Cultural sensitivity and tourism

Report from Northern Norway

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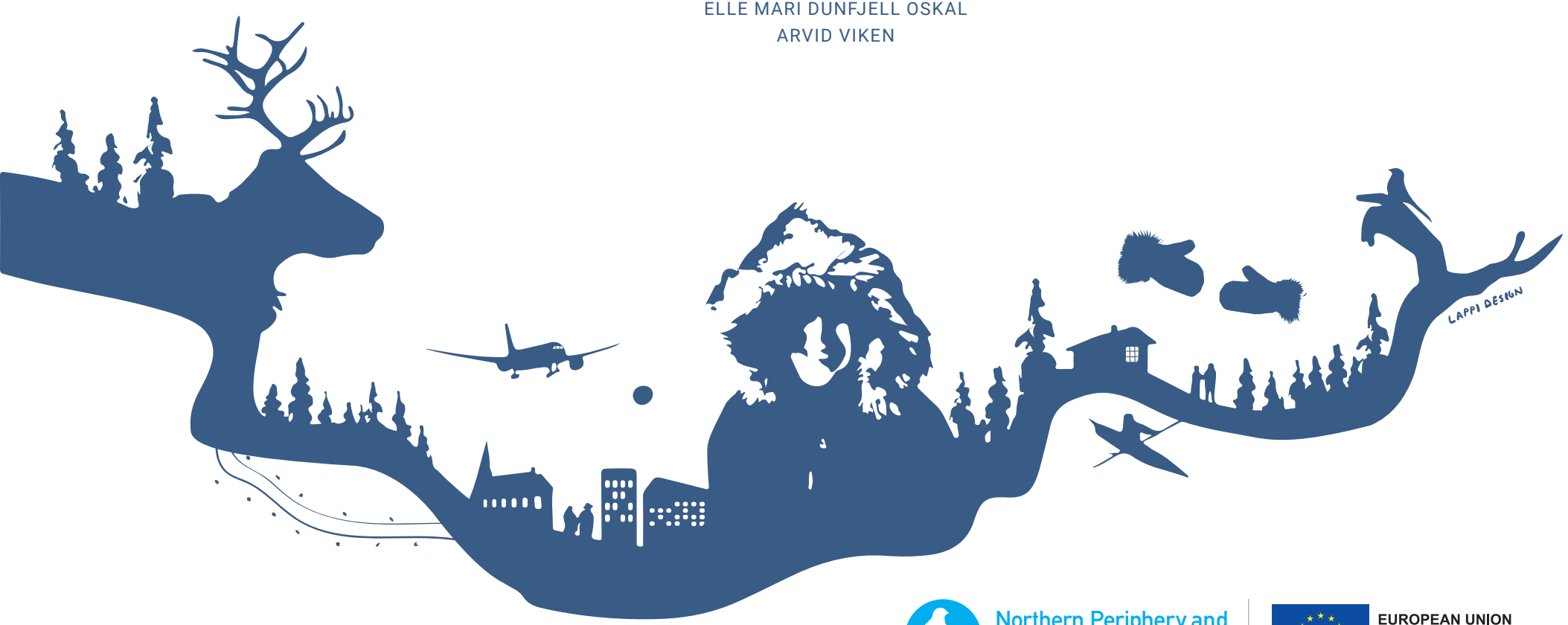

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Lapland University Consortium
LUC
TOURISM

Rovaniemi 2020

ARCTISEN

Promoting culturally sensitive tourism across the Arctic

Main result: Improved entrepreneurial business environment for culturally sensitive tourism that will be achieved by improving and increasing transnational contacts, networks and cooperation among different businesses and organizations. Improvement of business environment will also result in concrete products and services, locally and transnationally designed, that support the capacities of start-ups and SMEs to develop sustainable, competitive and attractive tourism businesses drawing on place-based opportunities.

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Contents

Introduction

Introduction

Over the last 20 years, tourism has grown to become a central economic sector in northern Norway. Tourism in this area has developed from being primarily a summer-based activity to an activity that is, more or less, year-round. Winter tourism has gained momentum as a new peak season, and the previous tourism activities of gazing at the landscape, midnight sun and northern lights have been extended to a whole range of activities. Husky rides, igloos, whale safaris, snow hotels, fishing, randoneé skiing and mountain biking are among the many new activities that are sold to tourists. Visits to Sámi camps are among these activities offered to tourists and are a focus of this report. Even if many of these activities are new to the northern Norwegian context, they are still set in an Arctic landscape that is an important feature of the attraction.

