Are we poles apart? Stakeholders' cooperation and decision-making in on-land cruise tourism in Iceland and New Zealand

Tracy Harkison[1]* iD **& Þórný Barðadóttir**[2] iD

[1]*Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand*
[2]*Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, Akureyri, Iceland*
Corresponding author, email: tracy.harkison@aut.ac.nz

ABSTRACT: The rapid growth of the global cruise ship industry in tourism has been evident in New Zealand in the southern hemisphere and Iceland in the northern hemisphere, where both countries have experienced a substantial increase in cruise ship arrivals at a growing number of ports. Although the two countries are geographically very far apart, they do share various similarities in their tourism. Within the framework of stakeholder theory and using an interpretivist, case-study methodology, the aim of this research is to explore similarities and differences in the issues facing stakeholders in on-land cruise services in New Zealand and Iceland, and to evaluate stakeholders' levels of participation in decision-making in their respective cruise sectors. The population of Napier is 61 100, whereas Akureyri's population is merely 18 500. However, both destinations receive similar numbers of cruise passengers, or around 100 000 in the 2016/2017 New Zealand season, 2017 Icelandic season. Findings provide general insights into on-land cruise services, and the co-existence of land-based tourism and cruise tourism in rural and urban areas. Furthermore, the overall research findings indicate that although the two destinations differ in their population, main attractions and geographical location, they seem not that far apart in the opportunities and challenges facing the local stakeholders and the decision-making processes of their cruise sectors.

KEYWORDS: cruise tourism, Iceland, New Zealand, stakeholders

Introduction

One of the world's fastest growing tourism sectors is the cruise industry (United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO] & Asia-Pacific Tourism Exchange Centre [APTEC], 2016; MacNeill & Wozniak, 2018). Iceland and New Zealand have experienced a growth in the number of cruise calls and passengers, as well as a rise in the number of ports being visited in both countries. Administration of data and access to information on this sector varies greatly between the two countries. While Cruise New Zealand annually publishes an extensive "Summary Report" (Cruise New Zealand, n.d.) on the economic importance of the country's cruise industry, the comparable Icelandic organisation, Cruise Iceland, provides merely the numbers of passengers embarking at Icelandic harbours in the last couple of years (Cruise Iceland, n.d.). However, what is evident is that in both countries the arrival and service of these cruise ships requires the involvement of numerous stakeholders.

This research set out to explore the following question:

In the context of stakeholder theory, how effectively do stakeholders in on-land cruise services cooperate and what is their role in decision-making processes in the sector?

While stakeholders in on-land cruise services are the subject of this research, they are of course not the only stakeholders in the cruise sector in the two towns being studied. The experiences, views and values of other important stakeholders, such as residents and the visiting passengers, also deserve attention and would be a worthy topic for follow-up research at the two sites.

Cooperation and cohesion between stakeholders is both vital to the sustainable development of the cruise sector and an important tool in deterring fragmentation between the cruise sector and other forms of tourism (Lester & Weeden, 2004). Recent studies still indicate a lack of such cooperation and management (Pashkevich, Dawson, & Stewart, 2015; Alonso & Alexander, 2017). This article investigates the main opportunities and challenges facing stakeholders in on-land cruise services in Iceland and New Zealand.

Despite the geographical distance between New Zealand in the southern hemisphere and Iceland in the northern, the two countries share many similarities in regard to tourism. The similarities are evident in travellers' comments in online travel guides and blogsites (Young Adventuress, 2014; Jackson, 2016; Jontycrane, 2017) and are also reflected in Icelandic tourism strategies. An example of the latter is the Icelandic Tourist Board's implementation of a quality assurance and environmental system for Icelandic tourism, where it chose to emulate New Zealand's Qualmark organisation (Icelandic Tourist Board, n.d.). Another example is in Promote Iceland's (2013) *Long-Term Strategy for the Icelandic Tourism Industry*, where it says that "although New Zealand is located on the other side of the world, comparisons are often made with Iceland in terms of destination

similarities with regard to the landscape and Adventure Tourism potential" (p. 26).

New Zealand with its 4.8 million population far exceeds the Icelandic nation of 350 000 souls, as does Napier with its 61 100 residents, while Akureyri has only 18 500. Napier is situated in Hawkes Bay, a region in the east of the North Island of New Zealand. Akureyri is located in Eyjafjörður, mid-north Iceland. Napier's main tourist attractions are its constructed and manufactured art deco architecture, and wine. Akureyri is one of Iceland's most visited destinations and is situated close to some of the country's most popular nature resorts (Huijbens, 2015). The town is the largest by population outside of the Icelandic capital area and is often referred to as the "Capital of the North" (Visit North Iceland, 2015).

Although these two towns differ in both geographical location and number of residents, they are visited by quite comparable numbers of cruise passengers: around 100 000. However, while Napier port received 55 cruise ships in the 2016/2017 season, Akureyri port serviced 107 cruise ships in the 2017 season (Table 1).

