

Full Length Article

Residents' coping with cruise tourism

Amanda Hauso Sandven^a, Matias Thuen Jørgensen^{b,*}, Philipp Wassler^c^a Department of People and Organizations, Bournemouth University, Talbot Campus Fern Barrow, Poole BH12 5BB, UK^b Department of Social Sciences and Business, Roskilde University, Universitetsvej 1, 25.3, DK-4000 Roskilde, Denmark^c Department of Management, University of Bergamo, Via dei Caniana, 2, 24127 Bergamo, Italy

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 29 August 2023

Received in revised form 12 January 2024

Accepted 16 January 2024

Available online xxxx

Associate editor: Antonio Russo

Keywords:

Cruise tourism

Residents

Sustainable cruising

Coping

Regulation

Visitor management

ABSTRACT

Cruise tourism is a contested practice, requiring research that moves beyond oversimplified accounts of progress or despair and applies primary data at the community level. Using in-depth interviews with residents of Eidfjord, Norway, during the pandemic-induced “break” from cruise tourism, this study critically examines their perspectives on and coping with cruising. It reveals that the pandemic has spurred residents to shift from more individualistic (reactive/anticipatory) coping to more communal (proactive/preventive) coping. Findings suggest that the good/bad, for/against debate about cruising needs to transition towards a comprehensive approach emphasizing not only sustainable planning, regulations, and visitor management but also a better understanding of how residents cope with cruise tourism and distinguish between impacts that they can and cannot cope with.

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Introduction

The global cruise industry has grown remarkably in the past twenty years until it peaked in 2019 (CLIA, 2019). 2020 was forecasted to be another record year for the industry, both in passenger numbers and with the launches of new ships and cruise concepts (CLIA, 2019). However, in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a global decline in the cruising sector. Cruise holidays were now a source of stress (Skift Research, 2020), due to high-profile on-board outbreaks with cruise ships becoming hot spots for spreading the virus (Choquet & Sam-Lefebvre, 2021). This forced the residents of several cruise destinations to experience a temporary life without cruise tourism.

The literature has produced limited knowledge about resident perspectives on cruise tourism, and the existing literature is conflicting in terms of whether the negative impacts of cruise tourism outweigh the positive (e.g. Del Chiappa et al., 2018; Weaver & Lawton, 2017). As we further outline below, in both instances there are examples of silencing of resident perspectives, because they do not fit into a unison perspective for or against cruise tourism. This is in line with Ren et al.'s (2021) argument that cruise tourism cannot be boiled down to either (economic) salvation or (socio-cultural) destruction. In recognition of this complexity and the heterogeneity of resident perspectives, it is relevant to explore more in-depth how residents engage with cruise tourism.

Previous studies of cruise destinations are skewed by the fact that residents can only relate to their current situation – life with cruise tourism. For many residents, positive impacts may not be immediately visible, but they may assume overall benefit. Status

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: matia stj@ruc.dk (M.T. Jørgensen), philipp.wassler@unibg.it (P. Wassler).

quo bias (Eidelman & Crandall, 2012), would suggest a tendency to evaluate cruise tourism more positively, if already present and that residents will assume a worse outcome if things change, than if they stay the same. Contrastingly, some residents may have difficulty relating to actual positive impacts, whereas more visible negative impacts such as crowding are exacerbated.

We argue that the COVID pandemic offers a unique opportunity to provide a new perspective when studying resident perceptions on cruise tourism because it offers a chance for residents who are used to living with cruise tourism to experience and reflect on life without it. Whereas the previous research has investigated what cruise tourism is, what implications it has, and which adaptation strategies destinations or communities may adopt to limit its impacts (Dawson et al., 2016), our study uses the pandemic “break” as an opportunity to explore *how* residents live with and without cruise tourism.

We do so by focusing specifically on how residents cope with cruise tourism. Coping refers to individual or collective action, reaction, or strategy related to critical events (Shaw et al., 2013). Jordan et al. (2015) found that coping in a tourism context differs significantly from other contexts, being more emotion-focused and potentially less able to deal with stress related to tourism development. In a cruising context, Jordan and Vogt (2017) indeed found that a majority of residents perceive stress related to cruise tourism development; but also, that a significant percentage do not – the reason for which is not evident from their research. As a result, they called for research that takes tourism-specific factors such as the geography of a tourism destination and communal coping into account.

The goal of this research is thus to assess resident perceptions of the cruising industry and their coping mechanisms in light of these research gaps: dynamically and critically, during a timeframe of cruising standstill. This will not only allow for a new perspective on the residents’ relationship with the cruising industry, and how they cope with its negative impacts, but also give insights into how the community plans to move forward when the industry reprises. Like previous research (e.g. Brown & Kline, 2020), we perceive the COVID pandemic as an exogenous shock—an event that appears suddenly and involves far-reaching consequences for those involved (Soluk et al., 2021)—which may have altered how residents perceive cruise tourism at their destination. Based on this, we wish to explore how the pandemic has affected residents coping in response to cruise tourism. To do so, we apply a coping framework proposed by Schwarzer and Taubert (2002), which enables us to trace how residents were perceiving and coping with cruise tourism pre-pandemic, if and how this has changed during the pandemic “break” from cruise tourism and whether and how it has changed how residents aim to cope with it going forward.

We zoom in on the critical case (Flyvbjerg, 2006) of Eidfjord, Norway and its residents. This case exemplifies a small destination, that is simultaneously highly dependent on and susceptible to the negative impacts of cruise tourism. As such, it constitutes an ideal site for understanding if the pandemic has changed residents’ perceptions and coping mechanisms related to the cruising industry.

In addition to the already identified gaps, the paper addresses calls for local community-level studies based on primary data to support existing industry-dependent studies that mainly rely on macro-economic data and inaccurate and unverified industry self-reports (Cheer, 2017; Klein, 2011; MacNeill & Wozniak, 2018; Stewart et al., 2011).

