

Via

Tourism Review

21 | 2022 :

Tourisme et biopolitique

The biopolitics of Arctic tourism development and sustainability

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<https://doi.org/10.4000/viatourism.8084>

Translation(s):

La biopolitique du développement et de la durabilité du tourisme arctique [fr]

La biopolítica del desarrollo turístico del Ártico y la sostenibilidad [es]

Abstract

In recent years, the concept of Arctification has been used to describe how spatial simplifications and strategic essentialisation of Northern Europe have been used for branding in tourism. This article deconstructs the Arctification phenomenon into three main dimensions, (I) exogenous tourism development, (II) territorialisation, and (III) consumptive ethics of planetary care. The article claims, from a biopolitical perspective, that arctified visions of tourism and sustainable tourism in the Arctic can be understood as the production of heterotopic spaces. By engaging with Foucault's concept of heterotopia as spaces of exception based on deviation (alterity) and compensation (sustainability), the article further claims that it provides a valuable framework for analysing contemporary challenges and paradoxes of sustainability and tourism growth strategies in the Arctic. The article illustrates its main arguments by drawing examples of Arctification from Finnish Lapland.

Index terms

Keywords : Arctic tourism, Arctification, biopolitics, consumptive ethics, sustainable tourism, heterotopia, globalisation, regionalisation

Editor's notes

Peer-reviewed article

**Full text**

I. The biopolitics of touristic Arctic and sustainable tourism

Carrying our communicating, disciplined selves out to a wilderness escape, we find functions and roles, even there. We find assignments too; we are there to relax, to recuperate, to report back that nature still exists, that it still teaches lessons.

- William Chaloupka and R. McGregor Cawley, 1993, p. 15

- 1 The interest in Arctic areas and Northern Europe has grown strongly in recent decades (Saarinen and Varnajot, 2019). Yet, at the same time, Arctic areas and nature are often used as symbols of the negative impacts of global climate change. Therefore, one of the critical concerns in contemporary tourism is staying societally acceptable, regardless of its contribution to global and local environmental change. As such, Arctic tourism epitomises the paradoxes and challenges of sustainability, consumerism, and modernity. Hence, this article examines how Arctic tourism development and image production are adjusted and sustained in relation to global environmental and cultural change.
- 2 Eriksen (2021) describes contemporary life as overheated global modernity based on its profound homogenisation of cultural and biological life. Similarly, Ritzer and Ryan (2002, p. 51) coined the phrase “*globalisation of nothing*” to describe the diffusion of “*empty forms that are centrally conceived and controlled and relatively devoid of distinctive content*”. In tourism, Löfgren analysed the history of Western vacationing as an evolution of global standardisation and the emergence of transnational rituals that create strikingly similar destinations, experiences, and products across the world (1999).
- 3 This article analyses the diffusion of such globalised and homogenised cultural forms in Arctic tourism in the context of Finnish Lapland. First, it discusses homogenisation and touristic territorialisation processes through the concept of Arctification. This concept is understood as a production of new images of Northern Europe as the Arctic (Müller and Viken, 2017), simplifying regional images and meanings for touristic purposes. Here, Arctification is placed in relation to Eriksen’s (2021) thesis to address the effects of the re-enactment of empty cultural forms in tourism. Cultural forms, which Ritzer and Ryan (2002) attached to the idea of “nothingness”, present products and tastes that are easily transnationally scalable and require limited local or contextual input. In the article, the spread of nothingness is understood as a push for global standardisation of destinations and products in part of “exogenous tourism development” (Andriotis, 2002, pp. 76-77) and destination management (Nogués-Pedregal *et al.*, 2017): tourism development based on external valorisation and global restructuring, particularisation and production of touristic resources and places according to the aesthetics, desires of touristic demand and mobile capital.
- 4 Secondly, the article discusses Arctic tourism destinations as heterotopias of deviation and compensation (Foucault, 1986), as societal production of exceptional places. Heterotopic destinations reflect not only the destination’s ability to provide alterity to repetitious everyday life but also the ways they are promoted as exceptional places to the chronic environmental unsustainabilities of modern life. One of the central claims of this section is that Arctification processes can be seen as demand adaptation strategies where domestic, regional, and place-bounded marketing strategies are substituted for more global and exogenous forms (Hultman and Hall, 2012). Thus, Arctification captures how destinations are enacted as heterotopic spaces for deviation (touristic alterity) and compensation (sustainability).
- 5 Thirdly, the article responds to a call for biopolitical perspectives on tourism-heavy regions (Lapointe and Coulter, 2020; Cheer *et al.*, 2021) to understand how tourism creates spaces of exception in different contexts (e.g., Minca, 2009; Ong and Jin, 2017; Wall-Reinius *et al.*, 2019; Saarinen and Wall-Reinius, 2021). The paper’s central claim is that by thinking of tourism destinations as biopolitically constituted sites, discourses,



