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CAPÍTULO 12

INTEGRATING VOLUNTOURISM, COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM, AND REGENERATIVE TOURISM FOR INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY

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ABSTRACT: This study integrates the concepts of voluntourism, community-based tourism, and regenerative tourism to explore their potential for fostering responsible tourism practices. The starting point was to examine how voluntourism, often criticized for its unethical impacts on local communities and environments, can be reimagined within the principles of community-based and regenerative tourism, but it was expanded during the research process to accommodate the three tourism

types equally. The study emphasizes that when these three frameworks align, they can shift from short-term, self-serving actions to sustainable initiatives that contribute positively to the environment, the society, and the economy. Using a comprehensive literature review, the study synthesizes key concepts and frameworks from the three tourism models and identifies the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved. The stakeholder mapping process highlights the contributions of tourists, local communities, businesses, governments, intermediaries, as well as nature and culture, focusing on the collective responsibility to ensure the responsibility of tourism. By comparing these roles across tourism models, the study identifies shared characteristics and potential areas for improvement, stressing the importance of collaboration in creating a more ethical tourism ecosystem. The results suggest that integrating voluntourism, community-based and regenerative tourism principles can significantly enhance the responsibility of stakeholders. This integrated approach benefits both the host communities and visitors in the long term. This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of responsible tourism and offers practical insights for stakeholders seeking to align their actions with more ethical practices and the goals of sustainable development.

KEYWORDS: Voluntourism. Community-based tourism. Regenerative tourism. Responsible tourism. Stakeholder mapping.

INTEGRANDO O TURISMO VOLUNTÁRIO, O TURISMO COMUNITÁRIO E O TURISMO REGENERATIVO PARA AUMENTAR A RESPONSABILIDADE

RESUMO: Este estudo integra os conceitos de volunturismo, turismo comunitário e turismo regenerativo para explorar seu potencial de promover práticas responsáveis de turismo. O ponto de partida foi examinar como o volunturismo, frequentemente criticado pelos impactos antiéticos nas comunidades locais e no meio ambiente, pode ser reimaginado dentro dos princípios do turismo comunitário e do turismo regenerativo. No entanto, o estudo foi expandido durante o processo de pesquisa para acomodar igualmente os três tipos de turismo. O estudo enfatiza que, quando esses três modelos estão alinhados, podem passar de ações de curto prazo e interesses próprios para iniciativas sustentáveis que contribuem positivamente para o meio ambiente, a sociedade e a economia. Utilizando uma revisão abrangente da literatura, o estudo sintetiza os conceitos-chave e as estruturas dos três modelos de turismo e identifica os papéis e responsabilidades dos envolvidos. O processo de mapeamento de stakeholders destaca as contribuições de turistas, comunidades locais, empresas, governos, intermediários, bem como da natureza e da cultura, focando na responsabilidade coletiva para garantir a responsabilidade do turismo. Ao comparar esses papéis nos modelos de turismo, o estudo identifica características comuns e possíveis áreas de melhoria, destacando a importância da colaboração na criação de um ecossistema turístico mais ético. Os resultados sugerem que a integração dos princípios do volunturismo, turismo comunitário e turismo regenerativo pode aumentar significativamente a responsabilidade dos stakeholders. Essa abordagem integrada beneficia tanto as comunidades anfitriãs quanto os visitantes a longo prazo. Este estudo contribui para a compreensão teórica do turismo responsável e oferece insights práticos para os stakeholders que buscam alinhar suas ações com práticas mais éticas e os objetivos do desenvolvimento sustentável.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Volunturismo. Turismo comunitário. Turismo regenerativo. Turismo responsável. Mapeamento de stakeholders.

1 INTRODUCTION

Voluntourism, community-based tourism, and regenerative tourism are widely recognized approaches within the broader field of tourism, each offering distinct yet interconnected perspectives on responsible tourism development and sustainability. This study examines the theoretical interconnection between these concepts. Initially, voluntourism was placed at the center of observation, but later in the research process, the perspective was expanded to accommodate the three tourism types equally. Voluntourism has long been criticized for its ethical shortcomings, including power imbalances, short-term impacts, and the risk of reinforcing dependency in host communities. However, by integrating the principles of community-based tourism and regenerative tourism, it can be reimagined as a more ethical and responsible force for change. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the conceptual development of

tourism by providing a theoretical foundation for the integration of the three approaches, offering insights that support the development of more responsible tourism practices.

A key aspect of ensuring responsibility in tourism is the recognition and accountability of stakeholders. To achieve this, it is essential to first establish a comprehensive mapping of stakeholders across voluntourism, community-based tourism, and regenerative tourism. This study synthesizes core features of these stakeholders by drawing on direct and indirect references to their roles and functions in the existing scientific literature. While these models share commonalities, they also offer unique elements that, when combined, enhance responsible tourism.

