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ENHANCING CULTURALLY SENSITIVE TOURISM IN FINNISH LAPLAND
Exploring the role of the Sámi tourism guidelines

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Abstract

The tourism industry's growth resulted in unethical impacts on the local communities which prompted the implementation of controls such as policies, codes of conduct, and Indigenous tourism guidelines to maintain ethical standards. While policies and codes have been widely studied, research on Indigenous tourism guidelines is limited, focusing on their effectiveness and limitations. This study aimed to understand how the "Principles for responsible and ethically sustainable Sámi tourism" are recognised and implemented and explored their role in enhancing cultural sensitivity.

The conceptual framework of this thesis was guided by Viken et al.'s (2021) study on cultural sensitivity. The main research question of the study was: *What role do the Sámi tourism guidelines have in enhancing cultural sensitivity?* The sub-questions were: *What actions are tourism actors taking in order to enhance cultural sensitivity?* and *How are the Sámi tourism guidelines recognized and used by tourism actors in Finnish Lapland?* The study used two sets of data: semi-structured interviews with three tourism actors and online data from eight tourism actors' websites. The methods of analysis were thematical analysis for the first set and qualitative content analysis for the second set.

The main findings of the research suggested that tourism actors in Finnish Sápmi actively engaged in promoting cultural sensitivity towards the Sámi people through actions like prioritizing authentic experiences, recognizing the diversity within Sámi culture, fostering reciprocity between hosts and guests, and encouraging collaboration within the tourism industry. A portion of Lapland's tourism sector showed awareness and implementation of the guidelines, aligning their actions with the principles that promote cultural sensitivity, respect, and reciprocity in Sámi tourism. Additionally, inadequate training for seasonal workers, limited control over tourism companies' behaviour, and the impact of Christmas tourism on Sámi culture were identified as challenges while education, digital tools, and certification systems were seen as opportunities to enhance cultural sensitivity. In the future, a broader perspective should be applied to offer a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon of Indigenous tourism guidelines, and voices of Sámi entrepreneurs should be included as well. Future studies could also examine the Indigenous guidelines through the context of postcolonial narratives.

Key words: Indigenous tourism guidelines, Indigenous tourism, Sámi tourism, cultural sensitivity, thematic analysis, content analysis, Sámi Homeland

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

> Among many challenges of today, under the pressures of the current homogenisation of cultures, the modern way of life, longstanding out-migration, and the failure to fulfil the rights of the Sámi, Sámi culture is fragile and its preservation, development and natural transmission to future generations cannot sustain further external disruptions. (Sámi Parliament, 2018, p.5).

> There is an acute need for creating criteria, rules, and a monitoring system to guarantee the authenticity, responsibility, and ethical sustainability of tourism based on Sámi culture, as defined, and accepted by the Sámi community concerned. (Gardiner, 2021).

Indigenous peoples have been involved in tourism since the 19th century. They were guides and porters in Africa (Hall et al., 2008) they were taking visitors to cultural ceremonies in Australia (Cahir & Clark, 2010), they were producing and distributing souvenirs to travellers in the south of Canada (Phillips, 1998), and so much more. The beginning of 20th century saw an increase in the number of travellers seeking the "exotic" destinations and their Indigenous peoples (Craik, 1994 as cited by Whitford & Ruhanen, 2016). Around this time Sámi people and their cultures started appearing in Fennoscandia's tourism marketing materials (Pettersson, 2004). The rise in Indigenous involvement in tourism was mostly a result of assimilation processes and policies, but also came from the desire of the Indigenous peoples to represent their own culture (Nicholson, 2001). Indigenous tourism has continued to grow and develop and nowadays it is an essential part of the tourism industry in many countries like Australia (Zeppel, 2006), Canada (Hurst et al., 2020), Norway (Viken, 2022) and Finland (Kugapi et al., 2020; Saari et al., 2020).

Throughout the years, tourism has been considered the perfect option for improving the poor socio-economic conditions of Indigenous communities and has been seen as a way to preserve Indigenous cultures and traditions (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003; Smith, 2003; Whitford, 2009). However, Whitford and Ruhanen (2016, p. 1082) tell us that "tourism can be a double-edged sword", which means that besides the positive impacts that tourism brings to the Indigenous communities (creates jobs, develops the local economies, preserves the local cultures, improves self-determination), it creates negative effects as well, like exploitation and

misrepresentation of culture, disruption of lifestyle, cultural and land appropriation, racism, and destruction of habitats (Crick, 1989; Smith, 2003; Zoomers, 2010). In the case of European Arctic, the same double impacts were observed, and more often than not the negative effects outnumbered the positive ones, with conflicts arising over marketing of Sámi cultures (de Bernardi, 2022; Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016), appropriation of culture (Keskitalo et al., 2021; Viken, 2006) and misrepresentation (Keskitalo, 2017), to name a few. Furthermore, research has shown that the issues related to cultural insensitivity are worse in Finland than they are in other parts of the European Arctic (Olsen et al., 2019, p.17).

The start of the 21st century saw an increased attention from researchers towards the negative effects of tourism on the Indigenous communities (see Altman & Finlayson, 2003; Chang, 2006; Clark, 2009; Dyer et al., 2002; Hall et al., 2008; Lui & Lu, 2014; McIntosh, 2004; Yang, 2011), and actions have been taken to try and reduce those negatives to a minimum. In countries like Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Norway policies were implemented for the sustainable development of the Indigenous tourism sector (Viken, 2022; Weaver, 2010). The reason why Indigenous peoples were included in those policies was because governing bodies saw the potential for Indigenous tourism to drive growth across the whole tourism industry (Whitford & Ruhanen, 2010). However, the effectiveness of such policies has been questioned by researchers, with many agreeing that they fail to create real change (Altman, 1988; Whitford et al., 2001). Governments have been criticised for often giving priority to economic growth over sustainably when developing tourism, even though the policies they are creating, or their rhetoric sounds "green minded" (Bramwell, 2004, p. 32). Furthermore, Whitford and Ruhanen (2010, pp. 491-492) found that in the case of Australia there was a general underappreciation for the diversity and complexity of Indigenous cultures throughout different policies, and that they lacked a clear way for achieving sustainable Indigenous tourism development.

Since policies were not enough of a catalyst for change, in 2012 the World Indigenous Tourism Alliance (WINTA) and the Larrakia Declaration were established, with both having the goal of guiding the development of Indigenous tourism and making the tourism industry more equitable and culturally sustainable (Whitford & Ruhanen, 2016). Agreements and declarations such as those laid the groundwork for the development of indigenous tourism guidelines (Olsen et al., 2019). The aims of these guidelines were to further reduce the negative effects of tourism on the Indigenous communities, enhance cultural sensitivity in tourism, and make the non-

Indigenous tourism actors have a more ethical and responsible behaviour (Indigenous people and the travel industry, 2017).

