

Friluftsliv – a stable entity or responding to social change?

TRINE SYVERTSEN

Rationale

- Friluftsliv – often referred to as an **inspiration** in other countries (1)
- Defined as **free life in nature**, distinct Scandinavian lifestyle (2)
- Still distinct, but recent research warns against **ethnocentrism, essentialism** (3)
- Critique: Participating figures overestimated, class, gender and cultural differences underestimated, not pro-ecological (4)
- More attention to friluftsliv as “**ambiguous, complex and contradictory**” (5)
- More attention to how friluftsliv is used by **powerful stakeholders**: state, NGOs, media (6)
- Purpose: Explore **how the conceptualisation of friluftsliv** has changed in Norway from the 1900s - today



Findings

	Table 1: Conceptual change: Friluftsliv. Based on documents, newspapers and collocation analysis of each decade
1980s-1990s	Nostalgia, simple life in nature. Media and urban culture are seen as competitors to friluftsliv. Focus: Get away into wild nature, authentic lifestyle <i>Year of friluftsliv 1993</i> : Opening event in mountain area.
2000s	Reorientation and uncertainty. Traditional friluftsliv is stagnating, what next? We are richer, but are we happy? Focus: Nature experiences enhance quality of life <i>Year of friluftsliv 2005</i> : Opening event in urban forest.
2010s	New growth, friluftsliv is trendy again. But rising problems of inactivity: young, elderly and immigrants. Focus: Lower threshold, better marketing, urban greenspace <i>Year of friluftsliv 2015</i> : Opening event in Oslo city park with high immigrant population.
2020s	<i>Year of friluftsliv 2025?</i>

Objectives and design

Investigate:

- how friluftsliv is instrumentalised in **state policy** (White papers, documentary analysis)
- how friluftsliv is used in **public speech** (Ngram, galaxy, collocation analysis, digital humanities)
- the goals of “**Year of friluftsliv**” every 10 years (NGO documents, documentary analysis)
- the **events** at the opening of each “year” (newspaper articles, National library)

Assess:

- the **usefulness of combining** documentary analysis with digital humanities methods (7)

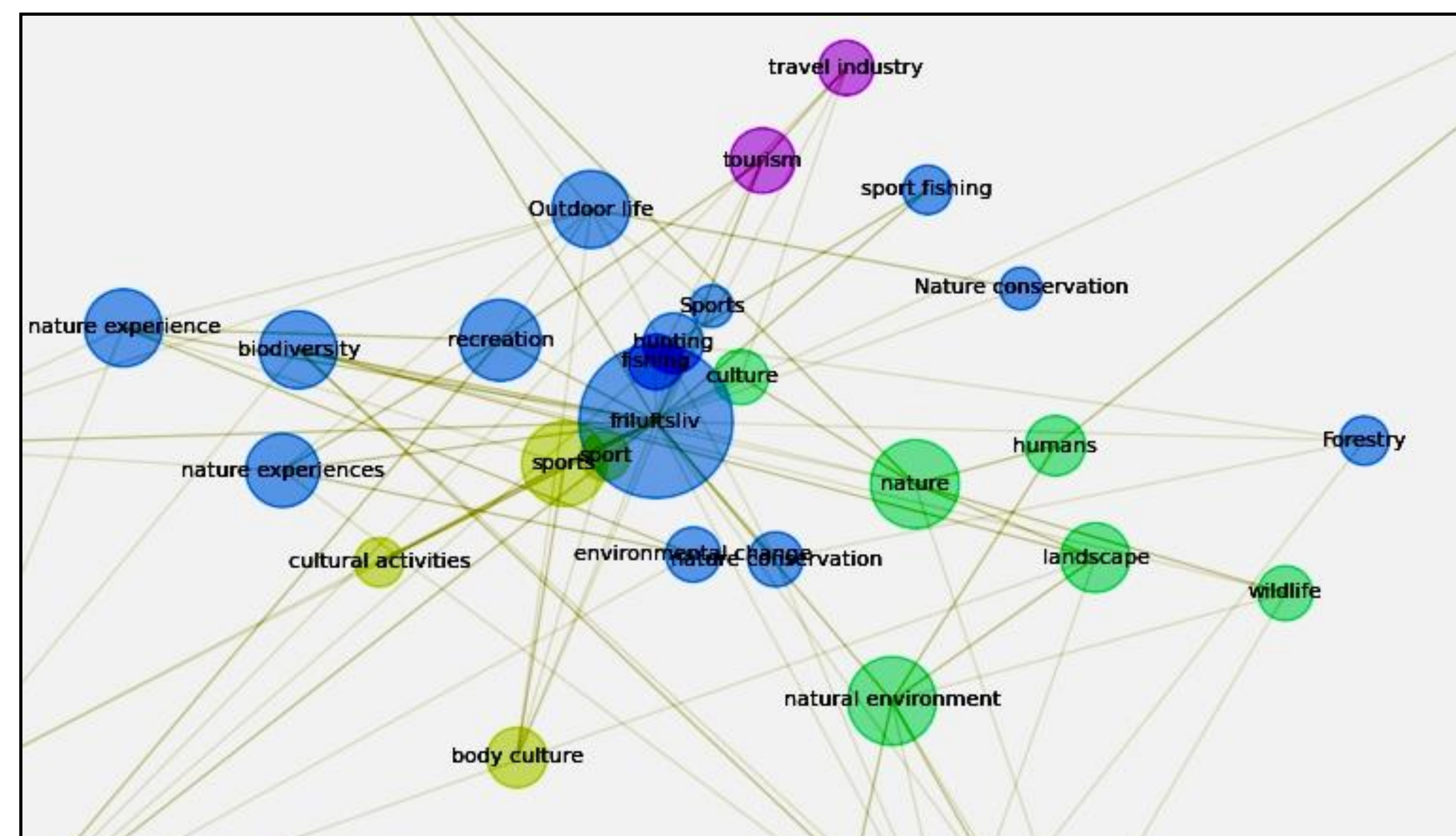


Fig 1. Galaxy analysis: Core themes linked with friluftsliv in Norwegian newspapers, entire corpus. National Library, Norway. Digital humanities lab.

SAME DEFINITION, BUT NEW UNDERSTANDING OF FRILUFTSLIV FROM SIMPLE LIFE IN NATURE TO SOLVE SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN CITY

Conclusions

- **Mixed method design** deepens understanding of conceptual change.
- Definition of friluftsliv **similar** in most documents, but emphasis, values and practices **are changing**.
- Friluftsliv increasingly **part of state policy**, an instrument to solve social problems.
- Digital humanities analysis **uncovered new aspects**.

References

- (1) (Dixon, 2023; Knight et al., 2023; Loynes, 2002)
 - (2) (Beery, 2013; Hofmann et al., 2018)
 - (3) (Gurholt & Haukeland, 2020; Aasetre & Gundersen, 2012)
 - (4) (Anderson et al., 2023; Humberstone & Gurholt, 2001; Mickelsson, 2021; Skille et al., 2023; Skår, 2009)
 - (5) (Gurholt, 2008 p 65, see also Crowley, 2013; Skille et al., 2023)
 - (6) (Gurholt, 2023)
 - (7) (Boasson & Malvik, 2019; Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Kveim Lie et al., 2022; Martin, 2017)
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