Mari Partanen is a tourism geographer and a cultural anthropologist. In her PhD thesis, she examines tourism and sustainability by diving into the cultural framework of a place where tourism is being developed. She explores community resilience and local inclusion in tourism development through social innovations, which are transformative, co-creative initiatives for challenging the status quo. Her thesis provides alternative, critical aspects to consider in tourism development, while emphasizes the interlinked needs for sustaining socio-environmental systems at multiple scales.
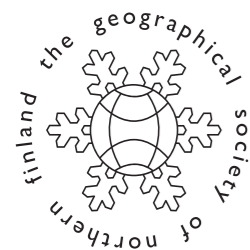
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geographical publications

Social innovations for inclusive development in tourism –

insights from Kemi, Finland

Mari Partanen

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publications

Social innovations for inclusive development in tourism –

insights from Kemi, Finland

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Abstract

Tourism is known to bring various benefits, especially in areas where services, employment, and vitality are needed. Yet, local people can be excluded in tourism development processes and as users of tourism services. Such exclusive development can reduce community resilience by focusing on the economic needs and innovations of the industry rather than widely addressing local wishes. As an alternative, inclusive development in tourism emphasizes acknowledging local perspectives and making tourism more beneficial for both locals and tourists. Acknowledging diverse community perspectives, leaving no one behind in development, and maximizing positive tourism impacts are central for enabling more sustainable tourism development, alongside the overarching need for environmentally sustainable tourism. However, research on different community perspectives towards inclusive development in tourism has remained limited. In addition, studies on the means for changing the exclusive development paths are highly needed. This thesis suggests that the diverse perspectives towards tourism development and the means for change can be studied through social innovations. Social innovations can be transformative, multi-sectoral, cooperative processes and outcomes that create social value. They provide alternative options for business-focused innovations and development processes in tourism.

Social innovations and tourism are studied in Kemi, Finland, where tourism has been strongly developed in recent decades. Through an ethnographic approach, local views on tourism are examined via three perspectives: the public sector actors not usually included in tourism development; the actors working directly in tourism; and local young people who are traditionally very little heard in tourism development. It is elaborated what kinds of needs for change the three community groups identify in relation to tourism and what kinds of initiatives have been or are hoped to be carried out for realizing the change. Three actualized social innovations and three social innovation propositions are introduced and their contribution to inclusive development and community resilience-building, in relation to tourism, is examined.

The aim of the thesis is to examine tourism through social innovations as part of inclusive development and community resilience-building and to further evaluate the potential of social innovations to enhance sustainability. Thus, it is studied how social innovations contribute to inclusive development and community resilience-building in relation to tourism and, in this context, to sustainability; how different local community members (public sector actors, actors working directly in tourism, and young people) perceive tourism development and tourism in Kemi; and how social innovations contribute to inclusive development and community resilience-building in relation to tourism and, further, to sustainability in Kemi.

The findings indicate that locals identify needs for more inclusive development in tourism in terms of services and co-operation in development. Local social innovations (a cooking club and a youth service centre) not directly linked with tourism can provide insights of how tourism could benefit wide needs in communities. Social innovations in tourism (a locally embedded tourism development project renewing an old industrial island into a recreation area) and social innovation propositions in tourism (a platform for enhancing the flow of information regarding tourism; and a movie theatre or a petrol station for finding a space for hanging out) can diversify available services for addressing local needs. Thus, the results show that social innovations can help with shedding light on the entangled nature of tourism and communities and bring understanding of the context of tourism development by noticing the local challenges and needs as

well as novel possibilities and ideas for change. In particular, social innovations can challenge the status quo of tourism by bringing out non-traditional perspectives in development and by redirecting the focus of tourism towards local needs, beyond the usual business-centred perspectives. Furthermore, social innovations can bring value that is first and foremost social, yet also potentially economically and environmentally relevant. In addition, they can provide a methodological tool for tourism development. In these ways, social innovations enhance inclusive development in tourism and build community resilience, as well as contribute to enhancing sustainability. Particularly, social innovations can help in narrowing down the wide sustainability goals into practical processes. Yet, it is also important to remember that the value social innovations create can be perspective dependent.

Thus, the thesis argues that 1) social innovations can challenge the state of tourism development by emphasizing socially embedded development over business-focused processes and initiatives, 2) social innovations can enhance inclusive development and build community resilience by directing tourism towards local needs and by identifying non-traditional perspectives in planning and development, and 3) social innovations can contribute to enhancing sustainability, yet the contribution requires critical evaluation as well because social innovations do not necessarily holistically address the sustainability issues of tourism.

Conclusively, inclusive development and community resilience-building informed by social innovations can, eventually, contribute to enhancing sustainability and its core idea of leaving no one behind in development, as well as to the need to minimize the negative impacts of tourism and maximize the positive. However, their contribution to comprehensive sustainability requires also critical evaluation and further research, especially by acknowledging the interlinked needs for sustaining socio-environmental systems at multiple scales.

Keywords: social innovation, inclusive development, tourism, resilience, sustainability, local

Tiivistelmä

Matkailulla on lukuisia myönteisiä vaikutuksia erityisesti alueilla, jotka kaipaavat palveluita, työpaikkoja ja elinvoimaa. Paikalliset voivat kuitenkin jäädä matkailun kehittämisprosesseissa ulkopuolisiksi ja heidän roolinsa matkailupalveluiden käyttäjinä voi jäädä tunnistamatta. Tällainen eksklusiivinen kehitys voi heikentää yhteisöllistä resilienssiä, jos kehityksen painopiste on laajojen paikallisten hyötyjen tavoittelemisen sijaan taloudellisissa tarpeissa ja matkailutalouden innovaatioissa. Inklusiivinen matkailun kehittäminen painottaa vaihtoehtoisesti paikallisten näkökulmien huomioon ottamista ja matkailun hyödyllisyyttä sekä paikallisille että matkailijoille. Monipuolisten paikallisnäkökulmien huomioon ottaminen, ketään ei jätetä -periaate sekä matkailun myönteisten vaikutusten maksimointi ovatkin kestävämmän matkailukehityksen ytimessä. Erilaisten paikallisyhteisön näkökulmien tutkimus inklusiivisen matkailukehittämisen kontekstissa on kuitenkin rajallista. Lisäksi tutkimukset eksklusiivisten matkailupolkujen muuttamisen keinoista ovat tarpeen. Väitöskirja esittää, että erilaisia näkökulmia ja muutoksen keinoja voidaan tutkia sosiaalisen innovaation käsitteen avulla. Sosiaaliset innovaatiot ovat monialaiseen yhteistyöhön perustuvia, muutosta ajavia prosesseja ja lopputulemia, jotka luovat sosiaalista arvoa. Ne tarjoavat vaihtoehtoisen tavan bisneskeskeisille innovaatioille ja kehittämisprosesseille matkailussa.

Tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan sosiaalisia innovaatioita ja matkailua Kemissä, missä matkailua on kehitetty voimakkaasti viime vuosikymmeninä. Etnografisen tutkimuksen kautta kartoitetaan kolmea näkökulmaa matkailuun: julkisen sektorin toimijoita, jotka eivät ole perinteisesti mukana matkailukehityksessä; toimijoita, jotka työskentelevät matkailussa; sekä paikallisia nuoria, jotka ovat yleensä hyvin vähäisesti huomioituja matkailukehityksessä. Väitöskirjassa tarkastellaan, millaisia muutostarpeita näiden ryhmien edustajat tunnistavat matkailuun liittyen. Lisäksi tutkitaan, millaisia aloitteita on tehty asiantilan muuttamiseksi tai millaisia aloitteita paikalliset toivoisivat muutoksen toteutumiseksi. Väitöskirja esittelee kolme toteutunutta sosiaalista innovaatiota ja kolme sosiaalisen innovaation ideaa ja arvioi niiden kontribuutiota inklusiiviseen kehitykseen ja yhteisön resilienssin rakentamiseen suhteessa matkailuun.

Väitöskirjan tavoitteena on tutkia matkailua sosiaalisen innovaation käsitteen kautta, osana inklusiivista kehitystä ja yhteisön resilienssin rakentamista, ja edelleen arvioida sosiaalisten innovaatioiden mahdollisuuksia edistää kestävyyttä. Väitöskirjassa tutkitaan, miten sosiaaliset innovaatiot voivat kontribuoida inklusiiviseen matkailukehitykseen ja yhteisön resilienssin rakentamiseen suhteessa matkailuun ja tässä kontekstissa kestävyyteen; miten paikallisyhteisön eri jäsenet (julkisen sektorin edustajat, matkailussa työskentelevät ja nuoret) näkevät matkailukehityksen ja matkailun Kemissä; ja miten sosiaaliset innovaatiot voivat kontribuoida inklusiiviseen kehitykseen ja yhteisön resilienssin rakentamiseen suhteessa matkailuun ja edelleen kestävyyteen Kemissä.

Tulosten perusteella paikalliset näkevät tarpeita inklusiivisemmalle matkailukehitykselle niin palvelujen kuin kehittämiseen liittyvän yhteistyön osalta. Paikalliset sosiaaliset innovaatiot (sosiaalinen keittiö ja nuorten ohjauskeskus), jotka eivät suoraan toimi osana matkailua, voisivat kuitenkin tarjota näkökulmia siihen, kuinka matkailu voisi vastata paikallisyhteisöjen tarpeisiin. Sosiaaliset innovaatiot matkailussa (paikallinen matkailukehitysprojekti, jossa entisestä teollisuussaaresta on kehitetty virkistysalue) ja sosiaalisen innovaation ideat (matkailuun liittyvän tiedon välittämiseen tarkoitettu alusta sekä uusi ajanviettopaikka drive-in-elokuvateatterin tai huoltoaseman muodossa) voivat monipuolistaa palveluja paikallisia tarpeita ajatellen. Siispä, tulosten perusteella sosiaaliset innovaatiot voivat auttaa ymmärtämään matkailun ja yhteisöjen sidoksia sekä

paikallista matkailukehittämisen kontekstia, koska ne auttavat kiinnittämään huomiota paikallisiin haasteisiin ja tarpeisiin sekä uusiin mahdollisuuksiin ja muutosideoihin. Sosiaaliset innovaatiot voivat erityisesti auttaa haastamaan nykyisenkaltaisen matkailun tilaa painottamalla ei-perinteisiä näkökulmia kehityksessä sekä ohjaamalla matkailukehitystä kohti paikallisia tarpeita, ohi tyypillisten bisneskeskeisten näkökulmien. Lisäksi sosiaaliset innovaatiot luovat ensisijaisesti sosiaalista arvoa, joskin voivat olla myös taloudellisesti ja ympäristöllisesti relevantteja. Sosiaalisia innovaatioita voi käyttää myös metodologisesti työkaluna matkailukehityksessä. Näillä tavoilla sosiaaliset innovaatiot voivat edistää inklusiivista kehitystä matkailussa sekä rakentaa yhteisön resilienssiä ja myöskin kontribuoida kestävyyteen. Sosiaaliset innovaatiot voivatkin auttaa rajaamaan laajoja kestävyystavoitteita konkreettisiksi prosesseiksi. On kuitenkin syytä muistaa, että sosiaalisten innovaatioiden tuoma hyöty voi olla näkökulmasidonnaista.

Niinpä tutkimus väittää, että 1) sosiaaliset innovaatiot voivat haastaa matkailukehityksen tilan korostamalla sosiaalisesti painottunutta kehitystä bisneskeskeisten prosessien ja aloitteiden sijaan, 2) sosiaaliset innovaatiot voivat edistää inklusiivista matkailukehitystä ja rakentaa yhteisön resilienssiä ohjaamalla matkailua kohti paikallisia tarpeita ja tunnistamalla ei-perinteisiä näkökulmia suunnittelu- ja kehitystyössä ja 3) sosiaaliset innovaatiot voivat kontribuoida kestävyyden edistämiseen, joskin tätä kontribuutiota täytyy tarkastella myös kriittisesti, koska sosiaaliset innovaatiot eivät välttämättä edistä kokonaisvaltaista kestävyyttä.

Tiivistäen, inklusiivinen kehitys ja yhteisöllisen resilienssin rakentaminen sosiaalisten innovaatioiden kautta voi kontribuoida myös kestävyyteen ja sen keskeiseen ketään ei jätetä -kehittämisperiaatteeseen sekä tarpeeseen minimoida matkailun haittavaikutuksia ja maksimoida sen hyötyvaikutuksia. Kuitenkin sosiaalisten innovaatioiden kontribuutiota kokonaisvaltaiseen kestävyyteen tulee tarkastella myös kriittisesti ja aihetta on syytä tutkia lisää erityisesti sosio-ympäristöllisten, moniskaalaisten systeemien kestävyyden kontekstissa.

Asiasanat: sosiaalinen innovaatio, inklusiivinen kehitys, matkailu, resilienssi, kestävyys, paikallisuus

List of original articles

Article I   Partanen M & Sarkki S (2021) Social innovations and sustainability of tourism: Insights from public sector in Kemi, Finland. Reprinted with the permission of Sage Publishing. Originally published in *Tourist Studies* 21(4): 550–571. Available online: https://doi.org/10.1177/14687976211040246

The article was co-authored with Dr Simo Sarkki. The author of the thesis was the main author and responsible for planning the research: the topic, research design, research questions, and methods. The author gathered and analysed the data and wrote the majority of the article. Dr Sarkki contributed by discussing the findings, structuring the article, and interpreting and writing about the data. The author was responsible for responding to the peer review, and Dr Sarkki contributed to peer review as well.

Article II   Partanen M (2022) Social Innovations for Resilience — Local Tourism Actor Perspectives in Kemi, Finland. Reprinted with the permission of Taylor & Francis Group. Originally published in *Tourism Planning & Development* 19(2): 143–163. Available online: https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2021.2001037

The author planned the research, gathered and analysed the data, and wrote the article as well as responded to the peer review.

Article III   Partanen M, Kettunen M & Saarinen J (2023) Community inclusion in tourism development: young people's social innovation propositions for advancing sustainable tourism. Reprinted with the permission of Taylor & Francis Group. Originally published in *Tourism Recreation Research* [Online 30 June 2023]. Available online: https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2023.2226040.

The article was co-authored with Doctoral researcher Marika Kettunen and Professor Jarkko Saarinen. The author was the main author as well as planned the topic and research design, including research questions and methods. Doctoral researcher Kettunen also contributed to planning the research questions and utilization of methods. The author and doctoral researcher Kettunen planned the fieldwork and gathered and analysed the data, interpreted the data, and wrote the article together. Professor Saarinen contributed by structuring the article, writing about the focus, and interpreting the findings. The author was responsible for responding to the peer review with contribution from Doctoral researcher Kettunen and Professor Saarinen.

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When flowers are blooming, nights are nightless, and the summer is so beautiful,
Puumala, 24.6.2024
Mari Partanen

1 Introduction

1.1 The challenge of exclusive development in tourism

"It is vital that more research which actively listens to community voices is conducted to counter industry-centric perspectives and inform inclusive approaches to tourism development" (Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018: 600–601).

It has long been noted that tourism can contribute to sustainable development, yet tourism can also weaken sustainability. Sustainability refers to a long-term goal to sustain the planet, while meeting the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own (United Nations 2024; see Elo *et al.* 2024; Saarinen 2021b). One challenge for reaching sustainable development is tourism development that takes an exclusive, growth-seeking, and industry-centric path, which leaves local communities out of development processes and does not take notice of them as potential users of services (Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018; see Rastegar & Ruhanen 2023). Such exclusive development can undermine the resilience of communities, as it often builds resilience only for a few community groups rather than for the whole place and its people (see Chen, Xu & Lew 2020; Saunavaara *et al.* 2023; Wakil, Sun & Chan 2021). Here, resilience refers to the capacity of communities to adapt to change and also benefit from the change (Ameel *et al.* 2016; Amore, Prayag & Hall 2018; Dredge 2019; Partanen 2022; Vale 2014;). These kinds of changes can be resulted by exclusive development and other processes and elements, such as geopolitics, globalisation, pandemics, climate change, or demographic changes (Prayag 2020; Saarinen 2021a).

Tourism should rather build community resilience than reduce it; a place cannot be considered resilient if tourism development is managed without considering diverse perspectives and the wider social needs in a community, such as needs for employment, or services enabled by tourism (Amore, Prayag & Hall 2018). Such tourism that enables positive change can help with managing the various pressures communities face, as it holds potential of enhancing sustainable development that benefits community members at large, for example through providing employment, vitality, and activities, (see Rezaei 2017). This potential of tourism contributes to Sustainable Development Goals and to the United Nation's principal to leave no one behind in development (United Nations 2015; United Nations Sustainable Development Group 2024).

1.2 Inclusive development and social innovations

For releasing the potential of tourism to contribute to sustainable development and resilience-building, tourism development needs to be considered from the inclusive perspective. A locally inclusive perspective emphasizes both inclusive development in tourism and creating locally inclusive tourism services. This requires evaluating the focus of tourism: how relevant and approachable tourism services are for local people and, in relation to this, how the place is branded by tourism and whether that branding is plausible and convincing from the local perspectives (see Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018; Wheeler *et al.* 2011). Importantly, it needs to be considered whether and how locals can take part in tourism planning and development – this requires widely involving and acknowledging local community members in tourism development,

addressing inequality, bringing people together, challenging stereotypes, and opening up the situation of minorities who are less involved in tourism development (Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018).