Akureyri port has long been one of three most-visited cruise ports in Iceland (the other two being Reykjavík and Ísafjörður). The number of cruise calls and passengers in Akureyri has risen markedly in recent years (Figure 1).

Napier port has become a popular cruise destination in New Zealand, although Figure 2 shows that the town has seen both rises and falls in the number of visiting cruise ships and passengers since 2011.

Figures 1 and 2 highlight the different cruise traffic in the two destinations under investigation. In Akureyri, the recent increase in cruise traffic has mostly been caused by repeat visits of the same cruises, meaning that in 2017 the number of cruise calls (107) far exceeded the number of cruise ships visiting the port (52). In Napier, few cruises make more than one docking each season, resulting in the number of cruise dockings (58 in 2016/2017) being almost the same as the number of arriving cruise ships (55). However, both received and serviced around 100 000 passengers in their respective seasons of 2017 and 2016/2017.

Numbers are not the only factor of importance when collecting information on the cruise industry. This was stated in a recent report on the Southeast Asian cruise industry: "The most important component of sustainable cruise tourism development is for destination policymakers and managers to conduct assessments to understand cruise tourism's potential benefits, risks and impacts" (UNWTO & APTEC, 2016, p. 11).

TABLE 1: Comparison of key cruise tourism statistics from Napier, New Zealand, and Akureyri, Iceland (Cruise New Zealand, n.d.; Statistics Iceland, n.d.; Tourism Dashboard, n.d.; Stats NZ, 2018)

Aspect	New Zealand	Iceland
Country: total population (2017)	4 764 951	343 960
Cruising season	October to April	April to October
Port city studied	Napier	Akureyri
City resident population (2017)	61 100	18 500
Cruise season studied	2017/2018	2017
Total season cruise calls	58	107
Total season passengers	98 100	103 000
Ratio of city residents to cruise passengers	1:1.6	1:6.2

The focus of this article is on the experiences and viewpoints of stakeholders in the on-land service of cruise ships in Iceland and New Zealand. The aim is to explore similarities and differences in the issues facing their on-land cruise services and to use the findings to evaluate the level of stakeholder cooperation, cohesion and participation in decision-making procedures in the cruise sectors in the two countries.

One issue that could be perceived as a limitation of this study is that it includes only one port in Iceland and one port in New Zealand. Another limitation is that the data were collected in a narrow time period in one year. Since the cruise industry is a highly seasonal sector, interviews conducted at other times of the year might result in different data. In spite of these potential shortcomings, the empirical data gathered reveal valuable insights into the concerns and challenges facing stakeholders in on-land cruise services that are highly relevant for policy in the cruise sector, regardless of its location.

Literature review

Globally, cruise tourism experienced growth in passenger numbers of over 30% between 2009 and 2016 (Dowling & Weeden, 2017). The Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA; 2017) has indicated that some of the worldwide reasons for the increase are a rise in the Chinese market, Generation X and millennials gaining an interest in cruising, new on-board and onshore activities being available, the introduction of larger ships, and the opening of new destinations. The worldwide effects of melting sea ice due to rising temperatures has lengthened cruising seasons, expanded the number of destinations that are now accessible, and opened what were previously austere and remote environments to the global cruise ship industry (Hull & Milne, 2010).

Despite the growth of the cruise sector, researchers seem to have long overlooked this sector of world tourism. A review of tourism research published from 1983 to 2009 (Papathanassis & Beckmann, 2011) concluded that relatively few papers dealt with the cruise sector, and that those published had a narrow focus, as most dealt with the business and economic aspects of the industry. Recent research has emphasised negative environmental effects of cruise tourism (Maragkogianni & Papaefthimiou, 2015; Carić, 2016) and raised questions about the real economic benefits of cruise visits to ports (Larsen & Wolff, 2016). Academics have also highlighted some positives of cruise visits (Shone, Wilson, Simmons, & Stewart, 2017) within the context of areas off the general land-based tourist track, where cruise visits are seen as possible catalysts for local, land-based tourism development (Olsen & Heleniak, 2016).

