



Paradise at a Crossroads: Navigating Regenerative Tourism in Hawai'i Amid Environmental and Societal Challenges

Iliana Arreola Castillo

Samantha Farabaugh

Leadership and Organisation

Degree of Master of Arts (60 credits) with a Major in Leadership and Organisation

Master Thesis with a focus on Leadership and Organisation for Sustainability (OL646E),

15 credits

Spring 2024

Supervisor: Helgi-Valur Fridriksson

Paradise at a Crossroads:
Navigating Regenerative Tourism in Hawai'i Amid Environmental and
Societal Challenges

Master's Thesis

Abstract

The exponential growth of international tourism necessitates a shift towards more sustainable and holistic development strategies. This thesis explores the concept of regenerative tourism, focusing on Hawai'i - a popular tourist destination renowned for its natural beauty yet facing significant environmental and social impacts from tourism. This thesis explores the paradox of balancing the economic necessity of tourism while preserving local communities and the environment. This study aims to investigate the implementation of regenerative tourism in Hawai'i, focusing on its interaction with local communities to address environmental and social well-being. Through interviews with Native Hawaiians, local communities, tourism industry employees, and tourists, the study explores perceptions and collaborations within the tourism industry. The research employed the theoretical frameworks of Regenerative Development, Communities of Practice and Transformational Leadership to deepen the analysis of the current implementation and effectiveness of regenerative practices in Hawai'i.

Findings reveal that while there is an awareness of the need for inclusion in regenerative practices, increased efforts are necessary to include Indigenous voices and ensure economic sustainability for local communities. The recommendations of this study highlight the importance of respect, inclusion, and empowerment of Native Hawaiians, advocating for active engagement with local communities to form reciprocal relationships that promote learning and growth. The theoretical lens offers practical tools and applications to address the expressed needs of community members.

Effective implementation of these regenerative practices has the potential to transform Hawai'i into a destination where tourism not only benefits the economy but also enriches the environment and local communities. This transformation promises a unique travel experience, allowing tourists to gain a deeper appreciation of the natural world and contribute positively to the islands, perpetuating a cycle of reciprocity and regenerative development.

Keywords

Regenerative Tourism, Hawai'i, Indigenous, Leadership, Communities, Collaboration

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	8
1.1 Background	8
1.1.1 Sustainability Principles Towards Regenerative Tourism	9
1.2 Research Problem	11
1.3 Previous Research	12
1.4 Aim and Research Questions	18
1.5 Layout	19
2. Theoretical Framework	20
2.1 Regenerative Development	20
2.2 Communities of Practice	22
2.3 Transformational Leadership	25
2.3.1 Green Transformational Leadership	27
2.4 Intersectionality of Chosen Theories	29
3. Methodology and Methods	31
3.1 Research Design	31
3.2 Data collection	32
3.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews	33
3.2.2 Selection of Interview Participants	34
3.3 Data Analysis	36
3.4 Ethical Considerations	40
3.5 Trustworthiness & Validity	40
4. Empirical Presentation of the Object of Study	42
4.1 Hawai'i - A Troubled Paradise?	42
4.2 The Path Towards Regeneration	43
5. Analysis	46
5.1 The Consequences of a Thriving Tourism Industry and its Environmental Impact	46
5.2 Environmental Stewardship and Ecological Restoration, the Path Toward Regeneration	50
5.3 Hawaiian Communities' Interplay and Connections to the Regenerative Tourism Scene	55
5.4 Intersections and Influence of Leadership Roles within the Industry	61
5.5 Analysis Through the Theoretical Lenses	66
6. Discussion	70
6.1 Problem Solving Towards Regenerative Tourism	70
6.2 Theoretical Implication	72
6.3 Practical Implication	73
6.4 Future Research	74
7. Conclusion	76
References	77

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide 1 - Tourism Industry and Community Participants	83
Appendix 2: Interview Guide 2 - Frequent Tourists to Hawai'i	85
Appendix 3: Consent Form	86
Appendix 4: Transcript of Interview 4	87
Appendix 5: Codes Overview	125

Tables and Figures:

Table Number	Table Title	Page Number
Table 1	Information Overview of Participants	36
Table 2	The Final Thematic Coding	39
Table 3	Aloha+ Goals Scorecard	44

Figure Number	Figure Title	Page Number
Figure 1	Framework for Regenerative Tourism Capacity Development	14
Figure 2	The Tree Analogy	16
Figure 3	Connection Between Theories and Research Scope	30
Figure 4	Research Design	31
Figure 5	Process for Conducting the Thematic Analysis	38

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the generous and kind participants who took the time to share their thoughts and feelings towards a very taboo topic in Hawai'i. Their responses were of the utmost importance and assistance to our research throughout this study. Their ability to share knowledge about tourism as well as the participants who were able to contribute Indigenous knowledge and information about cultural practices was significant to our findings.

We would also like to thank the natural environment for the guidance it has given Native Hawaiians and for the opportunities it allows today's society to thrive and be nurtured by it.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

One of the many joys we can experience during our lifetime on this Earth is the adventures of exploring all the wonders of the world. The words by the late storyteller Hans Christian Andersen “to travel is to live” (Brust, 1994, p. 41) and author Kate Douglas Wiggin “There is a kind of magicness about going far away and then come back all changed” (1917, p. 129), encapsulates the significance of what travel and adventure means in life - however, the emerging climate crises bring forward the reflection of what the environmental and personal costs are for the tourism industry and what the future of tourism might be. An indication of this appears with the recent mass demonstrations across Spain, predominantly on the Canary Islands on April 20th 2024, where thousands of people protested against the immense impact the tourism industry has on the Island and its residents (BBC, 2024). As one of the protesters from the march said, “It’s not a message against the tourist, but against a tourism model that doesn’t benefit this land and needs to be changed,” and another protester carried the sign, “This isn’t tourism - It’s an invasion” (Reuters, 2024).

The trajectory that led to this and other similar demonstrations around the world in recent years can partially be explained by the growth of international tourism that has surpassed the global economic growth rates (UNWTO, 2020), thereby compelling for an implementation of more sustainable development strategies (Zaman, Aktan, Agrusa & Khwaja, 2023). This perception is supported by existing literature that indicates that the current model of mass tourism development has resulted in a rapid depletion of Earth’s resources, deteriorating the environment and negatively affecting local communities (Ajoon & Rao, 2020; Tham & Sharma, 2023). This stands in alignment with the predominant message behind the before-mentioned demonstrations across the globe that symbolize a call for action towards more sustainable tourism models, as the local communities and organizations no longer can allow the destructive growth of tourism, the environmental impact, and the gentrification or ‘touristification’ and thereby exclusion of the local residents (Guardian, 2016; Cocola-Gant, 2023; BCC, 2024; Reuters, 2024).

While tourism stimulates economic growth and fosters cultural exchange, its environmental footprint is significant and multifaceted. Tourism's demand for infrastructure development, including hotels, resorts, and transportation, often leads to habitat destruction, deforestation, and pollution (Gossling, 2002). Moreover, the depletion of natural resources, such as water and energy, intensifies as tourist numbers surge, exacerbating issues like water scarcity and greenhouse gas emissions (Blyth et al., 2003). This strain on ecosystems can result in biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation, threatening delicate ecosystems and endangering species (Hall, 2001). In addition to direct environmental impacts, tourism can also exacerbate socioeconomic disparities and cultural commodification (UNEP, 2003). Indigenous communities often face displacement and exploitation as tourism encroaches on their lands, leading to the loss of traditional livelihoods and cultural heritage (Gössling et al., 2009).

1.1.1 Sustainability Principles Towards Regenerative Tourism

As illustrated above, the growth of the tourism industry has sparked significant concerns around the world, due to its backlash on both local communities and the environment. These negative consequences call for urgent changes in the tourism industry towards the prioritization of the well-being of not only profit but also people and the planet, an approach explained by Elkington (2018), thus the industry faces continued pressure to adopt sustainable practices (United Nations, 2023). Given its extensive global reach and significant environmental impact, the tourism industry stands in a critical position that requires advancement in the sustainability agendas (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2017; Alyahia et al., 2024).

In 2015, the United Nations brought forward the 2030 Agenda, with seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs), established to address global challenges and work towards a more sustainable, equal, and prosperous future for all (United Nations, 2023). According to UNWTO (n.d) the tourism industry has the capacity and responsibility to deliver “sustainable solutions for people, the planet, prosperity and peace,” and although the industry holds the capacity to directly or indirectly contribute to each of the SDGs, goal 8

‘Decent work and economic growth,’ 12 ‘Responsible consumption and production,’ and 14 ‘Life below water’ (United Nations, 2023), touch specifically upon issues within global tourism (UNTWO, n.d).

However, in spite of the ambition and potential of the tourism industry’s contribution to the realization of the SDGs, the inherent complexities of the wicked problem they seek to solve have made it a great challenge to translate these aspirations into reality and tangible outcomes (Wamsler et al., 2021; Inversini, Saul, Balet & Schegg, 2023). This predicament has led several researchers to state that the sustainable development efforts to mitigate, e.g. environmental harm, is considered inadequate (Chassagne & Everingham, 2020; Pollock, 2019; Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2023). Furthermore, numerous researchers and practitioners within the tourism industry have highlighted that the United Nations’s SDGs fail in addressing and questioning the underlying imperative for growth which reinforces the negative social-economic impacts (UNWTO & UNDP, 2017; Dwyer, 2018; Pollock, 2019; Bellato et al., 2023).

According to various researchers, one path moving forward for travel destinations is through the notion of regenerative tourism, emerging as a promising paradigm shift in tourism management and offering a transformative approach beyond traditional sustainability models (Dredge, 2022; Bellato et al., 2023). In an analysis by Steve Urlich (2020), there are different studies of regenerative tourism and its ability to be seen as either an extension of sustainable tourism, the future of tourism, or its own separate sector, as it has massive potential to rebrand the way society views how we live and operate with the environment. Regardless of its application, regenerative tourism seeks to minimize the negative impacts of tourism and actively contribute to the regeneration of communities, cultures, and natural environments (Duxbury et al., 2020). One key denotation that is mentioned in the literature is that regenerative tourism suggests that tourists will leave a place *better* than they found it, thus upgrading from the traditional view that sustainable tourism upholds: leaving a place *as good* as you found it (Urlich, 2020; Zaman et al., 2023). Therefore, regenerative tourism is described as an approach that takes sustainable tourism a step further with the aim to create positive, lasting change that comes from the ability of

living systems to heal, meaning that regenerative tourism would work to heal and make the living systems whole again (Urlich, 2020; Inversini et al., 2023).

By embracing regenerative principles, tourism stakeholders can move towards a more holistic and inclusive approach that fosters meaningful engagement with local communities, preserves cultural heritage, and promotes environmental stewardship (Cave & Dredge, 2020; Duxbury et al., 2020; Zaman et al., 2023).

Through the notion of regenerative tourism, this thesis will therefore dive further into the paradox and predicament of counterbalancing the economic necessity of tourism with the protection and preservation of its local communities and the environment. The point of the departure for this exploration is the archipelago of Hawai'i, being one of the world's most popular travel destinations. With its natural assets like beaches, coral reefs, and tropical forests, attracting millions of visitors annually (Salim & Mohd Tahir, 2012), tourism serves as the cornerstone of the economy (Pratt, 2015; Ulusemre & Lam, 2023) and thus, this archipelago finds itself in the center of this before-mentioned paradox.

1.2 Research Problem

As mentioned in the introduction, the tourism industry significantly damages the environment and, thereby, the livelihood of the people who call the beautiful Islands of Hawai'i their home. However, as described in the literature, traditional approaches remain insufficient on the path towards sustainable development, aiming at 'doing less harm' without addressing underlying systemic issues (Inversini et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2023). Although Hawai'i has more concentrated efforts towards sustainability throughout their tourism industry, there appears to be a disconnect between the community and their understanding of the positive impacts that tourism has the potential to bring (Assante, Wen, & Lotig, 2012). While there is an appreciation for the economic benefits that tourism brings to the islands, there are still surveyed residents who feel that their environment is compromised and degraded due to the impacts of tourism. Additionally, resident surveys reflect that residents often feel their increased cost of living and dependency on tourism is

too high (Assante et al., 2012), demonstrating the need for tourism practices that could potentially generate a mutual beneficence for communities, the environment, and the industry alike.

Research thus provides the context that the tourism industry does not have a current framework for increasing awareness and implementation of regenerative success within their practices. This prohibits the revival of the natural environment and support for local Hawaiian businesses, continuously disregarding the amplification of Native Hawaiian practices and knowledge that could serve to prevent and counteract the damage done by tourism.

1.3 Previous Research

This section will describe and evaluate previous studies and research on existing sustainability frameworks, regenerative tourism, and the collaborations among leaders and communities needed to increase the industry's regenerative development. As regenerative tourism is still a rather novel area, previous research will include a broader view of the topic by looking from a more global perspective.

Building upon the foundation of regenerative tourism, Hahn and Tampe (2021) propose three levels of regenerative strategies: restore, preserve, and enhance. This framework aims to empower places, communities, and tourists to operate harmoniously with interconnected systems, fostering net positive impacts across multiple dimensions (Dredge, 2022). Regenerative tourism responds to the limitations of traditional sustainability frameworks by acknowledging the complexity and interconnectedness between social, ecological, and economic systems within tourism destinations (Inversini et al., 2023; Bellato et al., 2023; Dredge, 2022). However, translating these insights into actionable strategies faces challenges. While scholars have outlined principles and conceptual frameworks for regenerative tourism, empirical studies on its application and effectiveness remain limited (Dredge, 2022; Inversini et al., 2023; Bellato et al., 2023). Particularly, there's a gap in understanding the role of hospitality businesses in advancing the regenerative movement

(Inversini et al., 2023). Hospitality industry stakeholders are integral to shaping the future of regenerative tourism, necessitating further research into their contributions to improving social-ecological systems and regenerative practices.

In the context of regenerative development, collaboration and inclusion within communities are crucial. Bellato and Cheer (2021) emphasize the critical success factors for local communities in sustainable urban tourism. It discusses the importance of incorporating all stakeholders' voices, especially indigenous or aboriginal communities, to ensure respect for culture and the environment. Their study in Fitzroy, Australia, highlights the necessity of understanding the relationship between humans and nature for successful regenerative tourism. The conceptual framework (Bellato & Cheer, 2021) presented in figure 1, showcases the integration of *Regenerative Development Principles* with *Inclusive Tourism Development*, emphasizing stakeholder participation and capacity-building efforts. The stakeholders involved in the tourism development process include local government, NGOs, community groups, tourism operators, community leaders, government planners and development actors. It advocates for regenerative approaches alongside inclusive tourism development, focusing on *Place-based Practices* uniquely developed by local stakeholders in inner-urban Melbourne.

Hence this framework aims to build community capacity, restore ecosystems, and create more inclusive tourism places. However, barriers such as poverty, lack of skills, and inadequate services hinder the inclusion of marginalized groups in tourism initiatives (Bellato & Cheer, 2021). It suggests redrawing stakeholder maps and widening participation in decision-making processes to partner with change agents can foster co-evolving mutualism and benefit both residents and the tourism industry.

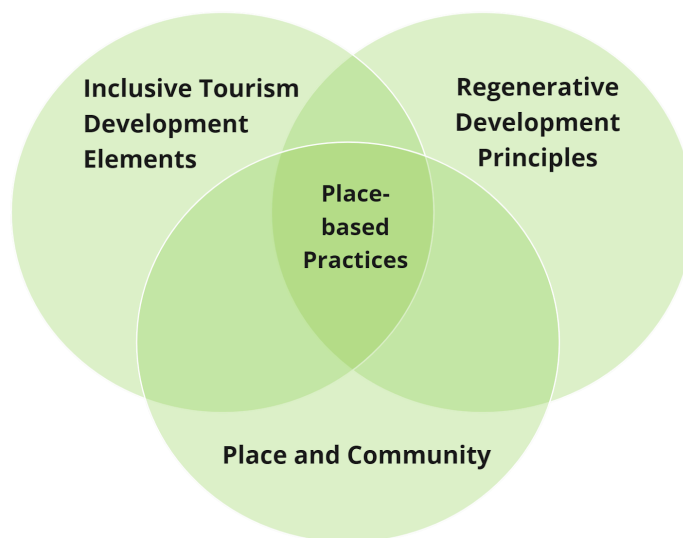


Figure 1: Framework for Regenerative Tourism Capacity Development (Bellato & Cheer, 2021)

This model, highlighting the intersections between tourism development, community, and regenerative development principles, has the ability to be applied to other regions of the world with similar issues relating to tourism. Figure 1 emphasizes the acknowledgement of place-based practices by showing that it is the connecting factor between the three sectors. This suggests that the tourism industry must look to the specific behaviors, cultural practices, and environmental considerations pertaining to individual locations in which tourism is operating (Bellato & Cheer, 2021). There must be awareness of the lifestyle that is already established in each tourist destination, accounting for the people and their daily habits to ensure tourism can include and regenerate these communities.

Drawing inspiration from communities of practice, such as those studied by Esmeralda F. Carini (2019) in Hawai'i's teaching community, the tourism industry could benefit from similar collaborative learning environments. These types of communities provide a platform for professionals to share knowledge, experiences, and solutions in a supportive setting, facilitating collective learning and improvement. Implementing such practices within the tourism industry could foster stakeholder collaboration, leading to more inclusive and sustainable tourism practices.

A reference to this practice was enlightened by research in New Zealand (Becken, Susanne & Jesvier, 2021), it offers a conceptual framework, termed the “tourism tree,” integrating elements of regenerative tourism and cultural values, which aims to ensure that tourism reflects and creates authentic values while promoting positive change and addressing the biodiversity crisis through public sector leadership and intervention. The findings highlighted that existing tourism strategies mainly focus on economic value, with limited consideration for societal and relational values. There was a consensus among participants that the emphasis on economic measures of success neglects broader perspectives on value creation, including environmental and cultural aspects.

The tree analogy, as shown in figure 2 below, suggests a shift towards a value-based approach to tourism, incorporating economic, environmental, social, and cultural dimensions embedded into the tourism system beyond just economic value. It emphasizes the importance of deep engagement with Māori cultural values and the integration of Tikanga Māori into tourism practices (Becken et al., 2021). The framework envisions a holistic view of tourism that acknowledges the interconnectedness of human and environmental well-being. Grounded in traditions, aiming to create value by connecting visitors to restoration projects, providing employment through indigenous rangers, and fostering different types of knowledge. This values-based tourism system signifies a departure from the current neoliberal approach to regenerative tourism, highlighting the need for a deeper consideration of cultural significance and wisdom in guiding tourism practices.

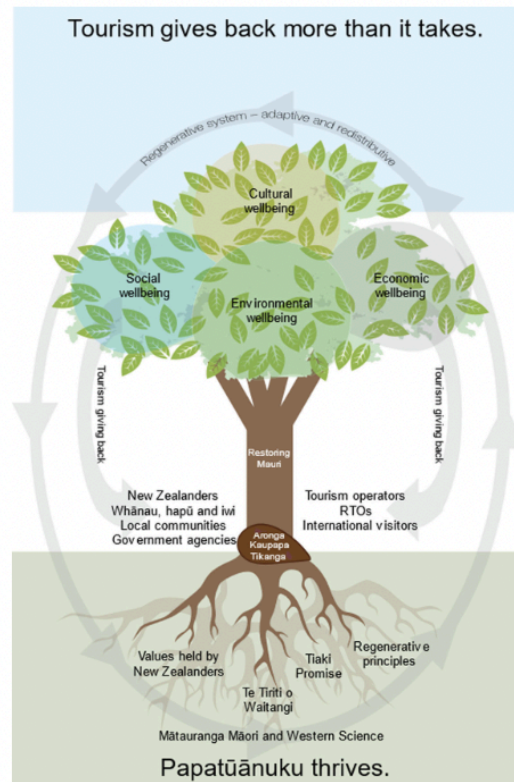


Figure 2: The tree analogy (Becken, Susanne & Jesvier, 2021, p.59)

The analogy in figure 2 is inspired by the work of Navi Radjou (2019) and portrays extractive economic models as large trees with shallow roots, symbolizing their focus on maximizing growth at the expense of long-term sustainability and societal well-being. In contrast, systems designed for social welfare are depicted as smaller trees with robust roots, emphasizing their prioritization of resilience and holistic well-being (Radjou, 2019; Becken et al., 2021). This analogy extends to the examination of existing tourism strategies, urging stakeholders to critically assess the underlying values and priorities embedded within these approaches (Dwyer, 2018). By framing economic systems as trees with varying root structures, the analogy prompts reflection on the alignment of tourism practices with principles of sustainability, equity, and resilience (Becken et al., 2021). Overall, it provides a visual and conceptual framework for understanding the complex interplay between economic models, tourism strategies, and societal outcomes (Dwyer, 2018; Radjou, 2019; Becken et al., 2021).

Another vital role in advancing regenerative tourism is the theory of transformational leadership, as it is a key element in driving change within an organization and across various stakeholders. Studies suggest a correlation between transformational leadership and green creativity within the tourism industry (Mittal & Dhar, 2016). A supportive environment cultivated by transformational leaders encourages environmental responsibility and innovation, where resource commitment is identified as crucial for fostering green creativity, leading to greener organizational identities and enhanced environmental care efforts within the tourism sector (Mittal & Dhar, 2016). In their study, they collected data from hotel managers in India and asked them to rate different measurements of green transformational leadership. Once this is established and hotels can form a greener organizational identity, they can create more green activities and devote more of their efforts to caring for the environment.

Studies on community inclusion, knowledge-sharing, and participation in tourism support community empowerment being a building block to regenerative tourism (Bellato & Cheer, 2021). Yet, there are few studies linking community inclusion to regenerative tourism in Hawai'i. Where residual animosity towards tourism persists, it is potentially addressable through community engagement (Bellato & Cheer, 2021). Additionally, understanding of the role of hospitality businesses in advancing regenerative practices and the inclusion of marginalized communities in tourism initiatives. Studies on industry leaders impact on regenerative tourism are lacking, with no clear guidelines or identifications of key figures crucial for aligning the interests of the local communities with the tourism industry. Specially, there is a lack of clarity regarding which leaders actively support both tourism initiatives and community empowerment.

In summary, while there is significant enthusiasm and theoretical groundwork surrounding the concept of regenerative tourism, there remains a notable gap between theory and practice in the current body of research. Despite the growing recognition of the need for regenerative approaches within the tourism industry, empirical studies on their application and effectiveness still need to be completed. This research gap underscores the pressing

need for empirical studies and the development of comprehensive frameworks to guide industry leaders towards fostering inclusive, sustainable practices that benefit both the tourism sector and local communities. There are studies regarding the definition of regenerative development and its positive connotations, but not many studies linking it directly to its success within tourism.

