



THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

香港理工大學

Pao Yue-kong Library

包玉剛圖書館

Copyright Undertaking

This thesis is protected by copyright, with all rights reserved.

By reading and using the thesis, the reader understands and agrees to the following terms:

1. The reader will abide by the rules and legal ordinances governing copyright regarding the use of the thesis.
2. The reader will use the thesis for the purpose of research or private study only and not for distribution or further reproduction or any other purpose.
3. The reader agrees to indemnify and hold the University harmless from and against any loss, damage, cost, liability or expenses arising from copyright infringement or unauthorized usage.

IMPORTANT

If you have reasons to believe that any materials in this thesis are deemed not suitable to be distributed in this form, or a copyright owner having difficulty with the material being included in our database, please contact lbsys@polyu.edu.hk providing details. The Library will look into your claim and consider taking remedial action upon receipt of the written requests.

CO-CREATING A REGENERATIVE TOURISM FUTURE:

EXPLORING CHINESE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS TO BUILD A
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

QINGYUN PANG

PhD

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

2026

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

School of Hotel and Tourism Management

Co-Creating a Regenerative Tourism Future:

Exploring Chinese Philosophical Roots to Build a Community of Practice

Qingyun Pang

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2025

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it reproduces no material previously published or written, nor material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

_____ (Signed)

Qingyun Pang
_____ (Name of student)

Abstract

This study examines regenerative tourism as an emerging paradigm in tourism development, particularly in the post-COVID context. In contrast to earlier models—such as neoliberal, alternative, and sustainable tourism—regenerative tourism extends beyond human-centred and economically driven frameworks, aiming to generate net-positive outcomes for both people and ecosystems. Despite its growing prominence, the concept remains underdeveloped, particularly with respect to theoretical clarity, the inclusion of non-Western perspectives, and empirical grounding.

Contemporary discourse on regenerative tourism is largely shaped by Western paradigms, often conflating it with concepts such as sustainability, transformation, or circularity. This conflation risks obscuring the distinctiveness of regenerative tourism as a paradigm in its own right. To address this limitation, the present study draws on *Sheng Sheng* (生生, perpetual growth and change), a Chinese philosophical framework centred on perpetual growth and transformation. Building on this foundation, the study proposes six core principles for regenerative tourism: (1) timeless regeneration, (2) organic self-generation, (3) harmony through polarity, (4) creative renewal, (5) the integration of creation and dissolution, and (6) ethical and equitable grounding.

While some of these principles resonate with Western concepts—such as circular systems and place-based thinking—others, including the embrace of contradiction and the cyclical interplay of creation and decay, offer distinctively Eastern perspectives. Within this framework, regenerative tourism is reconceptualised as a dynamic, relational, and ethical process that fosters the co-evolution of human and non-human systems. It prioritises the balance of cultural and ecological tensions over attempts to control them and values Indigenous knowledge as complementary to external innovation.

This study critiques prevailing co-creation models in tourism for their pronounced anthropocentrism, which often marginalises the role of non-human elements. In response, it introduces a “community of practice” model, developed through fieldwork in Azheke village, China. This model incorporates both human and non-human actors into regenerative processes shaped by shared knowledge, seasonal rhythms, and local power dynamics. Within this framework, Indigenous elites act as boundary spanners, mediating between cultural heritage preservation and ecological sustainability.

Two initiatives in Azheke—the protective transformation of Hani dwellings and the Azheke Plan—are examined to illustrate how the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng* is enacted in

practice. Each of the six principles is reflected in local regeneration efforts: regeneration as a continuous process; solutions emerging organically from within the community; the constructive engagement with tensions; innovation grounded in tradition; an acceptance of loss and transformation; and the ethical inclusion of all forms of life.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on regenerative tourism by clarifying its conceptual foundations and incorporating underrepresented Eastern philosophical perspectives. Practically, it proposes a framework for tourism development that is community-oriented, culturally sensitive, and ecologically inclusive. The research also underscores the value of resilience through adaptability, acknowledges the agency of non-human actors, and advances a more holistic understanding of well-being. Nonetheless, the study has certain limitations. It focuses primarily on a single strand of Eastern philosophy and examines a case that was not entirely community-led. Future research should engage with a wider range of Indigenous philosophical traditions and investigate initiatives that are more firmly rooted in bottom-up processes.

Acknowledgements

With the completion of my doctoral dissertation, I am approaching the end of my period of supervised study. From this point onward, my learning will be largely self-directed, and I may even be called upon to guide others—an exciting but somewhat daunting prospect.

I have studied Tourism Management for a decade: four years as an undergraduate, followed by three years each at the master's and doctoral levels. Initially, the discipline chose me, but over time, I developed a deep appreciation for it. This growing passion was largely shaped by the exceptional mentors I was fortunate to encounter throughout my academic journey. I am especially grateful to Professor Honggen Xiao, my doctoral supervisor; Professor Jigang Bao, my master's supervisor; Professor Nancy McGehee, who hosted me as a visiting scholar; and Professor Mu Zhang, my undergraduate supervisor. Their guidance not only introduced me to the richness of tourism research and the potential of tourism practice, but also encouraged me to think more critically and explore more deeply within the field. Thanks to their support, my pursuit of knowledge has been characterised not by hardship, but by joy and fulfilment.

Professor Honggen Xiao exemplifies the qualities of a *Junzi* (君子, person of virtue) imbued with profound Chinese wisdom. He has consistently inspired and supported me through his deep engagement with traditional Chinese philosophies, particularly Taoism. His inner tranquillity has taught me to remain composed when faced with difficulties or opposing views; his patience has encouraged me to embrace new situations and challenges without rushing the process of progress; and his inclusiveness has emboldened me to explore unfamiliar ideas without fear of failure. Under his supervision, I began to engage more deeply with Chinese philosophical thought and made a concerted effort to explore diverse epistemologies in tourism development. Over the course of my doctoral studies, this experience has significantly enriched both my mindset and my capacity for conceptual thinking.

Professor Jigang Bao possesses a wealth of practical, grassroots wisdom. With over thirty years of experience in tourism practice, his insights into real-world situations are remarkably accurate. Thanks to his mentorship, I was given a remarkable opportunity to engage directly in the field and participate in hands-on tourism projects. This experience left a lasting impression on me, particularly in revealing the positive impacts of tourism on poverty alleviation, community empowerment, and heritage preservation. It also deepened my conviction in the potential of regenerative tourism, which seeks to generate positive,

lasting outcomes through tourism development. His guidance helped me to ground my research questions in real-world issues. Even after I began my doctoral studies, he continued to support my work by facilitating access to field sites and providing valuable resources and advice.

Professor Nancy McGehee is a warm and generous scholar, deeply passionate about her research and consistently full of creative ideas. Her intellectual rigour and critical thinking have served as a model for my own academic development. She also offered valuable feedback on my doctoral thesis, drawing on both Western academic traditions and practical insights. Professor Mu Zhang supervised my undergraduate dissertation and supported the publication of my first article in English. He also served as a referee for my applications to both master's and doctoral programmes, consistently encouraging me to pursue further academic goals.

I am also deeply grateful to my mother, who has shouldered the family responsibilities that would ordinarily have fallen to me during these ten years of academic study. Her unwavering support has extended to my research as well—for instance, by helping me prepare materials for my experiments. My sincere thanks also go to the friends I met along the way. They are creative, thoughtful, and diligent individuals who generously shared their ideas and knowledge, and even assisted with data collection and analysis. Surrounded by such inspiring people, my academic journey has been filled with joy, discovery, and unexpected moments of delight. I have never regretted embarking on this path, not least because it has allowed me to meet such remarkable mentors and friends.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Board of Examiners—Professor Vincent Tung (Chair), Professor Lisa Ruhanen (University of Queensland, Australia), and Professor Xavier Font (University of Surrey, UK)—for their constructive comments and valuable insights. I also wish to thank my supervisory committee, Professors Sebastian Filep, Sabrina Huang, and Mimi Li, for their guidance and intellectual support, which were instrumental in bringing my doctoral research to a successful completion. In addition, I am grateful to Ms Yuki Lui for her continued support throughout my doctoral studies and research.

Over the course of these ten years, I experienced the loss of my maternal grandfather, paternal grandfather, and father. I dedicate this dissertation to their memory.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Regenerative Tourism: Pioneering a Transformative Future Paradigm	1
<i>Regenerative Paradigm in Mass Tourism Development</i>	1
<i>Three Gaps in Regenerative Tourism Research</i>	3
Chinese Philosophy: Cultivating Eastern Wisdom for Regenerative Tourism.....	5
<i>Evolution of Chinese Philosophy</i>	6
<i>Chinese Philosophy on Regeneration: Sheng Sheng</i>	7
Communities of Practice: Operationalising Regenerative Tourism Co-Creation	9
<i>Communities of Practice</i>	9
<i>Communities of Practice for Co-Creating Regenerative Tourism</i>	10
Research Questions, Objectives, and Significance	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review	15
Tourism Shifting Towards a Regenerative Paradigm.....	15
<i>Traditional Development: Capitalism</i>	15
<i>Alternative Development: Post-Capitalism</i>	16
<i>Sustainable Development: Modernism</i>	17
<i>Regenerative Development: Post-Modernism</i>	20
The Nature of Regenerative Tourism: Mixed or Messed Up?	23
<i>Sustainability</i>	23
<i>Transformation</i>	26
<i>Circularity</i>	27
<i>Regeneration</i>	29
Co-Creation before Regenerative Tourism.....	30
<i>Value Co-Creation</i>	31
<i>Tourism Co-Creation</i>	32
<i>Tourist-Centric Co-Creation</i>	33
Co-Creation in Regenerative Tourism.....	37
<i>Systems Thinking</i>	37
<i>Indigenous-Centred Approaches</i>	39
<i>Anti-Anthropocentric Co-Creation</i>	41
<i>Bottom-Up Collaboration</i>	43
Evolutions of Communities of Practice.....	48
<i>Practice and Learning</i>	48
<i>Learning in Workplace</i>	49
<i>Individual Development in Social Learning</i>	51
<i>Managerial Tools for Organisational Innovation</i>	52
Co-Creation through Communities of Practice	53
<i>Building Community: Formation and Expansion</i>	54
<i>Activating Community: Participation and Power Dynamics</i>	56
<i>Uniting Community: Identity Establishment and Internal Interaction</i>	59
<i>Crossing Communities: External Communication and Boundary Spanners</i>	62
Chapter Summary.....	65
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	69

Research Framework.....	69
Conceptual Research Design.....	70
<i>Research Paradigm: Philosophical Hermeneutics</i>	70
<i>Research Method: Interpretation</i>	72
<i>Data Collection and Data Analysis</i>	72
Empirical Research Design	74
<i>Research Paradigm: Social Constructivism</i>	75
<i>Research Method: Cross-Community Enactive Research</i>	76
<i>Research Site: Azheke village in Honghe Hani Rice Terraces</i>	77
<i>Data Collection: Observations, Document Analysis, and Interviews</i>	79
<i>Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis</i>	82
Researcher Positionality and Reflectivity	84
<i>Positionality and Reflectivity in the Conceptual Research</i>	84
<i>Positionality and Reflectivity in the Empirical Research</i>	84
Chapter 4: A Sheng Sheng-Inspired Perspective on Regenerative Tourism.....	86
<i>Sheng Sheng</i> in Chinese Philosophy	86
Regeneration Inspired by <i>Sheng Sheng</i>	90
<i>Perpetual Growth and Change</i>	90
<i>The Art of Self-Generation</i>	92
<i>Dynamic Interplay of Internal Opposites</i>	94
<i>Inherent Phase of the Life Continuum</i>	96
<i>Dialectical Relationship Between Life and Death</i>	98
<i>Shared Ren Among All Living Beings</i>	100
Regenerative Tourism Grounded in <i>Sheng Sheng</i> Philosophy	103
<i>Timeless Regeneration</i>	103
<i>Organic Self-Generation</i>	104
<i>Harmony Through Opposites</i>	105
<i>Creative Renewal</i>	105
<i>Embrace of Creation and Dissolution</i>	106
<i>Ethical and Equal Grounding</i>	107
Chapter Summary.....	108
Chapter 5: A Community of Practice for Regenerative Tourism	109
Engaging Indigenous Community and Non-Human Stakeholders	109
<i>Community Formation</i>	109
<i>Member Recruitment</i>	111
Activating Human and Non-Human Stakeholders.....	112
<i>Participation Dynamics</i>	112
<i>Power Structure</i>	114
Uniting Human and Non-Human Stakeholders.....	116
Crossing the Boundary between Human and Non-Human Practice	118
Chapter Summary.....	120
Chapter 6: Co-Creating <i>Sheng Sheng</i>-Inspired Regenerative Tourism	122
Demand to Upgrade Vernacular Homes.....	122

Conflict between Heritage Preservation and Dwelling Upgrade	125
Interdisciplinary Collaboration to Regenerate Traditional Village	129
<i>Tangible Regeneration through Architectural Design</i>	129
<i>Intangible Regeneration through Tourism Development</i>	131
Regenerative Outcomes in Traditional Village.....	134
Chapter Summary.....	136
Chapter 7: Discussions and Conclusions	138
Academic Contribution	138
Practical Implications	139
Limitations and Future Research.....	142
References.....	144

List of Figures

Figure 1. A continuum from traditional to regenerative tourism paradigm	65
Figure 2. Current Western-oriented definitions regarding regenerative tourism	66
Figure 3. Tourist-centric co-creative relationships before regenerative tourism	67
Figure 4. Human and non-human co-creative relationships in regenerative tourism	67
Figure 5. Community of practice to co-create <i>Sheng Sheng</i> -inspired regenerative tourism ...	69
Figure 6. Geographical location of Azheke village	77
Figure 7. Hani people working in rice terraces.....	78
Figure 8. The character <i>Sheng</i> from the oracle bone script	86
Figure 9. Philosophical meanings of <i>Sheng Sheng</i> in Chinese thought.....	87
Figure 10. Similar view in Azheke village under different weather conditions	111
Figure 11. The tree in the middle of road in Azheke village.....	113
Figure 12. Current structure of the community of practice in Azheke village	115
Figure 13. Traditional Hani mushroom house in Gaocheng village	123
Figure 14. “Restoring the old as it was” in Azheke village	125
Figure 15. Demolition and reconstruction in traditional style in Azheke village	127
Figure 16. Demolition and reconstruction in Azheke (left) and Duoyishu (right) villages ...	127
Figure 17. Mushroom house reconstructed by the design team in Azheke village.....	130

List of Tables

Table 1. Sources of the narratives analysed in the conceptual study	73
Table 2. Practitioners' profiles involved in data collection.....	79
Table 3. An example of thematic analysis	83
Table 4. Regenerative tourism principles inspired by the philosophy of <i>Sheng Sheng</i>	103

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter One opens by introducing the emerging paradigm of regenerative tourism and identifying key research gaps. It then presents Chinese philosophy and its potential contribution to defining regenerative tourism through the concept of *Sheng Sheng* (生生), often translated as *perpetual growth and change*. The chapter also discusses the usefulness of the community of practice framework as a practical and operational approach for implementing regenerative tourism. It concludes with the research questions, objectives, and outlines that briefly introduces the subsequent chapters.

Regenerative Tourism: Pioneering a Transformative Future Paradigm

Regenerative Paradigm in Mass Tourism Development

John Swarbrooke's influential 1999 publication, *Sustainable Tourism Management*, reflected his optimism about the potential of sustainable tourism and attracted a wide readership (Swarbrooke, 1999). However, nearly a quarter-century later, he posed a starkly different question: "Why did sustainable tourism fail?" (Swarbrooke, 2023). This critical reflection on the current state of the field has contributed to the rise of a new framework—the regenerative paradigm (Becken & Kaur, 2021; Mang & Reed, 2012). From a Western perspective, the regenerative paradigm is rooted in an ecological worldview that predates the Enlightenment, with origins in ancient Greek thought (Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022). Early Western philosophy often reflected an eco-centric, preservationist sensibility, emphasising a deep connection between human and the non-human world (Matunga et al., 2020). This worldview celebrates the symbiotic relationship between people and nature, viewing the world as a complex, interdependent system and recognising that tourism, like all human activity, is inseparable from ecological processes (Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022).

However, this ecological perspective was later overshadowed by Enlightenment thinking, which privileged scientific rationalism and linear progress (Gibson-Graham, 2007). The scientific and industrial revolutions ushered in a mechanical worldview (Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022), reinforced by Cartesian dualism, which conceptualised a clear separation between humans and nature (Ateljevic, 2020). During this period, capitalism and later neoliberalism came to dominate economic and social development, prioritising economic

growth. It was within this context that traditional mass tourism emerged, marked by an anthropocentric outlook that positioned humans above nature (Becken & Kaur, 2021).

In the 1970s, the increasingly severe environmental and social damage associated with capitalist modes of production and neoliberal practices prompted the emergence of post-capitalist thinking and growth-critical concepts such as degrowth and post-growth, both of which challenge the assumption of perpetual economic expansion (Toikka et al., 2026). This intellectual shift paved the way for alternative tourism paradigms that sought to counter approaches driven solely by economic imperatives. Among these alternatives, the sustainable tourism paradigm gained prominence in mainstream tourism discourse (Bellato et al., 2023) because it moves beyond a narrow focus on economic growth and seeks a balance between environmental, social, and economic objectives. Although both traditional and sustainable tourism remain influenced by dualistic thinking, sustainable tourism nonetheless marks a move towards a more ecologically attuned perspective—one that situates humans *around*, rather than above, the natural world (Becken & Kaur, 2021).

With the transition to the post-modern era, holistic thinking began to supplant dualistic paradigms. The term *regenerative tourism* was first introduced in 2007 and has received growing attention within the tourism academy since 2020 (Cave & Dredge, 2021; Sheller, 2021). It moves beyond dualism by rejecting the separation of humans from nature, instead embracing a holistic perspective of *humans in nature* (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Regenerative tourism also represents a shift from linear to systems thinking, with the goal of generating net positive outcomes for all stakeholders and entire ecosystems (Hutchins & Storm, 2019). It thus reflects a philosophical outlook that transcends capitalist, mechanistic, and individualistic paradigms (Artun, 2024; Aquino et al., 2024; Mura & Wijesinghe, 2023; Major & Clarke, 2022).

Regenerative tourism engages people, places, and practices in an integrated, place-based approach (Fusté-Forné & Hussain, 2022). Although the term itself is relatively new, the underlying principles have been present since the late twentieth century, originating from the broader field of regenerative development (Bellato et al., 2022). For instance, Arfwedson (1994) was among the first to explore the idea of *regenerative travel*, advocating the use of protected areas and heritage sites to transform local economies into models of sustainable development. Similarly, Uzzell (1996) introduced the concept of *regenerating tourism* to describe how heritage can revitalise declining regions or industries. Departing from the mindset of “doing no harm” (Day et al., 2021, p.28), the regenerative paradigm embraces the principle of leaving places in an improved state (Zaman et al., 2023; Bhalla & Chowdhary,

2022). It prioritises the generation of positive social-ecological returns, rather than merely minimising negative impacts (Bellato et al., 2023; Cave & Dredge, 2021; Duxbury et al., 2020; Hoxie et al., 2012).

As a transformative and responsible form of tourism, regenerative tourism is an emerging movement within the global travel and tourism industry. It actively aims to: (1) restore, renew, and strengthen the regenerative capacity, overall resilience, and long-term vitality of destination systems (Alhitmi et al., 2024; Rehman et al., 2023; Cave & Dredge, 2021; Cheer, 2020; Owen, 2007a); (2) generate a lasting positive impact on local economies, social welfare, cultural vibrancy, and ecological health (Alhitmi et al., 2024; Bellato et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2023; Duxbury et al., 2020); and (3) enable destinations to flourish and express their unique potential (Bellato et al., 2024a; Zaman et al., 2023; Becken & Kaur, 2021). Regenerative tourism is concerned not only with the outcomes of tourism development, but also with the foundational values that underpin it (Becken & Kaur, 2021). It seeks to reposition, rethink, and reimagine tourism by shifting from a protective to a reinventive mindset (Zaman et al., 2023). This approach embraces a transformative, decolonial, and transdisciplinary perspective, advancing forms of knowledge production that support a pluralistic and regenerative future for tourism (Bellato et al., 2024a). Achieving this vision requires global recognition of the diverse regenerative practices essential to driving systemic change (Sheldon et al., 2017; Carlsen et al., 2008).

Three Gaps in Regenerative Tourism Research

In the existing literature on regenerative tourism, three research gaps can be identified. First, the concept of regenerative tourism itself remains unclearly defined. Its distinction from sustainable tourism is often ambiguous (Yeoman & Sheldon, 2024). Crucially, there is no agreed method for evaluating regenerative practices (Hajarrahmah et al., 2024). Given their inherently place-based and context-specific nature (Major & Clarke, 2022), the pursuit of universal metrics may be both impractical and counterproductive. This underscores the need for a stronger conceptual framework—one capable of supporting the development of nuanced, context-sensitive evaluation tools.

Much of the existing literature continues to approach regenerative tourism through a sustainability lens, often reiterating principles already embedded in sustainable development. For instance, regeneration is frequently praised for its rejection of anthropocentrism (e.g., Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022), yet this orientation is already present in the foundations of

sustainability thinking (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Nevertheless, sustainability—particularly when framed around the “wise use” of resources—has frequently fallen short in practice. Despite its aspirations, regenerative tourism has yet to articulate concrete, distinctive strategies for realising a genuinely anti-anthropocentric ethos. This conceptual ambiguity reinforces the urgent need for clearer definitions and theoretical refinement. Continued critical inquiry will be essential in developing a more coherent and actionable foundation for regenerative tourism (Bellato et al., 2024a).

Second, most of the existing studies are rooted in Western perspective. Tourism’s dominant cultures, knowledge systems, and practices continue to be shaped by colonial legacies and capitalist-industrial paradigms (Bellato et al., 2024a). In the postmodern context, global development is increasingly critiqued as a discourse rooted in a Western, modernist, and materialist worldview (Esteva, 2023; Sachs, 2010; Gibson-Graham, 2007). Eastern perspectives remain markedly underrepresented in regenerative tourism research, resulting in a narrow and potentially biased understanding of the field.

Simultaneously, Indigenous and marginalised knowledges have been systematically excluded from mainstream scholarship (Bellato et al., 2024a). Although regenerative tourism draws on both Western science and Indigenous wisdom (Bellato et al., 2023, 2022; Bellato & Cheer, 2021), its discourse has largely been shaped by non-Indigenous practitioners, with limited input from Indigenous tourism professionals and scholars (Bellato, 2024).

Regenerative tourism has primarily attracted attention in a few key countries, such as Australia and the UK, while many other tourism-dependent regions remain underrepresented in academic research (Corral-Gonzalez et al., 2023). Advancing the field requires a deliberate move beyond Western-centric frameworks to support genuine community empowerment and what Mura and Wijesinghe (2023) describe as “liberation.”

It is insufficient to pursue regenerative tourism research solely through Western scientific methodologies, or to append Indigenous epistemologies to existing Western paradigms (Bellato et al., 2024a; Mura & Wijesinghe, 2023). What is needed is a decolonial approach that authentically integrates Indigenous science—place-based, context-specific, and transdisciplinary. Such an approach challenges the dominance of Western tourism paradigms and nurtures alternative, non-Western perspectives. By deepening engagement with complex social–ecological systems, Indigenous knowledge can play a transformative role in shaping a regenerative tourism paradigm (Bellato et al., 2024a). Integrating a decolonial lens into both the design and implementation of research enables a departure from discipline-bound

methods and supports the emergence of diverse knowledge (Bellato et al., 2024a; Peters, 2017).

Third, there is a lack of empirical studies in real-world contexts. Some destinations, such as New Zealand, have shifted their management strategies from a primarily short-term economic focus to prioritising regenerative tourism approaches aimed at delivering long-term, net-positive outcomes (Bode et al., 2024). Despite broad engagement with regenerative principles, tangible action—especially collaborative efforts among civil society, researchers, and practitioners—remains limited (Bellato et al., 2024a; Latham, 2024).

Translating regenerative ideals into practice is essential if the concept is to achieve meaningful real-world impact (Latham, 2024). However, most existing studies remain exploratory, lacking empirical depth, strategic focus, and actionable implementation models (Bellato et al., 2024a). In particular, research on multi-stakeholder collaboration is notably scarce, despite its critical importance for both advancing theoretical frameworks and evidencing the practical value of regenerative approaches. As a transformative paradigm, regenerative tourism demands more empirical research and detailed case studies capable of reimagining tourism systems, guiding implementation, evaluating impact, and informing practical strategies. Such research is vital for promoting holistic local sustainability and well-being (Latham, 2024; Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022; Cave & Dredge, 2021; Ateljevic, 2020; Duxbury et al., 2020).

Chinese Philosophy: Cultivating Eastern Wisdom for Regenerative Tourism

To address the first research gap—the ambiguous definition of regenerative tourism—a perspective grounded in the specific meaning of regeneration is required. The current amalgamation of ideas drawn from sustainability, transformation, and circularity risks obscuring the core essence of regeneration itself. At the same time, it is necessary to move beyond conventional Western frameworks, which often rest on a dualistic separation between humans and nature and thereby reinforce an imbalance between human and non-human beings. Chinese philosophy offers a valuable alternative. Centred on life and its continuous regeneration, it provides a systematic lens through which renewal and growth can be understood, while also asserting an ontological parity between humans and nature (Mou, 2014). This worldview not only offers a robust foundation for regenerative tourism but also

helps address the second research gap: the underrepresentation of Eastern perspectives in the field.

Evolution of Chinese Philosophy

The evolution of Chinese philosophy spans several millennia, shaped by shifting social, political, and ethical contexts. While it is commonly associated with the emergence of the *Hundred Schools of Thought* (诸子百家) during the Warring States period (500–221 BCE), when Confucianism and Taoism rose to prominence (Ebrey, 2022), its roots can be traced further back. One of the earliest sources is the *I Ching* (《易经》, *The Book of Changes*), originally a divination manual dating from around 1000–750 BCE. Between 500 and 200 BCE, the *I Ching* developed into a cosmological treatise (Kern, 2010). Its 64 hexagrams symbolise an ongoing process of creation and transformation, encapsulating the cyclical nature of life, moral order, and the cosmos (Xue, 2019).

Confucianism, founded by Confucius and later developed by Mencius, centres on morality, social harmony, and the ethical foundations of governance and education. The *Commentaries on the I Ching* (《易传》), traditionally attributed to Confucius, offer interpretations of change, morality, and cosmic order. These texts redefined the *I Ching*, transforming it from a divinatory manual into a foundational work of philosophical reflection (Redmond & Hon, 2014). In doing so, they influenced both early Taoist thought and the later emergence of Neo-Confucianism. The latter, a synthesis of Confucian ethics with elements of Buddhist and Taoist metaphysics, rose to prominence during the Tang and Song dynasties (618–1279 CE), eventually becoming the dominant school in Chinese philosophy (Bol, 2008).

Taoism, associated with the thinkers Laozi and Zhuangzi, advocates living in harmony with nature, embracing spontaneity, and practising *Wu Wei* (无为)—non-action or non-interference. The *Tao Te Ching* (《道德经》), traditionally attributed to Laozi, is a foundational Taoist text comprising 81 poetic chapters written in classical Chinese. It articulates core principles of the Taoist worldview, emphasising simplicity, humility, and the balance of opposites (Waley, 2013). For over two millennia, the *Tao Te Ching* has profoundly shaped Chinese philosophy, governance, and spirituality, influencing not only Confucianism and Buddhism, but also resonating with contemporary global thought, particularly within post-modern contexts (Li, 1999).

Whether in Confucianism or Taoism, traditional Chinese philosophy exhibits distinctive characteristics that set it apart from Western traditions shaped by Enlightenment thought, despite certain shared values in earlier periods—particularly the ecological worldview found in ancient Greek philosophy (Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022). Chinese philosophy has long centred its inquiry on the fundamental question of *life*—its nature, origins, and transformations (Yu, 2013). Clearer distinctions between living and non-living entities only began to emerge during the Warring States period. Prior to that, no strict separation was made between different forms of existence; instead, it was believed that “all things possess spirit,” with all phenomena regarded as expressions of life (Ding et al., 2021).

This sustained exploration has fostered a holistic worldview that integrates cosmogenesis, ethics, social order, and human practice (Lin, 2023; Li, 2022; Xue, 2019; Wu, 2018a; Yu, 2015). It reflects a profound concern for the continuity and cultivation of life, underscoring the deeply humanistic spirit at the heart of Chinese philosophical thought (Gu, 2022). As such, Chinese philosophy can offer valuable insights for regenerative tourism through its ontological emphasis on life and its (re)generation, as well as its foundational view of co-creation between human and non-human stakeholders.

Chinese Philosophy on Regeneration: Sheng Sheng

Chinese thought offers a distinctive contribution to the conceptualisation of regenerative tourism, setting it apart from Western perspectives. This distinction arises from a fundamental ontological difference: whereas Western thought has traditionally been characterised by a more static orientation (Xiao, 2022), Chinese thought is grounded in a dynamic worldview.

Western ontology tends to focus on fixed entities and linear causal relationships (Lin, 2023). Within this framework, Western teleology asserts that all things develop progressively towards a predetermined final cause or goal (Wu, 2018a), thereby distinguishing between the driving force of development and its ultimate purpose (Wu, 2018b). This perspective is further reinforced by the concept of creationism, particularly within religious cosmogony, which posits that existence originates from a singular act of creation by a divine or external force (Wu, 2018a; Dou, 2017). Such a teleological and creationist view is deeply embedded in Western metaphysical traditions, tracing back to Plato and Aristotle. In this tradition, existence is conceived as a structure imposed by an external agent, dividing being into form and matter, and creator and created. The creator, as an external force, imposes form and order upon passive matter, bringing the universe into being and establishing order from chaos (Wu,

2018a). This externally imposed structure functions as the foundational explanation of existence within Western metaphysics.

The idea of regeneration in Chinese philosophy is captured by the concept of *Sheng Sheng*, often translated as “perpetual growth and change” (Ding et al., 2021; Wu, 2018b). In contrast to the static ontology of the West, *Sheng Sheng* emphasises that the essence of existence is dynamic, continuous, spontaneous, self-renewing, natural, and interconnected (Li, 2024a; Lin, 2023; Wu, 2018a; Tao, 2017; Li, 2012; Qiao, 2011)—establishing an intrinsic link between natural phenomena, human values, and social order (Wu, 2024; Tang, 2019; Li, 2012). *Sheng Sheng* embodies the universe’s unceasing flow, its self-generating creative force (Zhang, 2017; Qiao, 2011), and its nurturing, regenerative power (Lin, 2023; Wang, 2010). This generative force functions as the fundamental energy underpinning existence, evolution, and moral development (Xue, 2019).

As a fundamental principle of cosmic generation and the perpetuation of life, *Sheng Sheng* is not only the foundation of social order but also central to the relationship between nature and humanity (Diao & Chen, 2024; Wang, 2010). It offers profound insights into the co-creation of social harmony and sustainable development through moral practice, emphasising harmony among individuals, between individuals and society, and between humanity and nature (Yuan, 2012). It also provides theoretical support for the flourishing of all beings, embodying a distinctively Chinese philosophical perspective on nature and life (Wu, 2018b).

Chinese philosophy’s inquiry into life encompasses not only existence but also value (Meng, 2014). *Sheng Sheng* refers to the continuous creation, innovation, and enhancement of all positive values (Zhang, 2017). Ceaseless generation is not merely the inherent nature of the cosmos but also a conscious human endeavour. The ongoing advancement of the *Way* is closely linked to the *Junzi*’s (君子, person of virtue) emulation of Heaven through tireless self-cultivation (Xiang, 2007). This cosmic movement is characterised by an upward, vigorous tendency, which, when expressed in human life, manifests as a persistent drive for self-improvement and a resilient, life-affirming value orientation (Guo, 2010).

Rooted in the principles of tireless effort and the nurturing of all things with great virtue, *Sheng Sheng* generates positive energy and propels the continual renewal of culture and civilisation (Qu, 2018). The Chinese ideal of *Sheng Sheng* is imbued with joy and optimism, expressing a hopeful view of morality, human nature, and Heaven, while emphasising worldly engagement, practical action, and a celebration of life’s realities (Shang & Lü, 2016).

This positive orientation of *Sheng Sheng* aligns with the core aim of regenerative tourism: to generate positive impacts on destinations through thoughtful tourism development.

Moreover, the concept of *Sheng Sheng*, which resonates with postmodernist thought, holds significant potential for addressing the challenges of modernity. Refined through dialogue with diverse intellectual traditions—including Western metaphysics (Zhang, 2016)—it represents China’s foundational understanding of dynamic transformation (Yang, 2023). Beyond its classical roots, *Sheng Sheng* offers a Chinese contribution to global discourse on environmental crises and cultural tensions (Xiao, 2022). By emphasising the continuity of life, harmony with nature, and social balance, it brings forward philosophical wisdom of enduring relevance in the context of globalisation. Therefore, the contemporary revival of *Sheng Sheng* is crucial—but it must not be confined within the conceptual boundaries of Western metaphysics (Wu, 2018a).

Communities of Practice: Operationalising Regenerative Tourism Co-Creation

To address the third research gap in regenerative tourism, an operational framework is needed to explore the practice of regenerative tourism co-creation. The concept of a community of practice offers such a framework, enabling the operationalisation of regenerative tourism across three dimensions: domain, community, and practice.

Communities of Practice

Communities of practice, based on the principle of collective learning through shared experience, have existed throughout human history (Tham et al., 2022). Historical examples include medieval guilds, collectives of artists developing new techniques, medical advancements—particularly in nursing—and innovations in military strategy and weaponry (Wenger, 2015; Li et al., 2009). In contemporary life, communities of practice emerge in varied settings, such as families striving to shape a shared lifestyle, employees coordinating their work, and students navigating both academic and personal challenges (Bertella, 2011).

As an academic concept, however, the notion of communities of practice was formally introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) and further developed by Wenger and others (Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger, 1998). Originally rooted in work-based contexts (Ericsson et al., 2020), the theory views individuals as active agents, with a focus on routine practices and situated

learning (Bertella, 2011). Crucially, the concept extends beyond formal education and is not limited to the instruction of novices (Albrecht, 2012). It has found broad application across diverse professional and social science domains, including government (Ison et al., 2014), sports coaching (Kjær, 2019), creative industries (Comunian, 2017), event management (Brown & Stokes, 2021), and higher education (Albrecht, 2012).

In tourism studies, the framework has been used to explore the behaviours and shared perspectives of tourists, highlighting the ways in which learning and historical experiences contribute to forming a coherent group identity (Carnegie & Kociatkiewicz, 2019). Typically, communities of practice are informal and organically formed, comprising individuals who share a common interest or concern linked to their activities. Members engage cognitively and emotionally, participating in collective learning, knowledge exchange, skill development, and performance enhancement, while also cultivating a shared identity (Smith et al., 2017; Bertella, 2011; Justesen, 2004; Wenger & Snyder, 2000).

These communities may exist within a single domain or form part of larger constellations—networks of related communities spanning multiple practices (Bertella, 2023; Wenger, 2010, 2000). Through boundary interactions and brokering relationships with other groups or individuals, communities of practice remain open to external influence and adaptive to evolving concerns. When united by a shared vision and high levels of interconnection, such constellations become integrated systems (Wenger, 1998), often anchored in common institutions (e.g. factories or schools), shared histories, or geographical proximity (Bertella, 2011).

Co-creative practices play a significant role in articulating the dynamic linkages that connect constellations of communities of practice. Learning, in this context, is not confined within isolated communities but extends across them (Bertella & Rinaldi, 2020). These communities are often structured around projects, functioning as (digital) platforms where learning and co-creation take place through dialogue, reflection, artefact creation, and collaborative action. This perspective emphasises learning as a process of co-constructing knowledge and understanding, rather than the simple transmission of information or execution of routines (Bertella, 2023; May, 2009).

Communities of Practice for Co-Creating Regenerative Tourism

As co-creating entities, communities of practice have significant potential to foster positive change, particularly in relation to sustainability. In sustainability-oriented communities,

members learn not only about sustainable behaviours, but also how to collaborate effectively in pursuit of sustainability goals (Bertella & Rinaldi, 2020). In certain destinations, co-creation involves partnerships among tour operators, tourists, and local residents to develop tourism products and experiences that are both authentic and sustainable (Okazaki, 2008). Incorporating diverse stakeholder perspectives—especially those increasingly attentive to sustainability—enhances the relevance and effectiveness of these collaborative processes (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). Such efforts often result in innovations that are better aligned with societal needs while advancing sustainability objectives (Ertz, 2024).

Given the close connection between sustainable and regenerative tourism, communities of practice provide a promising framework for operationalising regenerative tourism. This framework contains three components: *domain*, *community*, and *practice* (Brown & Stokes, 2021; Hilliard, 2006; Wenger, 2004, 1998)—each representing a distinct aspect of participation that motivates involvement (Wenger et al., 2002). The *domain* refers to a shared field of interest (Albrecht, 2012) that unites members (Barros et al., 2013), defines the community's identity, and frames the key issues members seek to address (Bertella, 2011). A community forms around this shared domain, distinguishing it from mere social or professional networks. While networks emphasise connectedness, communities of practice are grounded in shared purpose and collective engagement (Gotvassli, 2008; Hilliard, 2006; Wenger, 2004).

Domains can relate to any subject area, profession, academic discipline, or political cause (Smith et al., 2017; Barros et al., 2013). They cultivate a shared identity among members, foster cohesion, and generate motivation (Wenger et al., 2002). The domain also serves as a threshold of competence, helping members determine what knowledge is relevant and how it should be communicated (Cox, 2005). In this sense, members are typically self-selecting (Wenger et al., 2002), drawn by common interests and a commitment to mutual learning (Lee, 2022; Bertella, 2011).

The *community* comprises individuals who share the domain, sustain relationships through regular interaction (Bertella, 2011; Hilliard, 2006; Wenger, 2004), and collaborate towards common goals (Albrecht, 2012). These relationships are characterised by social bonding and mutual support (Almeida & Campos, 2022; Lee, 2022), which enhance commitment to community activities, including face-to-face engagement (Hilliard, 2006). Communities of practice are defined by (1) shared identities and competencies, (2) purposeful relationships centred on knowledge exchange, and (3) collective practice involving tools, techniques, and problem-solving strategies (Ericsson et al., 2020). Social

structure is central to the learning process, with communities serving as frameworks through which knowledge is co-constructed (Cox, 2005).

The *practice* dimension refers to the shared repertoire developed over time—encompassing documents, experiences, conceptual frameworks, tools, cases, stories, and symbols (Almeida & Campos, 2022; Albrecht, 2012; Cox, 2005; Wenger et al., 2002). It embodies the community's collective knowledge and the ways in which this knowledge is applied, adapted, and transmitted (Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, practice is inherently paradoxical: while it can be taught and transferred, it is not always directly observable or measurable. This duality presents a persistent research challenge in understanding and evaluating communities of practice (Corradi et al., 2010).

As the global tourism industry becomes more cognisant of its environmental, cultural, and social responsibilities, it is increasingly important to examine how value co-creation can support sustainability principles (John & Supramaniam, 2024; Boom et al., 2021). Integrating sustainability into the studies on value co-creation ensures that interactions between tourists and other stakeholders contribute meaningfully to the well-being of destinations and host communities (John & Supramaniam, 2024). Within the context of regenerative tourism, it is also essential to consider how communities of practice can support co-creation initiatives involving both human and non-human stakeholders. These approaches not only help mitigate the negative impacts of tourism but can also amplify its positive contributions (John & Supramaniam, 2024). A deeper understanding of the dynamic relationship between value co-creation and regenerative tourism can enrich theoretical frameworks and inform the development of practical strategies for shaping a more regenerative future.

Research Questions, Objectives, and Significance

Drawing on the three identified research gaps in regenerative tourism, the insights on regeneration offered by the Chinese philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*, and the potential of communities of practice to operationalise regenerative tourism co-creation, this research aims to define regenerative tourism from a regeneration-centred perspective and to operationalise its co-creation processes through a community of practice framework. Aligned with the framework of community of practice (i.e., domain, community, and practice), this research is guided by the following research questions:

- (1) Domain: Inspired by the Chinese philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*, what is regenerative tourism?

- (2) Community: How can a community of practice engage human and non-human stakeholders to co-create regenerative tourism?
- (3) Practice: How can the Chinese philosophy of *Sheng Sheng* inform the co-creation of regenerative tourism?

These questions provide the foundation for a deeper inquiry into regenerative tourism through a distinctive Chinese philosophical lens, while also addressing its practical realisation through collaborative, place-based approaches. To address these questions, the study pursues three specific objectives:

- (1) To clarify the core characteristics of regenerative tourism through the lens of Chinese philosophy.
- (2) To conduct enactive research in an Indigenous community in China to co-create regenerative tourism.
- (3) To explore how a community of practice guided by Chinese philosophy can facilitate the co-creation of regenerative tourism between human and non-human stakeholders.

These objectives contribute to a broader effort to develop a non-Western perspective on regenerative tourism and to strengthen the empirical foundation needed to address current conceptual and practical limitations in the field. The research comprises three interrelated components: a conceptual investigation of regenerative tourism grounded in the Chinese philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*, and two empirical studies that examine (1) the co-creation of regenerative tourism through a community of practice involving both human and non-human actors, and (2) the ways in which their practices are informed by *Sheng Sheng*-inspired principles.

Azheke village, an Indigenous community in southeastern China, was selected as the research site for both empirical studies for two main reasons. First, tourism development in Azheke has generated positive social, cultural, and ecological outcomes, offering a concrete case of regenerative tourism in practice. This makes it an appropriate context for assessing whether *Sheng Sheng*-inspired regenerative principles can illuminate regenerative tourism processes in real-world settings. Second, a community of practice—deliberately established and supported by local government and academic teams to engage Indigenous residents as active participants—has played a central role in local tourism development. The case of Azheke therefore provides an opportunity to examine the applicability of the community of practice framework for operationalising regenerative tourism co-creation.

Theoretically, this research contributes to clarifying the conceptual ambiguity surrounding regenerative tourism by introducing *Sheng Sheng* from Chinese philosophy as a

complementary Eastern perspective. It enriches practice-based evidence through the empirical case of Azheke village and advances the community of practice as a practical framework for operationalising co-creation within regenerative tourism. Practically, the research proposes the regenerative principles derived from Chinese philosophy to guide tourism practitioners in their business activities and to support policymakers in assessing whether tourism development initiatives are genuinely regenerative, thereby strengthening tourism governance. The study also underscores the significant role of Indigenous communities in co-creating regenerative tourism and encourages collaboration between external and local practitioners through communities of practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Two examines existing research on the paradigm shift in tourism development, current conceptualisations of regenerative tourism, the principles of value co-creation within regenerative processes, and the role of communities of practice in facilitating co-creation. It critically engages with dominant Western narratives of regenerative tourism and co-creation, while assessing the relevance and potential of communities of practice within a regenerative tourism context.

Tourism Shifting Towards a Regenerative Paradigm

To address the first research question, which examines the definition of regenerative tourism through a Chinese philosophical lens, it is crucial to understand the background that has led to the emergence of regenerative tourism, as well as the current definitions found in mainstream Western discourse. Existing research on (mass) tourism development has identified four distinct stages, each representing a different paradigm within tourism research and practice.

Traditional Development: Capitalism

Traditional tourism has developed within an economic and social system shaped by capitalism, which links happiness and well-being to economic gain. Capitalism promotes economic determinism, prioritising economic progress above all else—typically measured by a single indicator: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which quantifies profit and consumption (Cave & Dredge, 2021; Sheldon, 2020). Within this paradigm, individuals often pursue self-interest, particularly in the form of economic returns, through activities such as capital investment and resource extraction aimed at maximising commercial outcomes (Becken & Kaur, 2021).

Against the backdrop of global capitalist hegemony and Western modernisation (Esteva, 2023), traditional tourism has become deeply embedded in a neoliberal economic framework and industrial worldview. It reflects a “machine story” in which individuals function like cogs in a production line, delivering experiences packaged as products (Major & Clarke, 2022). This paradigm is marked by compartmentalisation, a narrow economic focus, and the fragmented management of individual system components (Suárez-Rojas et al., 2023; Becken & Kaur, 2021).

Rooted in the disciplinary foundations of neoclassical economics and management (Becken & Kaur, 2021), traditional tourism policies are largely shaped by neoliberal economic perspectives (Simmons, 2017). This system—often referred to as ego-economics—prioritises the interests of owners over those of other stakeholders (Sheldon, 2022). Decision-making within this model is typically concentrated at the macro level and dominated by multinational corporations, with the primary aim of accumulating wealth for a select few, particularly ownership elites (Becken & Kaur, 2021).

Traditional tourism is underpinned by the belief in human superiority over nature—a perspective rooted in anthropocentrism, a worldview prevalent in many Western philosophies that places humans at the centre of existence. Within this paradigm, tourism organisers—often elites—prioritise maximising human benefit through the exploitation of natural and cultural resources (Becken & Kaur, 2021). This orientation frequently results in the degradation of both social and ecological systems (Gibson-Graham, 1997). Moreover, with its singular focus on economic outcomes, traditional tourism tends to foster transactional host–tourist relationships (Holliday, 2016). This reflects the broader influence of neoliberalism, which privileges profit-driven motives and economic considerations above all else.

Alternative Development: Post-Capitalism

Alternative tourism is grounded in a different development paradigm, one that emphasises the diversification of tourism practices beyond purely capitalist models. As the negative impacts of traditional, profit-driven tourism become increasingly apparent, there is growing awareness of its harm to both people and the planet (Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022). This recognition underscores the urgent need for critical reflection on ego-economics and its underlying assumptions (Sheldon, 2022; Ateljevic, 2020; Benjamin et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2020; Lew et al., 2020).

One important area of reflection concerns the need to rethink the prevailing economic development model, with the degrowth paradigm in tourism gaining increasing attention as a viable alternative (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). The “political–economic growth machine” has come under sustained critique (Adhya, 2012, p.218), and there is a growing consensus that economic growth should no longer be the primary objective of tourism development (Bellato et al., 2022). Achieving sustainability and regeneration requires moving

beyond the pursuit of perpetual growth and decoupling resource consumption from economic expansion (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022a; Raworth, 2017).

Another key area of reflection concerns the ideological foundations of economic development. In this re-evaluation, capitalism and neoliberalism are no longer viewed as the sole pathways to economic and social progress (Gibson-Graham, 2008). To counter the negative impacts of traditional tourism, scholars have explored a range of alternative economic practices. For instance, Gibson-Graham et al. (2013) have mapped the diversity of economic arrangements, classifying enterprises into capitalist, alternative-capitalist, and non-capitalist categories. Building on this, Ruttenberg (2023) has developed an asset mapping and diverse economy assessment framework to support alternative-capitalist and non-capitalist approaches within surf tourism. A growing body of research is now challenging the dominance of industrial growth in tourism and advocating for economic models that sustain and regenerate both social and ecological systems (Bellato et al., 2023; Cave & Dredge, 2021; Gibson-Graham, 1997).

Within the context of post-capitalism, economic diversification contributes significantly to regeneration and resilience in tourism development (Dredge, 2022). To foster this diversification, Cave and Dredge (2021) propose three key steps: (1) recognising and supporting a plurality of economic practices within tourism; (2) promoting these alternatives through appropriate assessment and evaluation frameworks; and (3) developing policies that encourage diversified economic models and reduce dependency on capitalist systems. As Romagosa (2020) argues, in an increasingly uncertain global context, destinations that demonstrate greater resilience are those characterised by economic diversity, reduced reliance on specific markets, and a focus on qualitative rather than quantitative indicators—in other words, prioritising development over growth.