and spaces and as counter-sites of deviation and compensation, their analysis of tourism is better grounded within the context of on-going environmental change. The article further argues that the relational (Ek and Hultman, 2008) and biopolitical perspectives (Lapointe and Coulter, 2020) are useful to comprehend inherent territorialisation effects (Saarinen, 2017) as well as the ordering of space, place, people, and nature in contemporary tourism and its search for sustainability. Arctification is presented here as an example of the socio-political process of producing and portraying nature and regions for touristic purposes. To exemplify how biopolitics is present in tourism development and sustainable tourism, the article draws from the Finnish Lapland, notably from the planned Republic of Santa Claus destination. The empirical examples demonstrate how Arctification, sustainability, and global standardisation may be understood as attempts of total control of the destination and the touristic experience.

- 6 The article claims that the biopolitical aspects of Arctic tourism development and the sustainable tourism nexus are not just beneficiaries of “last chances,” but that sustainability visions are the very product of tourism promotion. In the heart of using sustainability for promotional purposes lie trust in consumerism as the de facto producer of common ecological will that emphasises tourist ability for responsible choices, sustainable leisure, and sustainable self. Therefore, tourism as the possibility to deviate and escape from the everyday is enabled increasingly by a logic of environmental compensation and care manifested in heterotopic destination development and marketing of the Arctic.

II. The making of Arctic in tourism

- 7 The Arctic has a deceptive concreteness at first glance. However, its increasing political, environmental and touristic significance is changing (Saarinen and Varnajot, 2019), making its representation flexible and multiple (Dodds and Woodward, 2021). Thus, the Arctic is actively arctified by tourism (Müller and Viken, 2017; Varnajot and Saarinen, 2021).
- 8 Arctification can be defined as “*a social process creating new geographical images of the North of Europe as part of the Arctic*” (Müller and Viken, 2017, p. 288). Here the key is to re-brand destinations, products, and places as part of the Arctic, to socially construct the Arctic through symbolic and material processes that resonate with given landscapes (Paasi, 2010), and to particularise the re-invented Arctic as a special touristic place by attaching it “*to special sites and relations among sites*” (Chaloupka and McGregor, 1993, p. 7). Hence, the Arctic is re-thematised as a place according to touristic demand that aims to distinguish destinations regionally.
- 9 Arctification can be understood as an example of Arctic tourism’s globalization. Arctification represents Arctic areas’ spatial commercialisation to global markets, along the lines of diffusion of global culture, especially associated with destination development (e.g., ski resorts, theme parks, and product development). In other contexts, concepts such as “McDonaldization” (Ritzer, 2013), “Coca-colonization” (McKay, 2008), and “Disneyfication” (Bryman, 1999) capture the general spread of global anglophone commercial culture. To exemplify global cultural diffusion and Arctification in Nordic tourism, recent studies (Saarinen and Varnajot, 2019; Marjavaara *et al.*, 2022) clearly show the allure of the “Arctic” in tourism branding as well as its “leakage” to more southern tourism destinations, by showing how the use the word “Arctic” has grown in company names and in marketing. Moreover, in the Finnish language and vernacular, northern Finland is referenced as Lappi (Lapland) or just the North, seldomly as the Arctic. The Arctic is often mentally located north of Finland for the Finns. Finally, the omnipresence of the Santa industry in Finnish Lapland can be seen as another example of commercial globalisation in the region (Herva *et al.*, 2020).