For reaching the aims regarding inclusivity, tourism development and services should be examined from different community perspectives, as enhancing inclusivity is deeply intertwined with local development practices and involvements. However, often in practice, tourism development and the changes brought by tourism are driven by few stakeholders representing the industry and public sector (Bichler 2021; Farsari 2021). Other local perspectives can be marginalized, in spite of their potential for collaborative planning, and despite communities having a central role in rethinking tourism to make it more sustainable. For example, younger generations are rarely heard in tourism development processes (see Koščak *et al.* 2021).

Initiatives that acknowledge diverse community needs and build community resilience are required for challenging the state of exclusive, industry-centric development in tourism. This requires innovative ideas and concrete drivers for change. In tourism, business innovations are often seen as the form of change, as they are expected to boost economic growth and provide new business opportunities (see Pappas, Michopolou & Farmaki 2023). However, it needs to be critically elaborated what kind of innovations are needed in tourism that has long struggled with sustainability and the problems of exclusive development (Booyens 2022). As noted, communities should have a central role in rethinking tourism to make it more inclusive. This requires exploring the variety of local ideas and initiatives for changing the status quo of tourism.

This thesis suggests that such processes for challenging exclusive development and services can be studied through the concept of social innovation. Social innovations are processes and outcomes that are based on novel ideas for addressing social needs and challenges by emphasizing multi-stakeholder co-operation for creating social value (Mosedale & Voll 2017; Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers 2014). Social innovations can be seen as a way to build community resilience by bringing understanding on the process of transformation and the actors involved in the change (see Westley 2013). Social innovations are often community-driven, grass-root drivers of change; they draw attention to understanding the possibilities of various local community members to initiate change, express innovative openings, and to carry out transformative processes. In tourism, social innovations incorporate the complexity of different actors and go beyond the traditional needs for development in private and public sector (Wirth, Bandi Tanner & Mayer 2022). Social innovations emphasize asking which needs community members identify for change and what kind of local initiatives should be carried out for realizing such hopes for change and, furthermore, who are or should be involved in the processes (Partanen & Sarkki 2021; Partanen 2022; Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023). Hence, they offer important theoretical and empirical insights for investigating tourism development by bringing a community-oriented alternative for the economically focused initiatives and innovations in tourism (Booyens 2022).

1.3 Research gaps

Despite the continuous calls to acknowledge resident perspectives in tourism planning and development, research on the residents' perspectives remains limited (Erdmenger 2022; Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018). Research has often focused on examining tourists' perceptions, while the very source of the original knowledge regarding the place where tourism is developed – the local views – have been less studied (Croes, Lee & Olson 2013). Furthermore, when local perspectives are examined, they are often represented by actors working directly in tourism. Meanwhile, when communities actively manage the changes brought by tourism, their resilience can strengthen (Wakil, Sun & Chan 2021). This research aims to contribute to filling this research gap by examining tourism in relation to inclusive development, community resilience-building, and sustainability from local perspectives and, moreover, from perspectives that are not traditionally regarded in tourism practice. The power relations between people who directly work in tourism but also between public sector fields and local community members are acknowledged. This approach contributes to the still marginal research on balancing and reshaping power relations between stakeholders in tourism (see Dong & Nguyen 2022) and contributes to bringing more nuanced understanding on community perspectives towards tourism. The participants of this study represent community members with varying possibilities to affect the focus of tourism and to participate in planning and development. The perspectives provide diverse insights to tourism development and the local power relations, ranging from the core actors to the marginalized groups not involved in development.

While research on innovations in tourism has been recently noted as a timely, emerging topic (see García-García et al. 2023; Pappas, Michopolou & Farmaki 2023) and social innovations have gained interest in policies, practice, and academia, social innovations in tourism as well as the social innovation development processes have been studied relatively little (Wirth, Bandi Tanner & Mayer 2022). Some research on social innovations in tourism has been done in relation to corporate social responsibility (e.g. Mahato *et al.* 2021) and social entrepreneurship (e.g. Sheldon & Daniele 2017) contexts. Yet, research on alternative, non-business centred innovations as well as the actual means for community members to change the state of exclusive, unsustainable development in tourism have been little studied (see Erdmenger 2022; Rus *et al.* 2022). This is especially the case with studies on how non-tourism originating social innovations can be relevant for tourism development, and studies on what kinds of social innovations community members propose for rethinking tourism development. This study examines such social innovation cases and elaborates them in relation to tourism development, in addition to studying a social innovation case in tourism.

Moreover, the study contributes to discussing what kind of value tourism informed by social innovations can create in addition to the usually sought economic benefits. This approach challenges the traditional way of elaborating the value of tourism, which is often measured only in monetary terms. Indeed, "*the non-monetary value produced, co-created and shared in tourism is less well understood and rarely measured*" (Cave & Dredge 2020: 505; see also Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018). Understanding the social value is especially important because the financial and resource-oriented understanding of tourism neglects the needs for building and maintaining other aspects of community resilience and wellbeing; furthermore, empirical research is needed for understanding how to strengthen different aspects of community resilience in relation to tourism, beyond the financial resilience aspect (Wakil, Sun & Chan 2021). This study provides empirical

insights for this matter by utilizing ethnographic methodology with participatory action research approaches. Especially the latter have been only marginally utilized in a tourism research context (Ivanova, Buda & Burrai 2021; Mura & Wijesinghe 2023).

Thus, there is a clear need to examine the potential of social innovations to bring different interest groups together and to change the course of exclusive development towards holistic value-creation (see Malek & Costa 2015) for enhancing inclusive development and building community resilience in places operating with tourism. Studying the role of social innovations in tourism is especially central because social innovations have been noted to hold potential for enhancing sustainability (Olsson *et al.* 2017). Forms of tourism that direct away from the unsustainable economically focused tracks need to be studied both in theory and practice (Fletcher *et al.* 2023). While research on actual shifts towards sustainability has received little attention, "*prototypes and experiments are everywhere*" (Cave & Dredge 2020: 504), and their empirical identification is key for finding concrete aims and suggestions for enhancing sustainability. Studying such prototypes and experiments through the concept of social innovations can reveal important insights for critically considering sustainability of tourism. However, there is still limited knowledge about the relationship between sustainability and social innovations (Eichler & Schwarz 2019; Hölsgens 2016). Furthermore, as social innovations are, indeed, social in nature, their contribution to comprehensive sustainability thinking that integrates the needs of human and natural aspects must be evaluated (Olsson *et al.* 2017). The thesis shall elaborate this angle as well.

1.4 Insights from Kemi

Social innovations and tourism were studied in Kemi, Finland, where tourism has been strongly developed in recent years but also where various needs for change exist, both in relation to tourism and outside tourism. Such needs are linked with, for example, finding employment, vitality, and services due to demographic changes in the city during the last decades (see Partanen & Sarkki 2021). Tourism has been hoped to bring such positive change for Kemi, yet tourism development has also been criticized by the locals (Partanen & Sarkki 2021; Partanen 2022). Meanwhile, there have been local initiatives for bringing change to tourism, which provides ground for studying the site through social innovations in relation to inclusive development and community resilience-building, while evaluating these phenomena against comprehensive sustainability needs. Moreover, tourism in Kemi has been studied very little (Ianioglo & Rissanen 2020), and this research provides empirical novelty regarding tourism research in the area.

In this study, three types of local actors' perceptions towards tourism development are studied: young people, public sector representatives, and actors working directly in tourism. These different groups were selected for gaining versatile perspectives from locals on their possibilities to take part in tourism production and consumption, which furthermore enabled studying power relations in tourism (see Byrd 2007; Dong & Nguyen 2022). The mentioned social innovation cases studied for the thesis are three actualized social innovations from private and public sector and three social innovation propositions by young people. The cases are examined in relation to tourism (development) in Kemi.

Public sector representatives from varying fields have participated in this study. They work in fields that have not been or are not directly connected with tourism development (such as youth services and environmental management), despite commonalities with

tourism. This wide involvement of public sector representatives allowed gaining novel insights to tourism development and enabled seeing its linkages with other fields and sectors. For getting a holistic picture of local people who work directly in tourism, data was also gathered from tourism actors, ranging from small entrepreneurs to the city-owned Kemi Tourism Ltd. company representative. Most of the participants work in private sector companies. Studying diverse perspectives from the public and private sectors acknowledges the notion that cross-sectoral and cross-actor co-operation are important due to the diverse nature of tourism touching different spheres of local life and the potential mutual interests and benefits between different operations and actors (Partanen & Sarkki 2021; Partanen 2022; also e.g. Richards & Hall 2000). Meanwhile, studying the range of tourism actors acknowledges that people working directly in tourism might hold very different possibilities to affect the general course of planning and development, while the central tourism developers might be under different pressures to succeed in providing employment and vitality in their areas (Partanen 2022).

Perhaps most importantly, the thesis gives an example of the variety of local groups via discussing local young people's relationship with tourism (Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023). Despite the marginalized role of young people in tourism development and planning, tourism is a sector interlinked with youth. For instance, the industry needs employees and is often dependent on especially young people for workforce (Robinson *et al.* 2019), while finding employment can be important for many individuals. Yet, tourism has more to offer to local communities than employment, such as free-time activities for locals, including young people. This is especially central in peripheral areas where the current economic system has created needs for external income in order to keep services running. In this respect, tourism can contribute to creating amenities and a social atmosphere that attract young people to stay in the area or in-migrate to the area (Duncan, Thulemark & Möller 2020). Still, young people's perspectives to tourism development are rarely acknowledged and have been marginally studied.

1.5 Research aim and questions

The aim of this study is to examine tourism through social innovations as part of inclusive development and community resilience-building to further evaluate the potential of social innovations to enhance sustainability. Particularly, the emphasis is on studying social innovations and inclusive development in tourism. Tourism and tourism development in Kemi are explored through three community perspectives: the public sector, actors working directly in tourism (mostly on private sector), and young people. The studied groups' potential needs for change as well as the locally driven social innovation initiatives are examined for understanding local means for enhancing inclusion and building resilience in relation to tourism.

The research questions are as follows:

1. a) How can social innovations contribute to inclusive development and community resilience-building in relation to tourism?
    b) In this context, how do social innovations contribute to sustainability?
2. How do different local community members (public sector actors, actors working directly in tourism, and young people) perceive tourism development and tourism in Kemi, Finland?

3. How do social innovations contribute to inclusive development and community resilience-building in relation to tourism and contribute to sustainability in Kemi, Finland?

The research question 1 is conceptual, while research questions 2 and 3 are empirically driven.

1.6 The articles

The articles of this thesis provide different community perspectives to the phenomena of tourism and elucidate power relations among community members. All of the articles tell a story of rethinking who to involve in tourism development. Hence, the articles explore perspectives beyond the ones traditionally at the centre of planning. The articles discuss social innovations as transformative processes happening within and outside tourism and bring up empirical examples of social innovations or social innovation propositions at the local level.

All the articles contribute to responding to research question 1. Via social innovations, the articles examine sustainability (especially article I: Partanen & Sarkki 2021), community resilience-building (article II: Partanen 2022), and community inclusion (especially article III: Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023) in relation to tourism. All the articles discuss social innovations, community perspectives, and tourism (development) in Kemi and present social innovation cases. Thus, they all answer to research question 2 and contribute to answering to research question 3.

Article I explores the relationship of two of the main concepts: social innovation and sustainability. Hence, it responds to research question 1, especially concerning sustainability. The article discusses tourism in relation to the public sector. The article utilizes data from representatives that have not been strongly involved in tourism development and more deeply focuses on (youth) employment and circular economy in processing food. From these fields, two social innovations were identified and their potential for enhancing sustainability in relation to tourism is discussed. Thus, the article focuses on non-tourism social innovations and on the potential of linking them with tourism. It discusses the benefits of tourism development for local communities by asking how tourism development could be connected to other aspects of local life to be more inclusive and sustainable for different community members.

Article II addresses research question 1, especially regarding community resilience-building by asking how local people who work directly in tourism build or would build resilience by changing the current state of tourism. In a way, the article approaches tourism from the traditionally studied private and public sector business perspectives. Yet, also in this article, the varying power relations at the local level, among tourism actors, are identified. Specifically, the less heard tourism actors' perspectives are discussed. Local tourism actors' needs and visions for resilience and the role of co-operation in resilience-building are examined. It is examined how a social innovation framework can be applied to community resilience-building in tourism. The article brings in the local communities' contribution and involvement to developing tourism through a social innovation case. A community-oriented social innovation realized by small tourism actors was identified and discussed as a way to build resilience. Finally, the results are evaluated against sustainability.

Article III examines research question 1 by concerning inclusive development in tourism through discussing community involvement beyond private and public sectors. The article explores how tourism could become a positive transformative force for locals. Specifically, young people are recognized as a seldom heard community group in a tourism planning context, yet a group in need of opportunities tourism has to offer. The article conceptually and methodologically utilizes social innovations in exploring tourism. The young people who participated in this study co-created social innovation propositions. Hence, the article did not discuss actualized social innovations but, instead, young people's socially innovative propositions for rethinking tourism development and the future of local communities. Finally, the findings were discussed in relation to sustainability.

In this synopsis, inclusive development in tourism and social innovations are at the core of the theoretical analysis. Chapter two conceptualizes social innovations, inclusive development and locally inclusive services in tourism, community resilience-building, and sustainability, and elaborates the relationships between these concepts. Chapter three describes the research design by discussing the research approach; the research process, materials, and methods; research ethics and reflection; and analysis. Chapter four introduces the field site. Chapter five summarizes the main findings of the thesis by explaining the three community perspectives and the social innovation cases. Chapter six discusses the findings further by examining how social innovations can challenge the state of tourism (development) towards inclusion and resilience-building via directing the focus of tourism towards local needs and bringing up the need for non-traditional perspectives in planning and development. Then, social innovations are evaluated against comprehensive sustainability thinking. Finally in chapter seven, theoretical and methodological contributions, practical implications, reflexive thoughts on the results, and future research needs are conclusively discussed.

The key concepts in this research are listed and defined in Table 1 and the flow of the synopsis is characterized in Figure 1.

Table 1. The key concepts in the thesis.

Concept	Definition
Social innovation	Novel or contextually novel solutions, processes, and outcomes that cross and challenge organizational boundaries, rules, and relationships and emphasize multi-stakeholder perspectives through participation and collaboration for bringing social value
Inclusive development in tourism	Tourism development that inclusively involves local community members
Locally inclusive tourism services	Tourism services that are approachable for locals
Locally inclusive perspective to tourism	Emphasizes tourism development that inclusively involves local communities and creates tourism services that are approachable for locals
Community resilience	The capacity of communities to adapt to change and benefit from change
Sustainability	Long-term goal to sustain the planet by meeting the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own

Research questions

1. a) How can social innovations contribute to inclusive development and community resilience-building in relation to tourism? b) In this context, how do social innovations contribute to sustainability?

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Key concepts

- Social innovation
- Inclusive development in tourism
- Locally inclusive tourism services
- Locally inclusive perspective to tourism
- Community resilience
- Sustainability

Empirical data

- Three local perspectives to tourism and tourism development in Kemi: the public sector actors, actors working directly in tourism (mostly on private sector), and young people
- Social innovation cases

Discussion elements

- Needs for change
- Social innovations challenging the state of tourism for enhancing inclusive tourism development and building community resilience
- The relationship of social innovations and sustainability

Figure 1. Flow of the synopsis.

2 Social innovations and inclusive development in tourism

2.1 The need for community resilience-building

The changes and impacts tourism creates range from global-scale issues to everyday life of an individual (Prayag 2020; see Ashworth & Page 2011). Tourism transforms places and holds potential of enhancing local inclusion, while also poses risks for local socio-environmental wellbeing for example through unmanaged growth and exclusive planning and development (see Saarinen 2021b). Tourism development has both positive and negative impacts on different community members (Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby 2022), and it is often the case that tourism development takes an exclusive path and leaves community members out of development processes (Erdmenger 2022). Barriers for accessing services, resources and equal opportunities are often the result of policies, laws, or practices that are in the hands of a few (see United Nations Sustainable Development Group 2024). Exclusive tourism services are accessible only for certain kinds of people and planned by only those holding power. Exclusive tourism development can, for example, result in a limited access to local areas through enclavic tourism spaces that are restricted for the tourism industry (Saarinen 2019)

Changes and pressures created by exclusive development require community resilience (Saunavaara *et al.* 2023). Resilience refers to ways and abilities to respond to disturbances and shocks, rebalancing, adapting, and benefiting from the change (Ameel et al. 2016; Amore, Prayag & Hall 2018; Dredge 2019; Vale 2014;). As mentioned, the disturbances can show as negative tourism impacts, such as unmanaged growth and its harm for the local areas, but also as pressures created by climate change, Covid-19, or demographic changes, for instance (Chen, Xu & Lew 2020; Prayag 2020; Saarinen 2021a). Meanwhile, tourism is vulnerable to different pressures, as was seen, for example, during the Covid-19 pandemic when travel had to be limited. Disturbances at the industry affect also local tourism actors and other livelihoods that are dependent on tourist flows.

These varying tourism-related changes and pressures that require community resilience have sparked serious calls to make tourism development more sustainable and inclusive. Enhancing sustainability and community resilience in a tourism context calls for equity and fairness in the production and consumption of tourism, both within the communities and for the future generations of the community. For contributing to sustainable development, tourism development should favour long-term perspectives that are fair and equitable to all generations in terms of how resources, utilities and welfare are distributed (see Soini & Birkeland 2014; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), while not leaving anyone behind in development (United Nations Sustainable Development Group 2024). In addition to acknowledging social needs, sustainability highlights the importance of protecting the environment for ensuring the preservation of future generations (Dessein *et al.* 2015; García-García *et al.* 2023). For building long-term resilience and enhancing sustainable development, the negative impacts of tourism should be minimized and the positive maximized for local communities and environment (see Fennell & Bowyer 2020).

