Integrating community ambivalence into resident sentiment research

Abstract. Resident sentiment and its ambivalence play important roles in maintaining the social sustainability of tourism development. The recent phenomenon of resident-tourist conflicts in some destinations clearly indicates problematic levels of resident sentiment and often reflects certain degrees of community ambivalence. Investigating resident sentiment in synthesis with community-level ambivalence can provide a nuanced understanding of the diversity of resident sentiments. This study conducts a systematic review of relevant literature, constructs a conceptual framework of community ambivalence, and analyzes the ambivalence dynamics. Drawing on social identity theory and social influence theory, community ambivalence formation and transformation processes are discussed. A set of propositions is developed to guide future research. When community dynamics are properly understood and directed, government agencies and businesses can better manage destinations and devise effective strategies to pursue healthy host-guest relationships and facilitate socially sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Resident sentiment; Community ambivalence; Ambivalence dynamics; Social identity theory; Social influence theory

1. Introduction

Although most residents are not directly involved in the tourism industry, as important members of the host community, residents are considered vital to tourism development (Chen et al., 2020; Hsu & Chen, 2019; Uchinaka et al., 2019). Therefore, how residents perceive, evaluate, and attribute interactions with tourists warrants investigation (Hsu & Chen, 2019). Resident sentiment can serve as an indicator of sustainable tourism development (Cheung & Li, 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2018) and destination decline (Diedrich & García-Buades, 2009); thus, it is an issue that has often been examined in tourism research.

The complexity of the mechanism for generating resident sentiment makes it vary among individuals (Chen et al., 2021; Hao et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2020). In real life, there is often a diversity of sentiments within the community (Pavlić et al., 2020). Having multiple sentiments concurrently in a group can lead to extreme behaviors and uncontrollable social consequences (Rothman et al., 2017). Therefore, relying only on the overall sentiment of residents (i.e., the average sentiment of the community) while ignoring the diversity of voices

within a destination is detrimental to tourism development and an indication of the immaturity of academic inquiries.

Sentiment represents "an acquired and relatively permanent major neuropsychic disposition to react emotionally, cognitively, and conatively toward a certain object (or situation) in a certain stable fashion" (Cattell, 1940, p. 16). Compared to attitude, sentiment is more encompassing and lasting, thus, it has more ability to predict resident behaviors (Chen et al., 2021). Hsu et al. (2016) conceptualized resident sentiment as "local residents' overall perceptions, views, and emotional dispositions underlying their responses to tourism development" (p. 1), in which attitude is the transient part. Fu et al. (2019) and Hao et al. (2020) proposed methods for analyzing residents' sentiments based on news data, expanding the data sources of sentiment analysis in tourism research. Chen et al. (2021) further revealed the constituent dimensions of Hong Kong residents' sentiments, including cognitive and affective attitudes toward tourists, identification with tourists, sense of superiority, and feeling of relative deprivation. Existing research includes mainly empirical studies assessing individual sentiment or the overall sentiment of residents, with little attention paid to the complexity of sentiment diversity among residents. Further, empirical studies on resident sentiment are location-specific. While they contribute to tourism knowledge, conceptualizing the phenomenon and developing a cross-destination conceptual framework could benefit the academic community by proposing a tourism-specific theoretical perspective.

Ambivalence, describing a state in which people hold different sentiments or attitudes at the same time (Li et al., 2024a; van Harreveld et al., 2015), has a strong capacity to portray the heterogeneity of residents' sentiments. Group-level ambivalence arises from interaction and is manifested by the simultaneous presence of opposite or contradictory feelings within a group (Pradies & Pratt, 2010). In tourism, ambivalence among residents has gradually gained attention (Chen et al., 2025; Ma et al., 2024). However, most existing studies are location-specific, focusing on attitude and evaluation, and have yet to conceptualize ambivalence concerning resident sentiment. Because residents within a community share a solid social identity and have a strong social influence on each other (Chen et al., 2025), resident sentiment ambivalence has a complex and dynamic nature, which may lead to unpredictable social conflicts (Rothman et al., 2017). Considering the importance of resident sentiment, this paper aims to conceptualize and understand sentiment ambivalence at the destination community level. The research objectives are as follows.

• Thoroughly review the literature on resident sentiment and resident ambivalence.

- Conceptualize community ambivalence and construct a conceptual framework of community ambivalence formation and transformation.
- Analyze the ambivalence dynamics.
- Suggest propositions for future research.

The formation of social groups hinges on the social identity of individuals, which defines the self-concept by distinguishing between ingroups and outgroups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identity theory proposes that social groups provide norms, values, and affective connections to their members, who locate the group and gain a positive social identity by conducting beneficial comparisons with the outgroups (Brown, 2000). Thus, residents' sentiments toward tourists revolve around their social identity. Because sentiments are individualized psychological states influenced by many factors, including values and beliefs, ambivalence on a group level is likely to exist (Pradies & Pratt, 2010). Therefore, the social identity theory's ability to explain intergroup relations underpins the formation of ambivalence in a community. In addition, group-level ambivalence could be shaped by interactions (Merton, 1976), with social influence being an important mechanism for its transformation. Given the frequency of interactions among residents, strong social influence among members makes sentiments susceptible to change, thus altering the state of ambivalence in the community. Therefore, the social influence theory, which explains how people adjust their behaviors and attitudes to adapt to the needs of the social environment (Kelman, 1953), can be used to support the conceptualization of the transformation of ambivalence.

A new concept, community ambivalence, is proposed in the study. It describes a state in which members are not ambivalent in their own right, but not all members of the community share the same sentiment toward tourists, which leads to the existence of different sentiments within a destination. Intra-individual ambivalence can also be encompassed within this concept because sentiments expressed typically represent the individual's overall disposition after reconciling conflicting sentiments (Chen et al., 2019; Ma et al., 2024). Based on social identity theory and social influence theory, community ambivalence is conceptualized as two processes: community ambivalence formation and community ambivalence transformation. This conceptualization offers a nuanced understanding of resident sentiment activation and change. Thus, the study refines the group-level ambivalence formation and transformation mechanism and expands the sentiment and ambivalence research in tourism.

2. Methodology

This paper aims to conceptualize community ambivalence and construct its formation and transformation framework. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies can both contribute to knowledge, but are rooted in location-based empirical data analysis. Beyond contexts, concepts describe complex ideas, which are formed through discarding uncommon characteristics in individual observations and aggregating common characteristics across all observations (Xin et al., 2013). To achieve our research objectives, conceptual analysis is more suitable than quantitative or qualitative analysis because it helps answer holistic questions by constructing a conceptual framework. Although conceptual research received less attention than quantitative or qualitative research in tourism, Xin et al. (2013) advocated that conceptual research should have an independent methodology from quantitative and qualitative research. Thus, following the theory-building approach (Meredith, 1993), this study constructs a conceptual framework to illustrate the formation and transformation of community ambivalence. A conceptual framework is "a collection of two or more interrelated propositions which explain an event, provide understanding, or suggest testable hypotheses" (Meredith, 1993, p. 7).

To establish the conceptual framework, the research flow as shown in Figure 1 is followed. Guided by the typology of themes in conceptual research (Xin et al., 2013), the methodology consists of five steps: (1) seeking theoretically and practically valuable topics, (2) searching for relevant literature, (3) reviewing literature and identifying knowledge gaps, (4) proposing the new concept, and (5) constructing the conceptual framework. The research flow encompasses most of the themes identified by Xin et al. (2013) and fits the logic of problem-solving in research and practice. Therefore, the relevance and rigor of the methodology can be ensured.

[Insert Figure 1.]

2.1 Seeking theoretically and practically valuable topics

Considering the vital role of residents, their sentiment can serve as an indicator of sustainable tourism development (Cheung & Li, 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2018), and thus has received considerable attention in recent years. Sentiment is a form of human subjectivity that can vary from individual to individual and over time (Munezero et al., 2014). Understanding how resident sentiment varies across members of the local community is important, as it offers insights for tourism policies and positioning and can deepen resident sentiment research. This paper, thus, focuses on the phenomenon of diverse resident sentiment, named as community ambivalence.

To conceptualize community ambivalence, it is necessary to first differentiate between resident sentiment and other subjectivity terms. Sentiment is a widely researched but ambiguously defined concept in various disciplines, therefore, the standard dictionary would be a suitable source to compare the differences among terms commonly used in various studies. Based on Munezero et al. (2014), Merriam-Webster online dictionary is used as a reference for selected terms (Table 1).