1.4 Aim and Research Questions

This research aims to analyze the current implementation and effectiveness of regenerative tourism in Hawai'i using several theoretical lenses. To understand and gain a deeper comprehension of the topic, perspectives of Native Hawaiians, local communities, tourism industry employees, and tourists will be interviewed and studied. This research seeks to contribute to the fostering of a symbiotic relationship that includes all stakeholders in the tourism industry's collaboration and implementation of regenerative practices. The study will be examined through the lens of three key theories: Regenerative Development, Communities of Practice, and Transformational Leadership.

Regenerative Development offers a unique outlook and perspective shift from traditional tourism practices. This theory will potentially enable workers within the tourism industry to understand the type of development and system changes needed to incorporate the revival of the environment and Native Hawaiian culture into their work, addressing sustainability challenges at a group level. The Communities of Practice theory aids this mindset shift by fostering the sharing of experiences and knowledge, strengthening the industry as a collective community. Additionally, Transformational Leadership is crucial for individuals to become leaders who bring lasting change and renewal to regenerative tourism. These leaders could gain self-awareness, understand their roles, and learn how to transform the industry. This research will explore how these frameworks can contribute to developing tourism practices that align with regenerative principles, ensuring long-term vitality, resilience, and community empowerment in Hawai'i's tourism industry.

RQ1: How can collaboration between local communities, organizations, and the tourism industry be leveraged to effectively implement regenerative tourism practices in Hawai'i?

RQ2: What are the existing leadership dynamics between local communities and the tourism industry in Hawai'i, and how do they influence regenerative practices?

RQ3: What are the key challenges faced in bridging the gap between the tourism industry's current practices and Native Hawaiians' regenerative practices, and how can these challenges be addressed?

1.5 Layout

With a point of departure in the research questions and aim, the remainder of the thesis is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, the selected theories will be presented in the light of the purpose of this thesis to provide a foundation for the analysis of the empirical data. This will be followed by the chosen methodologies and methods in Chapter 3, which will describe the reasoning for choosing the selected research approach as well as present how the research is conducted and analyzed. Chapter 4 will provide the empirical presentation of the object of study, where a brief presentation of Hawai'i's history and its implication for the current tourism industry and the Islands path towards regenerative practices. The analysis and results from the empirical data collection will be presented in Chapter 5, where the theories serve as a key element. In Chapter 6, the empirical results will be discussed in the light of the aim, research questions and chosen theories. Furthermore this chapter will offer theoretical and practical implications as well as suggestions for future research. Finally, the conclusion and reflections of the thesis will be presented in Chapter 7.

2. Theoretical Framework

To explore the aforementioned problematization within the tourism industry, it can be critical to understand how the different stakeholders collaborate and interact with each other within the industry in Hawaii. For the purpose of illuminating and analyzing how these stakeholders' dynamics, challenge and support a potential transition towards regenerative tourism in Hawaii, the following theories have been selected and will be presented in this chapter; Regenerative Development, Transformational Leadership, and Communities of Practice. Each theory provides a theoretical framework and lens that can help to understand the complexity of the tourism industry to achieve regenerative practices and thus lay the foundation of the empirical data analysis in the interviews.

2.1 Regenerative Development

Amidst the current challenges in the tourism industry, Regenerative Development (RD) presents a guiding light on the complex environmental and social issues confronting our world today. At its essence, RD represents a fundamental change in viewpoint, rooted in a diverse array of academic wisdom, RD transcends the boundaries of traditional sustainability models (DuPlessis, 2012), urging us toward a holistic understanding of our interconnected existence within the complex web of life.

The foundation of RD rests upon recognizing that our sustainability paradigms, though well-intentioned, often need to be more coherent in encapsulating the complexities inherent in social-ecological systems (DuPlessis, 2012). According to Purvis, Mao and Robinson (2019), the prevailing focus on the 'three pillars' of sustainability - environmental, social, and economic - underscores a mechanistic worldview that fails to resonate with the dynamic interplay of ecosystems. Moreover, traditional sustainability indicators frequently gravitate towards an elusive 'ideal' state, separated from the organic evolution of living systems (Bastianoni et al., 2019), whereas RD embarks on a journey guided by the principles of regeneration and thriving (DuPlessis, 2012). Central to this conception of living systems as dynamic, self-organizing entities endowed with the capacity to evolve

beyond mere sustainability toward heightened vitality and well-being. Within the domain of RD, health and well-being transcend the mere absence of harm, embracing the amplification of complexity, diversity, and adaptive capacity within social-ecological systems instead (Purvis, Mao & Robinson, 2019).

Rooted in an ecological worldview, RD indicates a profound shift in our relationship with the natural world; it invites us to perceive ourselves not as mere inhabitants but as active partners in the complicated dance of life (Reed, 2007). Drawing upon insights from complex adaptive systems science, ecology, quantum physics, and psychology, this integrative approach transcends disciplinary boundaries, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between human actions and ecological dynamics (Mang & Reed, 2012).

Regenerative tourism in Hawai'i embodies a paradigm shift that exceeds conventional sustainable development approaches, aligning seamlessly with the principles of RD theory. Rooted in ecological principles and a holistic worldview, regenerative tourism seeks to cultivate thriving communities and landscapes by nurturing regenerative capacities within social-ecological systems. Building upon insights learned over two decades of regenerative development practice, this approach acknowledges tourism as a transactional activity and a transformative force capable of catalyzing positive regeneration at multiple levels.

The RD theory, therefore, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and advancing the principles of regenerative tourism in Hawaii. By translating regenerative sustainability principles into actionable strategies, regenerative development facilitates the co-creation of tourism experiences that honor Hawaii's cultural authenticity while fostering ecological resilience and social equity. Through multi-sectoral community engagement and a commitment to holistic development, regenerative tourism in Hawai'i can mitigate the negative impacts of tourism and actively regenerate communities, cultures, and landscapes, thereby paving the way for a thriving and abundant future.

2.2 Communities of Practice

In order to create this aforementioned multi-sectoral community engagement, the theory of Communities of Practice (CoP) could mobilize community members and include them in the regenerative tourism conversation. CoP is a theory that was originally created by Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave, offering a theoretical tool that could be applied to groups of people to increase experience and conceptualize ‘thinking together’ (Pyrko et al., 2016). The main idea of CoP is to allow a space in which people from potentially different backgrounds, working in the same industry or related to each other in some way, can converse voluntarily and discuss the best practices for their industry to move forward (Steichen, 2001). The concept is structured based on the understanding that learning is social and, additionally, can be influenced by discussing the ways we participate in daily life. This allows for increased knowledge-based learning and shared information (Steichen, 2001).

CoP are sometimes self-organizing; however, many are cultivated, and this allows for members to feel that their time is being valued and that their presence is needed for the CoP (Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Cultivation can either come from organizations working to bridge the gaps between stakeholders or self-coordinated get-togethers between members. These spaces are not always harmonious and many times, different backgrounds bring different perspectives that may clash. This, however, is highly beneficial as it ensures there is no group-thinking, and that there will be diverse knowledge shared amongst the group (Wenger-Trayner, 2015).

Difference between CoP and Teams: Steichen compares CoP to Teams but notes the difference between the two as CoP has the ability to share and expand knowledge. Another key difference is that CoP are voluntary, allowing individuals to participate according to their own free will, not putting a dependency or responsibility on the individual. This can aid in more free-flowing of information as individuals will wish to share the information they bring to the CoP. There is a built trust between members and a community of learning that is understood between them (Steichen, 2001).

Practice: CoP typically refers to a common practice that all members of the community regularly partake in. These practices are usually work-related, a part of an industry, or a type of experience. All members of the CoP must partake in this practice or have some type of regular interaction with it. This forms the ability to converse and share knowledge about experiences, building communal knowledge about the practice (Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Individuals who would partake in a CoP for Hawaii's tourism industry would be industry leaders but also community members whose lives are impacted by tourism, whether that be through employment or lifestyle adaptation.

Potential: Steichen analyzes CoP as having the potential to bridge relationships and communication between groups of people that impact each other but do not always have the opportunity to discuss their connections. Open, honest communication allows an environment of learning to thrive. This attention to inclusion of all stakeholders and offering them a space to increase shared knowledge is a step towards the advancement of practice. A collective understanding of key requirements and practices can ensure that stakeholders within an industry function on equal levels with the same basis of information. There can be more productivity towards solutions that all members are satisfied with, giving a CoP a progressive edge that other theories do not offer in this context (Steichen, 2001).

Participation is noted as a key contribution to learning, not merely through physical presence but additionally through taking action and attributing a sense of connection to the learning (Wenger, 1998; Handley et al., 2006). However, Handley et al. (2006) identified the potential struggle of newcomers to CoP as they may not feel that they are welcome to that same participation that other members who have been a part of the CoP feel and analyzed the influence that power can play within individuals in a CoP. There is the possibility of conflict to arise from the opposing viewpoints of new participants to those who have fully participated in the CoP for an extended period of time. Thus, there is a need for participants to be aware of their personal identities and forms of participation to adapt to the dynamics and processes within their communities (Handley et al., 2006). This will

allow participants to understand how to reject or accept the conversations and understandings offered from fellow participants.

Although, Pyrko et al. (2016) discuss the value that CoP can bring to individuals from different backgrounds through the concept of ‘shared indwelling’. This idea extends the initial understanding that individuals will bring their own identities and tacit knowledge into a space, building on this to say that individuals will relearn and redevelop their comprehension of a topic based on the mutual experiences that others in the room share. This relearning will lead to *interlocked indwelling*, when participants are able to overlap their identities and experiences together for new forms of learning (Pyrko et al., 2016). Applying this to the tourism industry in Hawai’i, different participants may be able to learn, empathize, and grow their understandings of the impacts of tourism based on the shared experiences of individuals in the room. Participants must first understand their own identities and the manners in which they participate within their communities. This awareness and combination of shared experiences can lead to more relatability that will motivate individuals into taking action to make changes within the industry (Pyrko et al., 2016).

Looking at CoP as a tool for the tourism industry in Hawai’i, CoP could provide a space for community members, leaders in the tourism industry, and other related stakeholders to join together in a conversation on best practices to move forward. As more community members’ needs could be met through this open learning, there would be longer-lasting and more conscious decision-making regarding regenerative tourism efforts. Giving everyone the time to share thoughts, experiences, and wishes for the industry could put tourism into a more positive light, building leadership capabilities and offering more continuous support from all sides.

2.3 Transformational Leadership

In the quest for regenerative change within the tourism industry, transformational leadership (TL) offers a guiding light into how leaders can navigate the complexity of the modern world. This theory, deeply rooted in the interplay between leaders and followers (Northouse, 2016), emerges as a fundamental concept that complements the collaborative spirit of CoP.

TL theory, a significant paradigm in leadership studies, has a rich history of contributions from scholars across disciplines. The term was first introduced by Downton in 1973, but it gained notable traction through the seminal work of James MacGregor Burns in 1978. Burns laid the foundation by delineating leadership as a process closely intertwined with the needs and motivations of followers, setting it apart from mere power dynamics. At the core of TL is a profound connection between leaders and followers, promoting a synergy that elevates motivation and morality on both ends. This perspective emphasizes the leader's role in inspiring and empowering followers to realize their fullest potential (Northouse, 2016).

Bass and Riggio (2006) underline the theory's resonance in contemporary contexts, attributing its popularity to its focus on essential motivation and follower development, aligning with the evolving needs between times of uncertainty. Central to the essence of TL is a critical process that triggers change and fosters growth at both individual and collective levels; it goes beyond traditional notions of command and control, which dive into the domains of emotions, values, and long-term goals. It addresses various leadership behaviors, from individualized interactions to organizational and cultural influence. This perspective, as articulated by Howell & Avolio (1993), emphasizes leaders' selfless dedication to the collective good, transcending personal interests for the benefit of others.

Northouse (2016) delineates the multifaceted nature of TL in its core factors in the following way:

Idealized Influence: also known as charisma or role modeling, constitutes the emotional cornerstone of TL (Antonakis, 2012). Leaders who exhibit idealized influence serve as powerful role models for their followers, embodying values, integrity, and a sense of purpose. By setting high standards of moral and ethical conduct, they inspire admiration and loyalty, fostering a strong sense of identification and commitment among their followers.

Inspirational Motivation: revolves around the ability of transformational leaders to communicate a compelling vision and motivate followers to commit to shared goals. These leaders inspire enthusiasm, optimism, and a sense of purpose, rallying individuals around a common cause. Through effective communication, symbolic gestures, and emotional appeals, they embed a sense of belonging and excitement, energizing followers to transcend self-interest and strive for collective success. Inspirational motivation fosters a spirit of teamwork and collaboration, encouraging individuals to go above and beyond what is expected of them.

Intellectual Stimulation: involves challenging followers to think critically, innovate, and question existing assumptions. Transformational leaders stimulate creativity and encourage followers to explore new ideas, perspectives, and solutions. They foster an environment of continuous learning and growth, where individuals are empowered to challenge the status quo and engage in thoughtful problem-solving. By promoting intellectual curiosity and autonomy, these leaders inspire innovation and adaptability, driving organizational excellence and resilience in the face of change.

Individualized Consideration: emphasize the importance of personalized attention and mentorship, demonstrating genuine concern for the needs, aspirations, and development of each follower. They offer tailored guidance to help individuals realize their full potential. By creating a supportive environment where each person feels valued and understood, these leaders foster a sense of trust, loyalty, and empowerment. Individualized consideration promotes personal growth, autonomy, and job satisfaction, enhancing organizational effectiveness and well-being.

Going beyond theoretical constructs, scholars like Bennis and Nanus (1985) delve into the practical dimensions of TL. They emphasize the importance of visionary leadership, trust-building, and self-awareness in driving organizational change. On the other hand, Kouzes and Posner (2006) outline actionable practices such as modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart, which underpins exemplary leadership behaviors.

In contemporary discourse, transformational leadership continues to resonate, offering a path toward organizational resilience and innovation. Recent research identifies its transformative potential in shaping values, stimulating intellectual growth, and fostering innovative work behavior. This empowerment of employees and enhancement of organizational culture, as well as its influence in promoting engagement and collective efficacy, highlight the ongoing relevance of TL (Lei et al., 2019; Afsar & Umrani, 2019). In essence, TL theory represents a dynamic and holistic approach that transcends traditional paradigms. It means not merely a theoretical framework but a lived experience—a journey of self-discovery and collective evolution. As organizations navigate the complexities of the modern world, the principles of TL serve as guiding lights, illuminating paths toward shared purpose, ethical stewardship, and enduring success.

2.3.1 Green Transformational Leadership

Leaders act as a hub of knowledge within their units or teams, raising considerable influence over the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. This influence extends to resource allocation, with leaders directing more resources toward their priorities to achieve desired outcomes (Chen & Chang, 2013; Özgül & Zehir, 2022;). Building upon this, Cui and Wang (2022) show the significance of TL in fostering organizational learning and innovation through experimentation and dialogue, which is crucial for addressing environmental challenges and promoting regenerative innovation within organizations and communities. Moreover, Özgül and Zehir (2022) found that leaders with environmental consciousness are more inclined to embrace TL styles, further emphasizing the

interconnectedness between leadership, environmental awareness, and organizational innovation.

Building upon this notion, Green transformational leadership (GTL) emerges as a critical framework within organizational leadership. This concept was introduced by Chen and Chang (2013), particularly in response to the pressing need for environmental sustainability, which builds upon the principles of traditional TL while specifically focusing on environmental goals and sustainability. Studies have shown that GTL promotes achieving environmental objectives and exceeding performance standards and drives organizations toward environmentally responsible behaviors while fostering a culture of innovation and creativity (Cui & Wang, 2022). This specialized form of leadership not only addresses environmental concerns but also aims to provide companies with fresh ideas and visions for achieving a competitive advantage in the green market (Xin & Wang, 2023).

GTL embodies principles that blend conventional TL ideals with environmental sustainability objectives (Moin, Omar, Wei, Rasheed & Hameed, 2021). At its core, GTL emphasizes the importance of leaders acting as ethical role models, inspiring employees to mirror their commitment to ecological and societal concerns. This leadership style also entails effectively communicating the vision of environmental goals, encouraging innovative thinking among employees to devise sustainable solutions, and fostering a supportive environment where employees feel valued and empowered to contribute to the organization's ecological agenda (Moin et al., 2021).

In GTL, supervisors are crucial in guiding employees toward sustainable practices and nurturing their skills for green innovation (Özgül & Zehir, 2022). A strong emphasis on environmental improvement by GTL leaders encourages hospitality enterprises to develop their green intellectual capital, thereby enhancing their capacity for environmental innovation (Cui & Wang, 2023). High-level GTL contributes to the establishment of green values, corporate culture, and organizational structures within hospitality enterprises, fostering an ecological atmosphere conducive to green innovation (Xin & Wang, 2023). Moreover, GTL strengthens relationships between hospitality enterprises and stakeholders

by promoting the sharing of environmental knowledge and resources and facilitating environmental innovation (Xin & Wang, 2023). By aligning with stakeholders' green visions and continuously improving products to meet green demands, GTL in essence transcends mere ecological concerns by integrating responsible activities into the fabric of organizational culture. By embracing environmental responsibility as a communal obligation, organizations can ensure that every aspect of their operations, from service delivery to waste management, reflects a commitment to ecological sustainability (Moin, Ikhide & Li, 2024). Through GTL, organizations can navigate the complexities of the regenerative economy while driving innovation and fostering a sustainable future for generations to come.

2.4 Intersectionality of Chosen Theories

There are great possibilities when considering the potential of the implementation of all three of the chosen theories together. As RD plays a greater role in the success of regenerative tourism in Hawai'i, there will be necessary leaders to transform the scene from the way the industry currently operates in connection to local communities, culture, and ecosystem-based impacts. These leaders can be fostered from strategically organized CoP that allow individuals directly from Native Hawaiian communities to have the necessary platform to speak on the most pressing issues to their culture and land. The ability to transform the industry into a more regenerative space, amplifying native voices and indigenous practices that will work *with* nature as opposed to acting as a force *against* it, will exemplify TL. Specifically, this contribution will enact the principles of GTL and demonstrate sustainability's role in leadership and its capacity to transform industries. The impacts of the implementation of the chosen theories will be able to serve as a measure of their success and the intersectionality that they share.

This interconnectivity is illustrated in figure 3 below, where the research scope on regenerative tourism in Hawai'i is in the center, surrounded by the three overlapping circles representing each chosen theory.

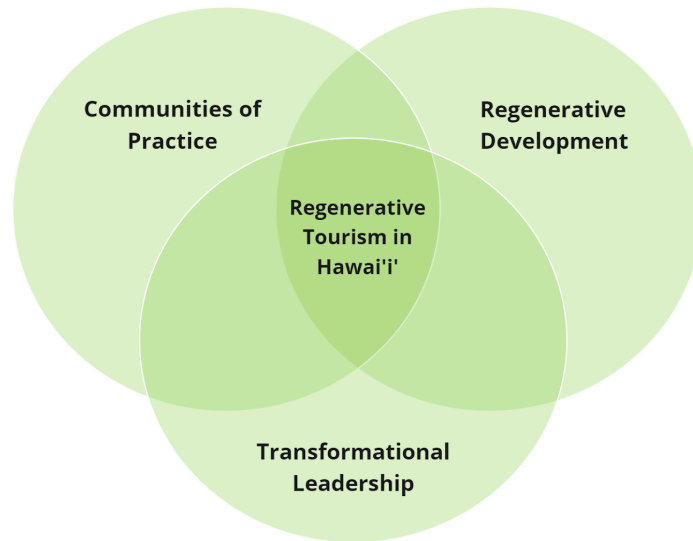


Figure 3: Connection between theories and research scope

The first circle *Regenerative Development* illustrates the principles and practices of regenerative development, showcasing how they contribute to the success of regenerative tourism in Hawai'i. This emphasizes the importance of sustainability, ecosystem-based impacts, and the integration of native practices with the tourism industry. The second circle, *Communities of Practice*, highlights how the empowerment of native voices and the fostering of collaboration and knowledge-sharing among community members. The third and final circle, *Transformational Leadership*, illustrates how visionary leaders can drive positive change by promoting sustainability, supporting indigenous perspectives, and transforming industry practices to align with regenerative principles. The center of the figure represents the intersectionality of the theories and their collective impact on the research's aim: offering Hawai'i's tourism industry a more regenerative space that honors local communities, culture, and ecosystems. This intersection symbolizes the synergy created by integrating these theories, resulting in a holistic approach to achieving a regenerative and resilient tourism industry.

3. Methodology and Methods

The structure of this chapter is twofold. The first part will introduce the selected methodologies, the logic and argumentation behind their selection, and the adjustments made to align them with the scope and aim of this study. The second part will outline the structure of the empirical work, followed by a presentation of the methodologies employed for data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study examines the impacts of the tourism industry on the environmental, social, and economic well-being of Hawai'i and the potential of regenerative tourism to reverse these impacts. More specifically, the study uses the theories *Transformational Leadership (TL)*, *Community of Practice (CoP)*, and *Regenerative Development (RD)* to analyze and discuss the empirical data. In order for these theories to draw together themes and illuminate commonalities or differentiating conclusions, the study's methodology will therefore employ a qualitative research approach, leveraging a vastly extended literature review as its initial phase to establish the theoretical foundation (Given, 2008), as shown in figure 4. This approach aligns with the complex nature of the research problem, which requires a deep understanding of existing sustainability frameworks, regenerative tourism principles, and collaborative practices within the communities and tourism industry. To get the most holistic collection of articles, we conducted the search via Google Scholar with peer-reviewed academic papers and articles in an iterative manner (Webster & Watson, 2002).

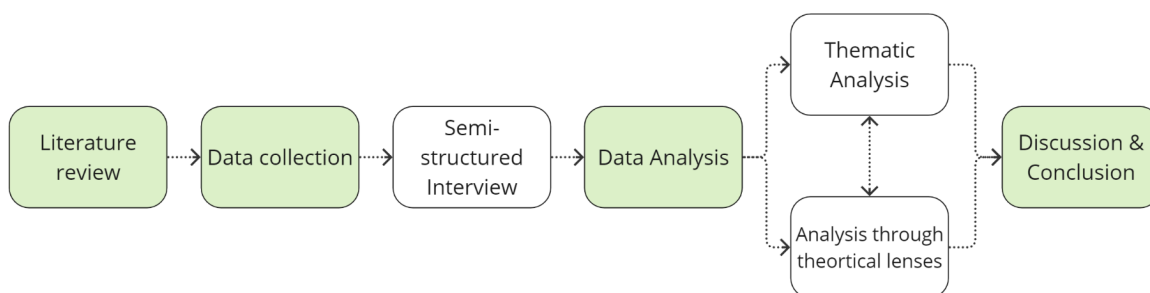


Figure 4: Research design

As shown above in figure 4, the literature review is followed by the data collection, consisting of semi-structured interviews to explore diverse perspectives, experiences, and insights related to regenerative tourism practices, collaborative efforts, and challenges faced in Hawai'i. The data obtained from the interviews will be subjected to two interconnected phases of data analysis; *first* a thematic analysis, focused on identifying patterns, themes, and connections within the data, which will uncover insights into the collaborative efforts, dynamics, barriers, and opportunities for implementing regenerative tourism practices in Hawaii. *Second*, an analysis through the lenses of the chosen theories with the aim to understand and later discuss how the notion of regenerative tourism could be used as an approach to transform the current landscape in Hawai'i into a regenerative space.