Places that operate with tourism can be regarded resilient when the overall needs are considered, rather than focusing on the needs of the tourism industry (Amore, Prayag & Hall 2018). Often, changing the state of exclusive development that weakens community wellbeing requires restructuring of tourism development and services by diversely recognizing locals' perspectives (see Ashworth & Page 2011; Erdmenger 2022;

Fennell & Bowyer 2020; Ren 2021). Sometimes it can be crucial to rather change – bounce forward – than bounce back to the previous state before the disturbances (see Dredge 2019; Lew et al., 2016; Prayag, 2020). For enhancing sustainability and building community-resilience in a tourism context, it is central to critically evaluate the current state of tourism and to develop tourism that promotes multiple perspectives and social justice (see Mura & Wijesinghe (2023).

Particularly, it is important to ask whose resilience is being built and what kind of resilience is the result of such development processes (Vale 2014). Communities can show resilience and resilience-building through adaptation and learning from the change, which can further build resilience against future shocks (Saunavaara *et al.* 2023). As elaborated in Partanen (2022), community resilience-building in relation to tourism can be seen as attempts to enhance local conditions by better managing tourism impacts and by creating positive change through tourism. On one hand, communities can build resilience against the negative tourism impacts by changing the methods of planning or redirecting the focus of tourism for the benefit of locals, for example – on the other hand, tourism can build community resilience by responding to local needs, which helps the communities to sustain despite uncertain times. The benefits of tourism are especially needed in areas that suffer from outmigration, diminishing services, and unemployment.

2.2 Inclusive development and locally inclusive services in tourism

As discussed above, it is important that tourism benefits the local community at large – this would mean that the benefits are spread evenly, the voices in tourism development are diverse, and planning and development are inclusive (Fan, Ng and Bayrak 2023; Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby 2022; Mura & Wijesinghe 2023; Wearing & Darcy 2011). In general, inclusive tourism works against the logics of tourism that is developed by a few and for a few. Rather, the idea is to make tourism accessible for all kinds of people despite their social, cultural, or physical characteristics (see Kastenholz, Eusébio & Figueiredo 2015). Inclusion can be conceptualized as an aim to create an environment where diversity is fostered and supported (Garg & Sangwan 2021). In a tourism development context, this requires acknowledging various groups in ethically producing and consuming tourism, as well as sharing its benefits (Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018). Locally inclusive perspective to tourism calls for evaluating tourism through at least two dimensions: how inclusive the *development* in tourism is and how locally inclusive the *services* are. This requires asking how the development is done and by whom, and how approachable and relevant the services are for local communities.

Firstly, whether tourism contributes to inclusive development is deeply dependent on the question of who controls and makes decisions about tourism development (Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018). Tourism governance should foster locals' opportunities to influence tourism development and ensure that tourism benefits local communities (see Erdmenger 2022). Planning, when defined as "*a future-oriented and strategic decision-making process that aims to direct human actions to a desired and mutually agreed direction(s)*" (Saarinen, Rogerson & Hall 2017: 308), does not always in practice address the mutual interests of the community in large. Often, the development of tourism is still defined in economic terms with an aim to sustain the industry, though it "also involves – or should include – wider regional development goals and indicators" (Moscardo & Murphy 2014; Saarinen 2014: 344). In other words, the business-oriented perspectives

tend to dominate during tourism development and planning (Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby 2022). Yet, if only certain groups are represented, such as people working directly in tourism on the private and public sector, development is directed only by a few and only towards the direction of a few. Inclusive development in tourism challenges such traditional top-down ways of using power in planning, development, and consumption by asking which community members should be more widely included in tourism.

However, when thinking about the community members to be included in tourism development and planning, it needs to be evaluated what belonging to a community means in the first place. Fan, Ng, and Bayrak (2023) suggest that belonging to a community is symbolic and identity based. Communities consists of different local groups whose members are simultaneously members of several groups through family ties, profession, friend groups, studies, hobbies, place of residence, virtual encounters, and so on. What is central is a sense of belonging to some perceived group rather than one's actual physical place of residence. However, as Fan, Ng, and Bayarak (2023) continue, geographical areas are the location for everyday social contact. In other words, belonging to a community can still be tied to an actual physical place, which is at the same time socially experienced and also constructed. Thus, the relationship between tourism and the people at the area where tourism operates is closely tied. In addition, places can be significant for communities despite the places being in constant change, modern-time interaction, and flux (Benediktsson & Suopajärvi 2007). Such dynamics are also created by tourism. Hence, locals have a relationship with tourism operating in their area, whether the relationship is direct or indirect.

Secondly, in addition to evaluating inclusive development in tourism, tourism services should be inclusive for locals. Recently, and especially after the Covid-19 caused lockdowns and restricted travel, who counts as a tourist has been questioned both academically and in practice (Hoogendoorn & Hammett 2021). This approach asks what differentiates a tourist from a resident if they use services or visit places in the same location and highlights the need for services that are relevant for the community members as well. In relation to this, following Croes, Lee, and Olson (2013), in addition to tourists perceiving products and services as convincing, it is important that locals feel proud of providing and promoting the products and services for travellers. Involving actors from sectors across the society, both the ones directly involved with tourism and those who are not, is important for tourism development that is true to a place (Croes, Lee & Olson 2013). This is because the focus of tourism and the provided services are deeply dependent on the people and the place where tourism is being developed. Tourism is rooted in the culture and history and the individual and collective identities and experiences on the place (Cheer, Mostafanezhad & Lew 2022; Duxbury *et al.* 2020). Tourism often brands places in a certain way (Wheeler *et al.* 2011) and simultaneously gives it meanings, while tourism development that ignores local culture, knowledge, and traditions has been considered unjust, unsustainable, and implausible (see e.g. Rastegar & Ruhanen 2023).

In this respect, the question of when and in which ways tourism services can be considered real, convincing, and original has revolved around tourism research and development for decades (see Rickly-Boyd 2013). For gaining such experiences in tourism, the perceived place and its features need to feel plausible to the viewer. In other words, the viewed features are then considered to actually originate from the place. Here, it is central to point out that tourists and locals can hold different stances on what is perceived as genuine. Stereotypical ideas of a place can create biases when the expectations of a place do not match the actual experiences. In such situations, the

destination brand contradicts with the place identity of local communities (Wheeler *et al.* 2011). A destination identity directs tourism development towards the inside (for the benefit of the locals), while a brand is directed towards the outside to serve tourists' expectations (see Nogués-Pedregal, Travé-Molero & Carmona-Zubiri 2017; Wheeler *et al.* 2011).

However, it also needs to be noted that while tourism utilizes the local characteristics for product development, developing tourism can also uplift locals' pride in their places, empower them, and support creating infrastructure, facilities, services, recreation opportunities, and public spaces (Rezaei 2017). Culturally sensitive tourism can entail and intend to enhance respect, trust, ethics, cultural identity, mutual understanding and cultural exchange, self-determination, governance, and capacity building, and unique healing, wellness, and spiritual needs (Hurst *et al.* 2021), which in turn can enhance inclusiveness.

To release the inclusive potential of tourism development and planning, they need to aim for an emic understanding of places, which means approaching local tourism development through first-hand community views, ideas, and concepts instead of adopting an etic view that ignores local knowledge systems (Xue & Kerstetter 2019h). For enhancing inclusive development in tourism and for creating locally inclusive services, local experience and knowledge systems – the emic – need to be placed over the etic, concepts and meanings given by non-locals. (In fact, it would be sometimes reasonable to talk about places instead of tourism destinations also in tourism research. A tourism destination is a tourism-oriented, etic term, while a place is more locally oriented, emic term that describes the location where tourism is being developed and operated. This change of a term directs the discussion to orient from the local perspectives.)

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that the local views on tourism are heterogeneous and there is no one single emic understanding of a place that tells what kind of tourism services should be developed (see Fan, Ng & Bayrak 2023). Furthermore, the idea of what is original can change over time and something considered unconvincing can start to feel real, and vice versa (Partanen 2022).

2.3 Social innovations and tourism

Inclusive development and locally inclusive services often require innovative ideas for transforming the potentially exclusive state of tourism (see Cave & Dredge 2020). However, as noted before, discussion on the tools for enhancing inclusion and participation regarding tourism development remains limited (Erdmenger 2022). Still, local people do take agency in making a change in their surroundings. Even though locals are not necessarily directly involved in tourism development processes, they often identify needs for transformation regarding tourism or local life in general and carry through initiatives for changing the status quo. Such initiatives and tools for change can be explored through the concept of social innovation.

In business, innovation refers to changing goods, services, production, delivery, and organizational or marketing methods and starting new business practices (OECD 2005). Following Pappas, Michopolou, and Farmaki (2023), innovations are often suggested as solutions to problems, as they are expected to bring positive change for the status quo and create economic growth. In tourism, innovations have been suggested to be a key factor for successful companies and destinations (see Pappas, Michopolou & Farmaki 2023). Despite the potential positive impacts, economically

successful innovations can in some cases contribute to accelerating harmful growth strategies that can weaken long-term resilience and sustainability. In tourism, it has been long noted that economically focused development and initiatives can be unsustainable and exclusive, which harms local communities and the environment (Cave & Dredge 2020; Niewiadomski 2020). Still, the understanding of innovations in tourism is largely based on innovations in business and manufacturing (Wirth, Bandi Tanner & Mayer 2022). Hence, critical studies on innovations and their contribution to tourism is highly needed.

Following Booyens (2022), social innovations can be considered as criticism for plain (business) innovations due to their nature of not seeking primarily economic wealth. Social innovations transform interactions and practices to create social value, and the social value is realized as, for instance, wellbeing and inclusion (see Booyens 2022). Social innovations can be conceptualized as novel or contextually novel solutions, processes, and outcomes that cross and challenge organizational boundaries, rules, and relationships and emphasize multi-stakeholder perspectives through participation and collaboration for bringing social value (Booyens 2022; Mosedale & Voll 2017; Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers 2014). Social innovations critically and holistically emphasize inclusive development by asking who the innovations are for, what the innovations are for, and how the innovations are created.

Social innovations can be viewed as a transformative process with socially valuable outcomes (Mosedale & Voll 2017). A social innovation process is co-operative and starts by identifying social needs and challenges and then forming ideas for making a change, which is followed by actualizing the ideas. Social innovation outcomes, then, are the final, actualized creations of the process, responding to social needs. With slight variations, all the conceptualizations of social innovations in the thesis articles (Partanen & Sarkki, 2021; Partanen 2022; Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023) have involved identifying the 1) social needs, 2) contextually novel ideas for changing the status quo, 3) forms of co-operation, and 4) creating or hoping to create outcomes with social value. These stages of social innovations form a transformational process aiming to respond to the initial needs for change. The conceptualization of social innovation as a transformative process is demonstrated in Figure 2.
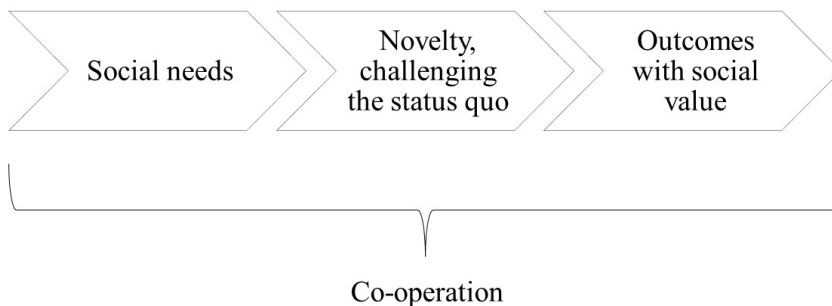
Figure 2. Social innovation as a transformative process.

While social innovations are grass-root and often stem from individual community members of civil society, carrying through the social innovation processes require multi-sectoral and multi-actor co-operation, often with resources from the private or public sector (Jungsberg et al. 2020; Partanen & Sarkki, 2021; Partanen 2022; Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023). Meanwhile, tourism is a field that requires co-operation and networks (Chimirri 2021) yet is usually practiced in its own sectoral silo (Partanen & Sarkki 2021). This can result in losses of synergies in tourism planning and development (Partanen & Sarkki 2021). Hence, considering how to rethink tourism planning and development through cooperative actions like social innovations is highly needed. This can mean studying social innovations that are formed in tourism for seeing their potential for local development in general (Partanen 2022; Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023) or studying non-tourism social innovations that could be linked with tourism development (Partanen & Sarkki 2021).

Understanding non-tourism social innovations in a place where tourism operates can reveal potential linkages between local transformative initiatives and tourism, for further making tourism more relevant and inclusive for locals (Partanen & Sarkki 2021). It is also important to study social innovations in tourism (socially innovative tourism products, for instance) for understanding how they could contribute to enhancing inclusion in local communities (Partanen 2022). Indeed, social innovations can be economically oriented yet create social value (Mirvis *et al.* 2016). For example, social innovations can be entangled with economic traits like social entrepreneurship (Morais-Da-Silva, Takahashi & Segatto 2016; Sheldon & Daniele 2017). Bressan and Pedrini (2020), for example, have studied small and micro firms, which operate in tourism yet are based on strong values of environmental and social sustainability. Via their empirical investigation, Bressan and Pedrini identified values and actions such as better work-life balance, less waste and consumption, respect for stakeholders and society at large, using clean energy, and respecting climate. The tourism actors' values are shown thoroughly in their personal lifestyles and livelihood choices. In the end, the values form a base for innovations they have created in a tourism context. Moreover, Wirth, Bandi Tanner & Mayer (2022) have identified for example a museum, a renovation program, a bilingual snow-camp for school classes, hotel co-operation, a solar ship, a supporting program, and a consumption-free place as concrete examples of social innovations in tourism. Such examples show the great variety of social innovations and demonstrate the general notion that social innovations in tourism can be seen as an attempt to create relevant value that goes beyond business-focused purposes and benefits (also) the locals, not only the tourists.

Such socially innovative processes and outcomes provide insights for rethinking the state of tourism development for further initiating not only economic sustainability measures in tourism via bringing versatile value beyond the economic benefits (see Cave & Dredge 2020). The contribution of social innovations to tourism development is conclusively demonstrated in Figure 3 (adapted from Partanen & Sarkki 2021: 556).
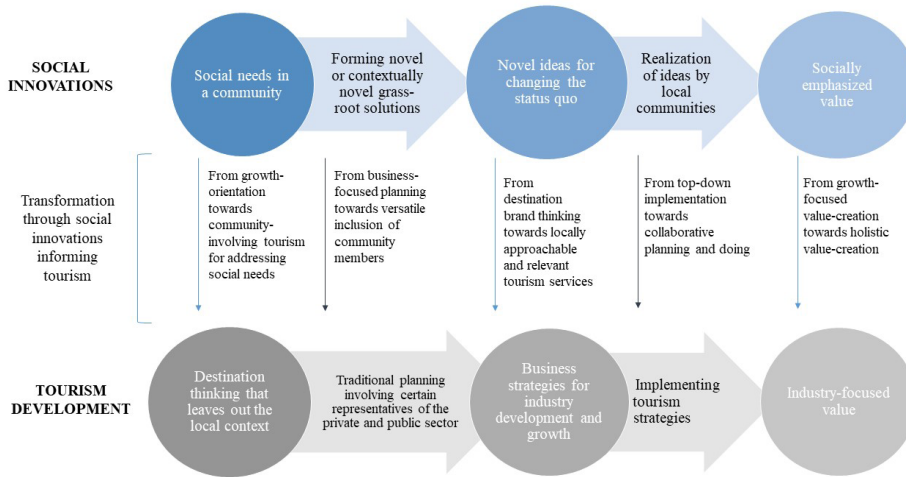
Figure 3. Social innovations informing tourism development (adapted from Partanen & Sarkki 2021: 556).

2.4 Social innovations, inclusive development, community resilience, and sustainability

To maximise the positive tourism impacts and to avoid the risks of exclusive tourism development, the conditions requiring change and resilience, as well as the attempts for enhancing inclusive development and building resilience need to be examined. This requires acknowledging the challenges for sustainability yet call for hope and active means for changing the status quo (see Pernecky 2020; Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic 2023). Enhancing inclusive development in tourism requires novel processes and initiatives for bringing change to exclusive development and services, which do not contribute to building community resilience. In this task, social innovations can provide relevant insights.

As suggested above, social innovations can inform tourism development by paying attention to 1) social needs, 2) contextually novel ideas for changing the status quo, 3) forms of co-operation, and 4) creation or hope to create outcomes with social value. First, social innovations highlight identifying social needs beyond the business-focused needs in tourism, which is also at the centre of inclusive development and services in tourism and, furthermore, central in comprehensive resilience-building. Second, the ideas for change call for critically assessing the current state of development and the focus of tourism, yet also thinking ways forward. Third, social innovations emphasize asking who are and should be involved in the development processes as well as the importance of co-operation. This bottom-up approach closely links with the idea of making tourism development and services inclusive to various community members, while inclusion is central for building and maintaining resilience in communities. Fourth, the social innovation outcomes are expected to bring social value (instead of focusing on bringing economic benefits), which could offer insights for strengthening resilience and inclusion in communities.