Literature review

Resident perceptions and attitudes towards cruise tourism

Despite some recent progress, resident perspectives on cruise tourism are still an under-investigated research area (Del Chiappa et al., 2018; Weaver & Lawton, 2017). The existing research has described both positive and negative dispositions.

Residents favouring cruise tourism primarily highlight perceived economic and employment benefits as well as multiplier effects (Penco & Di Vaio, 2014; Satta et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2011; Vayá et al., 2018). Stewart et al. (2011) found that residents viewed cruise tourism positively for its role in revitalizing local craftsmanship and providing opportunities to “meet new people” and “educate visitors” about the destination. Olsen et al. (2019) observed that residents considered cruise tourism less harmful to the local environment than other forms of tourism, because of the strict ways in which cruise visits are organized with controlled numbers of visitors, on-board waste storage, and boat anchoring with distance to settlements.

Negative perceptions and attitudes were primarily related to overcrowding, and socio-cultural and environmental strain. Such impacts have been the main reasons for anti-cruise sentiment in heavily visited destinations such as Venice, Dubrovnik, and Santorini (Papathanassis, 2017). Other problems recognized by residents are that cruise tourists spend most of their money on the vessel or in businesses that have an economic tie to the cruise ship company (e.g. Brida & Zapata, 2010; Jordan & Vogt, 2017), that positive impacts of cruise tourism only benefit a few people related to the industry (Del Chiappa et al., 2018) and that jobs associated with the industry are seasonal and volatile (James et al., 2020). Finally, it is argued that cruise tourism may have negative ripple effects on local communities – an example being the increased cost of living (Jordan & Vogt, 2017). Furthermore, all of these challenges are exacerbated by the power dynamics between (often small) communities receiving cruise ships and the large corporations owning and running the cruise lines (Choquet & Sam-Lefebvre, 2021; James et al., 2020; Weaver & Lawton, 2017).

As argued by Weaver and Lawton (2017) researchers often position themselves either in support of or opposition to cruise tourism. Among those more in favour of cruise tourism some authors seem to suggest that residents with negative attitudes are simply not well informed, and should be better informed so their perspective may change, citing that “... a certain type of ‘resident myopia’ [may] exist: that is, there is an inability to recognize consciously the positive impact of cruise activity in the city.” (Del Chiappa et al., 2018).

Those researchers that position themselves in opposition to cruise tourism, even if resident perceptions or attitudes are not, may have good reason for this. For example, they may feel a responsibility to highlight potential problems or even dangers of

a problematic industry, because residents may be too focussed on short term benefits to see the long-term consequences. Similarly, the quote above may be a call for a better-informed public, rather than a call to change resident perceptions or attitudes. However, both approaches by researchers can also be read as a form of silencing residents, when their attitudes do not fit a certain narrative either for or against cruise tourism. This can be considered a problematic element of cruise tourism research and is an indication that it is a contested field, as also suggested by [Weaver and Lawton \(2017\)](#). This calls for research that gives voice to residents, even if their perspectives do not fit neatly into a supportive or non-supportive framework.

Some studies of resident attitudes have attempted to assign certain attitudes to certain groups or segments. [Del Chiappa and Abbate \(2016\)](#) found significant differences based on demographic and socioeconomic factors in a study of cruise tourism to a port destination in Sicily, Italy. In terms of demographics, they found that cruise tourism was most attractive to the middle-aged and highly educated. In terms of socioeconomic factors, they found those who favored cruise tourism to be the ones whose personal income depended on it, those living close to a tourism area, those who had resided in the city for less than five years, and those that interact most intensively with tourists. This confirmed similar findings in a study in Olbia, Italy ([Brida et al., 2012](#)). However, in a later study of resident attitudes in Valencia, Spain, [Del Chiappa et al. \(2018\)](#) found no significant difference between groups based on similar factors.

This indicates that resident attitudes to cruise tourism may be site-specific. It is also an indication that the heterogeneity of opinions about the pros and cons of cruise tourism that has been found to exist among stakeholders within and between destinations ([James et al., 2020](#); [Van Bets et al., 2017](#)), is also present in resident attitudes. Based on this, we argue that accumulated attitudes are only partly relevant, and mainly so for decision-makers predetermined to either increase or decrease cruise tourism. First, because perceptions and attitudes are subjective and context-specific. Second, because they are not exhaustive, meaning that even in destinations where a majority thinks the positive impacts outweigh the negative, or vice-versa, those in the minority will still have to live with or without cruise tourism, and their experience and perspective are not unimportant just because they are in the minority. Third, because tourists' perceptions and attitudes are multifaceted, meaning that one person can like some elements of cruise tourism and not like others, without having formed an ultimate attitude that corresponds to either for or against cruise tourism.

These reasons lead us away from a focus on unified opinions for or against cruise tourism and call on us to focus on other perspectives relating to how residents perceive and live with or without cruise tourism. We find the question of how residents cope with cruise tourism to be a fruitful subject of research in this regard.

Residents and coping

[Lazarus and Folkman \(1984\)](#) define coping as “the cognitive and behavioral efforts exerted to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (p. 141). In other words, coping relates to individual or collective action, reaction, or strategy in relation to critical events ([Shaw et al., 2013](#)).

In tourism, coping has mostly been related to Cognitive Appraisal Theory, which asserts that individuals continuously cognitively appraise their experiences in everyday life, which influences their emotional and behavioral responses to the external environment ([Folkman et al., 1986](#)). Tourism-related studies have focused on how residents cope with tourism in general and at specific sites ([Jordan, 2015](#); [Jordan et al., 2015, 2019](#); [Jordan & Vogt, 2017](#); [Prayag et al., 2021](#)). The referenced research found that many residents experience stress from cruise development, however, how residents cope with cruise tourism in particular remains unclear.

Among the most used and recognized frameworks is coping theory ([Lazarus, 2000](#); [Lazarus & Folkman, 1984](#)). While this is mostly applied to individual psychology, other schools of thought have looked at communal coping, where social interactions are key to reacting to adverse events (e.g. [Afifi et al., 2020](#); [Cahyanto et al., 2021](#); [Parvin et al., 2008](#)).

