

The reciprocity of soil, soul and society: the heart of developing regenerative tourism activities

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Abstract

Purpose – *The study aims to investigate how tourism actors' methodologies fuel the development of regenerative activities anchored in the reciprocity of nature and humans directed at bringing well-being for all living beings.*

Design/methodology/approach – *To shed light on micro-scale regenerative creation processes in tourism, the authors engage in co-creative case study research with the owners of a small value-driven tourism firm in Arctic Norway in their creation of activities that strengthen the human–nature relation.*

Findings – *The authors found that the values of the tourism firm's owners constitute the soul creating regenerative activities based on the reciprocity of soil and society. Thus, the authors posit that soil, soul and society are at the core of developing regenerative tourism activities. A key finding identified is that it is challenging for small eco-centric driven firms to co-create regenerative tourism activities within a capitalocentric system. For regenerative activities to become regenerative tourism practices, multiple actors across levels of operations must act as responsible gardeners.*

Originality/value – *The study extends current literature on regenerative tourism by providing in-depth insights into the methodology, illustrated through soil, soul and society, guiding one small tourism firm's development of regenerative tourism activities and what drives these processes. The study also contributes knowledge that broadens the use of well-being in tourism to better address current capitalocentric challenges limiting the development of regenerative practices.*

Keywords *Regenerative tourism, Reciprocity, Human nature, Well-being, Diverse economies, Co-creation*

Paper type *Research paper*

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Introduction

The limitations of the sustainability discourse have long been questioned for lacking moral and ethical anchoring to create well-being for humans and nature (Jamieson, 1998; Kothari, 2010; Imran *et al.*, 2014). To stimulate sustainable development, scholars hold that ethical principles must originate from moral discourses that enable justice and equity for humans and nature (Talan *et al.*, 2020). This requires a shift in values away from “capitalocentric” trends underpinning profit maximation (Gibson-Graham, 2008) to a more “deep ecology” philosophy that recognises the intrinsic value of all life (Kumar, 2012; Næss and Jickling, 2000). Valuing the well-being of all living beings has contributed to moving sustainability towards a more eco-centric and integrative approach in line with deep ecology philosophy (Eckersley, 1992; Imran *et al.*, 2014). This approach aims at going beyond the dominant “mechanistic” discourse directed at balancing economy, ecology and society (Gibbons *et al.*, 2020; Fullerton, 2015). This is the core of the regenerative sustainability discourse, which not only addresses the need to include moral and ethical issues but also adopts a holistic worldview (Gibbons *et al.*, 2020; Mang and Reed, 2012; Fullerton, 2015).

A regenerative view of the world sees nature and society as complex, diverse and polyphonic, and as inter-connected and inter-dependent. This interdependency, or reciprocity, must be acknowledged so it can continue to regenerate itself, and thereby create well-being for all living creatures (Gibbons *et al.*, 2018, Du Plessis, 2012). This is obvious in agriculture – the farmer must harvest at a place to be able to sow, and then the soil must be cultivated to be able to sow and harvest again. This perspective has an underlying rationale or methodology, which views a site or an activity not only as a collection of things or ingredients but rather as energy systems: they are webs of interconnected dynamics that are continually directed at structuring and restructuring (Haggard, 2002, p. 25; Mang and Reed, 2012). This eternal circle of creation and recreation is said to be guided by meta principles of wholeness, change and relationships (Gibbons *et al.*, 2020). This interconnected system is continually changing, and thus adaption is argued to contribute to the well-being of present and future generations (Talan *et al.*, 2020). This entails individual states of being, belonging and becoming (Cecil *et al.*, 2008, 2010). Therefore, there is a need to adapt our economic systems to this worldview of an interconnected web of life and thereby to a regenerative way of thinking and acting so that the economy can serve systemic health within its own unique context (Fullerton, 2015, p. 8). Consequently, it is important to recognise and support the diversity of economic practices that are in line with a regenerative worldview but different from the capitalocentric rationale, which places capitalism in the gravitation centre of meaning making (Gibson-Graham and Dombroski, 2020; Gibson-Graham, 1996). As regenerative practices are not capitalonormative practices, it is necessary to read for economic differences to understand their meaning to create a better tourism future (Gibson-Graham, 2020).