Table 1 Definitions of subjectivity terms on Merriam-Webster online dictionary (2025)

Subjectivity Term	Definition	Synonym
Affect	a set of observable manifestations of an experienced emotion; the conscious emotion that occurs in reaction to a thought or experience.	Feeling, Emotion
Emotion	a conscious mental reaction (such as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body; a state of feeling; the affective aspect of consciousness.	Feeling, Sentiment
Sentiment	refined feeling; an idea colored by emotion.	Emotion, Feeling
Attitude	a mental position with regard to a fact or state; a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state.	Feeling, Emotion

The definitions and synonyms presented in Table 1 show the similarity of these subjective terms. In everyday use, people do not seem to precisely differentiate them and use them interchangeably. However, academic research tends to go deeper to identify subtle differences among these terms (Munezero et al., 2014). In tourism research, attitude and sentiment are the closest concepts, yet the two are not distinguished conceptually in many studies (e.g., Hao et al., 2020; Kirilenko & Stepchenkova, 2017). Generally, attitude is measured to reflect people's transient and concrete feelings, such as "I would like to..." (Zhang et al., 2025) and "I believe..." (Fennell & de Grosbois, 2024); sentiment, in turn, is often categorized as positive, negative, or neutral, and is used to reflect people's holistic and enduring subjective feelings (e.g., Chen et al., 2021; Fu et al., 2019). Since Hsu et al. (2016) conceptualized resident sentiment as an encompassing construct to describe "local residents' overall perceptions, views, and emotional dispositions underlying their responses to tourism development" (p. 1), resident attitude is regarded as a transient part of resident sentiment. This containment relationship can be supported by psychological literature and empirical evidence. Cattell (1940) defined sentiment as "an acquired and relatively permanent major neuropsychic disposition" and attitude as "an acquired neuropsychic disposition...as part of the purposive plan of some larger sentiment or complex" (p. 16). Chen et al. (2021) measured resident sentiment in five components (cognitive and affective attitudes, identification, sense of superiority, and feeling of relative deprivation) and validated them using survey data from 1,000 Hong Kong residents. Adapted from Munezero et al. (2014), we differentiated these subjective terms, and the details are illustrated in Figure 2.

[Insert Figure 2.]

As shown in Figure 2, affect is people's non-conscious response to external stimuli or physiological signals, and feelings/perceptions and emotions are expressions of affect. Sustained emotions are then developed into sentiment, which is encompassing and complex, with attitudes as its transient part. Combined with relevant information, opinions/judgments are personal interpretations of sentiments. Considering the encompassing and lasting nature of sentiment, resident sentiment could affect the overall support of the local community for tourism development (Chen et al., 2018), and is a better indicator of residents' behavioral responses than attitude (Chen et al., 2021), thus it is critical for sustainable tourism development. In the meantime, residents may receive different external stimuli or have different expressions of affect, which leads to varying resident sentiments within the community. Understanding different sentiments within the local community has value for destinations to devise effective policies and strategies to properly manage development and can advance resident sentiment research.

Some studies have examined the diversity of resident sentiments or attitudes. For example, Litvin et al. (2020) unveiled the diversity of tourist attitudes toward tourism and found that the differences depend on where they live; Lundberg (2017) found a significant difference in resident attitudes between permanent residents and second-home owners and utilized stakeholder theory to explain the variation. These studies reported mixed views of residents empirically and found the influencing factors of such divergence, however stopped short of conceptualizing the phenomenon. Conceptualizing resident sentiment ambivalence within the community can elevate the interpretation to a theoretical level and in a nuanced way. As sentiment includes both affective and cognitive attitudes (Chen et al., 2021), community ambivalence in this paper examines residents' ambivalence from both affective and cognitive perspectives.

2.2 Searching for Relevant Literature

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach (Page et al., 2021) is the evidence-based minimum set of items for reporting

systematic reviews and meta-analyses, presented in a flow diagram. PRISMA offers a standardized report process, thus improving the research quality and transparency. Since PRISMA makes the results more reliable and reader-friendly, it was adopted widely in tourism studies (Geremew et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2024), and guided our search for relevant literature. After defining the aim of the research, we developed a strategy to search for and select the literature, as illustrated in Figure 3.

[Insert Figure 3.]

We searched for literature in two categories (i.e., resident sentiment and resident ambivalence) on Web of Science and Scopus with the search terms {"resident sentiment" OR "local sentiment" OR "host sentiment"} for the first category and {"resident ambivalence" OR "local ambivalence" OR "host ambivalence"} for the second category. We retrieved the search terms for the two categories of literature separately in the title, abstract, and keywords, and restricted the scope to social sciences, management, and economics. Consequently, 4,049 articles were identified, with 2,002 being duplicates. After filtering out the duplicates, we further excluded misfit articles, with the exclusion guidelines being: not in a tourism context (e.g., in linguistics and education) and not focusing on the local community (e.g., about tourist experience). Finally, 36 articles on resident sentiment and 20 articles on resident ambivalence were retained, with details shown in the appendix Table A1.

Many studies on resident sentiment did not distinguish between the concepts of sentiment and attitude, and most resident ambivalence studies retrieved actually investigated resident attitude. Because attitude is part of the notion of sentiment, research on resident attitude can contribute to the examination and conceptualization of community ambivalence in sentiment. Thus, we included all the literature in Table A1 in our review.

3. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundations

3.1 Literature Review

3.1.1 Resident Sentiment

Sentiment as a subject has been studied extensively in different fields. Psychologists originally characterized sentiment as an enduring, complex, and organized system of dispositions that produces a certain emotion in a given situation. It is a psychological system that can be emotionally adapted to the ever-changing circumstances of its object and that corresponds to the duration of its object (Shand, 1922). Drawing on definitions of sentiment in social

psychology, Hsu et al. (2016) conceptualized resident sentiment as an encompassing construct to describe residents' overall perceptions/views of and emotional dispositions.

Existing research on resident sentiment consists of two main streams: methodological studies aiming to measure resident sentiment computationally and empirical studies analyzing resident sentiment in various contexts. The first stream is rooted in natural language processing techniques and the widespread use of big data (Alaei et al., 2019). Technically speaking, resident sentiment analytics is a positive and negative polarity dichotomy problem that relies on a pre-defined sentiment lexicon or a trained machine learning model (Fu et al., 2019). Gao et al. (2015) compared the performance of different open-source web services in the analysis of resident sentiments. Fu et al. (2019) proposed a method to classify resident sentiment from Chinese travel news texts and bridge the gap of previous research on sentiment analytics in tourism that did not emphasize predictive accuracy. On this foundation, Hao et al. (2020) further constructed a methodology for capturing dynamic resident sentiment from travel news texts.

The second research stream aims to observe resident sentiments in various contexts and analyze their relationship with other variables of interest. These empirical studies contribute to the understanding of resident sentiment by adding context-based evidence. For example, communities around nature-based tourism destinations are widely focused contexts, including ski areas (Johnson et al., 1994), national parks and protected areas (Perren et al., 2025; Van Hooreweghe, 2016), islands (Akhmedov et al., 2022; Ribeiro et al., 2018; Shakeela & Weaver, 2012), scuba diving locations (Scholtz & Saayman, 2018), coastal regions (Hanafiah et al., 2021), valleys (Mohammad Malik et al., 2024), and mountains (Gajdošíková, 2024). Some other studies focused on urban communities, such as small towns (Paradis, 2000), urban-rural fringes (Weaver & Lawton, 2001), and destinations developing casino (McCartney & In, 2016), cruise (McCaughey et al., 2018), sport event (Duignan et al., 2022; Kirilenko & Stepchenkova, 2017; Scholtz, 2019), festival (Skoultsos et al., 2020), religious (P.J et al., 2020; Young et al., 2021), and heritage (Chauma & Ngwira, 2022; Foroughi et al., 2023) tourism. Resident sentiment toward tourism was found to be complex and ever-changing in these study contexts, with residents tending to hold positive sentiments before the expansion of tourism activities, while their sentiments became complicated as tourism develops (Johnson et al., 1994).

In addition, prior research has shed light on resident sentiment's relationship with other variables. For example, Chen et al. (2021) measured Hong Kong resident sentiments in five components (i.e., cognitive and affective attitudes toward tourists, identification with tourists,

sense of superiority, and feeling of relative deprivation), which were shown to influence residents' support for tourism development and behavioral responses to tourists. Recently, overtourism has been recognized as a significant source of negative resident sentiments (Aston et al., 2023; Cheung & Li, 2019; Kirilenko et al., 2023) because it undermines their perceived control over tourism activities and tourists (Gössling et al., 2020), and increased community involvement can reduce such negative sentiments (Arıkan Saltık & Turgut, 2021). Negative sentiments may also come from crises and media coverage (Godovykh et al., 2021; Li et al., 2024b; Shakeela & Weaver, 2012). Positive resident sentiment, on the other hand, may come from the perceived social responsibility of businesses (Gursoy et al., 2019) and expected tourism sustainability (Ribeiro et al., 2018), in addition to satisfactory host-guest interactions (Li et al., 2024b). Positive resident sentiments are not only a sign of social sustainability but also offer tangible economic value as residents' advocacy behaviors on social media could attract more tourists (Lever et al., 2021; Uchinaka et al., 2019).

Traditionally, studies on resident sentiment tend to pertain to the population's overall sentiment. Given the varied sentiments among members of a community, the overall resident sentiment lacks the ability to characterize sentimental divergences, thereby failing to meet the theoretical and practical needs of inquiring and facilitating sustainable host-guest relationships. Furthermore, most prior studies are location-rooted empirical studies, focusing on popular destinations such as Hong Kong (Chen et al., 2021; Cheung & Li, 2019; Hao et al., 2020) or the United States (Kirilenko et al., 2023; Perren et al., 2025). Although empirical research can contribute to knowledge by providing insights from measurements, constructs, or models in various contexts, research that can conceptualize observed phenomena and develop theories is also needed.

