

Tourism and Sustainable Community Development in Northern Sweden

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Foreword

Small businesses with tourism as a focus are found in many rural and peripheral areas, including northern Sweden. Tourism development in rural and peripheral areas has resulted in varying outcomes and tourism has often been undertaken as a last resort by communities. In this report, Patrick Brouder shows that tourism persists as a tool for regional development in northern Sweden and that tourism makes important local contributions. Tourism development in northern Sweden has led to employment gains and it also contributes to local community development. Tourism is not the solution for community development, but what this report shows is that tourism has a role to play in sustainable community development. The studies presented in this report highlight a number of key challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism development in northern Sweden. These are discussed on three different levels: the regional level, the local community level, and the firm level.

This report shows that sustainable tourism development in northern Sweden faces both challenges and opportunities. New tourism firms add to employment over time despite the failure of most new firms. Tourism entrepreneurs and market segments geographically distant from protected areas are drawn to them because of their unique attributes. How those distant stakeholders are integrated into management planning remains to be seen. Climate change is a long-term challenge to winter tourism in particular. Food tourism is underdeveloped but growing in northern Sweden and has potential to contribute to sustainable local food systems and community development. Patrick Brouder also raises considerations of how to optimise local tourism networks and the role of the municipality and destination management organisations in tourism development is discussed. It is concluded that interaction among stakeholders over time leads to positive outcomes for tourism innovation and community development.

This report has been written in the period of May 2013 - January 2014 within the research project Knowledge-based Tourism Development at ETOUR, Mid Sweden University, and it has been funded by the European Union. The purpose of the report is to give an overview of several case studies with different challenges and opportunities in northern Sweden and the ambition is to provide well-founded, easy to understand, and accessible input for public and private stakeholders, community planning issues, and sustainability debates.

Östersund, March 17, 2014

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Summary

Small businesses with tourism as a focus are found in many rural and peripheral areas, including northern Sweden. Tourism development in northern Sweden has led to employment gains and it also contributes to local community development. This report presents findings on tourism's modest but sustainable contribution to local and regional development. Tourism in northern Sweden is mainly nature-based tourism (NBT) with a large share of businesses being accommodation providers as well as a large share of activity-based businesses. This report shows why tourism is closely aligned to sustainability goals in northern Sweden with sustainable tourism development facing both challenges and opportunities. New tourism firms add to employment over time despite the failure of most new firms. Market segments geographically distant from protected areas are drawn to them because of their unique attributes. Climate change is a long-term challenge to winter tourism in particular. Food tourism is underdeveloped but growing in northern Sweden and has potential to contribute to sustainable local food systems and community development. Tourism should be seen as a lasting resource for community development in northern Sweden.

Sammanfattning

Små företag inom turism finns i många landsbygdsområden och i perifera områden, så också i norra Sverige. Turismutveckling i norra Sverige har lett till positiva effekter på sysselsättningen och den har bidragit till lokal samhällsutveckling. I denna rapport presenteras resultat som handlar om turismens blygsamma, men hållbara, bidrag till lokal och regional utveckling. Turismen i norra Sverige är främst naturbaserad turism (NBT) och en stor andel av företagen är boendeanläggningar och aktivitetsbaserade företag. Denna rapport visar att turismen är nära kopplad till hållbarhetsmål i norra Sverige, men att en hållbar utveckling av turismen står både inför utmaningar och möjligheter. Nya turistföretag bidrar till sysselsättning över tid trots att de flesta nya företag inte är verksamma så länge. Resultatet visar också att det finns företag som är geografiskt långt från skyddade områden men som dras till dessa på grund av deras unika egenskaper och attraktionskraft. Klimatförändringen är en långsiktig utmaning, särskilt för vinterturismen. I norra Sverige är matturismen underutvecklad men har potential att bidra till hållbara lokala livsmedelssystem och till samhällsutveckling. Turism bör ses som en varaktig resurs för samhällsutveckling i norra Sverige.

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1. Introduction

Small tourism businesses are found in many rural and peripheral areas, including northern Sweden. These businesses survive where enterprise is not usually expected to flourish (Brouder, 2012a; Müller, 2011a). They tend to be very small businesses but they contribute to their local communities and to the broader region. Tourism development in northern Sweden has led to some employment gains (Brouder & Eriksson, 2013a, 2013b; Müller & Brouder, 2014; Müller & Ulrich, 2007) and it also contributes to local community development (Brouder, 2012b; Möller, 2012). Development through tourism is a possibility for many communities but measuring the impact of tourism is quite difficult. This report presents findings on tourism's modest but sustainable contribution to local and regional development.

Peripheral destinations, such as northern Sweden, have limited potential to develop tourism due to a lack of access to transport networks, information, political power and capital (Hall & Boyd, 2005). Moreover, due to the small-scale operations, firms are generally preoccupied with day-to-day survival rather than strategic management such as market development (Brouder, 2013a). Despite these challenges, many communities in northern Sweden continue to succeed in tourism development, much of which is community-driven development.