The regenerative paradigm thus rests on an ontology in which society and nature are inseparable and interconnected in a dynamic web of life. Inspired by Kumar (2012), we place this ontology in alignment with the trinity of the soil, soul and society. This trinity illustrates the reciprocity between nature and humans. All living beings are nature. Humans are not superior to other species but hold the power to take responsibility to restore and maintain harmony in the web of life (Mang and Reed, 2012; Gibbons *et al.*, 2020). This study argues that this is where the soul comes to matter. The soul can be understood as a “inner sustainability”, or “inner world”, formed by worldviews, beliefs, values, thoughts, emotions, desires, identities, spirituality, etc. (Ives *et al.*, 2020). This personified inner sustainability is necessary to grow the reciprocity of soil and society. Further, this ontology activates a will to care for all living beings and supports acts that allow justice and well-being to thrive for all. In accordance with a regenerative perspective, it is equally important to maintain the external and internal worlds. Thus, caring for the soul is just as important as caring for soil and society – it benefits the interconnected web of life.

The regenerative paradigm has travelled across different disciplines and scholars, as well as to tourism research (Cave and Dredge, 2020; Ateljevic, 2020; Sheldon, 2021). Yet, knowledge about tourism actors' unique contributions towards the creation of practices that further regenerative principles and well-being for all is still scarce. Inspired by Gibson-Graham (2014) and Geertz (1973), the aim of this study was to gain knowledge of underlying methodological principles guiding tourism actors' choice to invest in the development of regenerative activities by reading for difference and letting small facts speak to large issues through an exploration of a single tourism firm. Exploring what it does to strengthen bonds between humans and nature when developing tourism activities provides valuable knowledge about opportunities that exist today to shine light on how to build a more regenerative tourism future. Hence, the knowledge gained from our case study provides insights into how acknowledgement of a more diverse view on tourism economies can drive changes that strengthen the development of regenerative tourism practices while contributing to well-being for all. Our study also problematises current normative practices for preferencing measuring economic efficiency and the practices of commercialisation of concepts, particularly the risks linked to commercialisation of the concept regenerative tourism that comes with the current capitalocentric view on economies.

Theoretical approach

Rethinking the tourist economy. The tourism industry is argued to be unsustainable, with earnings leaking out of the destination community to large, dominant global tourism actors (Fletcher *et al.*, 2019;

Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.*, 2019). Currently, tourism represents the exploitation of natural and cultural resources for profit accumulation. The regenerative tourism approach moves beyond current capitalocentric discussions on sustainability by highlighting a bottom-up tourism approach in which there is a willingness amongst tourism operators, tourists, governance bodies and host communities to substitute wealth for well-th to grow a regenerative tourism future (Dwyer, 2018; Haase *et al.*, 2017).

Although current definitions of sustainable tourism are firmly entrenched in a paradigm that favours market-led competition and the needs of a powerful tourism industry (Bianchi and De Man, 2021; Saarinen, 2021), the regenerative approach argues for building tourism practices that can act as a force for transformational regeneration (Pollock, 2019). A transformation from the current “business as usual” becomes particularly difficult when a capitalocentric understanding of tourism is teamed with an unequal distribution of power in tourism systems, as “black holes” may develop to which everything gravitates. Today, large neo-Fordist industry actors have the power to dictate the state of affairs (Saarinen and Gill, 2018; Viken and Aarsaether, 2013), acting as black holes that support the creation of unjust tourism practices (Mosedale, 2012; Bianchi and De Man, 2021; Jamal and Higham, 2021). A more just and ethical tourism future depends on the more inclusive development that acknowledges material, relational, subjective and structural dimensions of well-being (Coulthard *et al.*, 2018; Gibson-Graham, 2008; Jamal and Higham, 2021) offered by the regenerative tourism approach (Cave and Dredge, 2020; Pollock, 2019). Further, potential power asymmetries contribute to legitimising the creation of tourism practices that create extensive benefits for large tourism actors and offer little to acknowledge more diverse and future-friendly tourism practices with a broader understanding of well-being (Hall *et al.*, 2015; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010, 2020). Hence, by maintaining a narrow understanding of well-being, one risks continuing the existing tourism path where the focus is on reduced negative impacts but with unknown future costs.