This study builds on researchers' previous scientific explorations (Röntynen & Tunkkari-Eskelinen, 2022; Röntynen, 2022; Tunkkari-Eskelinen & Röntynen, 2023) where the need to expand, concretize and integrate the theoretical framework of voluntourism, community-based and regenerative tourism has become evident. This study aims to refine the understanding of how tourism can be designed to generate long-term, meaningful benefits for local communities, the economy, and the environment.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

To develop the theoretical framework, this study employs an integrative literature review (Snyder, 2019), synthesizing existing research and some non-academic sources on voluntourism, community-based tourism, and regenerative tourism. The search process began by defining the core concepts, incorporating diverse perspectives. Comprehensive search was conducted across databases and freely available online sources, using as keywords the respective types of tourism and related terms, such as transformative tourism, alternative tourism, responsible tourism, and sustainable tourism. Iterative refinement and a snowball effect, tracing reference lists of relevant studies, allowed for a deeper exploration of key concepts.

The collected literature was systematized based on content, enabling the identification of commonalities, gaps, critiques, and ongoing debates. Additionally, historical context and the evolution of the concepts in practice was considered. The literature review findings are presented narratively, with inductive thematic analysis used to identify and analyze emerging patterns without predefined categories. This approach supports the development of a new theoretical framework integrating voluntourism, community-based tourism, and regenerative tourism (Torraco, 2005).

For stakeholder analysis, the study adopted the tourism destination ecosystem approach (Röntynen, 2024), categorizing stakeholders beyond industry actors to include the natural and cultural environment. This aligns with the perspective that “such

a business ecosystem consists of not only intermediaries and industry partners, but also various stakeholders including governments, visitors, and the natural environment” (Selen & Ogulin, 2015, 167). Furthermore, the input-output framework, traditionally used in economic modeling (Thomassin, 2018), was adapted as a qualitative tool to trace stakeholder interactions and emphasize responsibility in tourism.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE THREE TOURISM CONCEPTS

Voluntourism has evolved over time but has only been systematically studied in the last two decades, beginning with Wearing’s (2001) foundational work. No consensus exists on its definition, though academic literature treats “voluntourism” and “volunteer tourism” as synonyms (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Table 1 presents key definitions, showing an increasingly inclusive understanding of the concept. Wearing (2001) noted that voluntourism has often been equated with alternative tourism, international volunteering, and social work. While early studies took a sociological approach, the current study broadens the perspective to include socio-economic dimensions, acknowledging tourism’s economic drivers.

Research on voluntourism has largely focused on traveler motivations (Brown, 2005; Siebert & Benson, 2009; Proyrungroj, 2020), distinguishing volunteering- and vacation-oriented participants (Callanan & Thomas, 2005). The transformative impact on travelers is also widely studied (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Bentele, 2023), yet voluntourism’s regenerative potential for host communities remains underexplored (McGehee & Andereck, 2009; Hernandez-Maskivker, Lapointe & Aquino, 2018).

Table 1. Definitions of voluntourism in academic literature.

Author	Definition	Perspective
Wearing (2001, 1)	”those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • international voluntourism • development aid • tourists and local community as stakeholders • focus of the trip is volunteering
Brown (2005, 480)	”type of tourism experience where a tour operator offers travellers an opportunity to participate in an optional excursion that has a volunteer component, as well as a cultural exchange with local people”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tour operator • intermediary organization and tourists as stakeholders • focus of the trip is tourism
McGehee & Santos (2005)	volunteer tourist uses “discretionary time and income to travel out of the sphere of regular activity to assist others in need”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • voluntourist • helping others • volunteer and locals as stakeholders • focus of the trip is volunteering

Wearing, Young & Everingham (2017)	“reframe volunteer tourism away from development aid” “to look at the concept of ‘making a difference’ not through the lens of ‘helping’, but through a lens of intercultural understanding and mutuality”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • international voluntourism • purpose of voluntourism
Pompurová, Sokolová & Cole (2020,3)	“a voluntourist as an individual who, in free time, meets the specific need of traveling in order to gain a comprehensive experience, and engages voluntarily, without a claim and reward, in various voluntary activities while staying at a destination (outside usual residence)”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both domestic and international voluntourism • volunteers as stakeholders • focus both on volunteering and tourism as a “complete experience”
Röntynen & Tunkkari-Eskelinen (2022, 367)	“voluntourism is a combination of two sets of values – tourism and volunteerism in coexistence”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both domestic and international voluntourism • focus both on volunteering and tourism as a socio-economic phenomenon