Even though there has been an increase in visitors to the area, growth is not evenly distributed. Nor is the degree to which local and indigenous people participate in tourism development. Some places are far from the beaten tracks of tourists, while others have grown into tourist hubs. The growth in tourism has caused conflicts over access to resources and land as well as the fear of its having a negative impact on local communities that receive high numbers of tourists and experience rapid changes. Furthermore, the way Indigenous and local cultures are turned into tourism products has also caused concern. Who has the right to commodify Sámi and local cultures, how should it be done and should it be stopped – these are longstanding and ongoing debates that have gained momentum in places experiencing tourism growth. There are also debates on the role of companies coming from 'the outside' to utilise the land and in what way they contribute to local communities. Such issues are particularly prominent in debates on fishing tourism but might also relate to other activities. Fishing involves competition for resources, a competition that is also found on land. Tourism, together with extractive industries, infrastructure and an increase in leisure activities, is part of a growing use of the landscape that competes with traditional uses such as reindeer herding.

In the ARCTISEN project, we approach growth in tourism and its implications using the concept of 'culturally sensitive tourism'[1]. The notion of sensitivity highlights negative experiences of cultural exploitation, accentuate that Indigenous peoples and locals' control and determine how culture is used in tourism. Nevertheless, it is equally important to recognise the positive effects of tourism, whether economic, social or, as well, in fostering pride in local and

Indigenous cultures. Most of all, the report emphasizes the importance of participation by local and indigenous people in deciding the content and performance of cultural sensitivity.

The purpose of this report is to give a background for and an analysis of the potential of cultural based tourism in Northern Norway from the perspective of cultural sensitivity. The report discusses about Sámi tourism providers' perceptions on intercultural understanding within the tourism industry, and how the culture-tourism-link can be managed for a more sensitive tourism development.

The report is based on desk research and 23 interviews conducted during March and April- 2019 in Finnmark and Troms, in areas with people of Sámi, Kven*, and Norwegian origin. The interviewed persons represented 18 small and medium-sized tourism companies in rural and urban locations, and five other tourism related organisations such as public authorities, cultural organisations, NGOs and research institutes. The interview questions focused on the use of local cultural elements in tourism, the running of tourism businesses, the development of ideas, and the possibilities and challenges in tourism. The questions were connected to the use of local culture in tourism, running tourism businesses, development ideas and the possibilities and challenges in tourism. The following chapters discuss why it is essential to consider cultural sensitivity when developing tourism in Norway, what kinds of challenges need to be addressed and how cultural sensitivity could be heightened through increased community participation in tourism development. By bringing up different voices, opinions and experiences, the report aims to create better understanding about the environment where tourism business is being developed and operated.

*Descendants of immigrants from Finland

"The focus is to what degree Sámi tourism providers perceive that there is an intercultural understanding within the tourism industry, and how the culture-tourism-link can be managed for a more sensitive tourism development."

Figure 1. Characteristics of culturally sensitive tourism.

Framework for culturally sensitive tourism in Norway

Framework for culturally sensitive tourism Norway

Culturally sensitive tourism cannot rely only on good intentions. A legal and political framework for tourism is a necessary foundation for a tourism that benefits and is inclusive of local communities and minorities culturally, economically and socially. Furthermore, not only the existence of such a framework but how it is implemented and enforced and its relations to and impact on competing industries are of importance. This chapter approaches cultural sensitivity of tourism from three different perspectives that are important in Norway: Existing guidelines and quality certificates, legal, territorial and cultural minority–majority challenges in tourism and demand for culturally sensitive tourism in Norway.

Existing guidelines and quality certificates

In Norwegian politics, 'sustainability' has been the buzz word for tourism. The Norwegian White paper on the tourism industry states that sustainability must be the basis for further development of the tourism industry[2]. The tourism industry must take responsibility for managing its resources from a long-term perspective. This will provide tourism operators with a framework for their decision-making and priorities, locally, regionally and nationally. The government will further encourage nature-based tourism development and management through information, labelling and a simple infrastructure.

Guidelines are primarily on sustainable tourism and emphasise nature, even if they frequently include culture as an element. A typical example might be the advice given for visitors to conservation areas and the right to roam[3], while international guidelines for the protection of Indigenous peoples, like the Akwé: Kon guidelines[4], have not been implemented.

Visit Norway provides a vision for sustainable tourism in 2030 and 2050; in 2030, Norway should have taken a position as one of the most sought-after tourism destinations for sustainable nature- and culture-based experiences. Until 2050, most growth in Norwegian tourism is supposed to consist of unique experiences in intact and alive natural and cultural landscapes. Transportation to and from destinations must be as climate and environmentally friendly as possible. The tourism industry must, in close cooperation with public and other sectors, seek out and inspire low greenhouse gas emissions, offer local food specialties and be characterised by green value creation. Visit Norway shares ten prin-

ciples for sustainable tourism development that integrate cultural values by emphasising a) conservation of nature, culture and environment, b) strengthening of social values and c) economic viability[5].