By grounding the methodology in relevant literature and theory, the study seeks to generate valuable insights and contribute to advancing knowledge in regenerative tourism development. To do so, six general competencies have served as a source of inspiration and guidance for the optimal execution of this thesis and the collection of pertinent data. These competencies, as presented by Yin (2015), refer to listening attentively, posing good questions, generating knowledge on the chosen subject matter, demonstrating care for the data, doing parallel tasks, and maintaining perseverance through the research process.

3.2 Data collection

As illuminated earlier in this thesis, regenerative tourism is a rather novel research area. The literature review conducted for this thesis has demonstrated that there is a current research gap, particularly regarding applying the approach of regenerative tourism into practice. Hawai'i, being an archipelago that has explored the potential of regenerative tourism in recent years, thus serves as a relevant point of departure. Based on this research opportunity, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis have been selected as the prime methodologies to assist and guide this research journey, as they will allow for an in-depth exploration of regenerative tourism in Hawaii.

3.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The methodological approach for these interviews was influenced by the work of Svend Brinkmann and Steiner Kvale (2018), who emphasized the importance of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research, as semi-structured interviews allow interviewees to respond to questions in ways that best express their sentiments and opinions about naturally occurring phenomena (Silverman, 2014). This method facilitates the collection of comprehensive data, examining the broader context in which issues exist and uncovering the true causes and consequences of these issues (Silverman, 2014). In this thesis, semi-structured interviews were therefore employed to ensure that the interviewees could freely provide their insights into regenerative tourism, and thereby elaborate on the our knowledge on the topic. Furthermore, the interviews aimed to generate data regarding the relevance of the selected theoretical frameworks to the tourism industry, Hawaiians' perspectives, and tourists' perception of tourism. Specifically, these qualitative interviews sought to capture current practices, perceptions, and knowledge about regenerative tourism in Hawai'i.

To prepare for the interviews, two interview guides were designed to address the chosen research questions (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The first guide (Appendix 1) was used for individuals from the tourism industry and for community members, as these questions focused on the efforts that are being implemented to include environmental and cultural sustainability in the field. Additionally, these questions sought to understand the dynamics and inclusion of locals within tourism to Hawai'i. The questions for this interview guide took a departure in previous research and the selected theories, whereas the second interview guide addressed to frequent tourists to Hawai'i, (Appendix 2), instead focused on perceptions and thoughts about the tourists' experiences in Hawai'i and their feelings towards a more regenerative tourism industry.

The questions were adapted throughout the interviews, to make logical sense to the interviewees so that there was no confusion that could lead to miscommunication or misunderstandings. Additionally context was provided for interviewees when any possible

confusion occurred, enabling them a comfortable space to ask for clarification of the question and provide an appropriate response. Furthermore, certain questions prompted specific responses from interviewees that led to a new question being asked by the interviewer. This iteration and flexibility of the methodological allowed elaboration and more detail in the responses from interviewees, which resulted in more rich and comprehensive data. Thus, by applying this method, this study ensured that data collected allowed an in-depth understanding of regenerative tourism in Hawaii' from multiple perspectives, by allowing different voices and experiences to be represented.

3.2.2 Selection of Interview Participants

The selection of specific individuals for interviews was carried out to correlate to the chosen theories, as well as according to regenerative tourism's scope of stakeholders. As the researchers did not have particular connections in Hawai'i on a personal level, the researchers reached out to several viable candidates for interviews and allowed their responses to determine the possibility of the interview. This can be identified as random sampling from an original pool of purposefully-selected individuals (Robinson, 2013) that is suitable for this type of qualitative data collection.

The interviews involved a diverse group of participants, including individuals working within the tourism industry, local residents, Native Hawaiians, and tourists who have repeatedly visited Hawai'i. This diversity ensured a broader range of perspectives on the tourism scene and its impact on local culture, society, and the environment. There was the necessary sampling of employees connected to the tourism industry in Hawai'i. Specifically, a connection to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority was able to give us an industry-leading perspective. There was a need for an individual who could offer the "behind-the-scenes" of the industry to ensure that we were collecting accurate and holistic data. Additionally, there was the inclusion of Native Hawaiians and locals who have experienced and observed the impacts of tourism on the islands. These individuals were selected with the idea that they would be able to give first-hand accounts of community perceptions of the industry. Lastly, tourists of Hawai'i were selected to offer insights into their experiences and personal accounts and opinions of their travels to Hawai'i in relation

to community interaction, ecosystem education, and industry impacts. After the invited participants agreed to partake in the study, a consent form was sent and obtained prior to the interviews. A sample of the consent form can be found in Appendix 3.

While the tourism industry's influence on local communities can be seen across the world, our study focuses on Hawai'i to exemplify the impacts of tourism. Due to Hawai'i being such an isolated region of the world, gaining contact with locals and officials within the tourism industry specifically in Hawai'i served as a challenge. Additionally, it was difficult to find times to schedule interviews that aligned easily with schedules when taking into account the time difference between Sweden and Hawai'i being 12 hours. We did not have close connections to any contacts within the industry in Hawai'i, and this proved to make it more difficult to form those connections and collect data from the industry. Connections were eventually made through several contacts offering other individual contacts, and a broader network was created to include a greater perspective on the issue.

Despite these challenges, a total of eight semi-structured were conducted online using Google Meets, lasting between approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The choice of an online platform facilitated accessibility and convenience for all participants. The interviews were conducted in the period April 11th, 2024 to May 17th, 2024, recorded and transcribed in accordance with approval from the interviewee. A transcribed interview can be found in Appendix 4 as an example. Each interviewee was able to offer a different perspective while still maintaining the same or similar themes across their responses, which will be discussed in more detail in the data analysis below.

The selection of interviewee participants and the category in which their identities offered data are listed in Table 1. In agreement with the participants, their identity will be anonymous, and each participant will be referred to as 'Participant' followed by their number as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Information Overview of Participants

Participant	Organization & Relevant Role	Industry/Resident /Tourist	Date of Interview
Participant 1	Hawai'i Green Growth, Sustainability Business Forum	Tourism, Hawai'i Local	April 11th, 2024
Participant 2	The Washington Center	Native Hawaiian	April 17th, 2024
Participant 3	Hawai'i Impact Collaborative, Founder & Director	Hawai'i Local	April 18th, 2024
Participant 4	Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Chief Stewardship Officer	Tourism, Native Hawaiian, Hawai'i Local	April 30th, 2024
Participant 5	SEB	Hawai'i Local	May 3rd, 2024
Participant 6	North Olmsted City Schools	Hawai'i Tourist	May 7th, 2024
Participant 7	Smith's Mill Health Center	Hawai'i Tourist	May 10th, 2024
Participant 8	Ocean Conservation Efforts	Hawai'i Local	May 17th, 2024

3.3 Data Analysis

To organize and identify essential findings from the interviews, the thematic analysis (TA) approach, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), was selected due to its applicability to qualitative research and, in particular, the use of interviews as the primary source of data collection (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Joffe, 2011). TA is a methodological approach that allows for a systematic exploration of the data, enabling identification and organization by providing insights into patterns of ideas, perspectives and meaning (themes) across a dataset, which holds relevance to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2012). By focusing on the collective meanings in the data, TA allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of shared experiences and interpretations (Joffe, 2011). A key advantage of TA is its flexibility and adaptability, which make it well-suited to explore

diverse conceptualizations of a phenomenon within specific groups or contexts, ultimately enabling the researcher to identify commonalities in how a topic is discussed or represented (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Often, the determination of patterns and construction of themes are actively derived from the data using one or a combination of inductive and deductive approaches to data coding (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Data coding and theme generation can be approached through either an inductive or deductive method. The inductive approach is characterized by a bottom-up process, where codes and themes emerge directly from the data itself - here, the researchers closely align their analysis with the content of their data, allowing patterns to emerge naturally (Braun & Clarke, 2006). On the other hand, the deductive approach takes a top-down perspective, where researchers apply pre-existing concepts, ideas, or theories to code and interpret the data - here, the codes and themes are primarily derived from the concepts and ideas the research brings to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, coding and analysis is often a combination of both approaches, as researchers inevitably bring their own perspectives to the data while also considering the inherent meaning within the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

The inductive approach will be the primary focus applied because it allows answering the research question accurately, both through the lens of the theories and by enabling common themes to emerge and be brought into the data analysis. The data set was analyzed as illustrated in figure 5, following the widely accepted six-phase framework introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006): 1) *familiarizing oneself with the data*; 2) *generating initial codes that emerge naturally from the data*; 3) *searching for themes*; 4) *reviewing the themes*; 5) *defining and naming the themes*. Finally, 6) *Producing a report*, that summarizes and ties together the themes found from the data in relation to the theories and research questions.

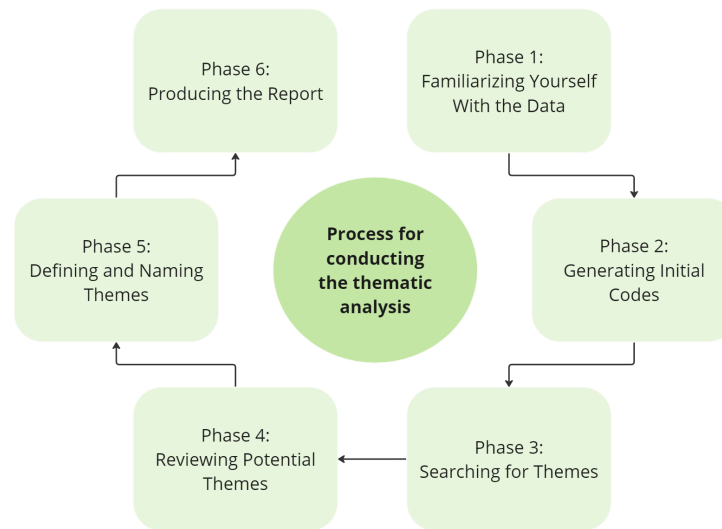


Figure 5: Process for conducting the thematic analysis. Inspired by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Starting with phase 1, '*Familiarizing yourself with the data,*' we proofread possible mistakes and errors during the transcription interview process. We then immersed ourselves in the dataset through repeated readings, actively searching for meaning and patterns and noting initial ideas related to the aim of our research questions. This thorough process ensures the accuracy and reliability of our data. In phase 2 '*Generating initial codes,*' we used the Nvivo software program to support the coding process. The transcripts allowed codes to present themselves from quotes by the interviewees. Essential for this phase was that the coding allowed for the structure and organization of the interviews into meaningful groups, which was unnecessary for the next step. Phase 3 '*Searching for themes,*' marks a shift in our focus from individual codes to broader themes within our dataset. We organize the coded data from the previous phase into potential themes, analyzing how different codes could be combined to form overarching themes. In the subsequent phase 4 '*Reviewing themes*' (Appendix 5), we reviewed and refined the themes generated in phase 3, re-evaluating those that lack sufficient data or overlap with other themes. This meticulous process allows for the identification of more robust and coherent themes and sub-themes (codes). Moving into phase 5 '*Defining and naming themes*' we used the thematic coding overview generated in the previous phase (Appendix 5) to refine the

themes for our analysis. We went through each theme and related codes, considering its contribution to the broader narrative of the data and its relationship with the other themes. Lastly, we went over the themes to ensure clarity by defining and naming them to illustrate the ‘story’ effectively, as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: The Finale Thematic Coding

Theme 1: The Consequences of a Thriving Tourism Industry and its Environmental Impact	Theme 2: Environmental Stewardship and Ecological Restoration, the Path Toward Regeneration
Overtourism Natural Resources Environmental Impact	Tourism Management System Change Regeneration Holistic Thinking
Theme 3: Hawaiian Communities' Interplay and Connections to the Regenerative Tourism Scene	Theme 4: Intersections and Influence of Leadership Roles within the Industry
Supporting Local Indigenous Knowledge Communities Colonization	Leadership Governmental Process Economic Impact Education

The final four themes with codes are presented here. In phase 6, ‘*Producing the report,*’ the final analysis will be presented in the analysis chapter. This final phase will focus on providing a concise, coherent, and logical presentation of the data and the final thematic coding analysis.

Once the six phases of the thematic analysis have been concluded, an additional analysis will be conducted in the form of analyzing the results from the thematic analysis through the lenses of the selected theories.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Tourism in Hawai'i is known to be a topic with conflicting opinions and to be layered with many perspectives. Thus, conversations around tourism in Hawai'i can be a sensitive topic for some, with the possibility of evoking many emotions. To ensure there were ethical measures taken to provide comfort and respect to the interviewees throughout the collection of data, 5 key principles, listed below, were followed (Kang & Hwang, 2021).

Maintaining Relationships with Research Participants - From the beginning of contact with interviewees, there was an intentional trust established and a respect given to them for their participation and willingness to share and respond to questions.

Upholding Informed Consent - Interviewees were asked for permission to record their responses in each interview at the start of their responses.

Upholding Confidentiality and Privacy - Interviewees' names and identities will remain confidential so as to respect their privacy and show appreciation and consideration for their responses.

Upholding Beneficence - The researchers maintained respectful questioning of the interviewees so that they did not suffer any harm throughout the data collection.

Upholding Honesty and Integrity - The research findings were clearly reported, analyzed, and discussed to contribute honest and accurate data according to the interviewees' responses.

Upholding these principles created an atmosphere of integrity and allowed the interviewees to share personal stories and feelings towards tourism in Hawai'i. This enabled the researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the research problem and collect increasingly accurate qualitative data.

3.5 Trustworthiness & Validity

Throughout this study, there were measures taken to ensure validity was established and supported by the data. Internal validity, in this context, can be explained as the accuracy of the findings in relation to reality (Merriam, 2001). Validity can be expressed through

qualitative data in the sense that there is an interpreter of the data who has the power to capture the ways in which the data can inform us of reality. Qualitative data is not rigid information like statistics, which quantitative data sometimes is presented in. Instead, qualitative data is holistic and multidimensional, allowing for the observation of people's constructions of the world (Merriam, 2001).

The data collected in this study was based on individuals' perceptions, experiences, and knowledge of the tourism industry. The diversity of interviewees provided differences in opinions and perspectives of tourism. This brought together many worldviews as well as multigenerational knowledge about Hawaiian culture and the impacts that the islands of Hawai'i have faced from tourism. These diverse perspectives are able to be interpreted and themes of individuals' constructions of tourism were able to be drawn from their responses, ensuring that the data collected is valid and trustworthy. When analyzing the data, the common themes contribute to the observations of worldviews that can resemble the reality of the tourism landscape in Hawai'i.

4. Empirical Presentation of the Object of Study

4.1 Hawai'i - A Troubled Paradise?

Tourism has had a profound impact on both the environment and culture of Hawai'i. A crucial part of Hawai'i's cultural history that is noteworthy to today's current situation is the lifestyle of the Indigenous Hawaiians prior to the colonization of Hawai'i by the United States Government in the 19th century (Medeiros, 2017). Discussing their indigenous practices, ways of living, and their history is integral to understanding the current economic dependence on tourism, as well as the feelings and sentiments towards tourism and its impacts on Hawaiian culture and society. Historically, Indigenous Hawaiians thrived sustainably, with nearly 1.2 million people living off the land through practices like the Ahupua'a system, which ensured efficient water distribution and sustainable agriculture (Kurashima et al., 2016). However, the colonization by the U.S. disrupted these systems, exploiting the land for cash crops like pineapple and sugarcane, which aligned with U.S. imperialistic goals and attracted tourists to the islands (Medeiros, 2017). The exploitation of the archipelago not only damaged the environment but also significantly altered Hawaiian culture, which has been further entrenched by the modern tourism industry (Kurashima et al., 2016).

The attraction of its natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and unique landscapes has drawn millions of visitors to the archipelago annually, contributing significantly to the state's GDP. According to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA, 2020), tourism accounted for approximately 17% of the state's GDP in 2019, generating over USD 1.4 billion in total visitor spending (UNWTO, nd). This robust industry has served as a significant source of private capital and has also played a pivotal role in job creation and state tax revenue generation, with the total number of visitors arriving to the islands rising 6.2 percent to a total of nearly a million visitors in July of 2019 (HTA, 2019). As tourism became the backbone of Hawai'i's economy, the islands became heavily dependent on imported resources, a stark contrast to their previous self-sufficiency (Medeiros, 2017).

The shift to a tourism-centric economy has overshadowed Hawai'i's rich cultural history and sustainable practices, highlighting the adverse effects of prioritizing tourism over indigenous ways of life (Kurashima et al., 2016), and although tourism has long been a cornerstone of economic prosperity for Hawai'i (Sobhee, 2008; Cheer et al., 2018), the exponential growth in the tourism industry is not without its challenges. The industry stands at a crossroads, balancing the economic benefits resulting from the imperative to preserve its natural resources and cultural heritage (Gon, et al., 2018). The surge in visitor numbers has exerted immense pressure on residential areas and key visitor sites, leading to overcrowding, traffic congestion, and deterioration of infrastructure and natural landscapes. The Hawaiian Islands, with a population of approximately 1.4 million residents, have experienced visitor numbers nearly seven times that figure, exacerbating concerns about sustainability and quality of life for residents and visitors alike (HTA, 2020).

Moreover, the environmental toll of mass tourism on Hawai'i's delicate ecosystems cannot be overlooked. The presence of people and their introduction of non-native species have led to losses in biological diversity and cultural heritage (Gon, et al., 2018). This environmental degradation is intensified by the high demand for resources from an ever-increasing number of tourists, whose demands often exceed the local biocapacity. Studies indicate that tourism accounts for a substantial portion of energy consumption and water usage on the islands, further straining already limited resources (Saito, 2013). Additionally, the influx of tourists has raised apprehensions among residents regarding preserving Hawai'i's natural resources and Native Hawaiian culture (Assante, et al., 2012). Similarly to the Canary Islands, as mentioned in the introduction, the archipelago of Hawai'i finds itself at the point of no return.

4.2 The Path Towards Regeneration

Despite the economic benefits associated with tourism, many residents prioritize environmental conservation over short-term financial gains (Liu & Var, 1986) and similar to other travel destinations, Hawai'i is in the pursuit for more sustainable practices and mitigation of the harmful effects of the tourism industry by reversing the loss of natural resources and decline in resident well-being. The Hawai'i Tourism Authority has illustrated

this ambition for change by having adopted strategic pillars, aiming at fostering respect for natural and cultural resources, supporting Native Hawaiian communities, and ensuring mutual enrichment between tourism and local communities (HTA, 2020).

Another example is the framework ‘Aloha+ Challenge’, a statewide public-private commitment, that was initiated to achieve the archipelagos’ social, economic, and environmental goals by 2030 measured against the SDG’s (Aloha+ Challenge., n.d.). In table 3 below, a highlight of selected goals from the Aloha + dashboard with status indications for Hawai’i’s progress is shown, and although the Hawaiian initiative is on the way, the archipelago face challenges ahead of the desired goals should be reached before 2030, with only one goal out of ten being on track:

Table 3: Aloha+ Goals Scorecard (Based on source: Aloha+ Challenge., n.d.)

Goals	Description	On track	Needs Improvement
Clean Energy Transformation			
Electricity: Renewable / Efficiency	Tracking the state's progress on its commitment to achieve; 70% clean energy for the electricity sector - 40% renewable, 30% for efficiency towards the goal of 100% by 2045.	✓	
Natural Resource Management			
Increase Fresh Water Capacity	Amount of water available for consumption. Defined as the total decrease in water demand combined with the increase in water supply.		✓
Watershed Forest Area	Protection of upland native forest, which are crucial for providing freshwater supply by functioning as a ‘sponge’, absorbing rain and cloud moisture.		✓
Marine Managed Areas	Protection of the marine ecosystem, using approaches that balance sustainable use, restoration, and conservation.		✓

Solid Waste Reduction			
Total Solid Waste Diversion	The quantity of discarded material redirected from landfills for reuse or recycling (excluding incineration), compared to the total amount of solid waste generated		✓
Total Solid Waste Generation	Total amount of solid waste generated statewide, including reused, repurposed, and discarded.		✓
Recycling	Measures the amount of materials recycled statewide, both non- and organic waste and materials.		✓
Smart Sustainable Communities			
Affordable Housing	Housing affordability Index, assesses if an average family earns enough to qualify for a mortgage on a home, nationally and regionally, using the latest price and income data.		✓
Economic Prosperity	Percent of Hawai'i households classified below the Self-sufficiency standard income level.		✓
Green Workforce and Education			
Sustainable Tourism	Amount of ecotourism-certified businesses in Hawai'i.		✓

In addition to the partially unsuccessful transition and realization of the Aloha+ goals (SGD's) in Hawai'i, the COVID-19 related lockdown and the devastating wildfire on Maui in 2023 have ignited an awareness and have made Hawaiians reflect on the prevailing issues and battle with overtourism, economic imbalances, and environmental degradation of the islands (McDonagh, 2022; McGough, 2023; Bower, 2024). An awareness that has inspired the consideration of other measures and approaches that may help the archipelago take further steps into a brighter future - amongst these the implementing of regenerative tourism, has been viewed as a promising alternative (Cave & Dredge, 2020; Bellato et al., 2023).

5. Analysis

The following chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis with emphasis on the multifaceted impacts of Hawaii's tourism industry, examining its environmental consequences, the potential for regenerative tourism practices, and the critical role of community and indigenous knowledge in shaping the tourism industry. The chapter is divided into two parts, the first part presents the analysis of each of the four themes; 1) The environmental consequences of thriving tourism, 2) The potential for environmental stewardship and ecological restoration, 3) The interplay between Hawaiian communities and the tourism industry, and 4) The influence of leadership dynamics within the industry. The second part of this chapter will present the analysis of the four themes through the selected theoretical lenses.

5.1 The Consequences of a Thriving Tourism Industry and its Environmental Impact

The consequences of a thriving tourism industry in Hawai'i present significant challenges, particularly concerning its environmental impact. This analysis of the data revealed a complex interplay between overtourism, natural resource consumption, and environmental degradation, all of which are complexly connected and reflect broader issues within Hawai'i's tourism sector.

A recurring theme in the analysis is overtourism, which manifests in various forms and leads to considerable pressure on Hawaii's infrastructure and ecosystems. One participant highlighted this issue by stating,

“Somehow, I can't imagine how the islands could have the capacity to coordinate tourism from 9 million people a year, even if they're all coming and they all want to volunteer [...] It seems really difficult to manage”
(Interview, 5).

