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Dear Editors,

I would like to thank you and the referees for the detailed and constructive comments on the manuscript. Based on the suggestions, I have now revised the article. I have paid special attention to clarifying the introduction, reframing the research questions and deepened the theoretical discussion around the selected concepts. In addition, the minor recommendations such as improving the methods sections and case study description have been made. The corrections are detailed in the table on the next page of this letter.

I am ready to continue work for the publishing process when needed.

Sincerely,



Outi Kulusjärvi

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| **Reviewer 1** | **Author** |
| The paper needs to be properly proofread for English structure. Some parts of the paper are more difficult to follow than others. | The paper has now been proofread. |
| The introduction needs the most attention. It took several reads of the abstract and introduction to adequately understand what the purpose of the paper was and how the purpose was to be achieved. | I have now rewritten the introduction and explained my approach better. |
| At the end of the introduction the author states three sections, but it appears there are at least 5 or six…if one adds discussion and conclusions. | Correct. Mistake is now fixed. |
| With the literature review, most works are cited in appropriate detail. However, there are a few instances of “so what?” That is, what is the importance of the literature cited to the paper. One example that stands out is the top of p. 5, last two sentences, fist par. “When economic actors….1612). Why are these statements important? What are their linkages to each other and to the work proposed in the paper? | I have rewritten the theory part and explained in the beginning why certain concepts are in focus. “To broaden EEG studies on tourism, Brouder (2014) has argued for the incorporation of the sustainability perspective. For him, “developing EEG measures in line with the goals of sustainable development (including sustainable tourism development) will be one of the most important challenges of EEG and tourism research going forward” (p. 544). This is considered necessary in order for EEG research to broaden its scope beyond tourism entrepreneurship and business development studies. This section examines theoretical notions on EEG and path creation research that are required to advance this research task” (p. 5).The new introduction also helps in seeing why certain concepts are applied. |
| Change materials and methods to: Research Methods and Study Region | Changed. |
| A map would be useful in locating this work – particularly as this is a special issue on remote development: e.g. peripherally located nations…and peripherally located communities with said nations. | I have now included a map in the paper.  (There is a spelling mistake “municipal center” in the map. I am supposed to get a revised version of the map on Friday the 28th April.) |
| There are instances where personal views are introduced in the description of results. e.g. p.11: “I only wish…”. Should such personal thoughts be introduced in the discussion? | This is a quote from interviews, not my personal thought. Due to its shorter length, it is embedded in the text. |

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| **Reviewer 2** | **Author** |
| The title, abstract and introduction give the impression that the paper would mainly be about tourism networks; but as the paper proceeds, networking only accounts for one (small) part of the discussion. This is a bit misleading and raises the wrong expectations at the start of the paper. Maybe consider revising the introduction to reflect the broader focus on economic agency and empowerment. | Thanks for this point. I have now rewritten the intro and put a more emphasis on local tourism agency and on the empowerment of local voices that are not heard in local economic decision-making. |
| The two research questions stated in the introduction are obviously relevant, but they seem somewhat disconnected from the various concepts used in the literature review and theoretical framework. Maybe there could be a clearer link between the framework and the research questions, either by adding sub-questions, or by re-wording the questions to reflect some of the concepts in focus (networking; economic agency; empowerment; social equity; alternative values & knowledges; well-being; sustainability) | True, the questions were not formulated using the theoretical concepts but they tackled the research topic more from a tourism actor’s perspective. I have now re-worded the questions. They reflect better path creation literature as well as poststructural political economic ideas on economic difference. |
| I’m mainly confused about the relations to the ‘sustainability perspective’ and the ‘political economic perspective’. Make sure to explain exactly what concepts are derived from these perspectives and how they relate to the rest of the framework (and/or how they fit with the research questions). This could either be better explained (in words) or illustrated (by a graph). E.g. there is some (relatively superficial) mention of ‘power’ – is this what you mean by political economic perspective? I was kind of expecting some deeper discussion around institutions, policies, governance approaches etc. | I have explained my political economic perspective in the introduction (p. 3). I’m talking about sustainability transitions not only as they are actualized though tourism governance. Instead, I discuss the economic sphere and economic agency as political action and decision-making. This is a post-structural political economic perspective that deconstructs ‘the capitalism’ as a homogenous practice with similar aims.  Sustainability perspective is explained in the intro (p. 3), theory part and discussed further in Discussion. |
| Or maybe the section “Diverse Tourism”, drawing on Massey and also Gibson-Graham, is maybe trying to explain the political economic perspective, but it’s a bit confusing (maybe also because the heading is a bit misleading). It’s not immediately clear how this section is relevant to the discussion or the framework. The focus on local/individual agency and decision-making pops up briefly, but it’s not clear where in the research framework it belongs. Also the results and final discussion don’t seem to clarify these points. | This comment helped to see how the text appears for a first time reader. I have tried to open up this poststructural political economic thinking better in the theory part (p. 6–8). |