International organisations are increasingly paying attention to the importance of sustainability in tourism. The United Nations General Assembly (UN) proclaimed 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (UN, 2016). This announcement emphasised the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The UN definition of sustainable tourism development states that it "requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building" (United Nations Environment Programme & UNWTO, 2005, p. 11). Sustainable tourism has been linked to stakeholder theory (Getz & Timur, 2005). This theory is based on Freeman's (1984) book, where he defined
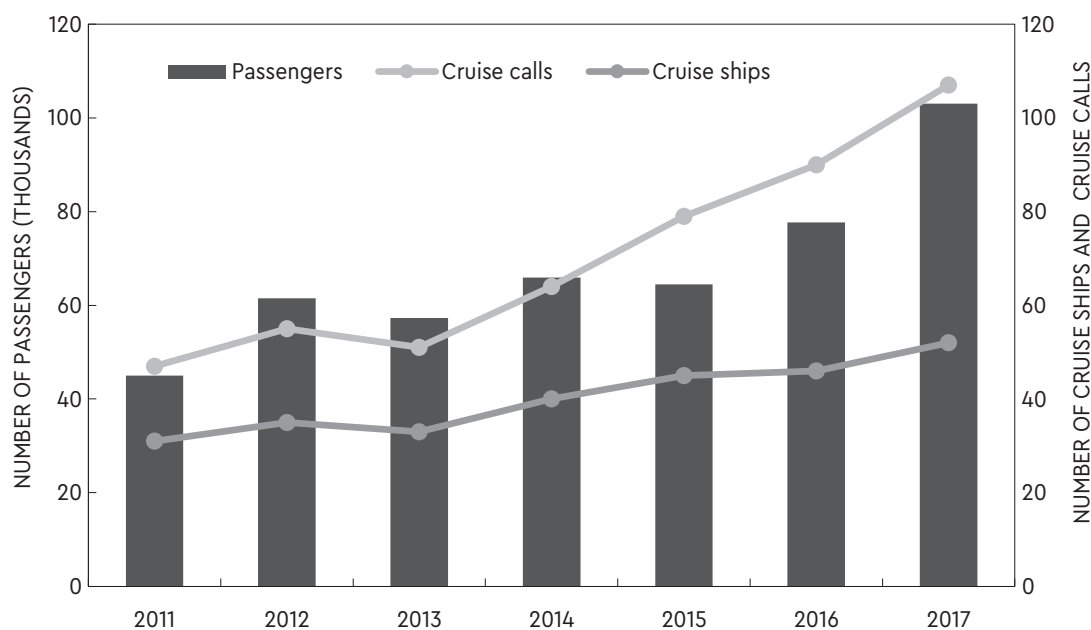
FIGURE 1: The number of cruise ships, cruise calls and cruise passengers visiting Akureyri, Iceland, in 2011–2017 (Tourism Dashboard, n.d.)
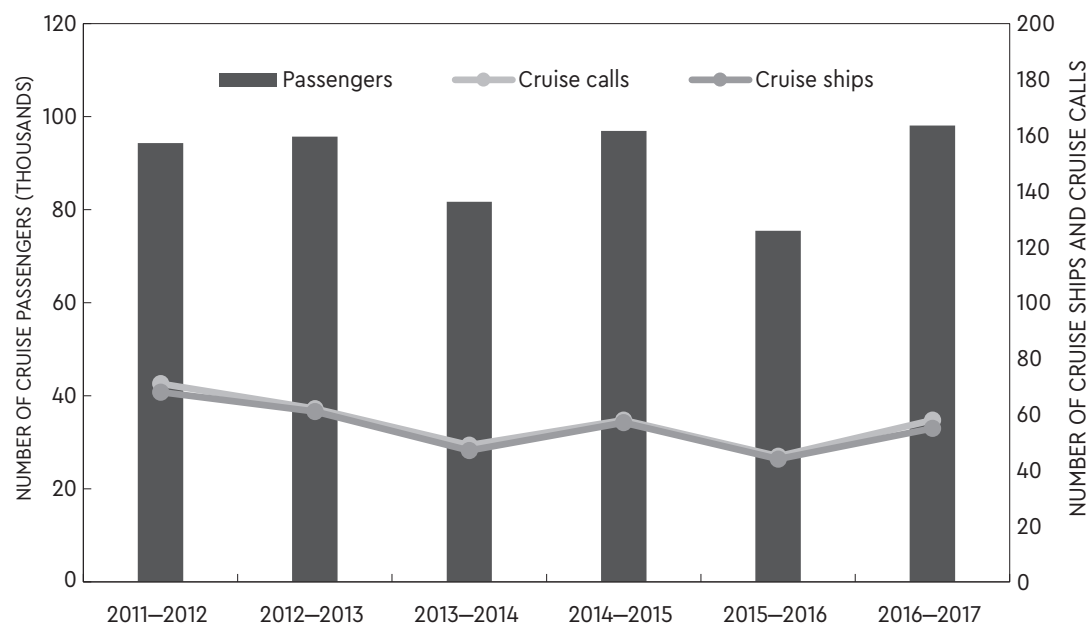

FIGURE 2: Number of cruise ships, cruise calls and passengers visiting Napier, New Zealand, in 2011–2017 (Cruise New Zealand, n.d.)

stakeholders as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (p. 46). The core of stakeholder theory is that the best practice and success of any business is achieved through the inclusion of representatives of all relevant stakeholders in decision-making and strategic planning. The argument is that such participation by all stakeholders, as well as collaboration between them, would result in the best decisions and thereby maximise the overall economic benefits. Stakeholder theory originated in business studies but was later adapted to other sociological phenomena. Sautter and Leisen (1999) applied the theory to

tourism. Their main focus was on stakeholders' compatibility and congruence, suggesting that "if players proactively consider the interests of all other stakeholders, the industry as a whole stands to gain significant returns in the long term" (p. 326).