The label Sustainable Destination is the Nordic region's only national labelling scheme for travel destinations. It is a tool for sustainable development of businesses and destinations when it comes to the environment, local communities, cultural heritage and the economy. With their unique stories and local culinary specialities, these destinations provide a beautiful combination of culture, activities and food, it is maintained[6].

The Norwegian Sámi Parliament provides general guidelines related to land and environment with the overall aim of ensuring that the natural resources of Sámi areas are managed with a vision to safeguarding future generations, with a basis for existence and the opportunity to develop Sámi culture. The concern of the Sámi Parliament is to secure the natural basis for Sámi culture and business practices[7]. As part of this the Duodji (Sámi handicraft) label, a pan-Nordic quality certificate, is in use for handicrafts. Additionally, the Norwegian Sámi Parliament is currently considering implementation of the 'Principles of Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism' developed by the Sámi Parliament in Finland[8].

In Finnmark, the Finnmark Estate (FeFo)[9], the landowner, has created a set of guidelines for the use of nature, making the area and its management predictable with a focus on ecological, social and economic sustainability. This should be to the benefit of the inhabitants of the county and, in particular, act as a basis for Sámi culture, reindeer husbandry, outdoor use, business practices and for society.

In conclusion, it might be said that, with the notable exceptions of Visit Norway and the Duodji label, among the few guidelines that exist, the sustainability concepts in use does not include ideas about culturally sensitive tourism[10] .

"The tourism industry must take responsibility for managing its resources from a long-term perspective. This will provide tourism operators with a framework for their decision-making and priorities, locally, regionally and nationally"

Legal, territorial and cultural minority–majority challenges in tourism

The Norwegian government has ratified International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169 – Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989, which is supposed to frame Indigenous rights in Norway. Three main issues linked to legal and territorial regulations were raised in the interviews. Two of these, that foreign companies or other external companies are allowed to utilise local natural resources, and crowding, are connected to how land use is regulated, particularly under the Recreational Act (Friluftsloven)[11]. Generally this law gives everybody a free access to non-agricultural land. The third is the use of local and in particular Sámi culture, partly connected to the Sámi Law[12].

The Recreational Act grants free access to land and particular resources also for commercial companies guiding people for recreational purposes. Some places this causes challenges and competition when it comes to marine resources in fjords or crowding of the land. The growth of tourism and use of land go together with an increase in the development of infrastructure, wind power plants, extractive industries, the building of second homes and diverse leisure activities that all compete with old industries, traditional livelihoods, and traditional users of the land. Additionally, the way the Recreational Act is practised, enables foreign and other companies with no local foundation to utilise areas, potentially without offering much benefit to local communities in terms of jobs or income. Such companies often lack knowledge of local norms and expectations for how land should be used, lack knowledge of risks and sometimes put pressure on local infrastructure. Moreover, the lack of a local basis also implies a potential deficiency of control over how local culture is communicated to tourists.

The issue of who should communicate local culture, and in particular the Sámi culture, and how it should be communicated is connected to the Sámi Law. The Sámi Law regulates Sámi rights, as well as who can become part of the Electoral Roll for the Sámi Parliament. The formal criteria extend to great grandparents, and these rather wide criteria mean that a formal enrolment, in many communities, has less impact on individual Sámi identity, than in the other Nordic countries. However, the Western tradition of portraying the Sámi in an emblematic way as a traditional reindeer herding people causes many stakeholders to feel insecure about how this should be done in a sensitive way, and sometimes becomes a hindrance for communicating a more realistic image of contemporary life. In particular, in tourist hubs like Tromsø this causes debate and signals a need for guidelines.

In Finnmark, the Finnmark Act[13] that in 2005 handed the ownership of land back to the population in that area, is an important legal framework. Approximately 45 000 km2 are owned by an independent legal entity, The Finnmark Estate on behalf of the population regardless of ethnic identity and as a basis for Sámi culture in particular.

Demand for culturally sensitive tourism in Norway

Tourism is definitively dependent on demand. A change to a more experience-oriented tourism has meant that traditional sightseeing-oriented nature tourism, even if still comprising an important market, has been provided new opportunities for developing products based on local and Indigenous cultures.

The ARCTISEN project conducted an online survey on demand for culturally sensitive tourism that had a rather low response. The 30 who responded offered some information on demand. More than 90 percent of the respondents had visit-

ed the Arctic region. 61.5 percent had taken part in tourism services based on Indigenous/local culture, and even though the motivations of respondents for visiting the area varied widely, most were satisfied with the experiences they had partaken in. When asked what kind of Indigenous/local experiences they were primarily interested in, food, culture, and learning about everyday life were specified. Even if the survey cannot be the basis for any conclusions, it adds to what was revealed by the interviews.

