do not benefit significantly from offering “all-inclusive” packages and hosting cruise guests who receive everything onboard their ships. The value created from direct bookings with providers is more interesting, but it often requires lower prices compared to what passengers pay onboard their ships. This creates uncertainty for experience providers, as they cannot predict how many customers they

will receive from a particular cruise arrival. Additionally, cancellations have a more significant impact on smaller businesses.

The providers expressed that the most desirable customers are those who spend a longer time at the destination, as they have more opportunities to engage in various experiences and contribute more to the local economy. However, heavy reliance on cruise tourism has led to a high level of standardisation in the tourism experience, which hinders the creation of economic value for the local community. The time constraints, limited capacity, administrative burden associated with cruise arrivals, and fixed prices that do not account for sudden changes in fuel or food prices were mentioned as additional factors contributing to this situation.

While it may be challenging for some tourism providers to innovate and design new tourism products, there is a growing willingness among micro- and family-owned companies to embrace innovation, which is particularly evident in their experiences before, during, and after the pandemic. This has led to the creation of a variety of natural and cultural experiences that cater to the interests of both locals and visitors. Examples of these innovative tourism products include tourism focused on Arctic flora and marine plants, culinary walking tours that showcase local cuisine, visits to fish factories to learn about the fishing industry, and tours that promote environmental practices such as beach clean-up. These new experiences offer visitors a chance to engage with the destination in a unique and meaningful way while also supporting the local economy and promoting sustainable practices.

### Coordinating and Collaborating

The level of coordination and support provided to cruise passengers participating in onshore experiences varies depending on the type of cruise provider. More expensive cruise lines tend to offer a higher level of communication, care and staffing onshore in the harbour area. They ensure that their personnel are available to assist passengers with any questions or directions they may need, providing a higher level of customer service. These cruise lines often have their own guides for bus tours to the North Cape or establish partnerships with local guides in Honningsvåg. This ensures that a clear and smooth organization is provided. By providing their own guides and maintaining strong communication channels, these cruise lines can offer a higher level of support and guidance to their passengers, ensuring a seamless and well-coordinated onshore experience.

The cruise companies providing less expensive cruises are often perceived as less prepared and less structured in the organization of the shore experience. This can create challenges for local tourism providers who host cruise guests. A lack of preparation and structure may result in a chaotic experience for both providers and cruise tourists. For instance, when a bus filled with cruise tourists visits a gallery and shows little interest in local stories or does not spend money on local products, it can frustrate the tourism provider. These interactions can consume valuable time and energy without generating significant value for the local community. Uncertainty regarding the timing, volume, and preferences of cruise tourists further exacerbates the challenges faced by tourism stakeholders.

The limited time spent by cruise tourists at a destination, sometimes ranging from 30 to 40 minutes for individual guests, is a subject of constant negotiation between cruise providers and the destination. While local stakeholders may prefer longer stays, ranging from nine to 24 hours, many cruise ships typically stay for only three to five hours. This disparity in expectations can strain collaboration and

requires more flexibility on the part of local stakeholders. Local tourism stakeholders have adapted to the demands of cruise providers for simple and time-constrained experiences. This emphasis on efficiency and standardized offerings can lead to a routine and lack of variety in the experiences provided to cruise passengers, frustrating stakeholders who wish to offer unique and diverse experiences to showcase their destination. With limited time available for engaging with cruise tourists, there is often competition among small tourism providers who aim to sell their products directly to those guests who have not opted for the prebooked options. This competition can lead to a “copycat” situation, where providers offer similar experiences in an attempt to attract cruise tourists during their short stay.

Indeed, enhancing coordination and certainty among cruise tourism operations can greatly benefit both the cruise tourists and local stakeholders. There are four practice bundles that could benefit from improved coordination: 1) negotiating the stay duration; 2) communicating with cruise tourists about tourist information; 3) guiding tourists to their booked experiences; 4) informing cruise tourists about the destination and its inhabitants; and 5) informing local stakeholders about the types of cruises and visitors that are expected to visit.