As community resilience, social innovations, and inclusive development are highly interlinked, they can be considered to offer insights for sustainability questions in

tourism. This is because inclusive development and community resilience-building and social innovations relate to discussions of how to leave no one behind in development. In a tourism context, these critical approaches contribute to the need to minimize the negative impacts of tourism and maximize the positive. At the same time, the aims of social innovations, inclusive development, and community resilience-building are often human-centred, based on the needs of people. In tourism research, finding a balance among the social, economic, and environmental elements of sustainability has been long one of the key endeavours (García-García *et al.* 2023). This is because sustainability inherently refers to considering all those elements; however, the ecological/environmental can be also seen as the precondition for the other forms of sustainability (Elo *et al.* 2024; García-García *et al.* 2023; Gill 2004; Saarinen 2021b; see Niñerola, Sánchez-Rebull & Hernández-Lara 2019). Eco-culturally sustainable societies emphasize the importance of seeking planetary wellbeing and places ecological wellbeing as the prerequisite for cultures to thrive and humans to live (Dessein et al. 2015; Soini & Birkeland 2014). From this perspective, sustainability refers to seeing the world as more-than-human, and adaptation to such a view requires new values, ways of life and visions of a sustainable society (Dessein *et al.* 2015). This refers to better integration and sustaining of human and natural systems at all scales (see Soini & Birkeland 2014). In this sense, the comprehensive sustainability thinking requires tourism to move towards development that prioritises the integrated socio-ecological sustainability aspects of systems impacted by tourism (see Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard 2022). Thus, while the economic needs and their risks for sustainable tourism development are already well known, also the social needs and responses to them (such as social innovations) have to be discussed in relation to the planetary needs, especially because the needs can be themselves intertwined. For this reason, the contribution of social innovations to comprehensive sustainability needs to be considered and evaluated also critically (Olsson *et al.* 2017).

Conclusively, in this thesis, social innovations are discussed in relation to inclusive development and locally inclusive services in tourism, as the means for changing the potentially exclusive state of (business-focused) tourism development require further research. In relation to this, the linkages of social innovations, inclusive development, and community resilience building are examined. This is important for managing changes and pressures created by tourism but also for using tourism as a way to bring positive change for locals. While these approaches seem to closely link to enhancing sustainability, it is also critically asked how social innovations, inclusive development, and community resilience-building contribute to enhancing holistic sustainability that acknowledges the essential need for planetary wellbeing.

3 Research design

The methodological approach of the thesis aimed for gaining a holistic picture of participants and their lives by deriving understanding from "*the larger, complicated, multifaceted, social, and historical contexts within which people's lives unfold*" (Bailey 2018: 4; see Wirth, Bandi Tanner & Mayer 2022). Inherently, the approach is based on the core aim to examine social innovations and inclusive development in tourism. Inclusive development challenges the idea of who to involve in tourism development (Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018) and social innovations are based on co-operation that acknowledges perspectives across different sectors and actors (see Mosedale & Voll 2017; Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers 2014). Hence, it was important to do empirical research on different community perspectives for understanding the context of social innovations and for understanding where the social innovation processes take place (Moulaert 2009; Wirth, Bandi Tanner & Mayer 2022). Furthermore, it was reasonable to examine people's perspectives through qualitative research approaches and through interpretive lenses by emphasizing the individual and unique experiences and views towards tourism (see Billups 2022) by paying attention to processes, structures, and interactions at the field (see Bailey 2018). Without studying the local perspectives, the understanding on the needs for social innovations and the local actions for making a change would be at risk of remaining on a superficial level.

The study explores the context of tourism development and social innovations through ethnographic research (see O'Reilly 2009) that aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of a place, its culture(s) and ways of life. Gaining a thick description (see Geertz 1973), an in-depth understanding of a place and its people, connects with the idea of seeing tourism as part of local culture and life in general, not just from the business perspective. Furthermore, utilizing ethnography allowed linking the observations on tourism to a broader cultural framework in a place (see Brannan, Rowe & Worthington 2012; Pink *et al.* 2016; Watson 2012). Additionally, the ethnographic methodology allowed studying tourism and the needs of local people by acknowledging the various power relations among communities. Moreover, the fieldwork has included participatory action research approaches, which have not been widely utilized in tourism research (Ivanova, Buda & Burrai 2021; Mura & Wijesinghe 2023), yet hold potential for gaining an in-depth understanding of people's perspectives and concrete means and hopes for change.

Thus, following Juuti and Puusa (2021), the thesis is rooted in social constructionism because of the intention to understand different perspectives that are in constant interaction and change. The work also attaches to post-structuralism, which is shown through critically examining the influence the perspectives have, by bringing light to perspectives that are marginalized, and in the wish to make a difference through research (Juuti & Puusa 2021). Through this critical perspective, the study emphasizes understanding tourism as a complex, multi-faceted system that is more than the sum of financial targets and processes (see Kulusjärvi 2020; Wakil, Sun & Chan 2021).

Kemi was chosen as the ethnographic research site for various reasons. Studying tourism as a livelihood in a city that is not traditionally seen as a tourism destination, yet a city aiming to grow tourism intensively, provided an interesting setting to study tourism development as part of local livelihoods and wishes for the future. Studying tourism in places where it is not yet a major livelihood and where the problems of tourism are, perhaps, more manageable when compared with places heavily affected by tourist masses, provides opportunities of learning from potentially resilient tourism

development processes (Erdmenger 2022). This can help identifying crucial tipping points that can direct towards inclusive or exclusive development in tourism, for example. Moreover, tourism in Kemi has not been widely studied (Ianioglo & Rissanen 2020). In addition, as was soon found out after starting the fieldwork, there are challenges to address in Kemi that can be considered as needs for social innovations. Despite the fact that Kemi has suffered, for example, from out-migration, youth unemployment, and cuts in services, there are also continuous initiatives to enhance local wellbeing. This provided interesting empirical insights for studying the questions of inclusive development in tourism through the initiatives that could be conceptualized as social innovations.

As noted, for gaining a comprehensive picture of tourism development, the thesis opens up the variety of local perspectives by studying the perspectives of local young people, actors working directly in tourism (mostly on private sector), and public sector actors. As Byrd notes (2007, 10), communities living with tourism can be *"divided into residents, business owners, and government officials"*, and the selected stakeholders represent these groups. Specifically, the groups were selected for gaining an understanding from both people who work in tourism and the ones who do not, which allows studying power linkages within community members with varying possibilities to affect tourism development (see Dong & Nguyen 2022). Generally, selecting participants for this study followed the idea that belonging to a community is symbolic and identity-based (Fan, Ng & Bayrak 2023). All the participants have some identifying factors that relate them to Kemi as a place. They have a sense of belonging to Kemi, be it via the very immediate area of residence or a feeling of belonging to the city. Most participants of this study live in Kemi while a few have a sense of belonging to some community in Kemi through employment or studies. For clarity, the term "local" is used with all participants because of their identifying, symbolic links to Kemi.

3.1 Research process, materials, and methods

The research process started with a literature review on tourism development, sustainability, and social innovations, and was later expanded to literature on resilience and inclusion. The fieldwork was completed in three periods, focusing on examining the perspectives of first, the public sector, then, the actors working directly in tourism, and finally, young people. The articles follow these phases.

The data from the three perspectives and on social innovations was gathered through interviews, document analysis, (participant) observation and a collaborative, participatory workshop. It was chosen to use a variety of qualitative methods because, following Gibbs (2018), multiple methods enable gaining a comprehensive understanding of the place and allowed gathering versatile knowledge on the place and the people.

The gathered data from 2019–2020 consists of 23 interview transcripts with private and public sector representatives, documents, (participant) observations, and observation and interview data gathered in a collaborative workshop with seven local young adults. The interviews were semi-structured. The interviews and the workshop have been the main sources of data for the thesis, while the observations and documents helped with gaining an understanding of the field site. For the first two articles, (participant) observation and interviews were carried out in order to understand tourism as part of local life and culture and to identify local socially innovative processes. The third article was based on previous findings and a collaborative workshop with seven local young

people. The gathered materials and their utilization in the articles are summarized in Table 2 and shall be discussed below.

In the beginning of 2019, I started the first phase of fieldwork – document gathering, interviews with public sector representatives, and observation of the place and during city events. First, I became familiar with current tourism and city development strategies. I visited tourism sites, went through the city websites, and read newspaper articles on Kemi and northern tourism in Finland. In 2019, I took part in events touching on youth employment and the history of the city, an online seminar on the future of Kemi, and the launch of the renovated SnowCastle area. Furthermore, I went to Kemi "as a tourist" and visited the attractions such as the SnowCastle resort area, museums, and local stores and restaurants. I took photographs during these visits. Attending these events and visiting the tourist attractions helped in getting familiar with tourism development and other current issues in Kemi. I took part in the events more as an observer than an active participant, yet observations as a tourist and researcher allowed me to dig deeper into local tourism practices. At the same time, as I visited the city events, I could also get an idea of how it feels to be a citizen in Kemi and get information about past, present, and possible future changes in the city. In addition to observation and document analysis, I did nine in-depth, semi-structured interviews with city representatives in spring 2019 (one as a pair-interview), and two with city representatives later on during the second fieldwork phase in 2020. In total, 12 city representatives have participated in this study. The ten representatives interviewed for the first article worked with city planning, management, environmental issues, employment, and business development. The last two interviews were not used as data for the first article but contributed to this thesis by giving additional insight from the museum and youth services sectors.

The second phase of fieldwork was conducted in the beginning of 2020 with mostly private sector tourism actors. I did 11 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with tourism actors who worked directly in tourism in the fields of accommodation, services, dining, and activities, and a representative of Kemi Tourism Ltd. In addition to the interviews, I was invited to visit the island of Laitakari, where I conducted participant observation in summer 2020 by having a simultaneous role of a visiting tourist and a researcher. I became familiar with the actual place of Laitakari where the development project and outcomes discussed during the interviews had been actualized.

The third and final phase of the fieldwork took place in autumn 2020. The first two phases of the fieldwork were based on more traditional ethnographic methods but with the third, I decided to head towards participatory action research. In participatory action research, the research is done with the participants instead of only conducting research on the participants (Kindon 2021). I have aimed to make the research simultaneously, as Refstie (2018: 201) notes on action research in critical scholarship, "*critical and rooted, explanatory and actionable*". A workshop was chosen as a method because workshops allow working together and co-creating knowledge to "*employ various forms of intervention, both to create contextual knowledge and to develop specific solutions*" (Gunn, Otto & Smith 2013: 4; see also Pritchard, Morgan & Ateljevic 2011). The workshop was held in Ohjaamo, a guidance centre for young people. This choice contributed to the need for providing study participants a safe space to talk about tourism and also to raise possible critical tones (Rastegar & Ruhanen 2023). Indeed, Ivanova, Buda, and Burrai (2021: 8) state that "*in order to progress and diversify tourism qualitative enquiry we need to create spaces where diverse voices, practices and experiences can be heard*". Having the workshop in a place that is not traditionally utilized for tourism planning and development brought new light to the power relations among communities. In addition, the ultimate idea of asking the youth

Table 2. Empirical materials collected and utilized in the articles.

Article number	Authors, year, title, forum	Research questions	Description of the data	Data gathering and analysis methods
Article I	Partanen M & Sarkki S (2021) Social innovations and sustainability of tourism: Insights from public sector in Kemi, Finland. Tourist Studies 21(4): 550–571. https://doi.org/10.1177/14687976211040246	1. How are social innovations and sustainability interlinked? 2. How do public sector social innovations contribute to enhancing sustainability in Kemi, Finland?	Public sector perspectives and two social innovation cases from the public sector	Interviews with 10 public sector representatives in 2019. Observing the city through the eyes of a tourist, attending events, document analysis in 2019. Qualitative, theory-oriented content analysis
Article II	Partanen M (2022) Social Innovations for Resilience — Local Tourism Actor Perspectives in Kemi, Finland. Tourism Planning & Development 19(2): 143–163. https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2021.2001037	1. How can a social innovation framework be applied into resilience-building in tourism in relation to sustainability? 2. What are the needs and visions for resilience and the role of cooperation in resilience-building in Kemi from the tourism actors' perspective?	Perspectives from people who work directly in tourism (mostly on private sector) and a social innovation case in tourism	Interviews with 11 private sector tourism actors in 2020. Participant observation at the island of Laitakari in 2020. Qualitative, theory-oriented content analysis
Article III	Partanen M, Kettunen M & Saarinen J (2023) Community inclusion in tourism development: young people's social innovation propositions for advancing sustainable tourism. Tourism Recreation Research. https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2023.2226040 [Online 30 June 2023].	1. What is the role of young people in relation to the sustainability of tourism in a community context? 2. What kind of social innovation propositions do local young people suggest for transforming tourism and how do these propositions contribute to sustainability?	Young people's perspectives and their three social innovation propositions	Observation and interview data gathered in a workshop for local young people (seven attendees) in 2020. Three interviews with youth services employees in 2020. Qualitative, theory-oriented content analysis

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about tourism development can be seen as a form of the researcher's activism. The workshop started with creating contextual knowledge about tourism, locality, and the role of local youth in Kemi and then developing specific social innovation propositions for rethinking tourism. The participants were encouraged to form social innovation propositions by thinking of local needs, coming up with ideas that create social value, and thinking of who to involve in the transformational process. While we as researchers tried to facilitate the process by giving a premise by talking about social innovations and encouraging the participants to think what tourism could potentially give to local people, we let the participants think for themselves about whether and how tourism could change from their perspective. In this way, we tried to avoid placing ideas into their minds but rather hear their views. The workshop feedback was positive and, as we researchers hoped, was expressed to bring something good for the participants as well.

3.2 Ethics and reflection

A researcher needs to reflect their influences on interpretations (Gibbs 2018: Semi 2005) and on the people being studied. While the researcher aims for seeing things through the eyes of participants, the analyses are themselves interpretations and, thus, constructions of the world (Gibbs 2018). It is central to be aware of how the researcher's position affects the study, both academically and how the researcher is familiar with the field being studied. For providing some reflexive thoughts on my position as a researcher, I have in-law relations to Kemi, so I had visited Kemi before starting the research and knew the city a little, which gave me a close look to emic, insider perspectives towards the place (Xue & Kerstetter 2019). I also do share a common language and culture with the local people, for example. However, I have never lived in Kemi and did not have any other connections with local people, particularly the youth, tourism actors, or public sector representatives. In this sense, as I am not a member of the community, I have had an outsider's etic perspective (Xue & Kertsetter 2019). On one hand, this helped in getting a fresh perspective of the studied area. On the other, it required intensive efforts during the fieldwork to understand the social relationships, the state of tourism, and development paths in the city. Ultimately, my aim was to gain an emic understanding of a place through first-hand community views, ideas, and concepts (see Xue & Kerstetter 2019).

For avoiding bias in interpretation, I have constantly evaluated and self-reflected what I know, what I need more information about, and from which perspectives I have gathered information. I am a researcher who has expertise in the studied issues, but simultaneously I have learned from the study participants about their local ways of life and the transformations around them. I have studied people in Kemi with a certain context sensitivity by trying to understand the needs for change as well as the issues in tourism planning and development from their perspectives (see Heikkinen *et al.* 2016), while acknowledging the globally pressing needs for sustainability. I have also kept in mind that a researcher needs to be sensitive for community members' differences in opinion, as well as to potential conflict between the views (Gibbs 2018). This was also the case with studying the three perspectives from the public sector, actors working directly in tourism, and young people. People had differing opinions regarding tourism development, both between and within the mentioned three perspectives. I consider that my role was to try to understand the participants' perspectives and reasonings for their opinions.

I have ensured all the participants have provided informed consent (Bailey 2018) with written, signed documents. Every participant has been over 15 years old, and they have been able to decide independently on their participation (see Finnish National Board for Research Integrity TENK 2019). People have participated confidentially (Bailey 2018) without their names being shared or published, and I have respected the participants' stances on participating, confidentiality and the gathering and archiving of the data. I have collected written agreements on participation from all the interviewees and workshop participants and prepared and handed out the notification following The EU General Data Protection Regulation.

3.3 Analysis

The analysis method for the synopsis and the articles was theory-oriented qualitative content analysis with a categorization system that was based on theory-oriented procedure (Kohlbacher 2006; Mayring 2000). This means that the analysis was both theory-oriented and iterative with deductive, conceptual elements and inductive, empirical elements (Watson 2012; see Yanow 2012). The research had inductive, emic elements due to avoiding high prior expectations, recognizing biases, and allowing the voices of participants to be heard. I tried to remain open to what was inherently found at the field. Simultaneously, I have been aware of theoretical concepts when entering the field and utilized them when analysing the materials. As Bailey (2018) notes, categories do not only automatically emerge from the data, rather they are identified and created by the researcher. Still, while utilising research-based concepts makes the research etic-oriented, I have tried to analyse the data by staying true to the participants' views.

For all of the articles, the analysis started with describing the data through a rough typification for forming categories and sub-categories, then reducing the data into summaries and finally interpreting the data through theory-oriented themes (see Gibbs 2018). This was done by looking for key features of the data, discovering relationships, meanings and patterns, creating conceptual definitions, noting similarities and differences within the data, paying attention to repeating notions, and producing a thick description, while keeping in mind the overarching research questions (see Bailey 2018; Gibbs 2018).

By using the categorization process described, the data was interpreted through theory-oriented themes. The main themes for analysis thorough the thesis included 1) needs for change, 2) wishes or initiatives for change and 3) the role of co-operation and participation in tourism development. The themes were based on research literature on sustainability and especially social innovations that emphasize needs and initiatives for change through co-operation. Furthermore, as the data regarding tourism was gathered from local people's perspective, the findings were noted to be relevant to discussions on inclusive development in tourism and locally inclusive tourism services. These elements have been present thorough the process via discussing the means of transformations and the question of local involvement in tourism development and planning. Resilience was noted as a relevant concept for studying especially the perspectives of tourism actors. This choice was based on the fact that the tourism actors expressed that they have had to be resistant to many changes and they have needed to find alternative ways to continue operation despite the challenges. This was noted to link with research on how community resilience can be weakened or strengthened.