Even though policies have been implemented and guidelines have been created, ethnicity is still being used as a resource for promoting tourism (de Bernardi, 2022; Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016), and Indigenous cultures are still being exoticized and shown as primitive (Grimwood et al., 2019). In the case of Finland, it can be observed from news articles that stereotypes and unauthentic representations of Sámi cultures are persisting (Gardiner, 2021) and Sámi identity is still being distorted in tourism (Jaakkola, 2022). On the other hand, Viken (2022) notes in his study that sensitivity towards appropriation is increasing and the tourism marketing is slowly starting to adapt. In this thesis I aim to explore what role Indigenous tourism guidelines play in the enhancement of cultural sensitivity, and if they can be a driver of change.

1.2. Tourism in Finnish Sápmi and the Sámi tourism guidelines

This master thesis discusses the use of Sámi cultures in Finnish tourism, with a focus on Finnish Sápmi. Before starting to discuss tourism in the Sámi homeland and the guidelines for Sámi tourism, a better understanding is needed of Indigenous peoples and communities. The definition commonly used by the United Nations states that:

> Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system (United Nations, 2009, p. 4).

In this thesis the Indigenous group that I will be focusing on are the Sámi. So, who are the Sámi? They are the only Indigenous peoples in Europe, and they originate in the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia (Kola Peninsula), territory called Sápmi or Sámi Homeland, and their population is estimated to be around 75 000, out of which about 10 000 Sámi live in Finland (Hääglund et al., 2019, p. 58; Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016, pp. 376-377; Pettersson & Viken, 2007, p. 177). There are ten Sámi groups throughout the Sápmi area, out of which three are in Finland: North Sámi, Inari Sámi, and Skolt Sámi; with each group having

its own language and traditional clothing (Samediggi, 2013). The history of Sámi people is described by Spangen et al. (2015) as having a legacy of colonization, which contradicts with Finland's claim of being the exception. Spangen et al. (2015) also detail the ways in which the Sámi people have been oppressed and exploited by the Finns, through processes like land dispossession, repressing legislation, and use of natural resources to name a few. The Indigenous status of Sámi was finally written into the Finnish constitution in 1995, and in 1996 the Sámi gained the right to self-governance, which is managed by the Sámi Parliament, who is elected by the Sámi every four years (Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016, p.376; Samediggi, 2013).

Historically, traditional Sámi livelihoods have included reindeer herding, fishing, hunting, gathering, small-scale farming, and making handicrafts, with reindeer herding still to this day being the most significant (Samediggi, 2013). It is important to mention that most Sámi nowadays live modern lives, and some have decided to combine the traditional livelihoods with tourism (Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016, p. 376), and according to Viken (2006, p. 9) "tourism has been a complementary subsistence to reindeer herding since the 19th century". After The Second World War, accessibility in Sápmi area increased and Sámi cultures became more important for tourism, however Sámi attractions were still considered complementary to other forms of tourism (e.g. nature-based tourism) (Viken & Müller, 2006, p. 2). Nowadays tourism is an essential industry in the Sámi areas from Finland, Sweden, and Norway and the Sámi cultures are attracting tourists in the so called "last wilderness of Europe" (Viken & Muller 2006, as cited by Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016, p. 380).

Arctic communities consider tourism as an advantage for the local communities but also something that created negative effects (Olsen et al., 2019). Sámi tourism had a positive impact on the Sámi communities, it created jobs, facilitated a reconnection with their identity, increased the knowledge of tourists and other tourism professionals about Sámi people and cultures, and ended up challenging the stereotypes (Leu et al., 2018; Maraud & Guyot, 2016; Viken, 2006). However, exploitation of Sámi cultures for tourism benefits has a long history, especially in Finland where it has been present for far longer than in other part of the European Arctic (Viken & Müller, 2006, p.2). Sáminess has been used in tourism as an exotic element for as long as there has been tourism in Lapland (Müller & Pettersson, 2001; Viken & Müller, 2006), and for years the tourism industry has marketed Sámi cultures as primitive and out of date (Olsen, 2006, as cited by Niskala & Ridanpää 2016). Some of the other issues that tourism has created are:

- use of Sámi garments by non-Sámi tourism actors (Kugapi et al., 2020, p. 25, Lindholm, 2014),

- stereotypical representation of Sámi in marketing materials (de Bernardi, 2022; Viken & Müller, 2006),

- "souvenirization of Sámi culture" (Viken, 2022, p.3),

- disturbance of the reindeer herding areas (Kugapi et al., 2020; Viken, 2022),

- objectification of Sámi (e.g. taking pictures without permission) (Quinn, 2020),

- the creation of fake rituals and traditions, like the very controversial "Lapland baptism" (Gardiner, 2021).

Even though, according to Kugapi et al. (2020, p. 8-9) commodification of Sámi cultures is decreasing, unethical behaviour towards Sámi people and culturally insensitive tourism still persists to this day in Finland as portrayed in media articles (Gardiner, 2021; Jaakkola, 2022; Quinn, 2020). Due to the unethical tourism practices that Sámi peoples have dealt with throughout the years, the Sámi Parliament launched the *Culturally Responsible Sámi Tourism projects*, through which in 2018 the "Principles for responsible and ethically sustainable Sámi tourism" were created (Sámediggi, 2017; Quinn, 2020).

The primary goals of the guidelines for Sámi tourism are to terminate appropriation of Sámi cultures, to put an end to the misinformation about Sámi, to protect the Sámi people and communities outside of the travel industry, and to safeguard Sámi cultures (Sámi Parliament, 2018). Amongst the target groups for these guidelines are the non-Sámi tourism actors and operators, the Sámi tourism actors, Finnish governmental body, and any visitor arriving in Sámi Homeland. (Sámi Parliament, 2018; Sámediggi, 2017). What it can be observed already from the target groups is that these guidelines recognize the need for the whole tourism industry to move into a more respectful and ethical direction.

The Sámi tourism guidelines consist of seven principles, each focusing on different aspects, such as preservation of cultural heritage, cooperation between stakeholders, improvement of tourism marketing, and respect for the Sámi cultural heritage. The principles can be observed in Figure 1. Besides the seven principles, which are the key parts of the guidelines, the document includes information about Sámi tourism, Sámi people and cultures, and the Sámi parliament's vision for tourism. The general belief is that if these guidelines are applied by the