Sustainable Development: Modernism

Sustainable tourism is informed by the principles of sustainable development, aiming to balance environmental, social, and economic considerations. Rooted in academic and industry discourses shaped by modernist thought, sustainable development emerged in response to the rapid transformations brought about by industrialisation and global modernisation. These changes have introduced profound challenges—particularly environmental ones such as climate change—that question the evolving relationship between humanity and nature, as well as the long-term viability of the tourism industry (Cui, 2020).

The dominance of capitalism and neoliberalism has often prioritised economic growth at the expense of ecological balance. In response, both academia and industry are increasingly shifting towards a sustainability-oriented paradigm (Bellato et al., 2023).

This paradigm shift is also shaping both tourism research and practice. The concept of *sustainable tourism* first emerged in 1975 and gained formal recognition within academic discourse by 1993 (Becken, 2019; Butler, 2015). While sustainable tourism was developed as an alternative to traditional tourism, the two share both similarities and differences. Both are influenced by Cartesian dualism (Ateljevic, 2020) and anthropocentrism, although sustainable tourism promotes the notion of “human around nature” (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Despite this, sustainable development approaches remain fundamentally anthropocentric. The widely cited definition by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) describes sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (p.43), framing sustainability primarily in terms of human welfare. This perspective underscores a resource-oriented view of nature, valuing it largely for its utility to humans. However, unlike traditional tourism, sustainable approaches aim to manage resources proactively, minimising harm and supporting ecological systems (Bellato et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2023; Becken & Kaur, 2021; Day et al., 2021). In promoting sustainable development, ethical principles are derived from moral discourses that seek to ensure justice and equity for both humans and nature (Talan et al., 2020).

Both sustainable tourism and traditional tourism view the industry primarily as an economic activity aimed at generating commercial returns. Sustainable tourism aligns with an industrial economic growth paradigm (Chassagne & Everingham, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018), often prioritising industry interests over those of the community and the environment. This focus reflects the modernist approach traditionally associated with sustainable tourism. Given the industrial emphasis on production efficiency, sustainable tourism systems are designed to optimise this efficiency (Becken & Kaur, 2021). However, unlike traditional tourism, which focuses solely on economic factors, sustainable tourism adopts a multi-dimensional approach, considering economic, social, and ecological aspects separately, with economic sustainability often taking precedence (Becken, 2019; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). From this perspective, the impacts of tourism development on society and the environment are viewed as external costs. While sustainable tourism remains fundamentally an economic activity aimed at generating profit, it seeks to minimise harm and internalise these negative externalities (Chassagne & Everingham, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). To achieve these

aims, a standardised set of indicators has been developed to monitor sustainable tourism development (Sheldon, 2022). This technocratic approach reflects a mechanistic worldview, favouring technical and managerial solutions. Rooted in modernist thinking, it aspires to universal solutions through the application of technologies, infrastructure, and managerial practices, drawing on a multidisciplinary knowledge base that includes engineering and environmental management (Becken & Kaur, 2021; Becken, 2019).

Despite differing intentions, both traditional and sustainable tourism often reproduce top-down approaches and associated power imbalances. In traditional tourism, such imbalances are typically embedded in hierarchical structures that lead to systemic inequalities (Chassagne & Everingham, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). Sustainable tourism, by contrast, aspires to redress these inequities by involving a broad range of stakeholders in decision-making processes (Becken & Kaur, 2021). For example, initiatives such as the Charcoal Lane Restaurant and the Smith Street Working Group actively engage Indigenous communities (Bellato & Cheer, 2021). This engagement can yield positive outcomes in terms of local capacity, knowledge, skills, and development practices (Hes & Du Plessis, 2014).

However, in practice, sustainable tourism remains largely shaped by “tourism experts” and professionalised forms of knowledge (Becken, 2019). In addressing global challenges, sustainable tourism operates across scales, requiring destinations to consider national and global implications in their local decision-making (Becken & Kaur, 2021). International organisations have played a key role in shaping the sustainable tourism agenda. For example, the World Tourism Organisation (2005) defines sustainable tourism as the comprehensive consideration of “its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities” (p.12). Such international perspectives offer an important macro-level context for understanding the development and application of sustainable tourism principles. This reliance can reintroduce top-down dynamics (Chassagne & Everingham, 2020; Dwyer, 2018), undermining its participatory ideals and allowing power imbalances to persist within its operational structures (Bellato et al., 2023).

In the post-COVID-19 era, sustainable development has faced mounting criticism for its linear logic and Western-centric foundations (Bellato et al., 2023). A central concern is its persistent alignment with neoliberal principles, despite its purported opposition to them. The structure of many sustainability programmes exhibits upward redistributive effects and exacerbates social inequality—hallmarks of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005). Although sustainable development nominally challenges neoliberalism, it often encounters resistance

from within the neoliberal paradigm, particularly in tourism studies (Dwyer, 2018; Tribe et al., 2015). Furthermore, sustainable development has been criticised for failing to address how modernist ideologies perpetuate imperialism and colonial structures (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015). As early as 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development warned that sustainable development risked reinforcing a growth-driven, modernist paradigm (Bellato et al., 2024a, p.2). In response, critical scholars have called for a decisive break from neoliberalism and a reappraisal of modernism's influence on sustainability discourse (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Tribe et al., 2015).

However, some scholars, including Day et al. (2021), contend that the shortcomings of the sustainability paradigm stem less from its conceptual foundations than from poor implementation. The dominant business model remains largely unchanged, continuing to prioritise economic growth, short-term gains, and fragmented government policies. These factors hinder the achievement of genuine sustainability in most destinations (Suárez-Rojas et al., 2023). Critics also highlight bureaucratic inertia and an overemphasis on managerialism within sustainability programmes as key barriers to meaningful change (Day et al., 2021; Scoones, 2007). In this context, advancing alternative ontologies and epistemologies—particularly those that challenge dominant “universal truths” such as colonial legacies—becomes both necessary and difficult (Mika & Scheyvens, 2022; Schultz, 2018).

Regenerative Development: Post-Modernism

Regenerative tourism is grounded in the paradigm of regenerative development, which seeks not only to sustain but to restore and enhance entire systems in a holistic manner. Emerging as a response to the limitations of sustainable development, regenerative development offers a compelling alternative, particularly within a post-modern context where absolute truths are questioned and the co-creation of knowledge through communities and collectives is emphasised. Although often positioned as a progression of sustainable tourism (Bellato et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2023; Becken & Kaur, 2021; Ateljevic, 2020), regenerative tourism marks a clear departure from its predecessor (Zaman et al., 2023; Cave et al., 2022). It challenges traditional capitalist narratives of sustainability (Mura & Wijesinghe, 2023) by advancing what some describe as “a regenerative form of sustainability” (Becken & Kaur, 2021, p.57). Sustainability focuses on efficiency and maximizing outcomes, while the regenerative movement is rooted in the ideals of thriving and flourishing (Alhitmi et al.,

2024). This paradigm shift signifies a fundamental transformation in our ontological assumptions, approaches, and practices related to development and sustainability.

The emergence of the regenerative paradigm represents an urgent response to escalating vulnerabilities caused by the fractured relationship between environment, society, and economy (Dredge, 2022). This disconnection is increasingly evident in a cascade of interrelated crises that pose existential threats to humanity. In 2023, for instance, following the hottest month ever recorded, UN Secretary-General António Guterres declared that the planet had shifted from an era of “global warming” to one of “global boiling.” Such events intensify uncertainty and disruption within broader cultural and political narratives, further exposing the limitations of conventional development models (Cui, 2020).

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant loss of life and widespread social isolation (Day et al., 2021), exposing deep systemic vulnerabilities. It has since been recognised as a catalyst for rethinking, resetting, redesigning, and transforming the tourism industry (Carr, 2021; Rastegar et al., 2021). This shift is reflected in the growing adoption of community-centred tourism frameworks, which aim to create more socially oriented models that prioritise public well-being (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2021). Two contrasting perspectives have emerged regarding the pandemic's long-term impact on tourism development. One view anticipates a fundamental transformation—ushering in a “New Normal”—while the other argues that tourism will ultimately revert to its pre-crisis form, given its entrenched cultural significance (McKercher, 2020). Nevertheless, the crisis offers a rare opportunity to reconsider core values and priorities within the sector (Becken & Kaur, 2021), encouraging the development of new approaches and models for more resilient and equitable tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2021; Scobie, 2019). As Eisenstein (2022) suggests, “During this great pause, we could potentially embrace the holistic paradigms and practices that have been waiting on the margins. In our humble state, we could bring them into the centre and build a new system around them (p.20-21).”

In the post-pandemic era, a growing number of stakeholders—including consumers, suppliers, governments, and international organisations—have expressed increased interest in the regenerative paradigm (Nitsch & Vogels, 2022; Sheller, 2021; Becken & Kaur, 2021; Cave & Dredge, 2021; Day et al., 2021; Duxbury et al., 2020). For instance, in late 2020, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) hosted an online debate entitled *Culture, Tourism, and COVID-19: Recovery, Rehabilitation and Renewal*. The discussion strongly emphasised the need for a more resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and regenerative model—one that advocates a shift from ego-economics to eco-

economics. In this model, natural, social, and cultural capitals are prioritised over financial capital as the foundational pillars of development (Sheldon, 2022). Within this context, regenerative tourism has been proposed as a transformative approach to supporting communities, creating employment, promoting cultural expression, safeguarding heritage, revitalising the tourism sector, and contributing to national recovery (Duxbury et al., 2020; Scobie, 2019).

The regenerative paradigm adopts a holistic, eco-centric worldview (Mathisen et al., 2022) rooted in the principle of “humans in nature” (Becken & Kaur, 2021), drawing its foundations from the philosophy of holism. In post-modern societies, the dominance of Cartesian dualism has been increasingly challenged and supplanted by holistic thinking. From this perspective, humans are not separate from nature but inherently interconnected with it, as one among many species. Grounded in this view, the regenerative paradigm emphasises the notion of the “greater good,” recognising that all living beings share a common destiny, purpose, and future (Sheldon, 2022, p.200). The existence, health, and well-being of human and non-human life are thus understood to be inextricably linked. Accordingly, regenerative development seeks to generate restorative outcomes across ecological, social, and economic dimensions (Mathisen et al., 2022; Day et al., 2021; Duxbury et al., 2020; Reed, 2007).

The regenerative paradigm has made a notable impact across multiple domains, including regenerative economies, agriculture, and design. Central to each is a belief in the system’s inherent capacity for self-healing, supported by a holistic approach that integrates health, justice, and regeneration (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Reed, 2007). A regenerative economy is characterised by long-term, systemic thinking and sustained community participation in decision-making (Sheldon, 2022). It is grounded in the belief that economic systems shape development and seeks to address the limitations of capitalist models by promoting alternative forms of capital and more holistic approaches to growth (Bellato, 2024).

Regenerative agriculture, one of the earliest sectors to adopt this paradigm, follows principles such as “no spray, no toil” (Ateljevic, 2020, p.6), respecting ecological processes, restoring soil health, producing high-quality food, and enhancing land productivity. This, in turn, contributes to greater social resilience within communities (Dredge, 2022; Ateljevic, 2020). Regenerative design similarly seeks to create systems that replenish their own energy and material resources (Molinero, 2022). Seen as an evolution of sustainability, it addresses the latter’s limitations and perceived stagnation (Molinero, 2022; Moore, 2001; Lyle, 1996) by shifting from minimising harm to generating positive impact (Alhitmi et al., 2024),

dissolving the human–nature divide, and embedding environmentalism within socio-political discourse (Owen, 2007a). From this perspective, human systems—including political structures—are understood to co-evolve with the Earth’s living systems (Day et al., 2021), and regenerative methods aim to meet the needs of both human and ecological processes in an integrated manner (Molinero, 2022).

In the context of tourism, regenerative tourism has been hailed as “the saviour of global tourism” (Zaman et al., 2023, p.797) due to its transformative potential (Zaman & Aktan, 2021; Ateljevic, 2020; Kim et al., 2020). Its capacity “to innovate and transform across scales” (Becken & Kaur, 2021, p.57) is frequently emphasised. Within the regenerative paradigm, the World Travel & Tourism Council (2021) has positioned tourism as a “force for good.” As an alternative to dominant capitalist models (Bellato et al., 2023), regenerative development embraces diverse economic practices that reflect a regenerative worldview and move beyond profit-centric logics (Gibson-Graham & Dombroski, 2020; Gibson-Graham, 1996). Crucially, it calls for a collective reckoning with the harmful consequences of human exploitation and environmental degradation (Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022), urging regenerative actions to restore the vitality of places and support the well-being of both human and natural systems (Mehmood et al., 2020). This perspective reframes tourism not as a passive victim of change, but as a sector that must be consciously reimagined to deliver positive and lasting impacts (Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022).

The Nature of Regenerative Tourism: Mixed or Messed Up?

Western discussions of regenerative tourism tend to coalesce around four distinct perspectives: regeneration as an intensified form of sustainability; as a transformative process that moves beyond conventional sustainability models; as a circular system of resource use; and as a means of restoring both human and ecological systems. Despite the prominence of these concepts, their relationships—and their integration within regenerative tourism discourse—remain insufficiently clarified.

Sustainability

Sustainability has evolved into a widely adopted policy concept, shaping practices across diverse fields, including regenerative movement and circular economy (Day et al., 2021). The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as “the quality of being able to continue over a period of time.” Building on this general definition, the 1987 Brundtland Report famously framed

sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p.43) highlighting the tension between short-term well-being and long-term development (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). Subsequent scholarship has formalised sustainability around three interdependent pillars: environmental, social, and economic (Purvis et al., 2019). This framework centres on the principle of “doing no harm” (Day et al., 2021) and maintaining balance across these domains. However, it has been criticised for its limited engagement with regenerative thinking and for its reliance on a mechanistic worldview that may constrain more dynamic, systems-oriented approaches (Gibbons et al., 2020).

The connection between regeneration and sustainability is evident even at the etymological level (Molinero, 2022). In the literature, regenerative tourism is often framed as an evolution of sustainable tourism (Nitsch & Vogels, 2022)—building upon and inherently encompassing its principles. For example, Zaman (2023) advocates regenerative practices to ensure that future generations can continue to appreciate natural and cultural heritage, aligning closely with sustainability’s core aims. Becken and Kaur (2021, p.57) describe regenerative development as “a regenerative form of sustainability,” while the global creative agency Valentine McCormick Ligibel (2018) refers to regeneration as “the new sustainability.” Such perspectives reflect a growing consensus among both scholars and practitioners that the future of sustainability lies in regeneration (Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022). Research on regenerative tourism, therefore, tends to be firmly rooted in sustainability science (Day et al., 2021), which offers robust methodologies for driving the transition towards more regenerative futures (Bellato et al., 2024a).

The form of sustainability embedded within regeneration offers a more comprehensive and refined perspective—one that aligns social and economic advancement with a deep commitment to environmental stewardship. While sustainable tourism works to reduce harm and preserve existing conditions, regenerative tourism goes a step further by actively improving and revitalizing ecosystems and cultural heritage (Alhitmi et al., 2024). Rooted in a holistic and ecocentric worldview, closely aligned with the environmental philosophy of deep ecology, regenerative tourism affirms the intrinsic value of all forms of life. It redefines wealth through multiple dimensions of well-being and prioritises balance and equitable benefit distribution. Rather than merely sustaining existing systems, regenerative tourism seeks to “build back better”—to revitalise, restore, and enhance the resilience and prosperity of communities, economies, and ecosystems. Recognising its potential, international bodies such as UNESCO (2020) and UN Tourism (2020) have endorsed regenerative tourism as a

strategic response to global challenges and as a pathway toward a more sustainable and resilient post-pandemic tourism sector. As a result, regenerative sustainability is increasingly seen as a more integrated, adaptive, and future-oriented framework, offering a foundation for emerging research agendas in the field.

The form of sustainability embedded within regeneration offers a more comprehensive and refined perspective—one that aligns social and economic advancement with a deep commitment to environmental stewardship (Molinero, 2022). Regenerative approaches aim not only to reduce carbon footprints and achieve net-zero outcomes but also to generate positive ecological impacts and foster environmentally responsible practices (Zaman, 2023). Rooted in a holistic and ecocentric worldview, closely aligned with the environmental philosophy of deep ecology, regenerative tourism affirms the intrinsic value of all forms of life (Imran et al., 2014; Mang & Reed, 2012). It redefines wealth through multiple dimensions of well-being and prioritises balance and equitable benefit distribution (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Rather than merely sustaining existing systems, regenerative tourism seeks to “build back better” (Day et al., 2021, p.33)—to revitalise, restore, and enhance the resilience and prosperity of communities, economies, and ecosystems (Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022). Recognising its potential, international bodies such as UNESCO (2020) and UN Tourism (2020) have endorsed regenerative tourism as a strategic response to global challenges and as a pathway toward a more sustainable and resilient post-pandemic tourism sector (Cave & Dredge, 2021; Ateljevic, 2020). As a result, regenerative sustainability is increasingly seen as a more integrated, adaptive, and future-oriented framework, offering a foundation for emerging research agendas in the field (Suárez-Rojas et al., 2023; Cave et al., 2022; Cave & Dredge, 2021).

Despite growing interest in regenerative tourism, the distinction between regenerative and sustainable principles remains ambiguous in practice. Tourists engaging in regenerative tourism often adopt a familiar sustainable mindset (Rehman et al., 2023)—seeking eco-friendly services and low-impact experiences (Izquierdo-Gascón & Rubio-Gil, 2023). The key difference, however, lies in a shift in relational perspective: rather than maintaining a host–guest dichotomy, regenerative tourism encourages a sense of collective responsibility, reframing the relationship as one of shared belonging—“us” rather than “you and I.” On the supply side, regenerative tourism emphasises managing destination carrying capacities (He et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2023; Day et al., 2021), limiting the adverse impacts of tourism development (Molinero, 2022), sustaining visitor numbers, replenishing local resources, and fostering long-term benefits for local environments and communities (Bellato et al., 2023; He

et al., 2023). While such initiatives actively advance sustainability goals (Burns, 2021), it remains unclear how they diverge, in substance or effect, from established sustainable tourism practices. This highlights the need for further research to clarify the practical and conceptual boundaries between the two approaches.

Transformation

Transformation entails “the emergence of a new order” from systemic disruption. It begins with escalating instability, progresses to the “death of the old way of being,” and culminates in a generative rebirth—symbolically akin to a phoenix rising from the ashes (Anderson & Anderson, 2010, p.61). This process represents a growth-oriented, irreversible shift that breaks fundamentally with prior practices and requires new knowledge and capacities for implementation (Reisinger, 2013). In the context of sustainable development, transformation is essential for addressing deep-rooted social injustices and environmental crises (Pepper, 2002), demanding structural change at multiple levels. Regenerative development embodies this capacity, with its inherent ability to innovate and adapt across scales (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Through continuous re-evaluation and responsiveness to evolving conditions, regenerative action drives transformative outcomes (Mehmood et al., 2020). Regenerative tourism, therefore, is grounded in the conviction that tourism can be a vehicle for systemic change—advancing equity, sustainability (Zaman, 2023), and long-term resilience through transformative practice (Ateljevic, 2020).

Tourism research has traditionally explored transformation through the lens of the individual traveller, focusing on internal changes catalysed by travel. These transformative experiences encompass behavioural, social, psychological, and spiritual dimensions (Zhao & Agyeiwaah, 2023), often designed to challenge comfort zones, expand worldviews, and foster social empowerment and intercultural understanding (Nandasena et al., 2022; Soulard et al., 2021). However, within the framework of regenerative tourism, transformation extends beyond the personal to encompass systemic change. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *transformation* refers to “a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that that thing or person is improved,” suggesting its relevance to both external systems and internal states (Ateljevic, 2020). Recognised by the United Nations as a foundational principle of regenerative tourism (Hui et al., 2023), transformation is now envisioned at the level of destinations themselves. This emerging paradigm views destinations as dynamic, living systems—sites of meaningful encounter, human–nature

connection, and reciprocal relationship-building (Bellato, et al., 2023). Regenerative tourism seeks to realise the full development potential of these places by generating net positive outcomes, particularly in social and natural capital. Its ultimate aim is to restore balance within the system (Dredge, 2022) and establish the conditions for long-term self-renewal, self-restoration, and self-replenishment—ensuring the flourishing of all forms of life (Bellato et al., 2023; Sheldon, 2022; Day et al., 2021; Mang & Reed, 2012; Reed, 2007).

A growing number of stakeholders—including citizens, consumers, suppliers, tourists, business leaders, and community representatives—are acknowledging the need for regenerative transformation. Their advocacy and engagement signal a broader recognition of the urgency to shift towards a regenerative paradigm and economic model (Ateljevic, 2020). Regenerative tourism, in particular, centres on celebrating people, places, and cultural diversity, while prioritising quality over quantity (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2021). Within this vision of a regenerative future, tourism is reimagined as a genuinely positive, transformative, and collaborative force—capable of contributing meaningfully to the well-being of both people and planet (Ooi & Shelley, 2023).

Circularity

Circularity, as a foundational principle of continuity and order (Bradley, 2012), is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as “the fact of constantly returning to the same point or situation.” The concept has ancient roots, historically employed to understand natural cycles, the movement of materials, and spiritual or religious cosmologies (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022b). In contemporary discourse, circularity underpins the circular economy—a model proposed as an alternative to neoliberal paradigms characterised by short-termism and consumption-driven growth (Sheldon, 2022). This economic vision blends ancient understandings of cyclical systems with ethical resource stewardship (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022a). In classical Greek thought, the concept of *economy* was grounded in the idea of stewardship: the ethical use of abundant means to meet needs and generate surplus for purposes beyond the economic sphere (Leshem, 2016). Building on this legacy, the circular economy reimagines the planet and its inhabitants as interdependent communities, advocating for the responsible use, regeneration, and redistribution of resources (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022a).

Whereas ancient Greek thought envisioned nature as abundantly providing for human needs, contemporary economic paradigms often frame the global environment in terms of

scarcity (Leshem, 2016). In response, the circular economy has emerged as a regenerative model that seeks to minimise resource inputs, reduce waste, and curb emissions and energy leakage. It achieves this by “slowing, closing, and narrowing material and energy loops”—through strategies such as durable design, preventive maintenance, efficient repair, thoughtful reuse, meticulous remanufacturing, meticulous refurbishing, and effective recycling (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017, p.766). In contrast to economic systems that externalise environmental costs, the circular economy prioritises resource optimisation and efficiency, particularly with respect to natural resources (Dredge, 2022; Sheldon, 2022). Within this model, tourism offers fertile ground for innovation—supporting initiatives that promote decommodification, reconfigure producer–user relationships, and pioneer new approaches to resource stewardship (Sørensen & Bærenholdt, 2020).

Regeneration is a core component of the circular economy (Day et al., 2021), with natural cycles of renewal informing circular strategies—particularly those grounded in regenerative land-use practices (Ateljevic, 2020). The core principle of circularity mirrors the cyclical, self-sustaining patterns inherent in regenerative processes (Dredge, 2022; Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022b). When applied within social and relational contexts (Massey, 2005), circular economy principles can activate regenerative dynamics by fostering new connections, relationships, and networks among diverse stakeholders. These synergies between regenerative tourism and the circular economy reveal significant potential for shaping the future of ecotourism—integrating sustainable practices with regenerative aims at both local and global scales (Day et al., 2021).

The organising principle of regenerative tourism, inspired by biomimicry, encourages us to learn from and collaborate with nature in shaping sustainable tourism frameworks (Becken & Kaur, 2021). At the heart of this approach lies the significance of circularity (Dredge, 2022). Viewed through a circular lens, tourism development is no longer a linear trajectory but a dynamic, regenerative process—interwoven with the broader geo-evolutionary patterns of the Anthropocene (Saarinen, 2020). By adopting circular regenerative strategies that encompass natural assets, tourism products, and services, the industry gains a powerful opportunity to realise sustainability and fundamentally reframe its role (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017). This shift positions tourism not merely as an economic activity, but as a catalyst for ecological and social regeneration—promoting growth that honours natural cycles and enhances the well-being of both ecosystems and communities (Ateljevic, 2020).

Regeneration

Regeneration recognises that the purpose of life is not merely to sustain or survive, but to thrive and flourish (Major & Clarke, 2022). This perspective resonates with the Cambridge Dictionary's definition of regeneration as "the act of improving a place or system, especially by making it more active or successful" (Grandi, 2024). Bizzarri and Micera (2024) employ a metaphor to illustrate regeneration: regenerative tourism is likened to nurturing a new shoot emerging from the trunk of a lime tree. This shoot is carefully detached and cultivated into a new plant—one that shares the same roots and genetic makeup as its source, yet grows independently. It retains the essence of the original without causing harm, disruption, or alteration to the environmental conditions from which it arose. Once established, this new growth follows its own autonomous path. In contrast to anthropocentric models, regenerative systems encompass both human and non-human elements, whose evolutionary capacity and regenerative potential are activated through regenerative development approaches (Bellato et al., 2023; Sanford, 2019; Mang & Reed, 2012). However, the precise focus of regeneration remains contested. For instance, Dredge (2022, p.270) emphasises "people, places, and nature"; Becken and Kaur (2021, p.54) highlight "people, culture, and land"; while Aquino et al. (2024, p.5) stress "people, place, and land" as the core elements of regenerative systems.

The literature conceptualises regeneration from two primary perspectives: regeneration for humans and regeneration for places. Human-centred regeneration is grounded in three core pillars: connection with the self, connection with others, and connection with nature (Teruel, 2022). Regenerative development calls for a meaningful reconnection between humans and nature—one that encompasses cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, and tourism is increasingly recognised as a potential catalyst for fostering this deeper reconnection (Forte & Mariotti, 2024). Consequently, regenerative tourism operates across multiple scales—from individuals to complex systems. At the individual level, it encompasses mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being (Mathisen et al., 2022; Ives et al., 2020). Within human societies, it extends to culture, community cohesion, and local economies (Bellato et al., 2023; Dredge, 2022). For example, regeneration has the potential to strengthen community resilience, reconnect people with agriculture and food systems, and enhance overall human health and well-being (Dredge, 2022). At the systemic level—which includes non-human elements—regeneration entails the restoration and revitalisation of ecological systems (Dredge, 2022; Hutchins & Storm, 2019). By harnessing nature's inherent restorative capacity, it offers a pathway to recovering lost ecological

wisdom, enabling ecosystems not only to endure but to flourish (Bhalla & Chowdhary, 2022). However, such regeneration requires substantial time, investment, and expertise (Hajarrahmah et al., 2024).

Regeneration for places is inherently place-based and shaped by local conditions (Dredge, 2022; Becken & Kaur, 2021). From a placemaking perspective, each location is unique—defined by its geography, history, culture, environment, and the evolving needs of its inhabitants (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Placemaking emerges through the continuous interaction between people and their surroundings, a process that in turn transforms and regenerates those places (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022a). Through context-sensitive placemaking, tourism can facilitate lasting transformative experiences and enable regenerative practices that impact local environments, natural assets, and all living beings (Richards, 2020; Karacor, 2014). Regeneration calls for a renewed understanding of place—not only as a setting for production or human consumption (Bellato, 2024), but as a dynamic component of interconnected life systems. It invites individuals, communities, organisations, and destinations to actively participate in the flourishing of the socio-ecological systems they inhabit (Major & Clarke, 2022). Regenerative development is place-centred, recognising the potential of place as the primary driver of genuine wealth. It regards place as a living partner in development—a co-creator engaged in a reciprocal relationship with its inhabitants (Bellato, 2024).

From a place-regeneration perspective, regenerative tourism is both transformative and economically viable (Dredge, 2022). Its value extends beyond mitigating the adverse effects of mass tourism (Becken & Kaur, 2021) or revitalising depleted destinations (Sheldon, 2022; Duxbury et al., 2020). Crucially, it also involves regenerating marginalised, underserved, or neglected landscapes and communities—reimagining them as meaningful and resilient tourist destinations (Ateljevic, 2020; Duxbury et al., 2020; Matunga et al., 2020). Place-based development that harnesses local potential offers fertile ground for such regenerative practices, positioning tourism as a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable transformation (Cheer, 2020; Owen, 2007b).

Co-Creation before Regenerative Tourism

To address the second research question—examining the co-creation of regenerative tourism—it is essential to distinguish between the prevailing co-creation approach in tourism and the distinctive form required by regenerative tourism.

Value Co-Creation

Co-creation, rooted in the service-dominant logic framework (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), has become a defining feature of the contemporary business landscape (Ertz, 2024). In economic literature, co-creation is understood as a relational, contextual, and interconnected bottom-up process (Mathisen et al., 2022; Gibson-Graham, 1997). It represents a shift from traditional models that positioned firms as sole creators of value and customers as passive recipients. Instead, value is seen as co-emergent, generated through interactive collaboration between providers and users, particularly via service exchange and active engagement (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Co-creation manifests in various forms, including feedback, co-production, firm-led service innovation, customer-driven customisation, and collaborative development (Oyner & Korelina, 2016). Its effectiveness depends on key interaction principles: willingness to exchange, open access to information, coordination, dialogue, transparency, adaptability, and informed risk-taking (Assiouras et al., 2024). As a strategic approach, value co-creation drives innovation, strengthens consumer engagement, and supports responses to sustainability challenges (Borges-Tiago & Avelar, 2025; Melis et al., 2023). Its inclusive nature enables the integration of diverse perspectives—from customers and suppliers to employees and non-governmental organisations—many of whom are increasingly focused on sustainability concerns (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

Consumer co-creation is a relational process involving the exchange of experiences, resources, and knowledge (Yang, 2025). It is an active, creative, and social endeavour through which organisations and stakeholders collaborate to create mutual value (Ribeiro et al., 2023). Widely adopted across both public and private sectors, co-creation is valued for its ability to generate insights, improve service outcomes, and build stronger stakeholder relationships (Ertz, 2024). Its effectiveness depends on sustained interaction and engagement (Carvalho et al., 2021), with perceived benefits and costs jointly mediating their impact on outcomes—though perceived costs may have a stronger influence (Li et al., 2025). Organisational support plays a pivotal role by facilitating participation which enhances satisfaction, loyalty, and customer spending (Grissemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). Within this framework, co-production and value-in-use function as transformative mechanisms that translate customer engagement into customer citizenship behaviours. Co-production refers to the customer's active involvement in the service delivery process, whereas value-in-use

emphasises the experiential dimension—where value is realised through the customer’s interaction with the service over time (Sadighha et al., 2025).

Despite its widespread adoption, co-creation has faced criticism for its occasional conceptual vagueness and lack of practical grounding. In some cases, its use in the literature remains superficial, lacking definitional clarity or methodological rigour (Phi & Dredge, 2019). However, the concept has progressively evolved to reflect more inclusive and participatory practices, involving a wider range of stakeholders throughout the value creation process (Voorberg et al., 2015; Steen, 2013). At its core, co-creation emphasises value as defined from the stakeholders’ perspectives, highlighting the importance of understanding and addressing their needs through collaborative engagement (Ertz, 2024). The success of co-creation initiatives often hinges on strategic alignment with organisational objectives, stakeholder synergy, and technological readiness (Cabiddu et al., 2013). Today, co-creation is applied across diverse domains, including product development (Von Hippel, 2006) and service design (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019).

Tourism Co-Creation

The tourism industry is inherently high-contact (Grissemann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012) and experiential, making it particularly conducive to value co-creation (Neuhofer et al., 2014). Experience co-creation, or value-in-use, is increasingly recognised as a vital mechanism for generating and sustaining value (Bezova & Azara, 2021), as it enhances the meaningfulness of encounters with services, places, and cultures (Kastenholz & Gronau, 2022). It is driven by the dynamic interactions between tourists and service providers, as well as the active involvement of tourists themselves (Buonincontri et al., 2017). Research has largely focused on co-creation as a tool for understanding customer experiences (Kim et al., 2022), improving service quality (Sthapit et al., 2022), and fostering deeper tourist engagement (Doyle & Kelliher, 2023)—ultimately contributing to more authentic, responsible, and sustainable tourism (Ertz, 2024).

From a relationship marketing perspective, tourism is inherently relational, characterised by continuous interactions among diverse stakeholders (John & Supramaniam, 2024). Value is co-created through collaborative processes that integrate these actors within service systems (Werner et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2018; Zători, 2016). As resources are exchanged, stakeholders not only co-produce services but also establish shared institutional arrangements, leading to value resonance—an alignment of values that fosters ongoing co-

creation and service innovation (Kuo & Chen, 2024). This process is context-dependent (Bertella & Rinaldi, 2020), unfolding through the synchronous participation of multiple actors (Melis et al., 2023) shaped by situational, organisational, and individual factors (Chathoth et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2020; Ross & Saxena, 2019).

Stakeholders—including tourists, local communities, service providers, employees, intermediaries, public bodies, and destination management organisations—jointly contribute to and benefit from value co-creation within a tourism ecosystem (Garanti, 2023). This ecosystem facilitates interactions across micro, meso, and macro levels, supporting the delivery of high-value services (Giannopoulos et al., 2020). In sustainability-oriented ecosystems, four key components underpin co-creation: stakeholder groups, resource integration, enabling technologies, and institutional frameworks (Polese et al., 2018). Resources essential for social value creation—natural, financial, political, institutional, and human capital—enable value generation at individual, organisational, and systemic levels through interconnected processes. Effective resource mobilisation depends on stakeholder collaboration, relationship-building, and local community empowerment (Altinay et al., 2016). Ultimately, sustained value co-creation in tourism is underpinned by altruism, solidarity, and a shared commitment to protecting the well-being of all ecosystem actors (Assiouras et al., 2022).

However, interactions between stakeholders do not always result in value co-creation; they can also lead to value co-destruction. Research on co-destruction in tourism remains in its infancy (Freire & Veríssimo, 2021). A key driver of co-destruction is the misalignment of practices and routines (Assiouras et al., 2022), which stem from cognitive scripts shaped by stakeholders' prior experiences and behaviours. When the cognitive scripts of consumers and providers are misaligned, both parties may perceive value co-destruction (Järvi et al., 2020). In the context of family travel, factors such as clarity of family roles and prior knowledge influence whether value is co-created or co-destroyed (Jia et al., 2025). Value co-destruction negatively impacts customer citizenship behaviours and overall experience evaluations, often resulting in adverse word-of-mouth (Jia et al., 2025; Arica et al., 2022).

Tourist-Centric Co-Creation

Tourists and Service Providers

Customer value is central to the success of tourism and is increasingly recognised as co-created through interaction between tourists and service providers. These interactions—

particularly during on-site experiences—are critical sources of value (Heinonen, 2023). For instance, ski chalets offered by service providers often serve as ‘consumer communities’, where like-minded guests co-create experiences through a combination of online and offline engagement, including social interaction, all-inclusive services, and shared cultural practices (McLeay et al., 2019). Tourist destinations actively facilitate this process by promoting idea exchange, co-designing experiences, and supporting the collective development of value (Payne & Frow, 2017).

Given its central role in tourism, co-creation has been widely examined as a mechanism through which consumers increasingly shape the design and delivery of tourism services and products (Suntikul & Jachna, 2016). For example, mutual engagement among tourists is essential in agritourism, enabling agribusinesses to adapt internal services such as activities and strategies to visitor preferences (Liang, 2017). In practice, co-production between tourists and service providers occurs through various channels, including virtual scenic attractions (Zhao et al., 2024), personalised care services (Johnson & Buhalis, 2022), and interactive digital platforms (Uysal et al., 2020). Simultaneously, value-in-use is achieved through onsite souvenir customisation (Lv et al., 2024) and immersive experiences in cultural heritage settings (Kastenholz & Gronau, 2022). Despite this progress, the dominant focus on service-based co-creation requires broadening to include the material environment and the wider socio-cultural contexts in which tourism unfolds (Suntikul & Jachna, 2016).

Tour guides, as individual service providers, play a pivotal role in co-creating guided tour experiences (Weiler & Black, 2015). By capturing attention, fostering engagement, and encouraging discovery, they contribute to more personalised and meaningful encounters (Zátori, 2016; Weiler & Black, 2015). However, in many heritage contexts, co-production is prioritised over value-in-use, with providers often adhering to authorised heritage narratives that constrain tourists’ interpretative participation (Bezova & Azara, 2021). This emphasis on didactic delivery limits the potential for genuinely co-created experiences that reflect diverse visitor perspectives (Ross, 2020). Additional barriers to effective co-creation include limited awareness and expertise in co-creation methodologies, alongside financial, temporal, and human resource constraints (Bezova & Azara, 2021).

Tourism entrepreneurs, as organisational service providers, contribute not only to economic development but also to policy-making processes that support sustainable tourism and local development (Stylianou et al., 2025). Among them, small-scale entrepreneurs who adopt co-creation and offer immersive, culturally authentic experiences are particularly well-positioned to succeed. They differentiate themselves through distinctive, hands-on activities

that actively engage tourists with local culture (Dias et al., 2024b). Within tourism lifestyle entrepreneurship, co-creation strengthens customer-based brand equity (Gamarra et al., 2024) and mediates the influence of factors such as social mission, community-oriented strategies, and emotional attachment to place on entrepreneurs' social self-efficacy (de Sousa et al., 2023). The interdependence between tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs and their destinations thus becomes a driver of value co-creation and social innovation (Dias et al., 2024a).

The success of co-creation between tourists and service providers is influenced by a range of factors on both sides. For tourists, psychological drivers—such as awe inspired by virtual attractions (Zhao et al., 2024), engagement, place attachment, perceived authenticity (Michopoulou et al., 2021) and innovativeness (Kim et al., 2019)—shape their willingness to participate in co-creation, thereby affecting satisfaction, loyalty, and behavioural intentions (Kim et al., 2019). On the provider side, organisational strategies, company culture (Chathoth et al., 2014), marketing approaches (Michopoulou et al., 2021), and innovative practices—such as gamification (Rather et al., 2023)—encourage collaborative participation. In addition, the quality of the relationship between tourists and providers further strengthens customer involvement in the co-creation process (Blazquez-Resino, et al., 2015).

Ultimately, co-creation yields a wide range of benefits for both tourists and service providers. For tourists, it enhances emotional and cognitive value (Johnson & Buhalis, 2022), fostering enjoyment, interconnectedness, spiritual vitality, independence, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging—particularly among older adults (Fan et al., 2025). It also promotes memorable and authentic experiences (Sthapit et al., 2018), while strengthening behavioural outcomes such as technology adoption, (re)purchase and revisit intentions (Lv et al., 2024; Assiouras et al., 2019), cultural stewardship (Lv et al., 2024), and customer citizenship behaviours (Arıca & Çorbacı, 2020). For service providers, co-creation enhances customer satisfaction (Prebensen & Xie, 2017), loyalty (Berenguer-Contrı et al., 2024), and trust (Moise et al., 2020), while also contributing to improved cultural authenticity (Szmigin et al., 2017), and the livability and appeal of destinations (Uysal et al., 2020).

Tourists and Fellow Tourists

Tourists are increasingly taking on a central role in value creation, shifting from passive consumers to active co-creators (Lv et al., 2024; Carvalho et al., 2021). Tourism co-creation is typically conceptualised as a subjectively lived, on-site experience characterised by active engagement and interaction (Campos et al., 2017). It encompasses a range of experiential

dimensions, including social interaction, creativity, enjoyment, novelty, social sustainability, environmental awareness, and memorability (Rachão et al., 2021). Co-creation occurs across all stages of the travel process—before, during, and after the trip (Zhang, 2020). In museums, for example, visitors add value by bringing prior knowledge and interests, engaging actively during their visit, and maintaining their involvement through social media, online reviews, or repeat visits (Antón et al., 2018). As resource integrators, tourists contribute to value creation through social, physical, and psychological interactions with fellow travellers throughout their journey (Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Prebensen & Foss, 2011).

However, the impact of tourist-to-tourist interaction remains contested. On the one hand, productive encounters between tourists can generate social, affective, functional, and network value (Pandey et al., 2025; Rihova et al., 2018). In some cases, indirect interactions with other tourists have a greater influence on the tourism experience than direct contact, with other tourists perceived as contributing either positively or negatively to the experience (Han et al., 2021). On the other hand, some studies suggest that tourist-to-tourist interaction has only a limited effect on value co-creation (Li et al., 2025). The growing diversity of travellers, particularly among younger generations such as Generation Z, is likely to shape co-created travel experiences (Zhang, 2020). As different generations interpret interactive value differently, interactions between adults and their parents during travel can result in both co-creation and co-destruction (Jia et al., 2025). Importantly, value co-creation is not solely dependent on social interactions between tourists; rather, it is shaped to a greater extent by individual factors, including attitudes towards sociability. The more attention tourists pay to other social actors—and the longer and more personal these interactions become—the more complex and multilayered the perceived co-created value tends to be (Reichenberger, 2017).

Tourists and Hosts

Residents' engagement in value co-creation is pivotal to destination (re)branding (Bowen & Sotomayor, 2022), cultural preservation, and sustainable development (Yang et al., 2022; Lan et al., 2021). Increasingly, host communities are calling for more meaningful involvement in tourism decision-making—engaging not only as individuals, but as a collective (Leal et al., 2022). Culturally empowered community associations can facilitate this collective agency, enabling residents to assume a transformative role. These associations promote co-creative participation through knowledge exchange, strategic partnerships, and psychological empowerment (Shrestha et al., 2025).

Resident-tourist interactions are fundamental to tourism value co-creation (Wei et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2017). These exchanges span communal, collaborative, and occasionally adversarial forms (Vegas-Macias, 2025). Local communities enrich the tourist experience by hosting, volunteering, and engaging in direct interaction (Hayes, 2024)—all of which enhance the memorability of visits (Williams et al., 2019). Given the frequent, spontaneous, and often intimate nature of these encounters, the experiential value of tourism is inherently reciprocal (Bertella et al., 2020). Nevertheless, some studies suggest that co-creation plays only a limited role in shaping host–guest dynamics (Huber & Gross, 2022).

Resident engagement may be either active or passive (Huber & Gross, 2022), driven by factors such as place attachment (Tosun et al., 2025), perceived socio-cultural benefits (Li et al., 2024), tourism impacts, and emotional solidarity (Lan et al., 2021). Life satisfaction has also been shown to mediate the relationship between perceived tourism impacts and participation in co-creation (Lin et al., 2017). Regardless of the mode of involvement, value outcomes for residents may include friendship, knowledge acquisition, greater self-esteem, and employment opportunities (Sevisari & Reichenberger, 2020). Through collaborative engagement, residents not only exchange knowledge but also help generate tangible benefits for their communities (Bertella & Rinaldi, 2020).

Co-Creation in Regenerative Tourism

Realising regenerative tourism requires a paradigm shift grounded in innovative economic models and practical principles (Major & Clarke, 2022). Within the dominant Western discourse, this shift calls for systems thinking, Indigenous-centred approaches, anti-anthropocentric co-creation, and bottom-up collaboration among diverse stakeholders—including hosts, entrepreneurs, and tourists. Together, these four foundational principles shape a distinctive understanding of co-creation in regenerative tourism.

Systems Thinking

The development of regenerative tourism is grounded in a holistic systems approach (Bellato et al., 2023), which emphasises collaboration and a renewed relationship with nature (Dredge, 2022). Its overarching aim is to cultivate a world defined by interconnectedness and interdependence, encouraging active human engagement in the co-creative and co-evolutionary processes that shape our shared future (Hes & Du Plessis, 2014). This approach

must be imaginative, dynamic, and innovative, drawing on both emotional and collective intelligence (Major & Clarke, 2022).

Central to regenerative tourism is systems thinking (Molinero, 2022)—a conceptual framework rooted in general systems theory (Day et al., 2021) and echoed in ancient Western and Eastern philosophies. Thinkers such as Aristotle and Lao Tzu have long emphasised the fundamental interconnectedness of the world (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2023), a perspective that continues to inform regenerative thinking today. General systems theory views life as a complex web of nested ecosystems (Mathisen et al., 2022), where human and natural systems exist in mutual dependence and constant interaction (Major & Clarke, 2022; Becken & Kaur, 2021). It highlights the vulnerability and interrelatedness of all living beings (Day et al., 2021), underscoring the collective responsibility for maintaining the health of the planet (Ateljevic, 2020).

From this perspective, tourism is not an isolated industry but an integral part of a dynamic, evolving system (Dredge, 2022). Regenerative tourism functions as a subsystem within the broader living system of the Earth (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Rather than focusing solely on sustaining tourism itself (Duxbury et al., 2020), this approach seeks to enhance the well-being of ecosystems, communities, economies, and cultures (Zaman et al., 2023; Becken & Kaur, 2021; Cave & Dredge, 2021). It prioritises the long-term vitality of local life and landscapes (Duxbury et al., 2020), prompting deeper reflection on the role of regeneration in broader socioeconomic systems (Mang & Reed, 2020). This, in turn, calls for innovative economic models that align with the interdependence of living networks and support a shift towards regenerative ways of thinking and acting (Fullerton, 2015).

A regenerative system comprises an intricate network of social, economic, and ecological subsystems (Cave & Dredge, 2021; Cheer, 2020), each with its own boundaries and internal dynamics. These systems often intersect, and their edges play a crucial dual role in the context of regenerative tourism. First, they provide spaces for intervention—points at which targeted changes can stimulate systemic transformation (Bellato et al., 2023). As tourism operates within and across these systems, it must adapt fluidly to their evolving conditions (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Viewing tourism as a complex adaptive system enhances its capacity to respond to uncertainty and crisis (Dredge, 2022), embedding resilience within both community well-being and ecological integrity (Day et al., 2021). Second, these edges serve as fertile ground for transdisciplinary knowledge production. Regenerative tourism draws on a wide array of disciplines and synthesises diverse knowledge systems, including Western science, Indigenous knowledges, and localised practices (Bellato, 2024; Becken &

Kaur, 2021). The cross-pollination of insights across disciplinary and geographic boundaries is essential for translating regenerative principles into effective practice (Suárez-Rojas et al., 2023).

At the heart of regenerative development lies the concept of place. Regenerative tourism initiatives are designed to optimise systemic outcomes (Bellato et al., 2023) by understanding places and events as dynamic energy systems characterised by continually evolving relationships (Mang & Reed, 2012). These living systems foster resilience by addressing the transformative impacts of tourism in a strategic, integrated manner (Zaman et al., 2023; Brouder et al., 2021; Duxbury et al., 2020). This involves creating self-renewing systems (Dowling, 2000; Lyle, 1996; Arfwedson, 1994) that align cultural and natural patterns with social and ecological processes (Reed, 2007). In doing so, regenerative tourism overcomes many of the limitations inherent in conventional models of sustainability, offering a more holistic and adaptive pathway for tourism development (Zaman et al., 2023).

Indigenous-Centred Approaches

Regenerative tourism is inherently context-specific, with each destination shaped by local cultures, values, and Indigenous presence (Sheldon, 2022). As such, there can be no universal framework: every destination functions as a unique living system, requiring bespoke approaches (Rojas et al., 2024). This transformation cannot be achieved through traditional scientific management models rooted in the dominant Western paradigm, which is shaped by ideologies such as individualism, marketisation, reductionism, and a worldview of separation (Dredge, 2022). These ideologies profoundly influence our perception and response to global challenges. Aligned with neoliberal economics and strategic management thinking (Dredge, 2018; Dredge & Jenkins, 2007), this paradigm often marginalises Indigenous knowledge, leaving little space for alternative epistemologies (Dredge, 2022).

As a result, Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and relating to the world are frequently ignored or appropriated within Western-centric tourism models (Boluk & Panse, 2022; Tham et al., 2020). However, emerging disciplines such as neuroscience increasingly affirm the legitimacy of holistic and integrative ways of knowing. Indigenous wisdom—rooted in observation, spiritual connection, and lived experience—constitutes a form of collective intelligence refined over generations (Dredge, 2022). It is transmitted through rich, non-linear systems of knowledge, offering a worldview that challenges the assumptions of ecological separation embedded in dominant scientific frameworks (Nelson & Shilling, 2018; Hes & Du

Plessis, 2014). Indigenous knowledge, therefore, forms a foundational pillar of regenerative thinking (Major & Clarke, 2022).