Several of our stakeholders mentioned that collaboration in receiving tourists is somewhat challenging due to the control exerted by powerful players over the flow of cruise passengers both to and on the island. An uneven distribution of access and a nontransparent planning structure were also mentioned. Collaborating with large cruise ship providers is difficult for local stakeholders due to the frequent turnover of staff, and decisions made in one season may change the next. Additionally, the role of the DMO in the planning process for cruise tourists is being questioned, as its focus is perceived to be based on outdated master plans. The prevailing view is that no progress has been made in implementing the existing action plan, which is considered outdated. Therefore, the DMO is constantly preoccupied with the development of new action plans.

While the primary focus of cruise tourism remains centred on bringing visitors to the North Cape, tourism providers have recently diversified their offerings. However, the distribution of cruise tourism passengers within destinations is uneven, creating challenges for small-scale operators seeking to enter the market and cater to cruise tourism. One of the main challenges is an extremely skewed market due to the isolation of cruise tourism. Many tourism providers attribute the administration of the harbour as the driving force behind the volume of cruise boats arriving at the destination. Consequently, achieving a consensus or a shared vision within the tourism industry on the island has become difficult. This situation is further exacerbated by the representation of the destination at international venues for cruise agents. The destination’s marketing efforts have witnessed frequent personnel turnover of local DMO representatives, leading to a lack of continuity and inhibiting innovative decision-making.

Providers of tourism excursions for large groups of cruise tourists have well-established collaborations with cruise companies. For example, Hurtigruten has its own guides who accompany their customers on a bus ride from Honningsvåg to their tours. Local tourism businesses also collaborate with the community to enhance the quality of experiences or products. For instance, if the previously mentioned original Christmas house (historically established by a private owner) books 80 cruise guests who want to eat king crab but lack the necessary supplies, the owner can rely on personal



connections to source the required raw materials. We have identified collaborations between smaller tourism providers as well. A restaurant and bar may sell each other's locally produced products, a local artist who provides materials for a tourism theatre show, and a bus tour company may stop at the Sami shop on the way to the North Cape.

However, beyond these small-scale and loosely coupled collaborations, most providers tend to work individually, with limited coordination between their activities to strengthen their position in the cruise industry or to deliver bundled experiences. The DMO endeavours to find common ground for collaboration, such as promoting sustainability goals within the destination and fostering cooperation among tourism stakeholders in the community.

### Guiding practices, cocreation of experiences and care for tourists

One of the significant aspects of delivering nature-based excursions to Magerøya is uncertainty. Providers on the island are never certain that the scheduled cruises will arrive as planned. Moreover, even if they reach the harbour, the weather conditions might be too harsh to proceed with the outings, such as hiking or bird safari excursions. Nature and wildlife are other elements of the experience that tourism operators cannot control. The incoming tour operator provides guides to Hurtigruten and other cruise lines.

For example, when tourists book a bird safari trip onboard, the bus and guide are arranged, and the boat and captain are booked for the bird safaris. This boat also offers available locations for individual tourists who will share the boat with cruise tourists. The cruise schedule dictates when the safari can depart and must return, and the individual guests must adapt accordingly. The guide sits next to the captain and points out flora and fauna during the trip, offering commentary in several languages. Some guides have come to Honningsvåg to work every summer and have gained more experience, while others are new or lack an interest in the subject matter they are guiding on. Since wildlife sightings are not guaranteed on these trips, the quality of the storytelling becomes even more important for creating a memorable experience. It is crucial for the guides to be skilled storytellers and to be multilingual. In addition to English, the ability to speak other European languages, such as German, French, Spanish or Italian, is often necessary.

According to our informants, there is a shared perception of the "ideal tourist" whom everyone desires to attract and engage with. This ideal tourist is characterized by a willingness to pay a premium, regardless of whether they are part of a group or an individual traveller. Additionally, they are specifically interested in nature- or culture-based experiences, indicating a level of knowledge and openness to learning and exchanging information.