entire tourism industry, it should lead to responsible and ethically sustainable Sámi tourism (Sámi Parliament, 2018), which could enhance culturally sensitive tourism in Finland. The Sámi Parliament is continuously working on improving the tourism industry and trying to make it more ethically sustainable (Samediggi, 2021).
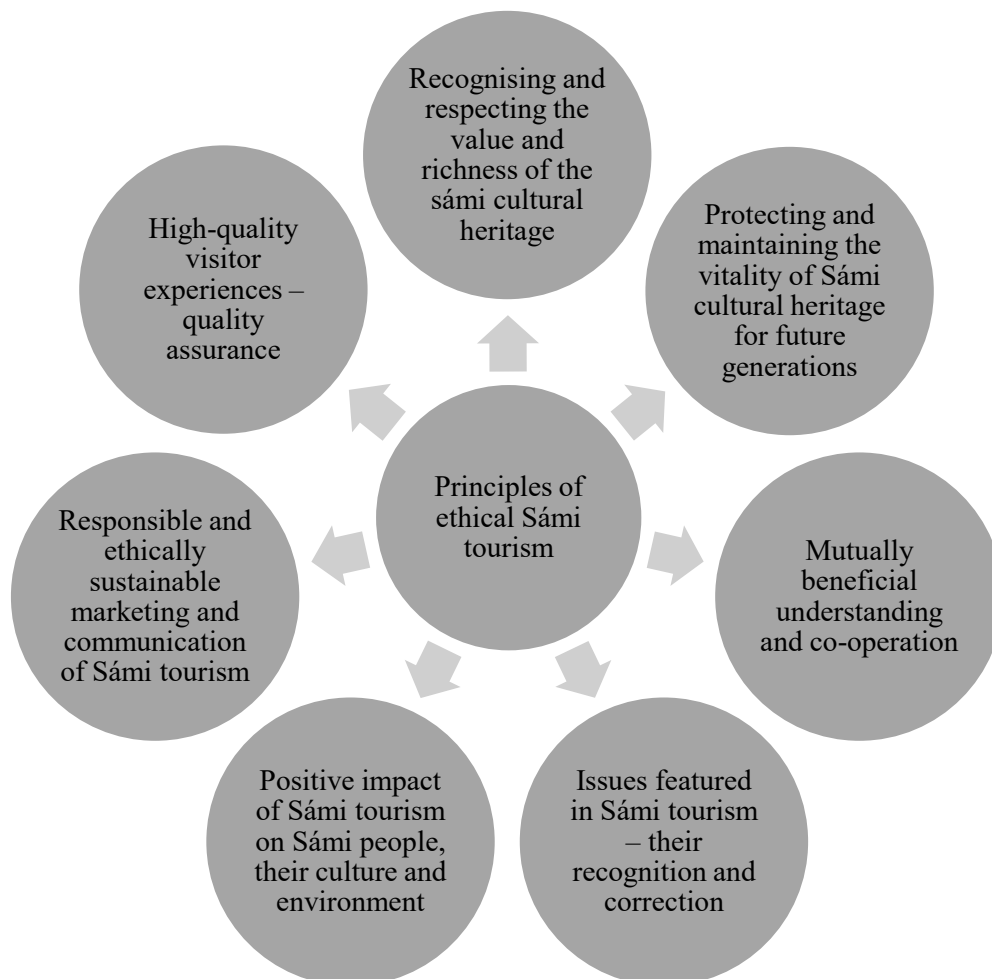
Figure 1. Principles for responsible and ethically sustainable Sámi tourism (Source: Sámi Parliament, 2018)

Based on the Sámi tourism guidelines, illustrations were created as part of the *Culturally Responsible Sámi Tourism projects,* in order to support the message of the guidelines and help raise awareness about them. The illustrations were created by Sámi comic artist Sunna Kitti and can be found on the Sami Parliament's website (Sámediggi, 2019). Furthermore, these illustrations are part of a new project launched by the Sámi Parliament in 2022, *the responsible visitors' guidance website*, which aims at improving the behaviour of tourists arriving in Sámi Homeland (Sámediggi, 2022a). In the same website, a page was created called "Vocabulary of Responsible Tourism in Sámi Homeland" where people can find Sámi Parliament's own

definitions of *authenticity, cultural appropriation, cultural sustainability, cultural safety, misrepresentation, primitivisation,* to name a few (Sámediggi, 2022b).

1.3. Previous research on Indigenous tourism guidelines

The tourism industry's growth brought with it the potential for unethical transgressions, causing the need for some form of control in order to maintain tourism as an ethical industry (Malloy & Fennell, 1998, p.454). One such control was done through policies (Weaver, 2010); however, governments have been criticised many times for creating policies that prioritise self-interests rather than sustainable development (Berke & Conroy, 2000; Whitford et al., 2001). Since policies were believed to be inefficient, tourism guidelines and codes of conduct were created at national and international level in order to help the improvement of sustainability in tourism. These guidelines and codes of conduct were seen as a softer, more voluntary approach to regulate behaviour inside the tourism industry, emphasizing education and self-regulation (Mason, 2005). Some of the sustainable tourism guidelines and codes of conduct can be observed in Table 1.

Table 1. Sustainable tourism guidelines (Source: Olsen et al., 2019)

Sustainable tourism guidelines	
International	Tips for a responsible traveller, UNWTO, 2020
	Global Code of Ethics for Responsible Tourism, UNWTO, 1999
	10 Principles of sustainable tourism, Visit Norway
	6 Dos and Don'ts of dog sledding, Visit Greenland
	Nature's Best quality label, Swedish Ecotourism Society, 2002
	Sisimiut community Guidelines, Greenland
Finland	Principles of sustainable tourism, Metsähallitus 2016
	Instructions for Responsible Tourism in Lapland, House of Lapland, 2020
	National principles for sustainable tourism, Visit Finland, 2019

Various stakeholders in the tourism industry, including tour operators, travel agents, and host communities have developed codes of conduct to influence consumer behaviour, raise awareness and reduce negative impacts that were brought on by the visitors (Cole, 2007). Fennell and Malloy (2007) defined codes of conduct as guidelines that outline how individuals

or groups should behave in certain places, focusing on ethics and responsibility. Furthermore, according to Holmes et al. (2016, p. 1179), these codes have played a consistent role in sustainable tourism discourses.

Previous studies have explored the evolution of guidelines and codes of conducts, with Mason and Mowforth (1996) tracing the origins of visitor codes of conduct to the 1970s and 1980s, noting that they spread from England and Wales to other parts of the world. Additionally, Holmes et al. (2016, p. 1180) tell that concerns over tourism's disruption of the Arctic environments and Indigenous communities led to initiatives like the World Wild Fund for Nature's collaborative project in 1996. This resulted in the creation of the first Arctic-specific codes of conduct addressing both environmental and Indigenous considerations (Holmes et al., 2016). In recent years there has been an emergence of guidelines, codes, and protocols specifically created to safeguard the rights of indigenous communities (Olsen et al., 2019). While earlier guidelines addressed broader sustainability issues and only mentioned the Indigenous peoples, these new initiatives are solely focusing on enhancing Indigenous tourism, ensuring respectful engagement with Indigenous cultures, and aiming to stop commodification of Indigenous cultures and values (Indigenous people and the travel industry, 2017; Sámi Parliament, 2018).

Besides the Sámi tourism guidelines created by the Sámi Parliament, which have already been discussed, various Indigenous tourism guidelines exist worldwide, each tailored to address cultural sensitivity and preservation (Olsen et al., 2019). Some of these guidelines can be observed in Table 2. In Canada, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) created national guidelines to help business owners in developing Indigenous tourism products (ITAC, 2019). The guidelines emphasize respect for nature, culture, and traditions, they aim to prevent cultural appropriation and communicate appropriate tourist conduct (Hurst et al., 2020, p. 21). Other guidelines from Canada include Parks Canada Agency's Promising Pathways Resource Guide, which asks for long-term commitment, mutual respect, and trust-building in Indigenous tourism activities (Hurst et al., 2020, p. 20).