There is a reciprocal relationship between Indigenous wisdom and the regenerative tourism paradigm (Liburd & Becken, 2017). Tourism can contribute to the revitalisation of Indigenous cultures (Nitsch & Vogels, 2022), while regenerative tourism depends on a shift away from narrowly scientific worldviews towards more integrative understandings of knowledge (Dredge, 2022)—placing particular emphasis on Indigenous epistemologies. Long before European colonisation, Indigenous communities developed adaptive systems of environmental management, responding flexibly to ecological change (Berkes et al., 2000). These place-specific actions, rooted in ancestral traditions, have revitalised local ecosystems, encompassing not only the natural environment but also human communities and their tourism activities (Lazic & Della Lucia, 2024). From this perspective, regeneration is not a novel idea but a reawakening of ancient, place-based understandings (Major & Clarke, 2022).

Despite the disruptions of colonisation and industrialisation, Indigenous peoples have sustained these knowledge systems, which continue to offer crucial insights into environmental and cultural resilience. In Oceania, for instance, Indigenous thinking has been instrumental in shaping regenerative tourism research. The concept of “stakeholder guilds,” derived from Australian Indigenous frameworks, describes collaborative relationships between human and non-human actors aimed at sustaining the health of place (Mang et al., 2016). In Aotearoa New Zealand, Becken and colleagues have drawn on Māori worldviews to inform tourism management. Māori intergenerational thinking aligns closely with regenerative tourism’s long-term vision (Liburd & Becken, 2017), embracing the principle of “humans in nature” (Becken & Kaur, 2021) and recognising the intrinsic value of all beings within complex ecological systems (Matunga et al., 2020). Becken and Kaur (2021) propose a framework that integrates Māori values with regenerative principles to promote multi-dimensional well-being and generate tangible benefits for local communities.

To integrate Indigenous wisdom in regenerative tourism, a transformative, decolonial, and transdisciplinary approach has been proposed (Bellato et al., 2023). A decolonial lens is essential for interrogating colonial narratives that persist in tourism. Postcolonial and Indigenous studies have highlighted the ways in which tourism can reinforce power imbalances and undermine Indigenous agency (Kaomea, 2016). Decolonial approaches resist these dynamics by reclaiming Indigenous voices and enabling communities to articulate their own visions of tourism development. In doing so, they engage in a participatory process that challenges capital-centric development models and redefines core concepts such as well-

being and value (Ruttenberg, 2023). This approach resists universalising principles and instead foregrounds meaningful Indigenous leadership and participation. Their framework challenges mechanistic thinking and dominant paradigms, seeking to restore and renew relationships among humans and between human and non-human world (Bellato et al., 2024a).

Decolonising tourism research also requires a fundamental rethinking of knowledge production. Rather than incorporating Indigenous epistemologies into Western frameworks, it calls for their recognition on their own terms (Peters, 2017). This involves transcending disciplinary boundaries and valuing knowledge grounded in lived experience, spiritual connection, and empirical observation alike. Decolonial approaches reject methodologies confined to Western paradigms, advocating instead for transdisciplinary, contextually responsive research practices. Such approaches require scholars and practitioners to critically examine existing tourism models and contribute to the generation of pluriversal knowledge—diverse ways of knowing that coexist and enrich one another (Bellato et al., 2024a).

Anti-Anthropocentric Co-Creation

With its emphasis on co-creation, regenerative tourism presents a practical and compelling approach to giving more than it takes—supporting the renewal and restoration of destinations (Bode et al., 2024). A shift towards holistic value co-creation marks one of the most critical developments in the evolution from sustainable to regenerative models of development (Zaman et al., 2023). By centring equitable and inclusive participation (Bellato et al., 2023), this approach reframes tourism from a limited focus on individual well-being to one rooted in ethical responsibilities and reciprocal relationships among soil, soul, and society (Mathisen et al., 2022; Gibson-Graham, 1997).

Regenerative tourism is inherently multisectoral, multiscale, multidisciplinary, and multifaceted (Dredge, 2022). It demands cross-sector collaboration (Major & Clarke, 2022) and a shared commitment from diverse stakeholders, including local residents, businesses, governments, tourists, and non-human entities (Zaman, 2023; Cave & Dredge, 2021; Duxbury et al., 2020). Each stakeholder possesses distinct capabilities and forms of agency (Dredge, 2022), which must be recognised and nurtured to support collaborative decision-making (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Meaningful, transparent, and authentic dialogue is essential for fostering regenerative practices (Boluk & Panse, 2022).

Co-creation in this context extends beyond human actors, encompassing non-human systems and tapping into the evolutionary potential of both (Becken & Kaur, 2021; Dias, 2019; Sanford, 2019; Mang & Reed, 2012). At its core, regenerative tourism is grounded in the co-evolution of human and non-human systems—including institutional and political structures (Day et al., 2021). This relationship is built on reciprocity, environmental ethics, and an awareness of planetary boundaries. It integrates social and ecological systems through a mindset of stewardship, care, and mutual respect (Gerhards & Greenwood, 2021; Cheer, 2020; Dwyer, 2018; Owen, 2007a).

Acknowledging the agency of non-human participants is central to this framework. These participants communicate their presence and needs through ecological signals, which are interpreted through ecological semiotics by experts (Husamoglu et al., 2025). Crucially, these experts include local inhabitants whose intimate knowledge of place is rooted in lived experience, Indigenous epistemologies, and cultural resilience (Bode et al., 2024). Tour guides, for instance, operate within more-than-human landscapes, engaging in practices shaped by ethical relationships with nature (Omma, 2024).

Two dominant approaches to value co-creation have emerged in regenerative tourism scholarship: stewardship and partnership. The stewardship model positions all actors as caretakers, jointly responsible for the flourishing of communities and ecosystems (Boluk & Panse, 2022). For regenerative practices to become embedded within tourism systems, stakeholders across all operational levels must embrace stewardship roles. Expanding the scope of well-being—beyond economic metrics—is vital to countering capital-centric constraints that hinder transformative change (Mathisen et al., 2022). When residents and visitors alike develop a deep sense of care for the places they inhabit or explore, they become active participants in regeneration (Tomassini & Cavagnaro, 2022a). Complementing this, Bellato et al. (2022) propose a set of regenerative roles for human stakeholders—guesting, hosting, communing, stewarding, and placing—and for places themselves, including sourcing, connecting, and attracting. These roles are fluid and interdependent, with stakeholders often embodying multiple roles simultaneously. Reimagining these roles requires a shift in focus from static identities to dynamic processes, systems thinking, and interrelationality (Mang et al., 2016).

The partnership approach, by contrast, repositions the human–nature relationship from managerial control to mutual collaboration (Day et al., 2021). It envisions co-creative engagements not only among people but also with other living systems (Boluk & Panse, 2022). This approach cultivates a socio-ecological consciousness and calls for a transition

from an ego-centric to an eco-centric worldview—from “me” to “we.” Such a shift nurtures empathy, collective responsibility, and a deeper awareness of interdependence (Rehman et al., 2023; Dredge, 2022). Value-based framework of Becken and Kaur (2021) exemplifies this orientation, supporting the tourism sector in building relational value between people and place. Viewed through an environmental ethics lens, it represents a broader transition from individualism to collectivism in tourism development (Rehman et al., 2023; Middlemiss, 2010).

Regenerative tourism also holds transformative potential in advancing justice by establishing ethical foundations that recognise more-than-human agency (Lazic & Della Lucia, 2024). It not only considers the outcomes of tourism, but also critically examines the foundational values that underpin it—including those expressed by non-human entities (Becken & Kaur, 2021). For instance, while rivers may support urban infrastructure and human use, their natural flow and intrinsic agency should also be respected and prioritized (Bellato et al., 2024b). This expanded conception of stakeholder inclusion challenges anthropocentric assumptions, recognising non-human actors as legitimate participants in tourism systems (Husamoglu et al., 2025). Nature itself can serve as a guide for regenerative design, offering principles such as valuing diversity, optimising and cycling resources, replenishing ecosystems, and maintaining circularity (Dredge, 2022). These principles reinforce non-dualistic, reciprocal relationships between humans and nature (Lazic & Della Lucia, 2024)—an essential corrective to human exceptionalism, structural injustice, and binary modes of thinking (Guia & Jamal, 2024).

Bottom-Up Collaboration

The transition to a regenerative tourism paradigm necessitates the sustained and active involvement of all stakeholders to enhance well-being across environmental, social, cultural, and economic dimensions (Fusté-Forné & Hussain, 2022). At its core, regenerative tourism is underpinned by a reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. It emphasises small-scale, community-led initiatives and prioritises the principle of giving back to local communities and ecosystems (Mathisen et al., 2022). Alternative tourism practices—particularly those emerging from Indigenous communities in the Global South—offer critical insights (Cave & Dredge, 2021). For example, Māori-led tourism in Aotearoa New Zealand embodies a holistic model that promotes well-being at multiple scales. These practices reflect

regenerative principles in action, demonstrating that tourism can contribute more than it extracts (Becken & Kaur, 2021).

In contrast to conventional tourism development—typically driven by top-down governmental agendas focused on economic growth (Dredge, 2022; Adhya, 2012)—regenerative tourism calls for participatory, place-based approaches informed by local knowledge. Moving beyond short-term, profit-oriented decision-making requires attentiveness to the voices of communities, Indigenous knowledge holders, environmental scientists, cultural practitioners, and other local actors (Yeoman & Sheldon, 2024). While external consultants may bring technical expertise, they often rely on reductionist frameworks that overlook the complexity and specificity of local contexts. By contrast, communities hold situated knowledge crucial for identifying and responding to local challenges (Dredge, 2022).

A bottom-up model of regenerative tourism must therefore be community-centred, ecologically informed, and responsive to local needs. Around the world, grassroots initiatives are already demonstrating regenerative potential and contributing incrementally to broader systemic change (Dredge, 2022). One such example is the Children’s University Tasmania, which leverages local resources to support individual, social, and cultural well-being. Within this model, the role of tourism shifts: stakeholders are encouraged to align their efforts not merely with visitor satisfaction but with the broader objective of enhancing community resilience and well-being (Ooi & Shelley, 2023).

Crucially, regenerative tourism depends on participatory processes through which goals, accountability, and progress are co-defined and assessed using metrics tailored to regenerative aims (Miller & Ward, 2005). Central to this approach is the question of how actions aligned with regenerative principles can be effectively supported and implemented (Hui et al., 2023). Incorporating the perspectives of both residents and visitors fosters more balanced stakeholder relationships (Bellato & Cheer, 2021), enhances participatory engagement, and enables the negotiation of contested values and priorities (Meneghello, 2023). However, conflicting stakeholder perspectives and entrenched power dynamics continue to pose significant challenges (Hajarrahmah et al., 2024). Addressing these barriers requires inclusive, distributed leadership and an explicit reckoning with colonial legacies. Regenerative tourism reimagines power as networked and decentralised, enabling a wider array of actors—including grassroots leaders—to contribute meaningfully to systemic well-being (Becken & Kaur, 2021; Cheer, 2020; Dwyer, 2018).

Trust-based collaboration is foundational to this emerging paradigm (Dredge, 2022). Effective regenerative tourism is grounded in cooperative problem-solving that creates shared

value (Zaman, 2023). As such, bottom-up approaches must also be collaborative (Cheer, 2020; Dwyer, 2018). Current discussions often centre on human stakeholders—such as host communities, tourism entrepreneurs, and tourists—each of whom holds a distinct and necessary role in co-creating a regenerative future.

Host Communities

As part of broader social policy strategies (Ooi & Shelley, 2023), regenerative tourism frequently supports local conservation efforts, including tree planting, wildlife protection programmes, and community-based sustainable agriculture (Becken & Kaur, 2021; Day et al., 2021). These initiatives, often small in scale, align with integrated approaches to local development, particularly in smaller or more vulnerable communities. Rather than pursuing large-scale interventions, regenerative tourism emphasises micro-level regeneration grounded in community needs and capacities (Hui et al., 2023; Cheer, 2020; Duxbury et al., 2020; Dwyer, 2018; Mang & Reed, 2012; Reed, 2007).

Community development—both as a process and a practice—provides an effective framework for regenerative tourism. By fostering equality and capacity-sharing, it strengthens communities and offers a foundation for planning and development that centres both people and the environment (Aquino et al., 2024). Within this paradigm, host communities are not passive beneficiaries but key agents of change (Dias, 2019; Dwyer, 2018). One illustrative example involves the creation of a walking itinerary in a mountainous region affected by natural disaster. This seemingly modest initiative encouraged residents to remain in the area despite the destruction of homes and limited access to basic services. The intervention emerged through a bottom-up process, facilitated by external actors who played a catalytic, rather than directive, role. In such cases, communities actively enhance systemic resilience, helping to move beyond recovery towards regeneration (Spalazzi & Mariotti, 2024). Tourism thus becomes a vector for revitalisation, not merely economic stimulation.

Local communities maintain deep-rooted connections to culture, heritage, and the environment. This embeddedness fosters a form of place-based pedagogy, grounded in ecological worldviews and largely independent of external knowledge systems (Spalazzi & Mariotti, 2024). Such locally situated knowledge positions community members to identify opportunities for sustainable prosperity and to develop context-specific responses to local challenges (Okazaki, 2008). Accordingly, regenerative strategies should emerge organically

from the grassroots, supported by meaningful community consultation and guided by local leadership (Muganda et al., 2013; Okazaki, 2008; Sofield, 1993).

Regenerative tourism, when meaningfully practised, involves close collaboration with communities to co-create sustainable travel experiences that enrich a destination's natural and cultural heritage (Bellato et al., 2023; Zaman, 2023). Central to this process is the prioritisation of community interests—yet this paradigm shift remains far from institutionalized (Ooi & Shelley, 2023). For regenerative approaches to take root and succeed over time, communities must be genuinely engaged, empowered, and invested (Duxbury et al., 2020).

Tourism Entrepreneurs

The evolution of global tourism depends not only on practical interventions but on a fundamental shift in human consciousness, adaptability, and an urgent recognition of the need for regeneration to secure long-term well-being (Dredge, 2022). Addressing managerial challenges and capitalising on emerging opportunities allows destinations to position themselves as leaders in regenerative tourism, appealing to an increasing number of global travellers who actively seek regenerative practices (Zaman, 2023). Implementing regenerative principles requires tourism entrepreneurs to challenge established norms and adopt alternative business models that drive innovation and systemic change (Gerke et al., 2024). Encouraging tourism operators to reallocate investments towards more regenerative initiatives is essential, particularly in counterbalancing consumer demand for less environmentally responsible options (Suárez-Rojas et al., 2023).

Entrepreneurs engaging in regenerative tourism often progress through three overlapping stages: inspiration, sustaining, exploration and participation. In the initial inspiration stage, a strong sense of purpose frequently outweighs a sense of self-efficacy, highlighting the significance of awareness-raising experiences and a “personal-is-political” ethos. The sustaining stage is characterised by a long-term commitment to social transformation, often prioritised over financial gain. In the final stage, exploration and participation, systems thinking becomes essential for embedding resilient and meaningful regenerative practices across operations (Hajarrahmah et al., 2024).

These entrepreneurs frequently form communities of practice, such as *Timbre*, comprising individuals united by shared regenerative values. Rather than functioning within traditional business hierarchies, these groups emphasise relationships built on mutual trust,

identifying as mates, friends, or “family.” Through collaborative and decentralised supply chains, they integrate ecological assets and social relations into networks of shared values and interests. This shift from transactional to relational ties is crucial for fostering deeper transformation and enabling the adoption of regenerative business practices (Gerke et al, 2024).

Tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs, even if not positioned to lead systemic change independently, nonetheless make meaningful contributions to the degrowth and regeneration agenda (Aquino et al., 2024). In this context, transformative leadership becomes essential (Cave et al., 2022; Hutchins & Storm, 2019). Such leadership involves cultivating collaborative relationships, practising self-awareness, mobilising collective action, and articulating shared values. Transformative leaders inspire those around them to act with integrity and purpose, even amid uncertainty (Cave et al., 2022).

Complementing this is the concept of regenerative leadership, which aspires to build holistic and integrated organisations. It reconnects rationality with intuition, the inner self with the external world, and promotes a balanced integration of masculine and feminine qualities in both human and ecological systems (Hutchins & Storm, 2019). Rooted in personal values and ethical commitments to regeneration, regenerative entrepreneurs aim to enhance the well-being of employees, suppliers, customers, and even non-human stakeholders. In their daily operations, they prioritise the use of local ingredients, nurture relationships with producers, and adopt practices that support long-term community and ecological well-being (Boluk & Panse, 2022).

However, regenerative tourism increasingly risks being co-opted as a marketing tool rather than embraced as a genuine commitment to systemic transformation. When destinations and businesses adopt the language of regeneration without fully engaging with its underlying principles, the concept becomes susceptible to dilution, thereby undermining its transformative potential (Yeoman & Sheldon, 2024). In addition, a persistent tension remains between the pursuit of commercial viability and the deeper ethical and ecological commitments required by regenerative tourism. Reconciling business imperatives with regenerative values continues to pose a critical challenge for the sector (Gerke et al, 2024).

Tourists

The most critical and transformative changes in regenerative tourism must begin at the individual level, grounded in personal values and everyday choices (Dredge, 2022). As

Sheldon (2022) notes, regenerative tourism represents a holistic and forward-looking approach to shaping the future of the industry—one that depends fundamentally on a shift in tourist mindsets towards cultivating respectful and reciprocal relationships with the planet (Hussain, 2021). By embracing regenerative principles, tourists are empowered to contribute to a sustainable and equitable world (Bellato et al., 2023; Zaman, 2023).

To support this shift, it is essential to develop both explicit and nuanced strategies that educate tourists on the value of a regenerative ethos (Hajarrahmah et al., 2024). This emerging paradigm is being driven by a growing cohort of individuals who adopt lifestyles aligned with global sustainability and social equity (Ray & Anderson, 2001). These so-called conscious citizens actively seek products and services that reflect their values, viewing travel not merely as leisure but as a means of self-discovery, ethical engagement, and cultural transformation (Ateljevic et al., 2016).

Motivated by principles of social and environmental justice, such tourists often engage in volunteerism and pursue transformative experiences. They are informed, communicative, and committed to both personal growth and collective well-being (Ateljevic et al., 2016). Moreover, they play an active role in promoting responsible tourism by supporting ethical practices and holding the industry accountable for irresponsible behaviour. In doing so, they help to reposition tourism as a vehicle for regeneration rather than extraction (Finkler & Higham, 2020).

Evolutions of Communities of Practice

To address the second research question, it is necessary to examine the capacity of such communities to operationalise co-creation among multiple stakeholders.

Practice and Learning

Communities of practice, understood as a practice-based approach to learning (Flanagan & Phi, 2024), are grounded in theoretical traditions associated with social and situated learning (Jaquinto et al., 2011; Wenger, 1998). Drawing from Aristotle's notion of learning as the integration of knowledge, skill, and practical wisdom (Eide, 2007), this approach conceptualises learning as a holistic process involving knowing, feeling, and doing. Practices are not merely sets of actions but are embedded within social interactions and shaped by context, history, and structure (Corradi et al., 2010; Schatzki, 2005; Reckwitz, 2002). Practice theories emphasise that learning occurs through the convergence of knowledge and action,

where meaning is co-constructed and identities are formed through participation (Corradi et al., 2010; Reckwitz, 2002).

As an epistemology, practice offers a lens that highlights the relational and contextual nature of learning (Wenger, 2010; Schatzki, 2005; Reckwitz, 2002). It transcends individual capacities, embedding learning within shared histories and collective experiences (Flanagan & Phi, 2024). In this view, learning becomes a socially situated process, where meaning is ascribed to life experiences through active participation in community practices (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2001; Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice are distinguished by the fact that their members are practitioners engaged in shared endeavours, rather than loosely connected individuals (Bertella, 2011).

This perspective aligns with John Dewey's experiential model of learning, which involves doing, reflecting, and feeling (Eide, 2007). Reflection—both in and on practice—is central, enabling practitioners to derive insights, adapt their actions, and generate new meaning (Getz, 2018; Kuklick & Gearity, 2015). In communities of practice, reflective processes are collaborative, enhancing collective understanding and practice through shared evaluation and mutual learning (Kjær, 2019).

Social learning theory underpins communities of practice, challenging traditional views of learning as a solitary, decontextualised activity (Albrecht, 2012). Instead, learning is seen as emerging from social interactions within a community, where individuals co-construct knowledge and contribute to each other's development (Wenger, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991). This model integrates key dimensions of learning: belonging (community), becoming (identity), meaning (experience), and doing (practice) (Jennings et al., 2009; Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger, 1998). As such, communities of practice represent an ongoing, emergent process of learning through collective engagement, grounded in the dynamics of social participation (Flanagan & Phi, 2024).

Learning in Workplace

The concept of communities of practice originates in the seminal work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991). In the 1980s, with funding from Xerox Corporation, the Institute for Research on Learning supported their comprehensive study of apprenticeships (Corradi et al., 2010; O'Brien & Sarkar, 2004). In this context, experienced practitioners were responsible for transmitting knowledge to novices—not through formal instruction alone but through immersion in everyday practice. Lave and Wenger expanded the traditional understanding of

apprenticeships by emphasizing the importance of social interaction among apprentices, beyond the dyadic relationship between student and mentor (Albrecht, 2012). Concurrently, Orr's research into workplace practices offered a complementary perspective. His study explored how shared knowledge operates as a form of "community memory" among professional workers, highlighting common behaviors and informal networks (Orr, 1990). As acknowledged by Carnegie and Kociatkiewicz (2019), Orr's insights significantly contributed to the foundations of communities of practice by underscoring the relational and collective nature of learning in professional environments.

This period marked a pivotal evolution in how learning was conceptualised. Lave and Wenger (1991) challenged cognitive models that treat knowledge as abstract and decontextualized, arguing instead for a model grounded in "situated learning." In their framework, learning is both an individual and collective process, emerging through active participation in the socio-cultural practices of a community. They introduced the concept of legitimate peripheral participation, describing how newcomers progressively move toward full engagement in community practices, thereby constructing their professional identities (Wenger, 2004). As they state, "*Learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners...the mastery of knowledge and skills requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the socio-cultural practices of a community*" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.29).

Contrary to conventional learning theories that separate learning from doing, communities of practice integrate the two, proposing a model of "learning in working" (Brown & Duguid, 1991). Initially conceived as a framework for understanding workplace learning rather than formal education (Lave & Wenger, 1991), communities of practice illustrate how newcomers acquire and refine skills by engaging with existing practices (Wenger, 2004) rather than inventing new ones (Cox, 2005). This often results in the reproduction of established routines (Albrecht, 2012). For example, during disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, experienced employees played a critical role in supporting newcomers' peripheral learning. Empirical evidence indicates that such experienced practitioners are more effective at reinforcing existing norms than at catalyzing innovation (Flanagan & Phi, 2024).

This dynamic highlights a potential limitation: the conservative tendency of communities of practice to perpetuate established ways of working (James et al., 2018; Lamers et al., 2017). While this is not always the case (Bertella, 2011), there is an inherent tension between continuity and transformation within these communities (Bertella & Rinaldi,

2020). This duality raises important questions for contexts such as regenerative tourism, where innovation and systemic change are central objectives.

Individual Development in Social Learning

In *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (1998), Wenger advanced the conceptual focus of communities of practice by emphasising personal growth and individual trajectories of participation. This marked a significant shift from his earlier work with Lave (1991), where the emphasis was primarily on collective learning through social participation. Central to this evolution is the concept of *legitimate peripheral participation*—originally introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991)—which positions learning as a socially situated, power-laden process (Contu & Willmott, 2003). Within this framework, newcomers are granted legitimacy as peripheral participants, enabling their progressive involvement in the community. Over time, as they gain experience and recognition, they move toward full participation, eventually assuming core roles and facilitating the inclusion of new members. This ongoing cycle of entry, engagement, and transition sustains the vitality and continuity of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The concept of peripheral participation thus occupies a liminal space between non-membership and full membership. Crucially, it acknowledges that new entrants must be granted sufficient legitimacy to be seen as potential full participants (Wenger, 1998). Through this process, practice becomes a binding and generative force, shaping community cohesion and identity (Hitchcock & Wesner, 2008). Subsequent scholars (e.g., Fleming & Pretti, 2019; Albrecht, 2012; Sutherland, 2009) have extended these insights to examine professional development trajectories, particularly in educational and workplace contexts. In such settings, learners are integrated into communities through authentic peripheral roles—guided by experienced mentors—enabling them to internalise and embody the profession’s norms and values. Importantly, newcomers are not merely passive recipients of knowledge; they can also contribute to the evolution of the community by introducing new perspectives and initiating cultural or procedural change. As novices become integrated, they transition from peripheral to core members, reinforcing the community’s regenerative potential (Fleming & Pretti, 2019; Eames & Bell, 2005).

Expanding on legitimate peripheral participation, Wenger (1998) articulated a broader social theory of learning grounded in the interplay between social practice, participation, identity, and meaning. He identified three foundational elements essential for the

development and coherence of communities of practice (Hitchcock & Wesner, 2008): “mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire” (Wenger, 1998, p.72). *Mutual engagement* refers to the active involvement of individuals through ongoing interaction, leading to the construction of shared meaning. *Joint enterprise* denotes the collective pursuit of a common goal, negotiated and continually renegotiated by members through participation. A *shared repertoire* encompasses the communal resources—language, routines, symbols, tools, stories, and concepts—that support communication, learning, and identity formation within the group (Cox, 2005; Wenger, 1998).

These three dimensions interact dynamically. As participants engage in joint enterprises, they co-develop a repertoire that reflects and reinforces the group’s evolving practices. Through this process of “learning by doing,” knowledge becomes embodied and embedded in social action (Bertella, 2011). In this stage, communities of practice remained informal, emergent entities—lacking formal structure, budgetary support, or scheduled meetings (Albrecht, 2012). Their development was characterised by organic growth rather than top-down formation (Roberts, 2006). Wenger (1998) emphasised that communities of practice cannot be artificially constructed or imposed; rather, they arise naturally through sustained, meaningful engagement among individuals united by shared interests and practice.

Managerial Tools for Organisational Innovation

The second evolution of communities of practice was shaped by the work of Brown and Duguid (1991), who extended and refined Lave and Wenger’s original contributions to better explain organisational learning dynamics. According to Brown and Duguid (1991), working, learning, and innovating are interconnected and essential components within an organisation’s knowledge system. Communities of practice are conceptualised as the social arenas where learning naturally occurs, a view that has since been widely adopted in organisational studies (Østerlund & Carlile, 2005). Wenger et al. (2002) advanced this conceptualisation further, positioning communities of practice as a strategic managerial tool (Cox, 2005). They highlighted the role of inter-organisational interactions as integral to social learning, promoting innovation, creative problem-solving (Bertella, 2011), and, ultimately, organisational competitiveness (Justesen, 2004). In this context, communities of practice are viewed as mechanisms that enhance knowledge across a broader organisational network (Henry & Pinch, 2000).

Although most communities of practice are self-organising by nature, organisations can facilitate their formation and development (Wenger et al., 2002). In their early stages, such communities typically require a less formal structure than other organisational forms, allowing members to shape the community's agenda and direction organically. Organisers are therefore advised to avoid prescribing rigid boundaries or predefined objectives. Instead, the emphasis should be on providing a flexible structure that supports growth while allowing for natural evolution (Hilliard, 2006). Organisations may assist by helping members identify and organise key elements essential to the community's development (Wenger et al., 2002). Organisational culture plays a critical role in this process (Allee, 2000), as communities of practice can help embed a company's mission, goals, and vision into everyday work environments. These environments—characterised by knowledge exchange, collaborative problem-solving, and the co-creation of new practices through diverse perspectives—enhance employee engagement and support innovation (Almeida & Campos, 2022).

Support from the organisation, in the form of sponsorship rather than direct management, is vital to the successful functioning of communities of practice (Hilliard, 2006; Wenger, 2004). Sponsorship legitimises the community (Hilliard, 2006), which is a necessary condition for effective learning (Meng & Zhao, 2021). This support may include dedicated time, travel funds, project financing, technological infrastructure, and administrative assistance (Wenger, 2004). Importantly, such sponsorship must respect the community's autonomy while granting it formal recognition within the organisation.

In this second evolution, communities of practice are strategically positioned as tools for organisational management, with an emphasis on their capacity to drive innovation and problem-solving (Justesen, 2004). This development addresses earlier critiques of the concept's limited impact on innovation. As a result, communities of practice may now take the form of informal business collectives or more formally structured organisational units (Shaw & Williams, 2009). In both cases, they contribute—directly and indirectly—to knowledge dissemination and organisational performance (Shaw & Williams, 2009; Justesen, 2004).

Co-Creation through Communities of Practice

Communities of practice may offer a valuable framework for fostering co-creation within regenerative tourism. However, existing discourse often overlooks the roles of Indigenous people and non-human stakeholders in these communities.

Building Community: Formation and Expansion

The initial phase of building a community of practice involves identifying contacts and forming informal relationships (Lee, 2022; Wenger, 1998). The literature identifies three key forms of proximity that facilitate the formation of communities of practice: geographical, cognitive, and relational. *Geographical proximity* historically played a central role (Flanagan & Phi, 2024), particularly when knowledge sharing relied on face-to-face interaction. Much workplace knowledge is tacit or embodied, requiring demonstration and contextualisation rather than codified transmission (Ericsson et al., 2020; Duguid, 2012). Consequently, communities of practice have often been perceived as limited in size and scope, confined by physical boundaries (Koliba & Gajda, 2009). Nonetheless, geographical proximity can also contribute positively, supporting the emergence of “learning regions”—territorial spaces conducive to knowledge exchange through high levels of trust and shared values. These regions foster collaboration through both formal partnerships (e.g., between firms, universities, and government bodies) and informal exchanges in everyday social or work-related contexts. Given the structural nature of institutions, learning regions tend to be most effective at the local or regional scale (Bathelt et al., 2004).

Cognitive proximity—a shared understanding or knowledge base—can be equally or more critical than physical closeness (Gertler, 2008; Amin & Cohendet, 2005). It often develops among individuals in the same field or domain. For example, mobile seasonal workers may participate in multiple communities of practice across geographically dispersed locations. Despite spatial separation, they remain linked through shared experiences of work, leisure, and professional knowledge, often maintaining strong cognitive, cultural, and communicative ties (Ericsson et al., 2020).

The development of information and communication technologies has further enabled the formation of communities based on *relational proximity* (Flanagan & Phi, 2024), defined by sustained interaction and trust rather than physical presence (Almeida & Campos, 2022). Digital platforms have allowed communities of practice to flourish across regional, national, and international boundaries (Wenger et al., 2002). As these communities are defined more by social relations than by setting, they may operate entirely online or adopt hybrid forms that blend digital and physical engagement (Tham et al., 2022). For instance, Almeida and Campos (2022) describe a community of hospitality professionals that originated through in-person interaction before transitioning to an entirely digital format. Online review platforms

in the tourism sector similarly act as distributed communities of practice, connecting tourists and service providers across countries (Flanagan & Phi, 2024; Hernández-López, 2019).

Virtual communities of practice are now among the most prevalent forms, a trend accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Flanagan & Phi, 2024). Amid social distancing measures, they enabled institutions—such as universities—to sustain teaching and learning continuity (Tham et al., 2022). However, the effectiveness of virtual engagement depends on the nature of the knowledge being shared. While information and communication technologies can support the exchange of explicit knowledge, they are less effective for conveying tacit, experiential knowledge that is central to many professional practices. As such, virtual participation alone may be insufficient. A blended approach, integrating digital interaction with in-person, practice-based learning environments, is often more effective for fostering deep, meaningful learning (Flanagan & Phi, 2024).

Communities of practice are voluntary (Wenger, 2000), self-organising social learning systems (Lee, 2022; Koliba & Gajda, 2009). As informal networks, they operate with considerable autonomy: members collaboratively determine their objectives, methods, tasks, and timelines, and leadership tends to emerge organically (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Participation is typically self-selected (Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger & Snyder, 2000), and members contribute in diverse ways, assuming varying responsibilities and holding different interpretations of the community's practices (Fleming & Pretti, 2019).

Recruitment often occurs in public or semi-public spaces, including virtual conventions or industry events (Hilliard, 2006). Members are drawn by a range of motivations: acquiring new knowledge, sharing expertise, enhancing career prospects, advancing ongoing projects, improving efficiency, or strengthening professional relationships (Ardichvili et al., 2003). For some, the appeal lies in the domain—a shared commitment to the growth of a specific field (Brown & Stokes, 2021)—while others are primarily motivated by the community aspect: the opportunity to learn, engage, and collaborate with like-minded peers (Barros et al., 2013; Henri & Pudelko, 2003). Among business elites, additional factors such as shared values, professional status, and group composition are often particularly influential (Almeida & Campos, 2022).

Member selection tends to follow an informal, intuition-driven process (Almeida & Campos, 2022). Existing members frequently extend invitations based on a perceived fit with the group's values and objectives (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). For example, in one case, a tourism educator initiated a community of practice on policy and planning by reaching out to colleagues teaching similar courses at other institutions (Tham et al., 2022). This intuitive

approach results in a membership marked by both commonalities and differences (Scott et al., 2008; Justesen, 2004). Shared industry background and professional roles often provide a foundation for trust and open exchange (Almeida & Campos, 2022). However, alignment is not solely based on sectoral affiliation (Justesen, 2004); shared values, attitudes, and a sense of mutual commitment are equally vital (Wenger et al., 2002). An illustrative example is Amigas do Trade, a community of professionally accomplished women in the hotel industry. Members describe a strong sense of unity grounded in trust, open-mindedness, and emotional connection—elements that underpin the creation and exchange of knowledge within the group (Almeida & Campos, 2022).

While shared commitment fosters cohesion, communities of practice are not homogenous (Wenger et al., 2002). Diversity in knowledge, experience, skills, and perspectives enriches the learning environment and supports both individual and collective growth (Almeida & Campos, 2022; Justesen, 2004; Cohen & Levinthal, 2000). Effective communication practices are key to leveraging this diversity (Almeida & Campos, 2022). For instance, a Cantonese opera community of practice benefits from including members with varying levels of expertise (Lee, 2022), enhancing creativity and broadening learning opportunities. Such diversity is often viewed as a catalyst for innovation and more meaningful relationships (Wenger et al., 2002). Evolving organically, communities of practice thrive on the dynamic interplay between shared purpose and member diversity—elements that are essential to their resilience and capacity for growth (Almeida & Campos, 2022).

Activating Community: Participation and Power Dynamics

Participation in communities of practice is inherently fluid, enabling them to continually renew themselves. Members may become more or less active in response to evolving interests or emerging issues in their field (Hilliard, 2006). As Barab and Duffy (2012) describe, this self-renewing process constitutes a “reproduction cycle” (p.39), wherein new members enter as legitimate peripheral participants and, over time, move towards full engagement and even leadership roles (Albrecht, 2012). This gradual integration allows novices—such as students developing their professional identities (Fleming & Pretti, 2019)—to learn from established members and eventually shape the future direction of the community (Barab & Duffy, 2012). Newcomers may also bring fresh interests and perspectives, potentially shifting the community’s focus in productive ways (Hilliard, 2006).

This regenerative process underscores the importance of maintaining an open, inclusive environment that welcomes varying levels of participation (Hilliard, 2006). Communities of practice typically alternate between periods of intense activity and phases of dormancy, depending on the nature of their practice and the engagement levels of their members (Tham et al., 2022). However, if a core group becomes overly cohesive or insular, the community's permeability may diminish. A strong sense of entitativity—shared identity and cohesion—can restrict access for newcomers (Agrifoglio, 2015), inhibiting diversity of thought and stalling innovation (Smith et al., 2017). This poses a risk to the long-term adaptability and vitality of the community (Brown & Stokes, 2021).

Participation is also shaped by intercultural dynamics and underlying power relations. In culturally diverse communities, members' interactional engagement can be moderated by their cultural norms and values. For instance, Chinese doctoral students in American universities may interpret power relationships differently depending on the influence of Confucian values. When traditional hierarchical expectations are relaxed, students tend to engage more actively, seeking feedback and contributing more openly (Meng & Zhao, 2021).

Moreover, the participation of newcomers is affected by what has been termed “boundary thinking”—a cognitive process tied to perceptions of competence and identity. International students, particularly from East Asia, may internalise feelings of inadequacy (Meng & Zhao, 2021), often due to linguistic challenges or cultural expectations (Morita, 2004). Such self-perceptions can inhibit their engagement in communities of practice and delay their progression from peripheral to full participation (Meng & Zhao, 2021). To support the sustainability of communities of practice, it is therefore crucial to not only facilitate inclusive participation but also to recognise and address the cultural and psychological barriers that may constrain members' engagement and identity development.

Participation motivation and social interaction in communities of practice are strongly shaped by perceived power dynamics, which vary across sociocultural contexts. Power in such communities is both socially constructed and contested (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992), influencing how individuals position themselves and engage with others. In Balinese society, for instance, power relations are informed by traditional hierarchies and historical political structures, which may subtly inform community dynamics (Hitchcock & Wesner, 2008). More broadly, participation patterns reflect the underlying power structures, creating “varied, more or less engaged, and multiple ways of being located in the fields of participation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.36).

Two contrasting perspectives on power exist within the literature on communities of practice. One promotes an egalitarian ideal in which all members participate as equals (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Research into an all-female community of practice in the hospitality sector illustrates this view, showing that shared gender identity fostered open communication and a sense of empowerment. From this angle, managers can help cultivate inclusive environments by encouraging a culture of collaboration, innovation, and open dialogue (Almeida & Campos, 2022).

However, the assumption of equality can obscure the more complex and sometimes unequal realities within these communities (Hislop et al., 2018). In practice, members bring different levels of experience, authority, age, and personality, all of which influence the group's internal dynamics (Roberts, 2006). As such, participation typically falls along a continuum: core members (often with leadership roles), active participants, and peripheral members (Wenger et al., 2002). Newcomers often begin as legitimate peripheral participants, gradually moving toward full engagement (Meng & Zhao, 2021). In virtual communities, those with minimal involvement are sometimes referred to as “lurkers” (Hilliard, 2006). The existence of these layers highlights that equal participation is rarely attainable—and perhaps unrealistic—in most settings (Wenger et al., 2002).

Power asymmetries become particularly pronounced in organisational communities of practice (Hislop et al., 2018), where participants' roles often align with their formal hierarchical status (May, 2009). Such alignments can discourage more junior or peripheral members from contributing meaningfully (Brown & Stokes, 2021). In some cases, communities may become insular or even elitist, reinforcing dominant voices and discouraging diverse perspectives (Hislop et al., 2018). This phenomenon—often referred to as “elite capture”—is especially common in development contexts (Mansuri & Rao, 2004), where powerful individuals disproportionately benefit from collective initiatives, thereby undermining equity and inclusivity (Hislop et al., 2018).

Furthermore, communities of practice that span organisations, such as distributed communities involving competitors or external stakeholders, face additional challenges. Conflicting priorities, intellectual property concerns, and organisational loyalties can all create tensions (Wenger et al., 2002). Hidden biases may privilege those with greater institutional power or communication skills, marginalising less vocal participants (Guijt & Shah, 1998). Addressing these challenges requires explicit attention to the power dynamics at play. Effective communities of practice must foster a culture of empowerment, where diverse forms of expertise and engagement are acknowledged and valued (Almeida & Campos, 2022;

Contu & Willmott, 2003). Understanding how power circulates—and how it shapes participation—is essential to building inclusive, resilient, and innovative communities.

Uniting Community: Identity Establishment and Internal Interaction

Identity plays a central role in distinguishing communities of practice from teams and networks, particularly as individuals work and learn together (Duguid, 2012; Østerlund & Carlile, 2005; Wenger & Snyder, 2000). It shapes whom we trust, influences with whom we share ideas, and underpins our sense of belonging (Bertella, 2011; Wenger, 2000). Within communities of practice, identity is both a process of self-development and a reflection of one's integration into the community, shaped through participation and interaction (Wenger & Snyder, 2000; Wenger, 1998). Members of such communities define themselves not only through what they do and how they do it, but also through their relationships and shared experiences (Wenger, 1998). Learning, in this context, is not merely the acquisition of knowledge but a process of becoming – an expansion of identity that opens individuals to alternative ways of being in the world (Wenger, 2000).

This evolving identity extends beyond affiliation with a particular culture or place; it encompasses the development of a sense of responsibility and global citizenship (Bertella & Rinaldi, 2020). Contemporary environmental movements, which increasingly emphasise sustainability, reflect a strengthened collective identity grounded in values such as responsibility, environmental stewardship, and democratic engagement (Ergas, 2010; Soron, 2010). Concern for the planet and future generations can motivate collaboration for the common good, reinforcing a shared identity as global citizens (Bertella & Rinaldi, 2020).

Importantly, identity is not only about becoming but also about belonging. Cohesion within communities of practice is sustained through shared commitment, passion, and identification with the group's expertise (Almeida & Campos, 2022). Wenger identifies three interrelated modes of belonging – engagement, imagination, and alignment – through which a community of practice can evolve into a dynamic learning environment (Bertella, 2011).

Engagement involves active participation in the community's practices, fostering mutual understanding through interaction, relationship-building, and shared learning histories (Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice in the events industry, for instance, provide a platform for practitioners to connect, exchange knowledge, introduce innovations, and collectively shape their professional identity (Brown & Stokes, 2021).

Imagination enables members to create mental representations of their roles and practices, situating them within broader temporal and spatial contexts. This creative mode allows individuals to extrapolate from their experiences, envision future developments, and interpret the practices of others (Wenger, 1998). For example, museum visitors interpret narratives in light of their own knowledge, expectations, and past experiences, shaping their engagement with exhibits (Carnegie & Kociatkiewicz, 2019).

Alignment refers to the process by which individuals coordinate their activities and values with broader institutional or societal structures. Through alignment, members contribute to a larger enterprise and become integrated within wider systems (Wenger, 1998). In some cases, friendships fostered through empathy and sustained over time can lead to the spontaneous formation of communities of practice. These relationships build trust, encourage engagement, and support the emotional and interpersonal foundations of belonging. Within such communities, members may identify themselves as friends united by shared goals and mutual respect. This contributes to positive group dynamics, enhancing members' sense of belonging, pride, and open-mindedness, and strengthening the community as a whole (Almeida & Campos, 2022).

In adult learning environments, opportunities for cooperative interaction among learners are essential (Hilliard, 2006). Communities of practice promote such interaction by fostering shared values and a strong sense of connection (Zboralski, 2009). Without sustained engagement and development, these communities risk stagnation and eventual dispersion. For example, professionals in the events industry consistently express the need for regular interaction with peers to exchange knowledge, introduce new concepts, and refine practices—activities central to communities of practice (Wenger, 2015).

Informal engagement in the workplace allows students to access tacit knowledge that is often difficult to obtain in formal educational settings. In work-integrated learning, for instance, students benefit from interacting with team members, observing peer conversations, and practising effective communication within professional communities (Fleming & Pretti, 2019). These social interactions also expose students to the culture, values, and behaviours—what might be termed dispositional knowledge—associated with a given profession (Martin et al., 2010; Billett, 2009).

Sustained interaction within a community of practice depends on two critical resources: time and space. To ensure their longevity and impact, communities of practice must define their core focus and maintain sustained interest in their domain (Brown & Stokes, 2021). This requires a clear structure and consistent opportunities for interaction (Kimble & Hildreth,

2005). By facilitating collaboration across time and space, communities of practice help educators and professionals address challenges often encountered within isolated institutional settings (Tham et al., 2022). However, insufficient time and space for idea generation, problem-solving, and reflective practice can hinder their function and raise concerns about long-term viability (Smith et al., 2017; Agrifoglio, 2015).

Time is fundamental for both the development of community members and the organic evolution of shared practices. Unlike formal projects bound by deadlines, communities of practice develop iteratively and at their own pace (Roberts, 2006). One study, for example, found that collaborations led by local actors often outlast the limited timelines of externally managed development projects (Bertella & Rinaldi, 2020). Participation in communities of practice can encourage deep learning, as opposed to surface approaches (Albrecht, 2012). Wenger et al. (2002, p.53) observe that “community design is much more like lifelong learning than traditional organisation design.” Meaningful engagement requires time and regular participation (Albrecht, 2012), presenting a challenge for many professionals. While digital technologies can extend access and facilitate real-time collaboration (Von Hippel, 2001), the persistent lack of time remains a barrier for many communities (Murillo, 2011; Kerno Jr, 2008).

Communities of practice comprise both public and private spaces (Brown & Stokes, 2021; Wenger et al., 2002), each playing a distinct role. The public space should be supportive, familiar, and conducive to open dialogue (Amin & Roberts, 2006). This includes meetings, forums, websites, social media, and events (Brown & Stokes, 2021)—spaces where members can interact, share ideas, and develop a collective identity (Smith et al., 2017; Barros et al., 2013). Meetings, in particular, provide inclusive settings for core groups, active and peripheral participants, and even non-members (Brown & Stokes, 2021). They create opportunities for dialogue and cross-pollination of ideas among individuals from related domains (Hilliard, 2006). Regularly held community meetings establish familiarity through consistent formats, fostering a comfortable environment for collaboration without the pressures typical of formal organisational settings (Wenger et al., 2002). Familiarity in such spaces accelerates the co-creation and assimilation of knowledge across contexts (Roberts, 2006; Boud & Middleton, 2003). The private space—typically managed by a core group—involves orchestrating the community’s activities and strategic direction. These leaders work within and across communities to shape the broader dynamic, demonstrating the interdependence between public and private domains (Amin & Roberts, 2006).

With the advancement of digital technologies, space is no longer confined to physical settings (Henri & Pudelko, 2003). Online communities of practice can span geographic and temporal boundaries, allowing global collaboration across time zones (Cullinane et al., 2022; Tham et al., 2022). In blended models that combine online and in-person interaction, partnerships—such as those between national sports coaching bodies and higher education institutions—illustrate the potential for effective collaboration (Kjær, 2019). Integrating people-centred and technology-enhanced approaches supports knowledge sharing, as interactive digital platforms facilitate deeper human connection and more dynamic engagement (Cooper, 2018).

Crossing Communities: External Communication and Boundary Spanners

Communities of practice are fundamentally shaped by the collective experiences of their members. To enhance their learning and innovation capabilities, it is essential for these communities to engage with external perspectives (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Such cross-boundary interactions encourage an outward-looking approach, fostering skills that transcend the limits of a single community (Shaw & Williams, 2009). For example, communities of practice can break down organisational silos within and between university faculties and institutions. This demonstrates how inter-institutional cooperation can improve educational quality and promote wider institutional collaboration (Tham et al., 2022).

The boundaries between practices are marked by both continuity and discontinuity (Wenger, 1998), offering valuable learning opportunities. These boundary dynamics help communities avoid becoming insular and facilitate knowledge exchange with external actors (Reinl & Kelliher, 2014; Shaw & Williams, 2009). Conventions provide effective platforms for such engagement, drawing participants from related professional fields (Hilliard, 2006), including those not formally associated with specific organisations or institutions (Brown & Stokes, 2021). These interactions enrich the diversity of perspectives and play a crucial role in the ongoing negotiation of meaning and identity within communities of practice (Eide et al., 2017).