2. Background to the Study Area – Northern Sweden

Northern Sweden (consisting of the four northernmost counties – Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Västernorrland, and Jämtland) is the study area in this report. It is a challenging environment for tourism entrepreneurs. A decline in primary sector and public sector employment has forced communities to seek out new development paths (Müller, 2011a). Tourism in northern Sweden has a number of particular physical and social conditions, e.g., many natural amenities; high seasonality with a long winter season; a lack of entrepreneurial tradition; and, few home-grown development opportunities (Lundberg, Fredman, & Wall-Reinius, 2012). Tourism development is one development path and it has received support from the European Union regional development funding (Wanhill, 2000). As in other northern regions, northern Sweden includes several large protected areas and these are obvious resources for tourism development due to their appeal to outdoor recreationists (Eagles & McCool, 2002; Fredman & Heberlein, 2005; Newsome, Moore, & Dowling, 2002). Tourism in Sweden has been growing in recent years with guest nights increasing from 25 million (1999) to 34 million (2011) in a little over a decade (SCB, 2013). In the study area, Norrbotten has the largest share of holiday travellers followed by Jämtland, Västerbotten, and Västernorrland (SCB, 2013). The leisure travel market is strong in the region with international visitors accounting for a large share (Müller, 2011b). This internationalisation presents new environmental challenges since visitors may make a larger carbon footprint

just getting to the north but many of these visitors also demand sustainable practices from the tourist businesses they visit in northern Sweden.

As a relatively well-developed, accessible region in comparison with other high-latitude areas, northern Sweden (see Figure 1) holds a leading position in tourism development studies, *i.e.*, as a relatively accessible region, tourism is afforded a greater chance of success. The area has quite good infrastructural connectivity including an extensive road network, an improving rail network, and several quite large airports, making it less remote than other northern areas, *e.g.*, northern Canada. It has long winters with the winter tourism season being a significant part of the tourism economy. The area has the Gulf of Bothnia on its east coast and the Scandinavian Range on its western border with Norway. Two thirds of the population lives in the coastal municipalities and the inland municipalities are sparsely populated, being among the least-densely populated regions of Europe. The land is part of the circumpolar boreal forest and dominant industries have been forestry (across the region), mining (in local centres), hydro-electric power (on most of the large rivers) as well as large tracts of reindeer herding land utilised for centuries by the indigenous Sámi people. Today, one in five employed people are working in the primary sector with more than one third of all employed people within the public sector (Statistics Sweden [SCB] employment data, 2007).

3. Tourism Supply

An emphasis on tourism growth has become tied up with the regional development discourse (Svensk Turism, 2010) particularly in rural and peripheral areas, where few other development opportunities are emerging and where tourism development has become a recurring strategy in local planning (Müller, 2011a). The inclusion of tourism as a development strategy is out of both opportunity and necessity – partly a result of increasing demand and partly a result of few alternative opportunities (Müller & Ulrich, 2007) – but it has also been driven by EU funding focussed on rural development with tourism as one of the most common branches promoted in EU regional development policy (Wanhill, 2000).

Tourism in northern Sweden is mainly nature-based tourism (NBT) with a large share of businesses being accommodation providers and activity-based businesses. Small and micro businesses are the driver of regional economic growth (see Table 1 below) and they have high seasonal variation in employment (Lundberg & Fredman, 2012; Lundmark, 2006). Almost all tourism firms in northern Sweden are small and most are, in fact, micro-firms. The small-scale supply presents unique challenges and possibilities for sustainable tourism development (see section 4, below).

Table 1. European Commission definitions of Medium, Small, and Micro Enterprises.

Type	No. of employees	Annual Turnover
Medium	< 250 employees	< €50 million
Small	< 50 employees	< €10 million
Micro	< 10 employees	< €2 million

4. Tourism Demand

Domestic tourism dominates across the seasons and across the region, with a few destinations receiving larger proportions of international visitors (*e.g.*, Åre winter resort in Jämtland and Kiruna – home municipality of the *Icehotel* – in Norrbotten) (Müller, 2011b; Nordin, 2003). Popular activities include hiking and being out in nature in the summertime with skiing, snow-boarding, dog-sledding and snow scooter tours being popular in the wintertime. The region has been developing towards a four seasons approach in recent decades having traditionally been a summer destination.

The increased share of winter tourism has brought with it a diversified, internationalised market with tourists coming from the traditional strongholds of Germany and Norway but there are also increases from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Many international tourists come to northern Sweden to experience the northern winter with plenty of snow, darkness, and the Northern Lights (*Aurora Borealis*). The winter season across northern Sweden is not as peaked as the winter season in northern Finland and the season runs from December through to April, making the region less seasonal than it was a decade or two ago.