- 10 Secondly, regionalising destinations and regional branding have been long present in tourism. Some examples include “Patagoniazation” (Mendoza *et al.*, 2017) and “Alpinisation” (Tissot, 2011), that, on the one hand, describe how particular regional identities have been constructed and mobilised in tourism. On the other hand, there is a description of how regional identities circulate in global markets and have been copied and reproduced in other areas (e.g., the Alpine style). These examples show the appeal and success of promoting regional identities and the search for a winning formula in place-branding to optimise available landscapes economically. Paradoxically, this also acts as a homogenising factor that increases similarities and puts regions in more dire and direct competition (Eisenschitz, 2010).
- 11 Finally, Arctification, as the production of regional territorial imaginary (Mendoza *et al.*, 2017), describes how regional identities are produced through spatial differentiation, representations and bordering, and appealing to the global interpretations of place. Tourism regions' relational and socially constructed nature is based on place promotion and marketing that spatialise meanings, histories, and representations to provide consumable natures and destinations (Saarinen, 2004a). Therefore, they also express power relations. Thus, Arctification presents a spatial simplification strategy for regional branding for touristic consumption that is directed to global markets and visitors. Hence, it exemplifies what Nogués-Pedregal *et al.* (2017) describe as exogenous tourism development, tourism development through “empty shells” to be filled with foreign tourist masses. Here, tourism development primarily aims to please global touristic demand and to create products that satisfy the search and desire for variance and engagement with alterity (MacCannell, 2011; Lapointe, 2021). The article claims that one of the main components of this regional branding and simplification is increasingly built around moral reframing (MacCannell, 2012). As later presented, this happens through ethics of planetary care and ideas around the fragility of Arctic nature, namely sustainability and the promise of sustainable consumption.

A. Globalising the Arctic

- 12 To discuss the homogenising effects of tourism growth and globalisation of the leisure industry in the Arctic, this article draws from the work of Ritzer and his thesis on “globalization of nothing” (Ritzer, 2003, 2007). For Ritzer, some aspects of globalisation present diffusion of nothing, “...empty forms that are centrally conceived and controlled and relatively devoid of distinctive content” (Ritzer and Ryan, 2002, p. 51). These empty forms are contrasted with things and phenomena that have roots, traditions and are sticky and hard to replace; in other words, they are “something”. What makes a thing easily globalised, is the lack of distinctive content; its ability to be scaled, translated, and enacted, regardless of the context in general. The globalisation of nothingness, according to Ritzer, is further described based on the promotion of cultural forms, consumption, and symbols built on a lack of distinctive substance (e.g., online bookshop), generic entities (e.g., fast food chains), lack of local ties (e.g., global fast-food chains that originated from specific places), temporal omnipresence (e.g., Disney World that is both timeless and presents all periods), and dehumanisation of social relations (e.g., algorithmic, automated interactions). Thus, globalisation is seen in the form of cultural flattening that overtakes local genuity and authenticity, a kind of one-way local-global relation leading to forced adoption of commercialised values (Meethan, 2003).
- 13 Ritzer’s rough categorisation is a useful starting point for analysing the impacts and adaptations of Arctification. The central claim of this approach is that due to the nature of the tourism industry and its common need to adjust according to the greatest demand, globalisation is understood as a process of homogenisation and standardisation of destinations. For example, the diffusion of the Alpine village in ski resorts across the world and “safaris” (e.g., whales, huskies, snowmobiles) represent the cloning of a language of the global tourism sector and visitor expectations instead of



appreciation of localities and their origins. Such a process can be understood not as an interpretation of the global and the local as the source of uniqueness, but as “globalization” (Ritzer and Ryan, 2002, p. 56) or adaption of “global cultural grammar” (Eriksen, 2016), with an ambition to diffuse commodified forms of nothingness to various geographic areas. The outcome would be a flat world where everything is rendered based on exchangeability and economic comparability (Eriksen, 2021).