Cruise tourists visiting the Arctic may sometimes lack awareness of the harsh and rapidly changing weather conditions. To address this, certain experience providers offer more suitable outfits to their visitors, especially for activities at sea. These providers have invested in safety equipment, as well as windproof and waterproof attire of various sizes, to ensure that their customers have a positive experience. Expedition cruises often supply their passengers with the necessary equipment due to their smaller guest capacity and higher prices. However, conventional cruises may not always carry equipment suitable for Arctic conditions. Hurtigruten provides guidance to its customers on what to

pack when visiting Northern Norway in different seasons, with a focus on warm and protective clothing, reflective gear, and spikes for shoes.

### Creating social value for destinations

It seems there may be a disconnect between the perceptions of some cruise companies and their staff regarding the actual offerings and activities available at the destination. Local stakeholders have made efforts to create an active and vibrant town centre with a museum, coffee shops, supermarkets, pubs, and other amenities to cater to both the local population and cruise passengers. However, there may be instances where the practices and offerings provided by locals do not align with the expectations of cruise guests.

The collaboration between local inhabitants and the municipality to create an active life in town centres is commendable. It provides both visitors and locals with a vibrant and engaging environment. Local inhabitants and the municipality worked together on creating an active life in the town centre that made the island more interesting for the local population to live and work. The construction of the Nordkapp trappe (stairs) in Honningsvåg is an example of a local initiative to enhance the hiking experience and protect the natural environment. Stairs provide a more comfortable and convenient way for hikers to reach the top of the central mountain, reducing wear and tear on the surrounding environment. The project was financed by local people, businesses, and the municipality.

However, along with the positive aspects, there are also challenges associated with the increased human presence in natural areas. One of the concerns is littering and disturbance caused by tourists. The example of finding empty cigarette packaging with Italian warning signs after a visit from one of the cruise ships highlights the need for responsible tourism practices and proper waste management when visits from cruise tourists are expected to increase significantly. Another consideration is the potential disruption to the grazing patterns of reindeer during the summer months. The presence of more humans in mountain areas can affect the natural behaviour of these animals.

Indeed, the availability of services such as restaurants, pubs and other infrastructure during the summer months creates social value for the community. However, the influx of cruise guests also has drawbacks for locals, who may find it challenging to access and enjoy establishments because they are often crowded and cater primarily to tourists.

The cocreation of experiences plays a vital role in connecting tourists to a destination and enhancing tourists' understanding and appreciation of the local culture and natural resources. The design of experiences, such as king crab safaris, can vary depending on the provider. In some cases, tourists may simply be offered the opportunity to eat king crab without any additional information about the species or the related fishing culture. This approach may focus more on the culinary aspect of the experience but neglects education and immersive elements.

On the other hand, there are providers who offer a more comprehensive experience. For example, tourists may witness the fishing process first, hear the story of the appearance of the crabs in this part of Norway, and then enjoy a meal in the dining area. This type of experience provides insights into the local environment and the activities associated with crab fishing. Overall, by carefully crafting

experiences and incorporating elements of education, cultural immersion, and sustainability, it is possible to provide tourists with enriching and memorable encounters that enhance their connection to the destination and its offerings.

### Addressing the externalities of hosting cruise tourists

The tourism experience providers we interviewed unanimously agree that the time the cruise passengers spend onshore directly impacts the quality of the experiences they offer. This influence is evident in several ways, as described in detail below.

The design of experiences must be tailored to the allocated timeframe. Different cruise lines operate on varying timeframes, and if there is little time available onshore, tourists may only be able to visit the North Cape before returning to their ship. However, when more time is allotted to a destination, other providers can offer services to cruise passengers. The availability of more time allows for more meaningful experiences. Engaging storytelling, informative guiding, showcasing the destination, and immersive island experiences require a timeframe that ensures that both the provider and the tourists are not rushed or stressed.

When cruise passengers are constrained by a tight schedule, they may exhibit “time fatigue” behaviour, characterized by restlessness and hurriedness. This behaviour often leads to a chaotic and nervous atmosphere, where visitors hastily capture pictures of their surroundings but do not have the time to fully immerse themselves in, or actively engage with, the destination and its inhabitants in a meaningful way.