While the analysis was in many parts theory-oriented, it appeared important also for the study participants to talk about local needs for change and the wishes for change. This shows that the theoretical framework originating from social innovation and sustainability studies was concise with the empirical findings. However, the participants emphasized talking about the local relationships of co-operation in tourism development and brought up the problematics regarding the focus of tourism. Although I considered these as potentially important issues already when entering the field, their strong emphasis required inductive, emic-oriented efforts for widening the understanding of the place and the community perspectives. Here, utilizing the inclusive development literature was especially useful.

When analysing the data of the social innovation cases, I followed the social innovation framework introduced in chapter 2 and summarized in Figure 2. I framed that in order to call locally driven transformative initiatives socially innovative, they must have been based on social needs and they must have brought contextually novel ideas for transforming the status quo. The initiatives have been or would be carried out through co-operation, and they have created or are hoped to create social value. As noted, the cases in the first two articles represent actualized social innovations. In the case of the third article, social innovations have been conceptually and methodologically used for imagining alternative futures. Yet, all the cases must have filled the explained social innovation criteria.

In addition to analysing all the collected data through the social innovation-based themes, each article has had specific theoretical perspectives. With the first article (Partanen & Sarkki 2021), social innovations and tourism were compared by looking for the needs of tourism and local needs in general, co-operation in creating a social innovation or planning tourism, and the (estimated) value created through social innovations or tourism from the public sector perspective. Tourism and social innovations in Kemi were analysed through themes of "*(1) current or potential needs and challenges related to tourism and social innovations, (2) co-operation in creating a social innovation or planning tourism, and (3) value creation through social innovation or tourism*" (Partanen & Sarkki 2021: 558–559). Two public sector social innovations and their potential linkages with tourism were analysed. The findings were discussed by suggesting widening the understanding of stakeholders in tourism, emphasizing holistic and multi-sectoral tourism development and value creation, and using collaborative spaces for planning tourism. These findings were discussed in relation to top-down regulations, sectoral silos and needs for practicality, which were identified as problems for enhancing sustainability.

With the second article (Partanen 2022), the gathered data on tourism actors' perspectives towards the present and future state of tourism was analysed through the conceptualization of resilience by using a social innovation framework of "*needs, visions, and collaboration for co-creating outcomes*" (Partanen 2022: 148). In addition, a social innovation case in tourism was analysed. The findings were discussed against sustainability through enhancing inclusion and diversification by considering local culture, suggestions on constructing multi-sectoral and communal dialogue, and identifying environmentally friendly visions.

With the third article (Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023), the social innovation framework was used for rethinking tourism and local life by co-creating propositions for responding to local needs. This was done by analysing young people's needs behind the social innovation propositions and their ideas for change, as well as the potential value the propositions could bring. Furthermore, the data was analysed by examining

whether tourism was directed for the benefit of the community or for the visitors. Additionally, barriers and pathways to participation and inclusion were identified, as well as the ways that their propositions supported tourism towards the inside of local communities instead of only towards the outside for tourists. The findings were finally discussed against the sustainability of community involvement in tourism.

For this synopsis, the views from public sector, actors working directly in tourism, and the young people were summarized. In addition, the identified social innovation cases were summarized and their contribution to bringing change in Kemi was examined. The findings were then analysed by bringing together and comparing the perspectives regarding tourism in Kemi. Specifically, the focus of tourism and participation and co-operation needed to be discussed as they were such important elements according to the study participants but also in terms of understanding inclusive development in tourism. The main findings were further elaborated against the research literature on inclusive development and services in tourism, community resilience, sustainability, and social innovations. Based on the data, directing tourism towards local needs and identifying non-traditional perspectives in development and planning through social innovations were noted as ways of challenging the state of tourism development for enabling inclusive development and resilience-building. Finally, the relationship of social innovations and sustainability was analysed by critically evaluating in which ways social innovations can contribute to enhancing sustainability and on which scales in a tourism context.

4 The field site of Kemi

Kemi is a city in northern Finland (Figure 4 – the map by Erika Brusila has been published originally in Partanen 2022: 147) with around 20 000 inhabitants (Official Statistics of Finland 2023a). Kemi is traditionally known for its heavy industry. Tourism in Kemi has been in constant change and socio-economic restructuration for the last decades. Tourism has been a relatively small livelihood since the 1980s, but has been growing during the last decades (Lapin luotsi 2023). For example, spent nights in Kemi have increased from around 66 000 nights in 1995 to around 102 000 nights in 2022 (Rudolph Statistical Database 2023, demonstrated in Table 3).

Based on the gathered data, modern-day tourism in Kemi has started off with the city-owned main attractions: the SnowCastle and icebreaker Sampo. The attractions are operated by Kemi Tourism Ltd. Many participants noted that since the beginning, the icebreaker Sampo has been the flagship of tourism. Soon, the SnowCastle – an outdoor castle made of actual snow – contributed to the tourism scene in the 1990s and, according to the participants, became also internationally known. Modern-day tourism has been developed and planned mainly by the public sector and, to some extent, by the private sector tourism actors. There are many small tourism actors operating in the sectors of accommodations, restaurants, attractions, and activities. Many public sector services such as museums also offer services for visitors.

Especially in the 2010s, tourism development and marketing have been directed towards international growth. In recent years, Kemi has invested massively in the SnowCastle resort area. The area has basically replaced the traditional snow-made outdoor castle. Several of the activities and facilities have been moved indoors with a year-round open ice castle and attached services (Figure 5). This was done with the expectation of boosting year-round tourism. One reason for developing (such) tourism has been to bring employment and vitality to the city. It can be interpreted that there has been hope that tourism would bring diversification to Kemi's livelihood structure through alternative socio-economic development prospects (see Saarinen, Rogerson & Hall 2017; Kimbu, Booyens & Winchenbach 2022) since the area has traditionally relied mostly on heavy industry. At the same time, the unemployment rate in Kemi in July 2023 was 15 %, whereas in the whole country it was 10.5 % (Official Statistics of Finland 2023b).

Kemi has also suffered from a diminishing population and the share of the population of persons aged under 15 has decreased from 19 % in 1987 to 13.1 % in 2021 (Official Statistics of Finland 2023a, demonstrated in Table 4). Also, youth unemployment has been rather high. In Kemi, the percentage of unemployed jobseekers aged under 25 of the entire workforce of that age was 19.1 % in July 2023, and the percentage has been on average 21.6 % in the past five years, August 2018 – July 2023 (Official Statistics of Finland 2023c). Young people have moved to bigger cities for education, employment, and more diverse leisure activities (Benediktsson & Suopajärvi 2007), and this continues to be the case. These changes call for asking how tourism can or could contribute to tackling the pressures of unemployment and demographic changes, among others.
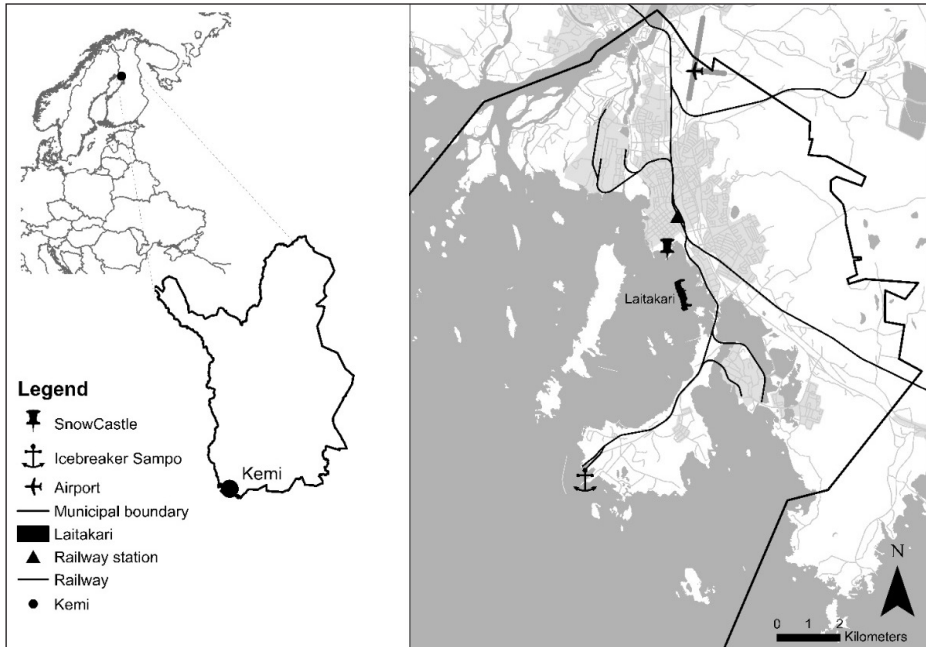
Figure 4. Map showing Kemi, the main tourist attractions, and the island of Laitakari. Map by Erika Brusila (Partanen 2022: 147).

Table 3. Tourism growth in Kemi. Source: Rudolph Statistical Database.

	Nights spent			
	1995	2005	2015	2022
Total	66,443	69,446	77,483	102,379
Domestic	53,078	51,987	59,225	77,782
Foreign	13,365	17,459	18,258	24,597

Figure 5. Entrance to the indoor ice castle.
Figure: Mari Partanen, 2020.

Table 4. Population in Kemi and the share of persons aged under 15 in 1987 and 2021. Source: Official Statistics of Finland.

	1987	1997	2017	2021
Population	25,984	24,485	21,256	19,982
Share of persons aged under 15 of the population, %	19.0	17.1	14.5	13.9

5 Community perspectives and social innovations for rethinking tourism development

Based on the gathered data, tourism has offered a new option in the livelihood structure of an industrial city of Kemi, and tourism can be seen as a way to answer the demographic challenges that the city has undergone (see also Isanioglo & Rissanen 2020). Broadening the livelihood structure towards service-based options can be seen as a development effort in so-called post-industrial times. Meanwhile, heavy industry is still a central source of livelihood for many people in Kemi, despite the continuous fluctuations in the industry (see Benediktsson & Suopajärvi 2007). This is what many study participants noted: heavy industry still comes first, yet there have been considerable efforts to develop tourism in Kemi (Figure 6). The citizens have both opposed to and supported tourism development.

The three local perspectives studied in more detail – the public sector, actors working directly in tourism, and young people – all show that there are many local needs for change in general but also for changing the current state of tourism. Yet, there are also various initiatives for transformations. The social innovation cases from each group provide examples of local processes that aim for transforming the status quo for responding to social needs and for creating social value. Examples of the identified needs, novel ideas, social value, and co-operation in the social innovation cases are demonstrated in Figure 7 (see also Partanen & Sarkki 2021; Partanen 2022; Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023). They all can hold potential or are already considered to contribute to building community resilience and making tourism development more inclusive. This shall be discussed below.

Figure 6. A sign demonstrating things to see in Kemi.
Figure: Mari Partanen, 2020.

Social innovation as a transformative process

Social needs	A novel idea for challenging the status quo	Examples of social value of the (potential) outcomes
The Social Kitchen: finding use for waste food	The Social Kitchen: arranging cooking clubs for processing waste food	The Social Kitchen: inclusion, healthier food, environmental education
Kohtaamo: unemployment, fragmented services, exclusion	Kohtaamo: restructuring services for the youth	Kohtaamo: employment, wellbeing, guidance, future prospects
Laitakari: diversifying tourism, more recreation possibilities for locals and tourists, bringing up local history and cultural heritage	Laitakari: developing tourism to the island of Laitakari with local people by deriving from the maritime culture and history	Laitakari: recreation possibilities, local pride, participation in planning and development
An information platform: a lack of information on tourism services, the existing channels do not reach young people	An information platform: establishing a platform for finding information on local happenings	An information platform: more possibilities for recreation
A drive-in cinema and an ABC petrol station: a lack of spaces to hang out or the existing spaces are not welcoming, lack of activities	A drive-in cinema and an ABC petrol station: developing activities and spaces to hang out	A drive-in cinema and an ABC petrol station: more liveliness, services and activities, possibilities to meet people, employment opportunities

Cooperation:
grass-root, multi-sectoral forming of solutions,
involving public sector representatives, private sector (tourism) actors,
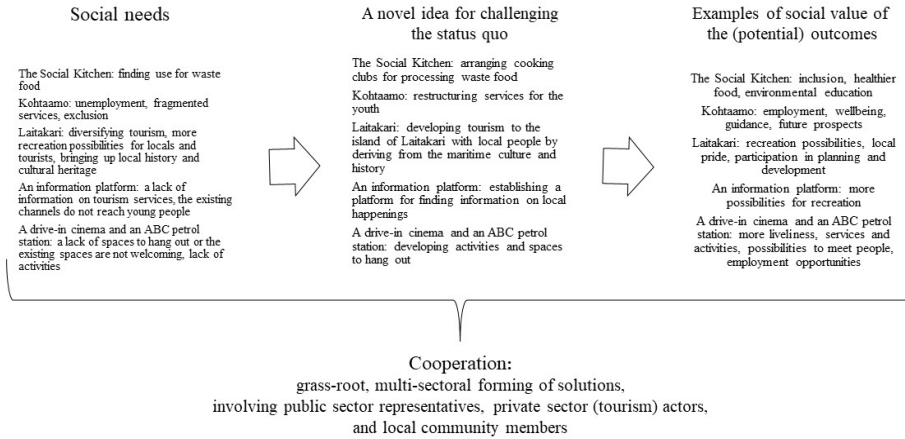and local community members

Figure 7. The social innovation cases.

5.1 Public sector

The public sector representatives brought up that generally, tourism of Kemi is rather accepted by the residents and brings vitality and activities to the city. Yet, it has also raised criticism since public sector has invested in tourism development. The public sector representatives from diverse fields noted that tourism development could be done more cross-sectorally and that tourism planning could be more participatory. During the discussions with people working in the public sector, it became clear that many fields in the public sector are strongly linked with tourism – for instance museums and cultural services, children and youth services, and environmental services. Yet, co-operation in planning and development were noted to be minimal. Additionally, often, the current tourism services were evaluated as too expensive for local people or considered unwelcoming, solely directed to tourists.

The city-owned Kemi Tourism Ltd. has focused on growing the number of international visitors with the purpose of bringing income and vitality to the city with a new branding: Experience365. The tourism development of Kemi Tourism Ltd. has focused on the main attractions, Sampo and the SnowCastle (resort area), with an aim to attract more customers and to boost year-round tourism. However, the public sector representatives considered that tourism could better represent the unique characteristics of Kemi. On the general city websites (Kemi 2024a) it is specifically noted that there is a lot to see and experience in Kemi beyond the obvious main attractions. For example, historical and archaeological sites, architecture, art, harbours, maritime activities, the archipelago, and cultural environments are mentioned as worth visiting. This is an interesting observation and underlines a finding that the public sector is scattered and diverse in terms of how tourism is perceived in Kemi.

During the fieldwork, common needs in tourism and at the city in general were identified. In the public sector interviews, the participants brought up needs for change. They were challenges such as unemployment, fragmented services, needs for inclusion,

and environmental sustainability, for example in terms of how to find uses for food waste. These can be seen as issues that challenge sustainable development in Kemi. The public sector representatives also discussed local initiatives for positive change. From these discussions, two public sector social innovations were identified (see Partanen & Sarkki 2021). They aimed to respond to local needs by transforming the status quo, through new collaborations that reach out towards the needs of local people, and by creating social and in another case, also environmental value. The first innovation was The Social Kitchen, which is a cooking club where food waste is prepared into meals. The second one was called Kohtaamo at the time of the study (today, Kohtaamo is called Ohjaamo because it is part of national Ohjaamo service centres). It is a one-spot meeting centre where young adults get support, for example in finding employment.

As we discussed the initiatives with the public sector representatives, I started to think about how to combine them with tourism, as there were clearly similar needs and characteristics between tourism and these innovations. This kind of approach combines with the overarching question of how tourism could be connected with other development paths and initiatives in a place that is more than a destination – rather, a place of residence where tourism operates (see Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby 2022). In Kemi, there is a need for finding employment for local people (while tourism constantly needs employees) and needs for finding ways to enhance environmental sustainability in a food waste context (while tourism operates in gastronomy and needs to consider circular economy) and social inclusion by taking part in activities (while tourism often provides activities and services).

Firstly, the Social Kitchen reproduces food waste in cooking clubs. It has been a joint effort of different sectors and actors, reaching out to local people as participants. This kind of an initiative creates social value by bringing people together to prepare and share a meal. It can support feeling included to the community, while providing information about healthier food and environmental education, for instance. As food and beverages are a central part of tourism experiences, from a sustainability perspective it is important to evaluate how to process food in relation to local surroundings. Or, as Ateljevic (2020: 473) notes, "*food is one of the key ingredients underpinning tourism consumption*". The evaluation of processing food in tourism needs to be done in terms of where the food comes from (is it locally produced?), how the food is processed (is there food waste? who uses it and how?) and served (who can take part in gastronomic experiences?), for example. Hence, the question rises whether tourism could contribute to providing resources for such social innovations through circulating food waste from restaurants, for instance. It was suggested in the first article that combining such local initiatives with tourism experiences can create new possibilities to bring tourism closer to local people and provide resources for the initiatives (Partanen & Sarkki 2021; see also Bell 2015).