Interviewees have noticed an increasing demand for cultural products and services that enable tourists to catch a glimpse of local lifestyles. It seems important to many tourists that they receive correct information, to have personal experiences with locals and to experience authentic things, for instance through 'home visits' or 'renting-a-local'. There also exists an increased interest in Sámi handicrafts and other kinds of locally produced souvenirs. Moreover, many entrepreneurs underline the importance of offering culturally sensitive products and services in various price levels.

The demand is mainly nature-related. This does not only refer to gazing but also to nature-based activities like dog sledging, sailing, fishing, northern light hunting, randonnée skiing, reindeer sledding and other activities set in Arctic landscapes. This close relationship between Arctic nature and cultures is something that could be developed into more culture-based products through storytelling and by utilising contemporary local life. This would add to the development of the demand for authentic local products, both traditional products and products that incorporate traditional patterns into new designs. In particular, the educational aspect of tourism, telling tourists about nature and culture from a local perspective, is something that according to the interviewees could be further developed.

To develop such products, locals require knowledge and awareness of their culture and skills to share with tourists. A general challenge for tourism in northern Norway are entrenched images of Indigenous populations, still communicated in many forms of adverts, that do not have much resemblance with contemporary life as observable on site. Furthermore, cultural heterogeneity and the presence of a National Minority, the Kvens, are barely communicated. Rather than a demand that should be met, the traditional image of three distinct cultures probably requires a long-term strategy to be altered.

Sensitivity practices, challenges and needs

Sensitivity practices, challenges and needs

To address the challenges as broadly as possible, we have had a particular focus on the degree to which local and Sámi communities participate in tourism development. Sámi communities differ in size and institutional organization, from the level of the family to villages to national and pan-national institutions such as the Sámi Parliaments. We have explored individual, family and small and medium sized business participation in tourism in village Karasjok, in Tromsø which is the largest town in the region and its surrounding area, and the coastal villages in the Lyngen fjord district (northern Troms County). In conducting interviews and field visits, we focused on the parts of the transnational interview guide addressing what needs their own businesses had and about products they had or wanted to develop. They were also asked about the cultural sensitivity of products and experiences offered to tourists.

In this chapter, we will illustrate some of the practices and challenges among entrepreneurs and the needs related to developing cultural sensitivity in tourism practices. In particular, we explore how sensitivity is related to participation and how it may enhance Sámi community empowerment in tourism development. The hypothesis is that services and products where Sámi themselves are in control of the process and the product, will result in culturally sensitive tourism. There are however several questions raised by this approach. What is considered appropriate and culturally sensitive by one Sámi actor such as a highly educated activist might not always resonate with the opinions of entrepreneurs in rural or urban Sámi communities. Must a shop owner or event producer have control of all suppliers, their ethnicity, and material and production methods? Must tour operators and agents have control over their subcontractors, and how these represent Sámi culture? Participation is not always a guarantee for sensitivity, but it is a guarantee for the involvement of diverse voices in the production of tourism services and products.

The trend in other sectors is moving towards certification or branding of places of origin, raw materials and producer descriptions. Could this be a solution also for Sámi tourism, where the level of community participation is one the main guarantees for cultural sensitivity? Based on interviews with mostly Sámi entrepreneurs, and field visits to these three locations, Sámi and non-Sámi entrepreneurs and businesses offering Sámi experiences can be located on a ladder of participation[14] in tourism[15], from a ladder of participation exists ranging “from ‘being consulted’ (often only being informed of a fait accompli) to being able to determine every aspect of the development process[16].