5. Sustainable Development and Tourism

Tourism makes a subtle yet substantive contribution to local development. The question remains whether tourism is sustainable or not and this report shows why tourism is closely aligned to sustainability goals in northern Sweden. In the broadest sense, tourism contributes to regional sustainability by helping to diversify the economy. Regions like northern Sweden have traditionally been dependent on exogenous development (*e.g.*, mining, hydro-power development) but tourism development in the region is mostly endogenous (Brouder & Eriksson, 2013). Thus, this can lead to more sustainable northern communities (Noakes &

Johnston, 2008). Sustainable community development and not tourism development, per se, must remain the ultimate goal if tourism is to have a place in northern communities.

Sustainable tourism development faces both challenges and opportunities. Climate change is a challenge to northern communities whose survival is already under pressure on several fronts (Bærenholdt, 2007). On the demand side, it may become more costly and less socially acceptable for tourists to travel the vast distances required to get to and travel around northern regions. Also, on the supply side, the quality of winter conditions in particular may deteriorate, leading to a shorter and less reliable season (Brouder & Lundmark, 2013; Tervo, 2008). Opportunities also exist for more sustainable tourism in northern regions with slow food tourism being promoted as one area within the broader concept of slow adventure, a concept which has much potential for sustainable tourism development in northern Sweden (de la Barre & Brouder, 2013). Key challenges for sustainable development include making stakeholders think about the long-term benefits of today's investments and getting them to also consider the softer community benefits of tourism development (Brouder, 2012b, 2013b).

6. Summary of Studies

Each of the studies had their own particular focus but this report draws on the main findings which relate to sustainability goals. Thus, the themes of each paper are positioned within the sustainable tourism debate and the challenges of sustainable tourism development in northern Sweden are elaborated on. The studies also include potential development opportunities, like food tourism, which are embedded in global sustainable development debates. Therefore, the following studies show some of the key quantitative and qualitative aspects to consider for sustainable tourism development.



Figure 1. Northern Sweden is the study area for this report with regional studies focussing on the four counties and local studies focussing on Jokkmokk municipality.

7. Studies of Sustainability and Tourism Development in Northern Sweden

7.1 Creative Outposts: Tourism's Place in Rural Innovation

Many rural regions have turned to tourism, partly as a result of declining traditional employment opportunities, supported by authorities from the local to the supra-national level, since tourism is seen as a sector which can benefit rural and peripheral regions. Tourism undoubtedly has potential and many of its impacts, both economic and social, go unnoticed by many locals. This paper explores the invisible social impacts tourism has, specifically the positive social impacts of tourism in one rural location. 'Creative Outposts' are rural locales which have been in decline but which are experiencing some local resurgence, partly attributable to innovative tourism development. Creative outposts act as rural centres for many tourist services, not unlike their historical role as market towns in the productive era. This paper takes Jokkmokk in northern Sweden as the case and looks for elements of tourism's role in rural innovation present in the local area.

Traditionally, studies of creativity and regional development have focussed on metropolitan areas and recently the trend has moved to mid-sized cities and tourism destinations. This paper takes the discussion to the rural and peripheral level and focuses on the crossover between creative processes and tourism and its impact on rural coping strategies in challenging times. The decline in traditional rural industry employment, such as agriculture and forestry, and in public sector job opportunities in recent years has created tremendous pressure on long-standing rural communities. Tourism is one way of revitalising local economies and sustaining communities.

This paper is based on interviews conducted in Jokkmokk during 2011. Jokkmokk is the second largest municipality in Sweden by area but has only approximately 5,000 inhabitants. Jokkmokk village lies above the Arctic Circle and is home to Lapponia – a world heritage area; the municipality also has a varied tourism market in both summer and winter. The research consisted of a series of semi-structured interviews with tourism stakeholders (five institutional officials and ten entrepreneurs) aiming to show whether or not tourism has some positive social role in the local community. Tourism is found to be an outlet for positive local social capital and the main themes from the interviews are summarised in Figure 2, below.

Actions	Tourism networks are loose and project-based (formal structure with no dominant local stakeholder and incremental gains)	Tourist office and tourism firms co-evolve (empowerment of entrepreneurs matched by institutional innovation)
	Tourism contributes to the local leisure space (presence of non-residents and artists helps maintain local places of leisure)	Tourism is a desirable diversifier (local capacity-building and entrepreneurship are seen more positively over time)
Outcomes	Space	Time

Figure 2. Tourism's role in local innovation in Jokkmokk (source: Brouder, 2012b).

In creative outposts, loose and temporary formal networks are common but the repeated interactions lead to a slow but steady evolution of relations between firms and other stakeholders. Also, innovation in tourism in these communities benefits the locals by diversifying the economy and making the place more liveable.