Based on the aforementioned context of cruise tourism, this study adopts a coping framework proposed by [Schwarzer and Taubert \(2002\)](#) and later elaborated by [Schwarzer and Luszczynska \(2008\)](#). These authors redesigned coping theory, extending it into volition and action theory. [Schwarzer and Luszczynska's \(2008\)](#) coping model acknowledges that:

“people strive for more resources, desire to maximize gains, and build up resistance factors either to ward off future crises or to grow and cultivate their capabilities for their own sake. This forward-time perspective helps to balance traditional coping models that overemphasize the reactive nature of coping.”

[(p. 1)]

In other words, the framework proposed does not just acknowledge a reactive dimension of the individual in the coping process but also considers issues such as resistance and development in looking forward to future challenges.

The framework proposes four coping dimensions, namely reactive, anticipatory, preventive, and proactive coping. According to [Schwarzer and Luszczynska \(2008\)](#), “reactive coping refers to harm or loss experienced in the past, and anticipatory coping to inevitable threats in the near future. Preventive coping refers to uncertain threats in the distant future, whereas proactive coping involves future challenges that are seen as self-promoting” (p. 1). Each of these coping dimensions are explained in more detail as they are used in the findings and discussion section to improve readability.

In a tourism context and specific to residents, a reactive coping framework prevails, where mechanisms related to experienced shocks are examined. However, a more inclusive coping theory that also looks to challenges, which have not yet materialized, is largely absent. Accordingly, this study adopted [Schwarzer and Taubert \(2002\)](#) and [Schwarzer and Luszczynska's \(2008\)](#) coping framework to understand resident perceptions and coping mechanisms related to cruising.

Methods

The study applies an interpretive, qualitative, explorative research approach, which through induction aims to build a deeper understanding of the cruise tourism phenomenon, its impacts, positive and negative, and resident perceptions and attitudes concerning these. Following the arguments of Stewart et al. (2013), and Fridriksson et al. (2020) among others, the best way to gain an understanding of (changes in) attitudes within communities is by engaging residents directly and recording local knowledge. To do so, a critical case (Flyvbjerg, 2006) destination - Eidfjord, Norway - was selected.

Critical cases are chosen strategically to provide in-depth insights, challenge existing theories, or illuminate underlying social, cultural, or organizational dynamics. They often represent extreme or unique situations within the broader context of the study, making them crucial for drawing meaningful conclusions and generalizations. Researchers select critical cases to analyze them intensively, aiming to extract valuable insights that can contribute to the field's knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2014). Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests that critical cases are essential for theoretical advancement and deeper understanding.

The cruise industry plays a vital role in Norwegian tourism. Pre-pandemic, in 2019, cruises to Norway accounted for about 3 % of the international market share, which is significantly higher than the global market share of 0,5 % (Visit Norway, 2020). Over the span of thirteen years, from 2006 to 2019, the number of cruise passengers visiting Norway surged from 370,000 to 850,000 (Visit Norway, 2020).

Eidfjord, a small municipality in Vestland County, Norway, has a population of under 1000 inhabitants. The business sector in Eidfjord is marked by the town being among the most attractive tourist destinations in Western Norway. Other industries include small industries, hydropower generation and agriculture (Vest-Norges Brusselkontor, 2023), but tourism remains a significant direct and indirect job creator for the town. An important part of this is that the town serves as a significant port of call for cruise ships along the Hardangerfjord. Mirroring the country's broader trends, Eidfjord's cruise tourism sector has witnessed rapid development, exemplified by the construction of its cruise port in 2005 and the subsequent increase in annual cruise calls from 27 to 89 by 2019. However, the anticipated 2020 season, projected to host 123 cruise calls, was severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in only one cruise ship visit. Similarly, the local DMO, Destinasjon Eidfjord, experienced a substantial decrease in revenue, plummeting from 6.7 million NOK in 2019 to a mere 101k NOK in 2020, largely attributed to the decline in sales of excursions, activities, and local experiences provided by the destination (Hauso & Dolve, 2020).

As such, Eidfjord represents a small destination and community of residents highly affected by the positive and negative impacts of cruise tourism, which has experienced the rapid decline of the cruising industry, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Yin (2014), case study methods are useful in studies like this that are asking "how" or "why" questions, where the investigator has little control over events, the topic of research is contemporary phenomena in a real-life context, and participants are central to the study. Limitations inherent to case studies were considered. These include a lack of generalizability, risk of bias, and a small population leading to a potential lack of scientific rigor (Flyvbjerg, 2006). As such, the authors are aware that "case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes" (Yin, 2014, p. 10). However, these weaknesses of case study research are similar to those of other social science methods, none of which can build general context-independent theory, because subjectivity and context are fundamental elements when analyzing human behavior (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Participant observation conducted by one of the authors, who worked at the destination for five years gave impressions about resident perceptions and attitudes, which formed a basis for further and deeper analysis through semi-structured interviews ($n = 15$). This in-depth knowledge also proved to be an advantage for the recruitment of relevant interviewees. The main goal of the data collection was to maximize the depth and richness of the data (Kuzel, 1992), as well as reflect different perspectives. Therefore, a combination of purposive and snowballing sampling (Maxwell, 2004; Patton, 2001) was used for recruitment of interviewees best fitting the selection criteria below. One of the author's engagements in the town meant that she was acquainted or familiar with some interviewees, however, an effort was made to ensure that this was not the case for the majority. Potential biases related with this were limited by relying more on the two other authors in the analysis of data for these interviews. Interviews were conducted via Zoom, due to Covid isolation in the spring of 2021. They lasted up to one hour and were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Criteria for all participants were that they were a resident of Eidfjord with awareness of cruise traffic in the town and were willing to engage in an open discussion about the topic. Half of the sample represents residents who work in the tourism industry, this is both representative of the town population where it is deemed that around half work in tourism or affiliated industries, and to explore different perspectives based on one's dependency on the industry. The other half of the sample are residents, who do not work in the tourism industry or directly affiliated industries. However, it should be noted that some of them may still feel somewhat dependent on it, because they may know people working there or their employment may be indirectly dependent on it (see example in findings). We consider this as a reflection of the reality in a small cruise dependent community and therefore not a bias in the sample. These respondents are included in recognition of the limitations of previous research that only dealt with stakeholders directly involved in cruise tourism (e.g. James et al., 2020), and to gain perspectives of those residents who, on the face of it, has less to gain from cruise tourism.