When tourists have limited time at Magerøya and can only visit the North Cape, this significantly impacts the economic value generated at the destination. The constrained timeframe hampers tourists’ ability to engage in secondary spending practices, leading to some challenges. While they may have enough time to purchase a souvenir at the Scandic North Cape visitor centre, they are unable to explore Honningsvåg, visit galleries, indulge in local bakery treats, explore museums, or enjoy locally brewed beer at the pub.

To summarize the various aspects of hosting tourism practices, we can draw the following conclusions:

- Differentiation among cruise lines based on price is observed, with guests of low-cost lines appearing to be less culturally sensitive and less aware of appropriate behaviour at the destination. They may show less interest in locally produced souvenirs and exhibit less sensitivity to cultural appropriation.
- Cruise lines that purchase local services and excursions, such as guides and equipment, are more valued by destination stakeholders than those that provide their own guides and offer all-inclusive experiences. It has been observed that both conventional and expedition cruises avoid buying local offerings.
- The harbour and the Scandic group, which owns the North Cape visitor centre, are the two stakeholders of Magerøya that benefit the most economically from cruises.
- Honningsvåg, as a tourist destination, comprises a mix of larger, organized businesses with extensive knowledge of the cruise market, as well as smaller entrepreneurs running a “one-

man show” or family businesses with few employees during the main season. The latter often face greater uncertainty regarding product delivery, employee availability, and sudden changes, which can have a significant impact. The pandemic intensified these challenges, and the reliance on extended networks of family and friends became vital for mitigating and adapting to changing conditions.

- Price setting has emerged as an issue for many entrepreneurs, who feel that Norway’s nature is undervalued. There is a desire to be more assertive with pricing. All-inclusive cruises limit opportunities for guests to engage in secondary spending while onshore.
- Several stakeholders have expressed frustration over the lack of meaningful dialogue and the perception that everything is dictated by the terms of the cruise tour providers.

The cruise industry is often regarded as a lifeline for remote destinations, serving as the economic backbone of the local tourism industry. However, the pandemic has revealed that the local tourism industry can survive even in the absence of cruise passengers. During this period, local businesses received government assistance, and although many individuals lost their jobs, it became evident that diversifying the types of tourists who visit the area can enhance resilience. Tourism businesses that rely solely on cruise arrivals for their survival are more susceptible to fluctuations than are those that also cater to bus, individual, and business tourists.

## Governing

“Governing” refers to the official and unofficial rules and regulations established by stakeholders to manage cruise tourism. Cruise ships arriving at Honningsvåg harbour are required to comply with international and national guidelines focused on environmental sustainability and safety. The harbour authorities and municipal government are committed to ensuring that all parties adhere to these guidelines. However, local tourism providers argue that the rules are formulated by individuals who have no first-hand experience in organizing the transportation of cruise tourists to one of their most desired destinations, the North Cape. The authors feel that the environmental impacts resulting from the “shuttle traffic” necessary to transport all passengers are not given enough attention by the authorities, who primarily focus on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by boats while their engines are running. Local providers, on the other hand, are more concerned about achieving a balance between environmental and economic sustainability in their operations. They believe that maintaining profitability will enable them to implement further measures towards environmentally responsible practices.

The municipality exercises governance overtourism by implementing tourism plans, such as the masterplan for tourism. Additionally, they provide economic support to tourism businesses during the pandemic and offer financial assistance to the DMO. The DMO serves as the representative body for the tourism industry on the island and operates based on voluntary membership fees. However, many smaller tourism providers on the island are no longer members of the DMO. The challenges faced during the pandemic have deepened internal conflicts among DMO members, and smaller companies are facing financial difficulties in meeting membership fees. As a result, several former DMO members, particularly smaller businesses, have chosen to cancel their membership due to perceived challenges in deriving benefits from collaborative efforts.