3.1.2 Ambivalence among Residents

Discussions about ambivalence started as early as Plato and Aristotle. The concept emphasizes the simultaneous existence of opposite attitudes or sentiments. Most of the psychology literature defines ambivalence as "a psychological state in which a person holds mixed feelings (positive and negative) toward some psychological object" (Gardner, 1987, p. 241). Several other definitions have been proposed, each with its own focus. For example, "simultaneously oppositional positive and negative orientations toward an object. Ambivalence includes cognition ('I think about X') and/or emotion ('I feel about X')" (Ashforth et al., 2014, p. 1454); "the simultaneous experience of opposing orientations toward an object or target, where 'orientation refers to the actor's alignment or position with regard to the object" (Rothman et

al., 2017, p. 35). Psychological ambivalence is also defined from an attitude perspective as coexisting of both positive and negative evaluations of a given object (Jost & Burgess, 2000; van Harreveld et al., 2015).

Sociologists such as Merton (1976) have revealed how organizational structures, including roles and norms, comprise conflicting values and beliefs (i.e., sociological ambivalence). Therefore, sociological ambivalence does not refer to a state of psychological or sentimental ambivalence, but rather to society's conflicting expectations. With this, the concept of ambivalence has been extended to the group level, where a group can be conceptualized as ambivalent when it is composed of actors who (1) are each ambivalent (holographic ambivalence) or (2) are not ambivalent in their own right, but whose thoughts or sentiments are in direct opposition to those of other actors, thus the group is defined as ambivalent (ideological ambivalence) (Pradies & Pratt, 2010). This study focuses on the latter because people tend to express consistent attitudes or sentiments after they have negotiated their ambivalent sentiments (Festinger, 1962). For example, Ma et al. (2024) uncovered that residents' ambivalence would transform into different attitudes due to their different information processing strategies; and Chen et al. (2019) found that residents would express their overall attitudes toward tourism development even though they have ambivalent attitudes. Therefore, ideological ambivalence can be seen as a state that takes into account intraindividual ambivalence. In addition, resident sentiment toward tourists at the community level aggregates the overall sentiments and concerns the complex role of social structures, depicting how individual sentiments spring to group-level consequences.

Existing tourism research on residents' ambivalence is mainly empirical, and qualitative and quantitative methods are used to derive the ambivalent attitudes or evaluations in particular situations. In the cultural tourism context, residents are observed to be both dependent on tourism demand and concerned about the destruction of culture and tradition (Cho, 2020; Deblock, 2013; Ivanova & Buda, 2020; Joseph & Kavoori, 2001; Mbaiwa, 2011). Concerning festivals and exhibitions, residents have simultaneously positive and negative attitudes toward the impacts of tourism (Chen et al., 2019; Green, 2002; Melville, 2024), and ambivalent cognitions about their own identities (Garcia, 2016). Residents living near nature-based tourism sites perceive opportunities (e.g., economic gains) and threats (e.g., higher rents) concurrently (Goodson et al., 2024; Nygård & Uthardt, 2011; Tumusiime & Svarstad, 2011). Rural residents' attitudes toward the future development of tourism and its impact on the environment are also ambivalent, and ambivalence changes as tourism develops (Bender &

Kerstetter, 2020; Huang et al., 2021; Ma et al., 2024). Furthermore, residents' ambivalence is reflected in their attitudes toward specific ethnic groups (Nelson & Matthews, 2018; Woosnam et al., 2018), such as tourists of a certain nationality, and toward specific identity groups (Brollo & Celata, 2023; Villa, 2019), such as short-term migrants.

Extant research on residents' ambivalence focuses primarily on their ambivalent attitudes toward and support for tourism. Compared to attitude, sentiment is more lasting and encompassing and thus is a more powerful tool to predict resident behaviors (Chen et al., 2021). Theoretically, the examination of resident ambivalence of sentiment contributes to an in-depth understanding of resident sentiment and its role in shaping resident behaviors. Given the enduring nature of sentiment, public policies tailored to the residents' sentiment ambivalence would be more effective by addressing concerns in the community. Furthermore, prior studies on resident ambivalence are mostly location-specific and observational. Although Chen et al. (2025) discussed the ambivalence of resident sentiment in a recent study, it was still confined to the context of border tourism in a Chinese city. Conceptualizing community ambivalence by integrating resident sentiment and ambivalence is of value because a holistically theorized framework synthesizing the results of multiple empirical studies is currently lacking.

3.2 Theoretical Foundations of Community Ambivalence

3.2.1 Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), explains how individuals derive part of their self-concept from their group membership, which is one of the most influential socio-psychological theories explaining intergroup relations (Chen et al., 2018). Tajfel and Turner (1986) proposed a differentiation between personal and social identities based on the distinction between interpersonal (where behaviors are largely influenced by individual variables) and group (where behaviors are largely determined by category-based processes) settings. Social identity theory focuses on the latter and aims to link social identity with group membership. The theory suggests that individuals locate the group to which they belong based on their social identity; and social groups provide the features that define the self-concept of members by providing normative values and affective connections associated with the membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Social identity theory explores the phenomena of "ingroup" and "outgroup", the underlying idea being that identities are constituted through a process of difference defined relatively or flexibly, depending on the activity in which an individual engages (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Individuals will endeavor to attain or maintain a positive social identity (and

thus enhance their self-esteem) that derives primarily from beneficial comparisons between the ingroup and the relevant outgroup (Brown, 2000).

Resident and tourist are two typical social identities at tourist destinations; thus, social identity theory has been widely utilized in research on residents' sentiments toward tourists (Chen et al., 2018, 2021, 2025). In addition, social identity theory contributed to examinations of residents' attitudes toward tourism development (Lever et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2014). To maintain and pursue a favorable social identity, residents would separate themselves from tourists from the sentimental and behavioral perspectives. Due to the powerful explanatory capacity of this theory for the relationship between ingroups and outgroups, we draw on it to theorize the formation of ambivalence in a community.

3.2.2 Social Influence Theory

Social influence theory explains how individuals adjust their behaviors and attitudes to meet the demands of a social environment (Kelman, 1953). Social influence may occur due to some explicit requests, but can also result from individuals' perceptions of what others might do or think. Kelman (1953) proposed three modes of social influence acceptance, namely, compliance, identification, and internalization. Compliance refers to a type of response to a request in which individuals agree with others apparently, but privately retain a different opinion (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). It occurs because individuals hope to achieve a favorable reaction from other individuals or a group. Identification refers to the circumstance where individuals are influenced by someone beloved or trusted. It occurs because individuals pursue to maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship with other individuals or a group. Internalization refers to the true acceptance of attitudes or behaviors both publicly and privately. It occurs because the content conveyed by the influence is intrinsically rewarding.

Regardless of the means, social influence can change people's attitudes and behaviors to varying degrees because (1) attitude is a societal outcome, which is conditioned by social customs, values, and norms, as well as a reflection of individual tendencies; (2) social influence affects different people to different extents; and (3) the degree to which people are receptive to influence depends on the impact, the characteristics of the influencing source, and the message being conveyed (Asch, 1961; Festinger, 1954). Meanwhile, studies suggest that social influence may not only lead individuals to become more similar to each other, but also trigger rejection of attitude change or even the pursuit of being more different (Hovland et al., 1957). In reality, social influence is sometimes denied, and individuals may be entrenched in their views on some issues and compromised on others (Flache et al., 2017).

Given that individuals attain self-esteem through social identity, residents are naturally influenced by other members of the community. With frequent direct and indirect interactions among residents, social influences are likely to play a role in changing their sentiments toward tourists. However, social influences may make the ingroup more similar or cause the emergence of sentiment diversity among ingroup members. Therefore, the social influence theory can underpin the construction of a mechanism for the transformation of community ambivalence in situations where multiple influences are considered.

4. A Conceptual Framework of Community Ambivalence

Resident sentiment and ambivalence are both research topics that have received much attention in tourism and sociology research, but these interconnected concepts have rarely been integrated. A holistic view of the formation and transformation of community ambivalence of sentiments toward tourists could facilitate the development of sustainable host-guest relationships and an understanding of resident sentiment dynamics. This section aims to establish a conceptual framework of community ambivalence and reveal its formation and transformation mechanism by leveraging social identity theory and social influence theory. Members within the community may differ in their sentiments toward tourists, leading to the formation of community ambivalence. Community ambivalence and community congruence may interconvert because of resident sentiment changes. Details are shown in Figure 4.

[Insert Figure 4.]

Figure 4 illustrates the conceptual framework of community ambivalence formation and transformation, the processes of which are based on social identity theory and social influence theory, respectively. The two theories are closely related. According to Cialdini and Goldstein (2004), a sense of belonging to a group derives from social identity and contributes to the likelihood that individuals will be socially influenced. Social identity is a source of residents' personal self-esteem, and in order to maintain it, the identity boundaries between residents and tourists are clearly delineated, thus activating sentiments toward tourists; and under the influence of diverse factors, community ambivalence is ultimately formed. The psychological need to pursue social identity makes individuals vulnerable to the social influence from the majority group in the community, resulting in community ambivalence transformation. Therefore, social identity promotes social influence, and social influence enhances social identity, both of which together build the foundation of community ambivalence.