Regenerative tourism connects to a need for new post-capitalist economic alternatives that focus on diverse kinds of value creation (Cave and Dredge, 2020; Gibson-Graham, 2008). Further, this perspective offers an inclusive and holistic tourism approach that highlights the urgency of long-term commitment to a type of tourism that connects to the holistic qualities of well-being (Sheldon, 2021; Coulthard *et al.*, 2018), which this study illustrates by the concepts of soil, soul and society. The perspective on well-being found in the regenerative tourism approach focuses on the reciprocal relationship between nature and humans, pointing at bottom-up, micro-scale initiatives and the idea of giving back to local communities and nature. For instance, Pollock (2019) posited that global tourism today undermines social and ecological inheritances and argued that it is crucial for the planet’s health to focus on regenerative growth.

Similarly, Gibson-Graham (2008) argued for economies centred on the well-being of people and the planet. Gibson-Graham further suggested that research adopting a performative view on economies can help visualise the existing economic diversities and hence make them objects of policy and politics. Along these lines, Pollock (2019) proposed that we all must act like “responsible gardeners”, committed to nature and seeking to grow healthy, adaptable and socially embedded tourism systems. Visualising and acknowledging regenerative practices as types of economic practices that contribute to growing healthy and adaptable tourism systems can further co-creation of new paths that contribute to reciprocity and therefore more just relationships between humans and nature (Duxbury *et al.*, 2020; Cave and Dredge, 2020; Ateljevic, 2020). This requires a recognition of a variety of tourism entrepreneurs’ motivations and reasons for doing tourism as equal to the essentialist conceptions so often taken for granted as driving tourism today. Visualising and acknowledging the diversity of regenerative practices that already exist can help to build the necessary global awareness needed to nudge a change, as the practices of small-scale tourism entrepreneurs have been found to improve the communities in which tourism takes place (Carlsen *et al.*, 2008; Ateljevic and Doorne, 2000, 2003; Sheldon *et al.*, 2017).

Co-creating well-being for all. In tourism, discussions focused on co-creation and well-being centre around the creation of positive feeling experiences by tourism providers, tourists and residents (Dekhili and Hallem, 2020; Chen *et al.*, 2020). However, the literature posits that

subjective feelings of, for example, happiness, or satisfaction lack substance in that such feelings do not necessarily contribute to utilitarian, or more collective feelings of well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Ryff and Singer, 2008; Smit and Diekman, 2017). The relevance of a utilitarian perspective on well-being for regenerative tourism links its advocating mutual benefits for the greatest number of people. In tourism, this would mean developing destinations that create the greatest number of benefits for the greatest number of people within the limits of the Earth's resources (Smith and Diekmann, 2017). However, this does not necessarily include the well-being of nature in line with the eco-centric approach.

Research argues that the concept of well-being is key to nudging a change in existing tourism practices when including environmental issues along with the dimensions of tourism host communities (Bichler, 2021; Hall, 2013). Well-being can be understood through being, belonging and becoming, where being reflects who the individual is, belonging entails individuals' relations with environments and becoming involves what individuals do to achieve their goals and aspirations (Wang *et al.*, 2006, p. 53). From a regenerative tourism perspective, we argue that this includes having an eco-centric and just way of thinking and acting to create well-being for all.

Well-being for all as a node for value co-creation can broaden current understandings of value creation in tourism from monolithic and fixed to a more diverse form, which can shift views of what counts as valuable world-making practices (Gibson-Graham, 2008; Chassagne and Everingham, 2019; Gibson-Graham and Dombroski, 2020). Further, viewing value creation in tourism through a diverse economies lens illustrates the possibilities of co-creating well-being for all living beings by highlighting ethical and just tourism practices (Cave and Dredge, 2020; Graham and Roelvink, 2010). Following these lines of argument, our study's proposition of the importance of acknowledging the reciprocity of soil, soul and society to co-create well-being for all connects to the nature of our interactions with and responsibilities for all life (Diprose, 2020). Ultimately, this points to human values and how they shape value systems that direct focus on what humans' value as part of their inner sustainability or inner world (Ives *et al.*, 2020).