Recently, the DMO initiated the process of obtaining sustainable destination certification from Innovation Norway, which requires its members to undertake sustainable actions, such as implementing environmental lighthouse certification within their organizations. Innovation Norway provides support to businesses seeking certification. However, there is some scepticism among small firms regarding the potential positive effect of this certification on their business. Moreover, the concept of sustainability and efforts towards achieving it have faced criticism from certain stakeholders who question the power dynamics among tourism actors in Honningsvåg. The DMO finds itself in a difficult position, caught between strong opposing opinions in the political and economic landscape of a small town, which hampers the development of a common vision for the destination's future. The current climate of mistrust among stakeholders has exacerbated this situation. Furthermore, the progress towards more sustainable tourism operations in Honningsvåg has been hindered by the pandemic, which has severely impacted the economic viability of most companies. Consequently, there is an urgent need for consolidation and collective action.

During our discussions with stakeholders, an intriguing topic emerged: the interpretations of the concept of sustainability and the means to achieve it. It became evident that tourism experience providers held diverse understandings that did not necessarily align with the perspectives of other stakeholders, including Innovation Norway, the DMO or representatives from the municipality. One of the entrepreneurs mentioned that local DMOs were more concerned about more direct measures, such as picking garbage, purchasing plastic, and purchasing local products, but forgot that the social responsibilities of businesses are directly aimed at dealing with their staff. This highlights the varying priorities and perspectives regarding sustainability within the local tourism industry.

Nevertheless, there was a general consensus among stakeholders that creating a common strategy for sustainable destination development, with the DMO playing a leading role, would be ideal. Many emphasized the importance of attaining a sustainable destination certification as a significant quality indicator, with the local DMO taking charge of the certification process already completing the initial stage of the Miljøfyrtårn two-step process. The representatives from the municipality showed great enthusiasm for this process, believing that it would provide clear guidelines and establish "rules of the game" for all tourism providers. However, some stakeholders expressed a more sceptical view, suggesting that a destination's heavy reliance on a specific type of tourism (cruise tourism) may hinder its true sustainability. They argued that true sustainability would require moving beyond the focus solely on visits to the North Cape.

The implementation of safety and environmental regulations has a significant impact on the operations of adventure experience providers. These regulations are either imposed by authorities or enforced by cruise companies to ensure risk management. However, complying with these regulations requires administrative work and documentation from local providers, which adds to their already demanding workload during the peak season. Cruise companies have strict requirements and insurance policies for their customers engaging in adventure activities at the destination. The responsibility for participating in high-risk activities such as snow-scooter tours or ATV trips must be clearly defined and covered by insurance. Tourism providers who successfully adopt these requirements gain a competitive edge in the market and are recognized as innovators, with their "best" practices spreading to other destinations in northern Norway.

The principle of the right of access to nature (Allemansrett) has been invoked to support the idea of free access for everyone to the North Cape plateau. While Scandic owns and operates the visitor centre, the surrounding areas, such as the parking lot, viewpoint and sculpture of the globe, are considered public spaces. Consequently, cruise tourists only pay for transportation to the North Cape and access to the visitor centre, but they are free to explore nearby natural public areas. The increasing number of visitors venturing into the surrounding natural landscape has raised environmental concerns for the municipality. To address this, information signs have been installed, and infrastructure such as waste bins has been put in place. However, the negative consequences of unrestricted access to nature, such as the growing amount of litter being left in the environment and visitors disregarding designated paths, have prompted interest in establishing “codes of conduct”. Municipal representatives emphasize the importance of respect for the local community and natural surroundings, and they aim to create a code of conduct similar to that provided by organisations such as the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) to reinforce these principles.

## Development of infrastructure

The development of tourism infrastructure is crucial for achieving economic, environmental and social sustainability on the island. However, a significant challenge lies in determining who bears the financial responsibility for these investments. Various perspectives exist regarding the necessary actions. One potential investment is land-based electricity, which could reduce air pollution from cruise ships in the harbour. However, the costs associated with implementing such infrastructure are high, and the existing electricity capacity on the island is insufficient. Private entrepreneurs have also expressed that financial constraints hinder their ability to transition to more environmentally friendly practices, particularly in relation to their reliance on fossil fuels. While they express a desire to be more environmentally conscious, economic sustainability remains their primary concern. As a result, there is a tendency to maintain the status quo and prioritise business-as-usual practices.