In this research, the main focus is on the stakeholders in the receiving and on-land service of cruise ships. That emphasis is supported by the fact that

while the existing cruise travel literature implicitly or explicitly highlights the impacts or implications of cruise travel for stakeholders, there has been a tendency to focus primarily on guests' experiences. Consequently,

attention paid to other stakeholder groups directly or indirectly involved in this industry has been very limited.
(Alonso & Alexander, 2017, p. 365)

Iceland and New Zealand have both experienced rapid growth in cruise tourism. For New Zealand, there has been a huge increase in the number of Australians who are now cruising its coast, along with a sharp rise in the Chinese market. New Zealanders themselves are also cruising: 2017 saw 2 per cent of the New Zealand population take a cruise – 90 184 New Zealanders sailed the world's oceans (Stats NZ, 2017). Iceland has long been visited by overseas cruises; in recent years there has been a rapid increase in the arrival of expedition cruises where Iceland is one of the North Atlantic cruises' Arctic destinations (Huijbens, 2015).

In a recent study in Akaroa, New Zealand, concerns about the increase in cruise traffic and its impacts on the town were voiced by the community. These impacts were seen as a strain on the infrastructure and facilities, and crowding in public buildings, footpaths, retail stores, cafés and restaurants. Other concerns were that the current number of cruise ship visitors overwhelmed the town, and there was a perception that there was a lack of control on this number and that there was a need to protect what the community felt made Akaroa "special" (Shone et al., 2017). There are many other sites around the globe that have experienced crowding issues when scores of cruise ship passengers disembark at the same time (Marušić, Horak, & Tomljenović, 2008; Papathanassis & Beckmann, 2011; Weeden, Lester, & Thyne, 2011; Jacobsen, Iversen, & Hem, 2019).

Few studies have focused on Icelandic cruise tourism in recent years. Those have mostly focused on Iceland as one of the world's Arctic destinations (Karlsdóttir & Hendriksen, 2005; Fay & Karlsdóttir, 2011; Huijbens, 2015). Although efforts have been made to evaluate the socio-economic effects of cruise visits in northern Iceland (Huijbens, 2015), no research has emphasised the on-land service of the Icelandic cruise sector. This research attempts to address this gap.

Methodology

The research was conducted through the application of an interpretive, qualitative case-study approach. The data collected were analysed by developing conceptual categories (Chetty, 2013). Qualitative interviews were the key source of data. Semi-structured interviews were used as they strike a balance between very structured interviews, which have an explanatory/descriptive approach, and the use of unstructured interviews, which enable a broad investigative approach (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). The guiding questions applied can be found in the Appendix.

For the purpose of this research, the relevant stakeholders were identified according to Hull and Milne (2010), who state that the successful receiving and servicing of cruise ships requires the participation of port authorities, municipal governments, shipping agencies, tour operators and local retail operators. Eight representatives were interviewed at each site of investigation, yielding a total of 16 interviewees for the study. Participants included shipping agents, tour operators, local business operators, visitor centre employees, city employees and councillors, as well as members of the cruise industry association.

The main data collection phase took place in Napier between 10 and 21 April 2017, and in Iceland between 13 March and 28 April 2017. The Icelandic interviews were conducted in Icelandic and later translated into English. All interviews were audio-recorded and took between 29 and 68 minutes to conduct. After being fully transcribed, the interviews were coded. Although the interview transcripts were coded in the context of the overall research question, coding was still performed with an open mind, with no codes predetermined – a method called "open coding" (Gibbs, 2007). Thematic analysis was applied, where patterns (themes) in the data are identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This enabled us to determine the emergent themes, challenges and opportunities faced by the stakeholders in cruise services at each destination. These findings are reported next, grouped in a section for each town (Napier and Akureyri), and will be further explored in the discussion section.

Findings: Napier

In Napier, strong themes came through the data from the stakeholders regarding the experiences of the on-land service for cruise ships. The themes and sub-themes are listed in Table 2 and elaborated on in the sections that follow.

Benefits
Monetary gain and atmosphere
The port authority manager stated that although cruise ships were not their main revenue stream, the benefits were great, as the visits and resulting tours brought revenue to the whole region. As stated by a tour operator: *"It's a big part of our summer income"*. Cruise ship passengers were great for the marketing of Napier as a destination: *"I think what we've always said is that a cruise stopover is like a taster to the region, so it's a very good opportunity to showcase what we have"* (Tourism Hawkes Bay employee). Research conducted previously via Tourism Hawkes Bay has shown that 25% of passengers revisited Napier and the surrounding region after their cruise was over; most of those passengers were Australian. Adding to the life of the city was seen as another benefit: *"Cruise passengers add atmosphere to the city when they are here"* (Napier's Deputy Mayor).