Voluntourism is often seen as sustainable (Bentele, 2023; Pompurová et al., 2018), offering benefits such as cultural exchange, economic gains for local communities (Pompurová, Sokolová & Cole, 2020), and increased awareness of social issues (Bentele, 2023). However, it faces ethical concerns, including orphanage tourism (Birrell, 2010), saviorism (Baumgarten, 2022), neocolonialism (Guttentag, 2009), commodification of culture (Wearing & McGehee, 2013), and negative environmental impacts (El Geneidy & Baumeister, 2019). The lack of clear responsibility frameworks (Smith & Font, 2014) has fueled misunderstandings and poor coordination (Röntynen & Tunkkari-Eskelinen, 2022). Given these critiques, scholars suggest shifting voluntourism from development aid toward cultural exchange (Wearing, Young & Everingham, 2017) or even reframing it entirely as charity (Anderson, Kim & Larios, 2017). Our previous research highlights that examples from developed countries could enhance its ethical standing (Röntynen & Tunkkari-Eskelinen, 2022). However, this study focuses on voluntourism’s theoretical evolution and its potential transformation through integration with other tourism models. As Wearing & McGehee (2013, 127) argue, “theory will be especially valuable in [...] the opportunity for volunteer tourism to create a new paradigm in tourism that places the community at the centre.”

Community-based tourism encompasses various definitions (Dangi & Jamal, 2016), often differing in scope and focus (Zielinski et al., 2020; Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2018). Fundamentally, it is a bottom-up approach aimed at empowering local communities by actively involving them in tourism development and management. However, scholars debate key aspects, such as the extent of local involvement – ranging from participation to full control (Blackstock, 2005; Lee & Joo, 2023) – as well as ownership models, distinguishing between community, private, or locally employed stakeholders (Zielinski et

al., 2020; Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012). Another question concerns whether shared goals or merely shared benefits suffice for community empowerment (Zielinski et al., 2020).

While sustainability is widely associated with community-based tourism (Ngo & Creutz, 2022), efforts to develop measurement frameworks remain ongoing (Dangi & Jamal, 2016; Wolters, 2021). Community-based tourism fosters economic, social, psychological, and political empowerment (Scheyvens, 1999), contributing to job creation, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation (Mtapuri, Camilleri & Dłużewska, 2021). It intersects with ecotourism, fair trade tourism, and heritage tourism (Dangi & Jamal, 2016), whereas pro-poor tourism is criticized for reinforcing neoliberal and colonial structures (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012; Blackstock, 2005). Despite its benefits, community-based tourism faces challenges, including reliance on short-term project funding (Zielinski et al., 2020), insufficient tourism expertise among governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cultural clashes, and weak host-visitor relations (Chatkaewnapanon & Lee, 2022). Moreover, community's initiatives often struggle to connect with relevant markets, limiting their long-term viability (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Regenerative tourism has evolved from broader regenerative development concepts (Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2022; Owen, 2007) and as a response to rethinking tourism in the post-pandemic era (Cave & Dredge, 2020; Ateljevic, 2020). Like voluntourism and community-based tourism, it challenges neoliberal values (Pollock, 2019). It is inherently pluralistic, shaped by real-world cultural contexts rather than abstract frameworks (Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2022). A recent definition highlights its core principles: fostering transformation, generating net positive impacts, integrating indigenous and Western knowledge, and aligning tourism with the regeneration of interconnected living systems (Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2022).

Regenerative tourism extends beyond sustainability, not only decreasing harm but also fostering renewal and resilience (Pollock, 2019). It prioritizes wellbeing over profit and promotes alternative economic models that create shared, non-monetary value alongside financial gains in the destination (Cave & Dredge, 2020). This perspective redefines the world as an intelligent, interconnected system rather than a resource to be exploited (Pollock, 2019). Asset management is central to regenerative tourism, ensuring cultural and natural resources are appropriately valued (Pollock, 2019).

Despite optimism in existing literature, regenerative tourism faces challenges. It requires clearer frameworks for practical application (Heslinga, 2022) and a deeper understanding of its transformative potential (Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2022). Additionally, it remains largely influenced by Western discourse, necessitating greater

inclusion of indigenous and Global South perspectives (Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2022; Hussain, 2023; Cave & Dredge, 2020). Traditional regenerative worldviews should inform its development, ensuring it moves beyond theoretical advocacy toward impactful practice.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE STAKEHOLDERS BY TOURISM TYPE

Volunteer travelers are the most studied stakeholders in *voluntourism*, characteristically positioned between tourists and volunteers (Han, Lee & Hyun, 2020). Their motivations combine altruism and self-interest, including a desire for cultural exchange, skill development, and meaningful experiences while contributing to natural environments, infrastructure, social structures, and local economies (Han, Lee & Hyun, 2020; Bentele, 2023; Hernandez-Maskivker, Lapointe & Aquino, 2018; Pompurová et al., 2018). Most voluntourists originate from developed countries (Bentele, 2023), creating an imbalance that can commodify local challenges and reduce benefits for residents (Bentele, 2023; Wearing, Young & Everingham, 2017). Short visits and insufficient training further limit positive impacts (Anderson, Kim & Larios, 2017). While voluntourism has traditionally been international, domestic voluntourists are now gaining attention too (Pompurová, Sokolová & Cole, 2020).