The municipality is responsible for the physical infrastructure in Honningsvåg, and there is recognition that improved planning along pedestrian paths is needed. In the central area of town, this would be beneficial. As part of their efforts, the municipality has established a public toilet near the harbour, serving as an example of infrastructure investment that enhances the town and provides services to visitors and inhabitants alike. Another method of financing infrastructure development is through crowdfunding. A funding campaign was initiated to raise funds for constructing a stone trail leading to the highest mountain top in Honningsvåg. Nepali sherpas were invited to design and build the trail, aiming to preserve the fragile natural environment of the mountain while making it safer and more accessible. However, another concern for municipal governance is the issue of abandoned buildings along the shoreline that remain standing without renovation or demolition.

Additionally, the municipality faces challenges in prioritizing the convenience and needs of its residents during peak tourist seasons, particularly regarding essential public services such as fire brigades and emergency rooms, which must remain operational even when residents are expected to relax and enjoy their summer. While the entire municipality has adapted to the presence of cruise tourism, cruise passengers primarily visit the North Cape rather than specifically experiencing Magerøya and Honningsvåg.

## Developing skills and competences

Entrepreneurs who have made investments and expanded their operations greatly benefit from the influx of guests from cruise ships during the short summer season. However, there is a high level of dependency on external guides who possess the necessary skills and experience to provide guests with a comprehensive understanding of nature, including specialized knowledge such as marine biology. The reliance on knowledgeable guides who can communicate effectively in multiple languages and cater to different groups creates a vulnerability for experienced providers. Ensuring the availability of qualified staff to meet various responsibilities is a significant challenge faced by tourism stakeholders, which has been further exacerbated during and after the pandemic. The scarcity of qualified service and tourism workers, as well as language competencies, has been a pressing issue. One stakeholder highlighted the magnitude of the problem by stating that job vacancies were difficult to fill after the pandemic. This decline in the available workforce is unprecedented, posing additional difficulties for tourism businesses in maintaining their operations and delivering quality services.

To secure staffing in the near future, a collaborative effort between public authorities (municipality and local upper secondary school) and private actors was initiated to establish a preparatory course focused on tourism and guiding at the local school. Several entrepreneurs from different companies have agreed to serve as tutors or mentors to the students, providing them with valuable hands-on experience and information. Additionally, the DMO has tested an innovative approach involving local pupils as mentors to cruise passengers who arrive during the off-season on Hurtigruten cruises. In other cases, service providers rely on their internal and external networks to recruit seasonal workers. Sometimes, their participation in wider networks, such as EU-financed Interreg projects, helps them gather knowledge about reliable guides and service workers who are often employed by large ski resorts in the northern parts of Sweden or Finland between November and April and then come to Honningsvåg between June and August.

Other entrepreneurs rely solely on themselves and their family members, calling upon them for assistance in case of emergencies or illness, especially in the case of family-owned businesses. Nevertheless, this dependence on family members makes companies particularly vulnerable, especially if the owners wish to retire. In several cases, the younger generation may express interest in taking over the business, but often, the example set by their parents serves as a deterrent, making them hesitant about pursuing a career in the hospitality industry. While the destination boasts many appealing qualities, such as unlimited access to nature, the uncertainties surrounding paid labour within the hospitality and service industry in Honningsvåg and other small villages we visited in Magerøya diminish the attractiveness of working in the tourism sector.

One of the drawbacks of heavy reliance on cruise tourists is the impact it has on companies providing adventure excursions. The uncertainty surrounding the exact arrival times, guests' group sizes, and potential delays create a "stand-by" situation for these companies. They are forced to allocate resources to handle logistical matters instead of focusing on delivering exceptional experiences to their guests. This additional administrative burden threatens the quality of the experiences offered. Moreover, relying heavily on the cruise industry can hinder innovation and the development of new



tourism experiences. Popular products, such as visits to the North Cape, have remained unchanged for many years. Nevertheless, as the cruise market evolves, the destination must introduce new products and enhance existing ones to meet changing demands and expectations.