This statement encapsulates the urgent sentiment that the current volume of tourists is a tremendous managerial task. Other participants refer to this situation as unsustainable, stressing both natural and human systems. The overwhelming number of visitors not only strains infrastructure but also exacerbates environmental degradation, calling for a fundamental shift towards more regenerative tourism practices. According to a predominant opinion among the participants, there is an immediate need for strategic intervention and managing tourist numbers to prevent long-term damage to Hawai'i's ecosystems and communities.

This is further illustrated by the same participant describing the chaos caused by overtourism,

“On the island of Kawai, where thousands of people went every day to the end of the road, it was completely ludicrous. People blocked driveways and parked everywhere, and emergency vehicles couldn't get in and out. And it was just pure and utter unmanaged chaos” (Interview, 4, Appendix 4).

This description shows the tangible disruptions and safety risks caused by unregulated tourist activity, which points to a lack of effective tourism management and infrastructure to accommodate the influx of tourists.

The tourism industry's consumption of natural resources is another significant concern highlighted by the majority of the participants. One participant described it in the following way,

“And a lot of the concerns with water on islands are always a big problem, just like access to water. There are these hotels in the valley that are using water for the land and watering the green grasses. But then people who live there and from there have less access to water” (Interview, 1).

This quote highlights the conflict for vital resources between the tourism sector and local communities, particularly regarding water resources. Hotels and resorts consume large

amounts of water, and this disproportionate consumption often leads to shortages for residents, emphasizing the broader issue of equitable resource distribution and the need for policies that ensure equitable distribution and the integration of regenerative practices within the tourism industry.

Adding to the complexity, another participant stressed that land constraints, environmental restoration, and the agriculture industry are similarly under immense pressure,

“Before colonization and US occupation, the native Hawaiian population was around 1,000,000 and was able to sustain itself completely with local agriculture, whereas now it's completely dependent on food imports and the same for energy imports as well” (Interview, 5).

This observation points to the limited availability of land and resources on the islands, which exacerbates conflicts over land use between tourism and other essentials such as agriculture and housing. The scarcity of land necessitates careful planning and strategic use to balance this problem over the islands in Hawai'i, which requires not just individual efforts but collaborative ones among stakeholders to develop land-use strategies that mitigate the negative impacts of tourism.

The broader environmental impact of tourism extends beyond resource consumption to include significant ecological consequences. For instance, a few participants highlighted the issue of carbon emissions associated with air travel to the islands, which not only account for the tourists but also due to the reality that a majority of resources have to be imported from abroad. This perspective enhances tourism's considerable carbon footprint due to Hawai'i's geographical isolation and according to some of the participants, reducing this impact requires innovative approaches and policies that promote eco-friendly travel options.

When viewing the environmental impact from the view of the locals, it is clear that the growth of tourism to the islands has severe consequences for the natural environment, as described by one participant,

“Like with our coral reefs and stuff like that, we have this one called Hanama Bay, but it's pretty deteriorated in terms of coral and stuff like that. But during COVID, when everything shut down, it all immediately rebounded, and now, they're doing a lot of things where you need a reservation, or there's a limit on how people can go from there. So, just like that environmental impact” (Interview, 5).

Building upon this citation, according to several of our participants, another profound environmental concern is the exploitation and mismanagement of natural resources, which has historical roots and contemporary repercussions. One participant reflected on this by saying,

“So there was a military aspect, and there was an agriculture and economy aspect that is all very exploitative [...], back to the Lahaina wildfire where you're seeing the cause of that fire being the old plantation or plantation land being totally overrun by invasive grasses, and that was the kindling that allowed the fire to spread so so heavily and the control of the water so that those huge agriculture companies from back in the day, from the 1800 to this day, actually own a lot of the rights to how the water flows. Yeah, across Hawaii, and especially in those agricultural areas and so you kind of see a big thread being connected from the, like colonial colonization of Hawai'i and the agricultural aspects, and like the exploitation of nature” (Interview, 3).

This detailed narrative connects historical exploitation with present-day environmental crises, illustrating how past land management practices have led to current vulnerabilities, such as the susceptibility to wildfires due to invasive grasses and water rights issues.

The analysis of the interviews and observations revealed the multifacet consequences of Hawai'i's thriving tourism industry, where overtourism leads to unsustainable pressures and logistical chaos, while the intense competition for natural resources strains local communities. The environmental impact is profound, with significant contributions to carbon emissions and damage to local ecosystems, and thus, addressing these issues requires a holistic and regenerative approach to tourism management, ensuring that the benefits of tourism do not come at the expense of Hawai'i's environmental health and resident well-being.

5.2 Environmental Stewardship and Ecological Restoration, the Path Toward Regeneration

One of the critical components of environmental stewardship in tourism is effective tourism management. The expansion of tourism infrastructure to accommodate increasing numbers of tourists is seen as inevitable but also detrimental to untouched natural areas. One participant reflects on this tension, stating,

“I think it's kind of unavoidable when you have the amount of tourism that Hawai'i attracts; it just leads to expansion; you need more hotels and resorts and restaurants to accommodate the increase in tourists [...], but at the same time, it's kind of taking over the untouched parts of the island, which were stunningly beautiful before, all the construction happened.”
(Interview, 6).

This quote shows the paradox of tourism development; while it brings economic benefits, it often comes at the expense of the natural beauty that attracts tourists in the first place. The challenge is to manage this growth in a way that preserves the environment. The hope for a shift in the destination and tourism management is highlighted by several participants, calling for a holistic approach with an emphasis on the bigger picture rather than simply getting more first. Amongst those participants who looked towards a new way of managing

tourism, this citation from one of them signifies how essential it is for a collaborative effort across stakeholders if a change is to be realized,

“I think the locals are the ones that probably have the most knowledge about what needs to be done. But the tourism industry probably has a better knowledge of how that can be done. So I think it would need to be a partnership between them, I don't think either one can do it all by themselves. I think it would require them to work together” (Interview, 6).

A concrete example of successful tourism management that benefits both the community and the environment is provided by another participant,

“The revenue generated from the reservations and the shuttle is going back into that community. They were able to hire community stewards who actually checked the IDs and reservations [...], and now they have a job to protect their place. So they feel empowered. When I look at the outcomes [...], it has been an undeniable improvement. We had a 90% reduction in resident complaints. We used to have, I think like 3000 people going out there a day, now it's down to 800. So the experience is completely different [...] So it's just this really holistic example of how to take the spot and the example of the worst way of just letting tourism do whatever it wants and reshaping it into something that is managed.”(Interview, 4, Appendix 4).

This example illustrates how thoughtful tourism management can lead to significant environmental and social improvements, transforming tourism from an exploitative industry to one that supports local communities and preserves natural resources.

These above-mentioned approaches advocate for comprehensive management strategies and stakeholder collaboration, as well as the consideration of ecological, cultural, and social impacts, promoting a balance between visitor numbers and environmental capacity. This aligns with another notion highlighted by a few participants, that a significant element

in moving toward regenerative tourism is the necessity for system change. This involves rethinking and restructuring the way tourism is measured and managed, focusing not just on economic metrics but also on environmental and social impacts. One participant discusses this shift, stating,

“In an old way of thinking, we were very focused only on things like arrivals and economic outputs, total visitor spending per person per day arrivals, those kinds of metrics. Now, I don't deny that those are important for a number of reasons, but I also think we need to think about GHG's; every flight to Honolulu costs us this much in sort of carbon. And so, how do we really measure all of those impacts together? And I think that's really what sort of informs our way of thinking about regenerative tourism, [...] it had to be a system change. It had to be an adaptive change.”(Interview, 4, Appendix 4).

This citation supports the previously mentioned need for an extensive approach to tourism management that incorporates environmental costs, such as greenhouse gas emissions, into the evaluation of tourism's impact and integrates all of the stakeholders involved within the industry, from airlines, agencies, communities, and Native Hawaiians to natural resources and living systems.

A general theme that was discussed by several interviewees was regeneration, which is explained by the participants as creating positive impacts on the environment and local communities, moving beyond sustainability to actively improving ecological and social conditions. One participant speaks to the evolving mindset towards a symbiotic relationship between tourism and local communities, saying,

“There are some people that want to be their own nation and Hawaii, which is totally respectful, respectable, and then there are other people who are like, how do we make this symbiotic relationship work for both parties kind of shifting the mindset there as well” (Interview, 1).

This perspective reflects the need for a balanced approach that respects the aspirations of local communities while fostering mutually beneficial interactions.

Tourism involves creating reciprocal relationships between visitors and the environment, supported by several participants, expressing the potential for volunteer tourism,

“Still seems to be a huge disconnection, if tourism is continuing, then to have more awareness of the local language culture and incorporating more volunteer type of tourism, like there’s a lot of local initiatives that offer volunteer days for native Hawaiian agriculture and restoration of land, or like Native Hawaiian Fish pond development and beach cleanups [...] more focus of what can tourism give to Hawai’i rather than what can give to tourists?”(Interview, 5).

This approach encourages tourists to actively contribute to local initiatives, as well as environmental and cultural restoration efforts, fostering a deeper connection to the destination.

Based on the analysis, holistic thinking in regenerative tourism was described by some of the participants to involve the consideration of the interconnectedness of all elements within the tourism system, including cultural, ecological, and social dimensions. One participant elaborates on this perspective, stating,

“When I say improve our quality of life for our residents, I’m also including and have given personhood to our natural environment. So I have to remind myself that not everybody thinks like that again [...]. Our Hawaiian mindset from an indigenous perspective. There’s a genealogical tie and a kinship of us to our elder sibling, and so when I talk about the quality of life for residents in a technical way about tourism, I have to be explicit to say that it also has to be good for the mountains. It has to be good for the oceans. It

has to be good for the fish and the birds and everybody. They have personhood” (Interview, 4, Appendix 4).

This citation illustrates the deep connection between people and nature in Hawaiian culture, emphasizing that true quality of life improvements must consider the well-being of the entire ecosystem, not just extract value from them. Emphasizing this interconnectedness between nature and culture, another participant supports this by saying,

“Anyone who studies indigeneity knows that most indigenous cultures were sustainable and regenerative just by the nature of their actions to their environment, and not only the connection, but the respect and reverence, and the kinship that they had and have with nature” (Interview, 3).

This insight shows the value of integrating traditional knowledge and practices into modern tourism strategies to achieve true regeneration and highlights the importance of maintaining a balance between human activities and natural processes.

The concept of holistic thinking is further supported by the recognition that tourism impacts are widespread and multifaceted. Another interviewee continues,

“Another way to describe regenerative tourism for us is this idea of the holistic view of it. We have to take into account the totality of impacts good and bad. And we have to have that sort of holistic thinking about it, from a natural systems design kind of mindset where it’s the totality of it all, and everything has an impact on something else” (Interview, 4, Appendix 4).

This perspective calls for a comprehensive evaluation of all tourism impacts, ensuring that regeneration strategies consider the complex interactions within natural and social systems.

In summary, the analysis of the interviews reveals a comprehensive approach to regenerative tourism in Hawaii, centered on environmental stewardship and ecological

restoration. Effective tourism management, systemic changes, regenerative practices, and holistic thinking are all crucial elements in this approach. By addressing these aspects, Hawai'i can foster a tourism industry that not only sustains but actively regenerates its natural and cultural resources, ensuring long-term benefits for both residents and visitors.

5.3 Hawaiian Communities' Interplay and Connections to the Regenerative Tourism Scene

In the course of the interviews, a common thread could be found between the community's perceptions of the tourism industry and the actions being taken by the industry to incorporate these perceptions, acknowledge them, and increase the effectiveness of their existence through their work. This analysis will therefore address the interactions between the communities and the tourism industry - first from the community's perspective and second from the tourism industry's perspective.

Those living in Hawai'i have a multitude of perceptions and feelings toward the tourism industry and its impacts on their communities. Some of these perceptions result in an overall feeling of animosity, as there are underlying tensions and issues that relate to bigger, more systemic changes needed regarding tourism and Hawai'i's economic dependence on the sector. Specifically, one concept that was mentioned by all participants who were either community members or Hawai'i locals was the colonization of Hawai'i by the United States Government. There was a deeper and more passionate feeling when speaking about this topic by one participant

“I think there's three things at play here, basically an indigenous way of viewing the land. There's the [...] United States way like the state, as in like the government entity and then also the United States way of viewing the land, and then the tourist way of viewing the land” (Interview, 2).

This citation explains the complex dynamics between the United States Government, its citizens on the mainland United States, tourists, and finally, these perspectives in

comparison to the original Indigenous way of viewing Hawai'i. The same participant elaborates on this dynamic by saying,

“When taro was planted, you know there's a lot of regenerative growth of cycling through plots of land and a community coming together in that sense. So I think that's the big challenge is, already that we are dealing with Indigenous people who are having the ownership of the land and then you also have the US government that is prioritizing, like initially sugar can [...] So I think the biggest challenge of that is that we're working in it with many different populations of people who are viewing their ownership of space differently” (Interview, 2).

This suggests a critical perspective of the US Government's colonization of the Hawaiian islands and their view of the land as being an economic gain for its agricultural potential, where the land became more of a tourist opportunity as opposed to the Indigenous Hawaiians' respect and care for the land that had supported them for centuries previously.

Two other participants additionally supported this notion in their responses. It was typically brought up early on in the interview, as many of the participants commonly felt that it was something that there must be more education on, especially in the United States on the mainland. It was highlighted that this lack of awareness of Hawai'i's history and identity as an independent entity separate from the United States is one of the reasons they feel that tourists do not understand Hawai'i before arriving to the islands as tourists. This correlates to the animosity mentioned earlier between residents and visitors,

“I think there's some animosity from locals to visitors for not being as aware and mindful of the culture and their impact” (Interview, 3).

This citation expresses the correlation between residents' animosity and tourists' mindfulness of their impact, thus leading to a disturbance of a sense of community on the islands. A point of view that was further elaborated on by another participant,

“Many people still don't view themselves as part of the US, it was very unfairly captured. And so because of that, there's not only an issue with tourism because of the current high numbers and impact, but also these historic issues and then also they don't realize maybe that because it was its own nation, there was its own language and culture” (Interview, 5).

Through the absence of proper education and awareness of the involvement of the United States in relation to a very self-sufficient and resourceful Hawai'i, there began a structural issue in the framework of tourism to Hawai'i and its disruption of communities. This lends support to the ideas discussed further along in the interviews of the potential of community involvement in the current industry. The participants were able to offer responses relating to how big of a role community engagement should play today regarding tourism in Hawai'i,

“More engagement with the local community, from these, like Hawai'i Tourism Authority, I think HTA is somehow trying to engage more locally and of course government as well. But there would have to be maybe more regulation, but in connection with local communities” (Interview, 5).

This illustrates a hope that Hawai'i can create a better tourism model that will benefit the communities, including their employment within the industry,

“There seems to be a lot of areas where people are pushing for more local and independence in terms of economics and also I think that there's been discussion from the government with the local community. So I hope there could be more growth in local industries [...]” (Interview, 5).

These citations acknowledge the current efforts that organizations like the Hawai'i Tourism Authority are already making to include community engagement; however, several participants additionally expressed that there remains a need for further local support to empower and increase independence and economic stability for Hawaiian communities.

Throughout the interviews, the participants provided in-depth responses discussing the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge into the community engagement conversation. Amongst these, predominant insights referred to the knowledge of relevant Indigenous heritage and the practices that many Indigenous Hawaiians share as useful to the understanding of the connection between Hawaiian communities and nature. This relationship has, according to most of the participants, been compromised because of tourism, with the environment and their nature-based cultural traditions being commodified for tourism. Several times during the interviews, participants, both from community and tourism backgrounds, brought up the Ahupua'a system of land management. One participant described the system like this,

“It’s like a way of Land Management and they say that even to date it’s one of the most successful ways to manage land ever, like most sustainable and basically the concept it’s a watershed. So from the start of the mountain to the bottom of the ocean [...] like one watershed, so everything within that watershed will be nourished, will be housed, will be fulfilled by that, what’s in that watershed. So all the people who got their food from that watershed, they lived in that watershed. But they also, like, were cared for [...]”
(Interview, 1).

This system of land management not only cared for natural resources from the environment but also allowed Indigenous Hawaiians to form a community around this water source and care for each other. There was an inherent form of community within their daily practices and the way they interacted with their surroundings. This connection with the environment and giving it personhood can also be understood through another concept that three additional participants talked about, which is viewing nature as an older sibling

“And so within a family system, there’s a reciprocity that exists between older sibling caring for a younger sibling, and likewise the younger sibling caring for the older and in that reciprocity and caring for one another is really the harmony and the balance” (Interview, 4, Appendix 4).

As described here, this relationship that connects each Hawaiian to the Earth and gives nature that personhood and respect as if it is another familial relation establishes a universal care towards nature that can bring together people into a community. According to participants, the Indigenous Hawaiian culture provides deeply rooted ties to those within it, to each other, and to nature, where people benefit as the planet benefits and vice versa.

Moving the focus from the community towards the industry, the related participants discussed the influence that Indigenous knowledge and practices played in the ability to connect with Hawaiian communities, understand their needs, and make decisions that will truly benefit the communities and their culture. The inclusion of Indigenous voices is thus integral to the success of regenerative tourism implementation. One participant talked about this component of their work in various ways, one significant insight was the role that Indigenous knowledge plays,

“Indigenous knowledge for us is super, super important as flagging growth as an organization, we're really grounded in indigenous values and with everything that we do, our main priority is incorporate indigenous perspectives, people, but also just those key concepts that we've learned about, make sure that those are incorporated as well and really like a grinding for everything that we do” (Interview, 1).

Many measuring the tourism industry's growth and sustainability are aware and acknowledge that Indigenous values are a key component to understanding the best ways for the industry to become more regenerative. Additionally, Indigenous voices must be given space in the industry in combination with those already in power.

In order for this Indigenous knowledge to be shared and a space to be created for those who wish to enter into the conversation, there was an inquiry about the strategies or specific efforts taken to address this next step in the process. Two participants mentioned the ability to bring people together into one space as a very inclusive and effective strategy. One

participant offered the concept initially while discussing a specific project in which there was the intentional undertaking of bringing together all relevant stakeholders of the project into one room,

“There was them, Native Hawaiian people and everyone had discussions on what the energy transition is, what we're looking for post Maui wildfire recovery [...]” (Interview, 1).

The participant highlighted the success of this strategy by explaining more thoroughly,

“In that meeting they came to a conclusion that community engagement and actively talking with people can de-risk project development, it can lower the cost of capital on a very financial level, like these things are happening because of community engagement and engaging with the local community and I think it was a realization both for {name of company} and also for the Native Hawaiians like the people that we brought to the table as well. And that was just such a cool moment of realization, and this is really important” (Interview, 1).

These citations signify the influential moment where all stakeholders in the room realized the power of speaking with each other. The company that was investing in the project had not been fully aware of the needs of the Maui community and realized this as they discussed these needs in-person with the community members. In order to gauge the best ways to go about the upcoming project, the investing company needed to hear and see the true beneficence that the project could contribute to, as they were not completely aware of the impact that the project could make. It took community inclusion and engagement to gain a grasp of the full potential of the project. The community is able to share this perspective directly, and both parties can be satisfied with the results of the project if they are aware of the same information from the beginning.

5.4 Intersections and Influence of Leadership Roles within the Industry

According to several participants, leadership within the tourism industry in Hawai'i is impacted by several factors: the people within the leadership roles, the knowledge and identities they bring with themselves to the position, and the type of work they do regarding tourism and its inclusion of Hawaiian communities. Throughout the interviews, there was a distinction made about the role of government processes and economics and how these components come together to form the current model of leadership. There was also a notable connection found between the potential for indigenous heritage to aid Hawai'i in its regenerative tourism journey and the leaders currently working within the industry to inform the relevant stakeholders and communities.

As the United States Government played a significant role in the colonization of Hawai'i, as discussed previously, this territorial expansion had significant effects on the modern-day political structure and processes that the Hawaiian islands must adhere to. When asked about the role that legislation plays in regenerative efforts in the tourism industry, one participant answered,

“I would say it's more like the political structure in Hawaii. And it's I think that's pretty common across America and probably a lot of other countries”
(Interview, 3).

The real problem, as one participant notes, is not so much that the legislation in Hawai'i is prohibiting progress but instead that the system that manages legislation at large is difficult to change. This can then influence the political leaders who advocate for legislation. Interviewee 3 remarks on this correlation by saying,

“Our governor is actually very supportive and a lot of his campaign ran on the same or very similar ideas around offsetting visitor impact. So like he's on board. So if the law were to make it to his desk, he would sign it into law.

So, the problem that we're facing here in Hawai'i is at that government level, elected officials, the ones that we're allied with just don't have the power or they don't have enough power to get it through the whole process. So that leadership structure and the power imbalance I think is probably the main factor” (Interview, 3).

As this participant explained, political leaders who are allied with community members and hope to bring justice to Native Hawaiians often lack the power to make real change. There was, however, common knowledge amongst participants that the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, representing the state of Hawai'i, has managerial power over decisions regarding tourism. One participant mentioned the importance of organizations like Hawai'i Tourism Authority by saying,

“I could also suggest reaching out to someone at the Hawaiian Tourism Authority (HTA)” (Interview, 8).

Even with an executive power such as this one, according to several participants, another limiting factor of leadership adaptability in tourism in Hawai'i is the dependence of the islands on the industry for economic stability. As the Hawaiian islands have grown to be very reliant on tourism for employment opportunities, tax revenue, and their overall economic well being, this puts the leaders of the industry in a complex setting. Here explained by one participant,

“I think it's definitely a bit contentious, obviously we're a big tourism destination and no one's gonna argue that it's a big part of our economy right now” (Interview, 1).

There is an awareness of this economic dependence by the tourism leaders, however, the relevant interviewees did not wish to encourage this type of economic dependence. There was strong sentiment towards increasing the support of local businesses and employment

opportunities for Hawaiians separate from tourism, which is further elaborated on in the following way,

“I can't speak for everyone, but they're {the tourism industry} kind of thinking: how can we diversify our economy and not be so reliant on tourism, especially with COVID, and that was a really big thing with COVID is like, obviously {it} shut down the entire tourism industry. And so learning how to kind of build back from that and kind of look at green growth recovery strategy has been something on the mind of a lot of people” (Interview, 1).

On the flip side, the community members fully support this notion, as mentioned by one participant,

“And then what I wish personally I guess would be that there would be a lot more independence economically for Hawai'i and more opportunities for people to work in industries besides tourism [...] and not feel like we have to depend on tourism” (Interview, 5).

This illustrates that the community is also pushing for more economic opportunity, allowing Hawai'i's economy to grow in different sectors. The ways in which to do this seem unclear to the community members, although one participant was able to discuss this complexity in great detail. Elaborating on the totality of the economy and visitor spending to both small businesses but also large corporations by stating,

“But that money goes to this large corporation [...] But on the flip side, if I only have them shopping locally, you lose that. And on the flip side, if they're only shopping there and not local, we lose all of the core of our economy, which is small business. And so how do you find a balance? And I describe it like this. I don't mind if a guest goes [...] and buys their beautiful Birkin.