The underlying premise in value co-creation from a regenerative perspective is precisely this: to involve the interests of humans and non-humans in collaborative processes to create benefits that improve their situation. Such co-creating processes must be guided by ethical principles to encourage justice (Jamal and Higham, 2021). In line with the literature on value co-creation in tourism, this study refers to co-creation as a process that cuts across and between multiple actors, including nature and animals (Bertella *et al.*, 2019). These thoughts resonate with the diverse economies literature that views co-creation as a relational, contextual and connected bottom-up activity with the potential to shift the focus from tourism practices coloured by a narrow understanding of well-being to practices that reflect the ethical responsibilities embedded in the reciprocity of soil, soul and societies (Gibson-Graham, 1996).

Methods

This study focuses on the practices of tourism entrepreneurs in the Arctic. The exploration is based on a detailed account of an entrepreneurs' business in Alta, North Norway. Inspired by Gibson-Graham (2014) and Geertz (1973), our research focuses on one tourism firm to let small facts speak to large issues (Geertz, 1973; Biehl and Locke, 2017). Through deep descriptions, our study aims to shed light on what underpins practices that foreground ways of working that can serve to illustrate reciprocal relationships between soil, soul and society (Dyer and Wilkins, 1991; Ren *et al.*, 2017). Such insights present possibilities with the potential to produce reverberations that can contribute to acknowledging regenerative ways of doing tourism and furthering well-being for all living beings (Gibson-Graham, 2014).

The co-creative approach in this study views researchers and the industry as partners who interact to co-create situated and actionable knowledge (Bradbury, 2015; Pain, 2004; Roelvink, 2020). This approach values contextual and situated expertise and perspectives from actors involved in the research process and views such insights as necessary to critically reflect on existing tourism

practices. Seeking out existing specificities that can enable us to learn from small-scale research can be of great value to research; however, it requires an open mind and careful attention to emerging matters of concern (Ren *et al.*, 2017; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Matters of concern connect to our daily lives and understandings of transformations as a result of small-scale changes (Roelvink, 2020; Vannini, 2014). The co-creative research approach in our study thus relates to the quality of the processes and relations developed through our research activities as well as the results of the study (Ren *et al.*, 2020).

Further, in using a co-creative approach, one of the owners of the tourism firm was invited to be a co-author early in the research process. The collaboration with this owner was prolonged through her appointment as an industry mentor for the researchers' university department. The aim of an industry mentor is to link scholars and practitioners closer together for the benefit of a wider society (Mathisen and Jørgensen, 2021).

Specifically, the study explored the firms' initial stage in developing a new activity (The Harvesting Project) in which the goal was to link humans and nature to help grow knowledge about the reciprocity of this relation to tourist and local visitors. This project started prior to the research in this study; thus, the researchers had no role in initiating the new tourism activity, and it was solely the work of the owners of the two firms. The knowledge that emerged from the co-creation process served as propositions to be reflected on and discussed by the researchers and one of the firm's owners. The partners had four face-to-face meetings of one to two hours in duration, where we discussed the history/origins, progress and directions of the new tourism activity. Further, these meetings enabled us to gain insight in the owners' approach to developing tourism activities. We also worked together with the owners to finalise the paper to ensure that the study's story is one of shared ownership. During the discussions between the researchers and one of the owners, theoretical and practical approaches were discussed and explored. It became apparent that the owner was unaware of the theoretical concept of regenerative development but applied its practical approaches in their daily work. The owner shared knowledge of The Harvesting Project's idea and development process, in addition to providing the researchers with documents and methods relevant for developing the new activity. Further, the researchers shared their knowledge to provide feedback concerning the development of the new activity. During the conversations, the owner was invited to reflect on what underpins their way of doing tourism.