Table 2. Indigenous tourism guidelines (Source: Olsen et al., 2019)

Indigenous tourism guidelines	
International	Indigenous People & the Travel Industry – Global Good Practice Guidelines, 2017 UNTWO-Recommendations on Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tourism, 2019 Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) National Guidelines, 2018 Promising Pathways: Strengthening engagement and relationships with Aboriginal peoples in Parks Canada heritage places, 2014
Finland	Principles of Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism, Sámi Parliament of Finland, 2018

Because Indigenous tourism guidelines have been created recently, there is a gap in research about these types of guidelines, their implementation, and impacts. Nonetheless, in recent years, more studies have been done on the effectiveness of guidelines, with the transnational baseline reports from the ARCTISEN project discussing this issue, focusing on their impact on improving cultural sensitivity in tourism (see Hurst et al., 2020; Kugapi et al. 2020; Olsen et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2020a). Hurst et al. (2020) analysed existing tourism guidelines in Canada, aiming to evaluate their impact on increasing cultural sensitivity withing the tourism industry. Their findings showed that the Canadian guidelines were not really adopted by tourism businesses, partly because the local governments had troubles with their dissemination (Hurst et al., 2020). Moreover, Hurst et al. (2020) credited the limited efficiency of the Canadian Indigenous guidelines to their voluntary nature and the fact that they are not included in a certification or accreditation program.

Kugapi et al.'s (2020) study looked into the potential for culturally sensitive tourism in Finnish Lapland, examining the ethical guidelines for Sámi tourism and their possible impact on tourism development. When the interviews were conducted for the report, the guidelines had been published only for one year, therefore their exact effect on the tourism industry was not clear yet. However, the opinions voiced at that point were mixed, especially about the sledge-dog business. One important aspect that interviewees mentioned was that cooperation with local

tourism actors is the key to a successful implementation of the guidelines (Kugapi et al, 2020, pp. 16-17). It is worth noting the difference between the guidelines from Canada and those from Finland. While ITAC's (2019) guidelines target only Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs, the guidelines created by the Sámi Parliament (2018) are aimed at the entire tourism industry in Finland, and tourists visiting the Sámi Homeland. This difference matters because while the Canadian guidelines might not have a huge impact, the ones from Finland could have bigger effect because they are aimed at a larger audience.

Ren et al.'s (2020a) study explored the various tourism guidelines from Greenland and observed a lack of clear Indigenous tourism guidelines. While there are existing guides like Sisimiut community guidelines and "how to kaffemik" which aim to improve tourists' behaviour, they do not specifically address Indigenous tourism activities. Ren et al. (2020a) suggest that the absence of strict guidelines in Greenland could be due to a small amount of negative impacts created by tourism for the local communities.

Another research from the Arctic is from a Canadian perspective. Holmes et al.'s (2016) collaborative study with the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation's (Denesoline) community members focuses on the creation of an Indigenized visitor's code of conduct. Their research resulted in an extensive guide that articulated Denesoline expectation for visitors to their territory and provided specific behaviours that are deemed appropriate. Furthermore, this code of conduct served as a tool for educating visitors on ethical and responsible behaviour when visiting the Denesoline territory (Holmes et al., 2016, p.1188). Additionally, Holmes et al. (2016) found out that community-derived codes of conduct targeted at tourists about appropriate behaviour can support Indigenous self-determination.

While majority of research on the phenomenon of Indigenous tourism guidelines is from an Arctic perspective, there are some studies made in other parts of the world. One such research is Jonathan Liljeblad's (2015) from an Australian perspective who used Foucauldian approach for power relations to explain how guidelines focused on Indigenous host – non-Indigenous tourist interaction should be created in order to be considered appropriate. Additionally, Liljeblad (2015) highlighted the fact that decisions regarding the Indigenous peoples in the structure of a tourist-Indigenous encounter should be made by the Indigenous people.

Several studies on Indigenous tourism guidelines have addressed concerns voiced by Indigenous communities and other tourism actors. In Kugapi et al.'s (2020) study, Sámi tourism actors' concerns are related to potential complications for their businesses, increased debates on Indigenous identity, and ambiguity regarding the guidelines' target audience. Other criticism of Indigenous guidelines revolves around their perceived strictness, with tourism actors calling for more flexibility (Kugapi et al., 2020). In contrast, study participants from Ren et al. (2020a) view strict guidelines as a positive, because you can clearly convey the desired tourist behaviour when they visit your destination. Furthermore, codes of conduct have also had their fair share of criticism, with Honey (1999, pp. 49-50) calling them "green tricks that allow an organization to claim sensitivity and responsibility" and Holden (2001, p. 159) referring to them as "nothing more than a cynical marketing ploy". This sentiment is also shared by Mowforth and Munt (2003), Wheeller (1994) and Butcher (2003), with the latter stating that codes of conduct sometimes patronize tourists and portray hosts as victims needing "paternal care." (Cole, 2007, p. 444).

"The success of any policy or regulation in guiding sustainability depends on the level of its acceptance by both business operators and tourists." (Mutana & Mukwada, 2020, p. 199). Applying this to Indigenous guidelines implies that their effectiveness relies heavily on the endorsement and cooperation of both guests and hosts. However, as pointed out by Hurst et al., (2020) guidelines are optional in nature, unlike regulations which are mandatory. Participants in Mutana and Mukwada's (2020, p. 205) research mentioned that they often disregard voluntary regulations, choosing to prioritize profit maximization. Due to this voluntary nature, Hurst et al. (2020) pointed out that assessing the effectiveness of Indigenous guidelines remains a challenge. Mason and Mowforth (1995) also highlighted the difficulty in studying the effectiveness of codes, questioning how can someone asses if the change in behaviour and attitudes was influenced by their implementation. Despite this challenges, Roberts and Rognvaldsson (2001) emphasized that behaviour is influenced by attitudes and in turn attitudes are influenced by increase of knowledge. This suggests that implementation of guides and codes can affect changes in behaviour.

1.4. Purpose of the study

Coming from Romania, a country with no Indigenous population, I had very little knowledge about Indigenous peoples and cultures. Everything I knew came from mass media, social media,

and a course in political geography from my bachelor's degree. But through a series of courses taken during my master's studies, such as "Introduction to the Arctic", "Sustainable Tourism Development in Northern Environments", and "People, cultures, and identities of the Arctic", I learned about the different Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, and I gained a deeper understanding about their cultures, traditions, and languages, about their development and the challenges they are facing. I became interested in finding out more, especially about the issues surrounding commodification of Indigenous cultures for the benefit of tourism. After learning about the strategies and guidelines that were created to help tackle the negative effects of tourism faced by the Indigenous peoples, I became curious if they were effective in creating a more respectful and ethical tourism. This curiosity led me to my master's thesis topic: exploring the role of Indigenous tourism guidelines in enhancing cultural sensitivity.