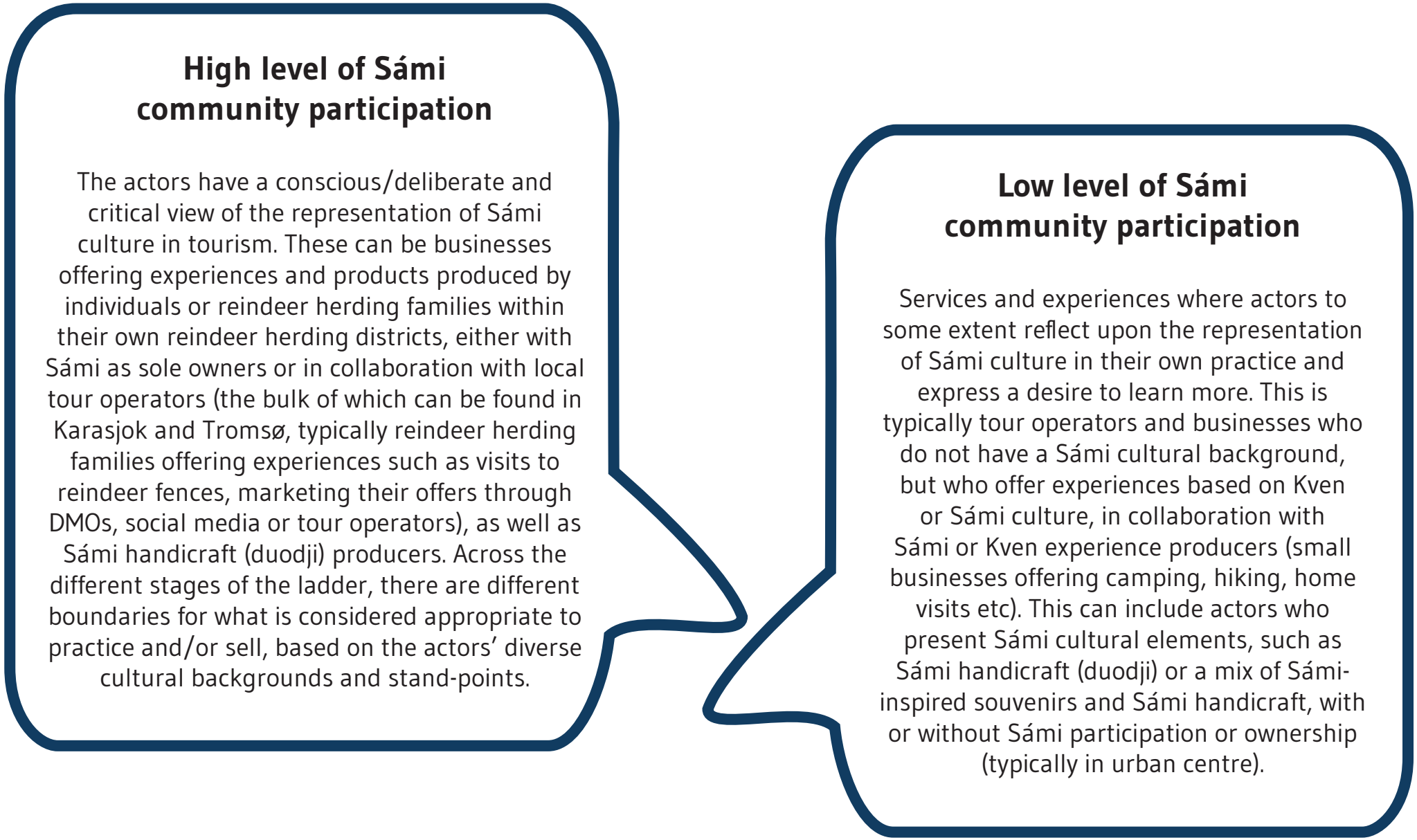

Figure 2. Levels of Sámi community participation

Between criticism and a deliberate approach to sensitivity in Sámi handicraft (duodji)

The Tromsø city has experienced an enormous growth in winter tourism, including experiences related to Sámi culture. Some of the ways in which Sámi are represented has been met with criticism. The Tromsø municipality has initiated a process together with Visit Tromsø to formulate guidelines for Sámi tourism in the area, thus addressing the criticism on the way Sámi culture is represented in souvenir shops and by tour operators.

A particularly heated debate in the regional media prior to the fieldwork was an opportunity to discuss the criticism from Sámi stakeholders on the sale of Sámi handicraft (duodji) in the city. Among Sámi handicraft producers, the "Duodji" label is certificate ensuring the authenticity of the product as a traditional handicraft item. The items produced under this label are however expensive and generally sold through personal networks and on Sámi seasonal markets. Thus, the majority of products sold in tourist souvenir stores are cheaper products from factories in Finland, China and elsewhere that can be ordered online. Particularly in Tromsø, a city with an expanding souvenir market, there is a concern about apparently Sámi souvenirs, their production and who sells them. The number of tourists is so high that there are not enough traditional handicraft producers to meet the demand. Thus, handcrafted and manufactured "Sámi" items are displayed and sold side by side, such as copies of ancient drums, quality knifes by renowned smiths, and miniatures of Sámi traditional dress such as the "Arctic doll" from a Finnish factory (see image 1).

Image 1. Souvenirs and the "Arctic doll" for sale in Tromsø. Photocredit: Camilla Brattland

One of the shops has moved through many profiles until it now follows the booming interest in Sámi handicraft. The owner has grown up with a diversity of Sámi souvenirs for sale to summer tourists along local roads, thus putting the contemporary selection of souvenirs offered by internet shops in perspective. For instance, he has chosen to sell the four-wind hat in

his store. In his opinion the hat has become a part of Sámi cultural expressions. Also, when it comes to the naming of Sámi products and culture, he does not see the use of the term "lap" as problematic. "I am proud of being from Lapland, while for others it is the worst", he says, emphasizing that different things might evoke emotions from person to person.