The Arctic Tourism Innovation System (ATIS) – a unified sectoral and regional innovation system (Lundmark & Muller, 2013) – is a useful approach to understanding the sustainability of tourism in northern Sweden. The ATIS brings together the regional and the sectoral elements to fully reflect the stark challenges facing tourism development in the north. For example, the isolated location of Jokkmokk, being far from the regional population centres but not quite close enough to the mountain areas, limits its scope for development. Also, the prevalence of micro-firms leads to a dependence on other support from the municipality – which still contributes the bulk of the money for the budget of the local DMO (Destination Management Organisation). On the positive side, tourism interacts with local creative industries and also adds positively to the local atmosphere by helping to create a lively village where things are happening. The innovative processes which move communities forward are subtle in rural and peripheral areas, making measurement difficult. However, the cumulative effect of these processes is clearly visible in the community. Tourism has a role to play in community development in creative outposts. Local tourism networks are natural community development networks due to their closeness to the community and the equality among members. These existing networks just need to be optimised for local development.

7.2 Staying Power: What Influences Micro-firm Survival in Tourism?

If tourism is to contribute to sustainable regional development, it must be producing entrepreneurs who stay around for the long-term and who create some employment locally. At the local level, many individuals respond to a growing tourism market by starting new firms and while the rate of start-ups is well documented there is less knowledge about the surviving firms and their contribution, if any, to the region. This paper examines the characteristics of surviving firms to see what distinguishes successful firms from failures. The paper departs from recent contributions in evolutionary economic geography (see Brouder, 2014), hypothesising that experience in the sector and experience in the local area increase rates of survival. The paper also assesses the relative impact the surviving firms have on regional development, paying particular attention to the number of jobs each new tourism firm creates.

The empirical work is based on individual-level data (*e.g.*, the personal characteristics of the entrepreneurs are linked to their business characteristics). Using survival analysis techniques with time to failure as the dependent variable, the paper shows that related experience (having worked in related sectors the year before start-up) in particular reduces the risk of business failure, as does local experience. In fact, new firm owners with related experience in the year before entry face a 56% hazard rate of failure (hazard rate < 100% implies lower chance of firm exit across the study period and vice versa) compared to those with no experience in the year before entry and firms with local experience in the year before entry face a 31% hazard rate of failure compared to those without local experience in the year before entry. Thus, previous experience and location of entrepreneurs plays a key role in the staying power of new firms. Furthermore, while the tourism sector is known to have low-entry barriers it is necessary to draw the distinction between the easy entry and difficult survival in the tourism sector.

The paper also shows the important economic performance indicators of survivors (Table 2). The employment gains are positive with an average of 1.5 employees by the end of the study period. These slow but steady gains may be well-matched to sustainable tourism development goals since they show a sector which is evolving slowly but which is small enough to be robust in difficult times and to refill itself over time as employees become entrepreneurs, and so forth. The small-scale nature of the sector means that there is room for everyone in a sustainable, local network of businesses. The results encourage simple policy interventions (*e.g.*, mentoring) which are becoming more common in local development policies. This paper is a first step towards improving the knowledge of tourism firms' long-term staying power and taken together with 7.1 (Creative Outposts) implies that the processes of change in tourism in peripheral areas such as the north of Sweden are slow-moving yet show noticeable positive change over time.