In the past couple of decades there has been an increase in Indigenous tourism studies with a focus on the impact of tourism on the Indigenous communities (see de la Barre et all., 2021; Dyer er al., 2002; Grimwood et al., 2019, Kelly-Holmes & Pitkäinen, 2014, Liu & Lu, 2014; Viken, 2022). However, little research has been done on Indigenous tourism guidelines and their specific impacts. This could be due to the fact that such guidelines have been created fairly recent (majority in the past 6-7 years) and with the Covid-19 pandemic affecting tourism, there was not enough time for them to have a real effect on the industry. Additionally, the concept of cultural sensitivity is fairly new in tourism research, however more attention has been given to it in the past years (see Kugapi et al., 2020; Marques & Engberg, 2022; Saari et al., 2020; Viken et al., 2021). After reading different conceptualizations, I found the study of Viken et al. (2021), that ended up shaping this thesis' understanding of cultural sensitivity in tourism. In their conceptualization, insensitive behaviours can be transformed into sensitive ones by employing respect, recognition, and reciprocity in encounters with others (Viken et al., 2021, p. 4). They see cultural sensitivity as a way to relate to cultural differences, and something that is continuously developed, exercised, and negotiated (Viken et al., 2021).

The aim of this research is to better understand how Indigenous tourism guidelines are implemented by tourism actors and explore their role in enhancing cultural sensitivity. In this case, the Indigenous tourism guidelines are the "Principles for responsible and ethically sustainable Sámi tourism", and the tourism actors are destination management organisations (DMOs), municipalities, safari companies, reindeer farms, and accommodation providers from Finnish Lapland. This thesis' main research question is as follows: *What role do the ethical*

guidelines for Sámi tourism have in enhancing cultural sensitivity? In order to answer this, two sub-questions were formulated: *1) What actions are tourism actors taking in order to enhance cultural sensitivity? 2) How are the Sámi tourism guidelines recognized and used by tourism actors in Finnish Lapland?*

This thesis applies qualitative research methods in order to study the phenomenon of Indigenous tourism guidelines and explore their role in enhancing cultural sensitivity. This is achieved through interviewing three tourism actors and analysing eight tourism actors' websites. Given the limited empirical data, this study is exploratory in nature, as the subtitle already suggests. As Swedberg (2020) pointed out, exploratory studies are suitable when data of a research is scarce or when there is insufficient knowledge of a phenomenon, and it often uses diverse types of data. By exploring the impact of the "Principles for responsible and ethically sustainable Sami Tourism" it can be seen how effective guidelines are in solving some of the problems that unethical conduct of tourism can create and how they can be used to improve cultural sensitivity in tourism. Additionally, the research can give an understanding of the present state of tourism and help identify the areas that still need improvement. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the growing research on the phenomenon of Indigenous tourism guidelines, in the context of enhancing cultural sensitivity in tourism.

1.5. Chapter outline

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The first chapter above began with an introduction that outlines the background of the study, including the involvement of Indigenous peoples in tourism, the impacts of tourism on the Indigenous communities, and the development of policies, guidelines, and organizations to reduce the negative impacts. Then it provided an overview of tourism in Finnish Sápmi and introduced the Sámi tourism guidelines. In the last two parts of the chapter, previous research on Indigenous tourism guidelines was reviewed and after that, the purpose of the study was outlined, and the research question and sub-questions were formulated.

The second chapter will contain an in-detail explanation about the conceptual framework. First, I will discuss how cultural sensitivity has been studied and understood in past literature and explain the one conceptualization I will be using in this thesis which is rooted in the notions of recognition, respect, and reciprocity. I will then continue discussing about cultural insensitivity

and the need for indigenous tourism guidelines to address the negative effects of tourism on Indigenous peoples and communities.

The third chapter, research methodology, will start with an explanation of the philosophical underpinnings guiding the study, then describe the methods of data collection, namely semi-structured interviews and online data gathering. After that, the two analysis methods will be explained, thematic analysis for interviews, and content analysis for the online data. Lastly, the ethical considerations of the study will be discussed.

Chapters 4 to 7 will be comprised of in-depth analysis of the interviews and online data and the findings will be discussed. Each of these chapters focuses on a specific theme that was identified either from the interviews, online data, or both. Finaly, chapter 8 will consist of the discussion and conclusion, where I will summarize the findings while showing how the research question and sub-questions are answered, discuss gaps in literature and the limitations of the study, and provide recommendations for future research.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Cultural sensitivity as a concept in tourism

Cultural sensitivity is a concept that has been discussed before in education, social work, and healthcare literature (Kirmayer, 2012; Sousa & de Almeida, 2016; Swendson & Windsor, 1996), and it has also started to be used in tourism research in recent years (see Donohoe, 2011; Hurst et al., 2020; Olsen et al., 2019; Saari et al., 2020; Viken et al., 2021). Donohoe (2011) is one of the first researchers to use cultural sensitivity as a concept in tourism. She applied the concept in her study on ecotourism, where she defined cultural sensitivity as:

> "a way to minimize impacts to the natural and cultural environments, foster intercultural awareness and respect, contribute to the protection of built and living cultural heritage, foster the informed participation and empowerment of local and Indigenous Peoples, and respect the socio-cultural value systems of the host community" (Donohoe, 2011, p. 37).

Throughout the years, there have been two approaches to cultural sensitivity, one that sees it as a vulnerability and the other that sees it as a competence (Viken et al., 2021, p. 2). Viewing cultural sensitivity as a vulnerability in tourism means calling attention to the risks posed by tourism expansion and commodification to sensitive environments, communities, and cultural heritage and it emphasizes the need for sustainable and responsible tourism practices to protect and preserve these vulnerable aspects of culture and nature (Viken et al., 2021). On the other hand, Viken et al. (2021) mention in their study that seeing cultural sensitivity as a competences means actively cultivating an understanding of and respect for different cultures, as well as demonstrating behaviours that reflect this awareness and care for others. Furthermore, they emphasized that by conceptualizing cultural sensitivity as "an outcome of learning and development" (Viken et al., 2021, p. 3) people can acquire skills that will help them navigate intercultural interactions in an ethical way. Therefore, by considering cultural sensitivity a competence, it implies that it can be easily obtained and enhanced.

Bennett (1986) used the concept of cultural sensitivity as a relational construct in his study on "developing intercultural sensitivity among those working in multicultural settings" (Viken et al., 2021, p.3). In his research Bennett (1986) discussed how people act towards differences, and he identified that people have either an ethnocentric or an ethnorelative experiences in intercultural interactions. Viken et al. (2021, p. 4) acknowledge in their study that ethnocentrism

relates to self-centeredness and categorizing other cultures as inferior and ethnorelativism relates to openness to new relations and mutual exchange. Furthermore, by using Bennett's (1986) study Viken et al. (2021, p. 4-5) suggest that culturally insensitive behaviour is based on ethnocentric relations, whereas culturally sensitive behaviour is based on ethnorelative relations.