Attraction
The art deco architecture in Napier is a point of difference and definitely a selling point for cruise passengers. The stakeholders noted that art deco-themed entertainment is always provided at the start and finish of each cruise ship visit. Napier is a compact city – a tourist city that it is novel and unique. Passengers are also drawn to the wider region because of activities associated with its vineyards. However, the interviewees did feel that the surrounding region's natural resources were underutilised, so there was a need to *"help industry to develop more products to offer the passengers"* (Tourism Hawkes Bay employee) including

TABLE 2: Themes sub-themes from stakeholder interviews in Napier, New Zealand

Theme	Sub-themes
Benefits	Monetary gain and atmosphere
	Attraction
Challenges	Pressure on infrastructure
	Pressure on the ports
Emergent themes	Increasing passenger numbers
	Improvements needed
	Decision-making

"*enough tourism product that isn't wine or art deco related*" (Napier City Business Inc. [NCBI] employee).

Challenges
Pressure on infrastructure
There were negatives to having cruise ships visit Napier. The shuttle buses ferrying cruise passengers in and out of the town could cause bottle necks in the town and there was a fair amount of congestion due to increased vehicle traffic. When Napier has two "big" cruise ships in the port at the same time, bus operators must enlist help from outside the region in order to have enough shuttle buses to deal with the number of passengers. An increase in the number of cruise ships has increased the numbers of homeless people coming into the centre of the city and begging for money, which is creating a negative image for the city. There were no comments about damaging the environment in Napier, although promoting sustainable tourism in the form of being environmentally friendly was an issue for stakeholders: "*No recycling bins in the town* – [cruise ship passengers] *can cause an increase in the rubbish that is generated*" (Tourist operator) was one concern.

Pressure on the ports
The port is in huge demand for the export of apples, bottled water and timber from the region; it is a working port that deals with large amounts of cargo. The port also felt pressure in its dependence on other ports to "bring" the ships to Napier: "*The ports have already widened their berths and increased* [the number of] *berths due to more ships visiting and* [the new ships] *being built are getting bigger and bigger*" (Port authority manager). The cruise ships need a particular tide in order for them to berth in the Napier port. This adds more pressure on the port to receive and process the cruise ships as quickly as possible. There is also competition from other ports to receive ships.

> *The port put up the landing fees because of the increase in ships, so they just went to another port. The port had to remove the increase due to pressure from the council so that the ships would come back* (Port authority employee).

Emergent themes
Increasing passenger numbers
Hosting repeat cruisers and capturing all the passengers when they are in port were important goals. "*To actually get all the passengers off the ships all the time; we see them staying on the ships and wonder why*" (Napier's Deputy Mayor). Stakeholders would like to increase the number of passengers coming to Napier by building on the shoulder months so that cruises arrive outside of the high season and provide repeat business to Napier and the region. Stakeholders felt that there was a need for more collaboration between council and ports and that this should come in the form of better dialogue/communication. It was felt that they could not become complacent, because the cruise ships would simply move to another port.

Improvements needed
Information for visitors via signage was felt to be inadequate and the only available seating was provided by cafés; not everyone wants to patronise a café in order to sit down. The first impressions of the port (it is a working port) could be addressed, and perhaps a better walkway into the city could be introduced.

The i-site (information centre) was not well positioned, so a redesign or moving it would be an improvement. The mental requirements are for local attitudes towards cruise ship passengers to improve: "*Attitudes are changing, but you will always have grumpy people and that is hard to work with*" (NCBI employee). A more positive attitude in the city towards cruise passengers would help efforts to get businesses to open early for the early ships coming in and to stay open later for the ships that go out in the evening. Attitudinal change could also lead to businesses developing more tourism products. "*We tend to hang our hat on art deco and wine. There is a huge piece of fun missing and we need to find it*" (Tour operator).

Decision-making
The cruise ship companies deal directly with the Napier Port authority, providing a five-year schedule of when cruise ships will be arriving without any opportunity for local stakeholders to negotiate the schedule. The ports only provide the cruises with water and do not take any of their refuse. Tour operators work very closely with the ground handler (the inbound agent) who shows the tour operators the programme that they have planned for the cruise ship passengers. What was highlighted by the tour operators was that they are told by the ground handlers not to take passengers to the i-site; this means that passengers must buy their ground tours while still on board the cruise ships. Tour operators thought that this disadvantaged the region; it was preferable that the i-site could provide cost-effective tours through passengers not having to pay the premium price demanded on the ship. However, the i-site team reported that they had seen an increase in the number of passengers who come ashore to book tours or who had pre-booked via the internet.