Table 1 provides an overview of the respondents, however, because of the small size of the town, only limited information can be shared to keep respondents anonymous.

Existing literature emphasizes the heterogeneous and non-cohesive nature of communities (Clausen & Gyimóthy, 2016), including those in cruise destinations (Del Chiappa et al., 2018). Therefore, the aim was not to extensively determine community-wide support or opposition to cruise tourism, but to gain in-depth knowledge of the residents' experiences living

Table 1
Respondent overview.

Nr.	Length of residency	Employment in tourism
1	22 years	Yes, 6 years
2	20 years	No
3	38 years	No
4	20 years	Yes, 25 years
5	3 years	Yes, 9 years
6	41 years	No
7	5 years	Yes, 6 years
8	34 years	Yes, 22 years
9	17 years	Yes, 17 years
10	13 years	Yes, 41 years
11	6 years	Yes, 28 years
12	50 years	No
13	50 years	No
14	37 years	No
15	1 year	No

with and without cruise tourism. To this end, respondents were asked to reflect on their memories of life with (pre-pandemic) and without cruise tourism (during the pandemic) to identify any changes in their predisposition or practices relating to cruise tourism returning to the destination.

While employing an inductive approach, the study's interview guide drew from the literature. However, the interviewer ensured that participants were allowed to open topics they found relevant, and followed the flow of conversation as long as it was relevant to the research topic. Thus, the data collection and analysis were explorative and open to include topics not otherwise reflected in the existing literature.

While there are no universal or agreed rules for deciding on sample sizes for qualitative interview studies, nor on how saturation is reached, some research has dealt with these issues. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) conducted a systematic review study to determine when saturation is reached in qualitative research. They found that for qualitative interview studies with relatively homogeneous study populations, such as the one in our study, saturation was reached at sample sizes between 9 and 17 respondents. Similarly, Francis et al. (2010) studied how saturation criteria can be established to decide on sample size for qualitative interview studies. They found a principle of 10 + 3 ("purposive diversity sampling for a minimum of 10 interviews, three further consecutive interviews with no new themes" (p. 1241)) to produce effective results. Following this method, they found that only 3 % of constructs would have been missed, which matches an earlier study that found that the first 12 interviews elicited 97 % of the important codes out of a total of 60 interviews. They compare this rule for saturation in qualitative interview studies to the 0.05 significance criterion for quantitative studies, arguing that while somewhat arbitrary, it can be a useful guide for researchers. In the studies they investigate, data saturation was reached after 12–17 interviews, depending on the specificities of the study. Following this, we concluded our data collection at 15 interviews, when little to no new perspectives emerged when adding new interviews, indicating that saturation had been achieved.

The host institution's ethics checklist was followed to ensure that the research followed ethical standards. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, consent, anonymity, and data protection before the interviews.

The data was analyzed through inductive thematic analysis, which is useful when the goal is to identify patterns within and between the perspectives of different participants' experiences, perspectives, behaviours, and practices (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Table 2
Summary of main themes and underlying codes.

Themes	Impacts affecting perception	Experience of crowding	Changes to perception as a result of no tourism	Future prospects
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic impacts and benefits - Environmental impacts and benefits - Socio-cultural impacts and benefits - Seasonality - Comparison to other forms of tourism - Traffic and local infrastructure - Attachment to the village - Visitor management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience of crowding - Adapting to crowding - Effects on perceptions - Destination recognition and popularity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening of existing perception - No change in perception - Change to perception - Negative perception being recognized by others - Expectations for post-covid scenario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulations of pollution - Visitor management regulations - Enhancing synergy between cruise and other forms of tourism - Crisis management plans - Reduced seasonality

The authors first familiarised themselves with the data, then data was manually coded into broad categories and subsequently into themes.

While the initial questions for the interview guide were informed by the theory, themes were let to emerge freely from the data through the inductive coding process. The identified themes were then compared to components of the adopted coping framework and a conceptual fit between the dimensions was apparent. The four main themes and underlying codes are summarised in Table 1. While the coding was done by one author, codes were confirmed between all authors, and all authors crosschecked and developed themes. Finally, the authors applied the coping framework to the themes to generate the analysis as it appears in the paper. The results of this are summarised in Table 2.

Findings and discussion

Our findings confirm Ren et al.'s (2021) argument that cruise tourism cannot be boiled down to either (economic) salvation or (socio-cultural) destruction. We find that the residents' perceptions of cruise tourism are not only heterogeneous between respondents, but also internally conflicted, as only a few respondents have a fixed perception of cruise tourism as either good or bad. This also confirms previous studies by James et al. (2020) and Van Bets et al. (2017), which point to an inherent heterogeneity of related opinions. In this section, we will first explain the positive and negative factors that make up the reasons why residents in our case have positive and/or negative perceptions of cruise tourism. Then we proceed to show how they balance and process these perceptions through coping mechanisms.

Positive and negative factors of cruise tourism

In terms of the factors that result in positive or negative perspectives on cruise tourism, our findings largely confirm those of previous studies. Positive direct and indirect economic impacts are recognized as important by all respondents, although many also mention the importance of sustainability in this regard. One respondent for example argued: "My general attitude is that cruise tourism is good, as long as it is sustainable economically, ecologically and socially. Too many cruise ships can easily become negative" (10). This is in line with studies which propagate that the pros of the industry exist even in stakeholders who may hold generally negative views (e.g., Del Chiappa et al., 2018; James et al., 2020; Van Bets et al., 2017) and others which point to the overwhelming importance of economic benefits of the cruise industry (Penco & Di Vaio, 2014; Satta et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2011).