B. Destination-making in the Homogenocene

- 14 Eriksen (2016, 2021) identifies homogenisation as the key element of overheated and accelerated modernisation, producing detrimental ecological and cultural impacts. Drawing from the convergence of biological life and ecosystems due to invasive species, viruses, and the introduction of new crops since the start of the Columbian “exchange” in 1492 (Mann, 2011), Eriksen adds culture to the equation. For Eriksen, what is at stake is the cultural (e.g., languages, traditional livelihoods, ethnicities) and ecological diversity (e.g., species, biodiversity) of the planet, an era of the homogenocene.
- 15 Tourism is one of the symbolic illustrations of overheated modernity through hypermobility, exemplified by rapidly growing volume, expansion of consumer niches, and environmental and cultural impacts. Some of the changes can be seen as tourism dependency, in the form of places and people existing for tourism, locals becoming inhabitants of “outdoor museums that never close” (Eriksen, 2016, p. 66). Here, the risk to local stems from the loss of autonomy due to tourism dependency, compromised existence tied to hosting and serving in the name of survival and vitality (Nogués-Pedregal *et al.*, 2017), leading to the birth of “the Real Ireland Limited” phenomenon (MacCannell, 2011, p. 121): the commodification of the last authentic corners of the world.
- 16 To contextualise the homogenising effects of overheating and globalisation, we can think of the rapid diffusion of greentrified mega-destinations such as theme parks and tourism complexes made from “scratch” (e.g., Dubai) or the latest iterations of sustainable future in the form of “cognitive” and floating cities (e.g., Neom city of Saudi-Arabia, the Oceanix city of South Korea). The common denominator of these mega-projects is twofold: firstly, they are built as post-industrial destinations based on the production of knowledge, leisure, and other immaterial ideals. Secondly, they are justified and marketed through specific ethics of planetary care, through economies that “do no harm” (e.g., sustainability, smart, circular). Moreover, these mega-projects are not only interesting futuristic curiosities but provide models and examples for other destinations. They provide blueprints for “sustainable” destinations, models to be mimicked and cloned (Eisenschitz, 2010) based on strategic re-essentialisation of regions, exogenous economic orientation, and specific planetary ethics. Thus, Arctification indicates the strategic essentialisation of a region through spatial simplifications and selected accentuation of elements that fit tourism demand. To understand Arctification as a spatial strategy, the article discusses it briefly as worldmaking, ordering, and territorialisation, before linking Arctic destination development to the notion of Foucault’s heterotopia (1986).

C. Arctified worlds, territories, and heterotopic destinations

- 17 Instead of understanding Arctification as a projection of global, capitalistic, and “external” forces or as a kind of overtaking of local cultures and values, it can also be understood as worldmaking (Hollinshead, 2009a, 2009b). Worldmaking conceptualises the creative and imaginative processes and promotional activities that tourism actors engage with to privilege certain representations over others (Hollinshead, 2009b, p. 281).



18 According to Hollinshead, worldmaking in tourism narrates “*the making/demaking/remaking of peoples, places, and pasts*” (2009a, p. 139) without the storyline of inevitable globalisation (e.g., compared to McDonaldisation and Americanization) and taken-for-granted passiveness of local actors. Additionally, touristic spaces are not voids but entail their histories (Saarinen, 2004a). Thus, the concept of worldmaking captures the role of the local orientation in including and excluding representations and in the interplay of global values, markets, and cultures, without the logic of forced globalisation. Still, the diffusion of global and capitalistic forms of tourism development rationalities and their lure for the locals is evident due to their promise of faster accumulation and economic development.

19 Tourism can also be understood as societal ordering. Here, tourism is not detached as *sui generis* but seen as one of the catalysts of modern society (Franklin, 2004; Ek, 2016). In other words, tourism is not taken as a societal supplement or outcome but as the very producer of modernity through territorialisation practices. Franklin’s topological ontology (2004) helps in thinking about the unclarity of simultaneous spatialities of modern tourism’s global-local relations and the production of cosmopolitan spaces; places that are difficult to identify purely as local, national, regional, international, or global (e.g., cruise ships, theme parks, all-inclusive resorts, airports), precisely because of touristic ordering and territorialisation.

20 To Baudrillard (1994), space becomes territory by making it visible and bounding it. Similarly, for Elden (2013), territory is a political technology of the state apparatus based on spatial control, sovereignty, and stability of place that enables its containment and management. However, such a container model of the territory is challenged by tourism. Hence, territories assumed fixity and contained nature are challenged by tourism, the business of mobility (Lapointe, 2021), and its ability to make and break places. To take a step further, tourism is a biopolitical force of de- and re-territorialisation that manifests “*materially/physically, as embodied and/or lived practice and includes notions and ideas about travel, the tourist subject, and tourist things in general*” (Tefahuney and Schough, 2016, p. 24). Thus, territories can be defined as “*the translation of experience (place) through symbolic action within a bounded space*” (Lapointe, 2021, p. 107). Extending the idea of territory beyond state and fixity to specific areas is more beneficial when analysing tourism development and its interaction with a locality, homogenisation, and globalisation.