Secondly, the other public sector social innovation, Kohtaamo, is a service centre that provides support services for young adults. It is based on an idea of restructuring services so that a young person can get support in one place instead of moving from one service to another regarding employment, studies, or life management in general. Kohtaamo is the result of cross-sectoral collaboration, with the customers being involved as developers of the services. Kohtaamo is expected to help with finding employment, guidance, and future prospects and, furthermore, support youth's wellbeing. Getting familiar with this social innovation revealed that tourism has been expected to bring employment for the local youth, whereas finding work in tourism has been challenging. At the same time, it was noted by one representative of the tourism industry that finding workers with required skills is hard, while some city representatives

stated that the expected requirements are too hard to meet. Such a problem exists despite the matching needs: young people need jobs and tourism needs employees. Finding linkages between people willing to work in tourism and people working in tourism in need of employees is needed. Perhaps rethinking the development paths in tourism could increase employment for the local youth (Partanen & Sarkki 2021). Then, questions such as what the young people are expected to learn for working in tourism (and who should teach them), how the current state of tourism works from the viewpoint of young people, and why the tourism companies expect certain skills from employees, could be elaborated.

For reaching such common benefits, planning tourism beyond the usual planning methods could be encouraged. Taking tourism planning and doing into alternative, collaborative spaces such as youth centres or cooking clubs could be encouraged, as ideas stemming from such places could bring completely new ideas to tourism actors as well and sharing knowledge in alternative spaces could bring different parties closer to each other (Partanen & Sarkki 2021; see Rastegar & Ruhanen 2023). In this task, the public sector could play a key role.

The findings indicate that the idea of who to involve in tourism development from the public sector can be challenged and widened via social innovations. Paying attention to social innovations rising from non-tourism sectors can help in finding concrete ways and initiatives for transforming tourism towards sustainability. Here, the cross-sectoral nature of social innovations can be utilized. Social innovations can help both in thinking about who to involve in tourism development and in crossing organizational and sectoral silos (Partanen & Sarkki 2021), similarly as The Social Kitchen and Kohtaamo have already done in the issues regarding employment and food waste. Bending towards non-traditional public sector representatives and the social innovations arising from these sectors can bring new insights into the local relevance of tourism. Hence, it is important to challenge the idea of which public sector actors ought to be involved in tourism development and, through them, which local communities could be (re)presented in tourism planning. This more inclusive approach could contribute to enhancing holistic sustainability with its various aspects by gaining an understanding of the tangled nature of tourism, city development, and local life (see Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby 2022). In the context of Kemi, this could mean, for example, employing local young adults through Kohtaamo or by arranging food waste cooking clubs in collaboration with local restaurants (Partanen & Sarkki 2021).

5.2 Actors working in tourism

While tourism actors in Kemi operate in various fields of business, they considered that the future of the main attractions is very central for their businesses. Firstly, the future of Sampo concerned some of the participants. Sampo has kept on operating since the 1980s, yet, as noted also in Saunavaara *et al.* (2023), due to its old age, Sampo has required renovations time after time and has not been able to sail for whole seasons. Furthermore, the ice and snow situation in Kemi has varied yearly, which has manifested as shortened cruising seasons for Sampo and as problems in building the snow castle due to lack of material (see Saunavaara *et al.* 2023). Generally, during the interviews Sampo appeared to be a beloved attraction for many tourism actors but the changes in its customer groups and brand aiming towards growth raised criticism. Indeed, as noted in Partanen (2022), while many representatives of the private and public sector voiced

that growth in tourism is needed and that there is space for growth, many saw risks in big growth, both for the environment and for the businesses and local wellbeing. They considered that growth should not be aimed at, for example, directing marketing towards Asia. Some tourism actors stated that tourism growth had already created crowdedness, for example on Sampo. Yet, in general, mass tourism was not considered a likely problem in Kemi.

Secondly, the relationship of the SnowCastle and tourism actors appeared complicated. Despite the SnowCastle became a famous attraction in the 1990s and, as has been often noted, surprisingly successful, it has also raised criticism that public funds were used for building the castle (Benediktsson & Suopajärvi 2007). In relation to this, tourism has been criticized due to the fact that the city also operates in tourism and competes with the private sector. This was expressed multiple times during the fieldwork, especially by the tourism actors. The tourism actors particularly stated that the changes carried out in the 2010s were misdirected and criticized the development of the SnowCastle resort area.

From the private sector viewpoint, and mainly from small actors, there are needs for finding better ways to do co-operation in tourism planning and development. In terms of co-operation between tourism actors, there have been conflicts and differing opinions among the biggest player, Kemi Tourism Ltd., and small tourism actors. The Master Plan 3030 Kemi (Pakarinen 2022) also brings this up as a challenge for tourism development. It can be interpreted that Kemi Tourism Ltd. holds the most power by owning the main tourism attractions and directing the course of tourism development, planning, marketing, and branding. Meanwhile, many small tourism actors felt that they are not being heard. Some expressed serious frustration with the current modes of co-operation and found it hard to continue working together. Still, there were hopes that a mutual understanding could be found between Kemi Tourism Ltd. and the small tourism actors, and that the tourism sector could find strength internally instead of competition and arguments.

In addition to this, some tourism actors considered that locals have not been heard enough in tourism development and that the current activities are not welcoming for locals. Meanwhile, it was also expressed that involvement of residents is not that important and the tourism actors should be at the centre of planning and implementing tourism. The tourism actors in general considered that tourism can bring a lot of good for locals, especially employment and vitality. Yet, they also brought up needs for diversifying tourism and creating more tourism products and recreation possibilities for both locals and tourists.

In general, it was noted that tourism is a sector that is sensitive to global stressors such as fluctuating markets and pandemics. These issues of operating on a vulnerable field of business, disagreements over the course of development and growth in terms of local wellbeing and environmental concerns, and the problems in co-operation hinder the resilience of tourism businesses and affect the resilience of a place in general (see also Saunavaara *et al.* 2023). The issues can be identified as stressors that require resilience(-building) from tourism actors (Partanen 2022).

The tourism actors suggested realigning the focus and target groups of tourism as well as rethinking co-operation in tourism development. These suggestions for change can be identified as possibilities to build community resilience. In this regard, tourism actors brought up the Laitakari development project as a recent example of responding to local needs by developing tourism that is rooted to local history and culture. In recent years, a former industrial island called Laitakari has been reconstructed into a

tourism and recreation area by local people and tourism actors (Figure 8, Figure 9). The development project has taken place by drawing from the special maritime culture and history of the island. The project has been carried out through multi-sectoral and multi-actor processes that have involved local people who had been living on the island, NGOs, the local museum, private actors, and the city. It was noted by the tourism actors that the project had a social gap to fill, as the attraction is aimed both for locals and tourists. Laitakari has brought recreation possibilities, local pride, and enabled participation in tourism planning and development.

This kind of co-creative, multi-sectoral planning and doing is typical for social innovations, as well as responding to social needs by initiating transformative processes for bringing something good for people. The development project has turned the approach to developing tourism upside down: it has asked what tourism could do for the locals instead of emphasizing what tourism needs (see Nogués-Pedregal, Travé-Molero & Carmona-Zubiri 2017). The project was identified to represent a path of tourism that aims to create social value for locals through involving tourism planning and development. It also diversifies tourism by drawing from local history and culture and provides an alternative for growth-seeking and resort-oriented development paths. Hence, the case represents a social innovation in tourism (Partanen 2022) and serves as an example of how to do inclusive development in tourism and how to make locally inclusive tourism services (Scheyvens & Biddulph 2018). Thus, the findings indicate that social innovations can help in conceptualizing the community resilience-necessitating conditions by paying attention to challenges that force or motivate change and social innovations can help in identifying ways and visions for collaboratively operating with

Figure 8. A sign in Laitakari. Figure: Mari Partanen, 2020.

change and co-creating outcomes for building resilience. Such social innovations in tourism can be seen as means of building community resilience (Partanen 2022).

At the same time, it is important to evaluate how different resilience-building initiatives in tourism contribute to sustainability (Partanen 2022). For instance, the development path in Kemi that aims for major international growth through the resort area can be seen as an aim to build resilience for the tourism industry and the city yet poses questions of how environmentally or socially sustainable the chosen path of development is (see Saunavaara *et al.* 2023). The operation of main attractions follows the idea of a destination brand, which is directed mainly towards the outside for tourists, instead of relying on destination identity, which is defined by locals and directed towards the inside for local communities (Nogués-Pedregal, Travé-Molero & Carmona-Zubiri 2017; Wheeler *et al.* 2011). However, it is also worth noting that as time passes, the idea of which tourism initiatives follow the destination identity can change (Partanen 2022). This underlines the need to constantly evaluate the directions in tourism development. Here, it is important to ask whose resilience is being built through such development paths and how sustainable it is in the long run.

Moreover, it is important to evaluate the scale of growth in tourism development: whether a small company grows a bit or tourism in general grows a lot (Partanen 2022). Optimizing growth is central for managing tourism impacts sustainably (Gössling *et al.* 2016). In some cases, aiming for de-growth or enhancing, for example, domestic tourism to drop emissions can be the wisest solution in terms of sustainability (see Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.* 2019). Here, it is central to identify which local, transformative

Figure 9. A former power plant in Laitakari. Figure: Mari Partanen, 2020.

initiates are compatible with the environmental sustainability goals (Partanen 2022). Social innovations emphasize social value, hence their contribution to environmental matters needs to be evaluated. On the other hand, social innovations can also aim at diminishing environmentally harmful development paths. Generally, taking care of the environment enhances communities' wellbeing in the long run.

5.3 Young people

The young people who took part in this study often expressed that tourism in Kemi could have a lot of potential in enhancing local wellbeing, especially by making the city livelier. Many considered the SnowCastle as the main attraction where to take visitors. However, the youth brought up that there is generally a lack of activities and spaces to hang out or the existing spaces do not feel welcoming. They specifically brought up that there is a lack of information on tourism services, or the existing channels do not reach young people. It was also noted that there are already quite a lot to do in Kemi but the locals are not necessarily aware of the possibilities. However, it was strongly expressed by the youth that tourism development in Kemi should aim for unique direction to distinguish itself from tourism of Lapland by deriving from local characteristics. This shows that the youth prefer tourism development that is based on place identity rather than using a destination brand that is based on (presumed) expectations of visitors (Wheeler *et al.* 2011).

According to the youth, their voices are very rarely heard or listened to in the city or especially in tourism development. For young people, taking part in tourism development appeared to happen through finding employment in tourism. However, as noted above, the results indicate that finding employment in tourism can be challenging. The city representatives working with employment services noted that it is hard for young people to find employment in tourism, despite the expectations that tourism would bring needed jobs to Kemi. Another possibility young people considered as a way to take part in tourism development was through contacting political decision-makers. However, this was considered difficult and raised precarious tones of whether the suggestions would make any difference. These doubts reflect the atmosphere young people may feel while trying to make a difference in tourism development or in local development in general (see Canosa, Moyle & Wray 2016). Meanwhile, the findings show that young people are capable and willing to participate in tourism development, but the specific ways of participation are missing. This is due to the fact that young people do not find the current ways of participation welcoming or they are not aware of the ways to participate. Furthermore, the young people's discussions showed that they felt decision-making power was not in their hands, but rather was in the hands of public sector representatives and tourism actors.

For rethinking tourism from local viewpoints, the participants co-created social innovation propositions. First, they created a platform for enhancing the flow of information regarding tourism. The participants noted that communication should be done in a way that reaches all age groups, not just the youth, and suggested ways to develop a proper platform for this purpose. The second and third social innovation propositions aimed to tackle two intertwined needs the youth identified: the lack of places to hang out as well as the need for more leisure time activities. Hence, they suggested opening an ABC petrol station and a drive-in movie theatre that could serve both visitors and locals. The first, a petrol station, was also noted to respond to the

need to attract passing-by visitors to stop in Kemi. Furthermore, if realized, the petrol station was considered to offer various services like a restaurant and the possibility to sell local products and, additionally, to create employment opportunities for locals. The propositions expressed needs and ideas of how to recognize young adults' inclusion in tourism planning, suggestions on how to create more inclusive services for locals, and ways to enhance more diverse, locally grounded, and socially valuable tourism. The propositions combined the needs of tourists and locals, hence challenge the ways of planning mostly for tourists.

The results indicated that young people have a lot to contribute to tourism development for making it a positive transformative force in their local surroundings. Yet, their possibilities to have a say in tourism development and planning is minimal. Furthermore, the propositions were often reflected against market logics and decision-making structures. Imagining something and creating social innovations new seemed to be linked to systems traditionally holding power. This is in line with the notion that often social innovations need private- or public sector support (Ilie & During 2012; Jungsberg *et al.* 2020). Meanwhile, for example Fletcher *et al.* (2023) suggest that a transition towards post-capitalist tourism requires various practices that are a combination of bottom-up and top-down initiatives and governance.

The findings suggest that grass-root social innovations have the potential to make tourism a positive transformative force for local communities (Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023). Such tourism could move towards changes that prioritize socio-ecological systems impacted by tourism (see Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard 2022). This kind of tourism places the non-industry needs as the most central ones in tourism development, and hence challenges economically oriented tourism development and innovations. It can be suggested that social innovation propositions hold potential in enhancing more sustainable forms of tourism towards the inside of local communities instead of only towards the outside for tourists (see Nogués-Pedregal, Travé-Molero & Carmona-Zubiri 2017). In relation to this, the propositions by youths contribute to the growing interest in proximity or resident tourism. Proximity or residence tourism challenges the idea that tourism should be developed solely for people who travel longer distances to visit a place (Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby 2022; Hoogendoorn & Hammett 2021). In this sense, the suggestions for enhancing tourism development towards the inside (Nogués-Pedregal, Travé-Molero & Carmona-Zubiri 2017), as well as the youth's social innovation propositions, link with the recent academic discussions of who counts as a tourist.

6 Discussion

6.1 Needs for change

When looking at the three local perspectives studied, they all suggest that the benefits of tourism could be better directed towards different community members' needs. Some tourism actors, many representatives of the public sector and the young people pointed out that locals not directly working in tourism have been excluded in tourism development. The planning methods in tourism development were regarded as exclusive. This has created a gap between tourism and local people both in planning and using the services tourism has to offer.

The findings in many ways indicate that the participants hope for more inclusive tourism that is relevant for both locals and visitors. Many participants across the public and private sectors and the youth expressed that the current focus of tourism requires rethinking. It was often expressed that the SnowCastle is no longer considered a place where locals would go. Especially the recent resort-oriented development and replacing the outdoor snow castle with the indoor ice castle raised criticism. After the Covid-19 pandemic, the outdoor castle has not been built at all, as the indoor ice castle has replaced the original concept. While Sampo was considered a product directed for tourists since the beginning and, hence, was distant for locals, it was expressed that the SnowCastle was first and foremost built for locals and then started to also attract tourists. Now, the investments in the new year-round snow castle resort area were considered a mistake, especially by tourism actors. Similar criticism towards the indoor ice castle is noted at the Master Plan 3030 Kemi (Pakarinen 2022) by the City of Kemi. Criticism towards the current focus of tourism could be explained by the fact that the mainstream tourism of Kemi has been planned to fill first and foremost the (estimated) visitors' needs. Switching the castle to the indoor environment in order to offer year-round winter experiences can be seen as an attempt to respond to the expected international customers' ideal of Kemi as a winter destination (see Varnajot 2020). However, this choice does not represent the seasons in northern areas as they are, since they are more diverse by nature (Varnajot 2020).

At the same time, the new direction of the SnowCastle as well as the growth agenda of Sampo can be seen as attempts to build local resilience through growing visitor numbers, which could provide vitality and income for the city (Partanen 2022; Saunavaara *et al.* 2023). The strategy can be also seen as a resilience-building tactic against climate change related changes in snow availability – simultaneously, growth-focused tourism contributes to climate change and can weaken community resilience, as the doubts towards the success of the development path suggests (Partanen 2022; Saunavaara *et al.* 2023; see Amore, Prayag & Hall 2018). Not all the study participants considered the directions to enhance local wellbeing, and some raised serious concerns regarding the environmental sustainability of the current direction of development.

Based on the findings, building long-term resilience via considering social and environmental limits regarding growth should be further discussed. In addition, the new direction in tourism can be seen as a disturbance that requires community resilience from small tourism actors who do not agree with the mainstream focus of tourism, as they need to consider how their livelihoods can continue after the changes in the focus of tourism. In addition, local people have needed to adapt to changes in a city with diminishing services and unemployment, and there are wishes that tourism would help with coping with such changes, for example through providing employment and

free-time activities. The findings show that these wishes and worries could be better considered in tourism development, especially for addressing young people's needs.

Then again, while criticism was raised, local people in Kemi do not necessarily consider the main attractions unconvincing or artificial *per se*, which is sometimes the problem when tourism appears distant for locals (see Rickly-Boyd 2013). However, while the participants of this study did not express directly that the main direction of tourism development does not originate from Kemi, they widely suggested diversifying and developing tourism that is rooted in local history, culture, and lifestyles. They also strongly noted that Kemi should not develop tourism that copies Lapland but rather aim for its own direction. According to many participants, diversifying activities and products could make tourism more welcoming and plausible also for locals, while developing a sense of local pride. Additionally, tourism actors suggested diversifying visitor groups to diminish the risks of being too dependent on tourists from certain countries. Developing industrial tourism and tourism originating from the local maritime culture were repeatedly brought up (Figure 10, Figure 11). Young people suggested basing tourism on alternative, locally grounded ideas and turning Kemi's quirkiness and sort of funny reputation into a benefit in tourism development. In addition, the Laitakari development project, which is based on local culture and history, was noted to be widely approved by locals.

Figure 10. Sailboats in Kemi. Figure: Mari Partanen, 2020.