Most respondents also recognized the contribution of cruise tourism to employment and a potential influx of new residents, although some questioned the sustainability of seasonal employment. Respondents for example argued: "It creates activity and generates income to local businesses, which leads to tax income to our local community." (13). This also reflects the high level of dependency of the destination on the tourism industry, where cruising plays a crucial role, which may affect the overall perception. To illustrate this, even a nursery teacher pondered that her employment was somewhat dependent on the tourism industry "There are several children in the nursery who have parents who work in the tourism industry. I do not want to say that my employment is directly dependent on the tourism industry, but it obviously helps to bring the number of children up." (14).

Respondents, even some with otherwise negative perceptions of cruise tourism, also mentioned that cruise tourism can create a cultural exchange, liveliness in the area, and a sense of local pride. Respondents for example described: "I find it exciting to walk around and listen to the various languages that are spoken." (15) and "I get to talk to people from different parts of the world, which I enjoy." (12).

Pre-pandemic, the development of cruise tourism has been fast and mainly focused on short-term benefits. The respondents mentioned that this has exacerbated the negative impacts on cruise tourists, other tourists, local businesses, and residents. This is in line with negative impacts identified in literature review. Respondents emphasized environmental impacts, mirroring concerns in other locations (Choquet & Sam-Lefebvre, 2021; Weaver & Lawton, 2017), stating: "There are more and more cruise ships every year and it makes irreparable damage to nature. The place is exploited too much, and maybe not in a few, but in a dozen years, there will be nothing to visit here, because it will be destroyed." (7). Such observations resonate with prior studies cautioning cruise tourism's interferences in the natural environment (e.g. Jordan & Vogt, 2017).

Others exemplified negative socio-cultural impacts also found in other heavily visited cruising destinations (e.g. Papatheassis, 2017). These impacts relate to the daily lives of residents, which are disrupted by cruise tourism, as exemplified in the following quote: "As a resident in Eidfjord, I think it can get too crowded in the village centre. Shops, hiking trails, the streets and sometimes even gardens of local residents become crowded. This is not ok! I am positive to tourism, but the spatial distribution of tourists needs to be improved."

Similarly, some respondents also mentioned how it can negatively impact the tourist experience and other types of tourism (e.g., Del Chiappa et al., 2018; James et al., 2020):

"A negative impact of cruise tourism is that if cruises are planned nearly daily and if two cruises are coming the same day, we are not able to offer our services to all of them at the same time or even at all. The cruise guests are getting frustrated because there are too few possibilities, we are frustrated because we can't offer more and the residents of Eidfjord are frustrated because the cruise guests don't know what to do and walk around in their gardens." (11).

This relates to the "agglomeration effect", mentioned by for example Brida and Zapata (2010) and Bonilla-Priego et al. (2014), meaning cruise passengers arrive simultaneously and in large numbers at certain points of the destination and create congestion. This is perceived to be a strain on both residents and other tourists (Motta, 2014), and potentially leads to reduced satisfaction and loyalty towards the destination (Jacobsen et al., 2019).

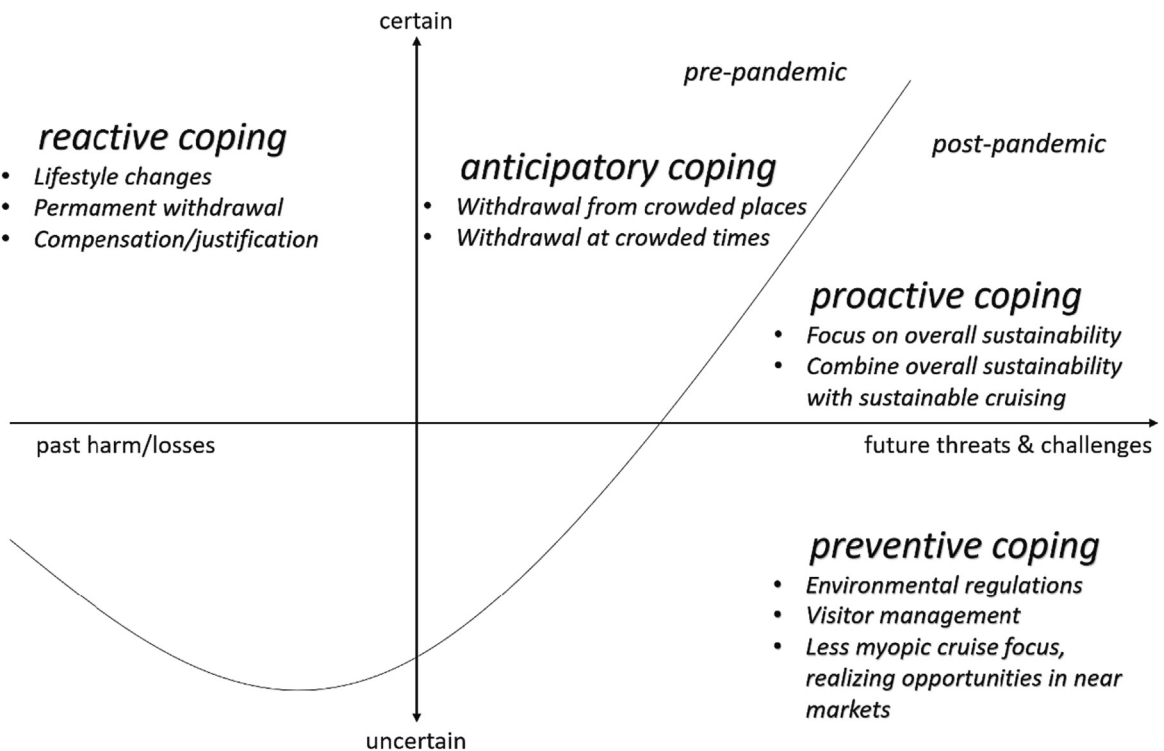


Fig. 1. Residents' coping efforts related to cruise tourism pre- and post-pandemic.