4.1 Community Ambivalence Formation

The conceptual framework uses two steps to explain community ambivalence. The first step is community ambivalence formation. Social identity theory argues that social groups present identity features that define the self-concept of group members by providing normative values and affective connections associated with group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Based on the identity, the ingroup and outgroup are formed. People affiliate with different social groups based on social identities, and residents and tourists are the two most typical social groups in the tourism context. Influenced by society-level factors, residents' sentiments toward tourists are activated. Social identity has been seen as a psychological attachment to a group; ingroup members may hold negative sentiment of others to maintain self-esteem, or positive sentiment if they treat themselves as in a more inclusive group with outgroup members (Chen et al., 2021). Thus, even though social identity activates and shapes the tone of resident sentiments toward tourists, individual-level factors, including both resident and tourist characteristics, will lead to different sentiments of each resident toward tourists, thus forming ambivalence at the community level.

4.1.1 Resident Sentiment Activation

Resident sentiment activation is an act describing how resident sentiment toward tourists is triggered from an inactive state. In constructing self-identity in the community, residents would deliberately reinforce their differences with outgroups (i.e., tourists), which would trigger perceptions and sentiments of the outgroups (Brown, 2000). Simultaneously, as residents incorporate their self-concept into the ingroup (Hogg et al., 1995), sentiment toward tourists would be activated. Given that it is a sentiment from one group to another, many society-level factors can influence the activation of residents' sentiments toward tourists.

First, social role is a critical factor influencing resident sentiment activation. People participate in everyday activities based on socially defined roles (e.g., mother, singer, teacher). Each role is a set of rights, obligations, expectations, norms, and behaviors that a person must face and fulfill (Biddle, 1986). Therefore, resident sentiment toward tourists is based on social status and other factors in a given situation, reflecting the social demands of that role.

Sharing common values is another prominent driver of social identity formation; therefore, common values contribute to forming resident sentiments (Li et al., 2024b). Concerns about negative impacts on culture (McCaughey et al., 2018; Van Hooreweghe, 2016) and religion (Young et al., 2021), which are the cornerstone of a society's common values, have been found to have an impact on residents' sentiments toward tourism. In addition, events

(Duignan et al., 2022; Kirilenko & Stepchenkova, 2017) and tourism mascots (Xu et al., 2022) are typically carriers of shared values and are thought to inspire national sentiment, which in turn influences support for tourism.

Meanwhile, resident sentiment is closely linked to the city's overall economic and industrial level (Johnson et al., 1994; Scholtz, 2019), with residents more inclined to have positive attitudes toward tourism during a financial crisis (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020; Hateftabar & Rasoolimanesh, 2023). However, the relationship between the overall economy and resident sentiment toward tourism is dynamic and non-linear (Hao et al., 2020). Residents usually hold positive sentiment toward tourism at the early stage of development, and negative sentiments emerge as the industry expands (Johnson et al., 1994).

Further, social exchange, one of the main perspectives explaining how residents perceive and react to tourism (Chen et al., 2020), suggests that individuals are rational and will initiate exchanges based on a subjective cost-benefit consideration (Emerson, 1976). Residents will develop a strong attachment when they are fully aware of the economic, social, and cultural developments brought about by tourism (Mohammad Malik et al., 2024), which may further influence their sentiments toward tourists (McCaughey et al., 2018). However, when the perceived cost on the societal level is too high, the overall sentiment of residents toward tourism deteriorates (Hanafiah et al., 2021; Paradis, 2000). For example, overtourism leads to a shortage of resources for residents, whose sentiments toward tourists become negative (Cheung & Li, 2019; Gössling et al., 2020).

Furthermore, residents' stereotypes of tourists have come under scrutiny in recent years, and they have been found to influence residents' sentiments toward tourists (Chen & Hsu, 2021; Hsu & Chen, 2019). Hsu and Chen (2019) built a conceptual framework of the formation and development of tourist stereotypes using attribution theory and found that stereotypes are influenced by personal and contextual factors, and tourist stereotypes could influence residents' sentiments. Some other studies focused on the relationship between tourist stereotypes and resident emotions, which also supports the influence of stereotypes on resident sentiment, as emotion is a direct driver of sentiment (Munezero et al., 2014). For example, Tse and Tung (2022, 2025) connected the interrelationships among tourist stereotypes, resident emotions, and resident behaviors.

Besides the above discussed items, more resident sentiment activation factors await empirical affirmation. For example, physical and mental states are important influences on people's sentiment formation, as unhealthy physical conditions and mentalities limit the activation of positive sentiments (Cannon, 1927; Shackman et al., 2009). Thus, Propositions 1-2 suggest these as triggers of resident sentiment activation.

Proposition 1. Individuals' physical conditions affect the activation of resident sentiments.

Proposition 2. Individuals' mental well-being, including factors such as the pace of life in society and daily stress level, as well as mentalities, affects the activation of resident sentiments.

4.1.2 Resident Sentiment Diversity

Social identity activates and shapes the tone of resident sentiments toward tourists. However, since residents attach to the community at different levels and many individual-level factors influence sentiment (Chen et al., 2021), not all residents share the same sentiment (Pavlić et al., 2020). Although intra-individual ambivalence may also occur, it would be negotiated and expressed as an overall sentiment (Chen et al., 2019; Ma et al., 2024). Thus, this study considers individual sentiment as individuals' overall sentiment after digesting the intra-individual ambivalence. Differences among the individuals' overall sentiments are formed by individual-level factors, including both resident and tourist characteristics.

Residents' perceived benefits influence their sentiments substantially (Ribeiro et al., 2018). For example, most residents are positive about tourism because of the benefits to their community, but younger populations and ethnic minorities may hold different sentiments due to varying perceptions of the benefits received (Kirilenko et al., 2023; Scholtz, 2019). The perceived economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits of tourism positively affect residents' sentiments and supportive behaviors (McCaughey et al., 2018; Mohammad Malik et al., 2024). However, benefits may be perceived differently by people living in different areas, e.g., residents affected by congestion will have negative feelings (Weaver & Lawton, 2001).

Resident involvement in tourism is another influencing factor. Gajdošíková (2024) found a large number of non-involved residents, and lacking community involvement is a critical source of negative sentiment (Chauma & Ngwira, 2022). Albeit the many reasons for low involvement, residents' high willingness to involve in tourism could rectify negative impacts (Hanafiah et al., 2021). Thus, community-based tourism is seen as an effective means of avoiding anti-tourist sentiment (Arıkan Saltık & Turgut, 2021). Integration of tourism with the daily activities of residents can even have positive effects in both economic and sentiment realms (Gajdošíková, 2024; Johnson et al., 1994). However, the more involved a resident is does not mean the more positive their sentiments are, as misperceptions and miscommunication can breed negative sentiments (Scholtz & Saayman, 2018).

Belongingness reflects the subjective sense of "being a part of" to avoid alienation (Lee & Robbins, 1995), therefore is another factor that influences an individual's sentiment toward an outgroup. Attachment, a construct of belongingness, is commonly leveraged to reveal resident sentiment (Paradis, 2000). When residents experience social and environmental changes from increased density caused by tourists, place attachment contributes to negative sentiment by influencing residents' perceptions of lacking control over tourism and tourist activities (Gössling et al., 2020).

Self-esteem is another important factor that affects sentiment. Specifically, Perren et al. (2024) identified the direct and positive influence of psychological, social, and economic empowerment on residents' support for tourism, and empowerment describes how tourism can increase residents' pride and self-esteem and make them feel unique and special. In addition, Chen et al. (2021) identified that residents' sense of superiority mentality serves as an underlying dimension of resident sentiment. Sense of superiority refers to a psychological feeling or attitude that results from an individual's self-esteem that they are superior to others in some way (e.g., ability, status, wealth).

Resident sentiment is largely formed based on their direct and/or indirect interactions with tourists; therefore, tourist characteristics are also sources of resident sentiment diversity (Scholtz & Saayman, 2018). While overtourism can trigger negative sentiments among residents, these negativities do not stem from the presence of tourists (Gössling et al., 2020), but rather from their violation of social norms (Aston et al., 2023), as residents fear that the community cannot be burdened with these negative impacts (Paradis, 2000). Thus, the level of civilization expressed by tourists through behaviors and manners is an important factor influencing residents' perceptions of tourists (Chen & Hsu, 2021). In addition, since residents expect economic gains from tourism, the consumption power of tourists has long been associated with resident sentiments (Chen & Hsu, 2021; Kim et al., 2020).

Further, compatibility reflects tourists' similarity with and friendliness toward residents. Social distance has been used to uncover the role of compatibility (Kim et al., 2020; Zhao & Xie, 2011), finding that residents have favorable relationships with tourists of the same nationality because of fewer cross-cultural conflicts (Sinkovics & Penz, 2009). Since people are prone to see positive outcomes from interaction with others who share similar beliefs, emotions, and behaviors (Li et al., 2024b), tourist compatibility can influence resident sentiments toward tourists. Furthermore, tourist responsibility, a set of discretionary decisions and actions taken by tourists to protect the well-being of a host community (Crilly et al., 2008),

is a critical factor leading to resident sentiment diversity. As overt behaviors can be important cues for people to generate impressions of others (Heider, 1958; Jones & Davis, 1965), responsible behaviors of tourists would trigger positive sentiments of residents.

In addition to the tourist and resident characteristics summarized above, other factors may also influence resident sentiment diversity, awaiting testing in future empirical studies. For example, people's basic psychological needs include autonomy (i.e., desire to be causal agents of one's own life) and competence (i.e., seek to control the outcome and experience mastery) (Zhang et al., 2019); thus, residents with high autonomy and perceived control would be more self-motivated to interact with tourists, and being more positive (or negative) in sentiment. Further, residents having limited contact with tourists are less likely to develop personally meaningful sentiments because they may rely more on news coverage, which has a significant effect on resident sentiments and may lead to sentiment convergence (Godovykh et al., 2021; Hao et al., 2020). Hence, tourism offerings (and types of tourists attracted) that limit resident-tourist interactions would hinder resident sentiment diversity. For example, cruise tourism usually limits the interaction of tourists with members of the local community because the visit duration at ports of call is limited. Thus, Propositions 3-4 are proposed.