Changing the focus of tourism towards locally relevant direction requires acknowledging the context of tourism development and approaching tourism development through local views, terms, and perceptions (emic) instead of focusing on the visitors' expectations of what tourism should be like (etic) (Xue & Kerstetter 2019). Inclusive, emic-oriented development in tourism calls for involving the local community for "*understanding the uniqueness of each place and articulating the narratives emerging from local history and community stories*" (Duxbury *et al.* 2020: 4).

6.2 Social innovations for inclusive development and community resilience-building

6.2.1 Directing tourism towards local needs

While there are inclusion-related challenges that hinder local resilience, there are also many locally driven ideas as well as transformative processes for changing the status. They can be conceptualized as social innovations that either directly contribute to or hold potential to enhance inclusive development and community resilience-building (Partanen & Sarkki 2021; Partanen 2022; Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023).

Firstly, the findings indicate that social innovations that are formed in tourism – such as tourism products – can enhance the wellbeing and inclusion of communities (Partanen 2022). This differentiates social innovations from innovations that create mainly economic value by attracting (a growing number of) tourists. A social innovation

Figure 11. By the sea in Kemi. Figure: Mari Partanen, 2020.

aspect can help in understanding more various ways of participation in tourism development and encourage developing socially impactful tourism innovations. Such tourism services can be planned by thinking about local communities as the key users of services, in addition to the visitors. The Laitakari project represents this kind of a social innovation, as well as the propositions of young people. They are examples of emic tourism development that is directed both to visitors and locals and that enhances wellbeing in a simultaneous place of residence and tourism. Thus, the findings show that social innovations can challenge the idea of who counts as a tourist and for whom tourism is planned by acknowledging resident tourism as a potential form of tourism (Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023; see Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby 2022). Diversifying tourism in this way can provide ways for building community resilience through providing alternative attractions and services, which can help in minimizing risks of being dependent on the future of main attractions (Partanen 2022; Saunavaara *et al.* 2023). Hence, the results suggest that social innovations developed in tourism can contribute to inclusive development by acknowledging local needs that go beyond the industry, which can result in redirecting the course of planning towards community needs and resilience-building.

Secondly, the findings suggest that combining public sector social innovations with tourism can bring insights to the wide community needs of inclusion and free-time activities that tourism could support. Combining non-tourism social innovations with tourism can help in better linking tourism with other aspects of local life and needs through an emic understanding of a place and make tourism more relevant and beneficial for community members such as jobseekers (Partanen & Sarkki 2021; Xue & Kerstetter 2019). Furthermore, social innovations that are not directly formed within tourism can challenge the traditional ways of tourism planning and development by providing insight on how to initiate innovative processes with participants from various community members and different sectors. This can support reconsidering how to do tourism in a more inclusive way from the viewpoints of other sectors and actors than those directly involved in tourism. The social innovation cases in the fields of employment and using food waste are examples of innovations that could bring social value to tourism development as well, if combined in collaboration. The potential linkages of local challenges and the change potential of tourism ought to be sought for realizing common benefits, which could result in building community resilience through positive change. Additionally, tourism could support local social innovation processes by, for instance, providing food waste from restaurants, and by employing local young people. This could, then, make tourism part of a solution rather than a creator of problems. Like this, tourism could enhance local inclusive development and resilience by supporting social innovations but also by changing the traditional ways tourism is developed.

Adding to Scheyvens and Biddulph's (2018) notions, the results strengthen the view that locally inclusive development and services in tourism means telling the stories of those groups and cultures who have not been lifted up in tourism in Kemi (like the Laitakari project has done and like the youth proposed), challenging dominant power relations (like all the studied social innovation cases have done), and providing opportunities for learning, exchange, and relationships between visitors and locals (like the propositions of the youth suggested). These empirical examples demonstrate how social innovations contribute to enhancing inclusive development by deeply acknowledging the context of tourism development. Furthermore, Biddulph (2018) notes that taking tourists away from the obvious destination sites and bringing them to

areas that are less celebrated, can work as a form of inclusive tourism. The results of this study add empirical insights to this notion; in Kemi, the youth especially pointed out that there is a lack of spaces to hang out, yet quickly came up with ideas of where such places could be established through tourism social innovations. Likewise, the Laitakari development project has brought an old industrial island back to life and draws visitors to the previously deserted place. These innovative initiatives can be seen as a way to challenge the obvious tourism sites by asking which places should be included in the tourism scene. This means that not only the place, Kemi, is acknowledged as an important element in tourism development but also the variety within the place.

Hence, the findings suggest that applying social innovation principles to tourism could contribute to inclusive development and to tourism development towards the inside, which emphasizes tourism development for the wellbeing of, first and foremost, local communities (Nogués-Pedregal, Travé-Molero & Carmona-Zubiri 2017). The findings highlight the notion that social innovations can be seen as an alternative to market-based solutions and create non-monetary value that can help in seeing the wider possibilities tourism has to offer for local communities (see Ilie & During 2012). Social innovations can help in shedding light on the entangled nature of tourism and communities and can help in gaining understanding of the context of tourism development. In particular, they can help in finding linkages between tourism and the needs of the surrounding local settings, which also reflect wider needs in the larger society. Importantly, the social innovation cases show ways of not only bouncing back to a previous state (after disturbances like changing the direction of tourism planning or needs for vitality), but also ways of bouncing forward to a new state of being (see Dredge 2019; Lew *et al.* 2016; Prayag 2020;). Hence, it can be argued that social innovations can be seen as a mean of building community resilience through transformation that challenges the current state of tourism development. This often requires bottom-up approaches.

However, it is also possible that inclusive development in tourism and the locally relevant, plausible services and even social innovations can be provided by the big players, as long as they are based on bottom-up processes. For example, practicing social entrepreneurship in tourism does not necessarily mean that small actors establish businesses based on a social mission (see Biddulph 2018). Also conventional tourism businesses can integrate a social mission into their business model. That can be crucial for the overall resilience and success of tourism industries that are often requested to be responsible in their actions. Interestingly, after the articles of this thesis have been written, there have been new development directions run by the city of Kemi. Recently, Kemi has stated to be the home of the Snowman (Kemi 2024b). This opening can be seen to follow the tradition of the SnowCastle to showcase snow and ice sculptures and art. Building snow creatures is a common activity especially among children in Finland during wintertime. Hence, this direction could also be considered to link with local ways of life. At the same time, the snowman is not only a Finnish creature. Such development can be seen as a strategic move to compete in international tourism markets by utilizing something commonly known. It remains to be seen how such development is welcomed by local people (and visitors). In addition, in 2023 the SnowCastle resort area opened a Winter Park, which is free to visit (Kemi Tourism Ltd 2024). This can be seen as an answer to the calls to make tourism more locally relevant, and in a way follows the original idea of the castle in the 1990s. In addition, the city website (Kemi 2024c) has used a different rhetoric for describing Kemi than the Experience365 marketing materials have used. For example, the website describes Kemi as a non-high-flying metropolis and note that:

"We are just ordinary people. And Kemi is just an honest, unwavering and slightly crazy town in the north of Finland."

Interestingly, this rhetoric is close to the one the youth wished for: humorous and self-ironic. These branches of development are interesting to follow when thinking about the focus of tourism and whether it originates from local viewpoints – and whether the direction provides potentials for creating social innovations.

6.2.2 Identifying non-traditional perspectives in planning and development

In research, social innovations have been either linked to social entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, and enterprise (like innovations in general), or seen to rise also from actors like governments, non-profit organizations, and individuals (Eichler & Schwarz 2019). This study suggests it is central to adopt the latter viewpoint that goes beyond the private sector. The latter perspective recognizes the potential in all kinds of sectors and actors of a society to collaborate and create social change and novel approaches and provides a critical perspective to tourism innovation studies. The social innovation cases of this study rise from a variety of sectors and actors, yet they all provide innovative insights to tourism development. Challenging the traditional roles and forms of co-operation in tourism is central for enabling inclusive development that builds community resilience (see Vale 2014; Westley 2013). Highlighting novel, non-traditional perspectives into the planning and development practices of tourism is important for identifying whose resilient is being built (see Vale 2014).

The results show that social innovations can help in thinking how to make tourism development more locally inclusive in terms of the provided services and development methods. Identifying local needs and ideas for change, not only the ones related to tourism growth and business development, can inform how to build more locally inclusive tourism products and services. This requires truly acknowledging local social needs instead of focusing on destination branding and development based on the (estimated) needs of tourists. This kind of development can help in moving from business-focused planning towards versatile inclusion of community members. Importantly, social innovations can help in asking how tourism development is done and by whom and help in paying attention to how approachable and relevant the services are from different community perspectives, which is at the heart of locally inclusive tourism services and development. Here, social innovations can provide insights for critically assessing who to involve in tourism development by widely acknowledging perspectives across different sectors and community groups, beyond the traditionally involved actors on private and public sectors. They demonstrate how to move from top-down implementation towards collaborative planning and doing.

Along with previous research, the findings show that traditional tourism development can create exclusions by overlooking the ideas and agencies of local groups, particularly local youths (e.g. Canosa, Graham, & Wilson 2018; Canosa, Moyle, & Wray 2016). The local youth of this study saw little opportunities to take part in tourism development, but also many representatives of the public sector noted that their work is separate from tourism even though their fields would have direct links to tourism. While tourism actors were directly involved in tourism, many small actors noted that they are excluded from decision-making and planning processes regarding the overall direction of tourism development in Kemi. According to the participants, even though Kemi Tourism Ltd.

operates as a city-owned company, its co-operation with several small tourism actors, local people, and other fields in the public sector has been limited. This indicates that tourism development could be more inclusive in terms of who are involved in planning and development.

The participants shared a wish of fostering co-operation among different sectors and actors. For reaching inclusive development, tourism planning and development in Kemi would need to widen the range of people who participate in tourism development by acknowledging community members such as the youth and other local groups, as well as the public and private sector actors who are not at the centre of tourism planning. The findings suggest that social innovations can bring light to non-traditional perspectives on tourism development as they widen the understanding of usual stakeholders to be engaged in tourism development and activities. What is common with all the examined social innovation cases is that they are based on multi-sectoral co-operation or common activities between various community members, including grass-root actors. As has been often stressed by critical tourism scholars, top-down planning and implementation practices need to move towards co-creative approaches for making development sustainable. Social innovations can be seen as co-creative processes and acts of exchange and sharing in tourism (see Phi & Dredge 2019). Eventually, as Duxbury *et al.* (2020) note, multi-sectoral community engagement can encourage sharing common values and aspirations as well as facilitates dialogue. They suggest such engagement can even foster a sense of community and empower the residents. To add to this notion, shedding light on practices in social innovation processes can help in finding ways to enhance similar processes in co-operation among tourism actors but also between different community members. Here, it is also important to remember what Chimirri (2021) states, that collaborative practices among tourism actors (and other actors as well, I add) are heterogeneous and constantly emerging and disappearing, instead of being simply strategic tools for development. Co-operation in reality is complex and full of ranging emotions, needs, and visions for change. It might also be the case that a complete consensus among community members cannot be found (see Kulusjärvi 2019).

Indeed, what is considered positive or negative tourism-driven change in a place is perspective-dependent, and the findings of this study confirm the notion that local views on tourism are heterogeneous (see Fan, Ng & Bayrak 2023) in terms of what is the desired direction for tourism development or how development should be done. In addition, it is good to keep in mind that developing tourism, even if it is locally rooted and directed for locals, can reveal various inclusions but also exclusions within and between local communities (Hoogendoorn & Hammett 2021). For example, if some community members consider certain areas unworthy for tourism development, this can create exclusive borders and enclavic tourism spaces not only between tourists and locals but between locals themselves (see Saarinen 2019). This is important to acknowledge when thinking about the directions of development. Furthermore, despite the results of this study suggest a common will to participate in tourism development, it is probable not all residents want to participate in tourism planning and development (see Erdmenger 2022). Some are driving the changes whereas others try to affect the changes, while some just simply follow what is to come.

Yet, if there are wishes for fostering co-operation, finding communal, reflexive, and dialogical (Kulusjärvi 2019), as well as safe (Rastegar & Ruhanen 2023), spaces in which to share ideas is important for enhancing socially innovative processes and co-operation. Here, switching spaces for planning does not mean only moving from one place to another, but trying to understand one another's perspectives by reflecting on one's own

position with the purpose of finding something in common. As the social innovation workshop demonstrated, for example, bringing tourism planning to non-traditional spaces that are safe for local knowledge and value-sharing (Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023; see also Rastegar & Ruhanen 2023) can act as a practical example of how to see tourism differently and how to share knowledge and ideas through dialogue. Fostering such meeting spots can be seen as one way to create culture that encourages innovative, out-of-box thinking, which can in turn build community resilience and flexibility for change that is locally rooted and informed from multiple perspectives (see Lew *et al.* 2016). In such spaces, utilizing social innovations as a method for imagining a locally and socially relevant tourism development process can provide interesting practical inputs for inclusive development (see Partanen, Kettunen & Saarinen 2023). Supporting such actions could, potentially, result in more resilient communities. Such communities could then provide ground for new social innovations to thrive through a culture that supports new initiatives and openings (see Lew *et al.* 2016).

6.3 The complex relationship of social innovations and sustainability

It is often noted that social innovations need to be scaled up for bringing systemic change to the root-causes of problems (Westley *et al.* 2014; Morais-Da-Silva, Takahashi & Segatto 2016). Social innovations indeed have a fundamental transformative character that can eventually change wider culture as well (Ilie & During 2012). Social innovations often share common characteristics, hence ideas from their development processes can be utilized for transformation across society. Finding innovative ways to enhance sustainability is especially critical when seeking pathways to reducing the worldwide negative impacts of tourism through multi-scalar actions (see Fletcher 2023). Especially when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, pressing calls were made for taking the pause as an opportunity to rethink sustainability of tourism in terms of equity, justice, and carbon neutrality, for instance (e.g. Benjamin, Dillette & Alterman 2020; Cave & Dredge 2020; Duxbury et al. 2020; Niewiadomski 2020; Prideaux, Thompson & Pabel 2020).

The thesis suggests that exploring social innovations at the local level can reveal characteristics that are useful for identifying both similar needs for change and processes for change in other places that need to find ways to manage tourism and enhance sustainability. Furthermore, while social innovations can bring change for local people, they can also offer transformative experiences for tourists who are not residents of the area (see Chhabra 2021). Potentially, the impact can carry on with them to other parts of the world.

What is important, moreover, is to look for and support opportunities and processes to foster social innovations. Even though social innovations are locally rooted, they may need external support in order to be sustained (Jungsberg *et al.* 2020). While social innovations are bottom-up by nature, top-down initiatives and governance can be directed towards supporting their creation. In this regard, the micro level community resilience-building is entangled with resilience of other levels of the system, the meso and macro levels (Prayag 2020; Vale 2014). Importantly, it needs to be noted that building internal community resilience or creating social innovations are not comprehensive solutions for the often multi-scalar problems that cause the needs for resilience in the first place, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, or wars. Being resilient or building resilience should neither overshadow the responsibility of governments nor be seen as the responsibility of an individual (Farsari 2021).

At the same time as there are calls for scalability, the results highlight that social innovations are formed at a certain time, in a place and space and within a culture, and community values and culture shape social innovations (Moulaert 2009; see Ilie & During 2012). Furthermore, change "*is a messy, place-specific process that will be seen through a myriad of contemporaneous realities in a global patchwork*" (Lew *et al.* 2020: 462). The cases of this study show that despite their potential for societal change, social innovations are often based on contextual needs and created for addressing local problems. This does not mean that the structural problems causing the needs for social innovations should be forgotten. Rather, while scalability is important for enhancing sustainability in general, it is also important to study social innovations with a certain context sensitivity (Heikkinen *et al.* 2016; Kluvankova *et al.* 2021). Context-specific features are also important when attempting to both study and build resilience (Chen, Xu & Lew 2020). In this respect, local initiatives should be seen and studied as attempts to adapt to changes through contextually relevant, community-oriented processes. Thus, social innovations that are locally rooted and operate on a local level do not need to necessarily be scaled up as such for being valuable if they have local significance (see Wirth, Bandi Tanner & Mayer 2022) and if their main value is in creating local resilience (see Westley *et al.* 2014). Or, simply put, what works in one place might not work in another.

Hence, the findings indicate that social innovations can enhance inclusion, community resilience-building, and sustainability by transforming and challenging the unsustainable status quo of tourism. Enhancing sustainability, indeed, requires new ways of thinking and acting (see Dessein *et al.* 2015), and the thesis suggests that this need for novel ideas and processes links social innovations closely with enhancing sustainability. Social innovations can be regarded as specific responses to local needs, which can contribute to narrowing down wide sustainability goals (Partanen & Sarkki 2021). The social innovation cases of this study can be argued to contribute to enhancing sustainability both locally and on multiple scales. The social innovation propositions of young people offer examples of planning tourism within the specific context and resources while modifying the direction of development. The Laitakari case and the young people's propositions contribute or could contribute to filling the needs for socially inclusive and sustainable tourism development that respects local history and culture (see Duxbury *et al.* 2020). Furthermore, linking the public sector social innovations with tourism can be seen as a way to bring systemic change to the current situation of keeping tourism planning and development in its own sectoral silo. These social innovation cases can be seen as an opening for tourism to create wider social values in terms of employment, food waste management, and inclusion, for instance. Moreover, while the goal of socially innovative initiatives is to enhance local wellbeing, they can also in their small part contribute to the wider, planetary-scale needs of sustainability. For example, the case of Laitakari can be seen as a local aim to contribute to the broader needs for de-growth or post-growth (Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.* 2019; Saarinen 2021b; Sharpley 2022). Laitakari represents an alternative tourism development path that is not directed toward accelerating growth through international markets that can weaken sustainability and community resilience.