Local communities are often framed as passive recipients of aid (Hernandez-Maskivker, Lapointe & Aquino, 2018; Bentele, 2023), reinforcing neocolonial power dynamics and white saviorism (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Community members, including children and marginalized groups, can be commodified (van Doore & Nhep, 2023; McGehee & Andereck, 2009). However, recent perspectives highlight that both developing and developed communities can host voluntourism (Pompurová et al., 2018; Wearing & McGehee, 2013; Röntynen & Tunkkari-Eskelinen, 2022). Locals act as hosts, providing accommodation and tasks, sharing cultural insights, and engaging in reciprocal exchanges with tourists (Wearing, 2001; Bentele, 2023). Despite these roles, barriers such as economic status, language, and social structures can limit their participation in tourism (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Locals' perceptions of voluntourists range from admiration to seeing them as intruders (Bentele, 2023; Hernandez-Maskivker, Lapointe & Aquino, 2018).

Intermediary organizations, including non-governmental and commercial entities, play a critical role in voluntourism's management (Pompurová & Marčeková, 2017; McGehee & Andereck, 2008; Bentele, 2023). These intermediaries, often operating from outside tourism sectors, structure voluntourism experiences (Wearing & McGehee, 2013; Röntynen & Tunkkari-Eskelinen, 2022). When well-managed, they facilitate transformative

experiences while balancing community benefits (Bentele, 2023; Anderson, Kim & Larios, 2017). However, some prioritize profit over local needs (Wearing, Young & Everingham, 2017), and their presence can create dependency on external aid (Bentele, 2023). Online platforms are redefining intermediary roles, enabling direct host-traveler interactions and unpackaged voluntourism experiences (Röntynen & Tunkkari-Eskelinen, 2022; Wearing & McGehee, 2013).

Beyond human stakeholders, voluntourism engages natural and cultural environments. Activities like wildlife conservation and disaster recovery benefit destinations but for now voluntourism provides limited ecological impact compared to social and economic contributions (Hernandez-Maskivker, Lapointe & Aquino, 2018; Pompurová et al., 2018). Tourists often seek cultural exchange, reinforcing authenticity and sustainability in tourism (Ribov, 2014; Bentele, 2023). Meanwhile, regulatory frameworks hold the power to ensure ethical voluntourism, e.g., by protecting local labor markets and preventing exploitation, such as child trafficking (Bentele, 2023; van Doore & Nhep, 2023).

Community-Based Tourism as a bottom-up approach prioritizes local communities as key stakeholders, empowering them in tourism development and management (Blackstock, 2005; Mtapuri, Camilleri & Dłużewska, 2021; Ngo & Creutz, 2022). Often involving marginalized or indigenous groups in rural and remote areas (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012; Zielinski et al., 2020; Naranjo Llupart, 2022), this type of tourism is not exclusive to developing nations (Zielinski et al., 2020). Limited resources, skills, and market networks of locals create participation barriers and reduced opportunities for competing on the market (Liang, 2022; Lee & Joo, 2023; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009), necessitating external support, which can introduce power imbalances (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012). Local actors contribute as entrepreneurs, employees, and suppliers (Blackstock, 2005), while tourism success depends on their positive attitudes toward visitors (Blackstock, 2005). However, communities are often mistakenly viewed as homogenous, overlooking internal power dynamics (Blackstock, 2005; Zielinski et al., 2020). Defined by location or identity (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012), communities function as networks (Zielinski et al., 2020). By community-based tourism locals minimize economic leakages (Mtapuri, Camilleri & Dłużewska, 2021) and maximize tourism benefits (Ngo & Creutz, 2022), yet industry actors often resist local decision-making, fearing higher costs and lower profits, reducing participation to tokenistic formal approval (Blackstock, 2005). Community-based tourism contrasts conventional mass tourism, dominated by large international firms, being represented by small, locally owned businesses. To strengthen local economies, CBT businesses should source supplies from community producers (Mtapuri, Camilleri & Dłużewska, 2021).

As an alternative tourism model, community-based tourism fosters direct visitor-local interactions, offering immersive cultural experiences (Mtapuri, Camilleri & Dłużewska, 2021) and the opportunity to contribute to the destination (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012). Tourists seek authenticity and are often urban or international visitors drawn to rural tranquility and unfamiliar cultures (Zielinski et al., 2020). Their role as cocreators emerges through their pursuit of fulfilling experiences and is facilitated by social interactions, with learning and recreation being primary motivations (Liang, 2022). Tourists in community-based tourism share similarities with voluntourists, such as diverse budget levels (Mtapuri, Camilleri & Dłużewska, 2021). Unlike voluntourism, however, private-sector involvement in community-based tourism is represented minimally due to concerns over diverting resources from local communities (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Due to the forementioned participation barriers, intermediaries are essential for mobilizing local actors (Lee & Joo, 2023). These include NGOs, sustainability-focused agencies, community associations, tourism organizations, and some private tour operators (Wolters, 2021; Liang, 2022; Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012). Universities also play an intermediary role (Liang, 2022; Lee & Joo, 2023). While external agencies should facilitate local leadership and market access, some exploit communities for own benefit (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012), making local control over resources crucial (Dangi & Jamal, 2016). NGOs often connect communities with government aid (Lee & Joo, 2023) and encourage visitor engagement in local culture to enhance experiences (Liang, 2022). Digital technology further empowers communities by improving market access (Keskinen et al., 2020; Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2022). Intermediaries, controlling critical resources, hold significant power in CBT development (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012).