One of the most significant boundary-crossing interactions occurs between researchers and practitioners (Cooper, 2018). The relationship between theory and practice is particularly dynamic: while practice may be informed by theory, it is not simply an implementation of it (Wenger, 1998). Instead, practice contributes to the development of new concepts and frameworks, advancing both theoretical and practical knowledge (Bertone et al., 2013).

Collaboration between academia and industry is therefore highly valuable (Brown & Stokes, 2021). Joint research involving non-academic stakeholders can enhance plurality, depth, and reflexivity (Bertella & Rinaldi, 2020).

Despite the abundance of academic knowledge, it is often underutilised by practitioners (Xiao & Smith, 2010). Empirical studies consistently reveal limited uptake of academic insights, particularly in tourism and hospitality (Ruhanen, 2008; Frechtling, 2004), where scholarly work rarely informs commercial practice (Hudson, 2013). This is often attributed to perceptions of academic research as overly complex, marginally relevant, or inaccessible, compounded by differences in professional languages, behaviours, and networks. These disparities can hinder effective communication, preventing academic research from influencing the operational realities of tourism management (Hudson, 2013; Thomas, 2012). Policymakers in many countries, including the UK, have acknowledged this gap and advocated for stronger connections between researchers and the end-users of their work. Policy discourse frequently positions research as a driver of innovation and competitiveness, prioritising engagement with business stakeholders. In the UK, this has led to various initiatives aimed at enhancing knowledge transfer to the private sector (Thomas, 2012).

To support these efforts, Johannisson (2018) proposes a radical methodology known as enactive research, where academics temporarily assume the role of practitioners, such as in entrepreneurship. This immersive approach enables researchers to gain a more situated understanding of the field and produce research with greater practical relevance (Johannisson, 2018). Even when academics do not directly engage in tourism operations but work in education, they still operate within a shared professional domain. This common ground fosters mutual understanding and a collective commitment to advancing the field. Empirical evidence suggests that academics play a crucial role in tourism-related communities of practice. Through sustained collaboration and effective communication, academics and practitioners co-construct shared repertoires of knowledge, contributing to the long-term development of practice (Albrecht, 2012).

Cross-boundary interactions between communities of practice often rely on individuals who participate in multiple groups—commonly referred to as *boundary spanners* (Ericsson et al., 2020; Williams, 2007; Wenger, 1998). These individuals play a critical role in organisational development and innovation (Ericsson et al., 2020) by facilitating knowledge exchange across otherwise disconnected domains. In a broader context, mutuality refers to the recognition of reciprocal benefits that extend beyond organisational boundaries (Bertella,

2023). Boundary spanners enhance mutuality by actively bridging these boundaries, supporting the circulation of ideas and practices (Shaw & Williams, 2009).

Two key factors contribute to the emergence of boundary spanners: individual capability and mobility within the labour market. Those who bridge communities tend to possess diverse competencies and networks (Shaw & Williams, 2009), often holding memberships in multiple associations that reflect the multifaceted nature of their roles (Brown & Stokes, 2021). Business elites provide a compelling example. Their professional networks act as conduits for knowledge exchange (Thomas, 2012), much like those among mid-level managers or entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (Scott & Ding, 2008; Beesley, 2005). In competitive labour markets, elites earn status through visibility, rank, and connectivity. Their influence often transcends their immediate organisations, subtly shaping norms and expectations across the sector (Thomas, 2012).

Human mobility—particularly labour mobility—represents a vital yet underexplored mechanism of knowledge transfer (Shaw & Williams, 2009). In sectors such as manufacturing, labour turnover is often the principal channel through which knowledge spillovers occur (Djankov & Hoekman, 2000). In tourism, especially in regions where firms are geographically clustered, workforce mobility enables employees to move fluidly between employers, promoting the exchange of tacit knowledge and experiential insight. This mobility occurs at multiple scales (Shaw & Williams, 2009): for instance, hotel managers transferring between establishments exemplify inter-firm mobility, while tourism workers relocating across regions illustrate extra-firm mobility (Uriely, 2001). Such movements position individuals as boundary spanners who carry practices, norms, and innovations across organisational and geographical boundaries (Shaw & Williams, 2009; Williams, 2006). In doing so, they may reshape the knowledge bases of both the originating and receiving organisations (Tushman & Scanlan, 1981). While these transfers can involve trade-offs, they are frequently understood within communities of practice as fostering mutual benefit through shared learning and innovation (Shaw & Williams, 2009).

Importantly, it is not only senior professionals who fulfil this role. Front-line employees also contribute significantly to the diffusion of tacit knowledge. Migrant seasonal workers, for instance, move cyclically between tourist resorts (Ericsson & Hagen, 2012), occupying overlapping roles as employees, service users, and consumers. Through their direct engagement with guests and familiarity with customer expectations, they identify product weaknesses and facilitate the transfer of knowledge between destinations. Their accumulated experience, exposure to different cultural and operational contexts, and commitment to the

tourism sector can help stimulate innovation, particularly in rural or peripheral areas (Ericsson et al., 2020).

The high degree of labour mobility in tourism and hospitality, coupled with the importance of tacit knowledge, gives labour turnover a distinctive role in knowledge transfer within the sector (Williams, 2012; Hjalager, 2002). As tourism becomes increasingly globalised, firms frequently serve visitors from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Williams, 2012). In such cases, knowledge transfer may take the form of hiring migrant workers from tourists’ countries of origin—an example that underscores the strategic importance of human mobility in knowledge flows. Whether occurring between firms, regions, or national innovation systems, the contributions of boundary spanners offer valuable insight into the mechanisms by which knowledge circulates within the tourism system. These individuals often hold the key to understanding how ideas move across institutional and sectoral boundaries, shaping both practice and innovation (Shaw & Williams, 2009).

Chapter Summary

Drawing on existing tourism literature and practice, prevailing development paradigms can be broadly categorised into four stages: traditional (neoliberal) tourism, alternative tourism, sustainable tourism, and regenerative tourism.

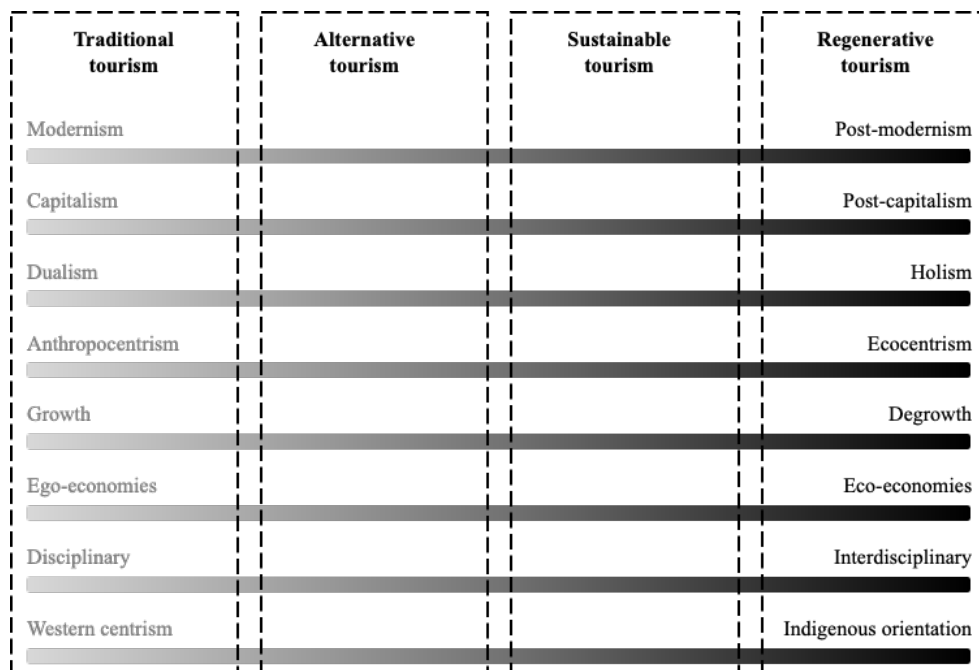


Figure 1. A continuum from traditional to regenerative tourism paradigm

Source: Drawn by the author

Figure 1 presents a continuum illustrating the gradual shift from traditional to regenerative paradigms, highlighting their socio-cultural, economic, and ontological foundations alongside their key characteristics. Because this evolution is incremental and often implicit, the boundaries between paradigms are not clearly defined; the use of gradient colours in the figure reflects this continuous transition.

Although regenerative tourism is generally viewed as a transformative paradigm, its conceptualisation remains contested. Current scholarship interprets it through four main lenses—sustainability, transformation, circularity, and regeneration—each emphasising different aspects of this emerging field. Conceptually, *sustainability* denotes the capacity for long-term endurance; *transformation* implies fundamental or systemic change; *circularity* refers to the organised movement of resources within a closed-loop system; and *regeneration* suggests a process of renewal, often involving recovery and growth.

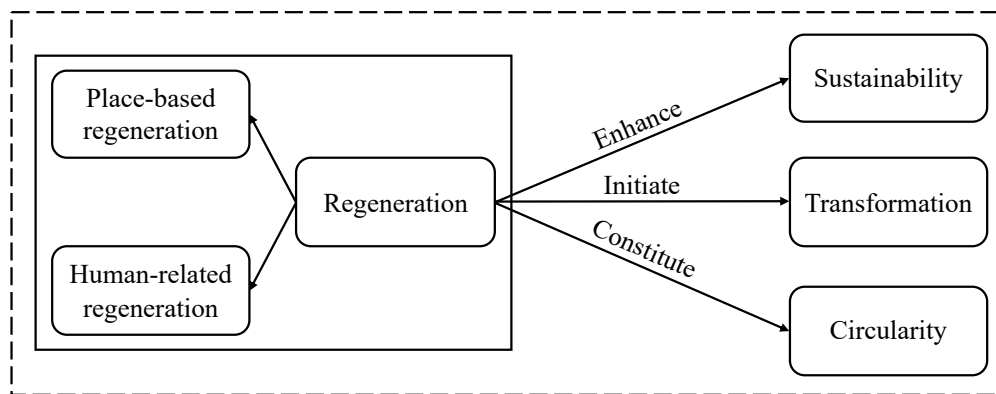


Figure 2. Current Western-oriented definitions regarding regenerative tourism

Source: Drawn by the author

Figure 2 summarises the connections among these dominant interpretations. Yet Western discourse continues to struggle with definitional clarity, resulting in persistent conceptual ambiguity. This raises a central question: should these diverse understandings be treated as complementary dimensions of regenerative tourism, or is a more unified core definition—centred on the concept of regeneration itself—needed?

Co-creation has been widely promoted as a means of generating positive tourism outcomes; however, existing approaches largely derive from service-dominant logic. While this perspective moves beyond traditional producer-centred models, it may still misalign stakeholder expectations, leading to value co-destruction and weakened relationships. In tourism—an experiential and high-contact industry—the discourse remains predominantly business-oriented and tourist-centred, focusing on bilateral interactions between tourists and service providers, hosts, or fellow travellers (**Figure 3**). Although more inclusive approaches

are emerging, the literature continues to privilege human actors and frequently neglects non-human stakeholders, whose roles are increasingly recognised as essential to regenerative systems.

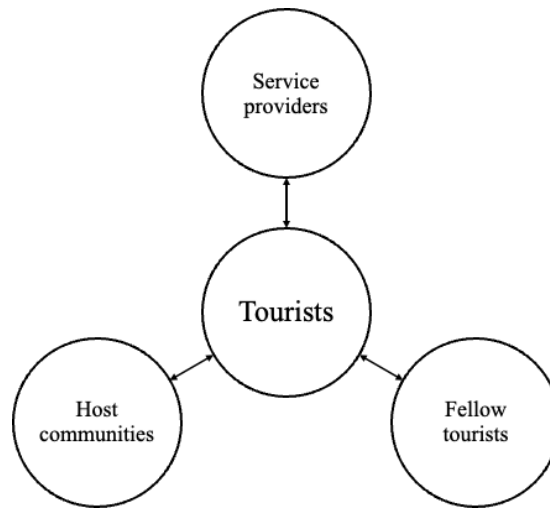


Figure 3. Tourist-centric co-creative relationships before regenerative tourism

Source: Drawn by the author

Within Western discourse, four foundational principles underpin regenerative tourism: (1) systems thinking, (2) Indigenous-centred approaches, (3) anti-anthropocentric co-creation, and (4) bottom-up collaboration. Together, these principles offer a more holistic understanding of co-creation. **Figure 4** illustrates the co-creative relationships proposed in current regenerative tourism scholarship. By integrating diverse epistemologies—especially Indigenous knowledge—and fostering collaboration between human and non-human actors, regenerative tourism aspires to relational ethics, ecological awareness, and grassroots participation. Nevertheless, despite growing interest in co-creating with the more-than-human world, practical methods for engaging non-human stakeholders remain underdeveloped.

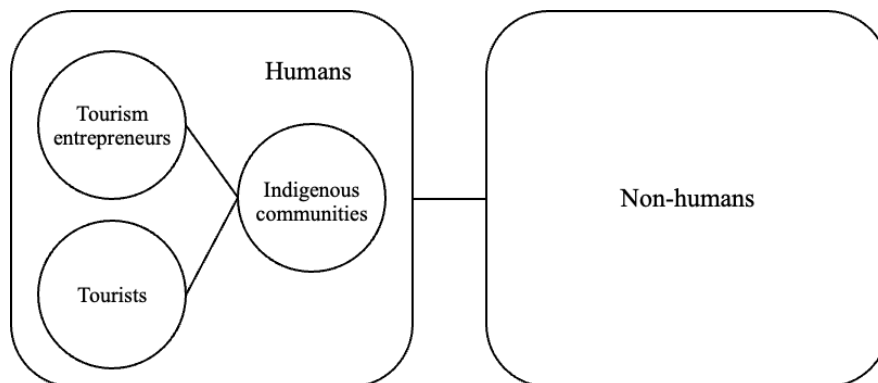


Figure 4. Human and non-human co-creative relationships in regenerative tourism

Source: Drawn by the author

These limitations may in part stem from Western philosophical traditions which, even when ecocentric, continue to conceptualise humans as distinct from and responsible for protecting non-human entities. Such perspectives can unintentionally reinforce hierarchical relationships and inhibit more integrated understandings of co-creation. Addressing this conceptual constraint opens a productive avenue for engaging with non-Western epistemologies—such as Chinese philosophy on *Sheng Sheng*—that offer alternative understandings of regeneration, interdependence, and co-creative processes.

Although regenerative tourism promotes a distinctive co-creation approach that includes Indigenous communities and non-human stakeholders, the literature has yet to propose an operationalisable model for achieving such integration. Communities of practice, however, with their inherently adaptive and evolving nature, present a promising framework. Their flexibility allows for the incorporation of non-human actors—particularly relevant in regenerative tourism contexts where human and more-than-human collaboration is central. By intentionally building, activating, connecting, and extending communities that engage both Indigenous communities and non-human stakeholders, communities of practice can provide a practical pathway for operationalising regenerative tourism co-creation and for analysing multilateral interactions among more than two stakeholders.

Overall, this chapter addresses three issues through a review of the literature on regenerative tourism, co-creation, and communities of practice. First, it outlines the paradigm shift towards regenerative tourism and the field's still-ambiguous conceptualisation, underscoring the need for a definition grounded specifically in the idea of regeneration. Second, it compares co-creation approaches used prior to the emergence of regenerative tourism with those associated with regenerative tourism itself. This comparison shows that the distinctiveness of regenerative tourism lies in its inclusion of Indigenous communities and non-human stakeholders in the co-creation process. Yet, the literature offers little guidance on how such an approach can be operationalised. Third, the chapter introduces communities of practice as a practical framework for co-creation. It argues that communities of practice can operationalise regenerative tourism co-creation by establishing, activating, linking, and bridging communities in ways that intentionally engage both Indigenous communities and non-human stakeholders.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter Three outlines the research framework, research design, and the researcher’s positionality and reflexivity. The conceptual study adopts an interpretive approach informed by philosophical hermeneutics to examine notions of regeneration through the lens of *Sheng Sheng* philosophy, offering Chinese insights into regenerative tourism and its co-creation. The empirical components, conducted in Azheke village in Southwest China, employ a cross-community enactive research approach to investigate the potential for co-creating regenerative tourism through a community of practice. This process engages both human and non-human beings, reflecting in *Sheng Sheng*-inspired regenerative principles.

Research Framework

To reinterpret the concept of regenerative tourism from an Eastern perspective and clarify its practical application through empirical evidence from China, this research proposes a conceptual framework grounded in the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*. The framework informs a community of practice involving both human and non-human stakeholders, working collaboratively to foster regenerative tourism (**Figure 5**). Underlying this framework is the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*, which provides a guiding perspective on regeneration from a Chinese worldview. Informed by this philosophy, both human and non-human stakeholders engage in a community of practice committed to co-creating regenerative tourism practices that honour reciprocal relationships and sustain the ongoing vitality of place.

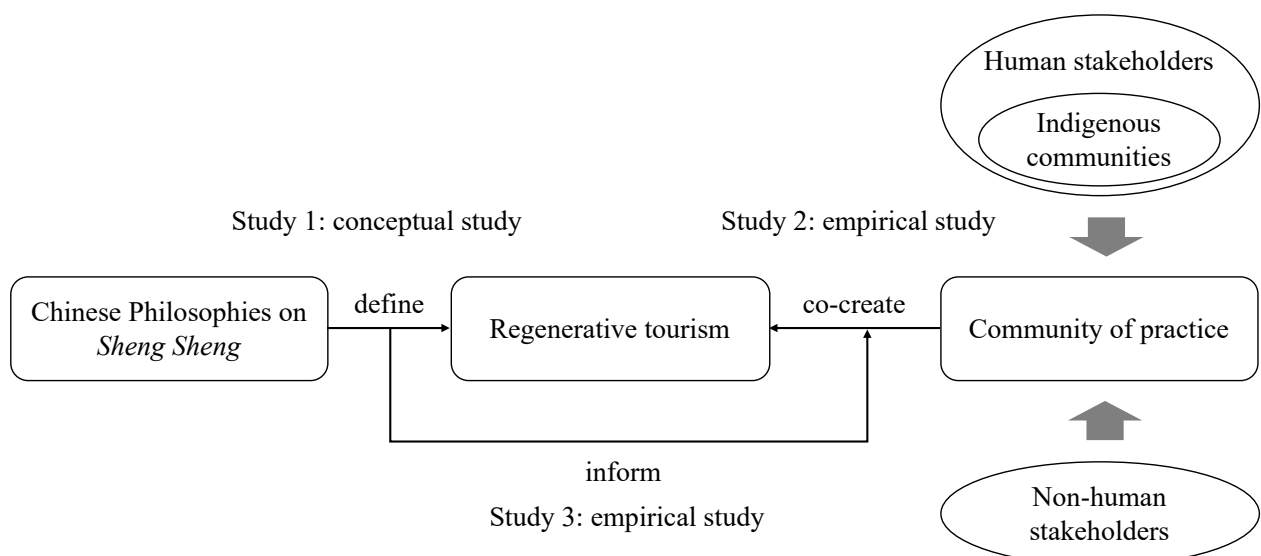


Figure 5. Community of practice to co-create *Sheng Sheng*-inspired regenerative tourism

Source: Drawn by the author

To address the research questions, this study comprises both a conceptual and two empirical components. The conceptual study examines foundational texts related to the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*, with the aim of exploring ancient Chinese wisdom on regeneration to strengthen the conceptualisation of regenerative tourism and inform its practice. Building on these insights, the empirical studies focus on enhancing the practical application of *Sheng Sheng*-inspired regenerative tourism principles by fostering a community of practice. The conceptual study is guided by a hermeneutic approach, while the empirical studies adopt a social constructivist paradigm. Both perspectives emphasise the significance of subjective and symbolic experience within a socially constructed reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Conceptual Research Design

The objective of the conceptual study is interpreting the notions of regeneration through the lens of Chinese philosophy. It aims to contribute to our understanding of regenerative tourism from the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*. Drawing on hermeneutics, this study adopts an interpretive approach to explore the significance and preservation of human experiences related to (re)generation. Foundational Chinese philosophical texts in *I Ching*, Taoism, Confucianism, and Neo-Confucianism and their interpretive works serve as the basis for analysis and interpretation in this conceptual study.

Research Paradigm: Philosophical Hermeneutics

The selection of hermeneutics as the research paradigm for this conceptual study is grounded in its capacity to illuminate the interpretive processes underlying the significance of human experience as conveyed through literature (George, 2020)—particularly those experiences that diverge from our own (Thiselton, 2009). As a methodology of interpretation (Gilhus, 2021), hermeneutics is concerned with discerning meaning in context (Masset et al., 2024) and ensuring interpretation that is responsible, valid, and productive. This involves not only the practical work of textual interpretation but also a critical inquiry into what occurs when “we read, understand, or apply texts” (Thiselton, 2009, p.4).

Schleiermacher (1998) laid the foundations for hermeneutics by proposing systematic procedures for interpretation. His model encompassed two main approaches: grammatical interpretation, which analyses the linguistic features of a text, and psychological interpretation, which seeks to reconstruct the author's intentions. Subsequently, Heidegger

and Gadamer reoriented hermeneutics, shifting its focus from procedural techniques to the conditions under which understanding itself becomes possible (Gadamer, 2013). This shift marked the emergence of philosophical hermeneutics (Warnke, 2016).

A central concept in hermeneutics is the interdependence between understanding a text as a whole and interpreting its parts—a dynamic encapsulated in the notion of the hermeneutic circle. In grammatical interpretation, the process typically begins with an initial grasp of the overall meaning, which informs the interpretation of individual elements. These elements are then reintegrated to enrich one's understanding of the whole. In psychological interpretation, readers begin with a provisional view of the author's life and examine the text as an expression of that context. This initial frame is subsequently refined through deeper engagement with the text, enhancing insight into the author's world (Warnke, 2016).

Later developments in hermeneutics introduced various forms of the hermeneutic circle, characterised by a reading process that moves between the structure and meaning of a text, between the text and its broader context, and between the reader's own perspective and that of the text (Gilhus, 2021). Crucially, literary interpretation is understood as a dialogic process. Gadamer criticised the privileging of authorial intent, advocating instead for a model of mutual questioning in which both the subject matter and the interpreter's assumptions come under scrutiny (Warnke, 2016).

Interpretation does not begin from a neutral standpoint. Readers are already embedded in particular purposes, histories, and frameworks of understanding, which shape the horizon of possible meanings. These preconceptions—often implicit—guide the initial encounter with a text (Heidegger, 2010; Dreyfus, 1990) and are refined through the interpretive process. Meaning thus evolves through ongoing engagement (Gadamer, 2013). However, an exclusive reliance on procedural methods can obscure the role of these inherited assumptions (Warnke, 2016).

For these reasons, this study adopts philosophical hermeneutics as its guiding framework, valuing its emphasis on the historically situated and dialogic nature of understanding. Unlike methodological approaches that attempt to eliminate the interpreter's subjectivity, philosophical hermeneutics acknowledges that interpretation is inevitably shaped by the interpreter's preconceptions, rooted in their cultural, historical, and linguistic contexts. This perspective is particularly relevant to literary study, where meaning is not fixed or solely determined by the author, but emerges through the dynamic interaction between reader and text.

Philosophical hermeneutics addresses this complexity by foregrounding the hermeneutic circle—understanding develops through a continual movement between parts and whole, and between the interpreter’s horizon and that of the text. It also frames interpretation as a dialogic process involving not only the text but also self-questioning on the part of the reader. These features make it especially well-suited to conceptual research that seeks not only to analyse texts, but also to interrogate the conditions of understanding and critically reflect on the interpretive process. This paradigm thus supports a more nuanced and ethically responsive engagement with literature, particularly when encountering experiences and worldviews different from one’s own.

Research Method: Interpretation

This conceptual study adopts an interpretive approach, appropriate for exploring the meanings behind human intentions, actions, beliefs, and the preservation of experiences in forms such as literature (George, 2020). The emphasis is on achieving understanding rather than mere description. The approach follows a spiralling method, moving iteratively between text and theory. This process involves dialectical dialogue, self-critical questioning, and the application of practical wisdom, engaging in ongoing reflective discourse. Central to this method is a priori ontological understanding of key concept, that is, regeneration. The spiralling interpretive process deepens understanding with each cycle, aligning with Heidegger’s concept of dialectical questioning, whereby continuous interrogation progressively enriches comprehension (Heidegger, 2013).

The interpretive approach adopted in this study follows established hermeneutic principles, as outlined by Gilhus (2021). These include: (1) engaging in a deliberate and close reading of the text; (2) drawing on comprehensive knowledge of the text’s language and contextual background; (3) remaining open to the possibility of cultural comparison; (4) acknowledging that interpretations are provisional and continually evolving; (5) considering whose interests are represented or advanced within the text; and (6) posing new and critical questions to the text.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

In this conceptual study, the foundational texts of the *I Ching*, Taoism, Confucianism, and Neo-Confucianism—together with their principal commentaries—are approached as rich, layered narratives inviting critical analysis and philosophical interpretation. Rather than

treating these works merely as doctrinal or historical artefacts, the study engages them as dynamic texts that articulate evolving visions of cosmology, ethics, and human flourishing. The selection, detailed in **Table 1**, is guided by the texts' enduring philosophical significance and their relevance to key themes in the Chinese conception of regeneration, including cycles of transformation, moral renewal, and the harmonisation of self and cosmos. This narrative framing enables a more nuanced exploration of how classical Chinese thought conceptualises change, continuity, and rebirth within both individual and sociopolitical domains.

Table 1. Sources of the narratives analysed in the conceptual study

Historical Context	Work	Author	Philosophical Traditions	Description
Western Zhou (1000–750 BCE)	<i>I Ching</i> 《易经》	Unknown	<i>I Ching</i>	A divination manual and the oldest Chinese classics
Warring States (475–221 BCE)	<i>Commentaries on the I Ching</i> 《易传》	Attributed to Confucius 孔子	<i>I Ching</i> / Confucianism	Reinterprets the <i>I Ching</i> as a metaphysical, ethical, and cosmological treatise
Warring States (475–221 BCE)	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> 《道德经》	Attributed to Laozi 老子	Taoism	The foundational text of Taoism, central to both philosophical and religious strands
Warring States (475–221 BCE)	<i>Zhuangzi</i> 《庄子》	Zhuangzi 庄子	Taoism	A foundational Taoist text comprising parables and philosophical dialogues
Warring States (475–221 BCE)	<i>Mencius</i> 《孟子》	Mencius 孟子	Confucianism	A collection of dialogues and teachings by the Confucian thinker Mencius
Western Han (202 BCE–9 CE)	<i>Shuoyuan</i> 《说苑》	Liu Xiang 刘向	Confucianism	A compilation of historical anecdotes and moral tales reflecting Confucian ideals
Eastern Han (25–220 CE)	<i>Shuowen Jiezi</i> 《说文解字》	Xu Shen 许慎	N/A	The first comprehensive Chinese dictionary, offering insights into classical meanings
Eastern Han (25–220 CE)	<i>Lunheng</i> 《论衡》	Wang Chong 王充	Critical of Confucianism	Essays critiquing superstition and discussing science, philosophy, and myth
Wei (220–265 CE)	<i>Annotations on Laozi</i> 《老子注》	Wang Bi 王弼	Taoism	A seminal metaphysical commentary on the <i>Tao Te Ching</i>

Northern Song (960–1127)	<i>Writings of the Cheng Brothers</i> 《二程遗书》	Edited by Zhu Xi 朱熹	Neo-Confucianism	Quotations and philosophical reflections from Cheng Hao 程颢 and Cheng Yi 程颐
Southern Song (1130–1200)	<i>Interpretation of the Great Treatise of the I Ching</i> 《易系辞传注》	Zhu Xi 朱熹	Neo-Confucianism	A key Neo-Confucian commentary on the metaphysical aspects of the <i>I Ching</i>
Southern Song (1130–1200)	<i>Collected Conversations of Master Zhu</i> 《朱子语类》	Edited by Li Jingde 黎靖德	Neo-Confucianism	Recorded dialogues between Zhu Xi and his disciples, covering diverse philosophical topics

The analytical method draws on hermeneutic and narrative-based approaches, informed by interpretive traditions in Chinese philosophy and contemporary critical theory. Each text is examined through close reading, with particular attention to metaphors, symbolic structures, and philosophical motifs related to regeneration. The analysis identifies recurring conceptual patterns—such as cyclical time, moral rectification, yin–yang dynamics, and cosmological correspondence—and traces their development across intellectual traditions. Treating the texts as narrative constructs also foregrounds the rhetorical strategies and dialogic structures through which meaning is conveyed and transformed. Where appropriate, comparative analysis highlights both continuities and divergences among the traditions, situating the texts within their broader historical and cultural contexts. This interpretive strategy supports a multidimensional understanding of regeneration as a philosophical concept operating on ethical, metaphysical, and existential levels.

Empirical Research Design

The empirical studies in Chapters Five and Six explore pathways for co-creating regenerative tourism within a community of practice shaped by the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*. Anchored in a social constructivist paradigm, they adopt a cross-community enactive research approach, as outlined by Bertella (2023). The studies are situated in Azheke village, Southwest China, where a community of practice—comprising both human and non-human stakeholders—has been established to foster regenerative tourism since the advent of tourism in the area. The author was an active participant in this community of practice from July 2019 to July 2022 and has maintained peripheral involvement since then. Upon returning to academia, she undertook a reflective inquiry into her experiences of co-creating regenerative

tourism in the village, aiming to derive insights into the processes and conditions that support such collaborative efforts. The ethical appropriateness of the study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Research Paradigm: Social Constructivism

The empirical studies are grounded in the paradigm of social constructivism, which views knowledge and understanding as co-constructed through human interaction. Within this paradigm, participants are not passive subjects but active contributors to the research process, and their engagement is recognised as intrinsic to the generation of meaning (Stebbins, 2011). Social constructivism, emerging from broader constructivist thought, posits that knowledge is shaped through the interplay between individual experiences and social contexts (Duffy & Jonassen, 2013). It emphasises that reality is not pre-given but socially and culturally produced, resulting in the construction of multiple, context-dependent realities (Berger & Luckmann, 2023).

These constructed realities influence how individuals interpret the world and interact with others (Duffy & Jonassen, 2013). Epistemologically, social constructivism stresses the intersubjective relationship between researchers and informants, underscoring the collaborative nature of knowledge production (Hayes & Oppenheim, 1997). Language plays a central role in this process (Charmaz, 2014), as meaning is conveyed and interpreted through discourse shaped by cultural and historical influences (Huang et al., 2025). Building on these principles, Kathy Charmaz (2014) developed a constructivist grounded theory approach. This methodology is particularly suited to examining complex social processes within specific contexts (Charmaz, 2011), such as regenerative tourism. Constructivist grounded theory rejects the notion of a purely objective or discoverable truth (Mills et al., 2006; Charmaz, 2000). Instead, it views data and theory as emergent from the interactive engagement between researchers and participants (Khanal, 2018). It favours an inductive process, whereby analysis is guided by participants' lived experiences and interpretive frameworks (Mills et al., 2006).

In contrast to the systematic procedures of traditional grounded theory, constructivist grounded theory maintains that data collection concludes not at a predetermined point (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022), but when the researcher determines that sufficient depth and meaning have been achieved (Khanal, 2018; Charmaz, 2006). The approach situates both the

research process and its findings within the historical, cultural, and situational contexts of participants' lives (Charmaz, 2016).

In both studies, constructivist grounded theory is applied to analyse experiences within a community of practice engaged in regenerative tourism. The focus is on how meaning and practice are co-created among human and non-human stakeholders, drawing on a philosophical lens of *Sheng Sheng* developed in the conceptual component of the research. This framework provides a means to interpret the unfolding processes of collaboration, transformation, and relational engagement within the community.

Research Method: Cross-Community Enactive Research

The adoption of a cross-community enactive research approach as the primary methodological framework is informed by its dual capacity to generate empirical insight and to recognise the researcher's potential influence on practice. This approach positions the researcher not as an external observer, but as an active participant within the practitioner community. Motivated by a commitment to the co-creation of regenerative tourism, the researcher moves fluidly between academic and practical domains, embodying a dynamic practitioner-scholar identity (Bertella, 2023).

The cross-community enactive approach is a relational, place-based model of academic engagement in which reflexivity plays a central role. This entails a critical engagement not only with the research topic and objectives, but also with the assumptions underlying knowledge production, particularly the idea of value-free inquiry. The method seeks to dissolve rigid role distinctions—such as those between the researcher and the researched—in order to cultivate greater openness, responsiveness, and depth of understanding (Bertella, 2023).

In both studies, the researcher immerses herself in the community of Azheke village, engaging directly with both human and non-human stakeholders in the co-creation of regenerative tourism practices. From July 2019 to August 2022, she participated actively as a member of the planning team and has remained a peripheral participant since September 2022. Her immersion included residing in the village from July 2019 to April 2020, and undertaking return visits from 20 February to 31 March 2021, 5–11 July 2021, 8–14 August 2023, and 5–13 July 2024. In addition, from July 2021 to August 2022, she was employed full-time as a research assistant for the planning team. Throughout this period, the author maintained close communication with the planning team, Azheke villagers, local government

representatives, travel agents, tourism entrepreneurs, and selected tourists, primarily via WeChat.

This immersion allows for an experiential understanding of the situated realities and relational dynamics that shape the community of practice. Having initiated the application of *Sheng Sheng*-informed principles within this context, the researcher subsequently transitions back into her academic role, undertaking a systematic and reflective analysis of the practical insights acquired (Johannisson, 2018). This iterative movement between practice and theory, underpinned by reflexive engagement, is fundamental to the enactive research process and supports a more nuanced, ethically grounded understanding of regeneration in tourism.

Research Site: Azheke village in Honghe Hani Rice Terraces

The empirical research is conducted in Azheke village, located in the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces of Yuanyang County, Yunnan Province, China (**Figure 6**). Famous for its iconic rice terraces and traditional Hani architecture, Azheke has been designated a core protected area of a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site since 2013.

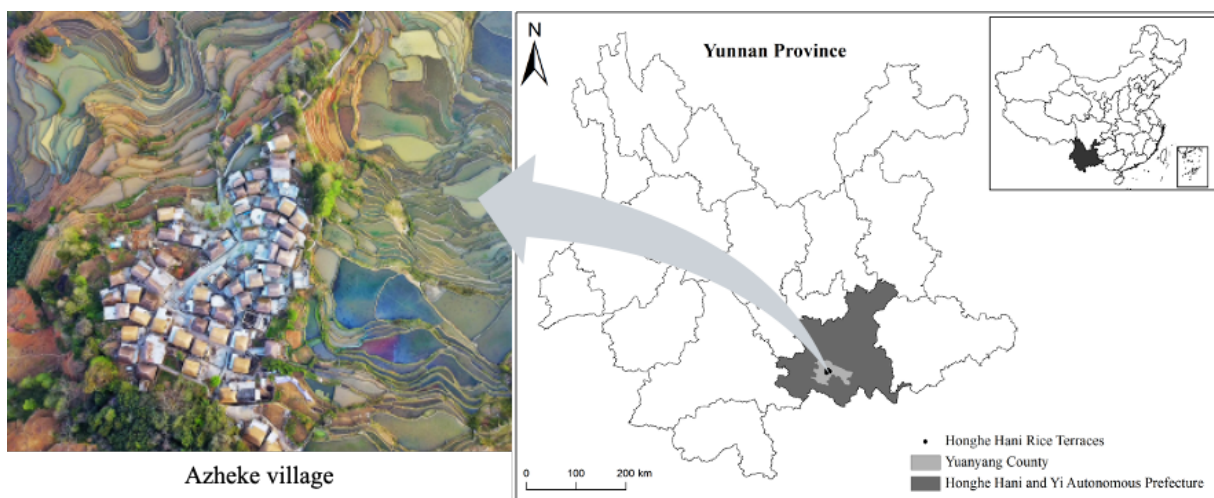


Figure 6. Geographical location of Azheke village

Source: Drawn by the author (right); taken by Bin Yang (left)

The Hani people, an ethnic minority group, have been constructing and maintaining these terraces for over 1,300 years (**Figure 7**). According to the Hani migration epic¹, the community originally settled in lowland regions where they acquired rice cultivation

¹ 《哈尼阿培聪坡坡》 - A poem recounting the migration history of the Hani ancestors, comprising over 5,000 lines, circulates among Hani communities in the Mourning Mountains on the southern bank of the Red River in Yunnan Province. Source: Institute of Ethnic Literature CASS, http://iel.cass.cn/ztpd/zgss/nfss/qtss/200610/t20061030_2762880.shtml

techniques from other migrant groups. After a series of military defeats, they relocated to the Ailao Mountains—referred to in oral traditions as the “Mourning Mountains”—and adapted their agricultural practices to the mountainous terrain. This adaptation process gave rise to the large-scale, integrated agroecological landscape now known as the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces. In this context, the Hani gradually learned to coexist with local ecosystems, developing livelihood practices attuned to the rhythms and needs of non-human stakeholders.



Figure 7. Hani people working in rice terraces

Source: Taken by the author

The region’s unique ecological and cultural landscape has attracted growing numbers of domestic and international tourists. French photographer Yann Layma was the first Western artist to document the terraces extensively. His 1993 work *Sculptor of Mountains* brought international attention to the harmony and beauty of the Hani countryside and played a significant role in shaping global perceptions of the region. Since the site’s UNESCO inscription in 2013, tourism in Azheke village has expanded substantially, fostering increased interactions between tourists and both human and non-human elements of the destination.

Over time, the expansion of the local Hani population and intensified social interactions within the community prompted the development of formal governance structures, culminating in the establishment of local administrative institutions. Since 2015, the Yuanyang County Government has supported regenerative tourism initiatives in Azheke by inviting two research teams to collaborate with the community: one from the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Kunming University of Science and Technology (hereafter referred to as the “design team”), and the other from the School of Tourism Management at Sun Yat-sen University (hereafter the “planning team”).

Azheke village was selected as the research site because it offers a concrete and distinctive example of regenerative tourism in practice. Since 2013, collaborations among the

community, design and planning teams, and local government have supported the restoration of traditional Hani dwellings and the establishment of a collectively owned tourism company, generating social, cultural, and ecological benefits. Azheke’s approach is particularly noteworthy for integrating Indigenous knowledge and recognising the agency of non-human stakeholders—such as forests, village infrastructure, rice terraces, and water systems—within its regenerative processes.

The vitality of the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, which underpin regional tourism, depends on maintaining ecological balance and sustaining traditional agricultural practices. This interdependence highlights the inseparability of tourism, livelihoods, and ecosystem health. Guided by the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*, the Azheke Plan places Indigenous communities at the centre of decision-making through participatory adaptation, a balanced integration of tradition and innovation, and transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms. These dynamics have fostered an emergent community of practice in which human and non-human actors collaborate within an evolving framework of regenerative tourism.

Data Collection: Observations, Document Analysis, and Interviews

To develop a comprehensive understanding of regenerative tourism practice and its co-creation processes—and to strengthen data triangulation—the empirical study drew on both primary and secondary qualitative data. Using naturalistic observation, document analysis, and in-depth interviews, it incorporated all key practitioner groups involved in Azheke village (Table 2).

Table 2. Practitioners’ profiles involved in data collection

Code	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Stakeholder role	Data source
G1	Li	65+	Male	Local government	Participatory research note/ document analysis
G2	Wang	40+	Male	Local government	Participatory research note/ document analysis/interview
D1	Li	40+	Male	The design team/Non- local tourism entrepreneur	Participatory research note/ interview
D2	Zhu	70+	Male	The design team	Document analysis
P1	Bao	60+	Male	The planning team	Participatory research note/ document analysis
P2	Yang	30+	Male	The planning team	Participatory research note/ document analysis

P3	Zhang	20+	Male	The planning team	Interview
R1	Gao	45+	Male	Local resident	Participatory research note/ document analysis
R2	Ma	50+	Male	Local resident	Participatory research note
R3	Gao	30+	Female	Local resident	Participatory research note/ document analysis
R4	Long	30+	Female	Local resident	Participatory research note
E1	Ma	50+	Female	Local resident/tourism entrepreneur	Participatory research note/ interview
E2	Pu	60+	Male	Local resident/tourism entrepreneur	Participatory research note
E3	Gao	40+	Male	Local resident/tourism entrepreneur	Participatory research note/ interview
E4	Liang	30+	Female	Local resident/tourism entrepreneur	Participatory research note
T1	Chen	40+	Female	Tourist	Participatory research note/ interview
T2	Wang	30+	Female	Tourist	Participatory research note/ interview
T3	Zhou	50+	Male	Tourist	Interview
T4	Qiu	60+	Male	Tourist	Interview
T5	Shen	60+	Female	Tourist	Interview
T6	Yu	35+	Female	Tourist	Interview

Primary data were generated through the author's long-term embedded participation in the Azheke community of practice. Before fieldwork commenced, the local government secured collective permission from the community for the planning team to reside in the village, assist with tourism development, and conduct research. As a member of this team, the author was recognised in the village as both practitioner and researcher. Between July 2019 and August 2022, she lived and worked alongside Indigenous residents, engaging directly in regenerative tourism initiatives and maintaining close contact with planning team members, government officials, Indigenous community members of all ages, local and non-local entrepreneurs in the village, tourists, and former design team members.

Primary data were collected through naturalistic observation that can provide opportunities to document behaviours and interactions in situ without intervention

(Angrosino, 2016). Observations focused on the regenerative tourism practices and their co-creation processes, including interactions among external actors, Indigenous communities, and ecological systems. The author kept detailed participatory research notes, which offer an extensive record of observed practices, everyday conversations, and important meetings and workshops held among key practitioners, including the local government, the planning team, the design team, and the Indigenous residents during the stay (**Table 2**). As many Indigenous residents—particularly elders—speak Hani rather than Mandarin, communication was often facilitated by Hani-speaking adults, youth, and children who translated for the author; parental consent was obtained for youth and children involved in translation.

Secondary data were collected through document analysis, defined as the systematic gathering, examination, and interpretation of printed and digital materials (Bowen, 2009). This method offers an effective means of analyzing texts related to the activities of the regenerative tourism community of practice. Initially, newspaper articles, reports, policy announcements, and other electronic documents were collected from Chinese and international online platforms and local official websites. Documents were then screened according to three criteria: (1) they concerned Azheke village or nearby areas such as Yuanyang County or the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces; (2) they addressed local development, particularly heritage preservation and tourism development; and (3) they captured the perspectives, actions, or interactions of key practitioners involved in local regenerative co-creation, including local government officials, the planning team, the design team, and Indigenous communities or residents.

To locate relevant materials, keywords related to place names (e.g., “Azheke,” “Yuanyang,” “Honghe Hani rice terraces”) and practice types (e.g., dwelling upgrade, heritage preservation, tourism development) were used across Baidu, Google, government websites, and other online platforms. Data collection in March 2025 produced more than one thousand documents. Duplicate or near-duplicate materials posted across different platforms were removed. Priority was given to documents that reflected regenerative practices and philosophies in the context of Azheke village.

In-depth interviews were conducted to supplement the data from participatory research notes and document analysis, assess data saturation, and enhance triangulation. This method offers detailed insights into regenerative tourism practices and co-creation processes. Interviews were carried out during return visits to Azheke village from 20 February to 31 March 2021, 5–11 July 2021, 8–14 August 2023, and 5–13 July 2024. Through purposive sampling, 11 informants participated in total: one local government representative, one design

team member, one planning team member who was also a non-local tourism entrepreneur, two local residents who also operated as local tourism entrepreneurs, and six tourists (**Table 2**). They were selected due to their specialised knowledge and experience relevant to regenerative tourism practice in Azheke village (Taylor & Blake, 2015).

Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours, depending on participants' availability and willingness to elaborate. Interview questions were tailored to each group to elicit nuanced reflections based on their specific experiences. Prompts such as "What do you see as the role of rice terraces, mushroom houses, the local ecosystem, or Hani culture in the process of tourism development?" were used to encourage open-ended responses and promote a natural conversational flow (Smith, 2005).

Data saturation was achieved because all key practitioner groups involved in the regenerative tourism co-creation process in Azheke village—local government representatives, the design team, the planning team, and Indigenous community members—were included. Confidence in the comprehensiveness of the findings was further strengthened through methodological triangulation. By incorporating additional perspectives from tourism entrepreneurs and tourists, the study enhanced the robustness and credibility of its analysis (Rahimi, 2024).

Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to interpret data derived from participatory research notes, document analysis, and interview transcripts. This method facilitates the identification and organisation of patterns within complex qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As many original materials were recorded in Chinese or other languages, they were first synthesised for analytical induction (Brewer, 2000) and then carefully translated into English to preserve their original meaning and context.

Following Berbekova et al. (2021), the researcher began by familiarising herself with the data and conducting an initial review. An inductive approach was then applied through manual coding and theme development using NVivo 12, ensuring that the analysis is not driven by any pre-established theoretical framework. The coding process proceeded through three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Open coding identified key categories informed by the *Sheng Sheng* framework developed in the conceptual study. During axial coding, these primary categories were further refined into subcategories. Finally, selective coding drew out commonalities and distinctions among

subcategories, with consistent labels assigned to those sharing conceptual similarities. A detailed coding example that integrated different data sources and different practitioners’ perspectives is presented as **Table 3**.

Table 3. An example of thematic analysis

Original Transcripts	Data sources	Open coding	Axial coding	Selective coding
<i>“The compensation mechanism has resolved a problem that troubled me for many years—it aligns the villagers’ understanding of mushroom house preservation with that of the government” (G1).</i>	Participatory research notes	Balancing the interests of resident and the government	Balancing the conflicts between different stakeholders	Regenerative principle: Harmony through opposites
<i>“Now I can look after the rice terraces, live in my own mushroom house, and still support my family. It really is the best of both worlds” (R4).</i>	Document analysis	Balancing residents’ needs	Balancing the conflicts within the same stakeholders	Regenerative principle: Harmony through opposites
<i>“The living conditions in the mushroom houses are relatively poor, so it is unlikely that villagers would voluntarily protect them. Once they have enough money, they are likely to buy houses elsewhere. However, if tourism is developed and the mushroom houses attract visitors—allowing villagers to benefit financially—they may come to realise that losing these houses could mean losing their source of income. Our ultimate goal is to encourage more villagers to participate and to cultivate a sense of responsibility. This responsibility is rooted in their own interests and can be reinforced through a system of incentives” (P1).</i>	Participatory research notes	Residents’ sense of responsibility to preserve mushroom houses	Local engagement in tangible regeneration	Regenerative principle: Organic self-generation
<i>“The purpose of redistributing benefits to the villagers is not simply to lift them out of poverty, but to enable them to maintain their traditional way of life. If it were just about poverty alleviation, and everyone became wealthy and changed everything, then it would lose its meaning—and this project</i>	Interviews	Residents’ motivation to maintain traditional lifestyle	Local engagement in intangible regeneration	Regenerative principle: Organic self-generation

<p><i>might no longer have any value. By linking the preservation of their original lifestyle to villagers' economic interests, they will have the motivation to remain actively involved"</i> (T3).</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

Researcher Positionality and Reflectivity

Positionality and Reflectivity in the Conceptual Research

The researcher was born and raised in mainland China. From her primary school years onward, she has been immersed in an educational environment deeply influenced by Chinese thought. During her Ph.D. studies in Hong Kong, SAR, she was supervised by a professor with a strong interest in Chinese philosophies, particularly Taoism. These experiences have fostered in her a nuanced understanding of cultural contexts and a heightened awareness of the importance of cultural sensitivity in research.

As a Chinese researcher, she has inherited literary and intellectual traditions rooted in Chinese culture and history. Consequently, when engaging with texts shaped by Chinese philosophy, she brings a pre-existing, historically informed perspective. Rather than disregarding this perspective as bias, she acknowledges it and actively interrogates it through ongoing inquiry. This involves exploring not only original philosophical writings and their historical interpretations but also contemporary analyses and international discussions beyond mainland China. Through this process, she uncovers alternative perspectives that challenge her own, creating opportunities for learning and growth (Warnke, 2016).