Proposition 3. Residents' autonomy, competence, and perceived control over tourism activities affect their sentiment toward tourists and tourism development.

Proposition 4. Tourism offerings and the types of tourists attracted impact resident sentiment through the nature of resident-tourist interaction.

4.1.3 Community Ambivalence

Following the definition of Pradies and Pratt (2010, p. 1), community ambivalence occurs when "groups embody opposing or contradictory thoughts and feelings". That is, community ambivalence arises from diverse resident sentiments. Pradies and Pratt (2010) argued that interactions are critical to group-level ambivalence, which can arise from interactions between individuals or between subgroups within a larger group. Consequently, different levels of community ambivalence can be formed.

Figure 5 illustrates two scenarios of community ambivalence, Positive Predicament and Heightened Anxiety. Positive Predicament describes the situation where the community is ambivalent in sentiments toward tourists, while the overall sentiment is positive. Heightened Anxiety presents the situation when the community is also ambivalent in sentiments toward tourists, but the overall sentiment is negative. Although both scenarios indicate community

ambivalence, differences in the overall sentiment can lead to very different social climates, making it necessary to consider both community ambivalence and sentiment simultaneously.

[Insert Figure 5.]

Amsterdam, Netherlands is a good example of Positive Predicament, which demonstrates the rigor of the proposed concept. It has long been recognized as one of the top tourist destinations in Europe. Although tourism contributes to the local economy, the limited space in the city and the increasing tourist volume cause high pressure on the city (Travel and Tour World, 2025), thus leading to community ambivalence. Consequently, the community of Amsterdam is in a predicament, as one resident said, "I like it here, but I won't stay here all my life, partly due to the tourists. They generally behave well – it's not that they are rowdies – but they don't know the rules of the city" (Gerritsma & Vork, 2017, p. 92).

Overtourism has become a key factor leading to residents' negative sentiments toward tourists in many destinations. For example, with only 55,000 residents, Venice, Italy attracted more than 5 million tourists in 2023 (Statista, 2024a), driving up traffic congestion and housing rents. The island was not designed to host so many people, thus most residents do not want to mingle with tourists (Spotted by Locals, 2020). However, the tourist flow benefits some residents by boosting the development of cultural and artistic events, traditional markets, and locally designed offerings (Georgiou, 2023). Thus, as tourism creates employment opportunities and promotes local artisans and designers, those involved in these fields are likely to have positive sentiments toward tourists. Consequently, the majority of negative sentiments keep the community in a state of Heightened Anxiety.

Community ambivalence may influence individuals' cognitions and behaviors, thus leading to some specific responses of residents toward tourists. Here we discuss several types of responses with respective conditions for their generation, and these responses may not occur at the same time. First, individual-level ambivalence has always been associated with amplified responses toward outgroups. The ambivalent attitudes may raise psychological discomfort, and more extreme judgment and behavior are needed to reduce this discomfort (Maio et al., 2001; Rothman et al., 2017). At the community level, although individuals themselves are not originally ambivalent, discomfort may arise under the social influence when individuals detect differences between the sentiments of their ingroup members and of their own. This discomfort comes from the individual's quest to conform to the community's position. As a result, individuals attempt to reduce discomfort through individually amplified responses.

In contrast to amplified responses, community ambivalence may also lead to vacillation (Rothman et al., 2017). The community experiences vacillation due to its inability to develop unified sentiments or behaviors toward the outgroup. In this case, the community has the potential to take on either of the two poles of sentiment but is unable to make a unified choice. On this basis, increased tolerance will occur as a result of long-standing and simultaneous conflicting sentiments and cognitions (Rothman et al., 2017). Increasing information search and discussion may contribute to members' acceptance of the ingroup's affective and cognitive complexity (Rothman & Wiesenfeld, 2007).

Concerning the impact of community ambivalence on responses to tourists, more outcomes need to be empirically validated. The social cost of voicing an opinion online is lower compared to face-to-face communication, so people are now more accustomed to communicating on social media (Uchinaka et al., 2019). Similarly, social media has become a popular platform for interaction between tourists and residents (Lever et al., 2021). When community ambivalence arises, community members may view expressing their sentiments toward tourists online as a way to avoid direct intra-community sentiment clashes. Additionally, lasting community ambivalence can make the community even more polarized. Thus, Propositions 5-6 are offered.

Proposition 5. Community ambivalence enhances the tendency of residents to express their sentiments online rather than face-to-face with fellow residents or tourists.

Proposition 6. Prolonged community ambivalence triggers negative sentiments and amplified responses toward tourists among residents.

4.2 Community Ambivalence Transformation

The process of community ambivalence transformation is proposed based on social influence theory. Residents' sentiments may change under the influence of individual- and society-level factors, thus making community ambivalence transform accordingly. Community ambivalence may be enhanced or maintained, which means the resident community continues to be in a state of ambivalence. Community ambivalence may also diminish or even dissolve, thus bringing the resident community to the state of congruence.

4.2.1 Resident Sentiment Change

Changes in sentiments occur from time to time in response to external stimuli (Hao et al., 2020). Social influence theory, originally proposed by Kelman (1953), is a framework for explaining changes in people's attitudes or behaviors to adapt to the demands of the social environment. Individuals are socially influenced because they are convinced by compelling arguments

(Myers, 1982), want to be similar to others (Akers et al., 1979), are unsure of a decision and follow the advice of others (Bikhchandani et al., 1992), or perceive social pressure to conform to social norms (Festinger et al., 1950; Wood, 2000). Thus, residents' sentiments toward tourists are influenced by the interaction between the two groups, as well as by the society- and individual-level factors, as shown in Figure 6.

[Insert Figure 6.]

In addition to updating their disposition from interactions with tourists, resident characteristics are also important in influencing their sentiment toward tourists. Individual coherence is a form of attitude and ability that reflects whether an individual is open to sentiment change. Research has shown that group members who are more confident in their judgments are more likely to influence others, rather than be influenced by others, regardless of the accuracy of their actual task (Zarnoth & Sniezek, 1997). Also, such attitudes and abilities are thought to be determinants of people's sentiment change by influencing their information processing (Wood, 2000). When people are both motivated and capable of processing information independently, attitudes are based on a more thoughtful and systematic assessment of relevant information; when people are less motivated or less able, attitude judgments are based on the accessibility of the source, information, or situation and are assessed through shortcut processing strategies (Hsu & Chen, 2019; Wood, 2000). For example, people may simply choose to agree with the majority position or the position of someone they know well.

Societal influences also contribute to residents' sentiment changes. Individuals always try to become involved and effective group members by understanding the group view, followed by adopting the ingroup position (Haslam et al., 1996). Residents could be persuaded by ingroup members' views because of their need to reinforce their group identity (Wood, 2000). Thus, resident sentiments toward tourists could be influenced by the opinions of other ingroup members. Baron et al. (1996) reported that highly motivated participants of their study rely on their own evaluation, except when information is present for too short a period to determine the correct answer; at that point, they appear to employ a heuristic strategy that relies on the judgments of others. In contrast, moderately motivated participants use a similar heuristic strategy; that is, they rely on others' estimation regardless of whether they can determine the correct answer themselves (Baron et al., 1996). Thus, highly motivated residents tend to form their sentiments toward tourists through their intergroup interactions with tourists,

whereas other residents are more likely to rely on ingroup assimilation to form their sentiments toward tourists.

Furthermore, social events and social freedom may influence sentiment change. Due to the role of media propaganda in orienting residents' sentiments (Gössling et al., 2020), some breaking social news may affect residents' sentiments (Shakeela & Weaver, 2012). For example, positive COVID-19 cases and news coverage directly affected residents' sentiments toward tourism and tourists (Godovykh et al., 2021). Meanwhile, social freedom, defined as "with respect to a holder of power, a respondent is free to do X or not-X" (Oppenheim, 2004, p. 176), is a factor that can influence sentiment change. Residents' sentiments toward tourists are rooted in the social structure, and in sociology, such sentiments are conceptualized as macro-social mentalities that pervade the whole society over time (Chen et al., 2021). Thus, the extent to which the social climate can accommodate changing and different sentiments from the mainstream affects the likelihood of sentiment change among residents.

Different communities may show different sentiments toward the same tourism activity, with age, city size, and industrial development all having an impact (Scholtz, 2019). For instance, the young population groups and racial minorities in Florida hold negative sentiment toward tourism, while most other people have highly positive sentiment toward tourism development (Kirilenko et al., 2023). Thus, factors related to the structure of the community are considered as aspects influencing resident sentiment change, because they may form social influence within the community. In addition, people who have a high-level community attachment participate more in local activities, such as shopping or patronizing restaurants (Paradis, 2000). Since these individuals have more opportunities to engage with tourists, their sentiment changes may be more frequent. Therefore, Propositions 7-8 are thus offered.

Proposition 7. Changes in community population and structure influence resident sentiment. **Proposition 8.** Changes in resident identity influence sentiment. When community attachment increases, residents' sentiments toward tourists change.