The information from the conversations was partly recorded and documented through field notes. The research process was transparent, as the owners took an active role in commenting on all parts of the paper, but particularly on the information concerning the case description, analysis and discussion sections. The co-creative approach was important in creating a common understanding of possible constituents of regenerative practices in our partners' tourism business.

A tourism firms' development of regenerative activities

About the tourism firm. The tourist firm, Trasti & Trine (TT), was founded in 2011, and is a small tourism firm in North Norway. In 2021, the firm's operating revenue was approximately 10 million Norwegian crowns (approximately 1.2 million US dollars), with 57 employees (most of whom were part-time). The firm is situated in a rural Arctic area, Alta, a long way for both national and international tourists to travel, and they have visitors (individuals and groups) during the whole year participating in a variety of nature-based activities. Most tourists travel by plane or cruise ship. The firm also has local visitors. TT is focused on creating well-being for both nature and humans, including well-being for the firm's owners and employees' by offering regenerative activities.

The place where the firm is located is essential. The heart of the place is an enclosed courtyard, which guests must cross when entering the main building, including a restaurant and wine cellar. Framing the courtyard are lodging facilities (built from local wood), a greenhouse, the owners' private home and a dog yard. In summertime, TT arranges outside cafés in the courtyard, selling homemade baked goods made in their bakery, in addition to other local food products. These cafés are popular amongst locals and visitors. They create social arenas and meeting places for

people from every layer of society. The firm thus takes a social responsibility to create well-being in socialising guests, as well as engaging youth in work training in agreement with the local employment office.

The owners' soul. The name of the firm is the name of the two owners. The main activities that TT offers are tied to their values, interests and passions, which connect to the concept of soul (Ives *et al.*, 2020; Kumar, 2012). The owners' soul is central in everything they do; they are partners in business as well as in life, and together they are the firm's creative force. They are devoted to their business and work to adapt the business for the next generation to continue regenerative development, thus contributing to the well-being of future generations (Talan *et al.*, 2020).

One of the owners, Trasti, is a renowned chef who has been awarded for his cooking and has worked at well-reputed restaurants. Thus, local food fused with international cuisine with creative twists is a central part of the business. TT offers activities such as food courses, where the chef involves guests in harvesting berries, mushrooms and herbs and preparing and making a variety of dishes. The aim of this connective practice is to build and/or strengthen the tourists' bond with nature and the chef's bond with the visitors. The food is served in the main building, the outdoor theatre, or outside.

Trine, the other owner, was previously a professional musher in dog sledding and has competed in many well-known races, including the famous Iditarod in Alaska, the longest dog sledding race in the world. One of her kids followed in her footsteps. Thus, polar dogs (Alaskan husky) are an essential part of the firm's concept. The kennel is popular amongst visitors, and during the summer season, the kennel houses puppies that guests can cuddle. This constitutes well-being for the puppies (and the owners) as they are being socialised and is a popular activity for guests, which may strengthen animal-human reciprocity. The dogs also socialise with tourists through dog sledding activities during the winter season, where visitors can learn to drive their own sled. The dogs are also used in races and are, as such, valuable for both the firm and the family.

From the start, the owners have aimed at attracting guests who value the well-being of nature. The activities that they create are in line with a "leave no trace" philosophy, in accordance with eco-centric values (Næss and Jickling, 2000). Yet, one important group of guests, in terms of economic liquidity, is winter cruise tourists. This is a type of tourism that challenges the owners' eco-centric values, as it is questionable whether it contributes to well-being for all or instead limits the reciprocity of soil and society (Weaver, 2005; Rhama, 2019). Therefore, TT has been working strategically to develop activities in other markets to become less dependent on mass tourism. However, it makes visible one major challenge of being a tourism entrepreneur in a rural capitalocentric economy: the local market is small; thus, entrepreneurs often depend on long-distance travellers (Mathisen and Søreng, *in press*). This shows that within a global capitalist frame, the growth of regenerative tourism activities in rural areas may be difficult to achieve.