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| The discussion of sustainability perspectives appears a bit ‘shallow’ and does not really specify what exactly it is that you will look at in relation to sustainability in your case study. The final discussion towards the end of the paper does little to clarify this. | I have tried to clarify this. Sustainability perspective is explained in the intro (p. 2), theory part and discussed further in Discussion. |
| I wonder if there needs to be some sort of reflection on the geographic context (northern; peripheral; isolated; sparsely populated; single-industry dependent etc)? These contexts seem to attract particular path-dependence issues, political economy approaches and consequently also tourism development paths that may be unique or extreme in these settings, compared to other settings. Would this be of relevance to the discussion? | I have included some discussion on this peripheral context in the Study area section, and continued it a bit in the rest of the paper. There, I mention the economic path of mining in the municipality of Kolari and talk about its relations to tourism very shortly. |
| Issues around missing linkages and limited opportunities for alternative niche markets and less-growth oriented development have been previously raised in studies on peripheral tourism resorts. This discourse is also strikingly similar to the concerns around ‘big project’ mining developments and the lack of spillover benefits for local people and businesses. So maybe the ‘dominant tourism path’ is not all that different from other typical northern development approaches, which could be considered as part of your discussion on ‘political economy’. | Yes, the dominant tourism path also forms an ‘enclave’ tourism space with fewer linkages to the surrounding areas and local economies. In this sense, tourism path is similar to other typical northern development approaches such as mining. Yet, I would think that tourism could be developed into an economic path that is better based on local values and knowledges. This is because already now, there exist multiple tourism paths, but the ones that are based on alternative economic decision-making remain in marginal as destinations are developed following the growth paradigm. |
| I would recommend including a separate case study section to introduce the geographic, economic and tourism context in more detail. Here you can provide a better description of the dominant tourism path, who the main stakeholders are, and how exactly dominant and alternative paths differ from or depend on each other. What does the industry look like? Which players are external/non-local, which ones are local, and what does ‘local’ actually mean (e.g. long-term locals that grew up with the dependency on the dominant path, or are they maybe more recent arrivals and as such less affected by the dominant players?). Are alternative pathways a recent thing? What other industries exist in the area (e.g. mining) or is tourism the main/only game in town? This would set the scene for the following case study findings. | I have now included a separate case study section in order to open up the context better. The case study description may help in understanding the differences in tourism actors’ economic decision-making. Yet, I will explain the multiple tourism paths only in the results section.  I define what I mean with ‘local’ tourism actors in the method section (p. 11). |
| Methods: include a bit more information on your interview sample. What kind of businesses and tourism players did you interview? Were they all representatives of the ‘alternative’ tourism paths, or did they also include some of the dominant players or public sector stakeholders? What limitations/bias could your sample have caused to the results? If the interview sample included small alternative players only, then it is natural that the results will reflect a very one-sided view in relation to alternative path creation and co-evolution. Small businesses tend to complain and whine a lot about lacking support from bigger players and municipalities. Could different viewpoints from different stakeholders provide a more balanced perspective? | I have now extended the methods section in order to explain the field work better.  I have interviewed tourism actors on both paths and also understand their perspective to destination development. Yet, this article focuses on marginal tourism paths and alternative views. For this reason, the view is purposefully “very one-sided”, but justified with the applied theoretical lens of poststructural political economy.  My point is exactly to argue that local opposition should not be automatically considered as “complaining” and “wining” but these should be taken into serious consideration. I see they can also be signs of political agency by economic actors. |