21 Tourism provides an ideal setting to analyse worldmaking, territorialisation, and homogenisation. Going back to Eisenschitz’s (2010) point on the risks related to the search for the winning formula and the cloning in branding, global competition is pushing tourism actors to search for distinctive features of their own—to become visible—mainly along with the same patterns. Thus, touristic placemaking is territorialisation, organising, and bordering space to facilitate its socio-spatial organisation, marketing, and control (Saarinen, 2017). In tourism, marketing produces the imagined and pre-scripted territory, always representing “*something by someone to somebody*” (Saarinen, 2004b, p. 442). Hence, touristic territorialisation is an expansive process of claiming priority in the name of the service economy, post-industrialism, and the perceived immateriality of sustainable tourism.

22 Tourism enclaves provide a good example of touristic territorialisation. Saarinen describes (2017) tourism enclaves presenting neoliberal governance that emphasise the role of markets instead of the state. According to Saarinen, tourism enclaves (e.g., ski resorts, all-inclusive hotels) are planned exclusive spaces that aim to keep touristic consumption within the enclave’s borders, making them also spatial exceptions within localities and among locals. Consequently, destinations and bordered touristic places may present “spaces of exception” (Simpson, 2016) based on systems of exclusion and inclusion and territorial recoding (Lapointe, 2021).



D. Tourism destinations as heterotopias

23 The impact of globalisation and homogenisation has multiple conceptions regarding the place. Drawing from the work of Augé (1995), for Ritzer (2002), the non-place presents cultural decline due to commercialisation (e.g., McDonaldization). In contrast, for Relph (1976), the idea of a “placeless place” point to minimising sensitivity to local attributes and connections, exemplified in tourism by cruise ships and tourism enclaves (Wall-Reinius *et al.*, 2019). Whereas Ritzer emphasises the forceful diffusion of capitalistic consumerism, Relph underlines the impacts of standardisation and diffusion of global kitsch on place identities and meanings (1976, p.143). Overall, these perspectives present a type of one-way ontological occupation of places and destinations due to their integration into global tourism (Eisenschitz, 2016). However, stepping outside the global-local descriptions that underline overtaking impacts of global culture, touristic spaces can be understood as heterotopias (Foucault, 1986), enacting functional utopias and counter-sites that contest societal norms.

24 The idea of tourism destinations as heterotopias has been used, ranging from theme parks to cruise ships, cities, resorts, and zoos (e.g., Bruchansky, 2010; Minca, 2009; Kearns *et al.*, 2016; Simpson, 2016; Rankin and Collins, 2017). Here destinations are places for deviation and alterity, exceptional spaces that play with authentic and artificial elements in expressing idealised aspects of nature and culture. They present heterotopias, sites of experimentation, and societal contrast that combine selected and accentuated features of society. For Foucault (1986), heterotopic spaces represented exceptional spaces that deviate, reflect, and juxtapose the everyday spatial arrangements, norms, and orders. Moreover, heterotopias have a societal function to produce societal cohesion by deviance to “*suspect, neutralize or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect*” (Foucault, 1986, p. 24). In other words, although juxtaposing and deviating from societal norms, they always also reflect societies, institutions, and their changes (Johnson, 2013; Rankin and Collins, 2016) by bringing together opposites to “*allow us to work on those oppositions, and on ourselves*” (Chaloupka and McGregor, 1993, p. 9). In addition to their reflective and illusory functions, these spaces’ “*role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. This latter would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation*” (Foucault, 1986, p. 27). Next, I turn to destinations as the exceptional spaces of compensation and the compensatory logics of sustainability in contemporary globalised tourism.

III. The biopolitics of sustainable tourism and the sustenance of tourist

25 Sustainable tourism can be interpreted as being inherently “biopolitical” (see Foucault, 2008, Lemke, 2001, 2011; Simpson, 2016). Visiting the Arctic is often attached to notions of planetary care through frameworks of sustainable, smart, circular, and responsible tourism. These crisis avoidance strategies (Eisenschitz, 2016) imitate broader discussions around environmentally unsustainable capitalism.