The natural environment and the local culture, owned and managed by communities, require responsible tourism practices to ensure sustainability (Mtapuri, Camilleri & Dłużewska, 2021; Ngo & Creutz, 2022). These resources are more valuable to locals than to other stakeholders (Liang, 2022; Chatkaewnapanon & Lee, 2022). Culture enhances visitor learning, while nature benefits their health and wellbeing (Naranjo Lluart, 2022). While community-based tourism emphasizes community self-reliance, collaboration with external stakeholders is essential (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012). Governments support this type of tourism through policy frameworks, infrastructure, financial incentives, and capacity building (Mtapuri, Camilleri & Dłużewska, 2021; Lee & Joo, 2023; Naranjo Lluart, 2022). However, regulations can also impose neocolonial influences through globalized policies (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012).

All stakeholders in the tourism value chain, including travelers, businesses, employees, and communities, share the responsibility of preserving local assets and

fostering the destination's overall development (Heslinga, 2022). *Regenerative tourism* aligns with the ecosystem approach, which highlights the interconnectedness of all stakeholders and their collective impact on the tourism system, requiring partnerships beyond conventional economic considerations (Heslinga, 2022). It also recognizes the interdependence of social and economic systems with “all life on this planet” (Pollock, 2019, 5). Inclusivity and broad accountability are central to its philosophy (Cave & Dredge, 2020; Inversini et al., 2023; Duxbury et al., 2021). Consequently, regenerative tourism involves all actors in a process of transformation and renewal of both themselves and their environment (Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2022).

Most tourists do not initially seek transformation, despite being detached from their roots in a globalized and digitalized world, however, they can be guided toward making a positive impact on themselves and their surroundings (Hossain, 2023). In regenerative tourism, visitors aim to leave destinations in better condition compared to this before their arrival, actively participating in its restoration while gaining meaningful, transformative experiences (Heslinga, 2022). Their regenerative engagement may include charitable action, volunteering, ideation (Cave & Dredge, 2020; Hossain, 2023), where they acquire new knowledge and skills, particularly in regenerative techniques (Heslinga, 2022). Additionally, tourists serve as cocreators by spreading awareness and advocating for regenerative tourism (Heslinga, 2022). Unlike conventional tourism, which contributes to climate change, overtourism, and power imbalances with host communities, regenerative tourism prioritizes quality engagement over mass participation (Pollock, 2019).

In regenerative tourism, hosts are members of the local community, often from indigenous backgrounds, as regeneration is rooted in traditional and indigenous knowledge (Heslinga, 2022; Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2022; Hossain, 2023). According to Pollock (2019), when communities consciously shape their identity, manage guest interactions, and recognize the need to unite in creating holistic tourism experiences, they drive the necessary change. This approach focuses on community potential rather than merely identifying challenges and implementing external solutions (Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2022).

Intermediary stakeholders are crucial in facilitating regenerative tourism. Tour operators provide experiences that benefit both visitors and communities, incorporating hands-on activities that align with local values (Heslinga, 2022). Destination management organizations (DMOs) extend their role beyond marketing and sales to asset management to contribute to long-term destination prosperity (Pollock, 2019). International development agencies should prioritize local needs to enhance long-term impact (Cave & Dredge,

2020). Digital technology acts as an intermediary by transmitting regenerative principles, fostering innovation, and enabling direct connections between tourists and locals (Heslinga, 2022; Cave & Dredge, 2020). Technology platforms also play a growing role in facilitating knowledge exchange and promoting regenerative tourism initiatives (Inversini et al., 2023).

Nature is central to regenerative tourism, serving as both an object of restoration and a vital “life support system” (Pollock, 2019, 3). It is not separate from humans but interwoven with them (Hossain, 2023). Regeneration requires a shift from traditional shareholder- and stakeholder-focused perspectives toward a broader view that includes communities and the planet as a living system rather than a mere resource pool (Pollock, 2019). Culture, as a source of collective intelligence, defines unique contexts across destinations, necessitating a pluriversal approach and integrating indigenous knowledge with modern scientific insights (Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2022). Regenerative tourism is not limited to specific activities but also involves regulations and restrictions that guide stakeholders toward responsible practices (Heslinga, 2022). However, regulatory frameworks can sometimes also hinder regenerative tourism by failing to recognize informal socio-economic structures where regenerative practices thrive, particularly in indigenous and developing communities (Cave & Dredge, 2020). To support regenerative tourism, policies should incorporate both alternative-capitalist and non-capitalist practices alongside traditional capitalist models (Cave & Dredge, 2020). Currently, no official certification exists to designate regenerative tourism initiatives (Heslinga, 2022).