| Results: Are ‘desired’ alternative paths (p. 10) already happening or are they just desired and not happening due to the challenges described later? This could be better explained, using more examples. Some parts of the results/discussion say that they can’t achieve their visions, but other parts seem to suggest that they do, at least on an individual level. Or maybe some do, some don’t? Explain this a bit more. | I have clarified this in the paper.  Tourism actors create the alternative paths in their own tourism operations, for instance by offering products that are dependent of unbuilt natural environment. Yet, their ideas on how tourism path should look like at the destination scale do not become actualized. They have experiences of not having power in the collective decision-making where the tourism path that focuses on new tourism construction dominates. This creates social dissatisfaction and frustration among tourism actors with alternative views. Yet, these actors have some ways to gain power in their tourism work. These feelings of empowerment are achieved by focusing on one’s own tourism path only instead of taking part in the official destination development. |
| Results: Are alternative paths also different from each other (i.e. heterogenous), or do they share commonalities (i.e. anti-growth; against the big players; eco etc). | I have now discussed this in the results section (p. 13–14) |
| The ‘multiplicity of knowledges and values’ (p. 13) is raised in the discussion, but it’s not very clear from the results what you mean by that and through what examples you tried to illustrate that. I can see the point about differing values, but what do you mean by knowledges, and how does this manifest? Maybe a few more details and explanations in the results would help. | I have checked the use of word ‘knowledge’ in the paper and explained its meaning more explicitly in the results section (p. 14) |
| Also the link to local well-being emerging from the alternative paths could be better demonstrated in the results, with more details and examples. | I think the revised introductions helps to explain what I mean with the link between tourism path creation and well-being; the various local tourism actors should have possibilities to create the kind of tourism destination they desire in their place of residence. |
| There are too many different concepts that are not clearly linked and related, and some only briefly pop up without being discussed in much depth (e.g. the comment on local-global coupling). | I have left out the local-global coupling because it indeed widened the topic of discussion to outside the destination scale. |
| Make sure there is a clear link between the literature/framework, the findings and the discussion. | I have revised the manuscript throughout. I hope I have been now able to make these links more explicit. |
| I’m not convinced the whole sustainability discussion towards the end of the paper makes a lot of sense. There is no evidence that these small alternative paths could ever be sustainable, and it’s hard to separate them from the dominant path (would there be any tourism without the dominant path?). Also, what is sustainable from a personal/individual business perspective may not be sustainable from a community/destination perspective – and here your interview or sample limitation could come into play. In addition, the link to climate change and sustainability is a bit awkward, and distracts from the actual focus of the paper. Maybe I’m just confused because the sustainability perspective (and the key concepts drawn from that for the analysis) are not clearly identified and discussed in the background of the paper. There would need to be a much stronger and more detailed discussion of the sustainability perspective in the literature review, and more results relating to sustainability issues, to make such points. I’m not sure that this is what the paper really wants to focus on. | In have now opened up my thinking better. With the paper, I suggest that there might be a possibility to create larger scale tourism path which does not compromise the less growth focused views and local values for nature conservation.  Surely it cannot be known in advance how exactly tourism destinations would look like if their development would not be based on the primary position of growth ideals. Yet, there is a need to start searching for ways forward, even if there is no proof it will succeed.  I have kept the climate change link in the paper, since I see it as essential justification for the empowerment of alternative economic practices. I see it introduces a new line of research, so I have tried to keep it short.  Yes, the paper wants to focus on social sustainability in destinations (and its links to ecological sustainability). I hope that the revised version is able to make this point clearer. |
| “Bringing the alternative knowledges behind tourism practices into focus is a powerful way to facilitate bottom-up change…” (p. 17). Is it really? And who should do that – at what level of agency? | I have removed this exact sentence but I have tried to make this argument clearer throughout the paper. |
| The text could be edited to simplify overly long and complicated sentences. It’s sometimes difficult to follow the line of argument. Excessive direct quotations from the literature also hamper the flow a bit. | The paper has now been proofread. |
| Only include page numbers with in-text references when using direct quotes. | This issue is now corrected. |