In general, both in Tromsø and in the other areas, there is an increasing interest in Sámi products from the growing Sámi urban population, from locals and from tourists. Thus, the assortment in many gift shops includes woollen shawls from the renowned Sámi company Stoorstålka and silver jewellery from different silver smiths in Sápmi. Also, cheaper versions of silver and handicraft are offered. The copies of silver jewellery are popular among the locals, particularly Sámi families who use copies for their children, without fearing the cost of loss or damage to the jewellery. In many Sámi communities, however, duodji producers invest in quality materials and they invest time and resources to make products that are true to tradition and innovative at the same time. Products such as handwoven bands for shoes or even home-made cow skin shoes (gápmagat) are either given as gifts to family members or displayed in handicraft houses with a high prize. The costume itself is also subject to an increased anesthetization through its displays in stores, design markets and art exhibitions, thus leading to increased attention to the design of particularly sought-after duojars (artists). This illustrates some of the challenges that actors are facing when deciding what to include in the selection of products for sale. Both locals and tourists desire cheap and nice products, while there is a pressure and desire also to include the traditional items with the "Duodji" label or produced by local duojars/handcrafters.

One of the trendsetters in the discussion on Sámi traditional handicraft is the cultural network around the Riddu Riđđu festival and the Centre for Northern Peoples in Gáivuotna/Kåfjord. As a Sámi cultural institution supported by the national government, the festival has a responsibility that goes beyond that of private shop owners. Practicing sensitivity and a critical approach to the representation of Sámi culture is key to the institutions, and the Riddu festival both participates in the debate on duodji and is also host to a Sámi handicraft market during the festival which takes place in July every year. During a focus group discussion around the issue of sensitivity, the festival director made it clear that they prioritized products with high participation by Sámi themselves. The slogan "Nothing about us, without us", is used as a guiding principle for the selection of items sold at their own market, and also in debates on how tourism in Troms should represent Sámi culture. The festival has however also experienced challenges in drawing boundaries between what to include and exclude. For instance, locals have criticized the exclusion of some popular market that according to a new festival management did not fit the "local and indigenous handicraft" profile. Such critics are hard to ignore for an organization that relies on the goodwill of local village and local volunteers year after year. In other words, sensitivity needs to be negotiated on many levels.

Representing Sámi culture-nature and reindeer husbandry

Both in Tromsø and Karasjok, reindeer herder families are the main developers of Sámi tourist products. They offer experiences such as feeding, sledding and visiting reindeer fences (see image 2) and even participating in spring migration. This is partly due to the fact that a growing number of reindeer herders are being forced out of the reindeer herding industry and have had to find other ways to continue to work with reindeer and within the Sámi reindeer herding culture.

Both in Karasjok and in Tromsø we met women with higher education struggling to find new ways to continue working with reindeer. In coastal Sámi communities, local businesses are not related to reindeer herding and draw upon the revitalisation of local Sámi culture that has been ongoing since the 1990s. Their tourist products are based on Sámi values concerning the use of nature and the revitalisation of Sámi and local cultural practices such as handicraft and traditional music mixed with modern art. Many of these areas have a problem being recognised as Sámi by outsiders because of the consequences of assimilation policies and the dominant image of the Sámi in tourism. The minority culture of the Kvens is hardly visible in tourism, even though in this area it is difficult to tell the difference between Norwegian, Kven and Sámi cultures in many villages and communities. However, those applying the Sámi markers, common in tourism, emphasise the Sámi heritage in their heterogeneous background, making the Sámi presence visible.

There are enormous differences between Karasjok and Tromsø, with Karasjok as a Sámi township and destination and Tromsø, where the Sámi constitute a minority and a minor ingredient to tourism products. This also implies that challenges differ, as do attitudes among tour operators. The reindeer herders in Karasjok operate tourism beside a migrating herd and a herding that is strongly regulated by law, whereas the reindeer tourism in Tromsø is operated and controlled within temporary reindeer fences, more or less independent of reindeer herding operations. There are also yearly events in Tromsø and other Nordic/Arctic cities during the Sámi week in February where reindeer races are organized with tourist classes, and handicraft and other Sámi products including reindeer meat is sold at winter markets.

In Karasjok reindeer herding and Sámi culture come first, and tourism is a secondary and part-time activity, whereas in Tromsø tourism can be a full-time job, and in many cases employing many people. Therefore, the sensitivity issues are also different. In Karasjok the concern is much about how tourists can behave and tourism operations take place without disturbing the reindeer and herding. In Karasjok, basically a Sámi community, those involved in tourism are sure about their Sáminess, whereas those in Tromsø are more concerned with whether what they do is Sámi or not. The coastal Sámi areas are somewhere in between. Due to the strong Norwegianisation processes they have been through, and the following period of Sámi awakening and revitalisation, they are more experimental and open to innovations concerning their Sámi expressions and identities – but also more aware of the cultural challenges that modern life and tourism represent. In other words, in being challenged to reflect upon how culture is being revitalised, they are also more sensitive to how culture is presented by themselves and others.