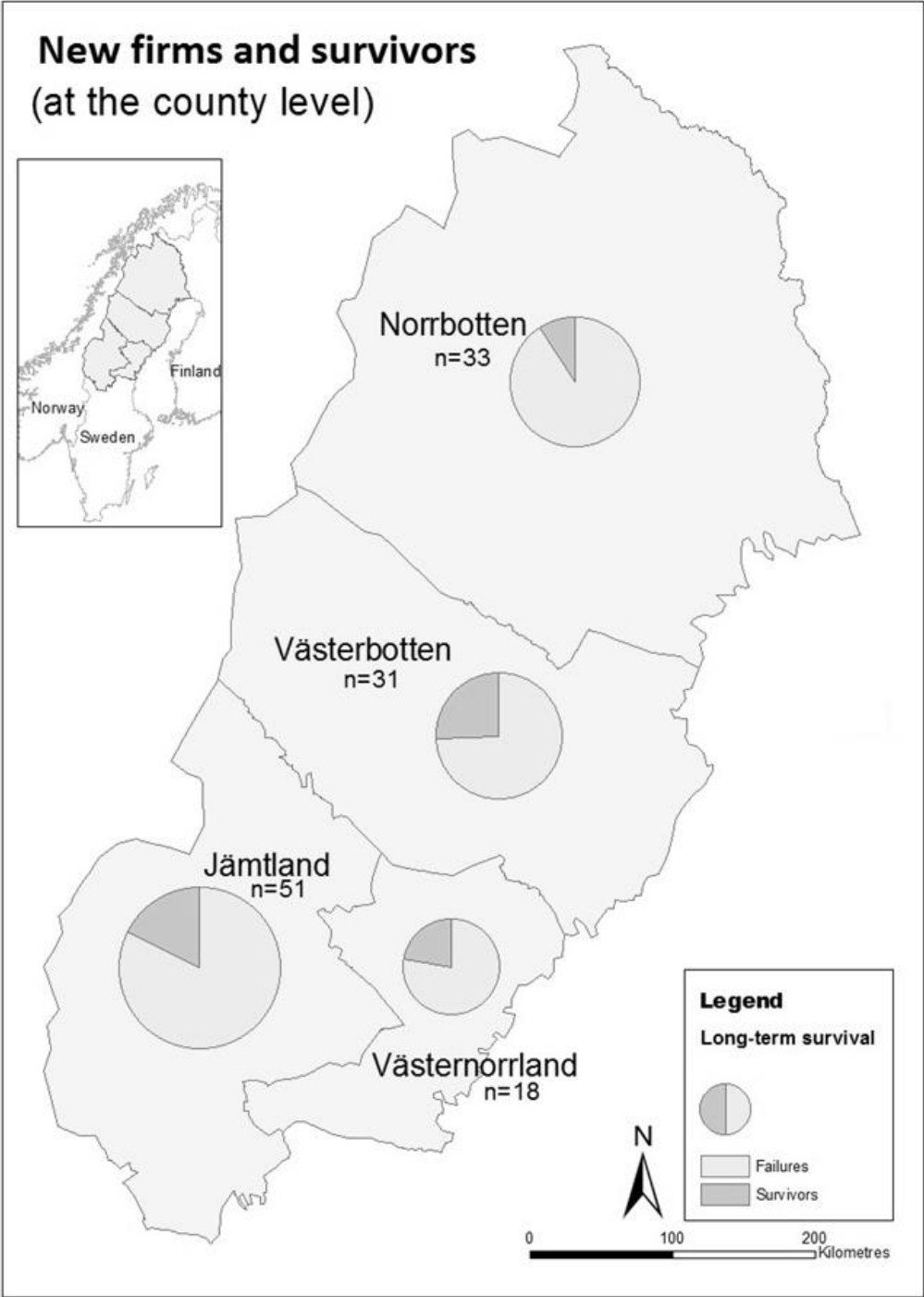


Figure 3. Map of Northern Sweden including all new tourism firms for 1999-2001 and the relatively few long-term survivors (source: Brouder & Eriksson, 2013a).

Table 2. Contribution of New Tourism Firms to Development in Northern Sweden.

Details	Entry	+ 1 year	+ 3 years	+ 7 years
Number of new firms	133	79	49	22
<i>% surviving</i>	100%	59%	37%	17%
Total Turnover	44	48	43	37
<i>Mean</i>	0.331	0.608	0.878	1.682
<i>Median</i>	0.267	0.383	0.617	0.788
Total Employees	20	29	32	33
<i>Mean employees per firm</i>	0.15	0.37	0.65	1.5
<i>Mean employees per employing firm</i>	2.86	2.07	2.46	4.13

Source: ASTRID.

Note: Turnover in million Swedish Crowns and adjusted for inflation (2008 prices).

Maximum number of employees in any new firm at any time was 6 (employee data recorded in November).

(Source: Brouder & Eriksson, 2013a)

7.3 Post-inscription challenges: Renegotiating World Heritage Management in the Lapponia Area in Northern Sweden

The Lapponia Area is one of only a few dozen UNESCO World Heritage Sites which is protected for both its natural and cultural heritage. The natural heritage is the landscape which has been shaped by the receding glaciers of the last ice age which left behind marshes, deltas, and unique vegetation. The cultural heritage is due to the continuing use of the land by the indigenous Sámi people for herding reindeer. The Lapponia World Heritage Area was listed in 1996 but it was not until 2009 that a new management structure was put in place as a result of the Lapponia Process – instigated to identify the key management issues for Lapponia.

The new management structure involves Sámi representatives, local municipalities, the county administration and the National Environmental Protection Agency. This new

Laponia management structure deals with many important issues, of which tourism development is one. The recent establishment of a new DMO for Jokkmokk (Destination Jokkmokk) highlights the potential challenges which lie ahead as regards Laponia – Destination Jokkmokk is not responsible for tourism development in Laponia but if tourism in the region is to be truly sustainable then the two separate organisations with responsibility for tourism development must coordinate somehow. Just how this cooperation will unfold is unclear at present. The study presented here shows clearly that Laponia matters to many tourism businesses who are outside the boundaries of Laponia and yet their use of Laponia for marketing and activities can only be sustainable if it is done in consultation with the Sámi.

The study investigates how Norrbotten's tourism businesses value the Laponia Area and highlights for the new management that the geographical reach of Laponia needs to be considered in planning. The following research questions are addressed: What do Norrbotten county's tourism businesses think of the Laponia Area in particular and protected nature in general? What is the value of the Laponia Area's attributes (Sámi culture and nature) for tourism businesses in Norrbotten county? What is the market reach of the Laponia Area in Norrbotten county and how may this affect management planning?

The results show that nearness matters but that likeness overcomes distance (Table 3). While the particular nature of the Laponia Area does not distinguish itself, almost all companies value nature for their business (Nature valued column). Culture-based tourism businesses, however, value Sámi culture more than other (nature-based) tourism businesses (Culture: Other row). This is not so surprising but the fact that cultural tourism firms more frequently stated that the Laponia Area itself had value for their business, even though most cultural-based tourism firms surveyed were non-local, is important. It implies that the cultural value of Laponia reaches farther than the natural appeal.