The overall findings from Napier show that although stakeholders felt that there were many benefits, there were many challenges for cruise ship tourism, and emergent themes needed to be addressed. Stakeholders felt that in general they worked well together and that there was a great deal of cooperation; however, there was still a lack of communication between them due to the separate and demarcated roles they perform when cruise ships arrive.

Findings: Akureyri

Themes that emerged from the Akureyri interviews are listed in Table 3 and presented in detail below.

Benefits
Monetary gain and atmosphere
The Akureyri findings show a strong focus on the economic gain from cruise visits. Stakeholders were concerned about a general

TABLE 3: Themes and sub themes from stakeholders in Akureyri, Iceland

Theme	Sub-themes
Benefits	Monetary gain and atmosphere
Challenges	Lack of management
	Strain on infrastructure
Emergent themes	Changes in traffic and passengers' travel patterns
	Different stakes
	Decision-making

presumption in Iceland that the cruise traffic contributes little to the local economy. They strongly opposed those notions, reporting that *"huge revenues"* (Tour operator) were the main benefit, or more precisely, *"just the income and better utilisation of the port's infrastructure and the revenue it brings"* (Municipal employee). The participants also emphasised the sense of life and a kind of positive pulse brought in by cruise passengers. There were even comments like, *"there's a kind of romantic flair linked to these arrivals here...the locals like to see the cruises at the pier"* (Port employee).

One factor in the rapid growth of cruise visits to Icelandic waters is high participation in the onshore tours, which are organised by contractual tour operators and sold by the cruises. Tour sales are important in the cruise lines' business model, as *"they* [cruise lines] *don't necessarily make their money from the sailing...tours really do sell well up here...this is their main source of income, what they sell on board the cruises"* (Tour operator). That fact, however, is directly linked to both challenges for the industry and possible changes to passengers' travel patterns.

Challenges
Evident challenges for the cruise industry in Iceland were poor management, lack of infrastructure and a discourse that linked cruise travel to mass tourism and low-spending tourists.

Lack of management
Findings show a general emphasis on the need for a regulatory framework: *"we are in such a grey area,* [and we] *need to just get clear rules, this is what I feel is causing most turmoil"* (Shipping agent). Comments on the lack of management also applied to cruise traffic. While the port showed the least interest in any centralised management, other stakeholders in service thought that ports should participate in such oversight:

> *We might want to see more management of arrivals... the ports have not been willing to do it because they don't think it's their role really and if they see they have the docking spot, they then think it is someone else's matter to handle* (Tour operator).

Strain on infrastructure
The challenges regarding the strain on infrastructure included that *"these larger cruises just pollute like a small village"* (Tour operator) and *"in the ER* [hospital] *it just means increased strain...during the summer vacation"* (Municipal employee). In Akureyri, most passengers take bus tours to a nature resort out of town. Participants commented that *"this is mass-tourism in its purest form. People stay for a very short time...they're very much consuming just within the unit of the cruise"* (Municipal employee). What the passengers do on land is undertaken in highly noticeable groups, raising concerns about their negative influence on the experiences of other visitors.

> *Having the image and perception of a quiet area, they may arrive...and there are lines of buses for like 500 metres and the area is just totally crowded* (Local tourism operator).

Other emergent themes
Changes in the passengers' travel patterns
The pattern of large groups of passengers travelling on buses might alter in the near future as findings show an emphasis on changes in the passengers' travel patterns, where an increasing number of passengers arrange their own tours. This can result in a wider distribution of income and even higher revenue for local tourism businesses, as *"the cruise ships add significantly to the prices for these tours...they add up to 100% to the retail price"* (Tour operator). Individuals travelling on their own can, however, create different kinds of management challenges. When there are *"over a thousand people arriving here in a matter of hours... this might become a problem later on with new generations accustomed to booking everything – wanting to do everything by themselves and able to do so"* (Municipal employee).

Different stakes
Large groups of visitors arriving in a sparsely populated country causes both strain on infrastructure and problems in providing an adequate service: *"When there are two, three, four ships the same day, it's difficult for us to handle because we just don't have enough buses, we don't have enough guides"* (Tour operator). Here the different stakes of the stakeholders become evident, as the *"ports gain most from the big cruises... they charge by tonnage and per passenger"* (Shipping agency employee). For other stakeholders, the case can be quite the opposite: *"the big cruises are those earning us the least...guides must be flown in, costing us before they even start talking... the last bus is for us the most expensive one"* (Tour operator). The cruise lines still actively market the tours and *"some sell enormously"* (Local tourism operator).