26 “*Tourism does not only shape people, but also shapes spaces and territories, as a creating force*” (Ek, 2016, p. 59). In this biopolitical sense, tourism is understood as a central actor in the modern context, showing how tourism is not only about the ordering of space (destinations) but also about self-ordering (being a tourist) and travelling cultures (Franklin, 2004). Being a tourist represents what Swyngedouw describes as the restructuring of identity and desire (2022), emphasising the tourist’s autonomous and responsible character and the entrepreneurial management of the self. Hence, tourism can be seen as biopolitical governing. In this sense, destinations are touristic heterotopias: simultaneously sites of societal control and surveillance and sites that shape ideas over societal normalcy and deviation (Löfgren, 1999), populations, nationalism, and identities (Foucault, 2008). In addition to showing how tourism is



constructed through disciplinary forms of thought and in collective cultural forms, the biopolitics of tourism engages directly with biological lives, living, and conceptualisations of vitality (Foucault, 2007). Here, vitality as an ordering principle captures how the economic and environmental dimensions of Arctification come together under territorialisation in producing and experiencing vitality through exceptional spaces and destinations. Firstly, vitality is employed in justifying, for example, further and larger tourism development in the name of peripheral survival where it is constructed as a common cause for the geographically neglected populations (Nogués-Pedregal *et al.*, 2017). Secondly, vitality is mobilised as a core thought in sustainable tourism regarding tourism's symbiotic potential in maintaining nature through its consumption. Together, they produce territories of vitality, where further tourism development promises to take care of the people and the environment. Bringing these aspects of vitality and care together in the form of sustainable destinations, the visitor engages not only in leisure as a deviation from the routines of the everyday but, increasingly, leisure as compensation (Chaloupka and McGregor, 1993) from the environmental unsustainabilities of the everyday.

A. Organising nature in tourism – selling silence and ecological fragility

27 The institutional promise of the tourism sector is based on its catalytic role in setting up socioeconomic symbiosis with nature, to act as a tool for its appreciation through “socio-ecological triage” (Swyngedouw, forthcoming). In other words, it shows which types of nature can be valued and how, as well as how its value-promise can be societally assigned through tourism. In contrast, on the individual level, the picture of sustainability becomes more complex. In principle, the sustainable tourist is idealised as a responsible and conscious actor who makes decisions based on environmental factors and care. Still, the mediums required to engage with planetary care through compensation schemes and green interventions targeting “externalities” are, in principle, established from the premise of pricing and monetising nature exactly because no one cares about it otherwise (Dempsey, 2016).

28 According to Swyngedouw (2007), sustainability is enacted as a planet-saving subject by two basic strategies: (a) by techno-natural interventions that solve environmental problems by developing nature and creating new natures (e.g., artificial meat, domed ski resorts) that make nature function as societally expected, or (b) by socio-metabolic interventions that keep nature and humans separated, in their expected places (e.g., protected areas). In sustainable tourism, both aspects are present. On the one hand, Arctic tourism is based on locating nature by its coding and signing, supporting its locatability and productisation. On the other hand, nature is increasingly becoming a problem for the Arctic tourism industry, as it does not provide the expected stability. Therefore, there is an increasing need to experiment with the Arctic, to render and reproduce it through Arctification as heterotopias of deviation (alterity) and compensation (sustainability) to contain the elements expected. Together, these aspects provide touristic spaces based on rationalisations of “vitality” (Rabinow and Rose, 2006) of the individual and planetary life. However, when engaging with planetary care and the responsible tourist, the focus of sustenance is mainly on sustaining demand and therefore securing the Arctic's touristic suitability, regardless of its physiological changes. The outcome of current mainstream, balanced, three-pillar sustainability frameworks is a battle in the endless middle-ground, originating from reincarnations of mutual and shared benefits between nature and modern society (e.g., smart, responsible, circular economies) and sticky zero-sum games between competing environmental rationalities producing a world of constantly shifting goalposts. Sustainable tourism operates on a particular type of framing of nature that enables it to focus on green consumerism, a commodified and commercialised expression of



planetary care, in the spirit that sustainability is something solvable and nearly taken care of under existing socio-environmental arrangements. Sustainable tourism in the context of the fragile but visitable Arctic proposes a biopolitical promise of social, economic, and environmental vitality. It provides the possibility to consume and manage nature for the wellbeing of the self and the planet.

- 29 An interesting example of destination marketing can be found in Salla, eastern Lapland. This municipality exemplifies the argument about the conceptualisation of Arctification as complex relations and dimensions of exogenous tourism development, spatial strategies, and consumption ethics. Salla's famous slogan "*Salla – In the middle of nowhere*" (Visit Salla, 2022) went viral in part due to its award-winning efforts (e.g., for its societal impact and 'tactical branding'), called "*Save Salla – Save the planet*", in the form of a parodical short film on the municipality's candidacy to host the 2032 Summer Olympics (see Save Salla, 2022). In the end, by selling Arctic fragility via a Brazilian-Lappish collaboration, the campaign received 7.5 billion online views in 63 countries, created 900 online posts, and reached around 250 million potential visitors via social media. It was estimated to have created marketing value of over 120 million euros (Koti-Lappi, 2021). What the example brings together is the spatial imagination of wilderness qualities, such as the remoteness and tranquillity of the Arctic, as well as the Arctic's current role as the forefront and symbol of climate change. In the form of the humoristic educational video, the marketers showcase the appeal of "bare nature" and the power of ecological fragility.