Development of activities connecting soil and society. Learning from nature and thus contributing to guest learning is a significant driver in all TT's activities. Through activities anchored in nature, the owners aim to pass on their knowledge and passion for nature to their guests. One of the owners described this as a type of weaving process, or a meeting of values, which is essential to co-creating meaningful experiences. The importance of knowledge sharing is also expressed through a recent idea, The Harvesting Project, whose aim is to facilitate guests' sharing of the knowledge they hold. A pilot of the Harvesting Project was realised in spring/autumn 2021. The pilot was funded by a local bank branch that announced the funding of activities contributing to a sustainable and green transformation in the tourism industry, ensuring that potential value creation remained at the destination or in the local region. Embedded in this bank strategy is social responsibility, and the bank publishes funding opportunities for local development projects in line with TT's plans about the Harvesting Project. The project resonates with concepts of "slow living" (Honoré, 2009) and "slow travel" (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar *et al.*, 2012; Sørensen and Bærenholdt,

2020), letting guests have room to reflect on and experience the dwelling of humans and nature for the well-being of both.

The Harvesting Project has evolved from other projects that TT has realised and is thus a result of continuous co-creating processes. Their focus on local food led to a need to grow (more of) their own vegetables and herbs, which resulted in the building of a greenhouse. This greenhouse is built from wood from the local forest, and plants are grown in their own composted soil (bokashi). The greenhouse created an opening for the Harvesting Project, which aims to invite guests to partake in the planting and harvesting of the growths. The greenhouse, and the nature around it, is the heart of the project, creating an arena for participants (guests and hosts) to share knowledge on growth through activities of planting and harvesting. The activity is scheduled for spring and autumn, in the firm's least busy season, where guests partake in planting and harvesting the seasons' growth, followed by activities of preparing for meals by using the growth. This is meant to (re)connect participants to nature through direct experience with plants and soil and therein creating psychological well-being (Willis, 2015) by establishing physical, emotional and spiritual connections with nature (Masov, 2019), and, thus, reinforcing participants' respect and humility for nature. Hence, the project fits well with the concept of regenerative business, geared towards stimulating the vitality of the eco-system towards value creation for humans and nature (Hofstra, 2016; Amoamo *et al.*, 2018). In TT's entrepreneurship, each project developed and landed, giving birth, through incremental and continuous innovation and renewal, to new activities strengthening the interconnection between soil and society ("spiderweb approach", according to owners' reflections of what they do). From the idea and planning phases, their activities are consciously and thoughtfully regenerative. The values underpinning the regenerative approach form the core of the business, carrying forward by the owners' values, interests and passions. This regenerative way of thinking and acting is driven by the owners' soul. Without this soul, the firm would not exist.

Discussion

Our case study shows that tourism is indeed more than an economic activity (Elliot, 2020), and it is more than *one* economy; the firm's way of thinking and acting illustrates the learning possibilities embedded in small tourism's methodology. Supported by the ontology of economic differences, this provides lenses for perceiving and approving the opportunities offered by a more eco-centric and integrative approach in tourism (Fullerton, 2015, Gibson-Graham, 2008).

When reading for economic difference in our case study (Gibson-Graham, 2020), we identified the risk of the public sector overlooking these bottom-up initiatives. The public sector works purposefully to put sustainable principles into practice, (re-)actualised through UN's sustainable goals and recent climate report (IPCC, 2021). Yet, this discourse on sustainability could be regarded as mechanistic and as such non-regenerative, as it is directed at balancing the three pillars of economy, ecology and society (Fullerton, 2015; Gibbons *et al.*, 2020). However, the discourse is still capitalocentric (Saarinen, 2021, Bianchi and De Man, 2021). Governing bodies initiate the implementation of sustainability in the tourism sector based on this rationality through top-down incentive schemes that initiate sustainability certifications, which are important measurements for evaluating tourism firms and on which they must report (Haaland and Aas, 2010; Gkoumas, 2019; Hall, 2015). This is not a challenge for firms such as the one in our study, which had completed several sustainability certifications. However, the question remains whether sustainability certifications promote well-being for all in accordance with an eco-centric perspective that recognises the intrinsic value of all life (Sheldon, 2021). Our study proposes that to promote well-being for all, sustainability cannot be divided into pillars of growth, as nature and society are interconnected in dynamic webs of life (Haggard, 2002; Mang and Reed, 2012). This, we propose, is the reciprocity of soil, soul and society (Kumar, 2012).