Several residents also argue that cruise tourism displaces other forms of tourism because cruise ships take up the view and can discourage other tourists and travelers from visiting the village on cruise days. For example, one respondent argued: "It creates activity that is not compatible with other forms of tourism, and not compatible with locals. It limits other forms of tourism (...) and creates queues and chaos that scares away our usual customers." (4). This confirms previous research that identified how dependence on cruise tourism can lead to negligence of other economic activities (e.g. Del Chiappa et al., 2018; Kovačić & Silveira, 2020).

Despite the negative impacts, a majority of residents welcome cruise tourism back to the destination post-pandemic, not only because of the economic impacts but due to its contribution to creating a livelier village. Two residents for example argued: "I think cruise traffic is part of Eidfjord's summer and I miss having cruise boats arriving. I grew up with the assumption that summer equals cruise ships." (13), and "I find cruise tourism a great addition to the village and the whole area and hopefully it will return soon. I find it rather sad that cruise tourism has been gone for so long and that it is unsure when it will return." (2).

These findings introduce inherent complexity, as the previously identified "critical" and "capitalist" stances in cruise tourism research (Weaver & Lawton, 2017) appear to coexist in individual resident perspectives. The combination of positive and negative effects of the cruise industry on the destination remained relatively consistent across respondents with varying lengths of residency and employment in the tourism sector. For instance, respondent 15, an Eidfjord resident of one year not directly involved in tourism, acknowledges economic and sociocultural gains from the cruise industry while also recognizing environmental impact and crowding concerns. Meanwhile respondent 13, residing in Eidfjord for over a decade and with over 40 years working in tourism, echoes similar sentiments. Although some researchers (e.g., Brida et al., 2012; Del Chiappa & Abbate, 2016; James et al., 2020) have emphasized the potential influence of residency and direct involvement in the tourism industry on attitude formation, our data suggests that this is not the case in Eidfjord. This may be attributed to the relatively small size of the investigated destination, where the impacts of the cruise industry are more apparent to the entire community.

Because a large part of the literature highlights predominantly negative impacts of the cruise industry, it may be surprising that residents want cruise tourism to return post-pandemic when considering the negative impacts. This acceptance can, at least in part, be attributed to the coping strategies that residents had developed to deal with the negative effects of cruise tourism prior to the pandemic.

Residents' coping efforts related to cruise tourism pre- and post-pandemic

With an outset in Schwarzer and Taubert's (2002) coping framework, we find that residents cope with cruise tourism in four different ways and that there has been a change in coping from mainly focusing on short-term reactive and anticipatory coping pre-pandemic, to a stronger focus on long term oriented proactive and preventive coping post-pandemic. This is summarised in Fig. 1 and explained in the following.

Anticipatory and reactive coping

The first part of this section will discuss the anticipatory and reactive coping mechanisms identified (Lazarus, 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These mechanisms were already present in the pre-pandemic period and stem from the lived experience of our respondents.

Anticipatory coping relates to the management of a known and certain risk or challenge (Schwarzer & Luszczynska, 2008; Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002). Most respondents have explained how they in different ways adapt their everyday life to avoid crowds. As such, 'temporary withdrawal from crowded places and/or at crowded times' based on knowledge about when cruise ships arrive and where the tourists go, such as planning one's shopping, swimming, nature walks, or other day-to-day activities around cruise arrivals, are among the most applied anticipatory coping efforts mentioned by the interviewees. Examples include: "I try to plan my shopping so that I avoid the times when most tourists are in the area." (3) and "I usually avoid the town center, and the popular nature spots. Mostly because it's overcrowded." (1).

Crowding was mentioned as a key issue that residents can anticipate, helped by the tendency of cruise tourists to follow standard patterns (Jaakson, 2004). Anticipatory coping mechanisms were highly effective related to this issue, as the limited time a ship berth leads to crowding but also to "Predictability in situations of crowding, as we know the pattern of cruise tourists, compared to other tourists." (3), suggesting that the agglomeration effect (Bonilla-Priego et al., 2014; Brida & Zapata, 2010) might facilitate residents' development of effective coping. As such, the argument can be made that one of the more negative characteristics of cruise tourism – many guests disembarking at the same time, and only staying for a short period – if managed correctly, can be regarded as a strength by some.

In addition to immediate reactions—and arguably more worrying for the socio-cultural fabric of the destination—more permanent impacts on the local society have been identified through reactive coping mechanisms.

Reactive coping efforts deal with past or present stressful encounters to compensate for or accept negative experiences. This can for example be readjusting goals or behavior, finding benefits, or searching for meaning in a given situation (Schwarzer & Luszczynska, 2008; Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002). Our respondents, for example, do this by 'changing their lifestyle' more permanently due to crowding experienced in the past. Especially, they mention that cruise tourism has led to a more or less 'permanent withdrawal' of a large number of residents in addition to the aforementioned reactive lifestyle changes. This relates to crowding-out effects observed in cruise destinations (Motta, 2014), which are ultimately affecting the socio-cultural landscape of a destination (Papathanassis, 2017). The data also shows that this withdrawal does not only happen among permanent residents but also among the extended group of residents that have cabins in the mountain area. This is further discussed under preventive coping (*Preventive coping and proactive coping* section).

Reactive coping was also enacted as a form of 'compensation/justification' by some respondents. These respondents largely showed a "could-be-worse-attitude". For example, some attempted to justify existing or expected negative impacts of cruise tourism by comparing it to (potential) negative impacts of other tourism activities. These respondents argued that some form of economic activity is necessary and that cruise tourism is preferable to for example local boats and ferries. One respondent for example explained:

"The bigger problem has been the daily Fjord-sightseeing-fast-speed-boat with Chinese guests. These guests – as opposed to the cruise guests – highly violate the local community, having no respect for the local people and trespassing on their property. And on water, the boat does not respect the wildlife as they are sailing too close and too fast near the coast or other small vessels" (9).