B. Total landscapes of the Arctic and the Republic of Santa Inc.

- 30 To summarise the previous discussion and to tease out the different economic (exogenous tourism development), spatial (territorialisation to heterotopias), and ethical (planetary ethics) dimensions, destination development plans in Finnish Lapland are used to exemplify Arctification.
- 31 In the past decades, Finnish Lapland has experienced relatively strong tourism growth, turning many of its traditional skiing resorts from domestic destinations into nodes of global tourism. The outcome in many of the most visited resorts (e.g., at Levi and Ruka ski resorts in Northern Finland) is a kind of global pastiche, made from neo-traditionalism (e.g., Alpine architecture), cultural appropriation (e.g., commercialisation of selected features of indigenous Sámi culture) and adoption of global tourism products (e.g., huskies and safaris) (Niskala and Ridanpää, 2016; Saarinen and Varnajot, 2019; Herva *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, and regionally, to support Lapland's competitiveness, the sector engages with ironic nostalgia to ridicule and trivialise the past and present to make space for new and wanted spatial arrangements and imaginations (Pretes, 1995). In this spirit, Lapland is always seen as outdated when discussing major future projects. Moreover, tourism development is presented at the local level as a common search to secure socioeconomic vitality, as the last chance of the peripheries, that require the formation of common interest at the local level to face the world of global competition (Nogués-Pedregal *et al.*, 2017). Here, local progress is primarily tied to expectations over ever-expanding tourism and interest in the Arctic.
- 32 Mega-projects provide another example of territorialisation. The planned Arctic theme park, Republic of Santa Claus (ROSC, 2022), exemplifies what Britton described as landscapes of social engineering in tourism (1991). The Republic is planned some 25 kilometres north of the city of Rovaniemi (the "official" hometown of Santa) and the Arctic Circle. According to its planners, the Republic would match the visitor rates of the Louvre and Disneyland by bringing annually 10 million visitors. The project leaders estimate that it would overcome the problem of seasonality in the Arctic and provide



millions in tax revenues and unprecedented employment opportunities, which would change the centre of gravity for Finnish and Nordic tourism.

33 The Republic promises an all-around optimised destination in terms of access, target markets (e.g., thematised Christmas sectors for different cultures), on-site decarbonisation (via electronic cars, monorails, and reindeer), built on “pristine wilderness” (in a very extended sense), totally domed to control artificial snowing and scheduled northern lights displays, and viralised through e-passports and satellite shops in airports. Moreover, the Republic has an obvious focus on Christmas, a mall, locally sourced food, and wellness products in all imaginable ways. Here, trust in global demand for Christmas destinations and in the continued growth of global tourism provided the business logics for such an unprecedented, Disneyworld-size endeavour in the Arctic. In addition to justifying the land use and the State’s support for the Republic, the plan is covered with the rhetoric of planetary care. The Republic is imagined as a techno-futuristic artificial pseudo-Arctic. Its offer of sustainable tourism in the context of the fragile but visitable Arctic proposes a biopolitical promise of social, economic, and environmental vitality for the self and the community. It provides the possibility to consume and manage nature for the wellbeing of the self and the planet and escape the everyday spaces and psyches of unsustainabilities. Finally, the Republic aims for exceptionalism in financial and cosmopolitan ways. In general, it is marketed as an apolitical, non-religious, neutral space, imagined cosmopolitan community made out of hypermobility (Eriksen, 2016). Moreover, Santa’s state would become a tax-free zone, exceptional also in a legislative sense. This was justified as an act of entrepreneurial support as the overall regional economic and employment impacts would compensate for the lost taxes of this arrangement.