Entrepreneurs in the tourism industry are encountering challenges in regard to recruiting staff for the tourism season. In particular, the younger generation tends to be less willing to work overtime or during evenings and nights. For instance, if a cruise boat arrives late at night and departs early in the morning, it requires employees to be at work during unconventional hours. Despite this, smaller businesses on the island are more inclined to create an attractive working environment. For example, one owner of a private bus company allows employees to define their own tasks and collaboratively plan their activities with the manager. This approach fosters a sense of satisfaction, trust, and contribution to the common goal of providing the best possible service to customers.

To effectively manage tourism flows to the island, tourism stakeholders have learned to adapt by relying on informal networks. Moreover, in recent years, formal networks supported by the public, the EU and national funding schemes have been developed. These formal networks also provide additional support and resources for the tourism industry, enhancing its ability to manage and address the challenges associated with tourism flows on the island.

## Cruise Troubles and Concluding Remarks

The destination of Magerøya and the town of Honningsvåg have historically not been considered primary destinations for cruise tourism because of their short and intense summer season. Instead, they have primarily served as a departure point for tourists visiting the iconic North Cape, which is a significant attraction in Northern Europe. The development of the cruise tourism industry in the region can be attributed, in part, to the influential position held by the main stakeholders responsible for directing tourists to the North Cape. However, the increasing number of visitors to this attraction has raised concerns regarding both the fragile Arctic environment and the limited economic impact on the surrounding local communities. Many voices within the region have recognized the need to extend the tourism season and shift the focus from mass cruise tourism to land-based tourist excursions. This shift is seen as potentially creating greater economic value for a more diverse group of tourism providers on the island.

The concerns raised by tourism and service providers in the area highlight several important issues related to the impact of cruise tourism on the local community. These concerns include:

- Due to the high reliance on the foreign labour force, the tourism industry in the area heavily depends on foreign workers to meet the demand generated by cruises. This reliance on seasonal workers creates challenges related to language barriers, cultural differences, and turnover rates, which may affect the quality of service delivery.
- Traffic congestion—The influx of cruise tourists leads to increased traffic congestion, especially during the peak tourism season.
- A lack of clear organisational structure—The organization and coordination of hosting cruise tourists may lack a clear structure, which can result in inefficiencies and difficulties. The



absence of a well-defined system can lead to confusion and challenges in managing the arrival, transportation and activities of cruise tourists.

- Logistical challenges in organizing excursions are connected to the rising volumes of cruise traffic and the varying demands and preferences of visitors.
- Stress and uncertainty connected to cruise arrivals—the unpredictable nature of cruise arrivals and uncertainties associated with weather conditions—can create stress for tourism providers.
- The active disengagement of some entrepreneurs—the monopolistic structure of the cruise tourism industry—is governed by multinational corporations, resulting in limited opportunities for local entrepreneurs to actively participate in and benefit from cruise tourism activities. This can lead to disengagement and a sense of exclusion among some members of the local community.

The need for transformation and improved collaboration among the local hospitality industry, harbour, municipality, cruise ship industry and DMO is crucial to address challenges and ensure a more equal distribution of economic benefits. Stakeholders recognize the importance of developing a joint “master plan” that outlines a comprehensive and coordinated approach to managing both land-based and cruise tourism in the destination.

By working together and self-organising, tourism industry stakeholders can aim to create a more balanced and inclusive tourism ecosystem where the benefits are shared more equally. While larger players in the industry may currently enjoy the most significant benefits from cruise tourism, it is important to consider the broader impacts and costs associated with the industry. These externalities, such as environmental impacts, infrastructure demands, and public services, need to be acknowledged and addressed collectively by destination stakeholders. Through collaborative efforts and a shared vision, it is possible to create a more resilient and inclusive tourism industry. This requires ongoing dialogue, cooperation and a commitment to long-term planning and management for the benefit of both the local community and visitors.

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