Table 3. How do different Tourism Businesses value Sámi Culture and Nature?

	Sámi valued	Nature valued
Cultural : Other	89% : 46% <i>(n= 9 : 68)</i> <i>Fisher's Exact Test = 0.016</i>	100% : 97% <i>(n= 9 : 68)</i> <i>Fisher's Exact Test = 0.198</i>
Local : Non-local	75% : 48% <i>(n= 8 : 69)</i> <i>Fisher's Exact Test = 0.14</i>	88% : 99% <i>(n= 8 : 69)</i> <i>Fisher's Exact Test = 0.779</i>

n = 77; survey asked how Sámi Culture and Nature are valued only from a business perspective, this is not a reflection of how entrepreneurs value Sámi culture or Nature in general. (Source: Brouder, 2013b)

These findings underline the heart of the sustainability question in Jokkmokk: How can the powerful image of the cultural landscape of the Sámi be respectfully integrated into tourism development which benefits both Sámi and non-Sámi tourism businesses? And how do the local development networks (*e.g.*, Laponia Management and Destination Jokkmokk) work together to broaden the base of stakeholders beyond just the geographically-proximate ones? Finding a solution is not easy but it is vital for sustainable, fair development to occur.

7.4 Climate Change in Northern Sweden: Intra-regional Perceptions of Vulnerability among Winter-oriented Tourism Businesses

Winter tourism is an important sector in northern Sweden, generating seasonal employment and bringing tourists from the south of Sweden, Scandinavia, and the rest of the world to northern Sweden. Winter-tourism businesses rely on a stable season with even short-term variations or late arrival of snow resulting in a loss of business. Northern Sweden is projected to experience significant changes in the 21st century. The most common approach to climate change planning is to assume common, standard impacts on all tourism businesses and to plan accordingly but a more sustainable approach would be to identify specific areas and particular types of business which are more at risk and focus efforts on helping vulnerable businesses.

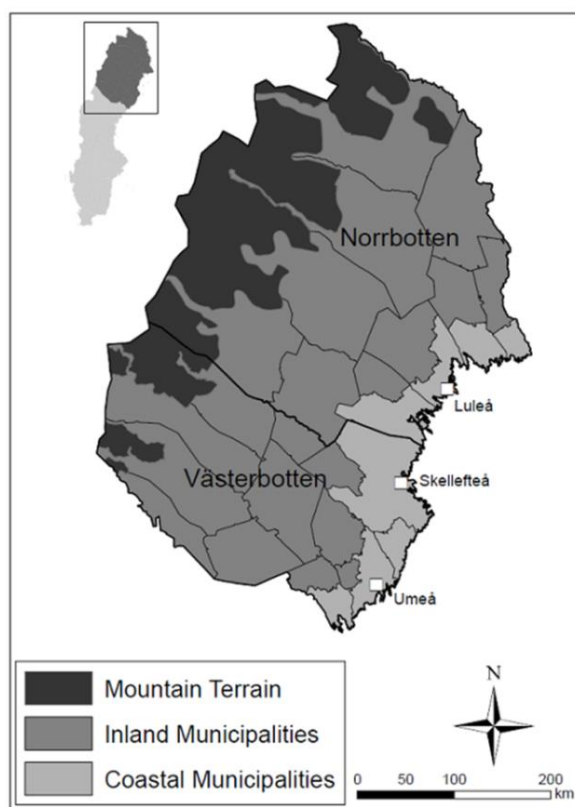


Figure 4. Map of Upper Norrland, Sweden (source: Brouder & Lundmark, 2011).

If winter tourism is to continue to be a sustainable element of an all-seasons tourism economy then the spaces of vulnerability and possibility need to be considered. This paper examines the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten, where winter-tourism consists mainly of micro-firms. A web-based survey of winter-oriented tourism entrepreneurs yielded 63 usable responses (representing a 42% response rate). Entrepreneurs in the coastal municipalities see climate change as a problem in their area and are more willing to accept that one relatively poor-snow winter is evidence of climate change in the region, compared with inland entrepreneurs. However, when asked how they prioritise climate change there was no significant difference by location. Instead, it was the venue-based operators, as opposed to the mobile operators, who were most concerned. Regarding the ten-year future of climate change in the region, respondents expect milder, shorter winters and those on the coastland to a significant degree expect milder and rainier winters compared to the inland firms. The paper suggests that basic mapping of firms in a given region, along the criteria of exposure and adaptability, allows a better assessment of climate change vulnerabilities (Figure 5). The entrepreneurs accept that climate change will impact their sector in the coming decade but they do not believe that it will be detrimental to the industry's survival.

