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## The agency of melting glaciers.

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# Glaciers and perennial snow is disappearing



Foto: Sigbjørn Myklebust (1993-1997), Ove Binnestad (2001-2003), Kurt Erik Nesje (2004), Alfie Nesje (2005-2014)

Brikdalsbreen Glacier, Western Norway

- 70% of glaciated area loss by end of century
- 93% of glaciers will disappear (high emission scenario) (Hanssen-Bauer 2015)
- An ongoing loss of an iconic tourist activity in Norway.
- Changes the visual appearance of important mountain regions

# Melting ice as a symbol of climate change

- Melting glaciers has become a poster child for climate change <<the endangered glacier narrative>> (Carey 2008):
  - ▶ As sites for scientific enquiries on climate change.
  - ▶ Sites for tourism experiences of sublime landscape features & realtime climate change impacts
  - ▶ Subject of imaginations in art and travel literature
- Research has tended to focus on economical, physical and technical aspects of impacts of glacier retreat on tourism.
- Climate change narrative: based on climate science – highly abstract models of reality that disconnects with actors' experiences and perceptions (Hulme 2009, Jasanoff, 2010)
- *How are melting glaciers enabling emotional engagement to the climate change phenomena?*



Ice radar measurements at Jostedalsbreen  
Photo: K. Sjørnsen, JOSTICE-project, HVL.



Nigardsbreen, J.C Dahl, 1844

## Sense of place, connection to nature and pro-environmental behavior

- Glaciers and ice caps have importance for place identity and hold symbolic and cultural significance for mountain communities (Orlove et al., 2008; Jurt 2015; Allison 2016).
- Increasing number of last chance tourists in the Arctic and to glaciers (Lemelin 2010; Lemeieux et al. 2019).
- *Still a lack of research into how the glaciers as climate change symbols affects tourism.*



[#ExtinctionRebellion](#) The first funeral of a glacier in Iceland, the historic Ok.

Oversett tweeten



11:25 p.m. · 18. aug. 2019 · Twitter Web App

# Charismatic entities and boundary objects

- “**Charismatic**” entities in the natural world have served to aid environmental protection – thus displaying a non-human agency (Lorimer 2007).
- Charismatic entities exercise agency (hybrid objects (Whatmore 2008))
- Charismatic entities can also serve as **boundary objects** (i. e Star and Griesemer 1989, Guston 2001)
  - ▶ Serves to connect different realms or epistemic communities i.e science and the public.
  - ▶ Translates meaning and significance across boundaries between different realms.



# Objectives

- Investigate whether tourism actors use climate change impact as an element in the tourism experience – to raise awareness and instigate pro-environmental behavior.
- Analyse the role of snow and ice as “charismatic entities” and “boundary objects” in this process



Photo: Halvor Dannevig

# Methods and cases

## Informants

- Mountain guides
- Destination Marketing Officials.
- Clients of mountain guides (tourists)

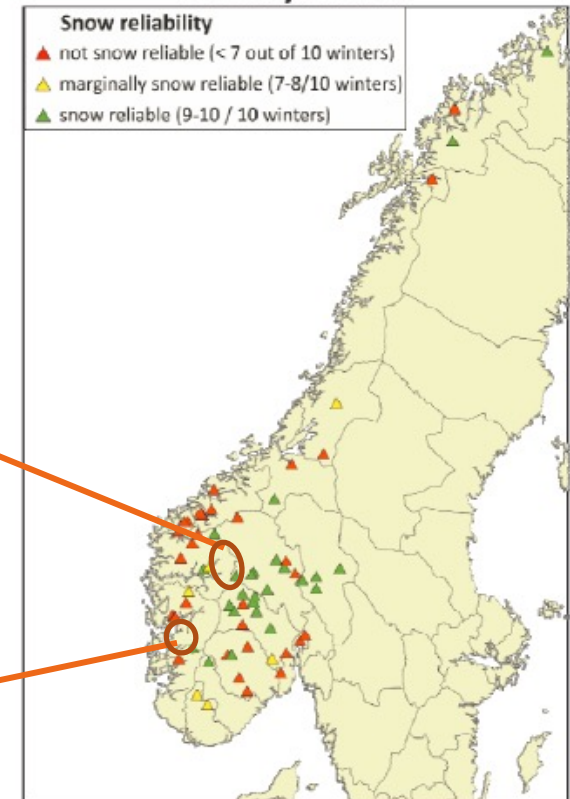
### Indre Sogn

- Workshop
- Two surveys (n=42, n=70)
- 5 interviews

### Hardanger

- Workshop
- 7 interviews

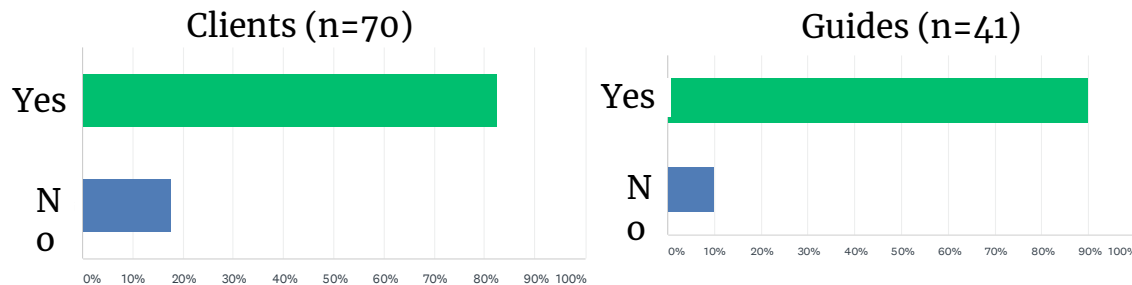
## Likelihood of ski conditions 100 day-season



Steiger et al. 2017

# Guides and clients responses to cryosphere change

Did you have to do things differently due to lack of snow and ice in summer?