While Bennett's (1986) conceptualization of cultural sensitivity is visualised as a linear one that "peaks" at some point in time, Viken et al.'s (2021) is visualized through circles, emphasizing its dynamic nature. Contrary to Bennett (1986), they consider cultural sensitivity not as something "finally achieved", but rather continuously negotiated and exercised through various tourism processes, encounters, and representations (Viken et al., 2021, p. 5). They argue that insensitive behaviours of assimilation, appropriation, and stereotyping can be transformed into sensitive behaviours of respect, recognition, and reciprocity. In their study, Viken et al. (2021) also emphasized that culturally sensitive processes are context-dependent and socially situated with people using either ethnocentric or ethnorelative orientations based on various factors like politics and social dynamics. Viken et al.'s (2021) conceptualization of cultural sensitivity is illustrated in Figure 2.
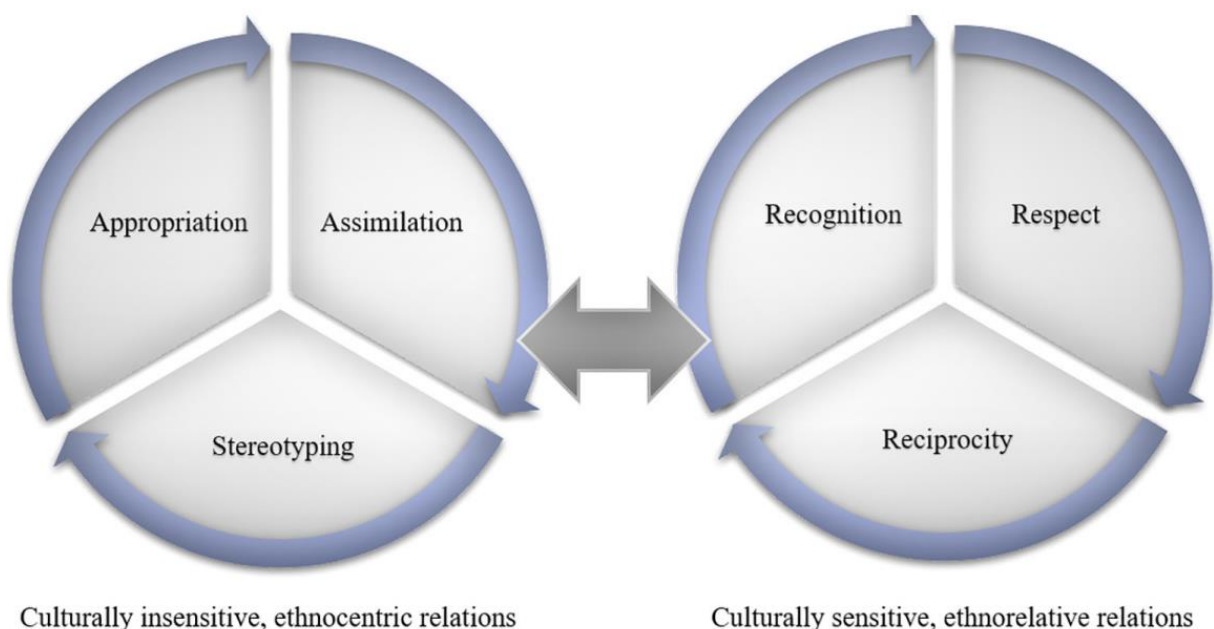

Figure 2. Conceptualization of cultural sensitivity in tourism (Source: Viken et al., 2021)

The first ethnorelative notion that Viken et al. (2021) use to conceptualise culturally sensitive tourism is recognition, and they discussed the notion of recognition from a few different theoretical perspectives. Firstly, they use Levinas' (1969) approach and define recognition as "recognition of other and otherness" (Viken et al., 2021, p. 6). In Viken et al.'s (2021, p. 7) words recognition relates to "questioning, reflecting and transforming our ways of being, knowing and valuing in relation with others"; therefore, they see recognition as acknowledging the existence and importance of others and not trying to categorize and define them. Secondly, Viken et al. (2021) used Fraser's (1995) approach which positions recognition as an important part of cultural justice. In Fraser's (1995, p. 280) opinion, lack of recognition not only creates negative attitudes but denies people full participation in social life due to institutionalized patterns of cultural values. Therefore, recognition means acknowledging the value and importance of every person and community, no matter their cultural background. For this, Indigenous people have created treaties, laws, and protocols, to ensure their national and international rights. Thirdly, Viken et al. (2021, p. 7) highlight the importance of "recognizing the historical contexts, unequal power relations, and previously silenced voices". This type of recognition is facilitated through reconciliation processes, and studies like Kramvig and Førde (2020) emphasize the important role tourism can play in these processes. Viken et al.'s (2021) last approach to recognition is seeing it as a way to combat years of stereotyping and primitivizing Indigenous people and cultures. They highlight the importance of recognizing Indigenous cultures as contemporary and not historical, while de Bernardi (2020) stresses that Sámi tourism actors want for Sámi cultures to be recognized as part of the modern world. All in all, recognition should be seen as a way to acknowledge cultural differences, diversity of cultures, and the historical, social, and political contexts that shaped them.

Besides recognition, Viken et al. (2021, p. 8) see respect as the second pillar of culturally sensitive tourism, and related to this notion they posed the questions of "who ought to act respectfully, and towards whom or what?". They emphasize the need of non-Indigenous people displaying respect for Indigenous people's cultures, traditions, laws, land, and cultural heritage and stress the importance of putting this type of respect into practice when making tourism related decisions. In relation to the Sámi people and cultures, the importance of showing respect for the Sámi costume, the gákti, has been highlighted by a number of researchers (see Kramvig & Flemmen, 2019; Olsen et al., 2019; Viken et al., 2021). As Kramvig and Flemmen (2019) highlight in their study, the Sámi traditional clothes have been misused, mistreated, and commodified in tourism, and that is why it is paramount to showcase respect for the Sámi

traditional article of clothing. Furthermore, Viken et al. (2021) mention that respect can be expressed through creating new collaborations and equal partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism companies.

Alongside recognition and respect, Viken et al. (2021) acknowledge the important role reciprocity plays in their conceptualization of cultural sensitivity. By drawing from tourism and hospitality studies (see Höckert, 2018; Kuokkanen, 2007; Levinas, 1969; Sabourin, 2013), Viken et al. (2021) define reciprocity as an exchange of care between hosts and guests, which creates friendship, trust, and mutual understanding. In this relation of reciprocity between hosts and guests, Viken et al. (2021) draw attention to Kuokkanen's (2017) study, which emphasizes the importance of learning to receive Indigenous knowledge with openness and respect. The relationship of reciprocity between hosts and guests can be cultivated through exchange of handicrafts (Kugapi, 2014) and storytelling in Indigenous tourism settings (Kramvig & Førde, 2020), amongst other tools. Moreover, Indigenous traditions, such as the Sámi tradition of *verdde* can highlight the importance of reciprocity amongst hosts (Viken et al., 2021). In their study, Svensson and Viken (2017) explain that the tradition of *verdde* is a concept that embodies the principle of general reciprocity and mutual assistance within a community, and that it refers to a beneficial friendship, where people know and trust each other, and occasionally lend a helping hand when needed (Viken et al., 2021, p. 8). One thing is important to note about reciprocity, it does not require a perfectly symmetrical relationship (Rhodes & Carlsen, 2018), it can thrive when there is a genuine exchange of knowledge, understanding, and care between hosts and guests (Viken et al., 2021).