And they can spend \$30,000 on that wonderful Birkin. I want them to go everywhere else. I want them at the farmers market, at the small fashion designer, I want them with a bottle of {name of local brand} rum, which is a local distillery that makes a bottle of rum here” (Interview, 4, Appendix 4).

Several participants commented on the concentrated visitor spending in specific tourist venues, but this citation embraces the idea of improving the flow of money, where it is distributed, and welcoming tourists to the islands so that they can support the local businesses and communities in all the ways that are economically needed. In order to foster this economic growth, there were discussions across several interviews about the types of leaders who are actively engaged in this transition. The most notable information regarding the types of people needed in leadership positions was from one participant, who is an indigenous leader in the tourism industry. This participant offered the perspective of indigenous knowledge, culture, and traditions while also understanding the economics, feasibility of regenerative tourism, and the work currently being done to transform this space. The participant shared many insightful perspectives, one of which was,

“It took government leadership. It took community leadership, right? It took resident leadership [...]” (Interview, 4, Appendix 4).

This citation explains the combination of leadership roles needed to enact change within the industry. Not only industry leaders but many other leaders in related sectors come together to understand what is best for Hawai'i and its inhabitants. The leadership roles of the industry leaders are heavily impacted by the knowledge that they bring about Indigenous and Native Hawaiian practices. One participant consistently expressed the disconnect between the industry's work and the community's perceptions of tourism, and while understanding the cultural exploitation and environmental destruction that tourism has caused, the participant stated,

“I wish everybody knew that there were leaders in this industry who are trying to make it better than it has been” (Interview, 4, Appendix 4).

This citation indicated reflection on the cultural impact that tourism has caused; however, it also feels that the participants themselves, as well as many other leaders with their own ancestry tied to Indigenous ways of life, are working to change the narrative of tourism in Hawai'i. In several of the interviews, there was a discussion about the necessary steps needed to take all of these leaders and create the correct transition into a more truly sustainable tourism scene in Hawai'i. One of the most common steps mentioned was proper education. The participants spoke about history education for tourists, but also education about Native Hawaiian practices that the industry can support through its activities with which tourists can engage. The tourists themselves aided in this concept, noting their own potential and impact through tourism, as mentioned by one of them,

“You know, as a teacher, I think anything is possible through education”
(Interview, 6).

There then lends support to the tourists, being the customers in the tourism business, to be receptive to their own participation in these activities. Another participant further agrees with this thought by saying,

“For example, the snorkeling and diving excursion [...] including history or having a native Hawaiian present on their staff to provide that information, just as tidbits because a lot of people do provide information about them, but they're not the ones that lived it, they have since moved there from the mainland. So, I think it would be really interesting to actually hear personal experiences. And I think most would be more open to it and then it would help to open the eyes of what more could be done to help them too”
(Interview, 7).

There are opportunities to educate the tourists that they are very open to, which would continue to benefit the community and tourists simultaneously.

As illuminated above both tourists and community members see the potential of education to coax the industry into change, the tourism leaders seek out these opportunities to educate. This is further stressed by one participant, who highlighted the ability of Indigenous leaders to embody the Aloha spirit and reclaim what that can mean for Hawai'i tourism by saying,

“And in hospitality, every visitor that comes to Hawaii, I have an opportunity with my team and our team to educate a visitor about Aloha and what that means here to us, but also how they can take that home”
(Interview, 4, Appendix 4).

Understanding the governmental structure and systemic changes needed to address tourism in Hawai'i, building local resilience, and educating tourists on Native Hawaiian practices and culture will lead to the significant growth that awaits the tourism industry's leaders. These leaders are already working to implement these changes through various strategies, and it is through continuous collaboration and education that this leadership will continue toward a regenerative path.

5.5 Analysis Through the Theoretical Lenses

The empirical data gathered for this research revealed the tourism industry's complex challenges and opportunities, stressing the need for integrated approaches to tackle issues such as environmental degradation, community involvement, and leadership. The following part of this chapter will, therefore, seek to add an additional layer to this analysis by viewing these challenges and opportunities highlighted in the themes, through the lenses of Regenerative Development (RD), Communities of Practice (CoP), and Transformational Leadership (TL).

As illustrated in the analysis above, the thriving tourism industry in Hawai'i, while economically beneficial, has led to significant environmental degradation, including habitat destruction, pollution, and resource depletion. By utilizing RD, which moves beyond

sustainability to focus on restoring and renewing ecosystems, supports a profound transformation in our relationship with the natural world and provides an understanding of the entire living systems, hence provides a critical framework for addressing these issues. One participant noted that “*the system that manages legislation at large is difficult to change*” (Interview, 3), showing the need for a dynamic and interconnected perspective that RD advocates. For instance, the deterioration and subsequent rebound of Hanama Bay’s coral reefs during COVID-19 highlight the potential for RD principles to inform policies that not only sustain but actively regenerate ecosystems.

In addressing this transition from sustainability towards a regenerative tourism industry, TL, particularly Green Transformational Leadership (GTL), can support this shift. Leaders in the tourism industry must inspire a change from exploitative practices to regenerative ones that enhance the natural environment. GTL emphasizes ethical guidance, environmental responsibility, and innovation, essential for reducing tourism's carbon footprint and promoting sustainable practices. The economic dependence on tourism presents a challenge, as one participant stated, “*We’re a big tourism destination and no one's gonna argue that it's a big part of our economy right now*” (Interview, 1). Viewing this through the lens of TL illustrates that transformational leaders must advocate for policies that balance economic benefits with ecological restoration, ensuring that tourism contributes positively to the environment rather than depleting it.

The difficulties in managing overtourism and resource allocation move beyond a leader's role by calling for a cooperative approach where community members, industry leaders, and policymakers share insights and develop best practices. This collaboration is crucial for fostering environmental stewardship, as indicated by several participants who discussed the need for a balanced economic model that supports local businesses while maintaining ecological integrity.

This approach can be linked to CoP; as community members participate in project planning and decision-making, they share insights and experiences, creating an environment of learning-based knowledge. CoP emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts among

stakeholders, a necessity evident in interview participants' varied perspectives and experiences. Therefore, CoP can play a crucial role in the Hawaiian transition towards creating regenerative tourism that gives a voice to the local communities by enabling leaders to consider the integration of all parties. One participant described an annual event demonstrating the relevance of applying CoP by bringing together community members and tourism employees, *“One of the things that is part of that is a sustainable identity tourism community of practice [...] sharing best practices and accessing technical advice”* (Interview, 1). This encourages locals to contribute to the industry's growth through personal stories and experiences.

Based on the analysis, community input is integral to regenerative tourism, as both industry leaders and community members acknowledged the need for Native Hawaiian voices in tourism in Hawai'i. There is a strong sentiment that the community must be included more, and the participants from the industry equally wish to amplify indigenous practices and strengthen connections with local communities. Furthermore, integrating indigenous knowledge is essential for successful regenerative tourism because Hawaiian communities possess deep ecological knowledge and traditions that can guide regenerative practices. As one participant pointed out, effective tourism management requires the integration of cultural practices and values; in this regard, CoP can facilitate this by promoting trust and open communication among diverse stakeholders, particularly by involving Native Hawaiian communities in decision-making processes.

In addition to the role of CoP, the theory of GTL contributes to this by emphasizing the environmental and social stewardship required to integrate the whole living system holistically. Transformational leaders must prioritize cultural respect and inclusion, engaging local communities as equal partners. This involves creating platforms for these communities to share their practices and insights. The empirical data supports this, with one participant emphasizing the importance of leaders who understand both the cultural and economic aspects of regenerative tourism. GTL is particularly relevant here, as it involves motivating and inspiring others to follow eco-friendly practices and valuing community insights in decision-making processes. Moreover, according to TL, education is another

critical element where leaders foster opportunities for tourists to learn about local cultures and sustainable practices and for industry stakeholders to understand and implement regenerative principles. As one participant noted, “*Anything is possible through education*” (Interview, 6), highlighting the role of education in fostering a regenerative tourism industry.

This analysis indicates that by integrating RD, CoP, and GTL within its practices, Hawai’i’s tourism industry can benefit in the transition towards a model that mitigates harm and actively contributes to rebuilding healthy and vital ecosystems and communities. Applying these approaches may ensure that tourism becomes a force for regeneration, aligning economic benefits with ecological and social well-being. For instance, the resource conflict between hotels and local residents can be addressed through CoP-driven policy-making and RD-informed practices supported by TL to ensure ethical and sustainable implementation.

In summary, this empirical data analysis, viewed through the theoretical frameworks of RD, CoP, and TL, presents the necessity for a regenerative, collaborative, and leadership-driven approach to address the environmental impacts of tourism in Hawai’i.

6. Discussion

In this study, the aim was to analyze the current implementation and effectiveness of regenerative tourism in relation to the existing challenges and collaborations in Hawai'i. To answer this aim, these three research questions were stated, as mentioned previously.

6.1 Problem Solving Towards Regenerative Tourism

RQ1: How can collaboration between local communities, organizations, and the tourism industry be leveraged to effectively implement regenerative tourism practices in Hawai'i?

RQ2: What are the existing leadership dynamics between local communities and the tourism industry in Hawai'i, and how do they influence regenerative practices?

RQ3: What are the key challenges faced in bridging the gap between the tourism industry's current practices and Native Hawaiians' regenerative practices, and how can these challenges be addressed?

RQ1 can be answered by examining the consistent responses across the participant groups about the future steps that the tourism industry could take to become more regenerative. As the industry currently is working to properly educate tourists prior to their arrival to the islands, they are aware of the need to continue education during the tourists' stay in Hawai'i about Indigenous ways of life and offer these tourists opportunities to give back to the communities. However, the industry does not currently offer many opportunities for tourists to take advantage or to participate in cultural or environmental regeneration, as discussed with the tourist participants in this study. Their responses showed that there is an audience for this type of tourism and that tourists would be open to activities that allow them to regenerate the environment and Native Hawaiian culture. This emphasizes a gap of applicable opportunities for this target audience to be offered during their travels to Hawai'i.

On the communities side, there is also a push for the tourism industry to support more local and Native Hawaiian businesses, giving the communities economic independence and

stability. When looking at all of these perspectives, the holistic answer to the research question is that collaboration through continuing support and empowerment of Native Hawaiian culture and businesses throughout the industry, can effectively implement regenerative tourism practices in Hawai'i. The promotion of activities that will educate and offer ways to contribute to regeneration will aid in the positive impact to the environment and culture in Hawai'i, while the economic stability will contribute to the community's well being and further support for the tourism industry to be regenerative. Thus, a recommendation is made for the tourism industry to strategically collaborate with local communities to create and actualize regenerative tourist opportunities that will not only socially and environmentally benefit them, but economically regenerate their communities.

RQ2 can be answered through comprehending the historical anecdotes that participants from Hawaiian communities shared, how this history has impacted and shaped tourism on the islands today, and how the industry currently integrates Native Hawaiian culture into their work. The original conquest of Hawai'i by the United States Government affected the land management on the islands, thus impacting today's agricultural farming and environmental systems. Additionally, the way the Indigenous were treated and the ways in which their practices have been disregarded over the years is relevant to the regeneration of ecosystems and the care and protection of nature from the tourism industry. Today, there remains a power imbalance between the leaders and the structure of the tourism industry versus the community members. Therefore, the answer to the research question is that the leadership by the tourism industry has failed the local communities in the past in terms of inclusion towards environmental regeneration; however, currently, there are efforts from the industry leaders to learn from and incorporate Indigenous practices in pursuit of environmental regeneration. The existing dynamics have had innumerable consequences on communication between communities and the industry in the past, but with this distance, there was a noticeable need for the communities to be part of the environmental regeneration conversation.

RQ3 can be answered by continuing to understand the dynamics between the industry and the Hawaiian communities, as this is the main barrier that has evolved to present itself in different ways in Hawai'i's society today. Through tourism, there is cultural and environmental commodification. Due to this commodification, there are layers of

intergenerational attitudes and perceptions that have influenced and are continuing to influence today's Indigenous people of Hawai'i. If these issues could be fully understood, addressed, and the stakeholders who have been impacted by them could be included in further discussions and decisions, the distance can begin to be bridged between the communities and the tourism industry. Using the theory of Communities of Practice, there can be increased collaborations in reserved spaces that foster the sharing of knowledge and experiences to contribute to the betterment of practices and processes within the industry. Offering these spaces requires the understanding of their need and the challenges that Indigenous Hawaiians have faced in opposition to the tourism industry. Additionally, once this need is established, the sharing of knowledge and perspectives in the reserved spaces will continue to grow and develop towards collaborations.

Taking all of this information into account when answering the aim, there can be deductions made from the analysis of the current state of regenerative tourism in Hawai'i. This analysis assists findings about the success of specific strategies and collaborations between the industry and communities. These strategies seek to improve environmental quality on the islands as well as bring a new awareness and application of Native Hawaiian culture into tourism. From the executed data collection, the responses answer the aim by pointing toward the same concept: There must be power given back to Native Hawaiians. This can be seen through many different calls to action. There is a need for increased education of Indigenous practices that will regenerate environmental protection, a need for increased inclusion of their culture into tourism, and support for their economic independence and stability. These calls to action can be combined into a forward-thinking and transformational tourism experience that would both be influential to the tourist themselves but additionally to Hawaiian communities.

6.2 Theoretical Implication

The theoretical implications that can be drawn from the chosen theories is that the intersectionality of the theories allows their connected integration to appear encouraging and promising towards the research problem. Each theory by itself is relevant and incorporated in some way into the industry already; however, there is an expected outcome

that answers the aim of the study from the integration of the theories together. When applied together, there is a multidimensional process for industry leaders and communities to reference and follow. Through understanding the benefits of organized Communities of Practice, the industry can begin to have the inclusion of community voices that is needed for them to properly regenerate environmental systems and implement the Regenerative Development theory. In order to do this, they will have the Green Transformational Leadership theory to support their personal growth as leaders and gain an awareness of the identities that they bring to the conversation. As more individuals become confident in their ability to share knowledge and experience that will aid the tourism industry, there can be an expected transition from the industry today to a more regenerative tourism industry in Hawai'i.

The theories chosen worked in this study to offer practical tools that relate and serve the research problem accurately. The theories allowed for specific and relevant deductions to be made, as opposed to other leadership or network-perspective theories that could have been applied but may not offer as much relevance or significant contribution to the topic. Additionally, the chosen theories pertained to each of the individual, group, and network levels and described the ways in which to grow those identities. Each selected theory related to different audiences connected to the research problem, but there was overlap of these connections. For example, there are industry leaders who are also community members, and they can find connections to the transformation of their leadership through building community, for the goal of increasing regenerative development in tourism. In these connections, the aim is established and there are answers to the research questions.

6.3 Practical Implication

There are additional managerial implications from these findings. There are some efforts that stakeholders are already doing to bridge the gap between the tourism industry and communities in Hawai'i. The awareness of the need for inclusion of Indigenous voices is very apparent within the industry, and this is a contributing step towards regenerative progress. The value that Indigenous voices add and could continue to add is not

underestimated, nor ignored by many in today's tourism industry in Hawai'i. The Indigenous culture was spoken about highly and respectfully by the tourism industry participants, thus showing that there is the necessary foundation already laid for growing support. There is the potential to build more education, knowledge, and active collaboration from this foundation.

However, when discussing the research problem with stakeholders in Hawai'i, there would be several recommendations made to those in positions of authority. Looking at the sourcing of their food, materials, and other imports for their productions, recommendations could be made to increase reliability on local and Native businesses, offering economic beneficence to local communities. Additionally, there is room for improvement in the activities offered for tourists to give back to the environment and participate in ecological restoration in hands-on, meaningful ways. Tourism agencies could begin working with stakeholders who wish to increase regenerative tourism and collaborate with them through accurate planning, marketing, and promotional strategies. This can increase accessibility and awareness of the type of travel experience that will lead to reciprocity between the community and visitors. The tourism industry is the overarching managerial structure that has the opportunity to implement and offer these types of opportunities to the tourists. It is through the application of their leadership and inclusion of stakeholders that will determine the future of these types of activities and the tourism experience in Hawai'i.

6.4 Future Research

Reflecting on the previous studies that have been done on this topic, this study contributes a new convergence of knowledge and data regarding the leadership and collaboration needed to increase regenerative tourism. The theories offer a new lens to the topic and the efforts that are currently in place, how they could be modified, and how stakeholders' identities can be understood in connection to the topic. Participants' responses add new insight regarding the constructions that individuals in Hawai'i have towards tourism. Where past studies have offered theoretical tools to solely understand these concepts and remark on past cases, the application of theories in this study offers practical and feasible suggestions to effectively implement regenerative tourism in Hawai'i. This new knowledge and

application of theories can be used for further studies, as well as to inform tourism stakeholders on proper steps to move forward.

In the future, there could be further studies done on the success of the tourism industry in offering more regenerative activities and setting regenerative guidelines for tourists to adhere to. There are limited studies done on the thoughts and reviews of tourists who have participated in regenerative tourism, thus potentially limiting the spread and acceptance of the concept. With more studies that increase awareness and overall accessibility to regenerative efforts, more tourists could set expectations for their travels and participate in regenerative tourism. Additionally, further studies could be done to analyze the communities' feelings towards the industry once it has become more regenerative and the inclusion of Indigenous voices becomes a higher priority.

7. Conclusion

To explore the potential for regenerative tourism in Hawai'i, this thesis focuses on the collaboration between local communities, organization, and the tourism industry and the integration of regenerative tourism practices.

Based on the analysis of the empirical data, the recommendations for the tourism industry to move towards being a more regenerative industry can be explicitly understood as applying respect, inclusion, and empowerment to Native Hawaiians. This can be done by engaging with local communities to form a symbiotic relationship where there is reciprocal learning and growth. The recommendations for the communities of Hawai'i are to equally engage with the tourism industry in the ways they wish, to foster an environment of respect towards each other when possible, and for all stakeholders to increase knowledge about best practices and ways to improve the industry together. From this stakeholder engagement, successful implementation of regenerative tourism will be reflected as a unity of the appropriate integration of Indigenous Hawaiian culture and the support of their economic stability.

Together, through the collaboration of local communities, organizations, industry, and tourists' active participation, there is potential to make considerable progress towards regenerative tourism in Hawai'i. If implemented effectively, Hawai'i one day could be a destination that is known for its ability to transform the traveler, offering them not only the ability to learn more about Native Hawai'i, but also to give back to the islands that have continuously offered the tourist the trip of a lifetime. Conversely, this trip of a lifetime will change the way the tourist thinks and understands the natural world, allowing them to become a traveler who is positively educated and impacted by their experience. In exchange, this traveler will contribute positive impacts on the land and people to continue the regenerative cycle of reciprocity.

References

- Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A., & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *Journal of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy*, 4(10), 1358-1367. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1441>
- Afsar, B., Masood, M., & Umrani, W. A. (2019). The role of job crafting and knowledge sharing on the effect of transformational leadership on innovative work behavior. *Personnel Review*, 48(5), 1186-1208. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-04-2018-0133>
- Ajoon, E.J., & Rao, Y.V. (2020). A study of consciousness of young travelers towards regenerative tourism: With reference to Puducherry. *Journal of Tourism Economics and Applied Research*, 4(1), 1-10. <https://jtear.uoctourism.com/publication/2020volume1/regenerativetourism.pdf>
- Aloha+ Challenge. (n.d.). Aloha+ Challenge. He Nohona 'Ae'ōia - A Culture of Sustainability - Hawai'i's SDGs. <https://alohachallenge.hawaii.gov/>
- Alyahia, M., Azazz, A. M., Fayyad, S., Elshaer, I. A., & Mohammad, A. A. (2024). Greenwashing Behavior in Hotels Industry: The Role of Green Transparency and Green Authenticity. *Sustainability*, 16(3), 1050. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16031050>
- Antonakis, J. (2012). Transformational and charismatic leadership. *The nature of leadership*, 256-288. https://serval.unil.ch/resource/serval:BIB_3576DF50B587.P001/REF.pdf
- Assante, L. M., Wen, H. I., & Lottig, K. J. (2012). Conceptualization of Modeling Resident Attitudes on the Environmental Impacts of Tourism: A Case Study of Oahu, Hawaii. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 9(2), 101–118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2011.631354>.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). Transformational leadership. *Psychology press*.
- Bastianoni, S., Coscieme, L., Caro, D., Marchettini, N., & Pulselli, F. M. (2019). The needs of sustainability: The overarching contribution of systems approach. *Ecological Indicators*, 100, 69-73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2018.08.024>. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2018.08.024>
- BBC. (2024). Thousands rally in Spain's Canary Islands against mass tourism. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68865755>
- Becken, S., & Kaur, J. (2022). Anchoring “tourism value” within a regenerative tourism paradigm – a government perspective. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(1), 52–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2021.1990305>
- Bellato, L., & Cheer, J. M. (2021, July 5). Inclusive and regenerative urban tourism: Capacity Development Perspectives. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/IJTC-08-2020-0167/full/html>.
- Bennis, W., & Nanus, B. (1985). The strategies for taking charge. *Leaders*, New York: Harper. Row, 41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019263658707150021>

- Blyth, S. et al., 2003. 2003 United Nations list of protected areas, IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature. IUCN, UNEP-WCMC. Retrieved from <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1376882/2003-united-nations-list-of-protected-areas/1991146/> on 05 May 2024. CID: 20.500.12592/3851dc
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. *American Psychological Association*.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2018). Doing Interviews. *SAGE*
- Brust, B. W. (1994). The amazing paper cuttings of Hans Christian Andersen. *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*.
- Carini, Esmeralda F. (2019). "Hawaii Lab Cohort: Supporting Teachers' Literacy Pedagogy Through Teacher Learning Communities in Hawaii Public Schools." <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/66246>
- Cave, J., and D. Dredge. 2020. "Regenerative Tourism Needs Diverse Economic Practices." *Tourism Geographies* 22 (3): 503–13. doi:10.1080/14616688.2020.1768434.
- Chassagne, N., & Everingham, P. (2020). Buen Vivir: Degrowing extractivism and growing wellbeing through tourism. In *Tourism and Degrowth* (pp. 165-181). *Routledge*. DOI:[10.4324/9781003017257-10](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003017257-10)
- Chen, Y. S., & Chang, C. H. (2013). The determinants of green product development performance: Green dynamic capabilities, green transformational leadership, and green creativity. *Journal of business ethics*, 116, 107-119. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1452-x>
- Cheer, J.M., S. Pratt, D. Tolkach, A. Bailey, S. Taumoepeau and A. Movono (2018) Tourism in Pacific island countries: A status quo round-up, *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 5(3): 442–461. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.250>
- Cocola-Gant, A. (2023). Place-based displacement: Touristification and neighborhood change. *Geoforum*, 138, 103665. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2022.103665>
- Cui, R., & Wang, J. (2022). Shaping sustainable development: External environmental pressure, exploratory green learning, and radical green innovation. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 29(3), 481–495. <https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.2213>
- Dredge, D. (2022). Regenerative tourism: Transforming mindsets, systems and practices. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(3), 269-281. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-01-2022-0015>
- Du Plessis, C. (2012). Towards a regenerative paradigm for the built environment. *Building Research & Information*, 40(1), 7-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09613218.2012.628548>
- Duxbury, N., Bakas, F. E., de Castro, T. V., & Silva, S. (2020). Creative tourism development Models towards Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism. *Sustainability*, 13(1), 2. (<https://doi.org/10.3390/su13010002>)

- Dwyer, L. (2018). Saluting while the ship sinks: the necessity for tourism paradigm change
Article. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(1), 29–48.]. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2017.1308372>
- Elkington, J. (2018). 25 years ago I coined the phrase “triple bottom line.” Here’s why it’s time to rethink it.
Harvard Business Review, 25, 2-5.
- Given, L. M. (Ed.). (2008). The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods. *Sage publications*.
- Gössling, S. (2002). Global environmental consequences of tourism. *Global Environmental Change*, 12(4), 283–302. doi:10.1016/S0959-3780(02)00044-4
- Gössling, S., Hall, C. M., & Weaver, D. B. (2009). Sustainable tourism futures: Perspectives on systems, restructuring and innovations. In *Sustainable tourism futures* (pp. 1-16). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203884256>
- Gon III, S. M., Tom, S. L., & Woodside, U. (2018). ‘Āina Momona, Honua Au
Loli—Productive lands, changing world: Using the Hawaiian footprint to inform biocultural restoration and future sustainability in Hawai ‘i. *Sustainability*, 10(10), 3420. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10103420>
- Handley, K., Sturdy, A., Fincham, R., & Clark, T., (2006). Within and Beyond Communities of Practice: Making Sense of Learning Through Participation, Identity and Practice, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00605.x>.
- Hall, C. M. (2001). Trends in ocean and coastal tourism: the end of the last frontier? *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 44(9-10), 601–618. doi:10.1016/S0964-5691(01)00071-0. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0964-5691\(01\)00071-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0964-5691(01)00071-0)
- Hawai’i Tourism Authority (HTA). (2019). Hawaii Visitor Statistics Released for July 2019. <https://www.hawaiitourismauthority.org/media/3615/2019-08-29-july-2019-visitor-stats-press-release.pdf>.
- Hawai’i Tourism Authority (HTA). (2020). Strategic Plan 2020-2025. <https://www.hawaiitourismauthority.org/media/4286/hta-strategic-plan-2020-2025.pdf>.
- Howell, J. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1993). Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control, and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance. *Journal of applied psychology*, 78(6), 891. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.78.6.891>
- Inversini, A., Saul, L., Balet, S., & Schegg, R. (2023). The rise of regenerative hospitality. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 10(1), 6-20. DOI 10.1108/JTF-04-2023-0107
- Joffe, H. (2011). Thematic analysis. *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners*, 209-223.

- Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L. (2020). Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131. *Medical teacher*, 42(8), 846-854.
- Kang & Hwang, (2021). Ethical Conducts in Qualitative Research Methodology: Participant Observation and Interview Process, *KoreaScience*. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15722/jrpe.2.2.202109.5>.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2006). The leadership challenge (Vol. 3). *John Wiley & Sons*
- Merriam, Sharai B., (2001). Dealing with Validity, Reliability, and Ethics, *J. Willard Marriott Library*. <http://ereserve.library.utah.edu/Annual/ELP/7960/Rorrer/elp7960dealing.pdf>.
- Moin, M. F., Ikhide, J. E., & Li, Y. (2024). The relationship between green transformational leadership, corporate social responsibility, and task performance. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 31(2), 831-837. <https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.2606>
- Moin, M. F., Omar, M. K., Wei, F., Rasheed, M. I., & Hameed, Z. (2021). Green HRM and psychological safety: how transformational leadership drives follower's job satisfaction. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(16), 2269–2277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1829569>
- Özgül, B., & Zehir, C. (2023). Top management's green transformational leadership and competitive advantage: the mediating role of green organizational learning capability. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 38(10), 2047-2060. DOI 10.1108/JBIM-01-2022-0043
- Perry, F. (2016). “We are building our way to hell”: Tales of gentrification around the world. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/oct/05/building-way-to-hell-readers-ales-gentrification-around-world>
- Pratt, S. (2015). The economic impact of tourism in SIDS. *Annals of tourism research*, 52, 148-160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2015.03.005>
- Pollock, A. (2019). Flourishing beyond sustainability. In ETC Workshop in Krakow (pp. 1-10). Brussels, Belgium: *ETC Corporate*.
- Purvis, B., Mao, Y., & Robinson, D. (2019). Three pillars of sustainability: in search of conceptual origins. *Sustainability science*, 14, 681-695. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0627-5>
- Pyrko, I., Dorfler, V., & Eden, C. (n.d.). Thinking together: What makes communities of practice work?. *Sage Journals*. doi:10.1177/0018726716661040
- Radjou, N. (2019). Who is rich? It's matter of perspective. Retrieved June 18, 2021, from <https://naviradjou.medium.com/who-is-rich-its-matter-of-perspective-6e923150ae4>
- Reed, B. (2007). Shifting from ‘sustainability’to regeneration. *Building Research & Information*, 35(6), 674-680. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09613210701475753>
- Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in Interview-Based Qualitative Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11(1), 25–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.801543>.

- Salim, M. E., & Mohd Tahir, O. (2012). Kish as a small island towards sustainable tourism. *Alam Cipta. Universiti Putra Malaysia*.
- Salvador, R. D. (2023). Local Science for Tourists: Relaying the Importance of Regenerative Tourism Education in Hawai‘i. <https://hdl.handle.net/10125/106143>
- Saito, O. (2013). Resource use and waste generation by the tourism industry on the big island of Hawaii. *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, 17(4), 578-589. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jiec.12007>
- Schaltegger, S., & Wagner, M. (Eds.). (2017). Managing the business case for sustainability: The integration of social, environmental and economic performance. *Routledge*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351280525>
- Silverman, D. (2014). Interpreting Qualitative Data, *SAGE Publications*.
- Sobhee, S. K. (2008). Tourists’ willingness to pay and sustainable tourism policies in Mauritius. *International Review of Business Research Papers*, 4(3), 178-191.
- Squires, V. (2018). Northouse, PG (2016). Leadership: Theory and practice . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Pages: 494. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, (185
- Steichen, K. A. (2001). Project management communities of practice – advancing the practice. Paper presented at *Project Management Institute Annual Seminars & Symposium*, Nashville, TN. Newtown Square, PA: Project Management Institute.
- Suarez, B. (2024). Thousands protest in Spain’s Canary Islands over mass tourism. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/thousands-protest-spains-canary-islands-over-mass-tourism-2024-04-20/>
- Tham, A., & Sharma, B. (2023). Regenerative Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges. *Journal of Responsible Tourism Management*, 3(1), 15-23. DOI: 10.47263/JRTM.03-01-02
- Ulusemre, T., & Lam, W. (2023). Who benefits from international tourism in small Pacific islands? Value capture in the hotel industry in Hawaii. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 64(1), 98-109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apv.12365>
- United Nations (2023). The Sustainable Development Report 2023: Special edition. *United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)*. Retrieved from <https://desapublications.un.org/publications/sustainable-development-Goals-report-2023-special-edition>
- UNWTO, U. (2017). Tourism and the sustainable development goals–Journey to 2030. Highlights. Madrid.
- UNWTO., 2020. “Funding for a Regenerative Future – Could Tourism Taxes be Part of the Answer?” *UN Tourism*. Found at [Funding for a regenerative future – could tourism taxes be part of the answer? \(unwto.org\)](https://www.unwto.org/funding-for-a-regenerative-future-could-tourism-taxes-be-part-of-the-answer)
- UNWTO & UNDP. (2017). Tourism and the sustainable development goals – *Journey to 2030* (9789284419401).

- Liu, J.C. and Var, Turgur. (1986). Resident attitudes toward tourism impacts in Hawaii. *Annals of Tourism Research*. Volume 13, Issue 2. pp 193-214. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(86\)90037-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(86)90037-X).
- Mang, P., & Reed, B. (2012). Designing from place: A regenerative framework and methodology. *Building Research & Information*, 40(1), 23-38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09613218.2012.621341>
- McEnhill, L., Jorgensen, E.S., Ulrich, S. C. (2020). Paying it forward and back: regenerative tourism as part of place. *Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Tourism Internal Report 2020/101*, Lincoln University.
- Mittal, S., & Dhar, R. (2016, June 8). Effect of green transformational leadership on Green Creativity: A Study of Tourist Hotels. *Tourism Management*. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261517716300632?casa_token=tqH5I3-5i9EAAAAA%3Ab_fyJA9-8R6IUU7DecZDntbBOb9BYsQyrYU195UILfud7yK8KvDOXMyCqWJSmPfN4dU5z2JB1Q. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.05.007>
- Moin, M. F., Omar, M. K., Wei, F., Rasheed, M. I., & Hameed, Z. (2021). Green HRM and psychological safety: How transformational leadership drives follower's job satisfaction. *Current issues in Tourism*, 24(16), 2269-2277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1829569>
- Wamsler, C., Osberg, G., Osika, W., Herndersson, H., & Mundaca, L. (2021). Linking internal and external transformation for sustainability and climate action: Towards a new research and policy agenda. *Global Environmental Change*, 71, 102373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2021.102373>
- Webster, J., & Watson, R. T. (2002). Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: Writing a literature review. *MIS quarterly*, xiii-xxiii. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4132319>
- Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning as a social system. *Systems thinker*, 9(5), 2-3.
- Wenger-Trayner, E., & Wenger-Trayner, B. (2023, June 4). Introduction to communities of Practice - Wenger-Trayner. *Introduction to Communities of Practice*. <https://www.wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>
- Wiggin, K. D. S. (1917). *New chronicles of Rebecca*. Houghton, Mifflin.
- Yin, R.K., 2015. *Qualitative research from start to finish*. Guilford publications.
- Zaman, U., Aktan, M., Agrusa, J., & Khwaja, M. G. (2023). Linking regenerative travel and residents' support for tourism development in Kaua'i Island (Hawaii): Moderating-mediating effects of travel-shaming and foreign tourist attractiveness. *Journal of Travel Research*, 62(4), 782-801. www.researchgate.net/publication/328039672_httpjournalssagepubcomdoiabs1011770887302X07303626. Accessed 2 Apr. 2024. DOI: [10.1177/00472875221098934](https://doi.org/10.1177/00472875221098934)
- Xin, C., & Wang, Y. (2023). Green intellectual capital and green competitive advantage in hotels: The role of environmental product innovation and green transformational leadership. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 57, 148-157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2023.10.001>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide 1 - Tourism Industry and Community Participants

1. Can you please make a short intro of your position and what your opinion/connection is in terms of the tourism industry in Hawaii?

Follow-up: How do you see the environmental challenges that Hawai'i has currently and in your point of view is the tourism industry connected to that?

2. How do you perceive the current dynamics between local communities and the tourism industry in Hawai'i regarding environmental protection and regeneration efforts?

Follow-up: In your opinion, who has the responsibility to promote environmental sustainability?

3. From your perspective, what are the major challenges faced by the tourism industry in Hawai'i in terms of minimizing negative environmental impacts while maintaining economic viability?

Follow-up: How do you see the relationship between the tourism industry and local communities in minimizing these challenges? Do you know of any steps/initiatives that have been taken to foster collaboration?

4. Based on your expertise, what are the key environmental concerns associated with mass tourism in Hawaii, and how do they impact local ecosystems and communities?

Follow-up: Are there any specific regenerative tourism practices or strategies that have shown promise in mitigating environmental degradation and promoting ecosystem restoration?

5. How do existing policies and regulations in Hawai'i support or hinder the implementation of regenerative tourism practices aimed at environmental protection and community well-being?

Follow-up: What are some potential policy interventions or initiatives that could facilitate greater collaboration between stakeholders and promote sustainable tourism development?

6. How do indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage contribute to the concept of regenerative tourism in Hawaii, particularly in terms of environmental stewardship and community empowerment?

Follow-up: How can traditional practices and values be integrated into modern tourism initiatives to ensure respect for indigenous rights and promote cultural sustainability?

7. What is something you wish everyone knew about the industry?

Follow-up: How can more people understand what tourism signifies to you?

Appendix 2: Interview Guide 2 - Frequent Tourists to Hawai'i

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your connection or experience with tourism in Hawai'i?

Follow-up: Are you a frequent traveler to Hawai'i?

2. From your perspective, during your travels, how did you perceive the dynamics between local communities and the tourism industry?

Follow-up: Did you interact more with locals or with people employed in the tourism industry?

3. Are there any specific experiences or encounters during your visit that have increased your awareness or understanding of the environmental and cultural challenges facing Hawaii?

Follow-up: What did you notice about environmental awareness?

4. What are your feelings towards a more influential touristic experience that includes Native Hawaiian practices, knowledge, and culture?

Follow-up: How could this be created? What types of steps would you expect from the industry?

5. If you have taken many trips to Hawai'i, what changes have you noticed over the years?

Follow-up: How has nature been affected?

6. How does the industry currently educate tourists about Native practices and how do you imagine this could be improved?

Follow-up: Who are the leaders who could aid in this education?

7. What is your biggest takeaway from your travels to Hawai'i?

Follow-up: What would be your one wish for the tourism experience or for Hawai'i's tourism scene?

Appendix 3: Consent Form



A Study on Regenerative Tourism Efforts and Collaborations in Hawai'i

Interview Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation of regenerative tourism in Hawai'i and gain perceptions of current efforts being done within the industry to increase collaborations. The findings from this interview will be used to draw conclusions in the master's thesis for the Leadership for Sustainability program at Malmö University.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. With your consent, this interview will be recorded and transcribed by the researchers.

Your name will be kept anonymous in the written thesis and transcription of the interview.

You can ask questions or for further elaboration of the question and details at any point throughout the interview, as well as afterwards regarding your responses.

I hereby consent to participating in this interview.

A solid blue rectangular box redacting the name of the interviewee.

Name of Interviewee

A solid blue rectangular box redacting the signature of the interviewee.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samantha Forabough".
Researcher Signature

Appendix 4: Transcript of Interview 4

00:00:07 Speaker 1

Hi XXXX. Great to meet you. {small talk...}

00:00:16 Speaker 2

Likewise.

00:00:18 Speaker 1

Thank you so much for doing this interview. I really appreciate it.

00:00:23 Speaker 2

Of course I'm happy to.

00:00:25 Speaker 1

{small talk}...we are doing (our thesis on) regenerative tourism in Hawaii specifically and kind of looking at the collaborations between the industry and communities and that's where you come in. So collecting data, talking to people through interviews and yeah, I'm excited to hear what you have.

00:00:54 Speaker 2

Ohh wonderful. Awesome. I'm happy to share.

00:01:02 Speaker 1

All right. So are you OK with being recorded, by the way? OK. Thank you so much.

00:01:06 Speaker 2

I am.

00:01:08 Speaker 2

You're welcome.

00:01:10 Speaker 1

OK. So first question, can you briefly introduce yourself, your position, and your opinion or connection to the Hawaii tourism industry?

00:01:20 Speaker 2

Where do I start, so my name is XXXX. I'm the Chief Stewardship Officer for the Hawaii Tourism Authority, and that's a new role. It's the second of the sort I've had. So in 20, I'm going to go back a little bit in 2021, our Board of directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority

reorganized us and created a position called the Chief Brand Officer, which was really meant to be an embodiment of both not only our marketing functions, but our destination management functions and so for three years ending in 2023, I sort of had that role and then I transitioned in January of this year, 2024 into this new role Chief Stewardship Officer. In its most simple sense, my role is really to guide the strategy and implementation of our destination stewardship activities and how we kind of think about that is in sort of three broad groups, really four, but three primarily it's around our natural resources, Hawaiian culture as the indigenous people of Hawaii and then our broader community. And then lastly, what is our sort of relationship to the industry?

00:02:34 Speaker 2

And so anything in destination is sort of my realm and the Chief brand officer position that still exists. It's vacant right now is everything pre arrival. So they're doing all the pre arrival marketing. They're doing all the awareness and inspiration and education. And then once they arrive in Hawaii then they're sort of in my world and the programs that I implement in terms of like best experience and visitor arrivals and education, festivals and events. All that kind of stuff.

00:03:04 Speaker 1

That makes sense.

00:03:06 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:03:07 Speaker 1

Have you enjoyed your role?

00:03:09 Speaker 2

Absolutely. I wake up every morning and pinching myself that I work for one, in the state. I'm a public servant, so I'm a public employee. I work for the State of Hawaii. But I also pinch myself because I get to work on one of the most loyal brands in the world. When we think about repeat visitation to Hawaii, our repeat visitation rate is really high with a very loyal sort of visitor groupie population, for lack of a better term, and so I'm, you know, I wake up every morning blessed and grateful that I get to work with my colleagues and we get to represent Hawaii to the world.

00:03:47 Speaker 1

Is revisitation rates really important?

00:03:52 Speaker 2

Yeah. And I think from a regenerative tourism mindset, right, if you have a high repeat visitation, it means that those guests are familiar with the destination. They're more attuned with, sort of what cultural norms exist, what expectations there are of them by residents, right. So you know, what is the responsibility of a visitor in our home? And so as a repeat visitor, they're often more aware and we tend to see better behavior in destination from repeat travelers because they're aware of those things.

00:04:26 Speaker 1

OK. Yeah.

00:04:29 Speaker 2

And they obviously love Hawaii. You know what we talk about? How do we get people to love Hawaii as much as we do? And by extension, when they love Hawaii as much as we do, they'll care for it as much as we do.

00:04:44 Speaker 1

Yeah. Oh my gosh, that's awesome. That's what we're talking about in our thesis. So it's cool to hear it from you.

00:04:51 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:04:52 Speaker 1

OK, you answered that perfectly. So next question, how do you perceive the current dynamics between local communities and the tourism industry?

00:05:04 Speaker 2

Do you want me to answer that, like Hawaii specifically?

00:05:07 Speaker 1

Yes. Yeah.

00:05:10 Speaker 2

So Hawaii was one of the earlier destinations that measured in a consistent way what we refer to as resident sentiment. And so we've been doing a resident sentiment survey for nearly 40 years. And so we asked our residents the same 4 tracking questions across that entire data set and over the years, we've added more questions. But generally speaking, our residents still feel, a slim majority, still feel that tourism brings more benefits than problems.

00:05:36 Speaker 1

Mm-Hm.

OK.

00:05:49 Speaker 2

We've seen that number gradually decrease. And it's correlated to, often times, arrivals. And so there's this inverse relationship between resident sentiment and visitor arrivals. So when visitor arrivals decrease, we usually see the sentiment for tourism increase because of the economic and job, you know, impacts that tourism has. And so it's a, it's an interesting thing that we track and follow and make sure we're always aware of and mindful of.

00:06:25 Speaker 1

Yeah. OK.

00:06:27 Speaker 1

Do you feel like, with events like the Maui wildfires, resident sentiment goes down?

00:06:37 Speaker 2

I think we're still too close to the incident to sort of really understand what happened and how it impacted people's feelings in a meaningful way over time. Yeah. But I will just say tourism has always been a sensitive topic for us in Hawaii, right, for a number of reasons. And I could tell you from a cultural perspective, right there are conversations around the commodification of Hawaiian culture. We can talk about the hyper sexualization of Hawaiian women in the industry over, you know, the decades nearly a century now, you know? So tourism has always had its fair share of challenges in the mind of community. And I don't necessarily think that like disasters, whether they be hurricanes or the wildfire or whatever it was.

00:07:16 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:07:32 Speaker 2

Are necessarily the impetus for poorer resident sentiment. I think there's some really kind of core issues with tourism that haven't been resolved that I think Regenerative tourism is looking to address. Like our work in regenerative tourism and establishing a model that really embodies the values of regenerative tourism is a really important way to solve some of those challenges that our residents have with tourism.

00:08:02 Speaker 1

What do those models look like?

00:08:06 Speaker 2

So one of the things that I would point you toward as a resource and I'll drop this in the chat here, OK. It's called Aina Aloha economic futures, and so it actually was born out of the pandemic.

And so I would point you to a couple of things. One is the declaration. And so this was really born out of the pandemic. We saw a lot of government organizing. You know, the usual suspects, your Chamber of Commerce, your Restaurant Association. You know, those kind of like industry sort of airlines for America, you know, oil, lodging, empiricism association, like all the usuals and grassroots community was left out of that conversation.

00:08:52 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:09:00 Speaker 2

And so as we were figuring out what the pandemic pause meant and what we could think about as the future, because just for context, in 2019, Hawaii saw 10.4 million visitors and it was reaching a tipping point with our residents. Like this is too much, we can't handle this. We can't handle this many with the infrastructure that we have for an extended period of time and so there's, you know, those sorts of things that I think we're really driving a really strong conversation around, how do we rethink tourism? Pandemic happens and then we paused.

00:09:36 Speaker 1

MHMM.

00:09:38 Speaker 2

Two things I think were important to informing how we think about regenerative tourism, and I apologize, I'm going to get back to answer your question more directly, but I just want to...(explains the next point).

So in 2019, right, you had 10.4 million visitors. You had all this pressure from over tourism and like the conversations around, we can't sustain this volume for an extended period of time. So the whole tournament 30 board of directors in 2019 embarked on our strategic planning process where we went out to communities to understand what they wanted, what they didn't want, what would work, what wouldn't work. Etcetera. And we actually created our, what is now our current strategic plan, which was organized around the four pillars of natural resources, Hawaiian culture, community and brand marketing really is the four pillars of how we thought about our work. We were intentional about listing them in the order that we did that without. We have a Hawaiian proverb here in Hawaii, we say, hey, which literally means the earth. Our natural environment is the chief and we are serving

right from a Hawaiian perspective our worldview, for lack of a better term, I think epistemology might be the right word, but we sort of believe in our creation story that humans are the younger sibling of our natural environment.

00:11:05 Speaker 2

And we have a chant that's probably nearly 3000 lines long that essentially chant us from before The Big Bang, The Big Bang, and then through today, when humans, as we think of ourselves today.

00:11:17

Hmm.

00:11:18 Speaker 2

So in that genealogy, we believe we're the younger sibling. And so within a family system, there's a reciprocity that exists between older sibling caring for a younger sibling, and likewise the younger sibling caring for the older and in that reciprocity and caring for one another is really the harmony and the balance that we see in the world and should strive for you take that context and you understand the tourism problems that we had with 10.4 million visitors, insufficient infrastructure. Roads are too narrow and not enough parking, not enough restrooms. Not enough, you know, interpretive staff, not enough Park Rangers, not enough law enforcement. Not enough of all the things that you need to manage a visitor destination. Well, you could see why that imbalance occurred.