4.2.2 Community Congruence

In addition to community ambivalence, resident sentiment change may also trigger sentiment congruence within the community. Community congruence is defined as the state in which the residents of a community agree with each other and are sentimentally congruent toward tourists. During interactions among ingroup members, community congruence can be formed through both internal and external mechanisms. Homology (Bessi et al., 2016), mirroring an individual's need for internal cohesion, is the tendency to socialize and engage with others,

where the same information is constantly reinforced due to ingroups' similarities, resulting in a cocoon of information that makes sentiments similar. Argumentation is a means by which individuals and groups use reasoning as a tool to achieve their ends (Mercier & Sperber, 2011), and it assimilates sentiments by influencing people with external forces, such as new information and activities.

Under both mechanisms of homophily and argumentation, sentiment change in the community may make resident sentiments toward tourists similar. On the one hand, mutual information reinforcement and peer pressure make residents prone to develop sentiments similar to those of the social mainstream; on the other hand, factors such as media propaganda and public events contribute to bringing residents' sentiments closer to the mainstream public opinion of the society. Based on the outcomes of congruence, there would be two kinds of community congruence, as shown in Figure 7. Both scenarios, approaching consensus on their sentiments toward tourists, have completely different social impacts because they are at two extremes of the spectrum.

[Insert Figure 7.]

Resentment describes the overwhelming majority in the community holding negative sentiments toward tourists, causing the community as a whole to embody an atmosphere of aversion and rejection of tourists (Doxey, 1975). Barcelona could be an example of a destination experiencing Resentment, reflected by anti-tourist protests (Guy, 2024). According to official figures, in 2023, nearly 26 million tourists stayed overnight, but only 7.78 million of them stayed in legally registered hotels (Statista, 2024b). Thus, although tourists spent \$13.8 billion, the tourism revenues have not been distributed rationally. Meanwhile, the influx of tourists has driven up rents and housing prices in local communities; for example, rents have risen by 68% and the cost of buying a house has risen by 38% over the past decade (Guy, 2024). In addition, short-staying tourists, such as cruise passengers, visit only a few businesses or attractions, thus generating limited revenue for only a small number of entities. Due to the significant negative impact and lack of common economic gain, negative sentiments dominate and push such destinations into a state of Resentment. To alleviate the situation, the local government began to take measures such as charging taxes on overnight tourists and reducing the number of cruise passengers.

Social Harmony is on the opposite end of the spectrum, reflecting a situation where most residents (and thus the community as a whole) have positive sentiments toward tourists.

Nepal and Bhutan are both famous tourist destinations known for friendly people and beautiful scenery. Both countries are very open to tourism, and communities generally have positive sentiments toward foreign tourists. The Nepal government's efforts to develop ecotourism (Upadhaya et al., 2022) enhance community participation. The presence of tourists allows for the sharing of authentic local culture, which increases residents' pride in their community (Cho, 2020; Uchinaka et al., 2019). In addition, Nepal's tourism revenue contributes to 7.9% of its GDP and creates 1.05 million jobs; thus, residents are very friendly to tourists (Upadhaya et al., 2022). Bhutan reduces the adverse effects of overtourism by targeting and taxing wealthy tourists (CNN Travel, 2023). Apart from the economic benefits that the community can derive from tourism, the local Bhutanese also view cultural exchanges as a source of pride, and as such, the local community is in Social Harmony.

However, community congruence may narrow members' cognitions and affects, thus leading to groupthink, where group members prioritize consensus and conformity over critical thinking and independent judgment (Janis, 1971). In such cases, group members may suppress their independent thinking or dissenting opinions to maintain group harmony. Off-mainstream opinions within the community may be present but are often downplayed or ignored to preserve group cohesion. Thus, groupthink may lead to extreme opinions or even behavior radicalization among the isolated minority because congruence dampens non-mainstream information, which leads to a growing information cocoon. Guided by information from a single sentiment orientation, a few community members' opinions may become radicalized.

In addition to the above summary, other possible responses are also to be verified by future empirical research. Because constraints on expressing sentiments online are lower than those offline (Wu et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024), people tend to exaggerate their sentiments, which is likely to lead to the emergence of more polarized sentiments. Moving beyond the framework, residents are important stakeholders in tourism development and can influence the delivery of services (McCartney & In, 2016), thus, destination competitiveness and economic structure may be strengthened (weakened) by the positive (negative) community congruence. Future empirical research could explore Propositions 9-10 in-depth, guided by sociological and psychological theories, to develop further insights.

Proposition 9. Community congruence causes residents whose views are in the absolute minority to communicate more intensely online compared to face-to-face.

Proposition 10. Community congruence leads to over-dependence on or exclusion from tourism activities, resulting in a less diversified economic structure. When inertia sets in, the industry becomes less efficient and may become slow in responding to crises.

Furthermore, research context and methods are also essential for theory building. Cross-context and multi-method studies lead to generalizable findings and in-depth understandings of community ambivalence formation. We encourage the use of new and multiple methods to empirically validate the relationships proposed. Traditional studies mainly used qualitative and/or questionnaire data to measure resident ambivalence (Chen et al., 2019; Green, 2002; Melville, 2024), which may be subject to self-report bias. Big data analytics have been conducted with advanced techniques such as large language models to explore tourist and resident sentiment (Fu et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2024). With the development of new computing technologies and the abundance of multimodal data, opportunities abound for more accurate capturing and investigation of resident ambivalence.

Proposition 11. Conducting cross-context research on resident sentiment leads to more generalizable findings about community ambivalence.

Proposition 12. Utilizing advanced techniques, such as large language models, and multimethods, leads to more accurate and timely capturing and understanding of community ambivalence.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Dynamics of Community Ambivalence and Resident Sentiments

Community ambivalence may change with the addition of new residents, the emigration of current residents, and sentiment changes among residents, thus making community ambivalence fluid. Because the overall sentiment of a community toward tourists could move between the two extremes of positivity and negativity, the two types of community ambivalence (Figure 5, Positive Predicament and Heightened Anxiety) are in a dynamic state of flux. Yet, direct changes between the two community congruence states (Figure 7, Resentment and Social Harmony) are not possible because extreme reversal of the sentiments of all members cannot be achieved in a short time. Nevertheless, the size of the resident subgroup with specific sentiments could evolve while the polarity of overall sentiment remains stable, allowing community ambivalence and community congruence to shift into each other. The details can be seen in Figure 8, where the horizontal axis represents the overall sentiment, with negative on the left and positive on the right. The vertical axis represents the degree of ambivalence, with community ambivalence on the top and community congruence on the

bottom. Social Harmony, Positive Predicament, Heightened Anxiety, and Resentment can be represented by each of the four quadrants.

[Insert Figure 8.]

Social Harmony reflects a healthy relationship between the resident and tourist groups, which is conducive to sustainable tourism development, and is, therefore, an ideal state sought by all stakeholders. As in the cases of Nepal and Bhutan, sustainable tourism is developed for tourists to enjoy cultural and ecological tourism and residents to reap the benefits of pride and financial gains (CNN Travel, 2023; Upadhaya et al., 2022). In actual practice, however, the community may develop negative sentiments and may have community ambivalence as tourism continues to develop. Since government agencies can improve resident sentiment through proper management (Weaver & Lawton, 2001) and effective communication, the status of Social Harmony can be achieved by constructively managing the dynamics of ambivalence. As the curved arrow in Figure 8, when Resentment occurs, destination management agencies can first try to navigate community ambivalence and change the state to Heightened Anxiety by turning the sentiments of minority subgroups into positive ones, then continue to expand the sizes of subgroups holding positive sentiments and gradually change the state to Positive Predicament, and finally try to reduce community ambivalence to achieve Social Harmony. For instance, the government agency of Copenhagen, Denmark, encourages residents and tourists to participate in regenerative actions, such as clean-ups or using sustainable transportation, which allow them to earn rewards like food, bike rides, and access to local experiences (VisitCopenhagen, 2025). Equal access to these activities encourages social interaction between the two groups, and the minority of residents who first come into contact with tourists will change their sentiments towards them. As the population involved in regenerative activities increases, their sentiments toward tourists, who temporarily become part of the community, would continue to change.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

As an original effort to conceptualize community ambivalence, this work has several theoretical implications. First, this study addresses a shortcoming in current research on resident sentiment, which either focuses on individual-level sentiment by constructing methods for calculating residents' sentiment one by one (Fu et al., 2019; Hao et al., 2020) or observes the overall resident sentiment in a specific location (Chen et al., 2021; Kirilenko et al., 2023). However, sentiment ambivalence within any community can lead to complex social

consequences. Without recognizing the differences in views and their potential influencing factors, the effectiveness of resident sentiment analytics would be compromised. This study conceptualizes community ambivalence, which offers a nuanced understanding of resident sentiment formation, diversity, and transformation.