Decision-making
The findings reveal that the real decisions on the cruises' routes and stopover schedules in Icelandic ports are made solely by the cruise lines. This is linked to the different roles of the stakeholders in the service procedure and who their real customers are. Shipping agents and tour operators make contracts with the cruise lines on the servicing of their entire fleet's dockings in Iceland, while the ports and other service providers service each ship as an individual unit. The nationwide tour operators handle onshore activities through contracts with the cruise lines, although in some cases they outsource management of a ship to local tourism operators, who otherwise offer their services to cruise passengers in the same way as to other visitors. The municipality provides tourist information to the passengers as for other visitors, while the cruise association markets its associated ports and service units at trade fairs. Lines of communication show that shipping agents and tour operators are the only domestic stakeholders in direct contact with the cruise lines: shipping agents when receiving bookings from cruise line itinerary planners; and tour operators later on when receiving bookings from the cruise lines' departments of recreation and activity.

The overall findings from Akureyri show that although the stakeholders in on-land cruise services feel their cooperation to be strong, some of their comments suggest a slight lack of respect for each other's role in the process of service. Findings also reveal that the real decisions on the cruising routes, and even on the on-land cruise tourism, are taken by the international cruise lines without much say from the domestic and local stakeholders.

Discussion

The premise of this research was to collect knowledge from stakeholders in on-land cruise services and to assess the level of

their cooperation, cohesion and participation in decision-making procedures. The findings show some contrasting remarks on the concerns and challenges facing stakeholders at the two sites of investigation. Some of those disparities have to do with differences between the two cruise destinations. While the main attractions in Napier are within the city and either built or manufactured – art deco architecture and wine, in Akureyri they are out of town and nature-based. Interestingly, the findings show a desire in common to change this: Napier stakeholders were looking towards the possibility of developing underutilised natural resources, while the stakeholders in Akureyri emphasised the need for attractions that would keep passengers in town. The in-town versus out-of-town difference between the two destinations was further evident in the stakeholders' concerns. In Napier, there was a strong focus on the strain on the city by the large groups of passengers; examples being comments on the lack of rubbish bins and an increase in beggars on the streets. In Akureyri, the concerns were more on the possible crowding-out effect of large groups of passengers at nearby nature-based tourist destinations. Worldwide attention has been brought to the large numbers of cruise ship passengers who are disembarking at various sites and causing "over-tourism" (Jacobsen et al., 2019).

Another difference is that while in Napier the interviews highlighted possible competition from other cruise ports, Akureyri port seemed to be considered as a solid cruise destination. This was due the port's location in central north Iceland, where it compares favourably with not only nearby Icelandic ports, all with smaller service ability, but also with the much smaller ports in Greenland and on the Arctic sailing routes in the North Atlantic. Yet another factor of difference is that while the Napier data show an emphasis on cruise passengers as possible return visitors, no such comments were made in the Akureyri interviews.

However, there are some strong similarities in the research findings. In both locations, the stakeholders' perceived benefits were of the cruise visits bringing positive feelings and a sense of liveliness to the destinations, benefits echoed in recent research conducted on tourism in rural Iceland (Bjarnadóttir, Jóhannesson, & Gunnarsdóttir, 2016). Still, the benefit most emphasised in both towns was economic gain. In macro-economics, cruise ship passengers are not defined as "tourists". They are "same-day visitors", as their visits do not include an overnight stay (Eurostat, 2014) and therefore they do not buy accommodation at their destinations. Previous research has shown some contradictions in cruise passengers' spending. Research conducted in the La Palma Islands indicates the spending power of cruise tourists is "among the strongest of all tourists visiting the islands" (Alonso & Alexander, 2017, p. 368). There seems, however, to be a common notion that the average spending of cruise passengers is much lower than that of overnight tourists (Larsen & Wolff, 2016), resulting in Lester and Weeden (2004) concluding that "being able to attract high numbers of low yield tourists is not a solid foundation for sustainable growth" (p. 43).

In this research, the Akureyri stakeholders showed concerns about the general presumption that cruise passengers contribute little to the local economy, strongly opposing such notions, and providing various examples of real economic benefit from the visits, examples that can be summed up as: *they don't add to the local economy unless you try to sell them something* (Cruise association representative). There is, however, a wide lack

of official data on the real economic value of Icelandic cruise tourism (Frenţ, 2015), both at the sub-national level as well as for Icelandic cruise tourism in general. Napier, on the other hand, was able to show the real value of the cruise ships: they boosted the local economy by $22 million dollars in the 2016/2017 season (Cruise New Zealand, n.d.).

The theoretical frame for the research was stakeholder theory, at the core of which is the importance of all stakeholders' cohesion and input into decisions, planning and procedures (Freeman, 1984; Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & de Colle, 2010). Studies have further emphasised stakeholders' cooperation and cohesion as vital for both sustainable development of the cruise sector and an important tool in deterring fragmentation between different sectors of the tourism industry (Lester & Weeden, 2004). The findings of this research revealed indications that the stakeholders in both towns lack a real understanding of (and perhaps respect for) each other's roles and their importance in the service chain. Even though the findings show that stakeholders in both countries sense their cooperation to be close, some of their comments indicate that in reality there is an underlying attitude being "*this* is our job; *that* is their job" and "I do only *this*; others must manage *that*".