All of that is leading up to 2020 and we get to 2020 and the pandemic happens. So now I'm going to come back to that. I know local economic futures because I think that reciprocity, that ideal of this kinship between land and and man is important to kind of informing how we started to change how we thought about tourism and why.

00:12:27 Speaker 2

I know the declaration. I know Aloha economic Futures declaration comes out, it's co-authored by 14 Native Hawaiians, a very diverse opinions about a lot of things. But in that diversity we found strength.

00:12:42 Speaker 2

We basically co-authored this declaration and one of the values that we put forth said we are an inclusive. We are inclusive and embrace the collective that will call Hawaii home, grounded in the fundamental understanding. That's our responsibility to control and manage our resources and domain that allows us to fulfill our role as host here in our home with Aloha. And so really what we're saying is we gotta take care of our resources. We gotta take care of ourselves. If we're gonna truly be good hosts to the guests that we welcome. Yeah. And it was understanding and that.

00:13:18 Speaker 2

How do I say it? How did we prioritize the health of our natural resources, the health of us as people who call Hawaii home, right as residents, not just native lines, but all residents of Hawaii. How did we prioritize ourselves and our well-being and our quality of life so that we could in turn then be good host right. And and that decision to be a host is one that we needed to make and have agency in.

00:13:47 Speaker 2

And for us, to your point and to your earlier question, that was a very long runway to save our model and our system of regenerative tourism is really predicated on foundational elements. It's that balance and harmony with our natural environment.

And it's about prioritizing the quality of life and well-being of our residents, because I like to tell my team and others that when we say, why do we do tourism?

Well, if it's not to improve the quality of life and enhance and strengthen our natural resources, then why do we do it? Because if it's completely extractive, and if it's completely one way and there is no reciprocity in this exchange, then we're not doing it right. And then we've got to really ask ourselves, why do we do it?

00:14:37 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:14:37 Speaker 2

So I'm going to get a little bit more technical on the tourism piece of this right, because I think there have been a lot of terms over time that have sort of been thrown around, right. We could think about responsible travel. We can think about sustainable travel and now regenerative travel, greater sort of the new term dejour at the moment.

00:14:59 Speaker 1

Right.

00:15:01 Speaker 2

But what I really appreciate about some of the work that we've been doing and some of the mentors that we've had in doing this work really has really thought about this as creating systemic change, that it's not just small incremental changes. It's not just swapping light bulbs and toilet brushes, although those are important, they're not sort of the model shifting systemic change we're looking for.

00:15:32 Speaker 2

And then I think we really wanted to have a conversation again, when we think about our worldview that is informed by our indigenous values.

What does it mean to sustain something? What does it mean to be responsible with something? And in our language and in our worldview, we say this is another whole proverb *ecola no keola ecola* in words and in language can be life.

And in language and in words can come that, and so the words that we use to describe things, the way we talk about things is a really important sort of manifestation of what we're actually putting out into the world, right. And so when we thought about it, we said, you know, hey, sustainable sustain, it's just sort of like we keep it how it is.

00:16:23 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:16:23 Speaker 2

Right. We sustain it and is that bad? No. And I think we found ourselves in this sort of good, better, best kind of mindset. Right. And so we can think about responsible as the good right. We want to be mindful about what we do. We want to be mindful. And keep in mind our responsibility to what we're doing as a visitor or as a resident.

And then we said, OK, sustainable, we want to be able to keep this thing going in the long term. You know the economic impact of tourism is, you know undeniable. So in that way, we want to sustain it and we kind of had a conversation around that. And then we said, well, if we regenerate, what does that mean, right? What does that kind of bring to an essence of and a way of thinking about what we do. And we said no, we actually want to be there because I think conventional tourism is this idea of the old way of doing it, it's degenerating and it sort of moves the wrong way on the scale and we want to go in the opposite direction, which is regenerating, right? We really want to be in this space where tourism can be. I'm trying. I'm struggling for the right words, but.

00:17:36 Speaker 2

How to describe it?

(discussion about the best word to use...)

00:17:51 Speaker 2

Yeah. And I think another way to maybe describe regenerative tourism for us is this idea of like the holistic view of it, right? We have to take into account the totality of impacts good and bad. And we have to have that sort of holistic thinking about it and we have to kind of think about it from a natural systems design kind of mindset where it's the totality of it all and everything has an impact on something else. And you do this over here and this

happens over there. And I don't think we've necessarily measured tourism or had key performance indicators the past that really took into consideration the totality of so in an example right, I think in an old way of thinking we were very focused only on things like arrivals and economic outputs, right? Total visitor spending per person per day spend arrivals, those kind of metric.

Now, I don't deny that those are important for a number of reasons, but I also think we need to think about GHG's right, greenhouse gas emissions, every flight to Honolulu cost us this much in sort of carbon, right. And so how do we really measure all of those impacts together?

00:19:08 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

00:19:10 Speaker 2

And I think that's really what sort of informs our our way of thinking about regenerative tourism. And then we really kind of thought about it, I think from the perspective that again, it had to be system change. It had to be adaptive change. It couldn't just be these incremental little. I don't know what the right word is. Sorry. I'm struggling for words this early in the morning.

00:19:37 Speaker 1

It's okay!

00:19:41 Speaker 2

You know, they're little steps, right? And they're important. And you got to take the first step to get there, but we really wanted to be radical in rethinking what regenerative tourism could look like.

00:19:53 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

00:19:54 Speaker 2

And and so I think you know when we. When I think about my mentors, so just, you know, people that I talk to that I really, you know, Pauline Sheldon.

I don't know if you know her doctor Pauline Sheldon. She's a former uh University of Hawaii at Manoa. Tim School Dean and she's done a lot in sort of this regenerative tourism space. I think about my conversations with people like Anna Pallet, right, who sort of thought of as a, you know, a leader in this idea around adapting this regenerative model from other places and kind of injecting it into tourism.

00:20:41 Speaker 2

I think about leaders like John Defries, our former President and CEO at the Hawaii Tourism Authority, and so many others, Celeste Connors, who's the head of the Hawaii Green Growth, and Hawaii Local 2030 hub. And so there's like all these people that I think, you know, started to inform the work proper. And then I think about all the people.

The grassroots community leaders who really were incessant about making change and who motivated us and kept us in line and held us accountable because I think it really helped us flesh out some values or principles, maybe.

That really kind of I think helped us to define what regenerative tourism could be, right. So again, how do we think about tourism holistically and taking into account the totality of impacts good and that mitigate the negative and amplify the positive. How do we set standards around what it means right? What criteria exist for, you know, these regenerative tourism practices?

00:21:51 Speaker 2

How do we amplify collaboration? Right? Because I think for us a really important part of our process and what was really important to our residents was how do we provide them a voice in terms of decision making and so making sure that like individual residents and communities.

As well as our usual stakeholders having a voice in how we were sort of putting the model together has been a really important journey for us. How did we think about?

00:22:23 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

00:22:27 Speaker 2

The notion of quality over quantity and when we think about the value of a visitor over the lifetime over their lifetime. Right. It's not just the individual trip again for us and Hawaii. Repeat travel is important for us. And so how do we think about the quality of that lifetime value of that visitor? Right. So for example, you know, just the kind of an analogy.

00:22:53 Speaker 2

When you're young, you might be buying that used Toyota Corolla that's got 100,000 miles. And it gets you through and it's what you can afford at that time in your life. And you know, later on when you're, you know, much more advanced in life and you're a grandparent and maybe now you're driving around that BMW or you're driving around that Audi or whatever it is. In the same way our guests might come to us as college students on vacation.

00:23:04 Speaker 1

Mm-Hmm.

00:23:20 Speaker 2

For the summer or during the winter break, and they're staying at a hostel on Lemon St. in Waikiki and 50 years later they were now on their seventh trip and they're staying at The Four Seasons of the Ritz Carlton. And we really kind of want to take into consideration the totality of that relationship with that visitor, right. And so how do we think about quality and quantity?

00:23:46 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:23:48 Speaker 2

How do we think about the impact again to quality of life, right? So for us, where is the money flow?

00:23:56 Speaker 2

[That] has been a really important conversation to us, right? We know tourism in Hawaii last year was over \$20 billion in total expenditures. We know over \$2.3 billion was generated in tax revenue that went to pay the bills for the state. We know that tourism supported direct, indirect and induced over 200,000 jobs in our economy, which is almost 1/4 of our total workforce, so we know the economics of tourism are incredibly important to us, right in terms of GDP, tourism somewhere bounces between first and second all the time, so it's right up there. It's really important. So you know, how do we think about like income distribution, how do we think about visitor spend and how do we drive visitor spending to local businesses, right? And that diversity of retail and other spending was really important to us. And so how did we sort of think about our strategy in marketing? How did we think about our partnerships with local small and micro businesses?

And really, and it goes back to the understanding, the whole right, do I want visitors to stop shopping in Waikiki at some of the luxury brands? No, I probably don't because we're also getting 4% or 4 1/2% tax GST tax on those purchases, right? It's employing people.

00:25:23 Speaker 2

But that money goes to this large corporation. Someone like LVMH, right? But on the flip side, if I only have them shopping locally, you lose that. And on the flip side, if they're only shopping there and not local, we lose all of the core of our economy, which is small business. And so how do you find a balance? And I describe it like this. I don't mind if a guest goes to earn Mentz and buys their beautiful Birkin.

And they can spend \$30,000 on that wonderful Birkin. And just like Jane Birkin, I want them to go everywhere else. I want them at the farmers market. I want them at the small fashion designer. So I want a bottle of cool hunter rum, which is a local distillery that makes a bottle of rum here. It's great. I want them at Manueli and Kailua, who's a local fashion designer that makes great Aloha wear. I want them to buy that bottle of jam from the farmers market at a Community College, and I want them to fill that Birkin in with every locally owned product that they can think of and overflow that Birkin, just like Jane Birkin, would. Right. And so I think it's like, how do we think about the whole?

00:26:27 Speaker 2

You get sort of a little bit of everything and in that we find balance. So again, when we think about money, it's like what does that income distribution look like for our residents? Where is that spend going? How much are they spending, where are they spending it, all that kind of stuff?

You know, we think about other things too, like how do we mitigate climate impacts? One of the things that we have that we have to be very mindful of in Hawaii is we're at least a six hour flight from anywhere.

We're the most populous isolated landmass on Earth.

And so everybody gets here either on a plane or a boat, and that has climate impacts, right? And so how do we think about actual visitor volume and its contribution to greenhouse gas emission?

But we also import 90% of what we consume, right? As residents, you know. And so if I think about the visitors that are in have like on any given day, they're also residents, right, for a temporary period and contribute to what is being shipped here because they consume things too. And so how do we think about mitigating climate impacts. We think a lot about also I think how do we close the loop on some resources and so how do we get away from the, you know, disposable plastics and things like that and how do we be better and that kind of stuff. We think about tourism, land use, because that's important, right? And so where do resort areas exist? Where are they? What does that have as an impact on tourism or, excuse me, on traffic and local communities? And is it right on the beach and sea level rise and all that kind of stuff? So we think about that.

00:28:16 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

00:28:19 Speaker 2

We think about our source markets, right. We're really mindful about where are these visitors that we're soliciting, right? Encouraging, inviting visitors from. And so how do we

think about the diversity of those source markets because again, I mean, the pandemic was sort of this weird thing, but like, if all our eggs are in one basket, which we kind of - our primary source market is domestic visitors from the US West. If something were to happen there, we would be directly impacted. And so how do we sort of diversify our portfolio as it were, of source markets to make sure that we're resilient in the face of crisis.

And so that's a part of regenerative tourism for us.

00:29:05 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:29:06 Speaker 2

We think a lot about protecting sense of place. What is the character of the community? How do we protect view planes and scenic view planes? How do we protect cultural assets? How do we make sure that business practices also enhance and benefit the natural environment and communities and sense of place. And so yeah, we think about that and then a bunch of other stuff. I'll pause there. I'm gonna drink coffee because I've been talking a lot.

00:29:36 Speaker 1

That was such a good answer. You just kept going, but it was perfect because I had a couple of questions that you already answered just from that one answer. So those were fixed.

00:29:41 Speaker 2

Sorry.

00:29:54 Speaker 1

It's just so complex of an issue too, and the more I dive into it, the more I want to write about everything in the thesis, because it's just so fascinating to me and there's so much to talk about.

00:30:08 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:30:08 Speaker 1

And I I feel like you have that passion and that's why that answer was so good. So thank you.

00:30:15 Speaker 2

I think if I could offer you some advice because I've been doing this for a little bit and I've really kind of focused on this, if you really had to boil all of this down, it really comes back to, I think, 2 primary things.

How do you improve the quality of life for your residents and the destination?

And it's a deep conversation to have with your community, because that means different things to different people. And on one island because we have 8 main islands here in the Hawaiian Islands. You know what it means on Oahu is different than what it means on Kauai. And it can even be different on the north shore of Oahu versus the east side of Oahu. And so having these really robust conversations around what quality of life means to certain people and getting granular about that is 1 real important tenant for me of what we do and why we do it.

00:31:00 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:31:14 Speaker 2

And the flip side of that is we also have to recognize that tourism is a business and that tourism is an economic driver for our community. And so how do we improve the value and experience for our guests and we have to balance those two needs because sometimes they're in opposition to one another. But fundamentally, if we're not improving the quality of life for our residents and improving the quality of the guest experience for our visitor and we're not, maybe the last thing I would put around that is a ring of totality.

And how do we understand the impacts of it in totality? I think maybe those three things will help guide anybody that's starting to get involved and are curious about it.

00:31:57 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:31:59 Speaker 1

That makes sense.

00:32:01 Speaker 2

And then I think the only thing that would also add just to be explicit and I I have to remind myself to do this. So when I say improve our quality of life for our residents, I'm also including and have given personhood to our natural environment. So I have to remind myself that not everybody thinks like that again. Like if I go back to what I mentioned earlier.

00:32:20 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:32:23 Speaker 2

And our Hawaiian mindset from an indigenous perspective. There's a genealogical tie and a kinship of us to our elder sibling, and so when I talk about quality of life for residents in a technical way about tourism, I have to be explicit to say that it also has to be good for the mountains. It has to be good for the oceans. It has to be good for the fishes and the birds and everybody. And they have personhood.

00:32:44 Speaker 1

Yeah.

I love that. I'm definitely going to include that in the thesis.

00:32:55 Speaker 2

Yeah.

00:32:56 Speaker 1

Because I interviewed a couple of native Hawaiians previously and they said the same things.

The younger sibling older sibling, they mentioned that and then in a couple of questions from now, they also mentioned like farming systems that maybe you'll mention in the same answer.

00:33:16 Speaker 2

Probably Ahupua and how you take a resource, right? You use it for what you need it and then it goes back out into the system and then where it maintains the cycle? Yeah.

00:33:19 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:33:25 Speaker 2

Yep.

00:33:28 Speaker 1

Is that stuff talked about like within families? Or is it talked about in schools too?

00:33:36 Speaker 2

Mostly in family, we're getting better about incorporating it into formal curriculum, but no, it's just a pervasive way of thinking about our relationship. Yeah, yeah.

And I would say this right, like Hawaii's demographics have changed drastically over the years.

So for us locally, right, we have this conversation a lot. What I think most residents in Hawaii don't think about is that up until the 2010 census, a majority of people that resided in Hawaii, you were born in Hawaii, right? And I think that that just being raised in a place informs your worldview, right and informs the values and what you think about all that stuff.

For the first time in 2010 was the first census that actually showed that the majority of people who resided in Hawaii at that census were not born in Hawaii. And I think that tells you everything you need to know about what we've been experiencing as a society about changes in values. And we've been having these really deep conversations about our community and values.

00:34:45 Speaker 2

What we had to realize is the indigenous people of Hawaii, is that not? We've been the minority for a long time, very long time, right. But now, like everybody, all of our family, Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Portuguese, Filipino, you name it.

00:34:52 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:35:03 Speaker 2

They're also the minority. We call it combined, right, somebody that is at this place born here, right multi generational like it's from Hawaii, born in Hawaii, you call it Kamina.

00:35:04 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:35:14 Speaker 2

We're the minority now. Yeah. And I think that was a big shift for us in thinking about why we felt the changes that we were feeling just because our value system was being influenced and being tested by these outside forces.

00:35:35 Speaker 1

Hmm.

00:35:36 Speaker 2

And so I think for us, I'm sorry, I'm going to get a little meta here, Sam, but, for me personally as an individual, the role of hospitality and tourism is really important to me.

Because some of our elders have taught us that when the world is at war and in its craziest time, they'll look to Hawaii for the the key for that source, and for us it's Aloha. And in hospitality, every visitor that comes to Hawaii, I have an opportunity with my team and our team to educate a visitor about Aloha and what that means here to us, but also how they can take that home because Aloha is not unique to Hawaii, right? And I apologize in Europe, I don't know what you might call it, but there's Southern hospitality and there's Minnesota nice and there's the Pacific Way and there is Aloha in Hawaii. I'm sure there's a word for it where you're called, where you call home, right?

00:36:49 Speaker 2

And so how do we educate people about that and the power of that and so exponentially we sort of are an influence for good in the world and hospitality and that exchange and learning is why we travel per millennia. Right, traveling and learning about other cultures and food and places is so just inherent in being human, and this human experience that travel and hospitality are very much a part of who we are as a species. And so I don't think tourism and hospitality is going anywhere.

And so how we do it is important. And in Hawaii, we have the blessing and the opportunity and the gift to share our Aloha with the world.

00:37:28 Speaker 1

Hmm.

00:37:28 Speaker 2

And hopefully make this world a better place. And so as we learn about each other and we make friends, we're less likely to want to fight with our friends, right. We're less likely to, like, pass judgment. We're willing to have grace. We're willing to have patience because these relationships exist. And so when that declaration came out and we talked about this reciprocity.

00:37:36 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:37:50 Speaker 2

There also is this reciprocity in learning. There's also this opportunity for volunteerism to become the embodiment of giving back, right, like if you recognize that you have an impact on a place when you travel, if you can do something small to use your time, talent or gifts to give back to that place and have this really enriching experience.

That's regenerative tourism to us, too, right? You know, we had examples of Korean travel agents. Koreans are notorious for not liking to get wet, nobody's getting out in the sun like

they typically hate it. Generally I'm painting with a very broad brush, and so are you familiar with a familiarization trip?

00:38:30 Speaker 1

Mm-Hmm.

00:38:31 Speaker 2

So it's an industry term. So we'll take travel agents or travel writers, and we'll take them on a guided itinerary. We call it a fam trip for short or a familiarization trip.

So we took these Korean travel agents to kualoa, which is one of the activities that you can do. It's a place. It's actually this right behind me, this mountain.

00:38:52 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

00:38:52 Speaker 2

Above me, it's called Kualoa.

00:38:54 Speaker 1

OK.

00:38:55 Speaker 2

And on this side of it, sorry my calendar is like peeking through, but on that side of the mountain, there's kualoa and they have all kinds of experiences. It's family owned. John Morgan is the owner of the land and he has all these experiences.

One of them is a voluntourism experience where you can get into a lowly so that traditional agricultural system with the water and the Taro that you I'm sure you heard about in the ahupuaa, which is the land division from the mountain to the ocean. OK, so these travel agents who got in the mud and they got to go and clean the tarot.

00:39:21 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:39:32 Speaker 2

And they got to give back and give service through this voluntourism opportunity. And one of the travel agents, after shared his experience with us and he said I thought I would hate it. My initial thought was why am I going to go on vacation to work?

Why am I going to go to a place and, like, go volunteer? I'm on vacation.

00:39:54 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:39:55 Speaker 2

And he said he couldn't be more wrong.

After going through the experience, it was the one thing on that entire trip that stood out to him. It's the one thing that really changed his perspective about his relation to relationship to the environment and he said he had a ball. He had a blast.

And so you can see how for us, I kind of take this Steve Jobs approach, right? I think it was Steve Jobs. We'll probably have to Fact Check this, but I think it was Steve Jobs, and we're gonna tell them what they want before they know they want it.

Right. That was sort of his mantra. And I think in a similar way for us and for me with culture and tourism and things like voluntourism, I'm going to tell you as a visitor, you're going to want authentic coin culture and authentic coin experiences before you know you want them.

00:40:41 Speaker 2

And you might kick and scream the entire time. OK, but when you do them, you'll call me back and you'll say Kalani, that was the best thing we ever did. I had the most fun. I whatever, you know, they're these really impactful experiences. And I think for the generation of travelers that is coming up right, I'm talking about the younger millennial and beyond. And the pipeline of visitors. They're looking for unique and memorable experiences. They're mindful about their impact. They're mindful about the social responsibility that they have as the traveler. And so I think if if we as destinations and as government don't create the model of tourism that encourages these kind of regenerative experiences. We're going to miss a huge opportunity to capitalize on a new way of doing tourism. So in that way, we have to sort of till the earth in a responsible way.

00:41:31 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

00:41:36 Speaker 2

Like that ahupuaa system where you have it managed where it's logically laid out where it's impacts are minded and create the space for this sort of fertile net neutral way of doing tourism.

00:41:55 Speaker 1

Yes, well, another great answer.

OK, so I had a question when you were talking about, oh, when you mentioned the part of people are less likely to pass judgment when they're friends with tourists. So are you kind of trying to create that camaraderie between residents and tourists like you want you, You get what I'm saying?

00:42:28 Speaker 2

Yeah.

We have a really yucky government term that we use.

00:42:34 Speaker 1

OK.

00:42:35 Speaker 2

We call it resident visitor interaction.

00:42:38 Speaker 1

OK.

00:42:40 Speaker 2

If you've got a better idea, you let us know. Create this opportunity for residents and visitors to interact.

And to have a meaningful exchange, you know, growing up in Hawaii, I can remember family parties where my grandparents would just bring home the most random visitor that was on vacation, that they had met at the hotel. Many of our family worked at the hotel, they worked in hospitality. They would meet these guests, befriend them, they become friends, next thing you know, they're at my cousins graduation party or they're at my, you know, nephew's first birthday party. And we're like grandma, where did you bring Sally and Bob from?

Yeah, I met him down at the beach and that's our way of that's how we are. Right and so, I can count at least three right off the top of my head. Family friends that are close family friends that were befriended by my grandparents or parents because of their work in the industry, took them under their wing, brought them into our family and they still are part of our family and Ruby, it's that resident visitor interaction that we try to foster.

00:43:43 Speaker 1

Wow.

00:43:49 Speaker 2

Again, it goes back to that principle of reciprocity, where a visitor who is educated, and I mean that in the sense of I don't mean like they have a college degree. And what I don't mean that, I mean we've done our job as a destination marketing organization or destination management organization. Or whatever the hell we're gonna call this. That's a whole other section of the paper.