As pointed out by Viken et al. (2021, p. 6), ethnocentric notions are clearly interconnected, in their words "cultural appropriation becomes more problematic when it creates or manifests stereotypes of another culture, adding to processes of assimilation.". They also noted that the three ethnorelative notions of recognition, respect, and reciprocity are interdependent (Viken et al., 2021). Similarly, by drawing on Jean Piaget's (1965) sociological studies, Sabourin (2013, p. 306) noted that "relationships of reciprocity may produce respect, recognition, trust, responsibility, autonomy, and justice". Sabourin (2013) also emphasized that in order for these values to develop, the relationship of reciprocity needs to be symmetrical, in other words, there needs to be equal power dynamics.

Recently, cultural sensitivity in tourism has been further developed in projects like ARCTISEN, an international project implemented between 2018 and 2021, that aimed at increasing the knowledge of sensitive tourism development (Olsen et al, 2019). Through this project it was shown that in Canada cultural sensitivity has been discussed in academia far more extensively than it has been in the European Nordic countries, and in the case of the latter the concept of respect has been used more often than the concept of cultural sensitivity (Olsen et al., 2019). Furthermore, the ARCTISEN project identified key characteristics of culturally sensitive tourism, which are as follows: recognition and reciprocity, locality, respectful encounters, personal interactions and face-to-face discussions, cultural knowledge, discussing and listening, and co-creating (Olsen et al, 2019). Not surprisingly, these seven characteristics can be connected to Viken et al.'s (2021) conceptualization of cultural sensitivity in tourism. Henceforth, based on this, in order to create culturally sensitive tourism in Finland, the tourism industry needs to focus on respecting the Sámi peoples, recognising their knowledge and cultural differences, and making tourism a mutually beneficial industry.

While reading previous research on cultural sensitivity I started to ask myself if sensitivity is something that can be thought or shaped through implementation of guidelines. The opinion on the matter is divided between researchers. Levinas (1969) considered that ethics are not guided by rules, guidelines and / or laws, but that we become sensitive by being open and having responsibility for the other (Viken et al., 2021, p. 4). Contrary to the Levinasian thought, Viken et al. (2021) discuss in their study the potential for enhancing recognition of cultural tradition that comes from implementation of guidelines and tourism labels. They mention that ethical guidelines such as those created by the Sámi Parliament strengthen mutual understanding and respect, which are some of the bases for culturally sensitive tourism (Viken et al., 2021). Furthermore, Viken et al. (2021) also emphasize that tools such as Larrakia Declaration, Parks Canada's resource guide, and Sámi tourism guidelines can help enhance and support respect for Indigenous peoples and communities.

Another example of a tool that can help increase cultural sensitivity is the relatively new project "CultSense" created by Erasmus+, which aims to sensitize young travellers to local people and cultures and encourage healthy travel attitudes, by promoting respect, understanding, and deep intercultural exchange between tourists and residents. This project seeks to empower the youth to appreciate and engage with local cultures, ultimately enhancing their travel experiences and fostering mutual appreciation with local communities. The plan is to implement educational

initiuals focused on valuing diverse forms of heritage and promoting intercultural dialogue (Marques & Engberg, 2022, p. 5-6).

2.2. Cultural insensitivity in tourism

When it comes to cultural sensitivity, the main question might be "why do we need to consider it in tourism?". The answer to that can be found in Viken's (2022, p. 1) study: "Tourism is often blamed for being culturally insensitive and ignorant". Moreover, Indigenous people all around the globe have experienced injustices associated with colonization (Viken et al., 2021). Assimilation, identified by Viken et al. (2021) as one of the ethnocentric relations of culturally insensitive behaviour, is defined by Kuokkanen (2007) as a continuous process which involves combining Indigenous groups into national political units and erasing their distinct cultural identities. As discussed by Viken and Müller (2006), assimilation processes have been observed throughout all Sápmi, but in Finland those processes have been harsher. As a consequence, symbols of Sámi culture have been misused in tourism for far longer in Finland than in other parts of the European Arctic (Viken & Müller, 2006). Different processes that ensured the assimilation of Sámi in the Nordic countries included land grabs, mission work, expansion of nation-state, religious practices, and tourism has also played its role in perpetuating assimilation of Sámi people (Viken, 2022). Some of the assimilation processes in tourism are appropriation of Sámi land and cultures (Viken, 2022), Sámi marginalization in tourism policies (Viken, 2016), and stereotyping Sámi in marketing materials (de Bernardi, 2022).

The second ethnocentric relation that Viken et al. (2021) connect to culturally insensitive tourism is stereotyping, and they define it as a process through which people simplify, generalize, and categorize other people or groups. Historically, Indigenous people have been stereotyped through representing them as primitive and exotic (de Bernardi, 2022; Grimwood et al., 2019; Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016; Viken & Müller, 2006), issue that the Sámi have also struggled with (Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016). The stereotypical image of Sámi dressed in colourful clothing and herding reindeer has been perpetuated in tourism imagery for years, and as Niskala and Ridanpää (2016) highlight, this type of representation is problematic because it misrepresents their cultures, and it continues to fuel the power imbalances in the surrounding society. Niskala and Ridanpää (2016) also emphasized the importance of portraying Indigenous cultures as modern because previous Sámi tourism representation has shown them as "a part of history, not as an active participant in the contemporary world" (Nikala & Ridanpää, 2016, p.

385). Their study contributes to the existing research on the role of marketing representation in spreading misinformation about Indigenous cultures (see Chang, 2006, Chang et al., 2006, de Bernardi, 2022, Viken, 2022). Additionally, Niskala and Ridanpää (2016) point out that ethnicity being used in tourism is generally not a negative thing, but in order for ethnicity not to be commodified in the tourism industry, there needs to be more attention given to how ethnicity is used, by whom and with what purpose. Viken et al. (2021) emphasize that stereotyping intersects with other issues like cultural appropriation and settlers colonialism, further increasing the power imbalances and injustice. Recognizing and challenging stereotypical representation is paramount for increasing cultural sensitivity in tourism.

Besides assimilation and stereotyping, Indigenous communities have faced other insensitive behaviours, a major one being cultural appropriation, which was identified by Viken et al. (2021) to be the third ethnocentric notion of culturally insensitive behaviour. Young (2005, p. 136) defines appropriation as "the taking of something produced by members of one culture by members of another", and in a later study mentions that the issue of appropriation is considered to have started in the world of arts (Young, 2021, p. 307) but quickly spread to the tourism industry. Kugapi et al. (2020) state that one important appropriation issue in Finland is the use, and misuse, of Sámi costume and symbols by non-Sámi people. Viken (2022, p. 9) brings up the same issue of the Sámi costume and adds that cultural appropriation affects the performative arts such as storytelling and *yoik* (Sámi traditional song), the production of handicrafts, and creation of souvenirs. Heller et al. (2017), Kelly-Holmes & Pitkäinen (2014), and Keskitalo et al. (2021) all discuss the matter of souvenirs in tourism and emphasize the frequent issue of inauthenticity when it comes to souvenirs using Sámi culture. This inauthenticity stems from the fact that lots of souvenir shops in Finnish Lapland have fake products that were made outside of the region by people or companies that do not know the Sámi culture (Kugapi et al., 2020, p. 24). The problem of authenticity comes up for debate quite often in the Indigenous tourism industry (Viken 2022) and it has been researched by a multitude of authors, not only from the context of souvenirs but also from the context of indigeneity (Keskitalo & Schilar, 2016, Keskitalo et al., 2021) and storytelling (Schilar & Keskitalo, 2018).