Of particular interest to the researcher is the potential of non-Western knowledge—especially Chinese wisdom—to contribute to both the practical and theoretical dimensions of tourism studies. This focus reflects a deliberate effort to broaden the range of perspectives in the field, recognizing the richness and relevance of non-Western knowledge systems.

Positionality and Reflectivity in the Empirical Research

The researcher is a committed advocate of knowledge co-creation, particularly within highly situated research contexts. This philosophy emphasises the collaborative and reciprocal nature of knowledge creation, positioning both researchers and participants as active contributors to research outcomes and challenging traditional hierarchical research dynamics.

During her master's studies, the researcher immersed herself in the field as an active practitioner in tourism development in Azheke village. From July 2019 to April 2020, she lived in the village and worked on a range of initiatives, including tourism operations, staff and managerial training, social-media marketing, destination management, and liaison with local government and the Indigenous community. This engagement enabled her to maintain a close connection with Azheke and to become an informed outsider—one who engages with Indigenous knowledge systems while co-creating knowledge with diverse practitioners.

This positionality, however, presents both advantages and limitations. Deep involvement allowed her to observe subtle frictions, relational dynamics, and operational realities that might otherwise have remained unnoticed. Yet such proximity also carries the risk of being too embedded to fully recognise tensions or critically interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions. Rather than disregarding these potential biases, she acknowledges them and engages in continuous reflexive inquiry. After April 2020, she deliberately created distance from day-to-day practice, enabling her to revisit her experiences with greater analytical objectivity.

Her commitment to self-reflexivity includes attentiveness to issues in which dominant Western perspectives risk marginalising alternative epistemologies. She remains aware of the possibility that her own worldview may distort or over-interpret the knowledge shared by participants, and she adopts proactive strategies to mitigate these risks. Recognising the influence of pre-existing assumptions, she incorporates diverse voices from the field (Russell-Mundine, 2012)—including Indigenous residents, local government officials, the design team, tourism entrepreneurs, and tourists—to ensure a fuller and more inclusive understanding of the research context.

Chapter 4: A *Sheng Sheng*-Inspired Perspective on Regenerative Tourism

Chapter Four addresses the *domain* question, examining what regenerative tourism means through the lens of the Chinese philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*. The chapter begins by tracing the philosophical evolution of *Sheng Sheng* across different schools of Chinese thought, followed by an interpretation of its core ontological and ethical implications. It concludes by articulating six principles for defining regenerative tourism that are inspired by, and grounded in, the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*.

Sheng Sheng in Chinese Philosophy

The character *Sheng* (生) originally referred to the growth of plants (Xue, 2019). Its earliest form, found in oracle bone script, depicts grass or trees sprouting from the ground (**Figure 8**), vividly illustrating the natural emergence and development of life (Yang, 2023; Ding et al., 2021). According to the *Shuowen Jiezi* (《说文解字》), a Chinese dictionary compiled between 25 and 220 CE, *Sheng* means “to advance” and was initially used to convey ideas such as birth, growth, and generation. Over time, its meaning broadened to include reproduction, occurrence, life, and survival (Ding et al., 2021). In modern usage, *Sheng* functions as both noun and verb, depending on context, and frequently appears in expressions related to life, transformation, and existence. It symbolises emergence, vitality, and the ongoing process of creation (Yu, 2013).



Figure 8. The character *Sheng* from the oracle bone script

Source: *Shuowen Jiezi*

Based on the meanings of *Sheng*, the expression *Sheng Sheng* in everyday language can be interpreted through three grammatical structures: subject–verb, verb–object, and verb–verb. In the subject–verb construction, *Sheng Sheng* can be understood as “life generates,” signifying the perpetual reproduction and continuation of life in the cosmos. As a verb–object phrase, it can mean “generate life,” referring to the creation of all things—a transformation from nonexistence to existence. In the case of verb–verb structure, *Sheng Sheng* implies “to generate and generate,” with one act of generation following another, suggesting an endless

process. Regardless of the grammatical structure, *Sheng Sheng* consistently conveys the idea of an unceasing, continuously unfolding cycle of creation (Yang, 2023).

The philosophical concept of *Sheng Sheng* originates in the *I Ching* and was further developed within the philosophical traditions of Taoism, Confucianism, and later Neo-Confucianism, ultimately becoming a central tenet of Chinese philosophy. **Figure 9** illustrates how the philosophical focus of *Sheng Sheng* evolved across various schools of Chinese thought.

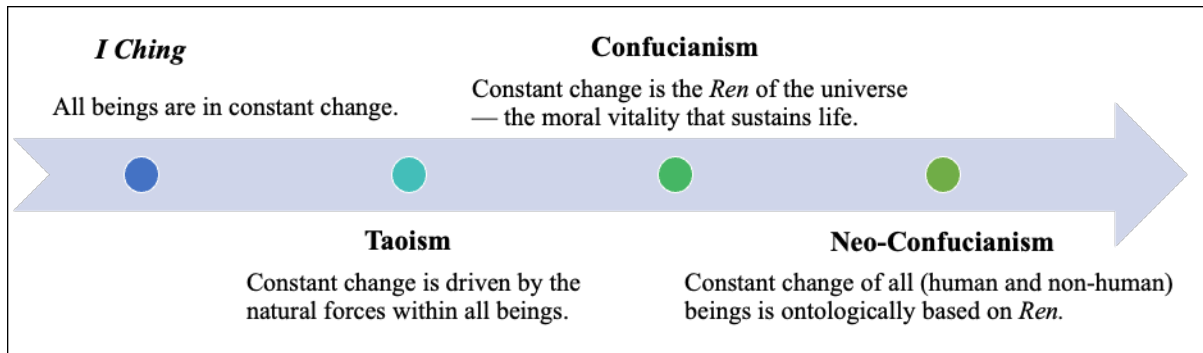


Figure 9. Philosophical meanings of *Sheng Sheng* in Chinese thought

Source: Drawn by the author

(1) *Sheng Sheng* in the *I Ching*

The philosophical meaning of *Sheng Sheng* was first systematically articulated in the *I Ching*, where it emerges as a core principle of transformation and continuity (Xue, 2019; Wu, 2018b; Guo, 2010). As a central concept in the *I Ching*, *Sheng Sheng* signifies that the essence of change lies in perpetual generation (Wei, 2015; Wang & Wei, 2014), ultimately addressing the fundamental question of life itself (Guo, 2010). Its most direct expression appears in the statement: “*One thing renews itself constantly in great virtue²; One generation gives life to another generation in perpetual change³*” (日新之谓盛德，生生之谓易). This passage conveys that ceaseless renewal constitutes the essence of virtue, while endless creation forms the underlying law governing all cosmic transformations (Yu, 2013; Huang, 2023). It succinctly captures the core spirit of the *I Ching* (Qu, 2018; Wang & Wei, 2014; Meng, 2014; Zeng & Zhang, 2013), and has since evolved into a broader cosmological and philosophical framework centred on *Sheng Sheng* (Wu, 2018b).

Within the *I Ching*, *Sheng Sheng* reveals the intrinsic force that animates all beings—the power of self-generation, continual transformation, life-sustaining processes, and boundless

² Translation from *Constant Renewal* (日新), *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

³ Translation from *Perpetual Growth and Change* (生生), *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

vitality (Zhang, 2016; Xiang, 2013; Zhang, 2012). Change in the *I Ching* is articulated through three interrelated dimensions: *ease and simplicity* (易简), *changeability* (变易), and *constancy* (不易) (Guo, 2010). The text recognises the self-generating order of nature as the highest aesthetic and moral principle (Xiao, 2022). The philosophical insights of the *I Ching* thus not only illuminate the dynamic structure of the cosmos, but also provide a vital theoretical foundation for understanding the profound interconnection between individual life and the natural world (Wang, 2022).

(2) *Sheng Sheng* in Taoism

The Taoist interpretation of *Sheng Sheng* most closely reflects the original phrasing of the *I Ching*: “one generation gives life to another in perpetual change,” characterised by transcendence, naturalism, and profound metaphysical significance (Lin, 2023; Ding, 2018; Zhang, 2016). Its foundational expression appears in the *Tao Te Ching*: “*The Way begets one; one begets two; two begets three; three begets the myriad creatures*⁴. *All things stand, facing Yang and embracing Yin; the interaction of Yin and Yang creates harmony*⁵” (道生一，一生二，二生三，三生万物。万物负阴而抱阳，冲气以为和). In Taoism, the *Way* is conceived as the self-manifesting activity of existence, through which the flow and transformation of life occur naturally, effortlessly, and spontaneously (Xiao, 2022; Chen, 2008). This understanding draws primarily on the *I Ching*’s notion of change as ease and simplicity.

Unlike reproduction-based concepts of generation commonly found in Western traditions, Taoism interprets *Sheng Sheng* as a process of continuous renewal. It envisions a cosmos grounded in self-generation and transformation, governed by universal principles intrinsic to nature itself (Ding, 2018). All beings are seen as part of a self-sustaining, self-regulating natural order, shaped by the dynamic interplay of *Yin* and *Yang* (Yu, 2013). This perspective marks a philosophical shift: from a theistic account of creation to a naturalistic cosmology, with *Yin* and *Yang* as the core generative principles underlying all transformation (Ding et al., 2021).

(3) *Sheng Sheng* in Confucianism

As the foundation and core of Confucian philosophy (Li, 2022; Tang, 2019; Dou, 2017; Zhang, 2016; Li, 2012), the Confucian interpretation of *Sheng Sheng* is first articulated in the *Commentaries on the I Ching* (hereafter *Commentaries*) and later elaborated by Mencius and

⁴ The 42nd line in *Tao Te Ching*, translation from Lau (1963)

⁵ Translation from *Yin and Yang* (阴阳), *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

subsequent Confucian thinkers. Building on the *I Ching*'s original expression, “*One thing renews itself constantly in great virtue,*” the *Commentaries* develop a philosophical framework that goes beyond cosmogenesis and the continuation of life to encompass human morality, the relationship between humanity and nature, and principles of governance (Ding et al., 2021; Wei, 2015; Yuan, 2012; Wang, 2010). This interpretation addresses not only the constitution of the natural world but also the establishment and functioning of social and ethical order (Shang & Lü, 2016), reflecting Confucianism's deep engagement with cosmic creation and moral ontology (Dou, 2017; Wang & Wei, 2014).

The Confucian understanding of *Sheng Sheng* extends beyond the natural world to encompass human moral responsibility and social governance (Lin, 2023; Wei, 2015). Confucianism emphasises inner cultivation and upholds moral values such as *Ren* (仁, benevolence), *Yi* (义, righteousness), *Li* (礼, ritual propriety), *Zhi* (智, wisdom), and *Xin* (信, integrity) as essential to sustaining the continuous development and flourishing of all things (Yu, 2015; Yuan, 2012). A *Junzi* (君子, person of virtue) is expected to cultivate the self in accordance with the generative principles of the cosmos, mirroring the universe's processes of ongoing life and transformation through continuous moral refinement (Wei, 2015).

By comprehending and aligning with the rhythm of *Sheng Sheng*, individuals can harmonise their conduct with the natural order and realise enduring ethical growth (Xiang, 2013). As the ultimate pursuit of morality and existence, the Confucian concept of *Sheng Sheng* encompasses not only individual life but also the broader aims of social harmony and stability (Liu & Yu, 2023). Mencius integrated *Sheng Sheng* into the domain of human ethics, linking it to governance and personal virtue through the integration of *Ren* and *Yi* (Zhang, 2016). This synthesis underscores the unity of moral cultivation and social order (Shang & Lü, 2016; Xiang, 2013). Confucian ethics uphold *Ren* as the foundational principle governing the relationship between humanity and nature (Yu, 2013), emphasising the ongoing processes of generation, cultivation, and flourishing (Li, 2012). By aligning personal growth with social harmony and the natural rhythms of transformation, Confucianism presents moral development as a dynamic, interconnected process rooted in the cosmological principle of *Sheng Sheng* (Wei, 2015; Li, 2012).

(4) *Sheng Sheng* in Neo-Confucianism

Neo-Confucianism profoundly deepened the ethical concept of *Ren*, reinterpreting it as an intrinsic essence aligned with the fundamental laws of the cosmos (Wu, 2017). In doing so, it not only inherited and expanded the moral vision of classical Confucianism, but also

assimilated metaphysical insights from the *I Ching* and the Taoist principle of *Sheng Sheng*. On this foundation, Neo-Confucian thinkers constructed a comprehensive philosophical system that articulated the unity of nature and humanity. This system emphasises the harmony between cosmic order and human moral cultivation, forming the distinctive cosmological and ethical framework of Neo-Confucianism (Zhang, 2012).

Neo-Confucianism elevates *Ren* to a metaphysical level (Wu, 2017), identifying it as the fundamental ontological essence underlying the universe's ceaseless generation. Within this framework, *Sheng Sheng* is understood as the concrete manifestation of ontological *Ren* (Yu, 2013). As the core moral principle of the cosmos, *Sheng Sheng* operates both as the dynamic force driving the creation and development of the universe and as the natural process through which life continually emerges. This perspective underscores the unity of all existence and affirms the intrinsic value of life (Shan, 2023). All beings—including humans and non-human entities—are participants in the unfolding process of *Sheng Sheng*. Consequently, there is no essential ontological division between humanity and the rest of the natural world.

Ren is seen as an integral expression of the cosmic order, and human conduct is expected to align with the generative rhythms and transformative patterns of the universe (Wu, 2017). Within Neo-Confucian ontology, *Sheng Sheng* emerges as a central principle (Wu, 2019), serving as the foundation for an integrated vision of the cosmos and human existence. Grounded in this generative concept, Neo-Confucian thinkers constructed a philosophical system wherein *Ren* is understood as ontological—the moral essence inherent in the structure of reality itself. In doing so, they unified cosmology, ontology, and ethics within a coherent and dynamic framework centred on the ever-unfolding process of *Sheng Sheng* (Shan, 2023).

Regeneration Inspired by *Sheng Sheng*

Perpetual Growth and Change

Sheng Sheng provides a philosophical foundation for regenerative tourism rooted in interconnection, becoming, and the life-affirming potential of transformation (Li, 2022). Integrating this ontological perspective shifts the focus from restoration to active participation in the generative rhythms of the living world (Yang, 2023; Gu, 2022; Yu, 2013; Yuan, 2012). Although often translated into English as “perpetual growth and change,” this

“growth” does not refer to economic expansion; rather, it denotes a positive, continuous process of transformation.

In the *I Ching*, change is understood through three interrelated dimensions (Guo, 2010): *ease and simplicity* (易简), *changeability* (变易), and *constancy* (不易). The first of these—*ease and simplicity*—represents the essential and foundational quality of change (Xue, 2019). This idea is articulated in the *I Ching*:

“The way of Heaven is easily understood because of its ease. The way of Earth is effective because of its simplicity. Ease means easy to know, and simplicity means easy to follow. If something is easy to understand, it appeals to people and draws them to it; if something is easy to follow, it will not be difficult to achieve it. Appeal can be enduring, and achievability will lead to great accomplishments. Endurance is a merit of a person of virtue, and being capable of reaching far is the pursuit of a person of integrity⁶” (乾以易知，坤以简能。易则易知，简则易从。易知则有亲，易从则有功。有亲则可久，有功则可大。可久则贤人之德，可大则贤人之业)。

This passage affirms that the natural order—embodied by Heaven and Earth—operates through principles of ease and simplicity (Wei, 2015). These principles render the cosmic process both accessible and effective. Natural transformation, therefore, follows intrinsic and intelligible patterns. The generative force of the cosmos is fundamentally simple, yet universally encompassing (Wang & Wei, 2014), and it reflects the highest virtue: the continuous propagation and renewal of all things (Xiang, 2007).

Secondly, *changeability* signifies regular and orderly transformation—the dynamic flux inherent in all things (Xue, 2019; Wei, 2015). The universe, and everything within it, is in a state of eternal movement, characterised by continuous creation, constant change, and renewal (Zhang, 2017; Qiao, 2011). This ceaseless transformation embodies the ongoing process of life itself, revealing the fluid, ever-evolving nature of existence (Wang & Wei, 2014). The dimension of changeability thus reflects the principle of perpetual generation and motion, underscoring the dynamic and interconnected essence of both the cosmos and all living beings (Ding et al., 2021; Zhang, 2016).

Thirdly, *constancy* refers to the unchanging nature of change itself (Xue, 2019; Wei, 2015)—the idea that while all things are in flux, the fundamental principles governing

⁶ Translation from *Ease and Simplicity* (易简), *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

transformation remain constant. Though phenomena shift and evolve, the underlying cosmic laws and essential relationships endure (Wang & Wei, 2014). In the *I Ching*, *Sheng Sheng* is regarded as the essence of cosmic vitality, rooted in the dynamic interplay of *Yin* (阴) and *Yang* (阳), whose interaction drives the generation of all things (Tao, 2017). As stated in the *Shuoyuan* (《说苑》), “*The alternation of Yin and Yang is called the Way⁷; all movements of things follow the Way*” (一阴一阳之谓道，道也者，物之动莫不由道也). This passage illustrates that *Sheng Sheng* is a concrete manifestation of *the Way* expressed through the generative and transformative dynamics of *Yin* and *Yang* (Ding et al., 2021). On this foundation, *Yin* and *Yang* operate as the mechanisms that regulate transformation (Wei, 2015). All changes follow a stable yet cyclical pattern, reflecting the intrinsic harmony and order within existence (Xue, 2019).

Sheng Sheng is conceived as the very essence of change, underscoring the generative and dynamic nature of existence (Meng, 2014). This understanding posits that being is not a static condition but an ongoing process of creation and renewal, with the cosmos itself characterised by continuous emergence and transformation (Xiang, 2007). Building upon these conceptual foundations, regeneration may be understood as a continuous, dynamic process through which living systems or complex structures restore, renew, and sustain themselves. This process manifests in three interrelated modes: through the recurrent enactment of fundamental patterns that confer coherence and stability; through adaptive transformations that facilitate responsiveness to changing internal and external conditions; and through the preservation of core integrity, maintaining essential identity and functionality amid ongoing change. Regeneration thus embodies a dynamic equilibrium between constancy and innovation, enabling systems to evolve without relinquishing the foundational characteristics that define them.

The Art of Self-Generation

Sheng Sheng provides a metaphysical framework grounded in organic change, where existence is not imposed from outside but emerges naturally, spontaneously, and cyclically from within. All beings participate in self-sustaining cycles of generation and transformation, forming an interconnected and dynamic whole (Wu, 2018a). Life is conceived as inherently

⁷ Translation from *The Alternation of Yin and Yang Constitutes the Way* (一阴一阳之谓道), *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

self-generating: the creator is immanent within the created, not external to it (Dou, 2017). This view stands in contrast to Western theological traditions that posit external divine intervention (Wu, 2024; Li, 2012).

Both Confucianism and Taoism deeply embody this vision of self-generation. In Confucian thought, inquiry into *Sheng Sheng* evolves from examining the external manifestations of life (生) to uncovering the internal grounds of nature and essence (性), marking a shift toward understanding the root of being itself (Ding et al., 2021). Confucianism asserts that the generation of all things arises from within the things themselves: self-generation serves as the fundamental cause of emergence, growth, and decay, while essence provides the internal foundation of their self-becoming (Li, 2024b).

Similarly, Taoism emphasises the spontaneous, intrinsic unfolding of life (Wei, 2015). Zhuangzi’s writings, such as *The Adjustment of Controversies* (《齐物论》), articulate that generation is not the result of deliberate action—an “I generate”—but rather a natural, effortless process, originating from the authentic self (自) rather than from a willful ego (我) (Gao, 2022). This Taoist perspective complements the Confucian view, highlighting that life’s dynamism springs from an inner source rather than external imposition.

Across both traditions, the universe is envisioned as operating through an inherent purposiveness: growth, renewal, and transformation arise from its own dynamic equilibrium (Qiao, 2011). This intrinsic vitality is vividly illustrated in Taoist texts such as the *Lunheng* (《论衡》), which states: “By the fusion of the fluids of Heaven and Earth, all things of the world are produced spontaneously⁸” (天地合气，万物自生), affirming that genesis is intrinsic and independent of external intervention. Similarly, the Taoist notion that “the Way begets the myriad creatures” (道生万物) symbolises the self-sustaining, self-renewing essence of existence (Gao, 2022; Han, 2021).

Within the metaphysical framework of *Sheng Sheng*, Confucianism and Taoism converge in affirming the self-unfolding nature of reality (Yu, 2023; Li, 2012). The universe is conceptualised as a living organism—vital, regenerative, and perpetually self-renewing—imbued with an intrinsic capacity for boundless transformation (Wang, 2010; Liu, 2003). Regeneration, understood in this context, is not a mere isolated event but a fundamental mode of being, embedded within the very fabric of the universe. It represents existence’s natural capacity to renew, transform, and perpetuate itself within the unceasing flow of life

⁸ Translation from *Chinese Text Project*

generating life. Regeneration, far from being a passive phenomenon, constitutes the self-propelling vitality of reality: the continuous unfolding of life from itself, through itself, and into itself. This dynamic process of renewal and transformation exposes an underlying principle: the living universe is not a static entity but is engaged in an ongoing process of becoming, guided by an innate rhythm that sustains and evolves its own existence (Shan, 2023).

Dynamic Interplay of Internal Opposites

In Chinese philosophy, the ceaseless generation of life is upheld as a core principle (Dou, 2017): all things arise through the internal interaction of complementary forces—most notably, the dynamic interplay of *Yin* and *Yang* (Wu, 2024; Zhang & Yang, 2021; Wu, 2018a). Heaven and Earth provide the field for the transformation and generation of all things, with the energies of *Yin* and *Yang* constituting the basic elements of life (Li, 2024b). The vitality of *Sheng Sheng* is rooted in this interaction (Wu, 2018b), which drives the continuous emergence and transformation of existence (Zhang & Yang, 2021; Wang, 2021; Zhang, 2017; Wang, 2010).

As the *Commentaries* explain: “*There is an intermingling of the genial influences of Heaven and Earth, and transformation in its various forms abundantly proceeds. There is an intercommunication of seed between male and female, and transformation in its living types proceeds*” (天地網緼，万物化醇，男女构精，万物化生). *Yin* and *Yang* are not binary opposites but mutually defining, interdependent forces (Guo, 2010). *Yin* is associated with receptivity, passivity, materiality, and the feminine principle; *Yang* with activity, creativity, vitality, and the masculine. These forces do not exist in isolation but operate in a fluid, cyclical rhythm—an organic dialectic that maintains cosmic balance and sustains life through ongoing transformation (Wu, 2018a).

Through the union of *Yin* and *Yang*, Heaven and Earth bring forth all things—Heaven representing the force of activity and creation (*Yang*), and Earth embodying receptivity and nourishment (*Yin*) (Zhang & Yang, 2021; Xiang, 2013). This interaction forms the fundamental mechanism behind the generation and transformation of all things in the cosmos (Wang & Wei, 2014). The *Commentaries* articulate the process of creation through the grand transformation of *Yin* and *Yang*, grounding it in the dialectical unity of Heaven and Earth. This cosmological vision reveals a universally operative structure, in which *Yin-Yang* serves

⁹ Translation from *Chinese Text Project*

not only as the ontological foundation of *Sheng Sheng* (Ding et al., 2021) but also as a crucial key to understanding the vital, dynamic nature of the universe.

Sheng Sheng integrates the principles of *Yin–Yang* interaction and dynamic balance, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding existence (Xue, 2019). Ancient Chinese philosophers, such as Cheng Yi (程颐), recognised early on that the nature or state of things tends to transform under certain conditions. *The Writings of the Cheng Brothers* (《二程遗书》) articulates this principle as: “*When reaching an extreme, things are bound to revert to their opposites*¹⁰” (物极必反). According to this view, when anything reaches the limit of its development, it is bound to change into its opposite. Such reversals are understood not as anomalies but as expressions of an inherent pattern of transformation. As Cheng Yi further observes: “*When there is life there is death, and when there is a beginning there is an end*¹¹” (有生便有死, 有始便有终). This cyclical understanding of change deepens the *Sheng Sheng* perspective, portraying existence as an unceasing process of emergence, culmination, and renewal.

The fusion and alternation of *Yin* and *Yang* constitute the fundamental source of life’s emergence, while their continuous transformation underpins the universe’s perpetual evolution (Deng, 2019; Xiang, 2013). As noted in the *Interpretation of the Great Treatise of the I Ching* (《易系辞传注》), *Sheng Sheng* manifests through the cyclical interplay of *Yin* and *Yang*, characterised by ceaseless continuity and natural expression. In this framework, life and breath, movement and stillness, are not binary opposites but complementary states, coexisting within an uninterrupted, harmonious rhythm which is unified through the ongoing process of *Sheng Sheng* (Shan, 2023).

Drawing on the conceptual framework of *Yin* and *Yang*, regeneration may be understood as the dynamic equilibrium of complementary forces, characterised by a continuous rhythm of transformation through which life perpetually renews itself. Rather than constituting a static endpoint, regeneration emerges as an ongoing process generated through the interaction of opposing yet interdependent principles such as movement and stillness, growth and rest, expansion and contraction. These cyclical dynamics reveal that vitality is sustained through the continual negotiation between change and stability. From this perspective, regeneration is not externally imposed but unfolds organically from the intrinsic harmonies embedded within existence itself. This understanding underscores the philosophical proposition that resilience

¹⁰ Translation from *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

¹¹ Translation from *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

and renewal are inherent properties of natural systems, grounded in their capacity to maintain balance amid fluctuation rather than to resist change.

Inherent Phase of the Life Continuum

Ceaseless transformation within the cosmos unfolds through two interrelated modes: the cyclic alternation of *Yin* and *Yang*, and the perpetual process of change (Wei, 2015). The first is manifest in the periodic rhythms of nature, exemplified most clearly by the succession of the four seasons. Besides, existence unfolds through an ever-evolving, generative structure. As the *Tao Te Ching* states: “*The Way begets one; one begets two; two begets three; three begets the myriad creatures*¹²” (道生一，一生二，二生三，三生万物), articulating the emergence of multiplicity from primordial unity. Similarly, the *I Ching* elaborates: “*Taiji generates the Two Modes, which generate the Four Images, and then the Eight Trigrams*¹³” (太极生两仪，两仪生四象，四象生八卦). From *Taiji* (太极, the Supreme Ultimate), the cosmos unfolds through successive stages: from the interplay of *Yin* and *Yang* to increasingly complex relational patterns that constitute all phenomena (Tao, 2017).

From a state of formlessness, *Taiji* initiates the dynamic of stillness and motion, giving rise to the generative tension between *Yin* and *Yang*, thereby animating existence itself (Wu, 2019). This process articulates a philosophical logic of unfolding: from non-being to being, grounded in relationality and perpetual transformation (Zhang & Yang, 2021). Drawing on the *I Ching*, Confucianism also conceptualises *Sheng Sheng* as a universal law governing all existence (Wei, 2015)—manifesting not only in the continuation of life within the natural world, but also in the boundless processes of cosmic creation and transformation (Zhang & Yang, 2021). The *Commentaries* further elucidate the progression from *Taiji* to the *Bagua* (八卦, Eight Trigrams), illustrating a natural evolution from simplicity to complexity (Lin, 2023).

The dynamic processes of *Sheng Sheng* can be articulated through three primary manifestations: the creation of existence from non-being, the continuation and renewal of life, and the harmony of interdependence and symbiosis (Wang & Wei, 2014). Together, these dimensions reveal not only the vitality and creativity inherent in life but also the profound relationality underlying all entities within the cosmos (Liu, 2021).

¹² The 42nd line in *Tao Te Ching*, translation from Lau (1963)

¹³ Translation from *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

First, the transition from non-being to being highlights the spontaneous and generative nature of life and phenomena. Rooted in the intrinsic vitality of the cosmos, this process conceives of life as a dynamic force initiated and sustained by the universe itself (Li, 2024a). As articulated in the *Annotations on Laozi* (《老子注》), “The formation and existence of *You* originate from *Wu*¹⁴” (有之所始，以无为本). Here, *You* (有) refers to the state of being after something has come into existence but before it perishes, while *Wu* (无) denotes the state of a thing before its birth and after its death. These formulations encapsulate the fundamental creative potency that underpins the cosmos (Li, 2024a; Liu, 2021).

Second, the continual alternation of *Yin* and *Yang*, along with the principle of returning to origins (Wang & Wei, 2014), ensures the sustained growth, development, and renewal of all things. Life flourishes through adherence to natural laws, maintaining an unbroken flow of existence. Analogous to the ceaseless movement of a river (Li, 2024a), the dynamic renewal of life not only reflects its inherent vitality but also embodies a philosophical understanding of perpetual transformation and regeneration within the universe (Liu, 2021).

Third, the mutual generation and co-existence of *Yin* and *Yang* (Wang & Wei, 2014) exemplify the principle of symbiosis among all entities. Within this framework, all beings are sustained through intricate relationships of interdependence, forming a balanced and harmonious whole (Li, 2024a). The notion of the harmony of interdependence and symbiosis foregrounds the relational character of existence and reveals a fundamental philosophical insight: life thrives through mutual support and co-flourishing within the cosmic order.

Regeneration can be understood as a fundamental principle through which life emerges, renews itself, and sustains continuity across time and space. Rather than being confined to biological reproduction or ecological restoration, regeneration reflects a broader ontological process in which existence continually arises from indeterminacy, adapts through transformation, and persists through systems of interdependence. This process is not static or linear but cyclical and relational, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between creation, continuity, and cooperation. Regeneration thus reveals an underlying order in which resilience and flourishing are enabled not through isolation or control, but through integration and mutual adaptation.

¹⁴ Translation from *You* and *Wu* (有无), *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

Dialectical Relationship Between Life and Death

The philosophy of *Sheng Sheng* encompasses not only the creation and flourishing of life but also offers profound insight into the dialectical relationship between life and death. Life and death, in this framework, are not opposing forces but rather complementary phases within a continuous, dynamic cycle (Gao, 2019). The processes of creation, transformation, and renewal are realised through the interaction of *Yin* and *Yang*, the cyclical movement of the seasons, and the interplay of generative and declining forces (Wu, 2024). Death, in this perspective, is not regarded as an ultimate cessation but as a natural expression of the *Sheng Sheng* principle (Yuan, 2012)—an essential phase that sustains the continuity of existence (Diao & Chen, 2024; Han, 2021).

Within the cosmological system of *Yin* and *Yang*, life and death are understood as mutually transformative. *Yang* initiates life and governs growth, while *Yin* presides over decline and prepares the conditions for regeneration. The *I Ching* articulates this dynamic by depicting life and death as a unified process, in which vitality is continuously renewed through transformation. This renewal is not merely a repetition of existence, but a transformation arising from the tension between life and death. This rhythm is vividly embodied in the cycle of the four seasons: spring and summer, governed by *Yang*, foster birth and flourishing; autumn and winter, associated with *Yin*, bring decay and dormancy, enabling the renewal of life (Qiao, 2011). As Zhu Xi (朱熹), an Ancient Chinese philosopher, said, although each season embodies a different mode—growth, nurturing, harvesting, and conserving—the underlying current of life remains unbroken. Even in the apparent stillness of winter, life persists in latent form¹⁵ (春生、夏长、秋收、冬藏，虽分四时，生意未尝不贯。纵霜雪之惨，亦是生意), demonstrating the cosmos's enduring creative vitality (Xiang, 2007). This ancient view finds striking resonance in modern ecological understandings. In ecosystems, the death and decay of organisms recycle essential nutrients, supporting the emergence of new life and maintaining the dynamic balance of the environment (Qiao, 2011). Death is thus not the negation of life, but its necessary continuation (Gao, 2019)—a process through which life regenerates itself. The *Sheng Sheng* philosophy anticipates this ecological wisdom, recognising death as an indispensable condition for the sustenance and flourishing of the whole.

¹⁵ Source: Zhen Dexiu (Song Dynasty), *Xishan Dushu Ji*, vol. 5, "Yuan Heng Li Zhen", in *Siku Quanshu*, Qing Dynasty [真德秀 (宋) 撰《西山读书记卷五·元亨利贞》，收录于《钦定四库全书》(清)]

Confucianism further deepens this understanding of life and death by embedding it within an ethical and spiritual framework. On one hand, it advocates for a life enriched with virtue, suggesting that individuals who cultivate moral integrity can face death peacefully and without regret. Living virtuously ensures that, at life's end, there are no lingering fears of unfulfilled obligations. In circumstances demanding a choice between life and righteousness, Confucian thought esteems those who “sacrifice life for righteousness” (舍生取义) as exemplars of the highest virtue, transcending the fear of death and achieving spiritual elevation (Gao, 2019).

On the other hand, Confucianism emphasises reverence for death as a natural extension of reverence for life. This attitude is expressed through ancestral rites (Liu & Yu, 2023), which preserve the continuity of familial bonds beyond physical death. By honouring their ancestors and upholding the family lineage, individuals transcend the limitations of mortality, situating their lives within an unbroken chain of memory and legacy. Thus, death is not viewed as a severance from the world but as a transformation through which life's meaning continues within the family and the broader human community (Gao, 2019).

Through the lens of *Sheng Sheng*, individuals are thus able to comprehend the cyclical essence of existence (Qiao, 2011) and to overcome the fear of death (Gao, 2019). The dynamic interplay of *Yin* and *Yang*, the perpetual renewal mirrored in the seasons, and the mutual transformation of life and death together reveal the generative nature of the cosmos. Confucianism's vision of virtuous living and ritual remembrance further enriches this cosmology, offering spiritual support and practical guidance for navigating the existential realities of life and death. Ultimately, *Sheng Sheng* invites individuals to discover enduring significance within the seamless continuity of nature and spirit.

The dialectical relationship between life and death frames regeneration not as a discrete or linear event, but as a cyclical and transformative process in which life is continually renewed through its engagement with death. Death generates the conditions necessary for the evolution of life, just as life carries within itself the seeds of its own demise—demise that, in turn, catalyses further transformation. Regeneration, then, is a dynamic interplay in which dissolution becomes the precondition for emergence, and the end of one form gives rise to new structures, systems, or ways of being. Rather than a simple restoration to a previous state, regeneration is marked by the productive tension between life and death—a process through which cessation becomes constitutive of new potentialities. This dialectical

framework reveals regeneration not as mere recovery, but as an ongoing mode of becoming, wherein decay, loss, and transformation are vital to the persistence and evolution of life itself.

Shared Ren Among All Living Beings

The Neo-Confucian tradition explains the vitality of the cosmos through the concept of *Ren* in *Sheng Sheng* (生生之仁), presenting perpetual generation, change, and love for others as deeply intertwined. Continuous creation is seen as the manifestation of the cosmos's inherent benevolence, with all beings arising through this unceasing power (Chen, 2014). Wang Yangming (王阳明), a major Neo-Confucian thinker, held that *Ren* underlies *Sheng Sheng*; it is both an attribute of *Liangzhi* (良知, innate knowledge) and the internal foundation of ceaseless creation.

In Chinese philosophy, the exploration of life concerns not only existence but also value. The *I Ching* asserts that “The greatest good in the world is to enable all living things to perpetuate themselves¹⁶” (天地之大德曰生), regarding life as the highest expression of the moral power of Heaven and Earth, and the generation and nurturing of all beings as their fundamental purpose (Wang, 2010; Xiang, 2007). Life is thus not merely the process by which the cosmos comes into being (Wang, 2010), but also a reflection of nature's inherent tendency towards creation and sustenance (Qiao, 2011). As the essential attribute of the cosmos, life manifests the virtue of Heaven and Earth (Wang, 2010), embodying both creative vitality and intrinsic moral goodness (Wang, 2022; Meng, 2014).

In Confucian thought, the human principles of *Ren* and *Yi* emulate and sublimate Heaven and Earth's “benevolence of ceaseless generation” and the “orderly generativity” that underpins righteousness (Wang, 2010). Moral cultivation is characterised by perpetual generation (Wang, 2022). Cheng Yi (程颐) likened the nature of *Ren* to a grain seed, an analogy further developed by Zhu Xi, who emphasised that the benevolent nature contained within the seed guarantees the emergence of life. As *Ren* spreads into appropriate realms, it gives rise to *Yi* (righteousness), *Li* (ritual propriety), and *Zhi* (wisdom), thereby manifesting the inevitable continuity of generation throughout Heaven and Earth (Xiang, 2007).

The connection between generation and *Ren* reflects not only a reverence for life but also an understanding of *Ren* as a universal life force permeating both nature and human

¹⁶ Translation from *Manage Wealth Properly and Speak Correctly* (理财正辞), *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

society. This relationship constitutes the fundamental driving force behind cosmic generation and the harmonious coexistence of all beings. It highlights that care for life and love form the foundation of both the universe and ethical life. The vitality of life and the unceasing movement of generation are themselves expressions of *Ren* (Chen, 2014). Thus, *Ren* is not merely a moral virtue but the ontological basis of the cosmos's ceaseless creativity, aligning human morality with nature's dynamic power (Hong & Jiang, 2017; Chen, 2014). This vision bridges the subjective and objective dimensions of morality and spirituality (Chen, 2016b).

In the tradition of Chinese philosophy, nature and humanity are regarded as an inseparable whole (Ding, 2018). *Sheng Sheng* offers an integrated and holistic worldview, in which the vitality of life permeates both the natural and human realms (Gu, 2022; Yu, 2013). Both Confucianism and Taoism view *Sheng Sheng* as the supreme virtue of Heaven and Earth, recognising it as the fundamental law governing the operation of the cosmos (Yu, 2015). This concept was elevated to the level of ontology, becoming the essential order and character underpinning the existence, development, and flourishing of all beings (Guo, 2010).

For Wang Yangming (王阳明), *Ren* primarily refers to the dynamic, responsive nature of perception—what he termed the *Ren of one* (一体之仁)—which emphasises the profound interconnectedness of humanity, Heaven, Earth, and all things. This conception of *Ren* establishes both the universality and the gradation of innate knowledge's creative vitality: universality is expressed in spontaneous compassion towards all beings, while gradation reflects the progressive unfolding of the *Sheng Sheng* process and the varying intensity of emotional responses (Zhao & Zeng, 2019).

The *Writings of the Cheng Brothers* affirms that “benevolent people see all things under heaven and themselves as one¹⁷” (仁者，以天地万物为一体). Here, “one” signifies not mere physical unity, but an organic, interconnected, and mutually sustaining whole (Chen, 2014). This perspective embodies the vitality and unity of existence (Shan, 2023; Chen, 2016b), fostering an attitude of respect towards all living beings as interrelated parts of a greater whole (Hong & Jiang, 2017). Cheng Hao (程颢), in particular, stressed that *Ren*, as the principle of ceaseless cosmic generation, expresses the vitality of nature and the universe. His philosophy placed special emphasis on perceiving the existence of all beings as intimately connected with oneself through a state of profound unity (Chen, 2016a).

¹⁷ Translation from *All Things are One* (万物一体), *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

The philosophy of *Sheng Sheng* is closely tied to moral cultivation (Wu, 2018b; Yu, 2013) and is upheld as a principle that humanity ought to emulate (Zhang, 2017). Moral conduct arises not from external divine commandments, but from an internal recognition of one's embeddedness within the ongoing flow of life (Wu, 2018a). As the *I Ching* states, “*The alternation of Yin and Yang constitutes the Way. It is good to follow the Way. And it is in human's nature to work by the Way*¹⁸” (一阴一阳之谓道，继之者善也，成之者性也). Through the “virtue of *Sheng Sheng*,” individuals transcend the limitations of mortal existence (Liu & Yu, 2023), aligning human moral cultivation with the *Way* (Wang, 2022). *Sheng Sheng* thus forms the foundation of Confucian morality, emphasising the importance of self-cultivation and the fulfilment of social roles (Lin, 2023).

As active and autonomous agents, individuals should, through persistent self-cultivation and the practice of *Ren*, embody the *Way* of *Sheng Sheng*, act in accordance with the natural order, realise the benevolent virtue of Heaven and Earth's creative power, and ultimately attain the state of “unity of virtue with Heaven and Earth”—the harmonious union of humanity and the cosmos (Liu & Yu, 2023; Wang, 2022; Zhang, 2017; Yu, 2015; Wang, 2010). This process not only furthers individual self-perfection but also contributes to the flourishing of all beings and the harmony of the natural world (Tao, 2017).

Within the Confucian cosmology of *Sheng Sheng*—the perpetual generation of life—two key dimensions of *Ren* emerge: the *Ren* of ceaseless growth and the *Ren* of unity. Together, they constitute the complete cosmological structure of Confucian *Ren* theory (Chen, 2014). They articulate a dynamic and relational vision of existence. The former underscores life's creative unfolding, where regeneration is not mere restoration, but an ongoing process of vitality, autonomy, and systemic renewal. The latter affirms the intrinsic interconnectedness of all beings, dissolving subject-object dualisms and grounding regeneration in mutual becoming. From this perspective, regeneration becomes an ontological and ethical orientation rooted in *Ren*, extending beyond anthropocentric frameworks to encompass the flourishing of whole ecologies. It is a relational practice guided by *Ren*, wherein the highest moral aim is to sustain the co-evolution and vitality of all life.

¹⁸ Translation from *The Alternation of Yin and Yang Constitutes the Way* (一阴一阳之谓道), *Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture*

Regenerative Tourism Grounded in *Sheng Sheng* Philosophy

Regenerative tourism moves beyond the conventional focus on sustainability, aiming instead to actively restore and enrich the environments (non-human beings) and communities (human beings) it engages with. Drawing inspiration from the Chinese philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*, six core principles provide a conceptual foundation for reframing regenerative tourism (Table 4).

Table 4. Regenerative tourism principles inspired by the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*

Design Insight	Philosophical Principle	Implications for Regenerative Tourism
Timeless Regeneration	Life exists in a state of continual growth and transformation, marked by simplicity, adaptability, and continuity.	Regenerative tourism practices should be simple to adopt, responsive to change, and adaptable to the evolving dynamics of destination systems.
Organic Self-Generation	Life arises from an intrinsic, self-generating force.	Regenerative tourism should draw on the destination's internal strengths, aligning with its natural rhythms and local sources of vitality.
Harmony through Opposites	Life dynamics are shaped by the harmonious interplay of opposing forces, often conceptualised as <i>Yin</i> and <i>Yang</i> .	Rather than seeking to eliminate differences, regenerative tourism should create space for diverse forces and perspectives to interact constructively.
Creative Renewal	Life emerges from non-being, continues through transformation, and reaches harmony through interdependence.	Regenerative tourism should be creative and iterative, nurturing mutual interdependence among all elements of the destination system.
Embrace of Creation and Dissolution	Life's resilience lies in the acceptance of both birth and decay.	Regenerative tourism should respect local traditions and histories while remaining open to innovation and forward-looking solutions.
Ethical and Equal Grounding	All forms of life, human and non-human beings, share a fundamental ontology of <i>Ren</i> , the moral vitality that sustains life.	Regenerative tourism should be grounded in an ethical commitment to all forms of life and a deep respect for their interconnectedness.

Timeless Regeneration

Regenerative tourism should adopt practices that are easy to adopt, responsive to change, and adaptable to the evolving dynamics of destination systems. In Chinese thought, life is understood as a process of continuous growth and transformation; regeneration is therefore conceived as an art of renewal guided by simplicity and shaped by both change and

continuity. This perspective aligns in important respects with contemporary international approaches to regenerative tourism. For example, Dredge (2022) conceptualises tourism as embedded within a wider, complex, and continuously evolving system. While both perspectives recognise tourism as dynamic and ever-changing, Chinese thought places greater emphasis on the need for regenerative responses to remain simple, flexible, and adaptive.

From this standpoint, regeneration is not a return to the past but the faithful unfolding of life's enduring essence through ever-evolving forms. Regenerative tourism likewise moves beyond conservationist or nostalgic orientations. Rather than being conceived as a one-off intervention or short-term project, regeneration is understood as an ongoing process of renewal, grounded in enduring principles and guided by simplicity. Accordingly, regenerative tourism informed by this view prioritises long-term relational commitments over immediate economic gains, recognising that cultural and ecological vitality must be nurtured patiently, often across generations. In this way, it seeks to maintain a delicate balance between preserving what is valuable and engaging constructively with the dynamic changes that tourism inevitably brings.

Organic Self-Generation

In Chinese philosophy, Life is understood as arising from an intrinsic, self-generating force. In the context of regenerative tourism, this implies that regeneration should draw primarily on a destination's internal strengths, aligning tourism development with local rhythms and sources of vitality. This principle resonates with international perspectives on regenerative tourism, which emphasise systems' inherent capacities for self-healing (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019) and conceptualise tourism as creating conditions for long-term self-renewal, self-restoration, and self-replenishment (Bellato et al., 2023; Sheldon, 2022; Day et al., 2021; Mang & Reed, 2012; Reed, 2007). Both perspectives foreground community agency, local knowledge, and the activation of latent potential embedded in landscapes and cultures.

From this viewpoint, regeneration embodies the self-propelling vitality of reality: a continuous unfolding of life through cycles of renewal and transformation. Regenerative tourism recognises this ongoing vitality and seeks to support the self-arising transformations of environments, communities, and economies. Rather than imposing external models or universal solutions, it works with the relational and self-organising dynamics of place. Tourism is thus reframed not as a static or extractive activity but as a participant in the

dynamic evolution of places and people. Regeneration, in this sense, is not merely restorative but generative, fostering the co-evolution of people and place through processes that are locally grounded, self-renewing, and responsive to change.

Harmony Through Opposites

According to *Sheng Sheng*, the dynamics of life arise from the harmonious interplay of opposites, most notably *Yin* and *Yang*. Rather than eliminating difference, regenerative tourism informed by this principle creates space for diverse forces and perspectives to interact productively. This dimension remains largely absent from dominant regenerative tourism discourse and thus represents a distinctive contribution of Chinese philosophy to its conceptual development. In contrast to many Western approaches, which tend to resolve tensions through fixed or stabilised outcomes, *Sheng Sheng* emphasises regeneration as a dynamic balance of complementary forces—a continuous rhythm of transformation through which life renews itself.

From this perspective, regeneration emerges through the interplay of movement and stillness, growth and rest, unfolding from the inner harmonies of existence. Applied to tourism development, this understanding underscores the importance of complementarity. Apparent oppositions—such as tradition and innovation, human use and ecological preservation, or presence and absence—are not inherently antagonistic but mutually generative. Regenerative tourism grounded in *Sheng Sheng* therefore encourages engagement with, rather than the suppression of, tensions between development and conservation and between global influences and local identities. Just as natural systems sustain themselves through the interaction of such forces, tourism must balance activity with preservation. Rather than seeking dominance, simplification, or erasure, regenerative tourism aims to sustain dynamic balance, enabling heritage and modernity to coexist. In doing so, it supports tourism models that are adaptive, responsive, and sensitive to context, rather than rigid or prescriptive.

Creative Renewal

In *Sheng Sheng* philosophy, life originates from non-being, unfolds through continuous transformation, and attains balance through interdependence. From this perspective, regenerative tourism should be creative and iterative, fostering mutual interdependence among all elements of the destination system. This principle aligns with contemporary

regenerative tourism discourse, which identifies systems thinking and holistic approaches as foundational to regenerative development (Bellato et al., 2023; Molinero, 2022). Beyond systems thinking, however, Chinese philosophy places particular emphasis on creation and innovation.