Second, by identifying the four ambivalence dynamics, the study deepens the understanding of group-level ambivalence, particularly in a tourism context. On the one hand, existing studies on the impact of tourism on local communities summarized the dynamic evolution of resident sentiment. For example, Doxey (1975) summarized the changes in resident sentiment in four states (i.e., Euphoria, Apathy, Annoyance, and Antagonistic), and Butler (1980) proposed the life cycle of the destination and the corresponding changes in resident sentiment in six states (i.e., Exploration, Involvement, Development, Consolidation, Stagnation, and Decline or Rejuvenation). Nevertheless, the role of community ambivalence was not considered. The four proposed ambivalence states integrate the resident sentiment and ambivalence, revealing the developmental mechanisms of community ambivalence from a dynamic perspective. On the other hand, most previous research on ambivalence among residents has been observational for a particular location and has focused on residents' attitudes and evaluations (Chen et al., 2019; Ma et al., 2024); ambivalence research on residents' sentiments is lacking. The conceptual framework and four ambivalence dynamics proposed enable a detailed investigation of the mechanisms of community ambivalence and provide a reference for subsequent empirical research. At the same time, the contextualized possible influencing factors of residents' ambivalence are clarified, thus setting a foundation for the future development of ambivalence research in tourism.

Third, the study integrates ambivalence and sentiments to provide a more holistic view of community dynamics. Because not all residents have the same sentiment as the overall community-level sentiment, a comprehensive picture of sentiments within a community can be understood when ambivalence is taken into consideration concurrently. As tourism planning research gradually moves toward holding a holistic viewpoint that considers the views and positions of various stakeholders (Agyeiwaah et al., 2016), understanding the perspectives of host communities enables the achievement of sustainable goals through mutual understanding and cooperation (Farsari, 2018; Shrestha & L'Espoir Decosta, 2023). Therefore, this study draws attention to and offers a foundation of community ambivalence for tourism planning and development research. Further, destination marketing research often aims to improve tourist experiences (Wu & Yang, 2023). Taking resident sentiment and community ambivalence into

consideration would facilitate the cultivation of a hospitable environment where tourists feel welcomed with enjoyable experiences. The four types of ambivalence dynamics offer different service landscapes for destination marketing researchers to refine their conceptual underpinning and study context.

5.3 Practical Implications

This work also has some practical implications for tourism policymakers and destination management organizations. First, the conceptualization of community ambivalence reveals the mechanisms inherent in residents' sentiment inconsistencies, thereby providing tourism policymakers with a toolbox for systematically improving residents' sentiments toward tourists and tourism. For example, in the stage of community ambivalence formation, management agencies can actively publicize tourists' positive economic, social, and cultural contributions to communities and reduce negative stereotypes held by residents, thus stimulating more positive sentiments. In the stage of community ambivalence transformation, management agencies can tactically slow down the spread of negative sentiments according to the social atmosphere. For example, starting from the compliance mode of social influence (Kelman, 1953), by publicizing positive relevant social events or community sentiments, residents could be nudged to conform and achieve a favorable reaction from other members of the community. Although these individuals may still hold a different opinion privately, at least the open social atmosphere is more welcoming for tourists. Trusted public figures and beloved influencers could be engaged to facilitate the identification mode of social influence acceptance to further manage community ambivalence. Through time, the agenda of social influence could be internalized by members of the community.

Second, management agencies can try to cultivate better host-guest relationships based on the particular community ambivalence and congruence states. When Heightened Anxiety exists, the majority of residents' concerns should be addressed through corrective actions or communication campaigns to avoid negative views from becoming damaging actions that could result in potential conflicts between residents and tourists. When Positive Predicament occurs, management agencies and businesses should try to identify the specific causes of the minority group members' concerns and properly address those issues through the quality of product offerings, better organized tourist activities, and/or proper framing of messages to facilitate residents' understanding of the importance of tourism to convert the minority of residents to align with the majority positive views. When Resentment occurs, government agencies should take immediate action through new policies or amendments to existing policies

and regulations to address social tensions. Industry-wide, multi-stakeholder collaborative actions are required to calm down the community's emotions. When Social Harmony is reached, various activities can be organized to attract tourists and facilitate healthy interaction between residents and tourists to ensure the further sustainable development of tourism.

Third, the dynamic nature of community ambivalence provides destination management agencies with a dialectical perspective, and in practice, ambivalence needs to be strategically managed by taking the specific context into account. To realize healthy host-guest relationships, destination managers would strive for a near consensus of positive resident sentiments (i.e., Social Harmony). However, community ambivalence is not something that always needs to be avoided. When Resentment occurs, destination managers can first devise strategies to transform community views into the category of Heightened Anxiety by leveraging community ambivalence, that is, persuading a small group of residents to change their sentiments from negative to positive. Contrarily, when Positive Predicament occurs, destination managers may try to decrease community ambivalence and change the state to Social Harmony by convincing a portion of the minority residents who hold negative views to conform with the majority's positive sentiments. These could be done through incentives, communication campaigns, favorable policies, or moral appeals. For instance, the government agency of Flanders, Belgium, launched a large-scale listening project in 2017 to gather attitudes from residents and tourists and engage residents in policymaking, which has achieved its goal of balancing all stakeholders and flourishing the community (Travel to Tomorrow, 2023). In addition, the sentiments of Hong Kong residents have become more positive after the government tightened the border crossing policy for tourists and tightened the shopping restrictions on tourists (Hao et al., 2020). Therefore, leveraging or decreasing community ambivalence at the right time could help destinations create a healthy tourism social landscape.

5.4 Future Research Agenda

The conceptual framework of community ambivalence presented in Figure 4 illustrates the current understanding of the phenomenon based on a systematic literature review of relevant empirical studies, using the social identity and social influence theories as underpinning support. However, significant knowledge gaps exist. A few sample propositions are proposed to illustrate potential directions for future research, but they are by no means exhaustive, with many more possibilities to be derived. For example, additional variables relating to different stages of the resident community ambivalence formation and transformation are worthy of investigation. The framework is not meant for empirical testing in one comprehensive study.

Instead, it serves as a blueprint of various approaches that community ambivalence studies can use to enhance our understanding of the sociodynamic nature of the phenomenon. As additional theoretical development and empirical evidence become available, the framework proposed could be revised, expanded, and refined to further advance our theoretical understanding of this important topic.

Figure 1 Conceptual Research Flow

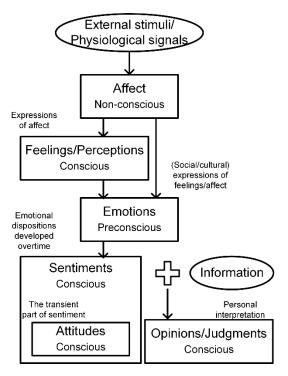


Figure 2 Associations of subjectivity terms

Note. Adapted from Munezero et al. (2014).

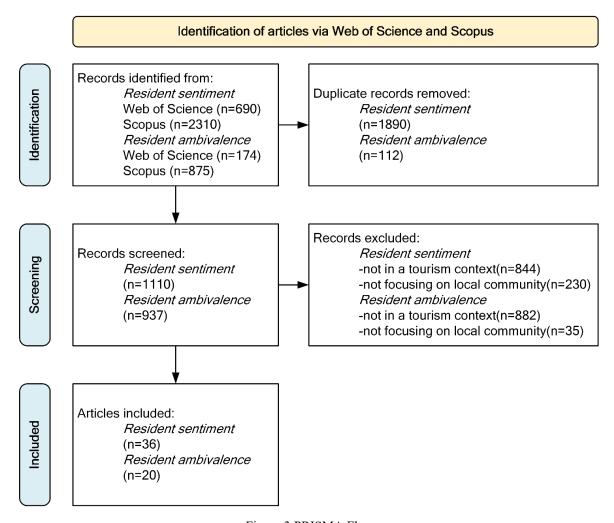


Figure 3 PRISMA Flow

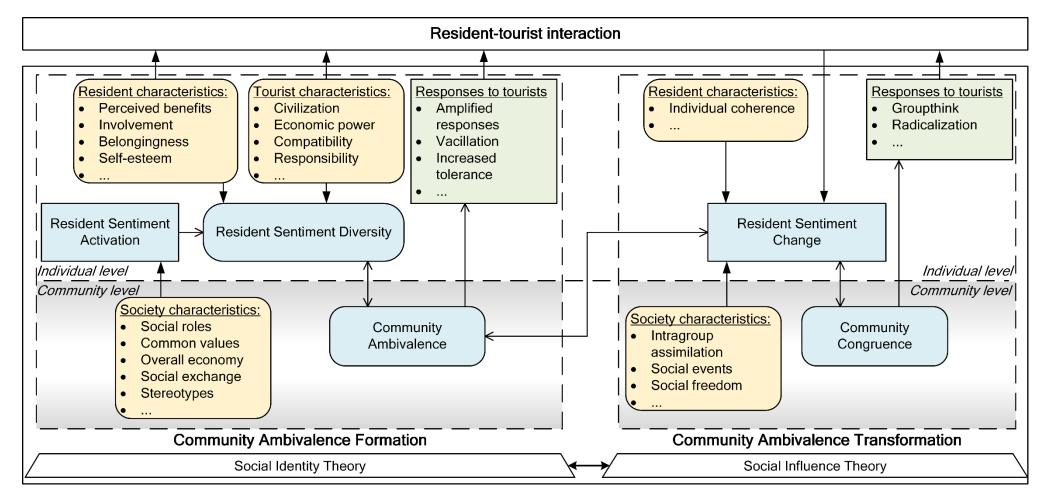


Figure 4 Conceptual Framework of Community Ambivalence

Note. Blue objects indicate stages of the process, where rectangles indicate acts and rounded rectangles indicate states. Yellow boxes indicate influencing factors and green boxes indicate responses to tourists. Closed-filled arrows indicate influence relationships and open arrows indicate sequences.