Well, what role did we have as a marketing organization through our marketing and through our branding to prepare and educate A visitor who wants to come to Hawaii to be a respectful and mindful traveler? What things they can do that embody those values I listed off earlier that help us think about regenerative tourism.

And have the best damn experience of their life. And so that's what I mean by educate, we prepare our visitors by saying we call it our Huliiana tips, our responsibility tips. So there is really simple ones, right? We encourage visitors to use reef safe sunscreen. We encourage visitors to go to the beach with a friend. Never by yourself, we remind visitors never to face their back to the ocean. We always ask them to swim at lifeguarded beaches. It's things like that that we try to prepare visitors so that we can reduce harm. Right. One of the number one killers of of people on vacation in Hawaii is actually snorkel.

00:45:21 Speaker 1

Really?

00:45:22 Speaker 2

So ocean safety is a reality. Yeah, that's snorkeling, hands down, has been for decades.

00:45:27 Speaker 1

Wow.

00:45:28 Speaker 2

So how do we prepare visitors for things like that? Like, if you're not a strong swimmer and you don't know how to swim, go do something else.

00:45:35 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:45:37 Speaker 2

Great swim at a lifeguarded beach. Don't go alone. Never face your back to the ocean, right. Like we try to be really explicit in preparing our visitors. We're very blessed. Right. And Hawaii, that many people the world over know Hawaii as a a visitor destination.

And so we don't have to spend a lot of our time convincing people that Hawaii is the great place to travel. It's important. We need to maintain it. We need to make sure people still

know we exist. But I think we focus a lot more now on when you come to Hawaii: This is how to do it.

00:45:57 Speaker 1

Mm-Hmm.

00:46:13 Speaker 1

Do you offer those resources in like airline videos?

00:46:19 Speaker 2

Absolutely.

Absolutely. So we really think about it, I'm going to switch to my marketing brain here a bit.

We really kind of think about that visitor journey from a couple of perspectives. I'm going to try and drop another link in here just so you can check it out.

00:46:40 Speaker 2

Actually, if I can figure out how to share this video, I kind of want to play a couple real quick just to give you a sense of what we talked about.

00:46:49 Speaker 1

OK.

00:46:51 Speaker 2

And then you can watch more of these later.

00:46:54 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:46:56 Speaker 2

Because we have a ton of them.

00:46:59 Speaker 1

Are they on the website?

00:47:02 Speaker 2

Actually, they are on our YouTube channel.

00:47:04 Speaker 1

Oh, OK.

00:47:05 Speaker 2

It's really easy for us to talk to stakeholders about it, but.

00:47:12 Speaker 1

{Small talk about setting up the videos on the Google Meets call...}

00:47:33 Speaker 2

Can you see this tab?

00:48:04 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:48:06 Speaker 2

All right.

{Video plays...}

00:49:12 Speaker 1

Nice.

00:49:14 Speaker 2

So we have lots of stuff like that and you know, I think for us it's been important. So it's things like that and we have a whole series of those videos and you can check them out later.

00:49:41 Speaker 2

You know, if I could just share one more because I think it's important to contextualize what we've been talking about. Yeah, we did another marketing campaign called how are you rooted.

And it was really important for us to communicate kind of the importance of culture to place that if you're coming to Hawaii, you really needed to understand who we are as a people and as a place. And so I just want to share one more because it's, I think, really emblematic of.

00:50:09 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:50:10 Speaker 2

And then for us to like language or in language, we didn't get to talk about this a whole lot, but Hawaiian language is also an important part of our work in regenerative tourism, right? How do we support our indigenous culture as the thing that makes have, like the unique? There's not sound and surf everywhere, but there's only one Hawaii and Hawaii's indigenous people, Hawaiians, myself and others, or this is our own home and this is the only place our language is spoken. And so if I get off a plane in Rome, what language do I want to hear? And if I get off a plane in Japan, what language do I want to hear? And one day I think, I hope that when people landed, how about you hear Holland? So yeah, if we can just we'll check this one out real quick.

00:50:53 Speaker 1

Yeah!

{Video plays...}

00:53:40 Speaker 1

Wow, that's amazing.

00:53:43 Speaker 2

So you know, that's kind of the, you know, what the right word is, how we try to like balance the two, the marketing piece and sort of the how do we take care of the other regenerative piece. There's a way of storytelling and doing our marketing and how we position ourselves in the marketplace, how do we distinguish ourselves from other sunset and surf destinations? How do we encourage visitors to come to Hawaii because we're so isolated? Right. It's the distance. It's the cost. We're often more expensive and further away than, say, Cancun or other closer destinations to our key source markets.

00:54:22 Speaker 2

And so we are making a purposeful note that if we do tourism better, if we do it in a regenerative way. And we do it in a way that is respectful to culture, to our environment, to each other. And I mean each other collectively, residents and visitors alike.

00:54:46 Speaker 2

That the experience that is born out of that will be what we believe our target travelers looking for and we'll take the additional time, cost and energy to get here.

And then likewise again, if it's done well and it's done right that it will improve the quality of life for our residents. So that's the on regenerative tourism that we're making.

00:55:12 Speaker 1

OK.

00:55:15 Speaker 1

So what would you say is the best way to educate residents about regenerative tourism or, I don't know. I'm trying to think of my question,

00:55:42 Speaker 2

Yeah, 2 two things. First, being present in community, we have to listen. We have to be present to listen. We've got two ears and one mouth, right? How do we use them? And how do we how do we truly listen?

00:55:48 Speaker 1

Mm-Hmm.

00:55:53 Speaker 2

And you know, I think for me that's my philosophy, right? Is how do I go out into a community, be present, be engaged, listen.

So that we can hear and understand truly understand what the desires of our community are. And you have to be consistent in that it isn't just a show up once every five years because the strap plan is expiring and having a community town hall because we got a check, a box, right? It's about meeting quarterly with that community. It's about being we have what we call neighborhood boards on Oahu, right? How do I, you know, go present to them more than once a year.

How do I actually engage and be present in community is really important. The other thing I would say is that beyond that, we have to have a way to measure.

00:56:50 Speaker 2

And demonstrate that we're making movement in a direction that we heard, that they wanted. So metrics and research are really important to us.

00:56:56 Speaker 1

Mm-Hmm.

00:57:03 Speaker 2

Because they help us know how we're doing. We are a data-driven organization.

Our research tells us what we need to know about our target audience. It helps us to do focus groups and message testing on videos like what you just saw. We do resident sentiment survey to truly understand our residents desires and needs, right? There's research parts of this that inform and data that inform everything that we do. And then like I said,

being in community is the other ingredient in our special sauce and doing that in a consistent way.

And then finally, I think what we're able to actually action and demonstrate, we have to sort of speak with our actions, words words mean nothing, right? And the you gotta actually show what you're doing differently.

00:57:47 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

00:57:59 Speaker 1

Is it helpful even just putting all these people in the same room? Like if, like you mentioned, the town hall but in another environment, just in the same room, does that help?

00:58:12 Speaker 2

Yeah, it does to a certain extent. I think for us, part of our role in government and as the agency responsible for tourism, we think of ourselves as a convener. We don't have a lot of statutory authority to make decisions over a jurisdiction, right, like-

You know, I don't know the visitor that's doing something dumb because there are bad apples, right? I can't. I don't have a badge or arrest that that naughty tourist, but we have to partner with local law enforcement and we have to partner with our Department of Land and Natural Resources for when hikers are going off trail.

00:58:41 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:58:53 Speaker 2

Like you know, there's all the reality of this stuff. And so I think we think about our role as a convener.

00:58:59 Speaker 2

And how do we put the right folks in the room? I'll give you another example. We had an issue in Kailua, my hometown, coincidentally, where you had commercial operators dropping off visitors in buses at the local county Beach park. And that was actually illegal. And so our residents and neighborhood board members were, you know, really upset about that and why nothing could be done, why weren't these commercial operators being cited?

00:59:23 Speaker 1

Yeah.

00:59:29 Speaker 2

And so we actually convene the local elected officials, the county, the Honolulu Police Department who has the enforcement in county parks, the bus companies that actually run these buses. And we got to the bottom of it. And we found out it was primarily rogue operators who were not licensed.

The van just doing whatever they wanted and one of the things that we learned was.

Twofold, we have something called the Public Utilities Commission, which regulates motor transport of people, so anybody like going on a bus for like a tour or regulated and you have to get a PC license to be a motor vehicle operator to transport people. I don't mean like a license to drive. I mean like, if you're going to do a tour.

01:00:16 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:00:16 Speaker 2

And you're gonna have people on your bus. You could have a special license for it so we found out that many of these guys didn't have the PUC license. We also found out that HPD wasn't aware and wasn't clear on the law. And so like, I know that sounds ludicrous, but they weren't like they were afraid to make enforcement decisions because they didn't have clarity on certain parts of the law. And so in this meeting that the Holy Tourism Authority brought together in partnership, like I said, with elected officials, community, the regulators, etcetera.

01:00:40 Speaker 1

OK.

01:00:49 Speaker 2

We were able to put everybody in the room and talk it out and come up with a solution. And so to your very astute point, bringing people together in the right way as a way to solve some of these challenges.

Yeah, from an over tourism standpoint, you know, I would point you to the example of. However, on the island of Kawai, where you had thousands of people going every day to the end of the road. And it was completely ludicrous and people were blocking driveways and parking anywhere and emergency vehicles couldn't get in and out. And it was just pure and utter unmanaged chaos.

01:01:30 Speaker 2

And unfortunately, it took another natural disaster, this time of flood, that completely closed off that one Rd. in and out of the North Shore of Kawaii for us to rethink the model and actually launch what had been in community planning and dealing our planning for 20 years. And so now we have managed access, there is a parking lot where you have to make reservations. There are only so many stalls set aside for residents and so many stalls set aside for visitors. And once the reservations are full, it's full the other way you can get there is on a a shuttle from the local resort area down to the beach park and so we take advantage of one, the revenue generated by having people pay for that shuttle. But we also have that captive audience as they're driving from the resort area to the beach where they're getting information about safety and local customs at that place.

Because the revenue generated from the reservations as well as the shuttle are going back into that community, they were able to hire community stewards that actually checked the ID's and reservations. So there's a little checkpoint now right where people show their reservation before they go. And the people who staffed that checkpoint and do that information and all of that sharing are actually local community residents from that place that have been there for generations. And now they have a job to protect their place. And so they feel empowered. You know, when I look at the outcomes of something like that, tourism management.

01:03:01 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:03:06 Speaker 2

It took three years. It took hundreds of millions of dollars. It took multiple federal, state and county agencies but the outcome has been undeniable improvement.

01:03:17 Speaker 1

Mm-Hmm.

01:03:17 Speaker 2

Right. We had a 90% reduction in resident complaints we had. We used to have, I think it was like 3000 people going out there a day, now it's down to 800.

Right. So the experience is completely different. They've built a boardwalk, so people aren't trapped seeing through the environment. And we're sort of mitigating the impacts to natural resources by building the boardwalk. We have the educational opportunities. We have the shuttle. So it's just this really holistic example of how to take the spot and the example of the worst way of just letting tourism do whatever it wants and reshaping it into something that is managed that I think is a fantastic case study and what regenerate tourism can look like.

01:03:59 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

01:04:02 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:04:03 Speaker 1

Would you say it's a combination of leaders from so many different industries and not just the tourism industry that then works to create that?

01:04:12 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

Absolutely.

01:04:16 Speaker 2

And it took government leadership. It took community leadership, right? It took resident leadership and the distinction that make between sort of resident and community. So like, I mean, community is like your.

01:04:21 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

01:04:28 Speaker 2

Your organized like Lions Club or you're, you know, people in community. They organize themselves, right, right. And then there's just like that Auntie who is so done with it, and she's just that one resident. But she's a leader in her community, and she just knows what's right and is not afraid to let you know, it's those kind of folks, too, that really keep the system working.

01:04:51 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:04:54 Speaker 1

OK. That makes sense.

01:04:55 Speaker 2

And then I would just add that an example, the lesson we learned is that our work didn't stop there because what it did was we solved the problem at the end of the road. But kind of like a balloon. We squeezed the end of it and the air moved out. And so some of the

challenges with parking illegally ended up moving down the coast. And so it's a good reminder that in this system and in the.

01:05:13 Speaker 1

OK.

01:05:16 Speaker 2

Totality of it, it's kind of like playing whack A mole, right? If you fix this one and you whack it over here, it pops up over here. And so then you gotta go figure out that side. And so until you sort of figure out a system change, you're going to have that game of.

01:05:19 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:05:31 Speaker 2

Whack A mole, for lack of a better term.

01:05:33 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:05:36 Speaker 1

Does that makes sense?

01:05:40 Speaker 1

OK.

01:05:41 Speaker 1

Just looking at my questions, you've kind of answered most of them, but I'm looking at one more.

01:05:50 Speaker 4

OK.

01:05:53 Speaker 1

Yeah. So you've kind of answered this already, but what steps do you think need to be taken to regenerate Native Hawaiian culture and knowledge?

01:06:03 Speaker 2

I'm going to be bold here...If our culture, right as Native Hawaiians, is going to be the thing that differentiates heavily as a visitor destination, and we're going to rely on cultural

practices like hula and lay greeting and things from our culture, there needs to be a meaningful reinvestment in our culture and in our people, right?

And we generate \$2.3 billion in tax revenue from tourism every year.

01:06:46 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

01:06:50 Speaker 2

Why not make a commitment of that a portion of that tax collection from tourism be redirected to benefit Native alliance?

Right. So we have the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. It's established by the Constitution of the State of Hawaii, sometimes referred, referred to as the 4th arm of government in Hawaii. So you have the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government. And in Hawaii, we have the Office of Human Affairs. So the support branch of government.

So couldn't we put a portion of tourism revenue into the trust Fund that manages in trust for Native Hawaiians as a way to benefit us, right? As a community, we also have something that was established by Congress called the department. Well, let me take that back the Hawaiian homes.

01:07:37 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:07:44 Speaker 2

The Mission Act was established by the US Congress. It's essentially, and it's most simple, and this is a rudimentary take this with a grain of salt. It's like our version of a reservation. Are there American Native Americans?

And so they have these set of sides of land that are only 450% native lines. We can get into that whole blood quantum conversation later. It's basically like us and AKA KC dogs that are still measured by blood quantum. But we'll get into that later.

01:08:16 Speaker 2

But the entity that is managing that is called the Department of Hawaiian Homelands.

It's a state agency. Why can't tourism revenues go to benefit the trusts for, you know, these homelands for endpoints? So what I'm getting at is that, is there a way to reinvest tourism dollars into things that benefit native millions, right. And really, I think fundamentally for me, it's also true that like, it's not just about us as native minds and as the indigenous people of this place. It's really like, how do we take care of everybody.

Because if my neighbor isn't doing well right then, I'm not doing well. So there's a collective. There's the we over me mindset that we have.

And when you live on an island, you're very cognizant that everybody has to help take care of everyone. And so in crisis we see that time and time again, you know the Maui wildfires happened as terrible as they are.

01:09:08 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

01:09:16 Speaker 2

One of the things that surprised us who were out there in the early days after the disaster was we had all these volunteers flying in from all over the world to come volunteer in this disaster zone, right? They're these nonprofit NGO's that do this all over the world all the time. They have a core set of volunteers that go into these disaster areas, established systems, distribute resources, etcetera.

01:09:42 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

01:09:43 Speaker 2

By the time they got to Hawaii, we had, as a community already done that, and they had remarked to us that they had never seen residents so organized, so efficient, so aided in caring for their neighbors anywhere else, and so one of the guys been doing it for 40 years, looked this in the eye and said I don't even know why I'm here. You guys got this. And so I think it's a testament to our our values as a community of how we take care of one another. And to me, I think that that's gotta inform what regenerative tourism means and by extension, your question about how do we sort of take care of native alliance. I think the better question is, how do we take care of everybody? Because again, we all live here and we all live in this island together.

01:10:32 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:10:37 Speaker 1

I love that.

01:10:42 Speaker 1

I think you've answered mostly every other question I guess.

My last question would be what do you wish everyone knew about the industry?

Which is a quite complex question.

01:11:03 Speaker 2

And you're referring to tourism, right as the industry?

01:11:05 Speaker 1

Yes.

01:11:13 Speaker 2

I wish everybody knew that there were leaders in this industry who are trying to make it better than it has been.

01:11:21 Speaker 1

OK.

01:11:22 Speaker 2

I think so often our community refuses to engage tourism as a topic because they feel like it's a waste of time and that it's just this machine that wants to gobble up all of our resources and take all of that away and do nothing to give back to this place.

01:11:39 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

01:11:40 Speaker 2

And I would encourage them to learn more. I would encourage them to educate themselves about what's going on and not just say, ah, it's a lost cause. Get rid of it altogether because I think for some people because it's complex because it's it's large, it's an industry that has a system and a status quo. And when you try to change the system, it always tries to return to homeostasis.

Right. They kind of have just dismissed this notion that tourism can be changed.

I just hope that they and I would encourage them that they learn more about it and that they don't give up on it so easily and that they're actually good people doing good work trying to actually make a change.

01:12:25 Speaker 1

Yeah.

I feel like they would just need to talk to you because you do such a good job of explaining it all.

01:12:33 Speaker 2

We try.

01:12:36 Speaker 1

All right. Well, I think that was all my questions. I one last question I would have is, do you have any contacts that you would recommend? I talked to after this for more industry perspective.

01:12:50 Speaker 2

Yeah, I would. Well, maybe not necessarily a contact, but maybe a way of thinking about opening the aperture of how you're looking at this and I don't know if you have, so forgive me if you have one thing that we didn't talk a lot about today is the politics around it and the the money that sort of flows through the system that sometimes can support or impede progress in this journey to regenerative tourism. Yeah. And so I think I would encourage you to look at the, like sort of political and policy options that exist to facilitate this change. And then looking at some of the business models.

01:13:20 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

01:13:28 Speaker 2

Interest and the systems of how money flows through the system that can either hinder or support that transfer. Also OK because certain people are incentivized in different ways.

01:13:41 Speaker 2

And so looking at things like land and cost of land and then who owns and how is it owned and where is ownership. The big thing for us, right, so much of our industry is pervasive with private equity firms and their ownership and stakes of things that own hotels and they'll put debt.

01:13:51 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:14:01 Speaker 2

On those properties that sit with that property now, right. And so it just gets transferred and switched around. And so who owns it? And what firms are involved and how? There's this like flip flop, right? Like one big PE firm will just sell it to the other one, increase the value, sell it back to the other one, and they keep playing this game, right. And so looking at some of that on the economics is another important one.

01:14:13 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:14:27 Speaker 2

And then the policy side.

01:14:28 Speaker 1

OK. Do you know of any organizations I could maybe look into or contact that would specifically talk about that?

01:14:38 Speaker 2

Not anybody that will pick up the phone to be honest.

01:14:41 Speaker 1

OK, yeah, I know what you mean. Yeah.

01:14:44 Speaker 2

But I think like where you can just more generally it might not be in Hawaii in particular, look at how things are owned and managed. You know one of the favorite questions I tell people is how many hotels do you think Marriott owns?

01:14:58 Speaker 2

And I'll ask the question to you, do you know how many hotels Marriott owns in the world?

01:15:02 Speaker 1

Hawaii. Ohh and all the.

01:15:04 Speaker 2

In the world, any or you could say Hawaii anywhere or in where are you at again, sorry.

01:15:09 Speaker 1

I'm in Sweden, but I'm I'm from Ohio.

01:15:11 Speaker 2

And Sweden.

01:15:13 Speaker 2

OK.

01:15:15 Speaker 1

In all of the world, I would guess like 1000.

01:15:18 Speaker 2

Or, say Ohio, I don't care.

01:15:20 Speaker 1

I have no idea.

01:15:20

Huh.

01:15:22 Speaker 2

What was the number you said?

01:15:23 Speaker 1

I said 1000.

01:15:25 Speaker 2

Yeah. So the the biggest misnomer is Marriott owns none.

01:15:29 Speaker 2

Their management firm, so they manage the hotel, they put their brand on the hotel, they staff the hotel, but they're not the ones who own the hotel. They own 0.

01:15:30 Speaker 1

Oh.

01:15:40 Speaker 1

OK.

01:15:40 Speaker 2

In the entire world, so you know it's understanding kind of the system of money, because there's somebody that owns the hotel and is investing in the real property of the hotel. And then they often contract somebody like a Marriott to manage the day-to-day of it. All right.

01:15:58 Speaker 1

Mm-hmm.

01:15:59 Speaker 2

And so understanding the economic ecosystem is important.

Behind the scenes.

01:16:05 Speaker 1

Yeah.

01:16:07 Speaker 1

I never would have guessed that OK.

01:16:11 Speaker 3

Yep.

01:16:12 Speaker 2

So kind of understanding the kind of nuts and bolts piece of that, you know, actually on the academic side calls somebody that works at like a team school, a travel industry management school like your Cornell, your NYU, UH Tim School, University of Holly, Tim Schools in the top 50 in the country. And so like call it Tim school professor.

01:16:13 Speaker 1

OK.

01:16:34 Speaker 2

I think they could probably unpack some of the hotel side of it and the economic side of it.

01:16:38 Speaker 1

OK.

01:16:40 Speaker 2

Yeah.

01:16:41 Speaker 1

That's very good advice, OK.

01:16:43 Speaker 2

Yeah.

01:16:45 Speaker 1

OK. Any last thoughts or anything else you want to touch on or?

01:16:49 Speaker 2

No, but this has been a great experience for me. Hopefully it was helpful for you as well.

01:16:53 Speaker 1

So helpful. You have no idea so so helpful. I really, really appreciate it. I know it's like an early morning for you and it took longer than I expected. But yeah, I really, really appreciate it.

01:16:56 Speaker 2

That's awesome. All good.

01:17:08 Speaker 2

Awesome, Sam, I wish you the best of luck.

01:17:10 Speaker 1

Thank you. Have a good rest of your day.

01:17:14 Speaker 2

Yes, have a good evening.

01:17:15 Speaker 1

Thank you. Yeah, see you.

Appendix 5: Codes Overview

Phase 4 ‘Thematic coding’ Overview of Original Codes in Relation to Themes

Environmental Impact	Regeneration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overtourism ● Natural Resources ● Environmental Impact ● Agricultural Land ● Degradation ● Natural disaster ● Tourism Impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tourism Perceptions ● Tourism Management ● Tourism Industry ● System Change ● Repeat Travel ● Regenerative Tourism ● Regeneration ● Natural Beauty ● Holistic Thinking
Communities	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting Local ● Self Sustainability ● Land Management ● Indigenous Knowledge ● Housing Issues ● Cultural Impact ● Communities ● Colonization ● American Influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tourism Tracking ● Leadership ● Green Fee ● Governmental Process ● Economic Impact ● Education