Our study shows that the reciprocity in this trinity connects to the firm's development of (regenerative) tourism activities. The reciprocity of soil and society is widely acknowledged in research as a support for the well-being of nature and society (Blum, 2006; Ateljevic, 2020;

Friedrichsen *et al.*, 2021). However, our study shows that the soul of firm's owners fuels their actions; hence, it is important to recognise this "inner sustainability" or "inner world" that is formed by their values (Ives *et al.*, 2020). The soul acts as a link between soil and society, the trinity that constitutes humans' willingness to use their power in a more just way. This reciprocity must be acknowledged by governing bodies so it can continue to regenerate itself, and thereby create well-being for all living creatures (Gibbons *et al.*, 2018, Du Plessis, 2012). This is in line with the literature's argument that well-being entails states of being, belonging and becoming (Cecil *et al.*, 2008, 2010). Well-being for all, as portrayed in our study, moves beyond these states, as it includes an eco-centric ontology.

We suggest that acknowledging, caring for and acting according to a regenerative perspective are essential to nudging and preconditioning small-scale tourism practices that contribute to building well-being for all (Gibson-Graham, 2008; Cave and Dredge, 2020; Sheldon, 2021). This means, we argue, letting small facts speak to larger issues (Gibson-Graham, 2014; Geertz, 1973). Thus, acknowledging the co-existence of diverse forms of small-scale regenerative activities can contribute to the flourishing of regenerative tourism practices. An ubiquity of regenerative small-scale tourist activities can enforce the visibility of regenerative practices, and hence depower the generic logic of growth (Gibson-Graham, 1996), thus reducing the influence of large neo-Fordist tourism actors (Saarinen and Gill, 2018; Viken and Aarsaether, 2013). This requires co-creations amongst multiple responsible gardeners and across different levels of systems (Pollock, 2019). Well-being for all becomes the moral and ethical anchor, and this ontology of deep ecology becomes the node in a network of activities that centres on the co-creation of value (Næss and Jickling, 2000; Kumar, 2012).

This means that generative development in tourism is a collective endeavour, underpinned by good relations and a shared understanding of the values that influence the well-being of all. Through such relations, proposal and promises made are connected to worldviews and expectations of respective stakeholders, for example, the tourism actors themselves, tourists, financial institutions and governing bodies. Moreover, this illustrates how difficult it is to act within a regenerative frame when "old" practices are tied to a narrow understanding of well-being and sustainability, for example, well-being for the tourist, the residents or the firm, measured by the pillars of economy, environment and society (Hartwell *et al.*, 2018; Dekhili and Hallem, 2020; Chen *et al.*, 2020).

Closing remarks

Our study contributes knowledge about what underpins the development of regenerative activities, shedding light on the possibilities and challenges when viewing such developments within a capitalocentric framework where soil, soul and society are often viewed as separate entities, each with a potential for increased earnings.

A risk of such a fragmented view is commercialisation of the concept of regenerative tourism to make it into a unique and economically measurable selling point, as identified in the current literature on sustainability in tourism (Gkoumas, 2019; Hall, 2015; Haaland and Aas, 2010). One concrete example within this literature is sustainability certifications, which are used as positioning tools to increase attraction value and profit. Our study argues that a continued focus on economic development contributes to disintegrating the concepts of moral and ethical anchoring, resulting in the continuation of the measurement of performance coupled to the financial bottom line. This constitutes a concern for both researchers and practitioners, as accommodation of regenerative tourism within the capitalocentric economy may result in commercialisation of the concept, which can crumble its foundations and use for the creation of a regenerative tourism future. Thus, researchers must also act as responsible gardeners.

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