The findings do show the overwhelming and alarming power of the international cruise lines in all decision-making. The only domestic stakeholders in direct contact with the cruise lines are the nationwide shipping agents (who receive bookings in the initial planning period of a cruise's sailing route), and the nationwide tour operators (who receive bookings from other cruise line departments, far closer to the cruises' arrivals). No local stakeholders were found to be in contact with the cruise lines or to play a meaningful part in the planning of the ships' routes. The real decision of when cruise ships will arrive in the port lies therefore with the cruise lines. In both locations, there was an underlying sense that stakeholders felt they were simply receiving schedules from the cruise lines, without any opportunity for negotiation. This indicates the stakeholders' sense of a lack of ability to manage and control the cruise traffic in their areas. The findings also reveal that much of the on-land cruise tourism is furthermore planned, managed and sold by the international cruise lines, with little power of negotiation for local service providers.

Previous research has raised questions about local authorities' ability to take part in the power play between international corporate cruise lines and other non-local developers (London & Lohmann, 2014). There are, however, indications that destinations are gaining an increase in negotiation power when the initiative for visits comes from the cruise lines, rather than from ports marketing themselves as potential cruise destinations (London & Lohmann, 2014).

Research has showcased the complexity of branding and definitions of cruise tourism magnets. Questions have been raised about the role of attractions in the development of a cruise destination, as each port can be viewed merely as a venue on the cruise's route, rather than as a destination in its own right (Lemmetyinen, Dimitrovski, Nieminen, & Pohjola, 2016). In that context, the cruise lines are the suppliers of products (visiting cruises and passengers) to meet the demand of ports' berths (sales of service). Esteve-Perez and Garcia-Sanchez (2018) state that the rapid growth of global cruise traffic is bound to result in cruise lines searching for new destinations and attractions. Therefore, a scenario could develop where there will be a lack

of ports able to serve cruise ships, with those who end up as the real suppliers to the demanding cruise lines having strengthened powers of negotiation.

The core of stakeholder theory is that the success of any business is achieved through the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in strategic planning and decision-making. Here, the stakeholders in focus have been the providers of on-land services. As discussed in the introduction, Icelandic tourism has at times looked towards New Zealand as a model for the quality control and management of tourism. In 2018, the Icelandic minister of tourism, Þórdís Gylfadóttir, said "we should to a greater extent look to countries that often are more advanced than us...there New Zealand is an example" (Brunton, 2018, para. 1).[1] Soon after a visit to New Zealand for the purpose of learning about quality tourism, Gylfadóttir told the Icelandic parliament (Alþingi) that "[w]e're facing a lot of the same challenges, and in some matters [New Zealand] is ahead of us" (para. 1). The findings of this research indicate that Iceland and New Zealand are indeed facing much the same challenges in the management of negotiations and real power in domestic and local decision-making in their dealings with international cruise lines.

There are many opportunities for further research to be conducted to look at the similarities and differences in other ports of each country.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to seek experiences from stakeholders in on-land cruise services in two locations and, in the context of stakeholder theory, to evaluate the level of their cooperation and participation in decision-making procedures. The findings show that in both locations the stakeholders' concerns are linked to their role in the service chain. Disparities between the two sites of research can be understood in the light of the differences between the two destinations in their attractions and the scope of visiting cruises. The similarities, however, seem to have much to do with the general lack of ability of domestic and local stakeholders to negotiate with the international cruise lines and to have a voice in the planning of navigation routes and on-land activities. The overall conclusion, therefore, is a stark reminder of the need for local governance and for closer cooperation between stakeholders on management and strategic planning in order to gain a strong and unified voice in all dealings with international cruise companies.

Notes

1   English translation by ÞB. Original Icelandic: "...við eigum að vera dugleg við það og í meira mæli að líta til landa sem oft eru komin lengra en við í ýmsum málum og þar er Nýja-Sjáland dæmi".

ORCID

Tracy Harkison https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2409-231X
Þórný Barðadóttir https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8415-7846

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Appendix 1: Guiding interview questions

In Akureyri, Iceland, the guiding open-ended interview questions were asked in Icelandic, but in Napier, New Zealand, the questions were in English. The English version is provided below.

Guiding questions:
- What do you see as the overall impact of cruise visits to Napier/Akureyri?
- How is the interplay between cruise tourism and on-land tourism in Napier/Akureyri?
- What are the main benefits from cruise ship arrivals in Napier/Akureyri?
- What are the key opportunities and challenges related to cruise ship services in Napier/Akureyri?
- How can Napier/Akureyri create and increase sustainable value from cruise arrivals?
- Who do you see as relevant stakeholders in cruise tourism in Napier/Akureyri?
- What is your vision for the future development of cruise tourism in Napier/Akureyri?