Social media such as Instagram have become an extremely important communication channel for Sámi reindeer husbandry actors in addition to tourist destination management web sites. Social media profiles are updated regularly during the tourist season with pictures of reindeer, winter

landscapes and some of the activities provided. It is however hard to communicate about culture through social media. During tourist visits, Sámi actors often experience a lack of knowledge about Sámi culture, and often questions are based on stereotypical notions. “They wonder whether we are real Sámi, they ask about the Sámi language, and why we do not have dark skin”, says one of the Sámi culture and reindeer experience providers.

In the coastal Sámi villages at the coast, however, many struggle to explain how Sámi culture and history is part of the nature experience even though it is not obvious to outsiders. Nature guides for instance, discover that once the principles behind their approach to nature use is explained as part of the Sámi worldview, it gives an added value to the tourists’ experience. However, coastal Sámi operators are seldom met with preconceived notions of Sámi culture as tourists’ in general associate Sámi culture with reindeer husbandry.

Image 2. Advertising nature in Tromsø. Photocredit: Camilla Brattland

Concluding reflections on the future tourism development

Concluding reflections on the future tourism development

This concluding chapter presents the needs in business innovation, product, service and capacity development. In the beginning, the outline for tourism development in general is presented, and followed by the discussion of the needs for guidelines and regulation.

Tourism development in general

The framework for tourism development in the Sámi areas in Norway involves the already mentioned tourism policies and the policies, laws and international agreements concerning the Sámi as an Indigenous group and reindeer herding as a Sámi livelihood. In the northern part of Norway, these cover a variety of destinations, a variety that is found with regard to the impact of tourism, kinds of tourism and in relation to variety in local communities. In most places there is a presence of Indigenous Sámi, people who identify with the National Minority of Kven, and people who regard themselves as belonging to the majority culture, as well as many with what they think of as their own culture, influenced by all these groups and sometimes others as well. The labels Sámi, Kven, and Norwegian imply homogenous cultures but they rather conceal the heterogeneity and local embeddedness of people's identifications.

Furthermore, there are major differences among communities with regard to size, impact of tourism and the kinds of tourism that exist. There are however, strong market-oriented changes going on, increasing pressure on Sámi and local culture and livelihoods. Outdoor recreation and tourism activities are growing, and they are increasingly based on modern technologies and commercial activities. Thus, there are many new people, industries and activities challenging the natural environment and the cultures of the northern areas.

The large-scale and top-down focus on tourism development which is the main mantra in Norway, is viewed by some interviewees as a threat to sustainable and locally-anchored tourism. To meet this challenge, there is a need to develop local partnerships and cooperation, not only among tourist businesses but also with other local actors. There is also a need for improved knowledge of local culture and history and developing products that can meet the demand for high-quality cultural mediation among tourists. Foreign companies and guides often have little or no knowledge of local culture and nature. As stated by the interviewees, there is an interest among tourists in witnessing contemporary everyday life in the communities they visit, and there is a potential for developing products providing for this. If such a

demand for products based on contemporary life in the North is going to be met, this will place additional stress on the importance of local and Indigenous involvement and control so that such products can be culturally sensitive.

The reported demand for products that reflect contemporary local life indicates that there is a need for innovation in marketing and developing products based on local life and nature, as well as strengthening local traditional handicraft and developing product designs that can cater to different segments of customers. Responding to this need will however entail commodification of Sámi culture. This is currently done by both Sámi and non-Sámi, and it is important to consider how Sámi interests can participate in developing commodified cultural services and products for tourism. The need for infrastructure and accessibility was also raised by some actors located at the periphery of the major destinations.

Several interviewees mentioned duodji, design, and modern food inspired by traditions. Tourism, it is maintained, could be a driving force for product development, as for instance in traditional handicraft. Several point out products based on Sámi local everyday life, such as reindeer husbandry and the communities in general. The latter implies that local heterogeneity is exposed and that guides relate to local ethics and values are exposed. Local cooperation was seen as important, to give a representative image of the variety in the culture. Even if not explicitly stated, many of these examples relate to an educational tourism wherein local culture and nature become the key, both ethically and as learning opportunities for tourists. Furthermore, many of the interviewees stated that being a part of a local community creates an interdependence wherein they have to relate to the local ethos. This should be at the core of culturally sensitive tourism.

Interethnic relations is an issue all places, experienced as a reluctance to define sharp boundaries in ethnically mixed communities. However, local and inter-local debates on the appropriation of indigenous culture, are going on and can also be important narratives in tourism contexts. Who can use Sámi symbols is an issue in the experience production and souvenir trade, and should be discussed also with tourists. How and by whom can Sámi culture be transformed to tourism products? In particular, such issues are vital to discuss in areas tending towards mass tourism and where new actors are entering the business scene. The issues do not necessarily have clear answers, or answers that fit all local communities. Within a frame of sensitivity, this is an important discussion.