This emphasis departs from many Western approaches by framing creativity not merely as a strategic or managerial instrument but as an intrinsic, generative force. Whereas Western models tend to prioritise planning, measurement, and control, *Sheng Sheng* foregrounds spontaneous emergence, relational transformation, and the co-creative capacity of all actors within a living system. Regeneration is thus understood as the continual emergence of life from emptiness: an ongoing renewal of vitality and the unfolding of harmony through interdependence. It reflects a self-manifesting rhythm of existence in which creation, continuity, and relationality converge.

Regenerative tourism informed by this view similarly embraces emergence. It reframes tourism's engagement with communities and ecosystems not as a dominating or extractive intervention but as a facilitator of collaborative regeneration. By respecting local cultures and ecological conditions, tourism can help create the conditions in which hosts and visitors thrive through mutual exchange and shared benefit, enabling the co-evolution of people and place through a harmonious process of becoming.

Embrace of Creation and Dissolution

In Chinese philosophy, life sustains its resilience through the acceptance of both emergence and decay. From this perspective, regenerative tourism should honour local traditions and historical continuities while remaining open to innovation and future-oriented change. This dimension is rarely addressed in dominant regenerative tourism discourse and thus represents a further distinctive contribution of Chinese philosophy to its conceptualisation. In *Sheng Sheng* thought, creation and dissolution are not opposing forces but interdependent phases within a regenerative cycle. Regeneration is therefore understood as a cyclical and transformative process in which the breakdown of existing forms enables the emergence of new life, structures, and systems.

This process is driven by the dynamic interplay between life and death, with decay functioning as a generative condition for renewal and evolution. Applied to tourism, this understanding calls for recognising the role of transformation and decline within destinations—whether through the regeneration of infrastructure, the evolution of cultural

practices, or the renewal of ecosystems. It challenges preservationist impulses that seek to maintain places and traditions in static or idealised forms. Instead, it legitimises processes of decay, adaptation, and renewal as integral to cultural and ecological vitality. Regenerative tourism guided by this principle respects heritage not by fixing it in time but by allowing it to breathe, adapt, and respond to contemporary realities while retaining its generative core. Buildings may be repurposed, traditions may evolve, and older forms may give way to new expressions. By embracing cycles of change, tourism can create space for the emergence of more resilient and contextually appropriate models that better serve both local communities and the environment.

Ethical and Equal Grounding

In *Sheng Sheng* thought, all life shares a fundamental ontology of *Ren*—a relational ethic grounded in empathy, harmony, and interdependence. From this perspective, regenerative tourism should be anchored in an ethical commitment to all forms of life and a deep respect for their interconnectedness. While existing regenerative tourism literature gestures towards this idea—for example, Dredge (2022) emphasises mutual respect and the principle of “do no harm” towards both humans and nature—such discussions often continue to treat human values and environmental wellbeing as conceptually distinct (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Chinese philosophy offers a deeper ontological grounding in which this separation is dissolved.

Within *Sheng Sheng*, regeneration is understood as an ongoing, benevolent process that enables all forms of life to persist, flourish, and evolve in harmony. Ethics is not conceived as a human-centred moral framework imposed upon nature, but as intrinsic to the fabric of life itself. *Ren*, traditionally associated with humaneness, is thus reinterpreted as a relational ethic that extends beyond the human realm to encompass animals, plants, landscapes, and the wider Earth community. Humans are not positioned above nature but understood as co-inhabitants within a shared moral and ontological space. This perspective affirms the ontological equality of human and non-human beings, united through shared vitality and mutual dependence. It rejects logics of separation and exploitation in favour of mutual care, reciprocity, and reverence for life.

In this respect, it aligns with systemic strands of Western regenerative discourse that challenge anthropocentric paradigms and recognise the agency, resilience, and self-organising capacities of non-human systems (Becken & Kaur, 2021). Ecosystems are thus viewed not as passive resources to be managed but as active participants in regenerative processes, capable

of adaptation, self-renewal, and co-evolution (Day et al., 2021). From this standpoint, regenerative tourism is not merely a development strategy but a moral and relational commitment: a conscious participation in the wellbeing of places, communities, and the broader living world. Grounding regeneration in this relational ethic extends current regenerative tourism thinking by providing a holistic foundation in which the wellbeing of people, nature, and place is inherently inseparable.

Chapter Summary

By incorporating six principles derived from *Sheng Sheng* philosophy, regenerative tourism can be defined as **an adaptive and evolving approach that aligns with the self-organizing rhythms of place. It balances internal tensions through dynamic harmony, encourages creative transformation that supports the co-evolution of human and non-human systems, respects local histories and Indigenous knowledge while welcoming new ideas and innovation, and is grounded in ethical principles and equality between humans and the more-than-human world.** This paradigm calls for a profound reconnection with the rhythms of life, recognising that true renewal is an ongoing process of evolution, balance, and interdependence. By reimagining tourism through the lens of regeneration, we can unlock a more vibrant, resilient, and harmonious future.

Chapter 5: A Community of Practice for Regenerative Tourism

Chapter Five addresses the *community* question, investigating how a community of practice can support regenerative tourism co-creation by engaging Indigenous community and non-human stakeholders. It explores the processes that activate participation, the role of shared identities and inclusive interactions in fostering cohesion, and the ways in which the Indigenous community facilitates connections across the human–non-human divide.

Engaging Indigenous Community and Non-Human Stakeholders

Community Formation

The community of practice in Azheke village was initiated by the local government. Back to 2015, the Yuanyang county was facing the risks of traditional Hani dwellings – mushroom houses – being falling apart or replaced by modern buildings. Meanwhile, many Indigenous people, Hani people, left their village to find a work, putting Hani culture at risk and threatening cultural continuity. Grounded in systems thinking and anti-anthropocentric co-creation, the community of practice in Azheke village engages both human and non-human stakeholders. This community has emerged organically through geographical, cognitive, and relational proximity, forming a shared practice around regenerative tourism.

Empowered by the local government, the community of practice in Azheke village is guided by key principles of regenerative tourism, including systems thinking, Indigenous-centred approaches, anti-anthropocentric co-creation, and bottom-up collaboration. These principles have informed each stage of the community’s development—initiating, activating, uniting, and boundary crossing—and are embedded throughout the entire process.

First, human and non-human stakeholders in Azheke village interact directly at the local scale, enabled by their geographical proximity. Central to Hani cosmology is the belief that all elements of the natural world possess spirit and agency. In recognition of nature’s generosity in providing essential resources—land, water, and materials for survival—the Hani have sustained a range of traditions aimed at protecting forests, mountains, and water sources. One such tradition stipulates that the establishment of a Hani village must begin with the designation of a sacred forest, believed to be inhabited by protective spirits. These spirits are thought to safeguard village life, and in return, the forest is ritually preserved. Access is

strictly regulated: villagers may only enter during an annual sacrificial ceremony; at all other times, entry is prohibited. Although belief in such spirits has declined in contemporary Hani society, the practice persists, rooted in a holistic worldview that understands nature as an interdependent system. As one villager explained, “*Protecting forests means protecting water sources, and protecting water sources means protecting terraced fields* (R4).” This sentiment illustrates a cosmology in which humans, land, and spirits are engaged in continuous dialogue. Even as the village and its rice terraces have become tourist destinations, the Hani have sustained a regenerative and reciprocal relationship with the local ecology.

Second, cognitive proximity is established through a shared knowledge base and collective goal of regenerating local socio-ecological systems. In Azheke village, actors such as water itself, the Azheke community, the Yuanyang County government, and non-local tourism entrepreneurs all engage in the co-production of knowledge related to water regeneration. Water follows its natural rhythms, with flow volumes varying seasonally and annually—diminishing during droughts or winter, or when channels are blocked, and increasing during wet seasons or when channels are clear. Water rarely deviates from these patterns, making it a relatively stable non-human actor. However, during periods of scarcity, disputes frequently arise among villagers over the direction and volume of water flow, which directly affects daily life and agricultural productivity. To manage these conflicts, the Azheke community traditionally relies on an Indigenous water specialist who oversees the cleaning of channels and allocation of water. This individual holds deep ecological knowledge, including how much water is necessary for sustaining rice terraces and how to balance domestic needs without overexploiting natural reserves.

With the rise of tourism, water-related tensions have intensified, particularly between local residents and tourism operators whose demands increasingly challenge the natural flow of the resource. In response, the local government has adopted a mediating role, introducing policies that support constructive dialogue and conflict resolution regarding water use (Hu & Bao, 2022). Informed by the advice of Indigenous specialists, both the Azheke community and non-local tourism entrepreneurs have invested in water-storage infrastructure to collect surplus water during the rainy season for use during periods of drought. Complementing these efforts, the local government has supported the development of a sewage treatment system that enables the recycling of domestic wastewater for agricultural purposes. Together, these initiatives reflect a collaborative approach to water management that aligns with regenerative principles and demonstrates a shared commitment to local system regeneration among diverse stakeholders. They also exemplify an emergent knowledge system grounded

in systems thinking and anti-anthropocentric values—one in which water is understood not merely as a resource, but as an active participant in shaping regenerative tourism practices.

Third, the proliferation of information and communication technologies has enabled sustained interaction among stakeholders regardless of physical location, fostering relational proximity. For instance, local actors—including government officials, tourism entrepreneurs, and tourists—frequently share images and short videos on social media that depict the non-human stakeholders and cultural activities in local areas. These posts often generate online engagement, thereby extending the visibility of the village and stimulating broader interest. Such digital platforms give rise to a distributed community of practice that connects local stakeholders with non-local actors, including online audiences and academic researchers. One example of this is the use of social media data by researchers to map cultural ecosystem services in the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces (Yang et al., 2025).

Member Recruitment

The community of practice in Azheke village is neither static nor exclusively social; rather, it is open, dynamic, and ecologically responsive. Both human and non-human stakeholders may enter this community through self-selection or informal inclusion by existing members. Weather, for example, functions as a non-human stakeholder (Craig, 2025), participating through self-selection by exerting a significant influence on tourism dynamics. In Azheke village, weather plays a pivotal role in shaping tourist experiences, as the visibility and attractiveness of key sites are highly dependent on favourable conditions (**Figure 10**).



Figure 10. Similar view in Azheke village under different weather conditions

Source: Taken by Junzhang Wang, 2025

Explained by informant P2, on 29 May 2025, adverse weather—marked by rain and fog—resulted in only one tourist visit and a modest income of 30 RMB. In contrast, clearer weather on 30 May brought 33 visitors and a total income of 797 RMB. This stark contrast highlights the direct and measurable influence of weather on tourism flows and economic outcomes, positioning it as an active participant in the community of practice.

Such influence necessitates strategic responses. Local governments, community members, and tourism entrepreneurs are increasingly compelled to adapt by offering weather-resilient alternatives, such as museum visits and indoor cultural activities. In this context, weather is not a passive environmental condition but an agentic stakeholder that co-shapes decisions, behaviours, and outcomes in regenerative tourism. Its capacity to shape community dynamics independently of human mediation affirms the agency of non-human actors. This underscores the broader principle that humans in the community of practice are not acting in isolation but are actively collaborating with, or responding to, non-human stakeholders as co-creators of regenerative experiences and practices.

Activating Human and Non-Human Stakeholders

Participation Dynamics

Grounded in Indigenous-centred approaches and bottom-up collaboration, and empowered by local government, the community of practice in Azheke village fosters the participation of both human and non-human stakeholders by cultivating an inclusive and enabling environment. Participation in such a community is inherently fluid; stakeholders—whether human or non-human—may begin as legitimate peripheral participants and gradually move toward full engagement or even leadership roles (Albrecht, 2012).

The Azheke community itself exemplifies this trajectory. Initially occupying a peripheral role in tourism development, the community has since evolved into an active and engaged participant. During the early exploratory stage, a few local residents assumed leadership roles. For instance, Ma (R2) was the first villager to engage in tourism services. Prior to 2018, he leveraged his personal *Guanxi* to collaborate with the local government and tourism entrepreneurs, helping organise guided tours and cultural events, including the Long Street Feast (长街宴). However, participation at this stage remained limited, as access to tourism ventures often required specific social networks and contextual knowledge. Consequently,

while local elites like Ma held leadership positions, the broader Azheke community remained on the margins.

A significant shift occurred in 2018 when the local government, in partnership with the planning team, initiated a regenerative tourism project with a dual focus on poverty alleviation and heritage preservation. As introduced by P1, this led to the development of the Azheke Plan, which prioritised Indigenous participation. Under the guidance of the planning team, villagers collectively established a community-owned tourism enterprise. Through this structure, all households could share in the financial benefits of tourism, and residents were encouraged to contribute their Indigenous knowledge through participatory decision-making processes. During the researcher's stay, regular community meetings were convened to address emerging challenges in tourism development, thereby fostering a sense of shared governance. As a result, Azheke village shifted from peripheral involvement to active participation in tourism planning and practice.

The participation of non-human stakeholders in the community of practice is similarly dynamic. As the community has deepened its engagement, the status and influence of non-human actors have also grown, in accordance with Indigenous epistemologies. Hani cultural values—particularly those grounded in Hani cosmology—have played an increasingly important role in shaping local power relations and guiding community decisions. This cosmology recognises the agency and ethical presence of natural elements such as forests and water, which are seen as spiritual protectors of the community and as active participants in sustaining life over centuries.



Figure 11. The tree in the middle of road in Azheke village

Source: Taken by the author, 2024

Reflecting this worldview, tourism development in Azheke has been deliberately managed to protect sacred forests and essential water sources by restricting visitor access to these areas. In one notable case, when a tree grew across a road frequently used by tourists, the community chose to leave it undisturbed rather than remove it (**Figure 11**). Such decisions illustrate the community's commitment to Indigenous values and their recognition of non-human stakeholders as integral co-governors within the tourism system.

This community of practice supports varying levels of participation, fostering an open and inclusive environment (Hilliard, 2006). Both human and non-human stakeholders engage in fluctuating patterns shaped by seasonal rhythms (Tham et al., 2022). Human actors—such as local residents, entrepreneurs, and tourists—tend to participate most actively during the winter months, reflecting the seasonal nature of tourism in the region. The Honghe Hani Rice Terraces attract the greatest number of visitors in winter, when the flooded terraces mirror the sky, creating striking visual effects. This period coincides with the Spring Festival, during which many villagers return home, tourist activity intensifies, and locally operated tourism services resume to meet demand. In contrast, non-human stakeholders follow an inverse rhythm. Their ecological activity peaks during the summer growing season and slows during winter dormancy, in alignment with natural cycles. This seasonal divergence highlights the distinct temporalities of human and non-human participation within the community of practice, reinforcing its dynamic and responsive nature.

Power Structure

These patterns of seasonal engagement underscore the dynamic and responsive nature of Azheke's community of practice. However, participation is not shaped solely by natural rhythms or voluntary involvement—it is also structured by deeper, often unequal, power relations (Meng & Zhao, 2021). These dynamics, while evolving, remain embedded in broader sociopolitical and cultural hierarchies (Hislop et al., 2018; May, 2009). In Azheke village, the community of practice is grounded in bottom-up collaboration, with strong support from the local government, which plays a crucial enabling role. Despite the growing recognition of non-human stakeholders, significant power asymmetries persist—not only between human and non-human actors but also among human stakeholders themselves. These imbalances reflect longstanding structures of authority and access within the Chinese governance context.

As illustrated in **Figure 12**, power within the community of practice is unevenly distributed, with the local government occupying a central leadership position due to its authority over regional development and policy implementation.



Figure 12. Current structure of the community of practice in Azheke village

Source: Drawn by the author

The Azheke community and the academic research teams also exert significant influence in the regenerative tourism process. Design and planning teams shape this process primarily through their roles in developing and implementing regenerative initiatives, most notably the reconstruction of the mushroom house and the Azheke Plan, which promotes Indigenous participation and the integration of local knowledge systems. However, in practice, both teams function mainly in a referential and enabling capacity rather than as primary decision-makers.

For example, the local government purchased a mushroom house for the design team, enabling the team to develop and trial regenerative design approaches for Hani traditional dwellings. This served as a demonstrative model for local residents. Nevertheless, decisions regarding the redevelopment of Hani mushroom houses were ultimately made jointly by the local government and the community. This arrangement reflected the dual governance structure: the reconstruction was funded by the local government, while ownership of the traditional houses remained with individual residents.

Similarly, the planning team developed and implemented a regenerative tourism plan for Azheke village while simultaneously supporting the local community in establishing resident-led staffing and management structures. The aim was to enable the community, over time, to operate its own tourism enterprise and manage the destination in collaboration with the local government. In this sense, the central role in regenerative tourism governance is ultimately

assumed by the Indigenous community and the local government, with academic teams acting as facilitators rather than directors of change.

Within this empowered framework, the Azheke community has transitioned from a peripheral role to a more active and agentic position in tourism governance. This shift reflects key principles of regenerative tourism—especially Indigenous-centred approaches and bottom-up co-creation—enabled by the supportive role of the local government.

Initially, non-human actors operated as “lurkers”—exerting indirect influence without formal acknowledgment (Hilliard, 2006). Their increasing recognition has been facilitated by Indigenous cosmologies that conceptualise non-human entities as sentient, ethical beings. This shift has invited non-human stakeholders into more visible roles, contributing ecological perspectives that reframe tourism practices in regenerative terms. Much like the early inclusion of tourists and entrepreneurs, non-human entities are now being welcomed as newcomers to the community of practice, with the potential to shape its trajectory.

These changing dynamics suggest an emerging openness within the core group—led by the local government and supported by academic teams—to the inclusion of diverse knowledge holders, both human and non-human (Agrifoglio, 2015). This inclusivity encourages innovation (Smith et al., 2017), reinforces adaptive capacity (Brown & Stokes, 2021), and signals a growing culture of empowerment in which Indigenous and professional knowledge systems are co-valued (Almeida & Campos, 2022; Contu & Willmott, 2003). Together, these developments deepen the community’s capacity to co-create inclusive and resilient regenerative tourism practices.

Uniting Human and Non-Human Stakeholders

Establishing a shared identity between human and non-human stakeholders is key to fostering co-creation within communities of practice, where processes of both becoming and belonging are central (Almeida & Campos, 2022). In Azheke village, such identity formation is supported through three interrelated modes: engagement, imagination, and alignment (Bertella, 2011). This is exemplified in the co-creation of Azheke’s architectural heritage, particularly its distinctive vernacular dwellings—colloquially referred to as “mushroom houses” due to their characteristic form. Alongside the village’s rice terraces, these dwellings play a significant role in attracting tourists, particularly during the low season when the terraces are not flooded.

Since the area's inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2013, tensions have arisen between conservation imperatives and the everyday needs of local residents. Rather than enforcing a rigid model of preservation, the local government adopted a more flexible, context-sensitive approach known as protective transformation. In 2015, a design team was commissioned to redesign the interior spaces of traditional Hani dwellings in Azheke village. Their interventions introduced essential amenities while maintaining the external form and cultural integrity of the structures.

To begin establishing a shared identity within regenerative tourism, the mushroom houses, along with the Indigenous community, local government, research teams, and tourists, actively engage in the regeneration of vernacular dwellings. The mushroom houses serve as both cultural and ecological anchors, embodying local values, aesthetics, and environmental adaptation. They help shape cultural identity, promote low-impact and climate-responsive construction, and attract tourists in search of authentic experiences. The Indigenous community articulated the need to regenerate mushroom houses in ways that balance modern living requirements with cultural preservation. They also contributed their traditional knowledge of construction methods, which proved invaluable to the collaborating architectural teams. The local government assumed a leadership role in decision-making, facilitating conservation efforts and inviting professional expertise into the regeneration process. The design team, sharing the goal of preserving distinctive vernacular architecture and traditional ethnic culture, offered their technical knowledge to support these efforts. Tourists, seeking heritage-rich and immersive experiences, added economic value to the traditional dwellings, reinforcing their significance beyond cultural symbolism. This, in turn, strengthened the confidence and capability of other stakeholders in sustaining and preserving the architectural heritage.

At the same time, these stakeholders engage their imagination throughout the regeneration process. The traditional design of the mushroom houses inspires human stakeholders to envision their future potential. The host community imagines a modern way of life for the Hani people that remains rooted in their historical experiences of environmental adaptation during migration. Drawing on past development practices, the local government recognises the value of mushroom houses for promoting cultural diversity and sustainable local growth. The design team reimagines these dwellings by integrating professional expertise with the expectations of the Indigenous community and the insights offered by traditional knowledge. Tourists, meanwhile, interpret Hani culture through the lens of their

own knowledge, prior experiences, and expectations of traditional architecture, shaping how they engage with the mushroom houses (Carnegie & Kociatkiewicz, 2019).

Throughout this process, stakeholders align their actions and values with broader societal structures associated with the community of practice, becoming integrated into wider systems of regenerative tourism (Wenger, 1998). In this context, these stakeholders developed a relationship grounded in empathy and sustained over time, which led to the spontaneous formation of a community of practice focused on regenerative tourism. Such friendships foster trust, encourage active participation, and support the emotional and interpersonal foundations of belonging within the community. This, in turn, enhances members' sense of pride and openness, ultimately strengthening the community of practice as a whole (Almeida & Campos, 2022).

The protective transformation of vernacular dwellings in Azheke village illustrates a regenerative model informed by systems thinking, Indigenous-centred approaches, and an anti-anthropocentric ethos. Systems thinking facilitates an understanding of the interdependencies among social, environmental, and architectural dimensions, helping to ensure that interventions in one domain do not generate adverse effects in others. By foregrounding Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices, the process respects local worldviews and enables the Hani community to steer transformation in accordance with their values. The anti-anthropocentric perspective further challenges human dominance over nature, advocating for a more harmonious relationship between built environments and surrounding ecosystems. In this context, traditional architectural forms are not merely conserved as static heritage but are revitalised to meet contemporary needs while maintaining their cultural and ecological significance. Azheke village thus offers a regenerative tourism model that goes beyond conventional sustainability by actively restoring and enhancing the vitality of place.

Crossing the Boundary between Human and Non-Human Practice

To enhance knowledge production and foster innovation in regenerative tourism, it is crucial for human stakeholders to engage with non-human perspectives (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Adopting an outward-looking, relational approach (Shaw & Williams, 2009) enables the field to move beyond anthropocentric paradigms and embrace principles of anti-anthropocentric co-creation. Within this context, boundary spanners—defined in communities of practice as individuals possessing the capability and mobility to operate across diverse domains

(Ericsson et al., 2020)—play a vital role. In regenerative tourism, those who are attuned to both non-human practices and human institutional dynamics can act as boundary spanners, facilitating meaningful exchanges between human and non-human domains. These actors support the development of more integrated, ecologically informed, and inclusive practices by bridging ontological and epistemological divides.

In Azheke village, this role is primarily assumed by Indigenous elites. A notable example is Gao (R1), a local resident of Azheke. He was born and raised in Azheke and has lived there his entire life. His deep interpersonal ties within the community, fluency in both the Hani language and a regional Chinese dialect, and familiarity with Hani cultural traditions position him as a key figure in local decision-making processes. Several factors contribute to his community status. First, as a middle-aged man, he holds structural authority in a society where gender and age influence social hierarchy. Second, due to the outmigration of the working-age population, most remaining residents are children or elders, making adult males like Gao relatively few and thus more central to community governance. Third, his strong kinship networks further bolster his influence. Finally, Gao has earned community respect through his active commitment to the welfare of Azheke.

The role of such boundary spanners is exemplified in the case of Gao during the initiation of the Azheke Plan. Gao played a pivotal role in mobilising community participation by organising collective meetings and persuading villagers to engage in the process. He acted as a key intermediary, facilitating communication between the local government, the planning team, and the Azheke community. In doing so, he also informally collected and relayed the perspectives of other Indigenous residents, particularly elders, ensuring that Indigenous knowledge—especially in relation to non-human practices—was meaningfully integrated into decision-making. For instance, Gao conveyed that tourists should be prohibited from entering sacred forests and that tourism activities must align with traditional agricultural cycles. The community continues to observe practices such as fallow periods and resists altering them to accommodate tourism schedules. By advocating for these practices to the researcher, Gao helped safeguard the integrity of local socio-ecological systems. His actions illustrate how boundary spanners can mediate between human and non-human domains, thereby advancing regenerative tourism practices that are both ecologically sensitive and culturally grounded.

Gao's role as a boundary spanner highlights three key aspects of Indigenous participation in regenerative tourism. First, individuals like Gao possess diverse competencies and social networks that enable them to perform multiple roles across stakeholder groups

(Brown & Stokes, 2021). His bilingualism and interpersonal ties with both the local community and external actors (e.g. government and researchers) facilitate the exchange of knowledge and practices across social and epistemic boundaries (Bertella, 2023; Shaw & Williams, 2009).

Second, Indigenous communities engage fluidly with both human and non-human realms, guided by holistic and relational worldviews. In Hani cosmology, relationality is central: humans, animals, plants, water, mountains, and even the weather are understood as interconnected participants in a living web. This worldview renders the boundaries between human and non-human permeable (Wenger, 1998), enabling Indigenous people to move fluidly between domains that Western epistemologies often treat as discrete.

Moreover, Indigenous ceremonies, rituals, and oral storytelling traditions serve as epistemological vehicles that bridge human and non-human worlds. These practices enable knowledge transmission across generations and species, often through metaphor, transformation, and personification. Importantly, for the Hani, land is not merely geographical territory but a sentient, communicative being. This perspective enables relationships with forests, mountains, and water as active partners in knowledge creation, challenging extractive logics that reduce the non-human to passive resources.

However, the prominent role of Indigenous elites, such as Gao, in mediating relationships between the non-human world and other human stakeholders also entails the risk of marginalising migrant residents, many of whom live outside the village for employment. During the development of regenerative tourism in Azheke, these residents may occupy a relatively peripheral position in local decision-making processes. To address this risk, the planning team sought to engage migrant residents through the establishment of a WeChat group that includes local government officials, planning team members, and representatives of all households, including those currently living outside the village. This platform enables migrant residents to stay informed about emerging village issues in a timely manner and to express their views and concerns on an ongoing basis, thereby enhancing their inclusion in the regenerative tourism process.

Chapter Summary

Communities of practice that incorporate more-than-human participation offer a practical framework for the co-creation of regenerative tourism, as demonstrated in the case of Azheke village. Here, a regenerative tourism model grounded in systems thinking and anti-

anthropocentric values engages both human and non-human actors—including forests, the village itself, rice terraces, water, and weather—as co-creators. Through geographical proximity (Flanagan & Phi, 2024), shared ecological knowledge (Ericsson et al., 2020), and digital connectivity (Almeida & Campos, 2022), diverse stakeholders collaborate to balance tourism development with traditional ecological stewardship. This inclusive and adaptive approach foregrounds reciprocal relationships, recognising non-human entities as active participants in shaping both cultural and environmental outcomes.

The community of practice in Azheke has evolved from peripheral involvement to active leadership in regenerative tourism (Albrecht, 2012) through Indigenous-centred, bottom-up collaboration, supported by local government and academic partners. Natural elements such as forests and water are acknowledged as co-governors, reflecting Hani cosmology and seasonal rhythms. While inclusive engagement is encouraged, underlying power asymmetries remain, revealing ongoing negotiations between traditional authority structures and emergent regenerative practices.

A shared identity between human and non-human stakeholders is fostered through the co-creation and adaptive transformation of elements such as traditional “mushroom houses.” These structures serve as focal points for negotiating modern living needs alongside cultural and ecological preservation. The regenerative process—driven by local residents, government agencies, architects, researchers, and tourists—reflects Indigenous-centred, systems-based, and anti-anthropocentric principles. Architectural heritage is thereby reimagined as a living, evolving component of community identity and regenerative tourism.

Engagement, imagination, and alignment among stakeholders foster empathy, trust, and a sense of belonging (Bertella, 2011), reinforcing a resilient community of practice rooted in cultural continuity and environmental harmony. In this context, Indigenous elites serve as boundary spanners (Ericsson et al., 2020), bridging human and non-human domains. Their bilingualism, cultural authority, and deep-rooted community ties enable them to mediate between diverse actors, ensuring that tourism development remains aligned with traditional ecological rhythms and sacred practices. Their role exemplifies how Indigenous leadership can facilitate anti-anthropocentric co-creation, promoting culturally grounded and ecologically attuned innovation in tourism.

Chapter 6: Co-Creating *Sheng Sheng*-Inspired Regenerative Tourism

Chapter Six presents Azheke village as a case study to explore how the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng* can inform the co-creation of regenerative tourism. Two key initiatives have been implemented, both centred on revitalising Hani culture through the regeneration of traditional dwellings. Rather than simply mitigating the adverse impacts of modernity, these initiatives aim to foster positive contributions through tourism development. The principles of *Sheng Sheng* have been integrated throughout both the planning and implementation stages.

Demand to Upgrade Vernacular Homes

In line with systems thinking, the preservation of the rice terraces is inseparable from the protection of traditional mushroom houses. According to the document analysis, a Hani proverb states, “*A house is built to last a hundred years; the terraced fields provide food for a thousand*” (房子盖了住百年, 梯田开了吃千年), highlighting the deep interdependence between habitation and cultivation. This holistic relationship is further underscored by a local government official recorded in the participatory research notes, who remarked: “*The Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, as a World Heritage site, are truly unique; they rely on people for their upkeep... The reason why terraced fields have become a World Cultural Heritage site is due to their authenticity; the production and daily life of people within them are the soul of the terraces, and thus the cultural landscape is of great importance*” (G1).

Mushroom houses serve not only as dwellings for Hani families but also as vital repositories of cultural memory and heritage. Their continued presence and use are integral to sustaining the broader cultural landscape of the terraces, reinforcing the interconnectedness of built form, agricultural practice, and living tradition. According to document analysis and participatory notes, traditionally, mushroom houses are structured in three distinct layers, each with specific functions (**Figure 13**). The ground floor is used for housing livestock and storing farming tools; the middle floor serves as the main living area, centred around a square hearth; and the upper floor functions as a storeroom for grain and miscellaneous items. After the annual rice harvest from the terraces, the rice is typically dried on the third floor before being stored, while water buffalo—essential to farming activities—are kept on the ground floor. Although traditional mushroom houses stand approximately 7 to 8 metres in height,

their internal space is relatively constrained, making the installation of modern amenities such as bathrooms or kitchens unfeasible.



Figure 13. Traditional Hani mushroom house in Gaocheng village

Source: Taken by the planning team, 2018

However, the continued existence of mushroom houses is increasingly under threat, due to three primary factors. First, there is a growing trend of outmigration among the Hani people. As community members move away, often in search of better economic opportunities, the traditional dwellings are left uninhabited and, consequently, unmaintained. According to the participatory research notes, the director of the planning team observed: *“In the past, the environment was relatively isolated and there was little contact with the outside world. Growing red rice was enough to meet basic survival needs, but that is no longer the case. Young people now go out to study or work and no longer know how to farm. According to survey, the monthly income from working outside is between ¥2,000 and ¥2,500, whereas cultivating red rice—excluding labour costs—requires an investment of at least ¥1,800 per month, yet the returns are not nearly as high”* (P1). Economic necessity has thus led many Hani people to abandon both their agricultural land and their mushroom houses.

Second, due to spatial limitations and the absence of modern amenities, many residents have in recent years chosen to replace traditional mushroom houses with buildings constructed from contemporary materials such as concrete and steel. As society develops, the functional expectations of vernacular dwellings have evolved accordingly. Many Hani residents now seek larger interior spaces and the inclusion of basic facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms. In the research notes, one official noted: *“Their traditional structure simply*

cannot meet modern needs. Life in them lacks comfort and dignity, so ordinary people find it hard to appreciate the so-called value of a World Heritage site” (G1). In response to these changing needs, residents often remodel or replace traditional houses in order to improve their quality of life.

Third, the protection of traditional dwellings is a relatively recent concern in local policy. Prior to this shift, government initiatives actively encouraged residents to replace their mushroom houses with modern buildings, offering cash incentives to do so. According to the document analysis, one Azheke villager explained: *“At the time, there were government subsidies for converting houses into reinforced concrete buildings. Our family received a subsidy of ¥7,000 in 2012, and a further ¥900 in two instalments in 2017”* (E2). These financial incentives were significant, particularly given that the annual per capita income in Azheke village was only approximately ¥2,745 in 2017. As a result, many mushroom houses were altered or replaced under the guidance of policy. *“Before 2013 or 2014, almost all the local buildings were mushroom houses. But now they have all disappeared,”* one local tourism entrepreneur recalled (E3) during the interview. A tourist similarly remarked in the interview: *“The damage caused by villagers to traditional dwellings is limited. In contrast, the government and developers can destroy an entire village in a very short time”* (T6). According to the research notes, the local government has also acknowledged its earlier shortcomings: *“In remote areas, we really did not do a good job of protecting traditional dwellings. It was not until we applied for World Cultural Heritage status that the government began to take preservation seriously”* (G2).

Together, these three factors—the outmigration of residents, the functional inadequacy of traditional structures, and earlier government policies promoting modern construction—have accelerated the decline of traditional mushroom houses, presenting significant challenges to their preservation within the context of regenerative tourism. These dynamics reflect key *Sheng Sheng*-inspired principles of regenerative tourism, particularly the **timelessness of regeneration** and **organic self-generation**. The World Heritage site is not a static entity, but one engaged in a continual process of growth and transformation. Within this evolving landscape, the needs and priorities of human stakeholders—such as local residents and government authorities—shift over time. In parallel, the physical form and cultural meaning of non-human stakeholders, such as mushroom houses, also undergo changes. These transformations are driven by internal, self-organising forces within the destination, including human motivations and the natural ageing or decline of material structures. Such processes unfold in alignment with the destination’s inherent rhythms and locally rooted sources of

vitality. From this perspective, the demand of regeneration emerges from an ongoing negotiation between past and present, continuity and adaptation.

Conflict between Heritage Preservation and Dwelling Upgrade

In response to the evolving housing needs of the Hani people, the local government has undertaken several initiatives to improve dwellings. According to the research notes and document analysis, three main approaches have been considered or implemented: “restoring the old as it was” (修旧如旧), “changing the bird in the cage” (腾笼换鸟), and demolition and reconstruction (拆除重建). Each method, however, presents specific limitations within the local context.

The first approach, “restoring the old as it was,” involves the renovation and upgrading of existing infrastructure (**Figure 14**). The local government has undertaken efforts to improve traditional dwellings. However, despite these initiatives, the outcomes have been limited. The structural form of the traditional mushroom-shaped houses is inherently unsuited to the demands of contemporary life. Nevertheless, this approach offers the greatest potential for preserving cultural heritage, particularly when compared with the other two methods.



Figure 14. “Restoring the old as it was” in Azheke village

Source: Taken by the author, 2024

The second approach, “changing the bird in the cage,” refers to relocating residents and repurposing traditional dwellings for commercial uses, such as hotels or tourism businesses. While this model may be viable in limited cases, it faces significant constraints within the

core protected zone of the World Heritage site, which comprises 30 villages and a population of over 10,000. Scaling up this approach would necessitate the construction of additional infrastructure—something that is no longer feasible given spatial limitations in Yuanyang. According to the research notes, one government official noted, *“Even if it could be done in one small village like Azheke, it would be impossible to roll out this approach elsewhere”* (G1).

Moreover, this strategy risks undermining the integrity of the cultural landscape and thus fails to meet key heritage preservation criteria. Without the continued presence of Indigenous residents, traditional villages risk losing both their authenticity and appeal to visitors. During the interviews, several tourists expressed similar concerns:

“If everything is handed over to outsiders to run, it just does not feel the same. Local villagers still need to be involved in the management and actually take on some specific roles... the community can provide localised support and services, including showcasing the unique characteristics and culture of ethnic minorities, as well as their warm hospitality towards visitors. The community can also help to preserve the village’s authentic atmosphere” (T1).

“If the guesthouses were to be placed within Azheke village, it would inevitably damage its traditional culture and undermine its ethnic character. In few years, these mushroom houses would be gone. And if you say it is all Han Chinese here, would people still visit?” (T4).

These comments underscore the importance of maintaining Indigenous involvement in order to safeguard both cultural heritage and the village’s touristic value, which align with the principles of regenerative tourism.

The third approach, demolition and reconstruction, involves replacing existing houses with entirely new buildings constructed using modern techniques, rather than traditional methods and locally sourced materials. This approach takes two main forms: one involves rebuilding in a traditional architectural style following demolition (**Figure 15** and left in **Figure 16**); the other entails constructing reinforced concrete houses and subsequently decorating them to resemble traditional dwellings (right in **Figure 16**). While the former may partially satisfy heritage preservation standards, the latter is more problematic. As one government official noted, *“From a cultural perspective, such houses have lost their value”* (G1).



Figure 15. Demolition and reconstruction in traditional style in Azheke village

Source: Left taken by Yunliang Dai, 1998 (cited in Dai, 2019); right taken by the author, 2024

In the interviews, tourists also expressed concern about the loss of authenticity associated with this method: *“In a village like this, if you pull down the houses and remove the roofs, would anyone still come? Perhaps not. Traditional villages are only truly attractive when they are steeped in their own history and culture”* (T6). These perspectives highlight the tension between modern housing needs and the imperative to preserve the historical and cultural authenticity that forms the basis of the site’s value.



Figure 16. Demolition and reconstruction in Azheke (left) and Duoyishu (right) villages

Source: Left taken by the author, 2024; right taken by the author, 2021

Of the three approaches discussed, only two can be considered compatible with heritage preservation objectives, albeit to varying degrees. The first, “restoring the old as it was,” aligns closely with the expectations of heritage experts but falls short in addressing the practical needs of local residents. Both the local government and the planning team acknowledge the limitations of this conventional preservation model. According to the research notes, one planner observed, “*Experts always agree that the mushroom houses need to be preserved, but they have not taken into account the people who actually live in them*” (P1). A government official similarly reflected, “*Various departments and officials started demanding that we manage the heritage site. However, I spoke with the director of the Cultural Relics Bureau at the time and said that our static approach to preservation was wrong—it was a dead end*” (G1).

The second, demolition and reconstruction in the traditional style, offers a compromise. Although it is less satisfactory from a strict heritage conservation standpoint, it responds more effectively to the aspirations of local residents for improved living standards. In seeking to reconcile these competing priorities—respect for cultural heritage and the everyday needs of the Hani people—the local government ultimately chose to implement this latter approach in Azheke village.

This decision reflects key principles of *Sheng Sheng*-inspired regenerative tourism, particularly the notions of **harmony through polarity** and the **embrace of creation and dissolution**. On the one hand, although World Heritage designation has enhanced the symbolic and cultural significance of traditional architecture, it has also introduced new complexities in balancing heritage preservation with the practical demands of contemporary rural development. In the interview, one local tourism entrepreneur shared her observation, “*Converting flat-roofed houses back into mushroom-shaped ones is not for the benefit of the villagers, but simply because tourists like to see them*” (E1). Regeneration, in this context, occurs not by eliminating tensions, but by fostering a productive interplay between opposing forces. Rather than attempting to resolve the conflict between heritage preservation and housing improvement, the regenerative approach adopted in Azheke village seeks to create an inclusive environment in which divergent interests—those of the local community, tourists, government officials, and heritage experts—can interact constructively.

On the other hand, the decision also reflects the local government’s acceptance of the cyclical nature of built heritage—the continuous processes of creation, decay, and renewal. Whereas conventional preservation approaches often emphasise static protection and resist the transformation or loss of heritage elements, the regenerative strategy in Azheke

acknowledges the inevitability of change. By reconstructing dwellings in a traditional style using modern techniques, the approach both honours the Hani people's architectural heritage and improves residents' living conditions. In doing so, it respects local history while remaining open to innovation and forward-looking solutions, thereby enhancing the village's cultural resilience.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration to Regenerate Traditional Village

Azheke village holds a distinctive position within the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces World Heritage site. It is one of five core villages nominated for inscription and has also been included in the third batch of nationally recognised traditional villages in China. According to the document analysis, one architect noted, *“The mushroom house is a distinctive and unique form of residence, and Azheke contains the largest and most complete collection of these dwellings. Their value extends far beyond architecture—they are vessels of culture and memory”* (D2). The local government similarly recognises Azheke's cultural and symbolic importance. The research notes record an explanation provided by a local government official.

“No matter how others may judge me, I must steadfastly protect these two villages: Azheke and Yakou. In the past, the mushroom-shaped houses were like birds' nests in the trees, nestled among the mountains, clouds, and mist. But now, the new buildings have all surpassed them, affecting the landscape. That's why we must make a firm decision to preserve Azheke and Yakou” (G1).

In light of this significance, two regenerative initiatives centred on the preservation and renewal of mushroom houses have been piloted in Azheke since 2013 and 2018, respectively.

Tangible Regeneration through Architectural Design

In 2013, to better respond to the needs of Azheke's residents and to promote the preservation of traditional mushroom houses, the design team renovated one such dwelling in the village (**Figure 17**). This intervention not only restored the structure but also reimagined its potential. The revitalised house demonstrated that these vernacular buildings are not merely cultural artefacts, but can offer a modern, comfortable, and high-quality standard of living. By doing so, the project challenged the prevailing assumption that traditional dwellings must be abandoned or replaced in the name of progress, instead positioning them as viable and desirable homes for contemporary rural life.



Figure 17. Mushroom house reconstructed by the design team in Azheke village

Source: Left taken by the author, 2019; right taken by the design team, 2017

This architectural intervention reflects key principles of *Sheng Sheng*-inspired regenerative tourism—specifically **creative renewal** and **ethical grounding**. The design team proposed a creative solution that upgraded the internal structure of the mushroom house while preserving its traditional external form. This design went beyond the limitations of conventional restoration by fostering interdependence among all elements of the Azheke system, particularly the Hani cultural landscape. It delivered a clear message: heritage preservation cannot rely on slogans or symbolic gestures—especially in Indigenous contexts. It must offer tangible, livable alternatives that support both cultural continuity and everyday wellbeing.

Besides, the project was grounded in ethical commitments, especially empathy toward the local community and respect for its cultural and socio-economic realities. Guided by the principle that conservation must align with local cultural, ecological, and economic conditions, the team intentionally positioned the renovation as “low-end.” This was not a reflection of inferior value but a strategic, inclusive choice. As Azheke is a low-income community where many residents live in basic conditions, the goal was to make the intervention accessible and replicable. According to the document analysis, one architect noted: “Positioning it as low-end is not the ultimate goal; the aim is to set the starting point

low enough so that villagers can reach it. Only by being responsible and caring towards them can we truly help them” (D2).

Intangible Regeneration through Tourism Development

The protective transformation of dwellings has laid a solid foundation for Azheke village to regenerate through tourism. Building on this, the planning team launched the Azheke Plan in 2018, establishing a community-based model for regenerative tourism (Yang & Bao, 2022). At its core, the plan seeks to empower local residents as central actors in tourism governance and benefit-sharing. Recorded in the documents, its key initiatives are encapsulated in the framework of “one core, two helpers, and three objectives,” which collectively guide the plan’s implementation and long-term vision.

At the heart of the Azheke Plan is the Indigenous community itself, reflecting the Indigenous-centred principles of regenerative tourism. Tourism development in Azheke is led by a village-based company, established on 17 September 2018, and jointly owned by the Azheke community and the local government. This company coordinates village improvement initiatives and oversees tourism operations, with all profits belonging collectively to the village. Staff are recruited directly from the local community, forming a management and operations team rooted in the village. The initial team comprised a manager, five ticket inspectors and guides, and five cleaners—11 members in total—with additional villagers joining over time.

As the plan evolved, new challenges emerged that extended beyond its original scope. To address these, the company adopted a flexible and participatory governance model centred on regular village meetings. These meetings provide a forum for collective deliberation on issues related to tourism and rural development. Resolutions are recorded in writing and, once endorsed by at least two-thirds of villagers, are formalised as additions to the village’s rules and regulations. In this way, the institutional framework underpinning tourism development is continually expanded and adapted.

In this way, the Azheke Plan embodies key principles of *Sheng Sheng*-inspired regenerative tourism—particularly the **timelessness of regeneration** and **organic self-generation**. By positioning local residents as the primary decision-makers and embedding governance in democratic consultation, the plan fosters a resilient, community-led model. Village-level rules and agreements are used not only to guide behaviour but also to resolve

emerging conflicts, enabling the initiative to adapt organically and evolve in a grounded, regenerative manner.

The “two helpers” of the Azheke Plan refer to the postgraduate students from the planning team and young local officials. Postgraduate students took up residence in the village, where they played a key role in supporting the establishment and operation of the community-owned tourism company. In addition to administrative assistance, they delivered targeted vocational training to equip villagers with essential skills in tourism services, management, and hospitality. The focus extended beyond immediate service improvements to building long-term local capacity and fostering a stronger sense of self-governance. Together with young local officials, they worked to nurture leadership within the community, strengthen institutional knowledge, and cultivate a sense of ownership over tourism development. The ultimate aim was to enable villagers to independently manage tourism activities, ensuring both long-term autonomy and the cultural sustainability of the community.

In doing so, and in alignment with Indigenous-centred approaches, the Azheke Plan also reflects a core principle of *Sheng Sheng*-inspired regenerative tourism: **The embrace of creation and dissolution**. By placing the Indigenous community at the centre of tourism development, the plan honours local traditions and cultural heritage. At the same time, the inclusion of external actors—such as academic researchers and local government officials—ensures that the process remains open to innovation and forward-looking solutions. This interplay between continuity and change enables a dynamic model of tourism that respects the past while engaging constructively with the future.

The three objectives of the Azheke Plan—heritage preservation, tourism development, and rural revitalisation—are pursued through active engagement of the Indigenous community. To promote villagers’ participation in tourism and strengthen their sense of responsibility for protecting cultural heritage, the plan introduced a creative and inclusive benefit-sharing mechanism. This compensation scheme distributes dividends to households based on their contributions through land, housing, and community involvement. Under the scheme, profits generated by the community-owned tourism company are divided 30:70: 30% is retained to cover operational costs, while the remaining 70% is distributed among villagers as tourism dividends. These dividends are allocated according to four criteria: 40% for ownership and maintenance of traditional dwellings, 30% for the upkeep of rice terraces, 20% for continued residency in the village, and 10% for maintaining household registration.

This mechanism not only incentivises heritage protection and agricultural continuity but also reinforces community cohesion and long-term commitment to local development.

This benefit-sharing scheme reflects key principles of *Sheng Sheng*-inspired regenerative tourism, particularly the notions of **timeless regeneration**, **organic self-generation**, and **harmony through polarity**. The mechanism is transparent, accessible, and designed to encourage behaviours vital to the village's cultural and ecological sustainability—such as preserving mushroom-shaped houses, continuing traditional farming, maintaining residential presence, and retaining household registration to support communal governance. As of 21 March 2025, Azheke village has conducted 11 tourism dividend distributions, disbursing a cumulative total of ¥2,870,500, with an average of ¥44,161.50 per household. This provides villagers with a tangible financial return for their participation in heritage-based tourism and illustrates the regenerative principle of simplicity in practice.

Although the protective transformation of mushroom houses has improved living conditions, they still fall short when compared to modern dwellings. The compensation scheme offers a pragmatic solution to this tension by enhancing local residents' self-motivation to voluntarily protect these traditional structures. Importantly, the local government, planning team, and tourists share a common understanding of this issue. According to the research notes, one local official noted:

“The compensation mechanism has resolved a problem that troubled me for many years—it aligns the villagers' understanding of mushroom house preservation with that of the government” (G1).

A planner elaborated on the rationale:

“The living conditions in the mushroom houses are relatively poor, so it is unlikely that villagers would voluntarily protect them. Once they have enough money, they are likely to buy houses elsewhere. However, if tourism is developed and the mushroom houses attract visitors—allowing villagers to benefit financially—they may come to realise that losing these houses could mean losing their source of income. Our ultimate goal is to encourage more villagers to participate and to cultivate a sense of responsibility. This responsibility is rooted in their own interests and can be reinforced through a system of incentives” (P1).