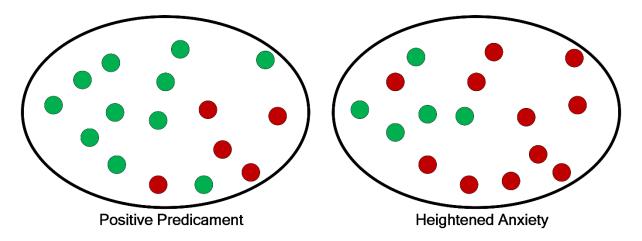


Figure 5 Community Ambivalence of Resident Sentiments toward Tourists

Note. Each dot represents a resident. Red indicates the resident holds a negative sentiment toward tourists, while green indicates a positive sentiment toward tourists.

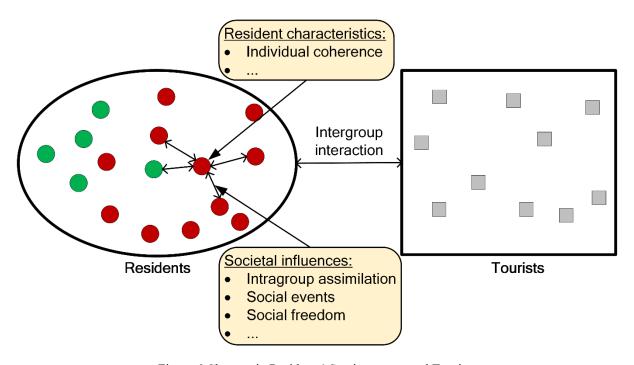


Figure 6 Changes in Residents' Sentiments toward Tourists

Note. Each dot represents a resident, and each square represents a tourist. Red indicates the resident holds a negative sentiment toward tourists, while green indicates a positive sentiment toward tourists. Closed-filled arrows indicate influence relationships and open arrows indicate interpersonal interactions.

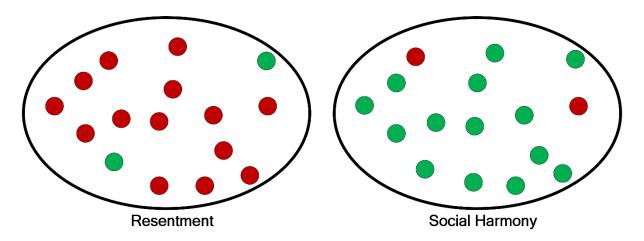


Figure 7 Community Congruence of Resident Sentiments toward Tourists

Note. Each dot represents a resident. Red indicates the resident holds a negative sentiment toward tourists, while green indicates a positive sentiment toward tourists.

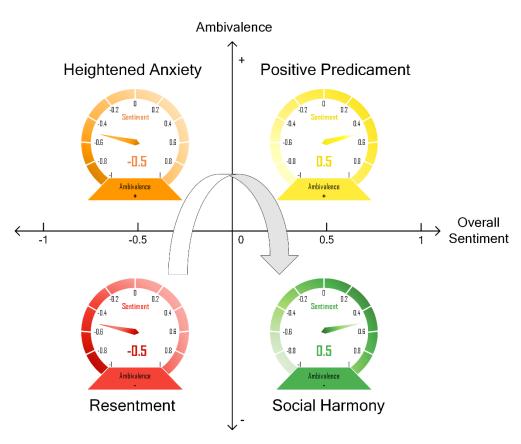


Figure 8 The Dynamics of Community Ambivalence and Resident Sentiments

Note. The curved arrow indicates the suggested management path to transform Resentment into Social Harmony.

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Appendix

Table A1 Background of the reviewed articles

Article Title	Publication Title	Publication Year
Topic: Resident sentiment		
Residents' perceptions of tourism development	Annals of Tourism Research	1994
Main street transformed: Community sense of place for nonmetropolitan tourism business districts	Urban Geography	2000
Resident perceptions in the urban-rural fringe	Annals of Tourism Research	2001
Resident reactions to a tourism incident: Mapping a Maldivian emoscape	Annals of Tourism Research	2012
The application and comparison of web services for sentiment analysis in tourism	2015 12th International Conference on Service Systems and Service Management (ICSSSM)	2015
House of Cards—An analysis of Macao's resident support for tourism and casino development	Tourism and Hospitality Research	2016
Place and exclusion in New York City's Jamaica Bay	Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences	2016
Sochi 2014 Olympics on Twitter: Perspectives of hosts and guests	Tourism Management	2017
Examining the predictive validity of SUS-TAS with maximum parsimony in developing island countries	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	2018
Diving into the consequences of stakeholders unheard	European Journal of Tourism Research	2018
Residents' perceptions towards cruise tourism development: the case of Esperance, Western Australia	Tourism Recreation Research	2018
Residents' perceptions of hotels' corporate social responsibility initiatives and its impact on residents' sentiments to community and support for additional tourism development	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	2019
Classifying residents' roles as online place-ambassadors	Tourism Management	2019
Understanding visitor–resident relations in overtourism: developing resilience for sustainable tourism	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	2019
One ultramarathon, two cities: Differences in social impact perceptions	Journal of Sport & Tourism	2019
Introducing news media sentiment analytics to residents' attitudes research	Journal of Travel Research	2020
A socio-psychological conceptualisation of overtourism	Annals of Tourism Research	2020
Local stakeholders' perspectives on religious heritage and tourism development in Varanasi	International Journal of Tourism Cities	2020
Exploring "sense of community" in the festival tourism experience: Review of the relative literature	Cultural and Tourism Innovation in the Digital Era: Sixth International IACuDiT Conference	2020
Resident sentiment toward a dominant tourist market: Scale development and validation	Journal of Travel Research	2021

Exploring destination advocacy behavior in a virtual travel community	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	2021
The role of community based tourism in avoiding overtourism	Overtourism, Technology Solutions and Decimated Destinations	2021
Host gazes from an Islamic island: Challenging homogeneous resident perception orthodoxies	Tourism Geographies	2021
Qualitative assessment of stakeholders and visitors perceptions towards coastal tourism development at Teluk kemang, port dickson, Malaysia	Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism	2021
COVID-19 and tourism: Analyzing the effects of COVID-19 statistics and media coverage on attitudes toward tourism	Forecasting	2021
Events as catalysts for communal resistance to overtourism	Annals of Tourism Research	2022
Destination image recovery with tourism mascots	Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	2022
Managing a World Heritage Site in Malawi: do residents' sentiments matter?	Journal of Heritage Tourism	2022
Q method finds anti-refugee sentiments on Yemeni migration to Jeju	Tourism Geographies	2022
Detecting early signs of overtourism: Bringing together indicators of tourism development with data fusion	Journal of Travel Research	2023
Policing freedom campers: The place, class, and xenophobic dynamics of overtourism in Aotearoa New Zealand	Tourism Geographies	2023
Capturing public voices: The role of social media in heritage management	Habitat International	2023
Rally-around-the-destination? Changes in host-guest emotional solidarity after crises	Tourism Management	2024
Protected area influence over resident attitudes towards tourism in gateway communities	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	2024
Community attachment, tourist contact, and resident attitudes toward tourism development of Kashmir Valley	Tourism	2024
Innovating the social pillar for engaging local inhabitants in urban and mountain destinations	International Conference of the International Association of Cultural and Digital Tourism	2024
Topic: Resident ambivalence		
Mediated resistance tourism and the host community	Annals of Tourism Research	2001
Marketing the nation: Carnival and tourism in Trinidad and Tobago	Critique of Anthropology	2002
Opportunity or threat? Finnish hunters' attitudes to hunting tourism	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	2011
Cultural commodification and tourism: The Goo-moremi community, Central Botswana	Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie	2011
A local counter-narrative on the conservation of Mountain Gorillas	Forum for Development Studies	2011

Back to my roots: Artifak and festivals in Vanuatu, Southwest Pacific	Critical Arts	2013
Techno-tourism and post-industrial neo-romanticism in Berlin's electronic dance music scenes	Tourist Studies	2016
Foreign presents or foreign presence? Resident perceptions of Australian and Chinese tourists in Niseko, Japan	Tourist Studies	2018
Stereotypes and perceived solidarity in ethnic enclave tourism	Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change	2018
It's not just black or white: Effects of ambivalence on residents' support for a mega-event	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research	2019
Local ambivalence to diverse mobilities – The case of a Norwegian rural village	Sociologia Ruralis	2019
Thinking rhizomatically about communist heritage tourism	Annals of Tourism Research	2020
Residents' attitudes toward tourism development in a rural community: A qualitative approach	Journal of Park and Recreation Administration	2020
'Playing Okinawan': A search for authenticity and the power asymmetry in Japanese appropriation of Okinawan folk music	Journal of Intercultural Studies	2020
From "villages of longevity" to "villages of cancer"? The emotional geography of tourism development in Bama, China	Emotion, Space and Society	2021
Temporary populations and sociospatial polarisation in the short-term city	Urban Studies	2023
Residents' attitudes toward land lease for rural tourism	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	2024
"We're no longer the senzala": Race, space, and difference in the Ethnic Capital of Brazil	Tourist Studies	2024
Broad values as the basis for understanding deliberation about protected area management	Sustainability Science	2024
Dual identity and ambivalent sentiment of border residents: Predicting border	Tourism Management	2025