So, it can be argued that social innovations can contribute to the sustainability principle of leaving no one behind in development and can furthermore help in minimizing the negative impacts of tourism while maximising the positive, which has been long noted as a goal of sustainable tourism development. However, this brings us to discussing the nuances and understandings of sustainability goals as well as the value and impacts social innovations in tourism create. Despite the promising examples

of bringing positively viewed change, social innovations and their contribution to comprehensive sustainability needs must be examined case by case. The outcomes and processes of creating social innovations need to be critically and continually evaluated. For example, what is socially valuable or innovative for certain communities or community members might not be the same for others (see Liburd, Menke & Tomej 2023) – or environmentally sustainable.

Due to diverse environmental, socio-cultural and developmental contexts, it is rather hard to adapt the idealism of sustainability consistently and in practice (Sharpley 2009; Sharpley 2020; Tervo-Kankare 2017). Objectively reaching sustainable societies is problematic due to different understandings of wellbeing, social value, resilience, and such qualities linked with sustainability. When the discussion on sustainability is taken to a local level, communities have varying ideas, motifs, and understandings of sustainability. Also in Kemi, locals viewed sustainability in varying ways. Often, they first connected sustainability with environmental issues, while social sustainability matters were expressed through different terms. Despite the multiple understandings of sustainability, it can be argued that it is a useful concept when it is utilized from a critical viewpoint when thinking about tourism and its impacts. The thesis suggests that when elaborating sustainability, tourism needs to be evaluated based on a critical, scholarly understanding of sustainability, but it must acknowledge the local context and knowledge systems in a culturally sensitive way.

Furthermore, from a holistic sustainability point of view, the different aspects of sustainability need to be considered and seen as interlinked, while the environmental aspect of sustainability can be seen as the precondition for other sustainability aspects such as the social or economic (see Elo *et al.* 2024; Dessein *et al.* 2015). Identifying environmentally friendly social innovations is important for building long-term community resilience. Interestingly, the propositions of young people contributed mainly to travel by land and domestic or proximity tourism; the Laitakari development project was directed toward a limited number of visitors in order to avoid exceeding the carrying capacity of the island; and The Social Kitchen was brought up for utilizing food waste. These examples show that local initiatives with a social goal can also enhance environmental sustainability. Such initiatives can be seen as a form of decarbonization (see Higham, Font & Fu 2021) or as de-growth strategies (Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.* 2019). Environmentally oriented social innovations can be seen as a means of enhancing social wellbeing and community resilience – after all, human wellbeing is dependent on nature's wellbeing (see García-García 2023), even if short-term benefits for reaching such aims are not so great economically, for instance. Yet, while social innovations hold potential in enhancing environmental sustainability, their environmental footprints require serious evaluation. This links with the question of whether they have the potential for being eco-innovations enhancing sustainability (see Alos-Simo, Verdu-Jover & Gomez-Gras 2023 for eco-innovations), and the question might be complex to answer. Enhancing sustainability in relation to tourism is challenging due to the nature of tourism as an economic, often growth-seeking industry (Sharpley 2009, 2020).

In this regard, even though social innovations can be seen to build community resilience and to enhance inclusion, not all social innovations, inclusive actions, and resilience-building measures automatically enhance all aspects of sustainability, for example if the process is done at the expense of nature (see Saarinen & Gill 2019). For instance, the youth's idea of a petrol station can be argued to both contribute to preserving a carbon-intensive society and to providing alternative infrastructure for aviation (yet, in this case, the main idea of the station was not to provide petrol

per se but a space to hang out). Moreover, the young people's propositions and the case of Laitakari demonstrate openings that are not detached from economics but still contribute to enhancing sustainability, or some aspects of it. The cases confirm the notion that social innovations can have economic characteristics, yet still contribute to sustainability (Mirvis *et al.* 2016).

Then again, from a critical viewpoint, social innovations developed in tourism are often business-oriented at least on some level. The studied social innovation cases are part of and also dependent on the (economic) system that cross-cuts different levels of society. This nature of social innovations in tourism needs to be kept in mind while thinking of their potential for enhancing sustainability. It is sometimes challenging to tell the difference between social innovations and other innovations. Can, for example, AirBnb still be considered a social innovation now that it is globally spread and strongly contributes to growth capitalism with positive yet also negative impacts on local people (see Morales-Pérez, Garay & Wilson 2022)? Similarly, based on the gathered data, the SnowCastle started off as a local shared space where people gathered to spend time together. Research participants often noted that the SnowCastle has been turned into a tourism resort area that aims for major international growth. This resembles a transition from a social innovation into a business-focused innovation. Furthermore, inclusive actions, for example in the form of social innovations, must not be misused as a way of developing tourism on such a scale that "inclusion for all" means unlimited flows of visitors.

The findings highlight the fact that tourism is a complex system in which positive impacts can eventually, over space and time, contribute to creating negatively viewed impacts (see Hall 2022). Such changes that contribute to growth can also show as, for example, transportation emissions, even if the local tourism impacts are considered sustainable (Hall 2022). Furthermore, short-term resilience created by social innovations can be beneficial for a while, but as time passes, they can become unsustainable and, also, not resilient in the long run (see Saunavaara *et al.* 2023). Hence, it is important to evaluate whether social innovations are compatible with both resource- and community-oriented stances on sustainability (see Saarinen 2014). Moreover, when social innovations are utilized methodologically, for example as a tool for participatory action research, it is important to remember that participatory action research does not often engage more-than-human participants efficiently, as Kindon (2021) points out.

Still, alternative initiatives are at the very heart of sustainable development, be it through profoundly changing or moderately challenging the current state of being. For enhancing sustainability, it is central to hold on to the ability to hope for better and to act according to the hope. As Pritchard, Morgan, and Ateljevic (2023: 951) note,

> *"Rather than being underpinned by a passive, unrealistic hope which is more akin to dreams and longings, hopeful tourism is an active hope which visualizes an idea and formulates a plan to accomplish its ends."*

At their best, social innovations can be seen as this actionable form of hope. The findings suggest that social innovations can help in finding practical ways to enhance sustainability, as sustainability has been criticized for its abstract nature. While sustainability is a wide concept, social innovations are narrower and more focused on solving certain problems at hand. Therefore, social innovations can be smaller-scale solutions for local sustainability needs but they also hold potential for turning into cross-cutting cultural innovations that shake societal structures. While acknowledging

the complex relationship between social innovations and sustainability, the thesis argues that social innovations can enhance at least some forms of sustainability, at least for some groups of people. In any case, it is central to evaluate what is the main purpose of an innovation and who are the ones to benefit from it to evaluate whether an innovation can be called social or, perhaps, sustainable in nature.

7 Conclusions

The thesis proposes three main arguments: 1) social innovations can challenge the state of tourism development by emphasizing socially embedded development over business-focused processes and initiatives, 2) social innovations can enhance inclusive development and build community resilience by directing tourism towards local needs and by identifying non-traditional perspectives in planning and development, and 3) social innovations can contribute to enhancing sustainability, yet the contribution requires critical evaluation as well because social innovations do not necessarily holistically address the sustainability issues of tourism.

In Kemi, different community members from public sector, private sector tourism actors, and young people consider that tourism development could be more inclusive in terms of services and development methods and the focus of tourism could be diversified and rethought. The main attractions are relatively approved and were considered important for Kemi, yet the resort-oriented development of the SnowCastle and the new direction of Sampo raised criticism. Three social innovations and three social innovation propositions were identified during the fieldwork. The Laitakari development project represents a social innovation in tourism. It has challenged the traditional way of planning and developing tourism, which shows in its in cross-sectoral, community-involving development processes and its idea to derive from local culture and history. The social innovation propositions by the young people suggest providing spaces to hang out for tourists and locals alike, as well as suggest providing relevant channels for informing about tourism services, which calls for more inclusive, multi-sector development actions. Finally, the two public sector social innovations of using food waste and bringing youth wellbeing and employment can provide relevant insights and synergies to tourism. Tourism could provide resources for The Social Kitchen, while The Social Kitchen could provide insights of how to enhance food waste circulation in tourism; and Kohtaamo could benefit from tourism providing employment opportunities, while tourism needs employees.

All the social innovation cases provide insights of how to make tourism development more inclusive for local people and how to build community resilience, both via non-tourism social innovations informing tourism and tourism-oriented social innovations enhancing local inclusion in general. They can strengthen and support the communities' wellbeing and resilience by widening the understanding of tourism stakeholders beyond the traditional ones and by planning services that are locally rooted. Thus, looking at tourism from various, also non-traditional perspectives – beyond the actors working directly in tourism on the private and public sector – and identifying social innovations rising from various sectors and actors can help in finding linkages between tourism and the needs in Kemi in general. Through their grass-root nature, social innovations can be seen as means of alternative development paths in tourism in Kemi. At the same time, the realization of social innovations might most optimally happen through initiatives that are bottom-up oriented and supported by multi-level governance and development practices. Furthermore, as the co-created social innovation propositions with the youth demonstrate, social innovations can be utilized as a method and a tool in planning. Finally, the cases can be regarded to enhance various aspects of sustainability, in addition to their social benefits, for example through circulating food waste or providing livelihood in tourism.

Hence, the findings indicate that social innovations can challenge the current state of tourism development, which is often based on exclusive business goals and development

processes. Social innovations help with asking what kind of value is created, by whom, and for whom. In addition to criticizing the status quo, social innovations bring new opportunities for change. They can help with redirecting the focus of tourism by acknowledging the context of tourism development and addressing wide social needs for bringing something positive for locals via emphasizing social value creation over business-focused value creation. Importantly, social innovations can help in noticing various, non-traditional community perspectives and ideas ranging from grass-root actors to the variety of public and private sector actors.

In this regard, social innovations can inform inclusive development in tourism by asking how tourism development is done and by whom while paying attention to how approachable and relevant the services are from different community perspectives. Then again, through informing inclusive tourism development, social innovations can build community resilience – the ability to change and benefit from change – by emphasising transformations that build community resilience against tourism-related negative changes but also by providing positive change and adaptation to different pressures through socially informed tourism initiatives. Such processes challenge and diversify tourism development that is focused on business-focused change based on growth targets and industry-oriented innovations. Here, tourism-related changes would become a positive transformative force via cooperative development that aims for social value-creation.

Thus, the results indicate that social innovations can contribute to enhancing sustainability in questions related to tourism and can help in narrowing down the wide sustainability goals. Through enhancing inclusive development in tourism, social innovations contribute to building community resilience and contribute to the sustainability principles to leave no one behind in development and to minimize the negative impacts of tourism and maximize the positive. Yet, while the relationship between social innovations, inclusive tourism development, community resilience-building and sustainability is close, it is also complex. Especially the question of holistic sustainability makes the relationship multifaceted. Even though social innovations can potentially enhance sustainability by contributing to de-growth, inclusion, and alternative economies, for instance, their benefits need to be critically evaluated. This is especially central in questions related to planetary-wide-scale issues. The overall contribution of social innovations to different aspects of sustainability needs to be examined, case by case. This has to be done by acknowledging the environmental limits as well as the multiplicity of voices in terms of what is considered sustainable when thinking about the potential of social innovations in a broad picture.

The linkages of social innovations, inclusive development, community resilience-building, and sustainability in a tourism context are conclusively demonstrated in Figure 12. The continuous arrows suggest that inclusive development in tourism enhances resilience and both inclusive tourism development and resilience can enhance sustainability. The dotted arrows suggest that firstly, social innovations hold potential for enhancing inclusive development in tourism through identifying the needs, ideas, forms of co-operation, and social value-creation. Like this, social innovations can help in asking how tourism development is done and by whom and help in paying attention to how approachable and relevant the services are from different community perspectives. Secondly, inclusive development in tourism informed by social innovations emphasizes transformation that builds community resilience against tourism-related negative changes. Meanwhile, it enhances tourism development based on social value-creation and positive change for locals and emphasizes tourism as a way to manage
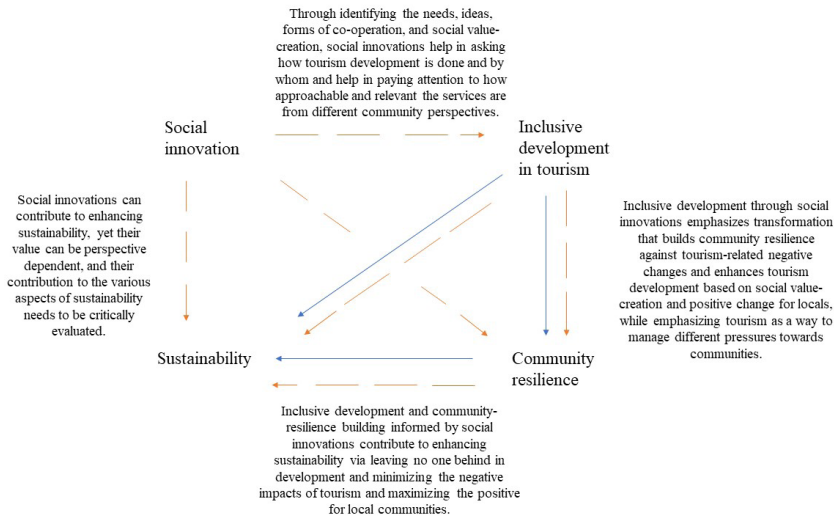
Figure 12. Social innovations, inclusive development, community resilience-building, and sustainability in a tourism context.

different pressures towards communities. Thirdly, inclusive development in tourism and community-resilience building informed by social innovations can contribute to enhancing sustainability via leaving no one behind in development and minimizing the negative impacts of tourism and maximizing the positive for local communities. Fourth and finally, even though social innovations can contribute to enhancing (social) sustainability, their value can be perspective dependent, and their contribution to other aspects of sustainability needs to be critically evaluated. In this sense, the dotted arrow also represents a less clear contribution of social innovations to comprehensive sustainability needs.

When thinking about the practical implications of the results, it is suggested to widen the understanding of what constitutes a tourism stakeholder and to include local community members to tourism planning and development processes. Such novel perspectives could bring something unique and innovative to the foci of tourism. At the same time, it is important to consider how tourism could employ local people, especially the youth, or in other ways contribute to community development for example in terms of managing food waste. Furthermore, planning could be taken to non-conventional spaces that provide a safe environment for dialogue. This could make the services more relevant for locals and not only for the visitors. That would create common benefits for the tourism businesses and the locals in need of activities. As noted, the findings also indicate that social innovations can work as a method for characterizing the transformational processes. Social innovations can be used as a conceptual tool for creating change and bringing up alternative perspectives, for example in a workshop setting. This attaches social innovations to the traditions of action research and opens up possibilities to utilize them in various design settings also outside of academia. Like this, social innovations can combine academic, research-oriented knowledge with practical, hopeful efforts to make a change.

When thinking about the limitations of this study, actualized social innovations carried out by the youth could have been looked for. Such outcomes could have provided insights on the process of actualizing an idea originating from non-traditional perspective. Instead, it was decided to seek initiatives through co-creation and to study

propositions from the youth for understanding how they would plan tourism if there were no restrictions. This did provide important insights to the study by accelerating discussion on the current state of tourism. By giving the youth free space to rethink tourism outside of the box, the research challenged the power relations in tourism planning and development. In addition, while the collected data does give insight to locals' perceptions towards tourism development in Kemi, it has been gathered from the explained three perspectives. Hence, obviously, it cannot be generalized that the notions in this thesis are the opinions of all the people living in Kemi nor that the findings can be directly applicable to all kinds of contexts. Studying the local groups even more widely could have brought new perspectives and suggestions to consider. Arranging workshops for different residents could have initiated interesting social innovation propositions. Simultaneously, as the time for research was limited and all the aspects and perspectives cannot be addressed all at once, this decision also leaves an endless possibility to study tourism and social innovations from various perspectives to further acknowledge different structures that marginalize people within local communities. In addition, for taking in-depth analysis even further, various identities that local people have (also various per person) could have been studied in more detail. Therefore, the thesis suggests continuing to further gather information from non-traditional community members in various contexts of tourism development. For example, residents could be asked more often where they would take their visitors instead of focusing on discussing about the most obvious tourism sites. Studying such a form of resident tourism could reveal more sustainable ways to host visitors. In addition, utilizing more action research-oriented methods in future studies on social innovations could reveal further information about the planning processes as well as the possibilities of realizing the innovation propositions with the study participants, if they wish.

The decision to use ethnographic methods and gathering different sets of data has given an in-depth insight to the three examined perspectives. While ethnographic research is always dependent on the researcher's position and the place and time of research, self-reflection on the position, discussing the findings through theory, and describing the study process can allow studying similar phenomena in different research settings. Further research in the field site is also encouraged for evaluating the findings of this research. Moreover, utilising the social innovation framework in similar studies could help further evaluating how accurately the framework fits with studying tourism and social innovation processes and outcomes in different contexts. This is also central for constantly evaluating their contribution to sustainability and calls for longitudinal and historical studies as well. In addition to studying locally oriented social innovations, social innovations that have wide social, cultural, environmental, or economic impacts on a societal or even global scale require further research in a tourism context. Additionally, the findings indicate that the environmental value of social innovations requires more research.

To conclude, the thesis suggests that utilizing community-driven social innovations can help in responding to different challenges and impacts of tourism. Social innovations can contribute to inclusive development and community resilience-building. This, in turn, can enhance sustainability, but the contribution of social innovations to comprehensive sustainability has to be critically evaluated, case by case. It is suggested to continue to critically seek paths towards inclusion, community resilience-building and sustainability by studying various local perspectives and social innovations that challenge the current state of tourism. In this task, there are many more initiatives to study – or, one could say, ways to act upon hope.

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