Winter tourism may not be the dominant sector in the region but it contributes to many communities and so understanding the impacts of climate change will enable tourism to remain a part of the sustainable development of northern communities in Sweden. Finally, most innovation systems approaches fail to consider the physical environment beyond proximity to regional centres and clusters. For most regions this does not really matter. However, in northern Sweden it does, especially if climate models prove to be accurate. Therefore, an effective innovation system for tourism in the north should incorporate the unique climatic conditions since the region is dominated by nature-based tourism and long-term sustainability of tourism is dependent on being aware of the coming changes now.

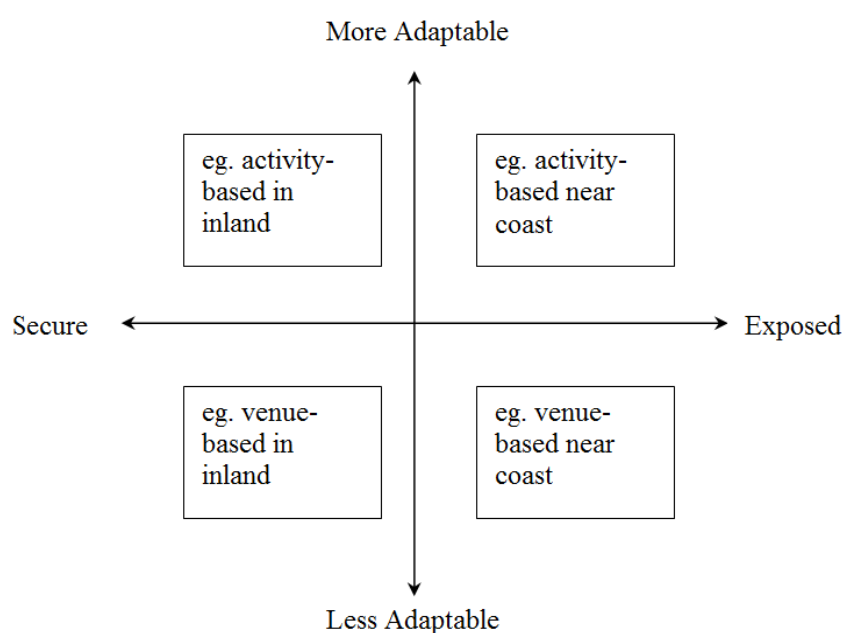


Figure 5. Perceptual map of businesses' intra-regional vulnerabilities to climate change (source: Brouder & Lundmark, 2011).

7.5 Consuming Stories: Placing Food in the Arctic Tourism Experience

Following culinary and food tourism trends developing around the world, the unique attributes of the circumpolar cupboard are being recognised locally and are used to enhance the appeal of northern destinations. Food tourism is embracing the rich storytelling traditions of circumpolar peoples, both the indigenous people who have always lived with the land, and more recent newcomers who have made "the North" their home. The growing

interest in the experience economy and the slow and local food movements mean that a unique opportunity exists for developing sustainable tourism food products and services.

This paper explores the role of food in the Arctic tourism experience in Yukon, Canada and Norrbotten, Sweden. The two regions provide examples and contexts that are interesting because of their similarities, and provide new insights due to their differences. The research question at the heart of this study is: How is food used to create and promote the Arctic tourism product? For the purposes of this report, the potential of slow food to contribute to sustainable tourism development in northern Sweden is highlighted.

Food events are strongly connected to the sense of place and community pride (Hall & Sharples, 2008), which are also tied to place and identity processes. In their case study of Cornwall, south-west England, Everett and Aitchison (2008) explore how these place and identity processes contribute to sustaining cultural heritage, not least by resisting and contesting global food homogenisation processes. They also found that food tourism can play a significant role in contributing to regional sustainability goals and help secure the “triple bottom line” of economic, social and environmental sustainability” (p. 150).

In Sweden, the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture has identified four focus areas for food industry research: climate; energy; sustainable food systems; and the market, linking the organic food movement to local agriculture and identifying the growing interest in good food (CUL, 2010). Moreover, the Sámi, northern Europe’s indigenous people, have an established food industry in Arctic Sweden. Through organisations such as *Renlycka* (Sámi reindeer herders’ quality trademark association) and *Slowfood Sápmi* (Sámi people’s slow food organisation) the industry has taken an active interest in food tourism development, in part because it raises the profile of their products and opens new markets. Thus, tourism development helps the reindeer industry to achieve its own sustainable development goals.

Jokkmokk has hosted a mid-winter market for over 400 years. Food has always been an integral part of the market, and in 2011 *slow food* was the market’s official theme. Recent visitor surveys had indicated that to “enjoy good food including local food made from local ingredients” was chief among expectations (*Jokkmokks magasinet*, 2010, p. 8) and the slow food theme was prominent at the 2011 market, with all restaurants encouraged to offer two menu-choices meeting the *Slowfood Sápmi* criteria of “gott, rent, och rättvist” (enjoyable, ecological, and fair trade). This raising of the food profile of the winter market shows the change in attitude to food’s place in the tourism product, from a marginal position to a central position.