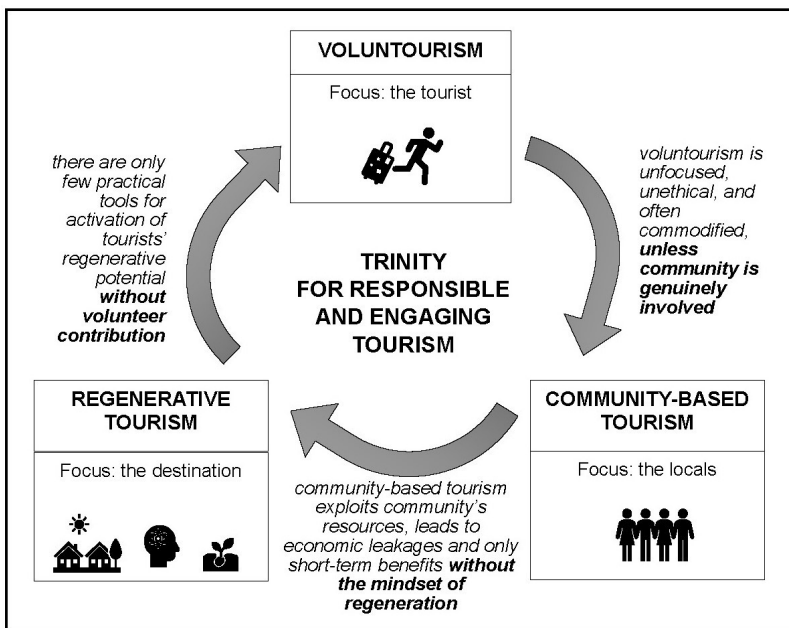
5 THE TRINITY OF VOLUNTOURISM, COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM, AND REGENERATIVE TOURISM

All three tourism concepts examined in this study aim to offer alternatives to the power structures, hierarchies, and dependencies characteristic of neoliberal frameworks. However, none of these concepts provides a universal solution for tourism, and each is subject to specific criticisms. It is argued that if voluntourism, community-based and regenerative tourism are re-envisioned and combined into a trinity, a more responsible approach can be achieved. The three frameworks complement one another by enhancing tourism’s responsibility and addressing each other’s limitations (Figure 1).

The commodification and detachment of voluntourism from genuine community needs, alongside its neocolonial tendencies that often exploit local communities, can be mitigated by localizing control. Communities possess the knowledge

necessary to determine their own needs and ensure the appropriate utilization of their resources. However, challenges such as limited tourism expertise, insufficient networks, and funding shortages can lead to a cycle of short-term projects, which often divert economic benefits away from the local area. Therefore, a regenerative approach is required to direct efforts toward long-term, sustainable impacts for the destination. While regenerative tourism’s holistic and optimistic vision is appealing, its implementation tools remain underdeveloped. Existing case studies suggest early indications of a regenerative mindset within certain communities or the supply side. However, for regenerative tourism to effectively engage visitors and achieve meaningful outcomes, it must offer immersive, transformative experiences that incorporate volunteering practices. By leveraging the interrelationships between these three tourism approaches, a more focused emphasis on the responsibility of all tourism stakeholders can be achieved.

Figure 1. The trinity of voluntourism, CBT, and regenerative tourism for responsible and engaging tourism.



6 COMPARISON AND INTEGRATION OF STAKEHOLDER ROLES

Table 2 presents a summary of the findings regarding the characteristics, roles, and responsibilities of stakeholders in the three tourism models. In all three types, the tourism experience is cocreated, necessitating positive and effective relationships between stakeholders. Tourists, in all cases, are characterized by a desire for meaningful,

memorable experiences, learning, recreation, self-transformation, and, to varying degrees, a willingness to contribute to the improvement of the destination. To enhance their sense of responsibility, tourists should be more diverse, including individuals from developing countries and those with an understanding of rural and indigenous contexts, and should become more aware of their role in the process.

Intermediaries, regardless of their specific type, must strike a balance between their own interests, the needs of the tourists, and the requirements of the local community. Those with a tourism background may not fully understand how to support local communities, while those from non-touristic backgrounds may struggle to create a holistic experience that motivates travelers, thus highlighting the need for cooperation between the two groups. Community-based tourism could particularly benefit from benchmarking voluntourism and regenerative tourism, as it currently faces challenges related to the market connections of the destination.

Caution is needed with digital intermediaries, as they can sometimes bring benefits but may also introduce new challenges and inequalities. The local community plays multiple roles, including approving or rejecting tourism activities, hosting tourists, initiating change, offering transformative benefits through interaction with visitors, and preserving important traditional knowledge. However, residents often face resource constraints, barriers to participation, or marginalization in the global power structure, even though all three tourism models highlight the importance of locals.