This relates to Jordan et al.'s (2015) assertion that in a tourism context, residents often go beyond traditional coping mechanisms, through scenario building and mental processes lining out (more or less favorable) alternatives. This is linked to the building up of resistance factors related to negative impacts, but also to a degree to a high tolerance of reception of tourism, potentially because of economic dependency (Penco & Di Vaio, 2014; Satta et al., 2015; Stewart et al., 2011). In terms of coping theory, this relates to levels of acceptance typically found in coping mechanisms (Schwarzer & Luszczynska, 2008; Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002).

It is evident that the "break" induced by the pandemic has allowed residents to pause and reflect. They have reoriented their short-term focused coping efforts, characterized by anticipatory and reactive coping, towards coping efforts that are more sustainable in the longer term. Adopting a "forward-time perspective", enabled by preventive and proactive coping as proposed by Schwarzer and Luszczynska (2008, p. 1).

Preventive coping and proactive coping

This section discusses preventive and proactive coping mechanisms identified in the findings, going beyond response-based coping approaches. According to Schwarzer and Taubert (2002) and Schwarzer and Luszczynska (2008), *preventive coping* refers to uncertain threats in a more distant future. This coping mechanism aims to build up long-term resistance and capabilities to face events that might happen, resulting in less strain if said events should occur.

Respondents indeed highlighted the necessity to develop specific ways to prevent reprisal and worsening of the negative impacts that cruising brings in terms of environmental regulations, visitor management, and a less myopic cruise focus. As an example of environmental regulation, one respondent specifically mentioned dealing with the ships' impacts on the natural environment through pricing regulations "... in Eidfjord we have as of 2020 implemented a system called EPI (Environmental Port Index) which differentiates the pricing depending on how 'clean' the ship is. Hopefully shore power will be a possibility in the future as well." (8). This was already partly applied but a strengthening was predicted to be necessary to prevent further negative impacts.

The Norwegian tourism industry is relatively highly developed and has set ambitious climate goals, for example that all UNESCO protected fjords shall be free from cruise and ferry emissions no later than 2026 (e.g. [Maritime Impact, 2019](#); [Vestlandsforskning, 2020](#)). No matter if these goals are realistic or will come to fruition or not, our respondents were generally optimistic about the high level of development of the industry in Eidfjord. This may contribute to development of preventive coping mechanisms, suggesting not the stage of development but rather the development model to be crucial for forming local attitudes. This is aligned with [Choquet and Sam-Lefebvres \(2021\)](#) call for the importance of developing related management strategies.

In terms of calls for visitor management, a respondent mentioned that: “When so many cruise guests are in a small place like Eidfjord—other tourists, Norwegian and foreign—don’t feel like stopping in Eidfjord as everything is overcrowded. And by this, random tourists might consider driving through and not making a stop.” (11). This suggests not only a relationship to the aforementioned issues with crowding but also the need for carrying capacity management for keeping the destination attractive. Respondents also mentioned a potential conflict between cruise tourists and other types of tourism in terms of “crowding out” ([Del Chiappa et al., 2018](#)), arguing that this specifically creates a conflict between people renting cabins and cruise tourists, where the latter is prone to spend less on busy days:

“the market of cabin-owners is a solid market for economic gain all year round and can be seen as an extended group of residents for the village due to the amount of time they spend at their cabins all year round. They are a contributor to a thriving village but avoid the village on days with cruises.” (4).

This links to the literature concerning a relatively low-profit margin for locals related to the cruise industry ([Fridriksson et al., 2020](#); [Vayá et al., 2018](#)).

Finally, calls for preventive coping also highlighted issues with a “myopic focus” ([Del Chiappa et al., 2018](#)) on cruise development. Two respondents expressed how the pandemic-induced “break” from cruise tourism had highlighted the vulnerability of over-dependence on cruise tourism, and at the same time the importance of local and near markets in addition to cruise markets. As such, another type of preventive coping employed by the residents was to better recognize the importance of alternative tourism markets, and near markets, and to work towards less dependency on cruise tourism markets.

Proactive coping, involves upcoming challenges that are seen as potentially self-promoting and are not necessarily preceded by negative or challenging events. It is generally considered an effort to build up general resources and does not see challenges as a risk or threat, but rather as personal challenges. Coping here is goal management, rather than risk management. Constructive paths of action are initiated ([Schwarzer & Luszczynska, 2008](#)).

Respondents expressed that better management of cruise tourism (in terms of overall sustainability and sustainable cruising) would be just another way to make Eidfjord an overall more sustainable destination, and that the pandemic has allowed reflection exactly on this issue. One respondent, for example, stated that this mission is fundamental for all types of tourism and could thus be combined with the cruise tourism sector “The pandemic has shown us that we need to get a wider focus on sustaining nature and the environment and find a way to combine this with cruise tourism.” (5). Even residents who expressed largely negative perceptions of cruise tourism, due to crowding and displacement of other types of tourism, stated that their attitude would improve if the cruise industry was built on a more sustainable strategy that would be more compatible with other forms of tourism.

In other words, our data shows that residents long for a proactive coping approach, a master plan which, also building on the perceptions, needs and coping capabilities of residents, manages to integrate sustainable cruising into the overall sustainable governance of the destination – tourism related and not. Some examples of related practices are evident in literature. [Paiano et al. \(2020\)](#) offered a preliminary framework for management practices in their case study of Italy, in terms of water and beverage packaging as a way to reduce carbon footprints. [James et al. \(2020\)](#) suggested intergovernmental agreements to address international regulatory issues in terms of sustainability. However, the literature suggests that sustainable management needs to be highly site-specific ([Dawson et al., 2016](#); [Fridriksson et al., 2020](#); [James et al., 2020](#); [Van Bets et al., 2017](#)), and a localized approach is a first necessity.

Conclusion

This paper addresses the need for comprehensive studies on cruise tourism that move beyond oversimplified accounts of either progress or despair ([Ren et al., 2021](#)), apply primary data at the community level ([Cheer, 2017](#); [Klein, 2011](#); [MacNeill & Wozniak, 2018](#); [Stewart et al., 2011](#)) and focus on communal coping ([Jordan & Vogt, 2017](#)). In the specific case of Eidfjord, Norway, the break in cruise tourism during the pandemic provided an opportunity to examine residents' perceptions and coping mechanisms.