34 Finally, the Republic represents what Mitrasinovic (2016) called “total landscapes” constructed from aggressive rationalisation and standardisation of landscapes. According to him, these total landscapes are based on the totalising harmonisation of space, made out of the aim of holistic control (leaving nothing undefined), an artificial and tangible presence (e.g., resort, theme park), and communicative orientation able to reproduce its cultural imagination in the collective consciousness. Part of this futuring of tourism in the case of the Republic is in its vision to discipline and re-imagine Arctic *nature* that is suitable with more visitors. Here Arctic nature is harmonised with unseen tourism growth in Finland, which align “with the requirements of a more ecologically reflexive capitalism” (Swyngedouw, forthcoming). The evident outcome is the inadequacy of the existing Arctic environment to satisfy and keep up with demand.

Conclusions

35 This article focused on the production of exceptionality and exceptional spaces in tourism by analysing current and future visions concerning the Arctic as a destination. Here, the (re)production of the Arctic is understood as an Arctification process based on spatial simplification and strategic essentialisation. This process frames Arctic increasingly as a place for the purposes of touristic consumption through a spectrum of planetary care, namely sustainability. The article looked at Arctification from a biopolitical perspective from three dimensions: (I) as exogenous tourism development targeting mainly global visitors, (II) as a spatial strategy based on de- and re-territorialisation, and (III) as an ethical stance on planetary care through consumption. Through these three dimensions and by using examples from Finnish Lapland, the article claims that the Arctification of Northern Europe ultimately frames nature and place as obsolete. Here, Arctic nature, climate, and seasonalities are increasingly seen as technical challenges, nuisances hindering the optimisation and growth of the tourism industry.



Furthermore, the biopolitical perspective used to explain the implications of homogenisation effects of globalisation (Relph, 1976; Ritzer, 2003; Eriksen, 2021) and

ethics of green consumerism claimed to lead to a type “Dubaisation” of the Arctic that aims for total control of destinations. Here sustainability is handled as a managerial and place-detached problem that can be dealt with by better destination design (e.g., domed destinations, locally decarbonised), trust in progressive consumer choices (e.g., appealing to the desire for alterity, environmental care, and the self) and by promises of a symbiotic tourism-nature relationship.

37 The consumerist ethics of planetary care is based on the transformative and pedagogical promise of “meeting” nature as a tourist. Here, nature is framed ontologically as a singular entity (global, planetary) (Swyngedouw, 2007). Its execution of sustainability is bordered to the level destinations and therefore detached from any references to systemic and structural ecological impacts. In other words, sustainability is rendered and sorted as manageable. At the same time, consumerist options are based on destination-tied, “just-around-the-corner” solutionism (Dempsey, 2016), where the focus is on better and more technology (e.g., decarbonisation) and managerialism (Hall, 2019), producing “sustainability” through techno-natural nurturing of the Earth (Swyngedouw, 2018). Here, tourism and its track-record are thought of as if there existed an alternate history where its unsustainabilities were solved. Hence, sustainability presents a translation and operationalisation of planetary ethics into a patchwork of solutions and products (e.g., carbon compensation schemes, ecotourism). Ultimately, these sustainable solutions aim for instant gratification of touristic experiences in situ, to elevate and secure the tourism experience by disassociating the experience from its environmental impacts. Therefore, sustainability needs to be understood as an essential dimension of Arctic marketing and branding in selling an idea and solutions for environmental fragility. Thus, it presents a model for transforming the experience of consumption into compensation, leading to sustenance rather than limiting the sector’s negative impacts.

38 Through Arctification, destinations and regions are imagined and promoted as territories of sustainability that compensate for the chronic unsustainabilities of modern Western societies. Hence, sustainability presents a sign to locate a safe space to consume without questioning tourism itself. For contemporary large-scale tourism development projects, the aim is to find ways to sustain tourism and touristic consumption in an environmentally troublesome reality by stabilising and immunising destinations (e.g., enclaves) and their environments (e.g., artificial snowing, domes) from the unstable nature of nature. Alas, the Arctic environment is becoming too needy for the tourism industry, too un-optimal and risk-laden. Therefore, it needs to become disenchanted from on-going global and local environmental reality, re-territorialised and rationalised through Arctification to secure its promises as an Arctic destination. Ultimately, the Arctification represents a tourism and tourist development mode wrapped in problematic logics of green growth aiming for predictability through control and stability of nature, the consumer, and the self.

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Aapo Lunden, « The biopolitics of Arctic tourism development and sustainability », *Via* [Online], 21 | 2022, Online since 22 August 2022, connection on 30 September 2022. URL :

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