The regulatory system, whether local, national, or international, can either support or hinder responsible tourism practices. It should be strategically designed to best serve tourism and development through tourism. Nature and culture as specific non-human stakeholders are present in all three models, but only regenerative tourism fully recognizes their active role within the ecosystem. In contrast, voluntourism and community-based tourism may overlook these stakeholders, treating them as mere resources or objects.

Table 2. Comparison of the stakeholders of voluntourism, community-based and regenerative tourism.

Stakeholders	Voluntourism	Community-Based Tourism	Regenerative Tourism
<i>Tourism Demand</i>	international and domestic tourists mostly from the West; vacation and volunteering oriented	urban and international tourists, immersing into local culture for learning and recreation	conscious or externally motivated tourists; quality instead of quantity

<i>Intermediaries</i>	NGOs supplying volunteers to destinations (according to local needs), not always understanding tourism	intermediary organizations aiding local communities in finance and capacity acquisition	non-touristic organizations appropriating tourism products for regeneration of the community; should prioritize local needs
	tour operators selling volunteering trips	almost no role of tour operators for the weak links of the locals to the market	tour operators facilitate RT experiences
	digital platforms removing the need for other intermediaries, setting own rules	digital platforms compensating for the lack of market links and empowering locals in new ways	digital technology as an enabler of the contacts between visitors and locals and a transmitter of the regenerative message
<i>Tourism Supply</i>	local community as an object of voluntary activity and a source of transformation for tourists, versatile and heterogeneous, hosting VT when able to participate, not always approving of VT	local community as an owner, developer, and beneficiary of tourism; often from marginalized, indigenous, rural, remote origin, from developing and developed countries; heterogeneous and networked, representing tourism service providers, local producers, residents	local community as an object of regeneration, a source of knowledge about means of regeneration, a catalyzer of change; often indigenous
<i>Regulative system</i>	ensuring the ethicality (e.g., local jobs, children's rights)	governments as a source of funding, motivator of responsibility; policies not always accounting adequately for peripheral regions and communities, channelling neocolonialism	governing agencies externally motivating tourists into transformative travel, promoting regeneration by imposing regulations and restrictions, but hindering it by not recognizing the informal sector
<i>Nature</i>	nature as an object and beneficiary of volunteer activity and a motive to travel	nature as a motive to travel, source of health for tourists; a resource most significant for locals and owned by them	nature as a fundamental support system, complementing society; a source of collective intelligence and an object of regeneration
<i>Culture</i>	cultural exchange in and through voluntary activity; learning about new cultures as a motive to travel	learning about new cultures as a motive to travel, cultural heritage preservation as a goal; a resource most significant for locals	culture as an asset and a source of collective intelligence; an object of regeneration

To further illustrate the research findings, an input-output analysis was conducted to examine stakeholders in voluntourism, community-based tourism, and regenerative tourism. This analysis identifies the direct, indirect, and induced impacts on tourism responsibility, focusing on how stakeholders' inputs and outputs contribute to tourism's responsible practices and sustainability. The input-output analysis provides a conceptual framework to understand the roles of various stakeholders in these three tourism models. It does not critically assess the alignment between intended and actual responsibilities

but rather focuses on the desired contributions and outcomes. By considering voluntourism, community-based and regenerative tourism as complementary and capable of learning from one another, the analysis emphasizes how they can address each other's shortcomings and ethical gaps. The analysis reveals how responsibility is embedded in stakeholders' contributions (inputs) and the resulting impacts (outputs), highlighting the importance of ethical tourism practices and mutual reinforcement between the models.

Travelers as stakeholders related to tourism demand contribute directly through their financial expenditure, motivation, expectations, ethical travel choices, respect for local culture, and sustainability awareness. These inputs generate indirect impacts such as economic benefits to local businesses, participation in cultural exchange, labor contributions (e.g., volunteering), and responsible consumption. The induced impacts are reflected in local employment opportunities, increased demand for ethical tourism services, influence on cultural perceptions, and empowerment of local entrepreneurs. Over time, travelers influence long-term sustainability attitudes and transform travel habits towards more responsible tourism.

Intermediaries, i.e., NGOs, tour operators, and digital platforms, provide logistics, funding mechanisms, marketing, volunteer coordination, and commit to promoting fair trade, ethical tourism, and inclusive business models. These inputs result in indirect impacts such as the organization of responsible travel experiences, market access for local providers, digital facilitation, transparency, and respect for local autonomy. Induced effects include the growth of sustainable tourism-related businesses, financial redistribution, capacity building in communities, and integration of community voices into decision-making processes. Over time, intermediaries influence policies, develop long-term sustainable business models, and raise awareness about regenerative principles.

Local communities as stakeholders on the tourism supply side offer hospitality, cultural resources, labor, and services, while stewarding natural and cultural assets and leading community-based tourism initiatives. These direct contributions generate revenue, empowerment, knowledge exchange, and the development of self-determined tourism models that prioritize cultural preservation. Indirect impacts include business expansion, improved infrastructure, enhanced cultural appreciation, local leadership in tourism development, and increased self-sufficiency. The induced effects reflect strengthened social cohesion, greater resilience, sustained local traditions, and the transfer of cultural knowledge.