Quotes from open ended questions to guides in survey and interviews

*«Its really really sad to see the change from black and white mountains to pure black. But I dont think it matter much for the clients.»*

*«It has major impact for all of us involved in glacier guiding. We need to think completely different about product development.»*

*«Its sad to see the extent of glacial retreat»*

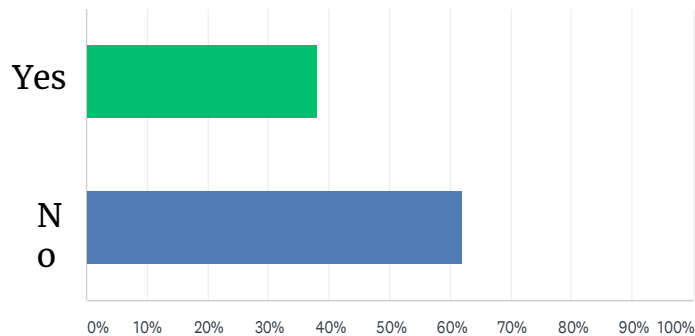




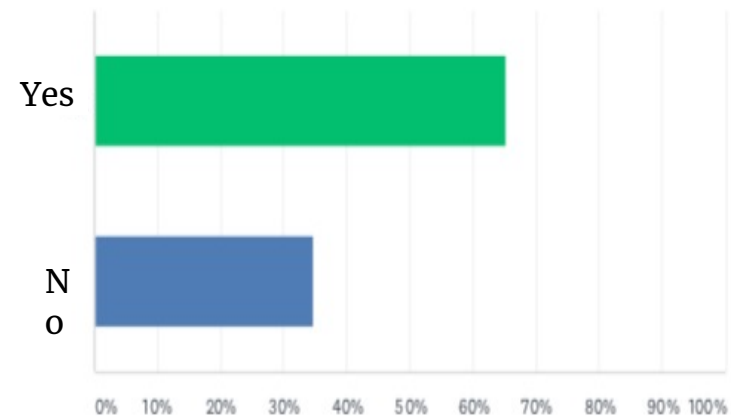
# Does being on guided mountain trips affect clients awareness and behaviour?

Does your interest in outdoor recreation affect your behaviour in relation to making pro-environmental choices? For example dietary choices, ways of travel, purchase of equipment?

N=71



Have you experienced that the guide has shared his thoughts on sustainability and climate change?



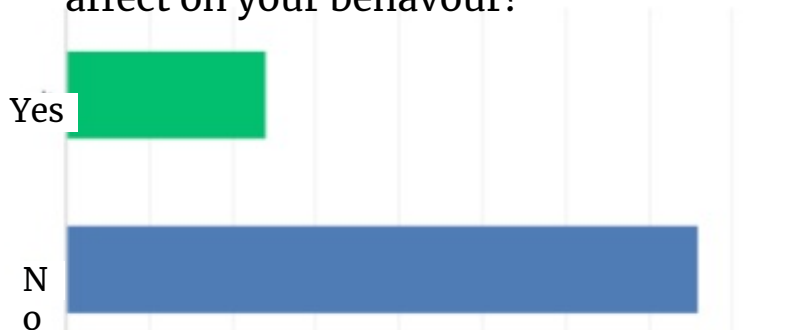
# Does being with mountain guides influence clients environmental behaviour ?

*«We talked about how we travel, to leave no trace, and visible climate change impact during the trip»*

*«I want to talk about environmentally responsible behaviour, but we need to look at ourselves first.»*

*»When you see what is happening your awareness is raised and you try to take care»*

Have your experience with guided trips had an affect on your behaviour?



## Breføreren meiner isbrereklame er breens eigen verste fiende

Norsk reiseliv brukar millionar på å marknadsføra Noreg og norsk natur i land på andre sidan av kloden. Det er dårleg nytt for isbreane, meiner både breførar og klimaforskar.



VANSKELEGARE FOR KVAR DAG: Å finna ei god rute til gjestene som skal opp på breen blir vanskelegare og vanskelegare.  
 FOTO: PATRICK DA SILVA SÆTHER I NRK

  
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 Artikkelen er  
 mer enn 10 år  
 gammel

**Glacier guide to far East Asian tourist: «The longer you are flying to get her, the longer it will be to walk to the glacier» (nrk.no; 17.01.2019)**

# Is the most important climate change impact on mountain tourism that it could inspire the industry to influence clients towards sustainable behaviour?

- Guides display both strong emotional connections to place and nature and use the melting mountains to raise awareness about climate change among clients
- Some also believe that the industry should also require commitment to sustainability from industry partners.
- But feel a need to have «their own house in order first» -i.e not accepting air travel themselves or from their clients.
- Illustrates an affective relationship between environmental change and desire to act (in line with Groulx et al. 2019 and others)



# Melting glaciers as charismatic entities and boundary objects



Untere Grindelwaldgletscher, Caspar Wolf 1774

- Glaciers are one of the most visual impacts of climate change and in this «capacity» serve as boundary objects between the science of climate change, the guides and general public
- Glaciers' charisma is tied to their aesthetic value, fame and iconic status from art and tourist marketing material
- The use of melting snow and ice to raise awareness and instigate pro-environmental behaviour show how glaciers functions as a charismatic entity with non-human agency by mobilizing emotions.


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Thank you!



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