This perspective is echoed by tourists in the interviews, one of whom remarked:

“The purpose of redistributing benefits to the villagers is not simply to lift them out of poverty, but to enable them to maintain their traditional way of

life. If it were just about poverty alleviation, and everyone became wealthy and changed everything, then it would lose its meaning—and this project might no longer have any value. By linking the preservation of their original lifestyle to villagers' economic interests, they will have the motivation to remain actively involved" (T3).

By acknowledging the coexistence of conflicting needs—cultural preservation and improved living standards—the scheme fosters a constructive interplay between tradition and modernity, ensuring the long-term sustainability of both community welfare and heritage conservation.

Regenerative Outcomes in Traditional Village

Regenerative tourism practices in Azheke village embody the ontology of *Sheng Sheng*, which regards change not as a threat but as a vital and generative force. As recorded in the research notes, one local official remarked: *"Everything is constantly developing, so if we want to protect the mushroom houses, we need to look at them from a forward-thinking perspective. I hope that in the future we can truly restore the local system of 'the four elements in harmony', with the mushroom houses being modern versions"* (G1). In this spirit, the built environment undergoes protective transformation, evolving alongside the community it serves. Tradition is not preserved through stasis, but through its sustained relevance in daily life.

This approach has resulted in more than just the physical renewal of traditional dwellings; it has also contributed to the cultural revitalisation of the village. By enabling buildings to adapt functionally while retaining their symbolic form, the project has allowed Hani residents to remain in their ancestral homes and to continue practising living traditions. Here, cultural heritage is neither static nor nostalgic—it is actively regenerated through use, adaptation, and ongoing participation.

Azheke's housing policy articulates a regenerative model of tourism that moves beyond preservation as an end in itself. Instead, it cultivates a dynamic cultural landscape in which authenticity is co-produced through the lived experiences of residents and the evolving expectations of visitors. This case suggests that regenerative principles may offer rural heritage communities viable pathways to sustain both their traditions and their future livelihoods.

Prior to the introduction of regenerative tourism in Azheke village, the increasing shift of Hani community members towards urban labour markets had disrupted the intergenerational transmission of Indigenous ecological knowledge, much of which is conveyed orally. As a result, the land-based, co-evolving practices that once underpinned Hani cosmology have become increasingly vulnerable to erosion.

In this context, tourism development in Azheke has catalysed a *Sheng Sheng*-like resurgence—fostering renewed life, connection, and regeneration. Young Hani from over ten families have returned to Azheke to participate in the tourism industry, re-engaging with traditional knowledge through contemporary practices. Their return reflects not only economic opportunity, but also a renewed sense of cultural responsibility and belonging. Recorded in the documents, one resident noted:

“I used to work away from home, but when I heard tourism would be developed in my hometown, I was delighted to return to take up a job. Now I can look after the elderly and children, so they are not left behind, and I feel more motivated working for my own community. I hope that wherever there is a home, there will be work—and wherever there is work, there will be a home” (R3).

Another reflected on the growing pride in cultural transmission:

“I have hosted visitors from countries such as Japan, Italy, the United States, and France. They all said that the beautiful scenery here made them reluctant to leave. In the past, everyone felt proud to leave the countryside and seek opportunities in big cities, but now I feel proud to have returned from the city to the countryside, and to be able to share our Hani culture with more people” (R4).

The involvement of younger generations in these initiatives signifies more than economic revitalisation; it represents the renewal of relational knowledge systems grounded in reciprocity between people and nature.

From the perspective of *Sheng Sheng*, the regenerative tourism model in Azheke village exemplifies ongoing co-creation and mutual nourishment. Young villagers, by learning from elders and sharing Indigenous knowledge with visitors, act as living conduits of tradition. In collaboration with a research team, they co-develop tourism policies grounded in local cosmologies and ecological ethics. The research team facilitates participatory village meetings involving local government officials and community members, drawing on Indigenous knowledge systems to address emerging challenges.

For instance, in designing tourist experience programmes, villagers share everyday practices such as waterway maintenance, explain the seasonal rhythms of rice farming, and articulate cultural taboos embedded in village life—such as the prohibition against entering the sacred forest. These insights have informed a variety of regenerative initiatives. Among them are Hani-led forest treks that offer immersive cultural experiences while conveying beliefs about forests, land, water, and spirits; seasonal farming activities aligned with natural cycles; and ecological guidelines that regulate tourist behaviour in accordance with local stewardship principles.

Within this community of practice—comprising vernacular dwellings, local residents, government actors, and researchers—the principles of *Sheng Sheng*-inspired regenerative tourism are realised through practice: (1) systemic adaptation enables ongoing transformation across both human and non-human realms; (2) local stewardship sustains the continuity of co-evolving practices; and (3) intergenerational dialogue activates the dynamism of Indigenous wisdom.

In this way, regenerative tourism in Azheke moves beyond preservationist logics, embracing dynamic regeneration. Rather than immobilising cultural practices in time, it enables traditions to evolve in dialogue with contemporary realities. This continual renewal—driven by the collaborative efforts of both human and non-human stakeholders, mediated through the Indigenous community—embodies the essence of *Sheng Sheng*: a vibrant, living system in which all beings co-flourish. Azheke thus serves as a model for how regenerative tourism, grounded in a dynamic ontology, can reconcile heritage conservation with the evolving needs of local communities. It demonstrates that protecting cultural identity does not require resisting change, but guiding it—through approaches that are contextually grounded, socially inclusive, and ecological attuned.

Chapter Summary

Regenerative tourism practices related to dwelling preservation in Azheke village illustrate how *Sheng Sheng*-inspired principles can inform culturally attuned conservation and socially responsive regenerative design. First, drawing on the principles of timeless regeneration and organic self-generation, regenerative demands are understood as internally generated and continually evolving rather than externally imposed or fixed. Regeneration thus emerges from within the destination system and responds to its changing conditions over time.

Second, the principle of harmony through opposites recognises that challenges arise from the coexistence of competing forces. Rather than seeking to eliminate these tensions, regenerative responses aim to work through them, reconciling development and conservation, continuity and change, and human and non-human needs. Tension is therefore treated not as a problem to be resolved but as a generative condition for renewal.

Third, informed by the combined principles of timeless regeneration, organic self-generation, and ethical and equal grounding, regenerative solutions are conceived as adaptive, locally rooted, creative, and morally accountable to both human and non-human stakeholders. Regeneration is not a linear process but an ongoing practice of adjustment grounded in place-based knowledge, relational ethics, and contextual sensitivity.

Fourth, regenerative outcomes are evaluated not solely in terms of growth or improvement but through their ethical commitment to all forms of life. They emerge from an acceptance of transformation and decline as integral to regeneration, acknowledging that renewal often involves trade-offs rather than unambiguous positive outcomes.

In contrast to dominant international frameworks of regenerative tourism, which tend to emphasise “building destinations better” through tourism development, a Sheng Sheng–inspired framework offers a more flexible and inclusive understanding of regeneration. It explicitly accommodates the coexistence of diverse, and sometimes conflicting, forces within destination systems. From this perspective, regenerative initiatives do not necessarily eliminate negative impacts; instead, they involve navigating ethical trade-offs between positive and negative effects as part of a dynamic and relational process of becoming.

Chapter 7: Discussions and Conclusions

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by outlining the study's theoretical contributions and practical implications, and reflects on its limitations while proposing directions for future research.

Academic Contribution

First, this research addresses the current conceptual ambiguity surrounding regenerative tourism by offering a redefinition grounded in Chinese philosophical thought. While regeneration is widely viewed as the key feature distinguishing regenerative tourism from sustainable tourism and related paradigms, its precise meaning remains unclear. Achieving greater conceptual clarity is essential for advancing both theoretical and practical engagement with the concept. In Western discourse, regeneration is often conflated with notions such as sustainability, transformation, and circularity—an overlap that risks obscuring its distinctive qualities. In response, this study draws on Chinese philosophy, particularly the concept of *Sheng Sheng*, to offer six insights that enrich and reframe the understanding of regenerative tourism.

The principles of *timeless regeneration*, *organic self-generation*, *creative renewal*, and *ethical grounding* resonate with current international discussions on regenerative development, particularly those emphasising systems thinking, self-renewing capacity, actors' agency, and ethical commitments to both human and non-human beings. In contrast, the principles of *harmony through opposites*, *the embrace of creation and dissolution*, and *the equal grounding* of human and non-human life represent distinctive contributions from an Eastern philosophical perspective. Together, these principles extend the conceptualisation of the regenerative paradigm and may also hold potential value for informing regenerative practices beyond the tourism sector.

Second, in response to the underrepresentation of Eastern perspectives, this research offers six insights into regenerative tourism grounded in Chinese philosophy. Current critical discourse remains largely Eurocentric, often overlooking alternative experiential and epistemological frameworks (Mura & Wijesinghe, 2023). By introducing the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*, this study provides a novel interpretive lens that both distinguishes regenerative tourism from sustainable tourism and expands upon prevailing Western conceptions. In particular, it enriches the field by advancing principles such as harmony through polarity,

creative renewal, and the embrace of creation and dissolution—concepts that foreground dynamic, cyclical, and relational understandings of regeneration.

Third, this research advances a practical approach to regenerative tourism co-creation by introducing the community of practice framework as a means of engaging non-human stakeholders. In doing so, it extends existing discourse on tourism co-creation, which has largely focused on human actors such as tourists, service providers, entrepreneurs, and host communities. Regenerative tourism, by contrast, calls for a broader perspective—one that acknowledges the agency and significance of non-human entities, including natural ecosystems, wildlife, and the wider environment. By recognising these elements as active participants rather than passive contexts, this study deepens understanding of multi-species and ecological involvement in tourism practice.

Fourth, in response to the limited empirical grounding of regenerative tourism, this research examines the community of practice in Azheke village as a case study to move beyond theoretical discussion and enrich the field with situated, practice-based evidence. What distinguishes this community of practice is its inclusion of scholars as embedded, reciprocal participants in the co-creation of regenerative tourism. Employing a cross-community enactive research approach (Bellato et al., 2023), this study bridges the gap between academic inquiry and practical implementation. By involving researchers as active contributors, it challenges conventional separations between knowledge production and on-the-ground action. Anchored in the philosophy of *Sheng Sheng*, this participatory model ensures that research is not only contextually grounded but also directly informs and supports the development of regenerative tourism practices.

Practical Implications

The findings offer practical implications for both policymakers and practitioners seeking to guide tourism governance and business practice toward a regenerative future.

Policymakers can use these six principles as a framework to guide or evaluate regional tourism development, establishing *Sheng Sheng*-aligned indicators in regional tourism monitoring systems. Specifically, the principle of *timeless regeneration* calls for continuous identification of shifting community and environmental needs, ensuring that policy responses remain adaptive over time. The principle of *organic self-generation* encourages policymakers to prioritise locally rooted regeneration demands and draw on local and Indigenous knowledge when formulating solutions. The principle of *harmony through opposites* supports

the identification of challenges emerging from the coexistence of opposing forces within destinations and promotes outcomes that reconcile—rather than suppress—these tensions. The principle of *creative renewal* invites policymakers to foster innovation and encourage creative approaches to addressing regeneration needs. The principle of *embrace of creation and dissolution* reminds policymakers to accept not only transformation and growth but also necessary decline or phasing out of unsustainable practices. Finally, the principle of *ethical and equal grounding* requires policymakers to assess tourism outcomes through a lens of ethical responsibility and equal commitment to all forms of life, human and non-human.

These six principles can lead to practical approaches. For instance, policymakers can create adaptive governance mechanisms that institutionalise continuous learning and adjustment, regularly evaluating and reviewing the updated conditions and establish legitimated pathways for mid-cycle amendments to tourism plans when conditions shift. Also, they can formalise Indigenous and local knowledge integration by designing policy instruments that Indigenous and local knowledge directly into planning and regulatory processes, and funding Indigenous knowledge stewardship programs that support revitalisation of cultural practices and community-led visitor protocols. And policymakers can formalize intellectual property and data sovereignty to protect Indigenous knowledge used in tourism products or interpretation.

Policymakers can also play a key role in facilitating the formation and development of communities of practice that actively engage Indigenous communities, who contribute vital Indigenous knowledge—particularly regarding relationships with non-human stakeholders—to decision-making processes. After initiating such communities, policymakers should participate peripherally while ensuring that the space remains inclusive and equitable for all stakeholders. By supporting regular meetings, workshops, and collaborative activities, policymakers can help create an environment in which diverse actors—especially Indigenous community members—exchange knowledge and co-develop regenerative approaches to tourism. By doing so, policymakers can more effectively identify local regeneration needs and support the development of solutions that are grounded in local knowledge and emerge organically through the tourism development process.

This research also has implications for practitioners involved in regenerative tourism development in villages worldwide. Drawing on the case of Azheke village, regenerative tourism practitioners can be understood as comprising both external and internal actors. External practitioners, such as academic research teams, can play an active role by supporting regenerative initiatives and facilitating the meaningful integration of Indigenous communities

and knowledge systems into the development process. Internal practitioners, by contrast, include local government authorities and Indigenous community members, who play a central role in decision-making processes throughout regenerative tourism development.

Guided by the principles of *creative renewal* and *embrace of creation and dissolution*, external practitioners can play a key role in generating innovative solutions that balance emerging demands with the preservation of tradition. In this process, they are expected to build long-term, co-governed partnerships with Indigenous communities, co-design regenerative solutions that integrate both cutting-edge expertise and Indigenous/local knowledge, include Indigenous experts as paid knowledge consultants instead of voluntary cultural informants, and maintain close connections to destination systems to identify challenges early and develop timely responses.

Guided by the principle of *organic self-generation*, larger tourism organisations should facilitate co-creation with Indigenous communities by developing the capacity to work effectively across cultural boundaries. This includes providing training to frontline staff in intercultural communication, Indigenous rights, and place-based knowledge systems, as well as prioritising the hiring of Indigenous knowledge holders as lead contributors to narrative development, visitor experience design, and cultural interpretation. Such practices help ensure authenticity and reinforce the central role of Indigenous perspectives in tourism development. At the same time, organisations should implement operational practices that respect ecological rhythms and acknowledge the agency of non-human stakeholders, designing activities and business processes around the needs of ecosystems rather than solely around visitor demand. Additionally, they should establish clear pathways for phasing out business practices that undermine cultural or ecological integrity and replace them with approaches aligned with regenerative principles. By actively participating in the community of practice, these organisations can contribute to a dynamic, shared learning ecosystem that supports continuous adaptation and strengthens the long-term viability of regenerative tourism.

For internal practitioners, the principle of *organic self-generation* highlights the centrality of Indigenous communities and their knowledge systems. Indigenous people can support regenerative tourism by actively participating in the community of practice, maximising their influence in the tourism development process. By working across boundaries and sharing Indigenous wisdom—particularly knowledge concerning non-human stakeholders—with other actors, they help ensure that tourism development remains grounded in local realities, relational ethics, and the ecological rhythms of place.

Limitations and Future Research

This research is subject to several important limitations. First, although *Sheng Sheng* draws from a rich stream of Eastern philosophy, it represents only one thread within a much broader and more diverse intellectual tradition. Eastern thought encompasses a wide array of worldviews, including Buddhist philosophies and various Indigenous cosmologies, each offering distinct epistemologies and value systems. By focusing primarily on *Sheng Sheng*, this study may overlook complementary or contrasting perspectives that could enrich understandings of regeneration and resilience. For example, Buddhist notions of interdependence, impermanence, and non-attachment might illuminate different dimensions of relationality and transformation. Similarly, Indigenous knowledge systems from other regions, such as the Māori philosophy in New Zealand (Becken & Kaur, 2021), may offer alternative approaches to place-based collaboration and cultural revitalisation. Future research would benefit from a more inclusive engagement with these diverse traditions to broaden the discussion on regenerative tourism.

Second, while the case study of Azheke village offers valuable insights into Indigenous empowerment and cultural heritage preservation, it does not fully represent a bottom-up, community-led process. The village's development has been significantly shaped by external actors, including government agencies and academic institutions, resulting in a hybrid model that combines top-down support with local agency. Consequently, the case may not fully reflect the dynamics or challenges of initiatives that emerge solely from within the community. To better understand grassroots innovation and self-determined development, future research should examine cases where the impetus, leadership, and decision-making are driven entirely by local stakeholders, independent of significant external intervention. Such studies could provide deeper insight into the capacity of Indigenous communities to self-organise, assert autonomy, and build sustainable futures on their own terms.

Third, focusing on a single village in China limits the broader applicability and generalisability of the findings. Comparative cases from other regions—particularly Indigenous or Global South contexts, such as Māori communities in New Zealand (Matunga et al., 2020)—could demonstrate how the principles of *Sheng Sheng* might be applied across diverse cultural settings, enhancing their transferability and scalability.

Fourth, the researcher's positionality as an outsider engaging with Indigenous knowledge carries the risk of idealising communities whose practices may also reproduce

inequalities. Future research should include critical reflection on regenerative tourism practices that could unintentionally perpetuate such inequities.

Finally, the current framework derived from Chinese philosophy remains largely descriptive and has yet to be operationalised to evaluate whether tourism development is genuinely regenerative. Future studies could develop specific regenerative indicators based on the six *Sheng Sheng*-inspired principles to guide both practice and assessment.

References

- Adhya, A. (2012). Jane Jacobs and the theory of placemaking in debates of sustainable urbanism. In *The Urban Wisdom of Jane Jacobs* (pp.215-228). Routledge.
- Agrifoglio, R. (2015). *Knowledge Preservation Through Community of Practice: Theoretical Issues and Empirical Evidence*. Springer.
- Albrecht, J. (2012). Authentic learning and communities of practice in tourism higher education. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 12(3), 260-276.
- Alhitmi, H., Rahman, E., & Bayram, G. (2024). Regenerative tourism—the concept of moving beyond responsible and sustainable tourism. In *The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Regenerative Tourism and Green Destinations* (pp.33-50). Emerald.
- Allee, V. (2000). Knowledge networks and communities of practice. *Organization Development Practitioner*, 32(4), 4-13.
- Almeida, S., & Campos, A. (2022). New avenues for business competitiveness: The case of a community of practice in the hotel sector. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 16(1), 20-34.
- Altinay, L., Sigala, M., & Waligo, V. (2016). Social value creation through tourism enterprise. *Tourism Management*, 54, 404-417.
- Amin, A., & Cohendet, P. (2005). Geographies of knowledge formation in firms. *Industry and Innovation*, 12(4), 465-486.
- Amin, A., & Roberts, J. (2006). Communities of practice? Varieties of situated learning. *Dynamics of Institutions and Markets in Europe research paper*.
- Anderson, D., & Anderson, L. (2010). *Beyond Change Management: How To Achieve Breakthrough Results Through Conscious Change Leadership* (Vol. 36). John Wiley & Sons.
- Angrosino, M. (2016). *Naturalistic Observation*. Routledge.
- Antón, C., Camarero, C., & Garrido, M. (2018). Exploring the experience value of museum visitors as a co-creation process. *Current issues in Tourism*, 21(12), 1406-1425.
- Aquino, J., Falter, M., & Fusté-Forné, F. (2024). A community development approach for regenerative tourism in the Nordics: lifestyle entrepreneurs towards a placed-based research agenda. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-06-2023-0148>

- Ardichvili, A., Page, V., & Wentling, T. (2003). Motivation and barriers to participation in virtual knowledge-sharing communities of practice. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 7(1), 64-77.
- Arfwedson, A. (1994). Opening message to the Congress. *World Leisure & Recreation*, 36(2), 5-6.
- Arıca, R., & Çorbacı, A. (2020). The mediating role of the tourists' citizenship behavior between the value co-creation and satisfaction. *Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 8(1), 125-150.
- Arıca, R., Polat, I., Cobanoğlu, C., Çorbacı, A., Chen, P., & Hsu, M. (2022). Value co-destruction and negative e-WOM behavior: The mediating role of tourist citizenship. *Tourism Review*, 77(4), 1116-1134.
- Artun, C. (2024). Policy and planning for sustainable destinations after crises. In *The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Regenerative Tourism and Green Destinations* (pp.285-301). Emerald.
- Assiouras, I., Skourtis, G., Giannopoulos, A., Buhalis, D., & Karaosmanoglu, E. (2023). Testing the relationship between value co-creation, perceived justice and guests' enjoyment. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26(4), 587-602.
- Assiouras, I., Skourtis, G., Giannopoulos, A., Buhalis, D., & Koniordos, M. (2019). Value co-creation and customer citizenship behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 78, 102742.
- Assiouras, I., Vallström, N., Skourtis, G., & Buhalis, D. (2022). Value propositions during service mega-disruptions: Exploring value co-creation and value co-destruction in service recovery. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 97, 103501.
- Ateljevic, I. (2020). Transforming the (tourism) world for good and (re)generating the potential "new normal". *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 467-475.
- Ateljevic, I., Sheldon, P., & Tomljenovic, R. (2016). The new paradigm of the 21st century: Silent revolution of cultural creatives and transformative travel of and for the future. In *Global Report on the Transformative Power of Tourism: A Paradigm Shift Towards More Responsible Tourism Traveller* (pp.12-20). World Tourism Organization.
- Barab, S., & Duffy, T. (2012). From practice fields to communities of practice. In *Theoretical Foundations of Learning Environments* (pp.29-65). Routledge.
- Barros, R., Midgley, G., & Pinzón, L. (2013). Systemic intervention with communities of practice (COP): A conceptual framework. Proceedings of the 56th Annual Meeting of the ISSS-2012 [Conference], San Jose, CA, USA.

- Bao, J., & Yang, B. (2022). Institutionalization and practices of the “Rights to Tourist Attractions” (RTA) in “Azheke Plan”: A field study of tourism development and poverty reduction. *Tourism Tribune*, (1), 18-31 [保继刚 & 杨兵. (2022). 旅游开发中旅游吸引物权的制度化路径与实践效应——以“阿者科计划”减贫试验为例. *旅游学刊*, (1), 18-31].
- Bathelt, H., Malmberg, A., & Maskell, P. (2004). Clusters and knowledge: Local buzz, global pipelines and the process of knowledge creation. *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(1), 31-56.
- Becken, S. (2019). Decarbonising tourism: Mission impossible? *Tourism Recreation Research*, 44(4), 419-433.
- Becken, S., & Kaur, J. (2021). Anchoring “tourism value” within a regenerative tourism paradigm—a government perspective. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(1), 52-68.
- Beesley, L. (2005). The management of emotion in collaborative tourism research settings. *Tourism Management*, 26(2), 261-275.
- Bellato, L. (2024). Regenerative development approaches involving tourism: Insights derived from place. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 1-21.
- Bellato, L., & Cheer, J. (2021). Inclusive and regenerative urban tourism: Capacity development perspectives. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 7(4), 943-961.
- Bellato, L., Frantzeskaki, N., & Nygaard, C. (2023). Regenerative tourism: A conceptual framework leveraging theory and practice. *Tourism Geographies*, 25(4), 1026-1046.
- Bellato, L., Frantzeskaki, N., & Nygaard, C. (2024b). Towards a regenerative shift in tourism: Applying a regenerative conceptual framework toward swimmable urban rivers. *Tourism Geographies*, 26(8), 1361-1380.
- Bellato, L., Frantzeskaki, N., Fiebig, C., Pollock, A., Dens, E., & Reed, B. (2022). Transformative roles in tourism: Adopting living systems' thinking for regenerative futures. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(3), 312-329.
- Bellato, L., Frantzeskaki, N., tebrakunna country and, Lee, E., Cheer, J., & Peters, A. (2024a). Transformative epistemologies for regenerative tourism: Towards a decolonial paradigm in science and practice? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 32(6), 1161-1181.
- Benjamin, S., Dilletta, A., & Alderman, D. (2020). "We can't return to normal": Committing to tourism equity in the post-pandemic age. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 476-483.

- Berbekova, A., Uysal, M., & Assaf, A. (2021). A thematic analysis of crisis management in tourism: A theoretical perspective. *Tourism Management*, 86, 104342.
- Berenguer-Contri, G., Gil-Saura, I., & Gallarza, M. (2024). Cocreating value with hotel guests in the “new normal”: The case of Spain. *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality*, 19(4), 537-550.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (2023). The social construction of reality. In *Social Theory Re-Wired* (pp.92-101). Routledge.
- Berkes, F., Colding, J., & Folke, C. (2000). Rediscovery of traditional ecological knowledge as adaptive management. *Ecological Applications*, 10(5), 1251-1262.
- Bertella, G. (2011). Communities of practice in tourism: Working and learning together. An illustrative case study from Northern Norway. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 8(4), 381-397.
- Bertella, G. (2023). Care-full academic activism for sustainable transformations in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 26(2), 212-223.
- Bertella, G., & Rinaldi, M. (2020). Learning communities and co-creative tourism practices in NGDO projects. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(4), 639-657.
- Bertella, G., Cavicchi, A., & Bentini, T. (2020). The reciprocal aspect of the experience value: Tourists and residents celebrating weddings in the rural village of Petritoli (Italy). In *Culture and Cultures in Tourism* (pp.191-201). Routledge.
- Bertone, M., Meessen, B., Clarysse, G., Hercot, D., Kelley, A., Kafando, Y., Lange, I., Pfaffmann, J., Ridde, V., & Sieleunou, I. (2013). Assessing communities of practice in health policy: A conceptual framework as a first step towards empirical research. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 11, 1-13.
- Bezova, K., & Azara, I. (2021). Generating and sustaining value through guided tour experiences' co-creation at heritage visitor attractions. In *Revisiting Value Co-creation and Co-destruction in Tourism* (pp.46-64). Routledge.
- Bhalla, R., & Chowdhary, N. (2022). Green workers of Himalayas: Evidence of transformation induced regeneration. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(3), 380-392.
- Billett, S. (2009). Realising the educational worth of integrating work experiences in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(7), 827-843.
- Blazquez-Resino, J., Molina, A., & Esteban-Talaya, A. (2015). Service-Dominant Logic in tourism: The way to loyalty. *Current issues in Tourism*, 18(8), 706-724.

- Bode, C., Hindley, C., & Legrand, W. (2024). The impact of regenerative tourism practices on environmental resilience in island destinations: A multi-stakeholder analysis of New Zealand. In *Advances in Hospitality and Leisure, Volume 20* (pp.159-178). Emerald.
- Bol, P. (2008). *Neo-Confucianism in History*. Harvard University Asia Center.
- Boluk, K., & Panse, G. (2022). Recognising the regenerative impacts of Canadian women tourism social entrepreneurs through a feminist ethic of care lens. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(3), 352-366.
- Boom, S., Weijsschede, J., Melissen, F., Koens, K., & Mayer, I. (2021). Identifying stakeholder perspectives and worldviews on sustainable urban tourism development using a Q-sort methodology. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(4), 520-535.
- Borges-Tiago, M., & Avelar, S. (2025). Co-creation dynamics in tourism and hospitality: A horizon 2050 paper. *Tourism Review*, 80(1), 194-208.
- Boud, D., & Middleton, H. (2003). Learning from others at work: Communities of practice and informal learning. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 15(5), 194-202.
- Bowen, G. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.
- Bowen, J., & Sotomayor, S. (2022). Including residents in the rebranding of tourist destinations to achieve sustainable development goals. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 14(1), 56-64.
- Bradley, R. (2012). *The Idea of Order: The Circular Archetype in Prehistoric Europe*. Oxford University Press.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brewer, J. (2000). *Ethnography*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Brouder, P., Teoh, S., Salazar, N., Mostafanezhad, M., Pung, J., Lapointe, D., Higgins-Desbiolles, F., Haywood, M., Hall, C., & Clausen, H. (2021). Reflections and discussions: Tourism matters in the new normal post COVID-19. In *Global Tourism and COVID-19* (pp.281-292). Routledge.
- Brown, J., & Duguid, P. (1991). Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. *Organization Science*, 2(1), 40-57.
- Brown, T., & Stokes, P. (2021). Events management as a community of practice. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 4(2), 224-242.

- Buhalis, D., & Sinarta, Y. (2019). Real-time co-creation and oneness service: Lessons from tourism and hospitality. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 36(5), 563-582.
- Buonincontri, P., Morvillo, A., Okumus, F., & van Niekerk, M. (2017). Managing the experience co-creation process in tourism destinations: Empirical findings from Naples. *Tourism Management*, 62, 264-277.
- Burns, E. (2021). Placing regenerative farming on environmental educators' horizons. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 37(1), 29-39.
- Butler, R. (2015). Sustainable tourism—paradoxes, inconsistencies and a way forward? In *The Practice of Sustainable Tourism* (pp.66-80). Routledge.
- Cabiddu, F., Lui, T., & Piccoli, G. (2013). Managing value co-creation in the tourism industry. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 42, 86-107.
- Cabrera, D., & Cabrera, L. (2023). What is systems thinking?. In *Learning, Design, and Technology: An International Compendium of Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* (pp.1495-1522). Springer.
- Campos, A., Mendes, J., do Valle, P., & Scott, N. (2017). Co-creating animal-based tourist experiences: Attention, involvement and memorability. *Tourism Management*, 63, 100-114.
- Carlsen, J., Morrison, A., & Weber, P. (2008). Lifestyle oriented small tourism firms. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 33(3), 255-263.
- Carnegie, E., & Kociatkiewicz, J. (2019). Occupying whateverland: Journeys to museums in the Baltic. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 75, 238-247.
- Carr, A. (2021). COVID-19, Indigenous peoples and tourism: A view from New Zealand. In *Global Tourism and COVID-19* (pp.37-48). Routledge.
- Carvalho, M., Kastenholz, E., & Carneiro, M. (2021). Interaction as a central element of co-creative wine tourism experiences—Evidence from Bairrada, a Portuguese wine-producing region. *Sustainability*, 13(16), 9374.
- Cave, J., & Dredge, D. (2021). Regenerative tourism needs diverse economic practices. In *Global Tourism and COVID-19* (pp.49-59). Routledge.
- Cave, J., Dredge, D., van't Hullenaar, C., Koens Waddilove, A., Lebski, S., Mathieu, O., Mills, M., Parajuli, P., Pecot, M., & Peeters, N. (2022). Regenerative tourism: The challenge of transformational leadership. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(3), 298-311.
- Chambers, D., & Buzinde, C. (2015). Tourism and decolonisation: Locating research and self. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 51, 1-16.

- Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp.509-535). Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2011). Grounded theory methods in social justice research. In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp.359-380), Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory* (2nd Ed.). Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2016). Shifting the grounds: Constructivist grounded theory methods. In *Developing Grounded Theory* (pp.127-193). Routledge.
- Chassagne, N., & Everingham, P. (2020). Buen Vivir: Degrowing extractivism and growing wellbeing through tourism. In *Tourism and Degrowth* (pp.165-181). Routledge.
- Chathoth, P., Harrington, R., Chan, E., Okumus, F., & Song, Z. (2020). Situational and personal factors influencing hospitality employee engagement in value co-creation. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 91, 102687.
- Chathoth, P., Ungson, G., Altinay, L., Chan, E., Harrington, R., & Okumus, F. (2014). Barriers affecting organisational adoption of higher order customer engagement in tourism service interactions. *Tourism Management*, 42, 181-193.
- Cheer, J. (2020). Human flourishing, tourism transformation and COVID-19: A conceptual touchstone. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 514-524.
- Chen, B. (2008). "Shengsheng zhi wei Yi"—A view on the ontological origin of life philosophy. *Social Science Front*, (9), 156-163 [陈伯海. (2008). “生生之谓易”——一种生命哲学的存在本原观. *社会科学战线*, (9), 156-163].
- Chen, L. (2014). The ontology of the philosophy of *Ren* (Benevolence). *Literature, History and Philosophy*, (4), 41–63+165 [陈来. (2014). 仁学本体论. *文史哲*, (4), 41-63+165].
- Chen, L. (2016a). The theory of “oneness of all things” from the perspective of *Ren* philosophy (Part I). *Hebei Journal*, (4), 1-7 [陈来. (2016a). 仁学视野中的“万物一体”论(上). *河北学刊*, (4), 1-7].
- Chen, L. (2016b). The theory of “oneness of all things” from the perspective of *Ren* philosophy (Part II). *Hebei Journal*, (3), 1-6. [陈来. (2016b). 仁学视野中的“万物一体”论(下). *河北学刊*, (3), 1-6].
- Cohen, W., & Levinthal, D. (2000). Absorptive capacity: A new perspective on learning and innovation. In *Strategic Learning in a Knowledge Economy* (pp.39-67). Routledge.

- Comunian, R. (2017). Temporary clusters and communities of practice in the creative economy: Festivals as temporary knowledge networks. *Space and Culture*, 20(3), 329-343.
- Contu, A., & Willmott, H. (2003). Re-embedding situatedness: The importance of power relations in learning theory. *Organization Science*, 14(3), 283-296.
- Cooper, C. (2018). Managing tourism knowledge: A review. *Tourism Review*, 73(4), 507-520.
- Corradi, G., Gherardi, S., & Verzelloni, L. (2010). Through the practice lens: Where is the bandwagon of practice-based studies heading?. *Management learning*, 41(3), 265-283.
- Corral-Gonzalez, L., Cavazos-Arroyo, J., & García-Mestanza, J. (2023). Regenerative tourism: A bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing*, 9(2), 41-54.
- Cox, A. (2005). What are communities of practice? A comparative review of four seminal works. *Journal of Information Science*, 31(6), 527-540.
- Craig, C. (2025). Weather: An organizational stakeholder for United States national seashores. *Tourism Management*, 108, 105123.
- Cui, Q. (2020). Wildlife tourism in (un)sustainable futures. In *Wildlife Tourism Futures: Encounters with Wild, Captive and Artificial Animals* (pp.9-23). Channel View.
- Cullinane, A., McGregor, D., Frodsham, S., Hillier, J., & Guilfoyle, L. (2022). Transforming a doctoral summer school to an online experience: A response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 53(3), 558-576.
- Dai, Y. (2019) 'Azheke: The Last Ancient Village of the Hani People – A Photographic Travelogue', *Chinese National Art*, (2), 12–23 [戴云良. (2019). 哈尼族最后的古村落——阿者科拍摄游记. *中国民族美术*, (2), 12-23].
- Day, J., Sydnor, S., Marshall, M., & Noakes, S. (2021). Ecotourism, regenerative tourism, and the circular economy: Emerging trends and ecotourism. In *Routledge Handbook of Ecotourism* (pp.23-36). Routledge.
- de Sousa, L., Dias, A., & Pereira, L. (2023). The determinants of social self-efficacy of tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 25(4), 429-441.
- Deng, J. (2019). The aesthetics of *Sheng Sheng* nurtured by the thought of "harmony between heaven and humanity"—ecological aesthetics in Chinese classical aesthetics. *Heilongjiang Education (Theory & Practice)*, (Z2), 120-122 [邓洁宁. (2019). “天人

- 合一”思想孕育下的“生生美学”——中国古典美学中的生态美学. *黑龙江教育(理论与实践)*, (Z2),120-122].
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2011). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage.
- Diao, Y., & Chen, Y. (2024). The *Ren* of *Sheng Sheng*: Ancient Chinese Confucian ecological thought and its contemporary implications. *Chinese Culture and Management*, (1), 178-188+274-275 [刁玉萍 & 陈亚平. (2024). 生生之仁：中国古代儒家生态思想及其当代启示. *中国文化与管理*, (1), 178-188+274-275].
- Dias, Á., Palacios-Florencio, B., & Hallak, R. (2024a). Drivers of social innovation for tourism enterprises: A study on lifestyle entrepreneurship. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 32(10), 2141-2158.
- Dias, Á., Shazid, S., & Pereira, L. (2024b). Co-creation and cultural immersion: Empowering small businesses through creative tourism. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 13(4), 699-706.
- Dias, B. (2019). Regenerative development – Building evolutive capacity for healthy living systems. In *Management and Applications of Complex Systems* (pp.147-155). Wessex Institute of Technology Press.
- Ding, S., Fei, C., & Wang, X. (2021). The philosophy of *Sheng Sheng* in the *Zhouyi* and its interpretation—Focusing on the Commentaries on *the Book of Changes* and "One Name, Three Meanings" in Yi. *Confucian Academy*, (4), 66-76+178-189 [丁四新, 费春浩 & Wang Xiaonong. (2021). 《周易》的生生哲学及其诠释——以《易传》和“易一名而含三义”为中心. *孔学堂*, (4), 66-76+178-189].
- Ding, Y. (2018). The *Commentaries on the Book of Changes* and "Sheng Sheng"—A response to Mr. Wu Fei. *Philosophical Researches*, (1), 41-49+58 [丁耘. (2018). 《易传》与“生生”——回应吴飞先生. *哲学研究*, (1), 41-49+58].
- Djankov, S., & Hoekman, B. (2000). Foreign investment and productivity growth in Czech enterprises. *The World Bank Economic Review*, 14(1), 49-64.
- Dou, C. (2017). An examination of the meaning of "Sheng Sheng" in Confucianism. *Confucius Studies*, (3), 53-65 [窦晨光. (2017). 儒家“生生”义考. *孔子研究*, (3), 53-65].
- Dowling, R. (2000). Global ecotourism at the start of the new millennium. *World Leisure Journal*, 42(2), 11-19.

- Doyle, J., & Kelliher, F. (2023). Bringing the past to life: Co-creating tourism experiences in historic house tourist attractions. *Tourism Management*, 94, 104656.
- Dredge, D. (2018). Governance, tourism, and resilience: A long way to go? In *Resilient Destinations and Tourism: Governance Strategies in the Transition towards Sustainability in Tourism* (pp.48-66). Routledge.
- Dredge, D. (2022). Regenerative tourism: Transforming mindsets, systems and practices. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(3), 269-281.
- Dredge, D., & Jenkins, J. (2007). *Tourism Planning and Policy*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Dreyfus, H. (1990). *Being-In-The-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being in Time, Division I*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.
- Duffy, T., & Jonassen, D. (2013). *Constructivism and the Technology of Instruction: A Conversation*. Routledge.
- Duguid, P. (2012). "The art of knowing": Social and tacit dimensions of knowledge and the limits of the community of practice. In *The Knowledge Economy and Lifelong Learning* (pp.147-162). Brill.
- Duxbury, N., Bakas, F., Vinagre de Castro, T., & Silva, S. (2020). Creative tourism development models towards sustainable and regenerative tourism. *Sustainability*, 13(1), 2.
- Dwyer, L. (2018). Saluting while the ship sinks: The necessity for tourism paradigm change. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(1), 29-48.
- Eames, C., & Bell, B. (2005). Using sociocultural views of learning to investigate the enculturation of students into the scientific community through work placements. *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education*, 5, 153-169.
- Ebrey, P. (2022). *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (1992). Think practically and look locally: Language and gender as community-based practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 461-490.
- Eide, D. (2007). *Knowing and learning in-practice in service work: A relational and collective accomplishment* (Doctoral dissertation, Doctoral Thesis, University of Tromsø, Tromsø).
- Eide, D., Fuglsang, L., & Sundbo, J. (2017). Management challenges with the maintenance of tourism experience concept innovations: Toward a new research agenda. *Tourism Management*, 63, 452-463.
- Eisenstein, C. (2022). *The Coronation: Essays from the Covid Moment*. Chelsea Green.

- Ergas, C. (2010). A model of sustainable living: Collective identity in an urban ecovillage. *Organization & Environment*, 23(1), 32-54.
- Ericsson, B., & Hagen, S. (2012). The mobile season workers' role in tourism companies' innovation work. In *Innovation and Business Development in A Tourism Context*. Bergen [Ericsson, B., & Hagen, S. (2012). De mobile sesongarbeidernes rolle i reiselivsbedriftenes innovasjonsarbeid. In *Innovasjon og næringsutvikling i en reiselivskontekst*. Bergen].
- Ericsson, B., Overvåg, K., & Möller, C. (2020). Seasonal workers as innovation triggers. In *Tourism Employment in Nordic Countries: Trends, Practices, and Opportunities* (pp.235-256). Springer.
- Ertz, M. (2024). Co-Creation. *Encyclopedia*, 4(1), 137-147.
- Esteva, G. (2023). Development. In *Walking on the Edge of the Abyss: Conversations with Gustavo Esteva* (pp.77-116). Springer.
- Fan, D., Buhalis, D., Fragakaki, E., & Tsai, Y. (2025). Achieving Senior Tourists' Active Aging Through Value Co-creation: A Customer-Dominant Logic Perspective. *Journal of Travel Research*, 64(2), 427-443.
- Finkler, W., & Higham, J. (2020). Stakeholder perspectives on sustainable whale watching: A science communication approach. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 28(4), 535-549.
- Flanagan, C., & Phi, G. (2024). Employee learning in tourism experiences during Covid-19: A Communities of Practice perspective. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 27(16), 2603-2617.
- Fleming, J., & Pretti, T. (2019). The impact of work-integrated learning students on workplace dynamics. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 25, 100209.
- Frechtling, D. (2004). Assessment of tourism/hospitality journals' role in knowledge transfer: An exploratory study. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(2), 100-107.
- Freire, R., & Verissimo, J. (2021). Mapping co-creation and co-destruction in tourism: A bibliographic coupling analysis. *Anatolia*, 32(2), 207-217.
- Fullerton, J. (2015). *Regenerative Capitalism*. Capital Institute.
- Fusté-Forné, F., & Hussain, A. (2022). Regenerative tourism futures: A case study of Aotearoa New Zealand. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(3), 346-351.
- Gadamer, H. (2013). *Truth and Method*. Bloomsbury.

- Gamarra, G., Dias, Á., & Pereira, L. (2024). The influence of social and environmental responsibility on customer-based brand equity. *Progress in Industrial Ecology*, 17(1-2), 135-162.
- Gao, Y. (2022). The threefold meaning of the Taoist concept of "self-generation." *Zhongzhou Journal*, (5), 104-109. [高源. (2022). 道家“自生”概念的三重意蕴. *中州学刊*, (5), 104-109].
- Gao, Z. (2019). *Shengsheng*: The fundamental path for Confucianism to transcend death anxiety. *Explorations in Psychology*, (2), 109-113 [高志强. (2019). 生生: 儒家超越死亡焦虑的根本路径. *心理学探新*, (2), 109-113].
- Garanti, Z. (2023). Value co-creation in smart tourism destinations. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 15(5), 468-475.
- Geissdoerfer, M., Savaget, P., Bocken, N., & Hultink, E. (2017). The circular economy—A new sustainability paradigm?. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 143, 757-768.
- George, T. (2020). Hermeneutics. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
<https://plato.stanford.edu/> (Accessed: 8 June 2025).
- Gerhards, J., & Greenwood, D. (2021). One Planet Living and the legitimacy of sustainability governance: From standardised information to regenerative systems. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 313, 127895.
- Gerke, M., Adams, M., Ooi, C., & Dahles, H. (2024). Entrepreneuring for regenerative tourism. Doing business differently in Tasmania's regional hospitality industry. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 32(10), 2207-2224.
- Gertler, M. (2008). Buzz without Being There? Communities of practice in context. In *Community, Economic Creativity, and Organization*. Oxford University Press.
- Getz, D. (2018). *Event Evaluation: Theory and Methods for Event Management and Tourism*. Goodfellow.
- Giannopoulos, A., Skourtis, G., Kalliga, A., Dontas-Chrysis, D., & Paschalidis, D. (2020). Co-creating high-value hospitality services in the tourism ecosystem: Towards a paradigm shift?. *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing*, 6(1), 3-11.
- Gibbons, L., Pearthree, G., Cloutier, S., & Ehlenz, M. (2020). The development, application, and refinement of a Regenerative Development Evaluation Tool and indicators. *Ecological Indicators*, 108, 105698.
- Gibson-Graham, J. (1996). Queer(y)ing capitalist organization. *Organization*, 3(4), 541-545.

- Gibson-Graham, J. (1997). The end of capitalism (as we knew it): A feminist critique of political economy. *Capital & Class*, 21(2), 186-188.
- Gibson-Graham, J. (2007). Surplus possibilities: Post-development and community economies. In *Exploring Post-Development* (pp.145-162). Routledge.
- Gibson-Graham, J. (2008). Diverse economies: Performative practices for other worlds'. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(5), 613-632.
- Gibson-Graham, J., & Dombroski, K. (2020). *The Handbook of Diverse Economies*. Edward Elgar.
- Gibson-Graham, J., Cameron, J., & Healy, S. (2013). *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Gilhus, I. (2021). Hermeneutics. In *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (pp.314-323). Routledge.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (2017). *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Routledge.
- Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. (2020). Pandemics, tourism and global change: A rapid assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(1), 1-20.
- Gotvassli, K. (2008). Community knowledge—a catalyst for innovation. *Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy*, 38(2), 145-158.
- Grissemann, U., & Stokburger-Sauer, N. (2012). Customer co-creation of travel services: The role of company support and customer satisfaction with the co-creation performance. *Tourism Management*, 33(6), 1483-1492.
- Gu, Z. (2022). A brief discussion on the idea of harmony and *Sheng Sheng*. *Cultural and Educational Materials*, (15), 30-33 [古周瑜. (2022). 和合生生思想刍议. *文教资料*, (15), 30-33].
- Guia, J., & Jamal, T. (2024). Entangled engagements: A posthumanist and affirmative ethics for tourism geographies. *Tourism Geographies*, 1-12.
- Guijt, I., & Shah, M. (1998). Waking up to power, conflict and process. In *The Myth of Community: Gender Issues in Participatory Development* (pp.228-242). ITGD.
- Guo, M. (2010). The concept of “Sheng Sheng” in the Yi and its value implications. *Lanzhou Journal*, (8), 1-4 [郭明俊. (2010). 《易》之“生生”观念及其价值意蕴. *兰州学刊*, (8), 1-4].

- Hajarrahmah, D., McGehee, N., & Soulard, J. (2024). The road to success: Tourism social entrepreneurs' quest for regenerative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *108*, 103818.
- Han, Q. (2021). *A study of the "Shengsheng" thought in the Zhouyi* (Master's thesis, Northwest Normal University) [韩乾. (2021). 《周易》“生生”思想研究 (硕士学位论文, 西北师范大学)].
- Han, X., Praet, C., & Wang, L. (2021). Tourist–tourist social interaction in the co-creation and co-destruction of tourism experiences among Chinese outbound tourists. In *Revisiting Value Co-creation and Co-destruction in Tourism* (pp.65-85). Routledge.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Hayes, C. (2024). Co-creating hospitable moments in event experiences: Omotenashi at the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup. *Hospitality & Society*, *14*(2), 197-216.
- Hayes, R., & Oppenheim, R. (1997). Constructivism: Reality is what you make it. In *Constructivist Thinking in Counseling Practice, Research, and Training* (pp.19-40). Teachers College Press.
- He, H., Shen, L., Wong, S. W., Cheng, G., & Shu, T. (2023). A “load-carrier” perspective approach for assessing tourism resource carrying capacity. *Tourism Management*, *94*, 104651.
- Heidegger, M. (2010). *Being and Time*. Suny Press.
- Heidegger, M. (2013). *The Essence of Truth*. Bloomsbury.
- Heinonen, K. (2023). Characterizing ex situ value: A customer-dominant perspective on value. *Journal of Travel Research*, *62*(8), 1707-1721.
- Henri, F., & Pudelko, B. (2003). Understanding and analysing activity and learning in virtual communities. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *19*(4), 474-487.
- Henry, N., & Pinch, S. (2000). Spatialising knowledge: Placing the knowledge community of Motor Sport Valley. *Geoforum*, *31*(2), 191-208.
- Hernández-López, M. (2019). Relational work in Airbnb reviews. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, *23*(4), 1088-1108.
- Hes, D., & Du Plessis, C. (2014). *Designing for Hope: Pathways to Regenerative Sustainability*. Routledge.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2018). Sustainable tourism: Sustaining tourism or something more? *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *25*, 157-160.

- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2021). Socialising tourism for social and ecological justice after COVID-19. In *Global Tourism and COVID-19* (pp.156-169). Routledge.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F., Carnicelli, S., Krolkowski, C., Wijesinghe, G., & Boluk, K. (2019). Degrowing tourism: Rethinking tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(12), 1926-1944.
- Hilliard, T. (2006). Learning at conventions: Integrating communities of practice. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, 8(1), 45-68.
- Hislop, D., Bosua, R., & Helms, R. (2018). *Knowledge Management in Organizations: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Hitchcock, M., & Wesner, S. (2008). The "SHIP" approach and its value as a community-based research method in Bali, Indonesia. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 11(1), 84-100.
- Hjalager, A. (2002). Repairing innovation defectiveness in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 23(5), 465-474.
- Holliday, M. (2016). *The Age of Thrivability: Vital Perspectives and Practices for a Better World*. Cambium.
- Hong, X., & Jiang, Y. (2017). *Ren* as life-generating and things-completing: On the value and significance of Confucian *Ren* for modern ecological civilization. *Morality and Civilization*, (4), 83–86. [洪晓丽 & 蒋颖荣. (2017). “仁”之生生以成物——论儒家之“仁”对现代生态文明的价值意义. *道德与文明*, (4), 83-86].
- Hoxie, C., Berkebile, R., & Todd, J. (2012). Stimulating regenerative development through community dialogue. *Building Research & Information*, 40(1), 65-80.
- Hu, J., & Bao, J. (2022). Evolution of water resource management in tourist destinations from the perspective of bureaucracy: A case study of the Hani terraced fields. *Journal of Natural Resources*, (8), 2102–2117.
- Huang, Y. (2023). From "What is Sheng Sheng" to "How does Sheng Sheng do"—The original concept of “Sheng Sheng” in the Xici Zhuan and its contemporary transformation. *Zhouyi Studies*, (2), 5-13 [黄玉顺. (2023). 从“生生何谓”到“生生何为”——《系辞传》“生生”的原初观念与当代转化. *周易研究*, (2), 5-13].
- Huang, Z., Pang, Q., & Bao, J. (2025). A regulation for inappropriate interactions between local children and tourists in poor destinations-a child rights informed practice. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 33(4), 719-737.

- Huber, D., & Gross, S. (2022). Local residents' contribution to tourist experiences: A community perspective from Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. *Tourism Review*, 77(2), 532-548.
- Hudson, S. (2013). Knowledge exchange: A destination perspective. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 2(3), 129-131.
- Hui, X., Raza, S., Khan, S., Zaman, U., & Ogadimma, E. (2023). Exploring regenerative tourism using media richness theory: Emerging role of immersive journalism, metaverse-based promotion, eco-literacy, and pro-environmental behavior. *Sustainability*, 15(6), 5046.
- Husamoglu, B., Akova, O., & Cifci, I. (2025). Regenerative stakeholder framework in tourism. *Tourism Review*, 80(2), 433-455.
- Hussain, A. (2021). A future of tourism industry: Conscious travel, destination recovery and regenerative tourism. *Journal of Sustainability and Resilience*, 1(1), 5.
- Hutchins, G., & Storm, L. (2019). *Regenerative Leadership: The DNA of Life-Affirming 21st Century Organizations*. Wordzworth.
- Iaquinto, B., Ison, R., & Faggian, R. (2011). Creating communities of practice: Scoping purposeful design. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 15(1), 4-21.
- Imran, S., Alam, K., & Beaumont, N. (2014). Reinterpreting the definition of sustainable development for a more ecocentric reorientation. *Sustainable Development*, 22(2), 134-144.
- Ison, R., Blackmore, C., Collins, K., Holwell, S., & Iaquinto, B. (2014). Insights into operationalizing communities of practice from SSM-based inquiry processes. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 27, 91-113.
- Ives, C., Freeth, R., & Fischer, J. (2020). Inside-out sustainability: The neglect of inner worlds. *Ambio*, 49, 208-217.
- Izquierdo-Gascón, M., & Rubio-Gil, Á. (2023). Theoretical approach to Api-tourism routes as a paradigm of sustainable and regenerative rural development. *Journal of Apicultural Research*, 62(4), 751-766.
- James, L., Ren, C., & Halkier, H. (2018). *Theories of Practice in Tourism*. Routledge.
- Järvi, H., Keränen, J., Ritala, P., & Vilko, J. (2020). Value co-destruction in hotel services: Exploring the misalignment of cognitive scripts among customers and providers. *Tourism Management*, 77, 104030.
- Jennings, G., Scantlebury, M., & Wolfe, K. (2009). Tertiary travel and tourism education: Using action research cycles to provide information on pedagogical applications

- associated with reflexivity, team-based learning, and communities of practice. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 9(3-4), 193-215.
- Jia, G., Yao, Y., & Fan, D. (2025). Value co-creation and co-destruction through adult child–parent interactions during family vacations: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 64(5), 1165-1185.
- Johannisson, B. (2018). *Disclosing Entrepreneurship as Practice*. Edward Elgar.
- John, S., & Supramaniam, S. (2024). Value co-creation research in tourism and hospitality management: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 58, 96-114.
- Johnson, A., & Buhalis, D. (2022). Solidarity during times of crisis through co-creation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 97, 103503.
- Justesen, S. (2004). Innoversity in communities of practice. In *Knowledge Networks: Innovation through Communities of Practice* (pp.79-95). IGI Global.
- Kaomea, J. (2016). Qualitative analysis as ho ‘oku ‘iku ‘i or bricolage: Teaching emancipatory Indigenous research in postcolonial Hawai ‘i. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22(2), 99-106.
- Karacor, E. (2014). Placemaking approachment to accomplish social sustainability. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, 3(4), 253-253.
- Kastenholz, E., & Gronau, W. (2022). Enhancing competences for co-creating appealing and meaningful cultural heritage experiences in tourism. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 46(8), 1519-1544.
- Kern, M. (2010). Early Chinese literature, beginnings through Western Han. In *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* (pp.1-115). Cambridge University Press.
- Kerno Jr, S. (2008). Limitations of communities of practice: A consideration of unresolved issues and difficulties in the approach. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 15(1), 69-78.
- Khanal, K. (2018). Constructivist grounded theory practice in accountability research. *Journal of Education and Research*, 8(1), 61-88.
- Kim, E., Tang, L., & Bosselman, R. (2019). Customer perceptions of innovativeness: An accelerator for value co-creation. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 43(6), 807-838.
- Kim, G., Duffy, L., & Moore, D. (2020). Tourist attractiveness: Measuring residents' perception of tourists. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 28(6), 898-916.

- Kim, M., Kim, H., & Kim, D. (2022). Volunteers of mega-events as co-creators of host destinations: Volunteers' experience, value, and satisfaction toward host destination. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 44, 101044.
- Kimble, C., & Hildreth, P. (2005). Dualities, distributed communities of practice and knowledge management. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 9(4), 102-113.
- Kjær, J. (2019). The professionalization of sports coaching: A case study of a graduate soccer coaching education program. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 24, 50-62.
- Koliba, C., & Gajda, R. (2009). "Communities of practice" as an analytical construct: Implications for theory and practice. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 32(2), 97-135.
- Kuhlman, T., & Farrington, J. (2010). What is sustainability?. *Sustainability*, 2(11), 3436-3448.
- Kuklick, C., & Gearity, B. (2015). A review of reflective practice and its application for the football strength and conditioning coach. *Strength & Conditioning Journal*, 37(6), 43-51.
- Kuo, S., & Chen, C. (2024). Exploring Service Innovation in Cultural and Creative Blocks from the Perspective of Value Resonance. *SAGE Open*, 14(4), 21582440241291669.
- Lamers, M., Van der Duim, R., & Spaargaren, G. (2017). The relevance of practice theories for tourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 62, 54-63.
- Lan, T., Zheng, Z., Tian, D., Zhang, R., Law, R., & Zhang, M. (2021). Resident-tourist value co-creation in the intangible cultural heritage tourism context: The role of residents' perception of tourism development and emotional solidarity. *Sustainability*, 13(3), 1369.
- Latham, E. (2024). Food in tourism in a time of critical shift: Four reflexive case studies in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 18(2), 246-264.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lazic, S., & Della Lucia, M. (2024). A holistic and pluralistic perspective for justice through tourism: A regenerative approach. *Tourism Geographies*, 1-18.
- Leal, M., Casais, B., & Proença, J. (2022). Tourism co-creation in place branding: The role of local community. *Tourism Review*, 77(5), 1322-1332.

- Lee, L. (2022). Community of practice: The making of knowledge dynamic in intangible cultural heritage. *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality*, 17(3), 338-350.
- Leshem, D. (2016). Retrospectives: What did the ancient Greeks mean by Oikonomia?. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 30(1), 225-238.
- Lew, A., Cheer, J., Haywood, M., Brouder, P., & Salazar, N. (2020). Visions of travel and tourism after the global COVID-19 transformation of 2020. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 455-466.
- Li, C. (2012). *Sheng Sheng*: The internal dimension of Confucian thought. *Academic Research*, (5), 1-10 [李承贵. (2012). 生生: 儒家思想的内在维度. *学术研究*, (5), 1-10].
- Li, C. (2022). The emergence of the "new ontology" in Confucianism—In what sense can “Sheng Sheng” be regarded as the ontological foundation of Confucianism? *Hebei Academic Journal*, (1), 1-16 [李承贵. (2022). 儒学“新本体”的出场——“生生”在何种意义上可以成为儒学的本体?. *河北学刊*, (1), 1-16].
- Li, C. (2024b). A preliminary discussion on the Confucian concept of "self-generation." *Hebei Journal*, (6), 49-63. [李承贵. (2024b). 儒家“自生”理念刍议. *河北学刊*, (6), 49-63].
- Li, L., Grimshaw, J., Nielsen, C., Judd, M., Coyte, P., & Graham, I. (2009). Evolution of Wenger's concept of community of practice. *Implementation Science*, 4, 1-8.
- Li, S. (2024a). An exploration of the "Shengsheng" thought in *Mencius*. *Jingu Cultural Creativity*, (7), 79-81. [李史如. (2024a). 《孟子》中的“生生”思想探微. *今古文创*, (7), 79-81].
- Li, X. (1999). Western postmodern turn and the contemporary significance of Chinese philosophy. *Journal of Nankai University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 6, 78-85. [李祥海. (1999). 西方后现代转向与中国哲学的当代意义. *南开学报*, 6, 78-85.]
- Li, Y., Zhang, L., Shi, J., & Ryan, C. (2024). Understanding value in residents' experiences and its impact on life satisfaction and value co-creation: Empirical evidence from Jiuzhai Valley, China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 29(3), 254-274.
- Li, Y., Zhang, L., Wang, T., & Ryan, C. (2025). Does negativity bias exist? Exploring the mechanism of rural tourists' interaction-based value co-creation: Perceived benefits and costs as mediators. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 30(3), 300-319.

- Liang, A. (2017). Considering the role of agritourism co-creation from a service-dominant logic perspective. *Tourism Management*, 61, 354-367.
- Liburd, J., & Becken, S. (2017). Stewardship Values in Tourism, Innovation and UNESCO World Heritage Governance: The Great Barrier Reef and the Danish Wadden Sea. In *Proceedings of the Third East-West Dialogue on Tourism and the Chinese Dream*, Gold Coast, Surfers Paradise, Australia.
- Lin, Z. (2023). My view on the philosophy of “Sheng Sheng” in the *Commentaries on the Book of Changes*. *Zhouyi Studies*, (3), 5-15 [林忠军. (2023). 《易传》“生生”哲学之我见. *周易研究*, (3), 5-15].
- Lin, Z., Chen, Y., & Filieri, R. (2017). Resident-tourist value co-creation: The role of residents' perceived tourism impacts and life satisfaction. *Tourism Management*, 61, 436-442.
- Liu, B. (2003). On the philosophy of "time" in the study of the *I Ching*. *Journal of Theory*, (2), 37-40. [刘彬. (2003). 论易学中“时”的哲学. *理论学刊*, (2), 37-40].
- Liu, Y. (2021). Where to find the starting point of the unity of knowledge and action in Chinese ethics? — On the possibility of "Shengsheng" ethics and philosophy. *Journal of East China Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, (2), 10–21+176 [刘悦笛. (2021). 中国伦理的知行合一起点何处寻? ——论“生生”伦理与哲学何以可能. *华东师范大学学报(哲学社会科学版)*, (2), 10-21+176].
- Liu, Z., & Yu, W. (2023). The expansion of "Sheng Sheng" and the modernity of Confucianism. *Chinese Culture and Management*, (1), 72-85+222 [刘喆 & 于文杰. (2023). “生生”的展开与儒学的现代性. *中国文化与管理*, (1), 72-85+222].
- Lv, X., Yuan, Z., Luo, J., Fu, X., Shen, H., Ai, J., & Shen, Y. (2024). Purchase and protect: Dual effects of tourist souvenir customization. *Journal of Travel Research*, 00472875241269819.
- Lyle, J. (1996). *Regenerative Design for Sustainable Development*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Major, J., & Clarke, D. (2022). Regenerative tourism in Aotearoa New Zealand – a new paradigm for the VUCA world. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(2), 194-199.
- Mang, P., & Reed, B. (2012). Designing from place: A regenerative framework and methodology. *Building Research & Information*, 40(1), 23-38.
- Mang, P., & Reed, B. (2020). Regenerative development and design. In *Sustainable Built Environments* (pp.115-141). Springer.

- Mang, P., Haggard, B., & Regenis. (2016). *Regenerative Development and Design: A Framework for Evolving Sustainability*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2004). Community-based and-driven development: A critical review. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 19(1), 1-39.
- Martin, A., Fleming, J., Ferkins, L., Wiersma, C., & Coll, R. (2010). Facilitating and integrating learning within sport studies cooperative education: Exploring the pedagogies employed by students, academics and workplace supervisors. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, 9(1), 24-38.
- Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. Sage.
- Mathisen, L., Søreng, S., & Lyrek, T. (2022). The reciprocity of soil, soul and society: The heart of developing regenerative tourism activities. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(3), 330-341.
- Matunga, H., Matunga, H., & Urlich, S. (2020). From exploitative to regenerative tourism: Tino Rangatiratanga and tourism in Aotearoa New Zealand. *MAI Journal*, 9(3), 295-308.
- May, A. (2009). Introducing communities of practice. In *Communities of Practice in Health and Social Care*. John Wiley & Sons.
- McKercher, B. (2020). Cultural tourism market: A perspective paper. *Tourism Review*, 75(1), 126-129.
- McLeay, F., Lichy, J., & Major, B. (2019). Co-creation of the ski-chalet community experiencescape. *Tourism Management*, 74, 413-424.
- Mehmood, A., Marsden, T., Taherzadeh, A., Axinte, L., & Rebelo, C. (2020). Transformative roles of people and places: Learning, experiencing, and regenerative action through social innovation. *Sustainability Science*, 15(2), 455-466.
- Melis, G., McCabe, S., Atzeni, M., & Del Chiappa, G. (2023). Collaboration and learning processes in value co-creation: A destination perspective. *Journal of Travel Research*, 62(3), 699-716.
- Meneghello, S. (2023). Mapping tourist landscapes in pandemic times: A dwelling-in-motion perspective. *Tourism Geographies*, 25(7), 1730-1745.
- Meng, P. (2014). The life significance of *Zhouyi* philosophy. *Zhouyi Studies*, (4), 5-8 [蒙培元. (2014). 《周易》哲学的生命意义. *周易研究*, (4), 5-8].

- Meng, Y., & Zhao, W. (2021). Whence legitimate peripheral participation? De-trivializing the social dynamics around Chinese students' doctoral research in the West. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 29, 100327.
- Michopoulou, E., Al-Qasbi, I., & Melpignano, C. (2021). Co-creating value in desert tourism experiences. In *Revisiting Value Co-creation and Co-destruction in Tourism* (pp.125-145). Routledge.
- Middlemiss, L. (2010). Refraining individual responsibility for sustainable consumption: Lessons from environmental justice and ecological citizenship. *Environmental Values*, 19(2), 147-167.
- Mika, J., & Scheyvens, R. (2022). Te Awa Tupua: Peace, justice and sustainability through Indigenous tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(2-3), 637-657.
- Miller, G., & Ward, L. (2005). Monitoring for a sustainable tourism transition. In *The Challenge of Developing & Using Indicators*. CABI.
- Mills, J., Bonner, A., & Francis, K. (2006). The development of constructivist grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 25-35.
- Mohajan, D., & Mohajan, H. (2022). Constructivist grounded theory: A new research approach in social science. *Research and Advances in Education*, 1(4), 8-16.
- Moise, M., Gil-Saura, I., & Ruiz-Molina, M. (2020). Implications of value co-creation in green hotels: The moderating effect of trip purpose and generational cohort. *Sustainability*, 12(23), 9866.
- Molinero, A. (2022). The public relations – social responsibility binomial in post-pandemic sustainable and regenerative tourism. *Human Review*, 12(6), 1-16.
- Moore, S. (2001). *Technology and Place: Sustainable Architecture and the Blueprint Farm*. University of Texas Press.
- Morita, N. (2004). Negotiating participation and identity in second language academic communities. *Tesol Quarterly*, 38(4), 573-603.
- Mou, Z. (2014). *Fourteen lectures on the synthesis of Chinese and Western philosophy*. Taiwan Student Bookstore [牟宗三. (2014). *中西哲学之会通十四讲*, 台湾学生书局].
- Muganda, M., Sirima, A., & Ezra, P. (2013). The role of local communities in tourism development: Grassroots perspectives from Tanzania. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 41(1), 53-66.

- Mura, P., & Wijesinghe, S. (2023). Critical theories in tourism – a systematic literature review. *Tourism Geographies*, 25(2-3), 487-507.
- Murillo, E. (2011). Communities of practice in the business and organization studies literature. *Information Research*, 16(1), 1.
- Nandasena, R., Morrison, A., & Coca-Stefaniak, J. (2022). Transformational tourism—A systematic literature review and research agenda. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(3), 282-297.
- Nelson, M., & Shilling, D. (2018). *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability*. Cambridge University Press.
- Neuhofer, B., Buhalis, D., & Ladkin, A. (2014). A typology of technology-enhanced tourism experiences. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 16(4), 340-350.
- Nitsch, B., & Vogels, C. (2022). Gender equality boost for regenerative tourism: The case of Karenni village Huay Pu Keng (Mae Hong Son, Thailand). *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(3), 375-379.
- O'Brien, D., & Sarkar, A. (2004). A participatory design approach for a distributed community of practice on governance and international development. In *EdMedia+ Innovate Learning* (pp.4606-4613). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education.
- Okazaki, E. (2008). A community-based tourism model: Its conception and use. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5), 511-529.
- Omma, F. (2024). Regenerative nature-based tourism: tour guides and stakeholder dynamics in Arctic Norway. *Journal of Tourism Futures*. (ahead-of-print).
- Ooi, C., & Shelley, B. (2023). Shifting from benefiting to serving community: A case of regenerative tourism and building cultural capital through the Children's University Tasmania. In *Handbook on Tourism and Rural Community Development* (pp.359-372). Edward Elgar.
- Orr, J. (1990). Sharing knowledge, celebrating identity: Community memory in a service culture. In *Collective Remembering* (pp.169-189). Sage.
- Østerlund, C., & Carlile, P. (2005). Relations in practice: Sorting through practice theories on knowledge sharing in complex organizations. *The Information Society*, 21(2), 91-107.
- Owen, C. (2007a). Regenerative tourism – Re-placing the design of ecotourism facilities. *The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability*, 3(2), 175-181.

- Owen, C. (2007b). Regenerative tourism: A case study of the resort town Yulara. *Open House International*, 32(4), 42-53.
- Oyner, O., & Korelina, A. (2016). The influence of customer engagement in value co-creation on customer satisfaction: Searching for new forms of co-creation in the Russian hotel industry. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 8(3), 327-345.
- Pandey, S., Kumar, D., & Ali, F. (2025). Measuring tourist-to-tourist value co-creation: a scale development. *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality*, 20(1), 16-37.
- Payne, A., & Frow, P. (2017). Relationship marketing: Looking backwards towards the future. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 31(1), 11-15.
- Pepper, D. (2002). *Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology To Social Justice*. Routledge.
- Peters, A. (2017). *Moondani Yulenj: An examination of aboriginal culture, identity and education* (Doctoral dissertation, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia).
- Phi, G., & Dredge, D. (2019). Critical issues in tourism co-creation. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 44(3), 281-283.
- Polese, F., Botti, A., Grimaldi, M., Monda, A., & Vesci, M. (2018). Social innovation in smart tourism ecosystems: How technology and institutions shape sustainable value co-creation. *Sustainability*, 10(1), 140.
- Prahalad, C., & Ramaswamy, V. (2004). Co-creation experiences: The next practice in value creation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18(3), 5-14.
- Prebensen, N., & Foss, L. (2011). Coping and co-creating in tourist experiences. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 13(1), 54-67.
- Prebensen, N., & Xie, J. (2017). Efficacy of co-creation and mastering on perceived value and satisfaction in tourists' consumption. *Tourism Management*, 60, 166-176.
- Purvis, B., Mao, Y., & Robinson, D. (2019). Three pillars of sustainability: In search of conceptual origins. *Sustainability Science*, 14, 681-695.
- Qiao, Q. (2011). On the “Sheng Sheng” thought in the *Commentaries on the Book of Changes* and its ecological significance. *Nankai Journal (Philosophical and Social Sciences Edition)*, (6), 55-65 [乔清举. (2011). 论《易传》的“生生”思想及其生态意义. *南开学报(哲学社会科学版)*, (6), 55-65].
- Qu, H. (2018). The contemporary dissemination of the Sheng Sheng values in the *Zhouyi*. *Journal of Qilu Normal University*, (3), 77-81 [瞿华英. (2018). 《周易》生生价值观的当代传播. *齐鲁师范学院学报*, (3), 77-81].

- Rachão, S., Breda, Z., Fernandes, C., & Joukes, V. (2021). Food-and-wine experiences towards co-creation in tourism. *Tourism Review*, 76(5), 1050-1066.
- Rahimi, S. (2024). Saturation in qualitative research: An evolutionary concept analysis. *International Journal of Nursing Studies Advances*, 6, 100174.
- Rastegar, R., Higgins-Desbiolles, F., & Ruhanen, L. (2021). COVID-19 and a justice framework to guide tourism recovery. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 91, 103161.
- Rather, R., Parrey, S., Gulzar, R., & Rehman, S. (2023). Does gamification effect customer brand engagement and co-creation during pandemic? A moderated-mediation analysis. *Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science*, 33(2), 285-311.
- Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist*. Chelsea Green.
- Ray, P., & Anderson, S. (2001). *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing the World*. Crown.
- Redmond, G., & Hon, T. (2014). *Teaching the I Ching (Book of Changes)*. Oxford University Press.
- Reed, B. (2007). Shifting from "sustainability" to regeneration. *Building Research & Information*, 35(6), 674-680.
- Rehman, A., Abbas, M., Abbasi, F., & Khan, S. (2023). How tourist experience quality, perceived price reasonableness and regenerative tourism involvement influence tourist satisfaction: A study of Ha'il Region, Saudi Arabia. *Sustainability*, 15(2), 1340.
- Reichenberger, I. (2017). C2C value co-creation through social interactions in tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 19(6), 629-638.
- Reinl, L., & Kelliher, F. (2014). The social dynamics of micro-firm learning in an evolving learning community. *Tourism Management*, 40, 117-125.
- Reisinger, Y. (Ed.). (2013). *Transformational Tourism: Tourist Perspectives*. Cabi.
- Ribeiro, T., Costa, B., Ferreira, M., & de Lamônica Freire, O. (2023). Value co-creation in tourism and hospitality: A systematic literature review. *European Management Journal*, 41(6), 985-999.
- Richards, G. (2020). Designing creative places: The role of creative tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 85, 102922.
- Rihova, I., Buhalis, D., Gouthro, M., & Moital, M. (2018). Customer-to-customer co-creation practices in tourism: Lessons from customer-dominant logic. *Tourism Management*, 67, 362-375.

- Roberts, J. (2006). Limits to communities of practice. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(3), 623-639.
- Rojas, N., Sand, M., & Gross, S. (2024). Regenerative adventure tourism. Going beyond sustainability—a horizon 2050 paper. *Tourism Review*, (ahead-of-print).
- Romagosa, F. (2020). The COVID-19 crisis: Opportunities for sustainable and proximity tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 690-694.
- Ross, D. (2020). Towards meaningful co-creation: A study of creative heritage tourism in Alentejo, Portugal. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 23(22), 2811-2824.
- Ross, D., & Saxena, G. (2019). Participative co-creation of archaeological heritage: Case insights on creative tourism in Alentejo, Portugal. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 79, 102790.
- Ruhanen, L. (2008). Progressing the sustainability debate: A knowledge management approach to sustainable tourism planning. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 11(5), 429-455.
- Russell-Mundine, G. (2012). Reflexivity in Indigenous research: Reframing and decolonising research? *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 19, e7.
- Ruttenberg, T. (2023). Alternatives to development in surfing tourism: A diverse economies approach. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 20(6), 1082-1103.
- Saarinen, J. (2020). What are wilderness areas for? Tourism and political ecologies of wilderness uses and management in the Anthropocene. In *Anthropocene Ecologies* (pp.51-66). Routledge.
- Sachs, W. (2010). Preface to the new edition. In *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power* (pp.vi-xiv). Zed Books.
- Sadighha, J., Pinto, P., Guerreiro, M., & Campos, A. C. (2025). Customer participation behavior and customer citizenship behavior in hotels: Testing co-production and value-in-use as mediators. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 14673584241310050.
- Sanford, C. (2019). The regenerative paradigm: Discerning how we make sense of the world. In *Regenerative Urban Development, Climate Change and the Common Good* (pp. 13-33). Routledge.
- Schaltegger, S., & Wagner, M. (2011). Sustainable entrepreneurship and sustainability innovation: Categories and interactions. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 20(4), 222-237.
- Schleiermacher, F. (1998). *Hermeneutics and Criticism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Schultz, T. (2018). Mapping Indigenous futures: Decolonising techno-colonising designs. *Strategic Design Research Journal*, 11(2), 79-91.

- Scobie, M. (2019). Caribbean cultural and natural heritage governance. In *Global Environmental Governance and Small States* (pp.147-173). Edward Elgar.
- Scoones, I. (2007). Sustainability. *Development in Practice*, 17(4-5), 589-596.
- Scott, N., & Ding, P. (2008). Management of tourism research knowledge in Australia and China. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 11(6), 514-528.
- Scott, N., Baggio, R., & Cooper, C. (2008). *Network Analysis and Tourism: From Theory to Practice*. Channel View Publications.
- Sevisari, U., & Reichenberger, I. (2020). Value co-creation in Couchsurfing—the Indonesian host perspective. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 14(4), 473-488.
- Shan, H. (2023). "Mingjue" and "Sheng Sheng": The natural dimension of Cheng Hao's Confucian humanism. *Guanzi Journal*, (4), 62-73 [单虹泽. (2023). “明觉”与“生生”：程颢仁学的自然之维. *管子学刊*, (4), 62-73].
- Shang, R., & Lü, A. (2016). On the different understandings of "Sheng Sheng" in Confucianism and Buddhism. *Journal of Nantong University (Social Science Edition)*, (5), 21-25 [尚荣 & 吕昂. (2016). 论儒佛对“生生”的不同理解. *南通大学学报(社会科学版)*, (5), 21-25].
- Shaw, G., & Williams, A. (2009). Knowledge transfer and management in tourism organisations: An emerging research agenda. *Tourism Management*, 30(3), 325-335.
- Sheldon, P. (2020). Designing tourism experiences for inner transformation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 83, 102935.
- Sheldon, P. (2022). The coming-of-age of tourism: Embracing new economic models. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 8(2), 200-207.
- Sheldon, P., Pollock, A., & Daniele, R. (2017). Social entrepreneurship and tourism: Setting the stage. In *Social Entrepreneurship and Tourism: Philosophy and Practice* (pp.1-18). Springer.
- Sheller, M. (2021). Reconstructing tourism in the Caribbean: Connecting pandemic recovery, climate resilience and sustainable tourism through mobility justice. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(9), 1436-1449.
- Shen, H., Wu, L., Yi, S., & Xue, L. (2020). The effect of online interaction and trust on consumers' value co-creation behavior in the online travel community. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 37(4), 418-428.

- Shrestha, R., L'Espeir Decosta, J., & Gaire, R. (2025). Conflict of interests? Negotiating superstructures for value co-creation at Indigenous heritage sites—the case of Patan, Nepal. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 30(3), 338-353.
- Simmons, D. (2017). Neoliberal politics and the fate of tourism. In *Tourism and Political Change* (pp.9-24). Goodfellow.
- Smith, D. (2005). *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. Rowman Altamira.
- Smith, S., Hayes, S., & Shea, P. (2017). A critical review of the use of Wenger's community of practice (CoP) theoretical framework in online and blended learning research, 2000-2014. *Online Learning*, 21(1), 209-237.
- Sofield, T. (1993). Indigenous tourism development. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 20(4), 729-750.
- Sørensen, F., & Bærenholdt, J. (2020). Tourist practices in the circular economy. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 85, 103027.
- Soron, D. (2010). Sustainability, self-identity and the sociology of consumption. *Sustainable Development*, 18(3), 172-181.
- Soulard, J., McGehee, N., Stern, M., & Lamoureux, K. (2021). Transformative tourism: Tourists' drawings, symbols, and narratives of change. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 87, 103141.
- Spalazzi, A., & Mariotti, A. (2024). Regenerative tourism as a post-disaster response: Lessons from Cammino nelle Terre Mutate. *Tourism Geographies*, 1-20.
- Stebbins, R. (2011). Leisure studies: The road ahead. *World Leisure Journal*, 53(1), 3-10.
- Steen, M. (2013). Co-design as a process of joint inquiry and imagination. *Design issues*, 29(2), 16-28.
- Sthapit, E., Coudounaris, D., & Björk, P. (2018). The memorable souvenir-shopping experience: antecedents and outcomes. *Leisure Studies*, 37(5), 628-643.
- Sthapit, E., Stone, M., & Björk, P. (2024). Sources of value co-creation, co-destruction and co-recovery at Airbnb in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 25(2), 249-276.
- Stylianou, C., Liasidou, S., & Garanti, Z. (2025). Women entrepreneurs' role in tourism co-creation and policy: Examining the case of Cyprus. *Tourism and Hospitality*, 6(1), 33.
- Suárez-Rojas, C., Hernández, M., & León, C. (2023). Sustainability in whale-watching: A literature review and future research directions based on regenerative tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 47, 101120.

- Suntikul, W., & Jachna, T. (2016). The co-creation/place attachment nexus. *Tourism Management, 52*, 276-286.
- Sutherland, K. (2009). Nurturing undergraduate tutors' role in the university teaching community. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 17*(2), 147-164.
- Swarbooke, J. (2023). *Why Sustainable Tourism Failed*. Responsible Tourism Partnership.
- Swarbrooke, J. (1999). *Sustainable Tourism Management*. Cabi.
- Szmigin, I., Bengry-Howell, A., Morey, Y., Griffin, C., & Riley, S. (2017). Socio-spatial authenticity at co-created music festivals. *Annals of Tourism Research, 63*, 1-11.
- Talan, A., Kaur, R., Tyagi, R., & Zhang, T. (2020). Ethical aspects of sustainability. In *Sustainability: Fundamentals and Applications* (pp.397-411). Wiley.
- Tang, W. (2019). *A study on Zhang Zai's "Sheng Sheng" thought* (Master's thesis, Shandong University) [唐文涛. (2019). 张载“生生”思想探微 (硕士学位论文, 山东大学)].
- Tao, X. (2017). "Shengsheng": The Confucian interpretation of life. *Guangxi Social Sciences, 5*(5), 53-57 [陶新宏. (2017). “生生”: 儒家对生命的诠释. *广西社会科学, 5*(5), 53-57].
- Taylor, G., & Blake, B. (2015). Key informant interviews and focus groups. In *Nursing Research Using Data Analysis: Qualitative Designs and Methods in Nursing* (pp.153-165). Springer.
- Tham, A., Iaquinto, B., & Driml, S. (2022). Navigating external referencing through COVID-19 disruptions-Teaching tourism policy and planning in Australia and China. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 30*, 100350.
- Tham, A., Ruhanen, L., & Raciti, M. (2020). Tourism with and by Indigenous and ethnic communities in the Asia Pacific region: A bricolage of people, places and partnerships. *Journal of Heritage Tourism, 15*(3), 243-248.
- Thiselton, A. (2009). *Hermeneutics: An introduction*. Eerdmans.
- Thomas, R. (2012). Business elites, universities and knowledge transfer in tourism. *Tourism Management, 33*(3), 553-561.
- Toikka, A., Ruuska, T., Wiman, L., & Heikkurinen, P. (2026). Degrowth and postgrowth: A systematic literature review of growth-critical science. *Ecological Economics, 240*, 108830.
- Tomassini, L., & Cavagnaro, E. (2022a). Circular economy, circular regenerative processes, agrowth and placemaking for tourism future. *Journal of Tourism Futures, 8*(3), 342-345.

- Tomassini, L., & Cavagnaro, E. (2022b). Circular economy: A paradigm to critically rethink sustainability in tourism and hospitality. In *Planning and Managing Sustainability in Tourism: Empirical Studies, Best-practice Cases and Theoretical Insights* (pp.1-12). Springer.
- Tosun, P., Uslu, A., & Erul, E. (2025). Connecting through chatbots: Residents' insights on digital storytelling, place attachment, and value co-creation. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 28(4), 561-584.
- Tribe, J., Dann, G., & Jamal, T. (2015). Paradigms in tourism research: A triologue. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 40(1), 28-47.
- Tushman, M., & Scanlan, T. (1981). Boundary spanning individuals: Their role in information transfer and their antecedents. *Academy of Management Journal*, 24(2), 289-305.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2020). Experts Call for Inclusive and Regenerative Tourism to Build Back Stronger Post-COVID-19. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2177> (Accessed: 19 May 2025).
- Uriely, N. (2001). "Travelling workers" and "working tourists": Variations across the interaction between work and tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 3(1), 1-8.
- Uysal, M., Berbekova, A., & Kim, H. (2020). Designing for quality of life. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 83, 102944.
- Uzzell, D. (1996). Creating place identity through heritage interpretation. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 1(4), 219-228.
- Valentine McCormick Ligibel (VML). (2018). The New Sustainability: Regeneration. <https://www.vml.com/insight/the-new-sustainability-regeneration> (Accessed: 19 May 2025).
- Vargo, S., & Lusch, R. (2008). Service-dominant logic: Continuing the evolution. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36, 1-10.
- Vargo, S., & Lusch, R. (2014). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. In *The Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing* (pp.3-28). Routledge.
- Vegas-Macias, J. (2025). Social contact and value co-creation practices. Tourist–resident encounters and urban cycling in Copenhagen. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 110, 103893.
- Von Hippel, E. (2001). Learning from open-source software. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 42(4), 82-86.

- Von Hippel, E. (2006). *Democratizing Innovation*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.
- Voorberg, W., Bekkers, V., & Tummers, L. (2015). A systematic review of co-creation and co-production: Embarking on the social innovation journey. *Public Management Review*, 17(9), 1333-1357.
- Waley, A. (2013). *The Way and Its Power: A Study of the Tao Te Ching and Its Place in Chinese Thought*. Routledge.
- Wang, L., & Wei, H. (2014). Discussing the philosophical thought of *the Commentaries on the Book of Changes* based on “Sheng Sheng.” *Zhouyi Culture Studies*, (6), 4-15 [王丽梅 & 魏后宾. (2014). 以“生生”为本论《易传》的哲学思想. *周易文化研究*, (6), 4-15].
- Wang, M. (2022). “Sheng Sheng:” The internal basis of Confucian moral cultivation. *Theoretical Circle*, (5), 37-44 [王明迪. (2022). “生生”: 儒家道德修养论的内在依据. *理论界*, (5), 37-44].
- Wang, Q. (2021). A study on the philosophical implications of the pre-Qin Taoist thought on valuing life. *Jingu Cultural Creativity*, (21), 53-54. [王庆祥. (2021). 先秦道家贵生思想的哲学意涵研究. *今古文创*, (21), 53-54].
- Wang, Y. (2010). “Sheng Sheng”, “Gan Tong”, and “Xie Xing”—The philosophy of the harmony between Heaven and humanity in *the Commentaries on the Book of Changes*. *Zhouyi Studies*, (3), 29-34 [王雅. (2010). “生生”、“感通”、“偕行”——《易传》的天人共生哲学. *周易研究*, (3), 29-34].
- Warnke, G. (2016). Hermeneutics. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.114> (Accessed: 12 March 2024).
- Wei, H. (2015). *On the philosophical thought of Sheng Sheng as the foundation in the Commentaries on the Book of Changes* (Master's thesis, Xiangtan University) [魏后宾. (2015). 论《易传》生生为本的哲学思想(硕士学位论文, 湘潭大学)].
- Wei, M., Bai, C., Li, C., & Wang, H. (2020). The effect of host–guest interaction in tourist co-creation in public services: Evidence from Hangzhou. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 25(4), 457-472.
- Weiler, B., & Black, R. (2015). The changing face of the tour guide: One-way communicator to choreographer to co-creator of the tourist experience. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 40(3), 364-378.

- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization*, 7(2), 225-246.
- Wenger, E. (2004). Knowledge management as a doughnut: Shaping your knowledge strategy through communities of practice. *Ivey Business Journal*, 68(3), 1-8.
- Wenger, E. (2010). Conceptual tools for CoPs as social learning systems: Boundaries, identity, trajectories and participation. In *Social Learning Systems and Communities of Practice* (pp.125-143). Springer.
- Wenger, E. (2015). Communities of practice: A brief introduction. STEP Leadership Workshop [Conference]. University of Oregon, Oregon, America.
- Wenger, E., & Snyder, W. (2000). Communities of practice: The organizational frontier. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(1), 139-146.
- Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice*. Harvard Business Press.
- Werner, K., Griese, K., & Faatz, A. (2020). Value co-creation processes at sustainable music festivals: A grounded theory approach. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 11(1), 127-144.
- Williams, A. (2006). Lost in translation? International migration, learning and knowledge. *Progress in Human Geography*, 30(5), 588-607.
- Williams, A. (2007). Listen to me, learn with me: International migration and knowledge transfer. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 45(2), 361-382.
- Williams, A. (2012). Tourism, migration and human capital: Knowledge and skills at the intersection of flows. In *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Research* (pp.251-264). Routledge.
- Williams, H., Yuan, J., & Williams Jr, R. (2019). Attributes of memorable gastro-tourists' experiences. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 43(3), 327-348.
- World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). (1987). *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press.
- World Tourism Organisation (UN Tourism). (2005). *Making Tourism More Sustainable-A Guide for Policy Makers (English version)*. World Tourism Organisation Publications.
- World Tourism Organisation (UN Tourism). (2020). Funding for a Regenerative Future – Could Tourism Taxes be Part of the Answer. <https://www.unwto.org/covid-19->

- oneplanet-responsible-recovery-initiatives/funding-for-a-regenerative-future-could-tourism-taxes-be-part-of-the-answer (Accessed: 19 May 2025).
- World Travel & Tourism Council. (2021). How travel and tourism can be a force for good. <https://travelhub.wttc.org/blog/how-travel-and-tourism-can-be-a-force-for-good> (Accessed: 18 March 2024).
- Wu, F. (2018a). On “Sheng Sheng”—A discussion with Professor Ding Yun. *Chinese Culture Research*, (1), 1-24. [吴飞. (2018a). 论“生生”——兼与丁耘教授商榷. *中国文化研究*, (1), 1-24.]
- Wu, F. (2018b). On “Sheng Sheng”—A discussion with Mr. Ding Yun. *Philosophical Research*, (1), 32-40 [吴飞. (2018b). 论“生生”——兼与丁耘先生商榷. *哲学研究*, (1), 32-40].
- Wu, J., Law, R., & Liu, J. (2018). Co-creating value with customers: a study of mobile hotel bookings in China. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(4), 2056-2074.
- Wu, P. (2017). The Benevolence of "Sheng Sheng" and Cheng Hao's "Oneness of All Things" in the Exploration of Joy. *Shanghai Culture*, (12), 94-103+127 [吴鹏. (2017). “生生”之仁与程颢“万物一体”之乐探微. *上海文化*, (12), 94-103+127.]
- Wu, Y. (2024). From "Tian Sheng" to "Sheng Sheng": An exploration of the true meaning of the "Sheng Sheng" concept in Heaven. *Zhouyi Studies*, (6), 19-27 [吴雁鹏. (2024). 从“天生”到“生生”：天之“生生”义涵述真. *周易研究*, (6), 19-27].
- Wu, Z. (2019). The concept of "Sheng Sheng" in Zhu Xi's theory of Li and Qi—Focusing on the issue of "Li Generating Qi". *Tsinghua Journal of Studies (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, (6), 167-175+203 [吴震. (2019). 朱子学理气论域中的“生生”观——以“理生气”问题为核心. *清华大学学报(哲学社会科学版)*, (6), 167-175+203].
- Xiang, S. (2007). The meaning of *Sheng* in the Yi and the *Sheng Sheng* philosophy of Neo-Confucianism. *Zhouyi Studies*, (4), 67-74 [向世陵. (2007). 易之“生”意与理学的生生之学. *周易研究*, (4), 67-74].
- Xiang, Y. (2013). *A study on the concept of Shi in the Zhouyi* (Master's thesis, East China Normal University) [向雅丽. (2013). 《周易》“时”之研究(硕士学位论文,华东师范大学)].
- Xiao, H., & Smith, S. (2010). Professional communication in an applied tourism research community. *Tourism Management*, 31(3), 402-411.

- Xiao, L. (2022). *Sheng Sheng* and ecology: On the main characteristics of Chinese aesthetic spirit. *Southwest University of Political Science and Law Journal*, (6), 166-173 [肖朗. (2022). 生生与生态: 论中华美学精神的主要特质. *西南政法大学学报*, (6), 166-173].
- Xue, L. (2019). *An exploration of the idea of "Shengsheng zhi wei Yi" in the Commentaries on the Book of Changes* (Master's thesis, Liaoning University) [薛雷渊. (2019). 《易传》“生生之谓易”思想探究(硕士学位论文, 辽宁大学)].
- Yang, L., Li, Y., & Wei, X. (2025). Validating social media data reliability for cultural ecosystem services mapping in data-scarce GIAHS: A mixed-methods approach in Hani rice Terraces. *Ecological Indicators*, 175, 113530.
- Yang, X. (2025). Social capital and consumer co-creation behaviors on tourism social media: The mediating role of psychological ownership. *Tourism Review*, 80(5), 1141-1155.
- Yang, Y., Wang, S., Cai, Y., & Zhou, X. (2022). How and why does place identity affect residents' spontaneous culture conservation in ethnic tourism community? A value co-creation perspective. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(6), 1344-1363.
- Yang, Z. (2023). Why is Confucian *Sheng Sheng* ethics considered “Sheng Sheng”? *Zhouyi Studies*, (1), 16-22+73 [杨泽波. (2023). 儒家生生伦理学何以为“生生”. *周易研究*, (1), 16-22+73].
- Yeoman, I., & Sheldon, P. (2024). The future of tourism: Interview with emeritus professor Pauline Sheldon on regenerative tourism. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 10(3), 402-407.
- Yu, S. (2015). “Sheng Sheng”: The virtue of Heaven and Earth, the essence of human life—A comprehensive interpretation of the world of meaning in pre-Qin Confucian and Taoist thought. *Journal of Education*, (6), 91-99 [于述胜. (2015). “生生”: 天地之德, 人生之的——先秦儒、道思想中的意义世界通论. *教育学报*, (6), 91-99].
- Yu, Z. (2013). The philosophical inquiry into “Sheng Sheng” and “ecology.” *Heilongjiang Social Sciences*, (1), 16-19+167 [余治平. (2013). “生生”与“生态”的哲学追问. *黑龙江社会科学*, (1), 16-19+167].
- Yu, Z. (2023). Ereignis in existential philosophy and the confucian way of *Sheng Sheng*. *Zhouyi Studies*, (2), 25-37 [余治平. (2023). 存在哲学的 Ereignis 与儒家的生生之道. *周易研究*, (2), 25-37].
- Yuan, Q. (2012). *The deep ecological implications and practical value of Confucian “Sheng Sheng” thought* (Master's thesis, North China Electric Power University) [原琦.

- (2012). 儒家“生生”思想的深层生态学意蕴及其实践价值(硕士学位论文,华北电力大学)].
- Zaman, U. (2023). Seizing momentum on climate action: Nexus between net-zero commitment concern, destination competitiveness, influencer marketing, and regenerative tourism intention. *Sustainability*, 15(6), 5213.
- Zaman, U., & Aktan, M. (2021). Examining residents' cultural intelligence, place image and foreign tourist attractiveness: A mediated-moderation model of support for tourism development in Cappadocia (Turkey). *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 46, 393-404.
- Zaman, U., Aktan, M., Agrusa, J., & Khwaja, M. (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.
- Zátori, A. (2016). Exploring the value co-creation process on guided tours (the 'AIM-model') and the experience-centric management approach. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 10(4), 377-395.
- Zboralski, K. (2009). Antecedents of knowledge sharing in communities of practice. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 13(3), 90-101.
- Zeng, F., & Zhang, T. (2013). "Shengsheng zhi wei Yi" and the exploration of ecological civilization. *Journal of Qilu Normal University*, (1), 79-84 [曾凡朝 & 张涛. (2013). “生生之谓易”与生态文明探析. *齐鲁师范学院学报*, (1), 79-84].
- Zhang, K. (2012). On “Sheng Sheng” and Ren in Zhu Xi's philosophy of the Yi. *Zhongzhou Journal*, (1), 114-118 [张克宾. (2012). 论朱熹易哲学中的“生生”与仁. *中州学刊*, (1), 114-118].
- Zhang, L. (2016). The characteristics and evolutionary context of Confucian “Sheng Sheng” philosophy. *Learning and Practice*, (3), 111-119 [章林. (2016). 儒家“生生”哲学的特质及其演进脉络. *学习与实践*, (3), 111-119].
- Zhang, P., & Yang, L. (2021). A brief discussion on the Confucian thought of "Sheng Sheng". *Philosophical Studies on Life*, (2), 40-52 [张培高 & 杨莉. (2021). 儒家“生生”思想浅论. *生命哲学研究*, (2), 40-52].
- Zhang, T. (2020). Co-creating tourism experiences through a traveler's journey: A perspective article. *Tourism Review*, 75(1), 56-60.

- Zhang, Z. (2017). What is a Confucian entrepreneur? *Ren and Yi, Sheng Sheng*, and entrepreneurial spirit. *Thought and Culture*, (2), 193-212 [张子立. (2017). 何谓儒商? 仁义、生生与企业家精神. *思想与文化*, (2), 193-212].
- Zhao, J., Park, H., Li, C., Wang, X., & Chen, Y. (2024). How awe affects value co-creation in virtual reality tourism experience. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 29(11), 1323-1332.
- Zhao, W., & Zeng, Z. (2019). “*With feeling, there is endless vital generation*”: An analysis of Wang Yangming’s concept of *Shengsheng* in innate knowledge (*Liangzhi*). *Journal of Huaqiao University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, (4), 34–40. [赵文宇 & 曾振宇. (2019). “有感则生生不息”:王阳明良知“生生”探析. *华侨大学学报(哲学社会科学版)*, (4), 34-40].
- Zhao, Y., & Agyeiwaah, E. (2023). Understanding tourists’ transformative experience: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 54, 188-199.