Governments and institutions provide legislation, funding, ethical standards enforcement, and equitable policies, ensuring the protection of vulnerable communities. The direct contributions from the regulatory system lead to the protection of local interests,

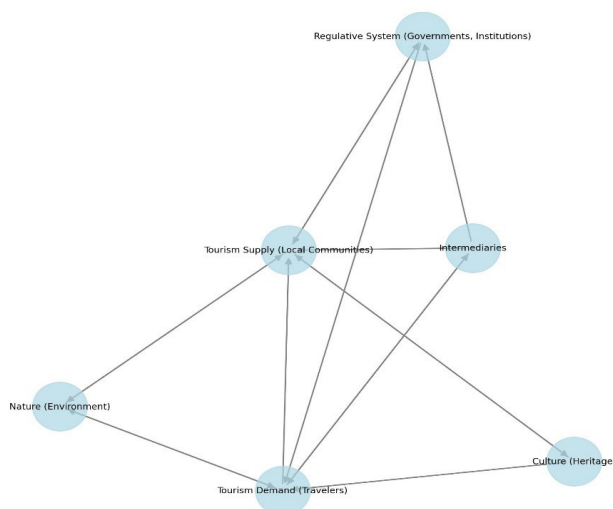
environmental conservation, incentive programs, and the promotion of responsible tourism development. Indirect impacts include economic redistribution, improved public services, and the accountability of tourism businesses, balancing growth with sustainability. Induced impacts include long-term shifts towards sustainable tourism governance, regional development, and the transformation of tourism into a regenerative tool.

Nature offers essential ecosystem services and serves as the environmental setting for tourism. Its direct contributions include attracting tourists, contributing to well-being, and facilitating eco-friendly tourism practices. Indirect impacts include enhancing local environmental awareness, promoting nature-based solutions for sustainability, and preserving ecological balance through tourism revenue. The induced effects are seen in climate resilience, the restoration of degraded areas, and the integration of nature into wellbeing tourism, ensuring responsible use of natural assets for future generations.

Culture contributes through local identity, knowledge, traditions, intangible heritage, and community consent in cultural representation. Direct inputs result in tourism appeal, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the education of tourists through ethical cultural tourism practices. Indirectly, these inputs strengthen the cultural economy, revitalize traditions, and increase the recognition of indigenous and marginalized cultures. The induced impacts include global cultural exchange, the increased representation of diverse voices, heritage continuity, and the long-term sustainability of cultural traditions.

Figure 2 visually illustrates the relationships between different stakeholders in simplified way, showing how they influence each other through direct, indirect, and induced impacts.

Figure 2. Simplified visualization of the integrated relationships between stakeholders of voluntourism, community-based, and regenerative tourism.



This input-output analysis highlights how each stakeholder's contributions, direct, indirect, and induced, create cascading effects that shape local economies, empower communities, and foster long-term transformations. It also emphasizes the importance of a responsibility-driven approach in tourism development, underscoring the complementary roles of voluntourism, community-based tourism, and regenerative tourism in promoting ethical, responsible, and regenerative practices.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

By integrating voluntourism, community-based tourism, and regenerative tourism, this study provides a conceptual foundation for improving tourism governance and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. It underscores the importance of re-imagining tourism approaches to foster more responsible and ethical practices. The interconnections between voluntourism, community-based and regenerative tourism reveal a deeper and more complex relationship than initially expected. Each approach contributes to a broader vision of participatory, ethical, and decolonized tourism.

Ethical concerns, particularly regarding community impact and the roles of various stakeholders, are central across all three frameworks. In community-based tourism, ethical responsibility is primarily in the hands of local communities, whether represented by local authorities or active residents, while regenerative tourism focuses on ethical objectives that complement and inform the ethical considerations of voluntourism. The relationship between the motives for contributing to the destination and traveling in each approach is significant, but the positive impact must be carefully guided by other stakeholders to ensure it is directed toward meaningful outcomes. While community-based tourism is often considered sustainable, its criteria remain undefined and warrant further clarification. Similarly, regenerative tourism, with its holistic consideration, requires a deeper exploration of its stakeholders, particularly intermediaries who play a crucial role in shaping responsible tourism practices. Additionally, local communities, both as hosts and beneficiaries, must be empowered in the development of tourism, ensuring that they play an active role in shaping the tourism ecosystem.

The study acknowledges the limitations of its theoretical approach and calls for empirical research, case studies, and observational data to further refine these frameworks and explore how the role of various stakeholders can be better integrated into the regenerative potential of tourism. Nature and culture, too, are not merely passive resources but must be actively stewarded across all three approaches to ensure sustainability. The reliance on theoretical mapping of stakeholders leaves room for future

research to investigate contextual variations, stakeholder awareness of their roles, and the conflicts that may arise between intended and actual responsibilities in practice.

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