"Furthermore, many of the interviewees stated that being a part of a local community creates an interdependence wherein they have to relate to the local ethos. This should be at the core of culturally sensitive tourism."

Needs for guidelines and regulation?

Sámi participation in the development of tourism products varies, and often dependent on the local community. In a community where the Sámi is exposed in many fashions, it is easier to realise the Sáminess of the place, but also of activities. The fact that a business has received financial support under the Sámi Parliament's policy for small-scale livelihoods, is often seen as a recognition or certification of the business in the eyes of the local and larger Sámi community in Norway. However, communities are not ethnically 'certificated' and many places the Sáminess is not so visible. Therefore, some municipalities have policies aiming at making the Sámi more visible, as using Sámi language and symbols in signposts and information sites. However, this is a difficult area. For instance, can the Sámi drum be used as an information sign, as it is done in Sápmi Park in Karasjok, or the Sámi costume as wall decoration, as it was for more than twenty years, also in Karasjok? To tackle such issues, there is a need for sensitivity. The question that has been raised related to this, is whether there are needs for guidelines.

When tourism is moderate, and entrepreneurs themselves are part of a local community, as in Karasjok, tourism actors appear to know how to handle cultural sensitivity. There seems to be no need for somebody to tell them how to act. Therefore, they are reluctant to develop guidelines for the sector. People's cultural background is their cultural guidance. However, in Tromsø, the idea of guidelines is more frequently discussed. Guidelines could make it easier to operate, in particular for those who are not part of Sámi communities – such as national tourist companies selling Sámi tours and items. Worldwide, there are numerous examples of such guidelines. Guidelines, produced through a collective process, could also be a way to answer questions about who should decide and be in control of the commercial use of culture. Guidelines may also pave the way for outsiders, telling them how to behave, making the business conditions easier for outsiders. Thus, there is an ambivalence, at least in allowing guidelines too much space.

The question of guidelines is related to community participation in tourism governance, in particular in relation to cultural sensitivity. Making a parallel to other sectors, tourism is basically without regulation, as long as general laws and rules are followed. In many fields there are certificate requirements for actors, there is a demand to be authorized as professionals, or to set up a company in a field. Particularly for companies based on natural resource extraction, there is an emergent awareness concerning corporate social responsibility and the concept of social licence to operate. The idea behind these principles is that companies should be aware of the socio-cultural implications of their business activities, and act accordingly, and about economic benefits and losses due to the extraction. The social licence issue, is also raised for tourism[17]. In general, to acquire a certificate to represent and interpret Sámi culture would then entail a certain level of professional competence in Sámi culture, or that the service meets the standards of guidelines such as the Akwé:Kon and other authoritative international standards. Could this be a way to guarantee a proper interpretation and mediation of Sámi culture? Or, is sensitivity the solution through a high level of participation of the Sámi, and a high level of reflexivity concerning business-culture relations? A certification could be voluntary, entailing that it would up to the consumers to choose whether they purchase the certified, culturally sensitive product, or the product without any certification, which could nonetheless provide an enriching experience for consumers, or vice versa.

Concluding remarks

Even with huge discrepancies in the Norwegian ARCTISEN project area, which covers diverse communities in rural and urban settings, some similarities exist in terms of the level of community participation in tourism development. First, there is growing awareness of and a wish to represent Sámi, Kven, and local culture in a sensitive way, also displaying the diversity of local Sámi cultures. This entails a need for better local control of how cultures are represented and sold, as well as knowledge and skills for developing culturally sensitive tourism products out of what are locally regarded as rather mundane activities.

Second, even though nature remains the selling point in Arctic tourism, there exists an interest in developing products based on local culture that can educate visitors and show how heterogeneous everyday life in these areas is firmly connected to particular relationships with nature. In this case, there appears to be a need to develop cultural and historical knowledge, both locally and in actors coming from the outside that will inspire how such products can be developed in a culturally sensitive way.

On the ladder of community participation in tourism, a higher level of participation by Sámi themselves will most likely enhances both intra- and intercultural understanding and respect, and thus the cultural sensitivity of Sámi tourism in the long run.

Notes and references

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Notes

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9. FeFo, 2019.
10. See e.g. Visit Tromso.
11. Recreational Act, 1957.
12. Sámi Law, 1987.
13. Finnmark Act, 2005.
14. Cf. Arnstein, 1969.
15. Murphy, 1985.
16. Cole, 2006, p. 631.
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ARCTISEN

Cultural sensitivity and tourism

Report from Northern Norway

This national report approaches community participation in Sámi tourism in Norway and its relationship with cultural sensitivity. To what extent does participation and empowerment guarantee cultural sensitivity in tourism? In which ways can Indigenous peoples and other local communities utilize their cultural heritage and contemporary life in creating successful tourism products and services? Based on interviews among tourism actors, the report offers an overview and discussion of cultural sensitivity in Sámi tourism in Norway.