Slow food principles can enhance the northern tourism experience, for instance, by encouraging visitors to eat local while introducing exotic foods from a cupboard most people assume is empty or know little about. The slow movement is also embedded in food security issues, and if these gain more significance, as they likely will with people's increased awareness of climate change, then it will become very difficult to ignore the elephant in the room – the incredible amount of carbon emissions associated with travel to northern places, and the compounding reality that, for most people, even once on site, more carbon emissions are usually required to cover those great distances which the northern regions are known for. Opportunities exist to enhance emerging cultural economies – some tourism oriented, others not – with food experiences. One advantage is that the kinds of experiences produced are often equally appealing to residents as they are to tourists (Brouder, 2012b, 2013b), especially event or festival-oriented, food-enhanced experiences. However, event and festival experiences are not offered on an ongoing basis, and culinary tourism experiences, where food is the central experience, are few and not yet common. Similar to other niche tourism offerings in peripheral regions, it remains challenging to create food oriented product offerings due to many of the same challenges that exist for tourism development in these regions more generally (*e.g.*, accessibility, seasonality, expense, *etc.*).

Tourism development creates markets for certain food products which may add to the sustainability of certain types of food production (*e.g.*, reindeer husbandry). Moreover, the novelty of certain northern food products (*e.g.*, wild berries) creates opportunities for innovative, slow adventure products, such as berry-picking and country kitchen baking, and these products are well-matched to sustainable tourism development going forward.

8. Discussion

The studies presented in this report highlight a number of key challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism development in northern Sweden. These are discussed here on three different levels: the regional level, the local community level, and the firm level.

At the regional level, climate change is the obvious challenge. Northern Sweden is a peripheral region and so faces the same questions of sustainability as other peripheral regions. Sustainable development goals cannot be divorced from the coming realities of a changing climate. The winter season is a vital part of tourism in northern Sweden. Ultimately, the long-term changes affect the collective regional development more than the individual entrepreneurs and so policymakers should begin to consider the potential long-term impacts. There are also important regional resources for tourism development in northern Sweden – protected areas. The Lapponia Area is a unique UNESCO World Heritage Area – protected for both its pristine nature and its cultural heritage. It is the cultural heritage of the Sámi people which makes the Lapponia Area unique and attracts tourism

entrepreneurs from hundreds of kilometres away. How those distant stakeholders are integrated into management planning remains to be seen but their voices must be heard since they can deliver customers and help contribute to the sustainable development of the region.

At the local community level, there are two important considerations. The first is how to optimise local tourism networks. The continuing role of the municipality and destination management organisations (DMOs) in tourism development is testament to the importance of tourism to the local communities and to the fact that the interaction among stakeholders over time leads to positive outcomes for tourism innovation and community development. In Jokkmokk, for example, the new DMO is adding to the network of tourism members both within and beyond the municipal boundaries and is already showing signs of positive development locally.

At the firm level, there is a high rate of attrition in the early years but the long-term survivors contribute to the regional economy with increasing turnover and modest employment gains. Support for emerging enterprises in the areas of 'know-how' and 'know-who' may help to lower the rate of business closure by overcoming experience deficits. Local business development organisations (*e.g.*, Structurum in Jokkmokk) are actively working with tourism firms by offering education and mentoring and are thus contributing to sustainable local development.

9. Conclusion

Tourism development in northern Sweden faces many challenges but it does make important local contributions. These contributions are well-suited to slow but sustainable community development goals. Tourism is not now, nor was it ever, the solution for community development but what this report has shown is that tourism has a role to play in sustainable community development in northern Sweden.

Based on the five studies included in this report, the conclusions on sustainable tourism development in northern Sweden are:

- i. Tourism businesses not only contribute to their local settings through economic means but also by enhancing the local leisure space
- ii. New tourism firms add to employment from their early years and the total employment by surviving firms increases over time despite the failure of most new firms

- iii. Market segments which are geographically distant from protected areas are drawn to them because of their unique attributes and these more distant stakeholders should be integrated into local sustainable tourism development
- iv. Climate change is a long-term challenge with winter tourism entrepreneurs feeling more vulnerable to climate change depending on their location but with non-mobile entrepreneurs most concerned with impacts regardless of their location. Regions must plan for the collective risk because only some firms are readily adaptable.
- v. Food tourism is underdeveloped but growing in northern Sweden and has potential to contribute to sustainable local food systems and community development through food related events and new product development in the region.

Northern Sweden has a healthy supply of nature-based and cultural tourism in many of its small communities. The role of tourism in such communities is not limited to opportunities for enterprise and employment but it also offers meaningful contributions to the local leisure supply. Northern Sweden faces a continuing struggle for societal cohesion and an 'all hands on deck' approach to local development. This is certainly one reason why tourism persists as part of local development strategies. Tourism should thus be seen, not as a last resort but more as a lasting resource, the development of which can result in many positive effects on the rural and peripheral communities of northern Sweden.

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