Our study reveals residents' complex and sometimes ambivalent relationship with cruise tourism, perceiving both positive and negative impacts. Based on our data, this complicated relationship does not vary substantially based on demographic factors such as length of residency and involvement in tourism. However, resident views on cruise tourism are conflicted, not only among different residents but also within individuals as they navigate the positive and negative facets. Negative factors predominantly encompass environmental and socio-cultural concerns, alongside the potential displacement of possibly more appealing forms of tourism. Conversely, residents acknowledge the industry's positive contributions to the local economy, employment opportunities, and the vitality it infuses into the town, generating a sense of local pride for some.

While acknowledging the negative impacts, residents express a desire to welcome back cruise tourism to the destination after the pandemic. This can be partially attributed to the coping strategies that residents had developed to counter its negative

effects pre-pandemic. These strategies primarily involve short-term reactive and anticipatory responses at an individual level. Residents temporarily avoid specific places at certain times, make lifestyle adjustments such as permanently avoiding certain areas, or choose to overlook negative impacts by justifying them against economic benefits of cruise tourism when compared to other economic activities. The withdrawal behavior extends to potential visitors from nearby regions, including those considering holiday or second home stays. Consequently, cruise tourism may limit other forms of tourism in the region. These issues primarily arise from the congestion and clustering effects associated with cruise tourism, which residents find challenging. Paradoxically, these same effects also provide an advantage of predictability, allowing residents to adapt and cope with cruise tourism. This paradox sheds light on why residents' perceptions of cruise tourism are often fragmented and internally inconsistent.

We also note that the pandemic-induced pause in cruise tourism has prompted a change in residents' coping strategies. We observe a shift from predominantly individual short-term reactive and anticipatory coping strategies before the pandemic to a stronger focus on long-term proactive and preventive communal coping measures afterward. This entails a heightened emphasis on the need for cruise tourism to become more sustainable by holding the industry accountable, enforcing environmental regulations, and improving visitor management. Additionally, residents now place greater importance on other forms of tourism, particularly from nearby markets or holiday homes in the surrounding areas and seek ways to enhance the synergy between cruise tourism and these alternatives. This shift indicates that while residents previously allowed cruise companies and destinations to operate without stringent regulations in exchange for economic benefits and positive contributions to the local area, the pandemic break has prompted a realization that stronger regulation and management of cruise tourism are necessary. Therefore, while our findings indicate a desire among residents for the return of cruise tourism to the destination, they expect changes in how it operates.

Existing research has predominantly focused on actions that the cruise industry, visitors, and regulators can take to minimize negative impacts. While these strategies are valuable, they often overlook the role and agency of residents themselves. Our study highlights the active role of residents, portraying them not as passive bystanders overwhelmed by external forces, but as individuals who, in many cases, desire cruise tourism under specific conditions that they can manage. Thus, we redefine the relationship between the cruise industry and the local community from a one-way impact on a local community to a collaborative effort involving cruise liners, authorities, local businesses and residents.

Thus, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of residents' coping in tourism destinations. Previous studies have shown differences in resident attitudes and behaviours towards cruising (e.g., [Brida et al., 2012](#); [Del Chiappa & Abbate, 2016](#); [Jordan et al., 2015](#)), suggesting that traditional coping frameworks may not fully capture residents' responses to tourism development. Building on this premise, our findings demonstrate a shift from individual coping actions (such as physical relocation) to a more collective approach within the resident community (e.g. [Afifi et al., 2020](#); [Cahyanto et al., 2021](#); [Parvin et al., 2008](#)). This collective coping reflects a community-wide call for action and supports the idea that communal coping plays a significant role for residents living in cruise destinations. By introducing [Schwarzer and Taubert \(2002\)](#) coping framework into the field of tourism, we hope that related research can look at triggers, mechanisms, and dynamics of individual and communal coping efforts among residents.

Practically, this study has implications for policymakers and destination management. It suggests a policymaking approach that does not aim to convince residents whether cruise tourism is inherently good or bad for their destination. Instead, the focus should be on understanding how residents weigh the pros and cons of cruise tourism and how they navigate its positive externalities and negative impacts. By differentiating between unacceptable negative impacts and those that residents can cope with, decision-makers can engage in more nuanced discussions and collaborative approaches. This entails not only sustainable planning, regulations, and visitor management, but also gaining a deeper understanding of residents' coping strategies. Such an understanding provides a stronger foundation for decision-makers when determining whether and how they should develop cruise tourism in a destination, based on residents' perceptions and their capacity to cope with specific aspects of it. This highlights the importance of actively involving the local community in decisions related to cruise tourism management. In the specific case of Eidfjord, this policymaking approach should promote visitor management, implementation of new green technologies, a cap on the number and size of ships and robust regulation and monitoring, combined with promotion of alternative types of tourism as a starting point to develop a more diversified and sustainable tourism industry.

Although we believe that variations of this approach are applicable to most cruise destinations, it should be recognized that this study was carried out in a small destination with relatively high tourism and cruise tourism dependency. Consequently, the findings may not seamlessly translate to destinations with significantly different contexts. In such cases, alternative futures that do not involve cruise tourism, as suggested by [Renaud \(2020\)](#), may seem more viable to residents.

Finally, nuanced interactions between coping strategies, economic benefits, and negative externalities need to be investigated further in future research. This could involve further examining the distribution of economic advantages and exploring the potential stress and displacement pressures in more depth.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Amanda Hauso Sandven: Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Matias Thuen Jørgensen:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis,

Data curation, Conceptualization. **Philipp Wassler**: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

No financial or personal interest affected the work.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2024.103732>.

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Amanda Hauso Sandven's primary research interest is in tourism management with a focus on behavioural research and perspectives of development.

Matias Thuen Jørgensen is interested in the various tourism topics that combine elements of business studies, sociology and (human) geography.

Philipp Wassler's primary research interest is in tourism management with a particular focus on sociological perspectives.