Some researchers consider that appropriation is not something automatically wrong, it becomes negative when there is oppression which is created by an imbalance in the power relations (Matthes, 2019; Young, 2021; Young & Haley, 2009). Power dynamics have been discussed a lot in the context of social sciences and tourism studies are no exception. Numerous authors

discuss the role of power relations in tourism (de Bernardi, 2022; Mathess, 2019; Notzke, 1999; Viken, 2022; Young, 2021) and it becomes more important in the context of Indigenous tourism where historically there has always been power imbalances between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Tourism created a lot of negative impacts for Indigenous peoples and communities, but luckily more attention was given to the issue after the United Nations' Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO) No. 169 was adopted in 1989. This triggered an increase in initiatives to improve the rights and livelihoods of Indigenous peoples (Whitford & Ruhanen, 2016, p. 1082). Some of those initiatives were the establishment of national Indigenous tourism associations and federations with the goal of improving the quality of Indigenous tourism experiences (Whitford & Ruhanen, 2010) and to develop a sustainable and responsible type of Indigenous tourism (Hurst et al., 2020, p. 16). Other initiatives were the indigenous tourism guidelines, which emerged as a response to the need for ethical and responsible tourism practices that respect Indigenous cultures and rights (Indigenous People and the Travel Industry, 2017). Such guidelines are seen by Viken et al. (2021) as tools for enhancing cultural sensitivity.

As can be seen from previous research, majority of issues faced by Indigenous people when it comes to tourism are related to cultural appropriation, misinformation, stereotyping, and a general disrespect for culture and traditions. And that is why working towards cultural sensitivity in Finnish tourism is crucial if we want to preserve, recognise, and respect Sámi people and cultures.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Philosophical background

Before explaining the methodological framework of the study, an understanding of the philosophical underpinnings that shaped the thesis is needed because, "the methodology that we apply is embedded in the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underly our research" (Hennink et al., 2011, p. 12). Research is guided by the idea that a researcher's actions are supported by a set of beliefs and values, which shape their view of the world, and those values and beliefs are known as paradigms (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p. 34). This study stems from the interpretive and constructivist paradigm because it is guided by the idea that reality is constructed by people's experiences and the researcher can only describe interpretations of those realities (Hennink et al., 2011; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, Slvetitch, 2011). In order to understand someone's experience and the context that shaped it, interaction with people is needed, and by doing that an "emic or insider's perspective" is gained (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004, p.4). This is why I want to collect qualitative data which brings out the voices of participants. This research takes a standpoint of pluralistic ontology, which implies that there is no "true" reality (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004), but rather there are more realities that people construct and interpret (Slevitch, 2011). According to Slevitch (2011, p. 77) "reality is mind-dependent and cannot be value-free". Therefore, because people have different interests, values, beliefs, and points of view, their experiences and interpretations are going to be personal and subjective. Consequently, this study's epistemological perspective is subjective, not only because the study participants will have different interpretations of the same phenomenon, but because me as the researcher cannot stay completely value-free throughout the research process (Hennink et al., 2011).

Based on my ontological and epistemological perspectives, and on the fact that I focus on incommensurable results, my study has a qualitative methodology. Furthermore, both Slevitch (2011) and Hennink et al. (2011) suggest that when a researcher aims to understand a phenomenon through the point of view of participants, they will use qualitative methodology. Lastly, I am analysing a phenomenon (Indigenous tourism guidelines), which further points towards qualitative research.

3.2. Data collection

The data used in this study was collected specifically for it and consists of three interviews, as well as online data collected from different tourism actors' websites. Interviews were chosen as a method of collecting primary data for the thesis because, it is the best way to understand people's view of a phenomenon, which is the guiding principle of a qualitative methodology (Slevitch, 2011). The type of interviews I used were in-depth interviews because they allowed for a better understanding of the research issue from the study participants' perspective, which reflects best the emic perspective (Hennink et al., 2011). In-depth interviews follow a semi-structured guide that gives flexibility to the interviewing process (Gillham, 2005) and makes it feel more like a "conversation with a purpose" (Hennink et al., 2011, p. 109).

Before the interviews took place, the participants received a letter of consent (Appendix 1) and were provided with a research overview. In the beginning of each interview a warm-up question was asked to help the interviewee feel more comfortable. Even though I had an interview guideline (Appendix 2), questions were not always asked in the same order or the same way as I tried to make the interviewing process feel more like a conversation. All interviews were conducted in English as it was the common language spoken by both the interviewer and interviewees. Some misunderstandings and miscommunications happened due to not speaking the same mother tongue. This challenge was overcome by double checking if I understood correctly and by asking questions a second time or reformulating the questions. The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and anonymized, so that no participant can be recognized. Furthermore, in order to preserve the anonymity of participants, they are referred to as P1, P2, and P3 in the analysis chapter.

A total of 20 tourism actors from across Finnish Lapland were contacted, out of which three agreed to an interview, two from Finnish Sápmi and one from outside the area. The interviews were conducted in 2023, one in February and two in March. The first one was done in person and lasted 38 minutes, the second and third ones were done online via Teams Meeting and lasted 55 minutes and 47 minutes. The interviewing process was guided by four themes that aligned with the research questions: 1) Implementation and dissemination of Sámi tourism guidelines, 2) Actions for culturally sensitive tourism, 3) Challenges and possibilities, 4) Plans for the future.

Only three interviews were conducted because it was challenging securing participants. Despite the thesis focusing on the role of the ethical guidelines for Sámi tourism in enhancing cultural sensitivity, I believe that people tended to focus only on the Sámi aspect, which lead to a reluctance in participating in the study. Additionally, as I do not speak Finnish, language barriers may have deterred tourism actors from participating in English interviews. Consequently, I had to adapt from the original plan of interviewing only DMOs and had to broaden the group to consider various tourism actors from Lapland. Even with such a big group of possible participants it was hard to find interviewees, which is a common challenge when conducting research with people.

Because the number of interviews was not enough to understand the phenomenon of Indigenous tourism guidelines in the Finnish Lapland context, I decided to supplement the empirical data with online content collected from tourism actors' websites. Since I could not reach enough tourism actors to interview them, checking their websites was the next best thing in trying to answer the questions: "How are tourism actors recognizing and using the ethical guidelines for Sámi tourism?" and "What actions are tourism actors taking in order to enhance cultural sensitivity?". My methodological decision of using data collected from online sources is supported by Kozinets' (2010) research on netnography, which states that content from the internet can offer significant opportunities for qualitative research.

In the beginning when I started looking at tourism actors' websites, I was planning to focus on DMOs, but from a short internet search I noticed that not a lot of DMOs from Finnish Lapland included information about the ethical guidelines for Sámi tourism nor did they include information about Sámi people and cultures. At this point I realised that selecting the websites was not an easy task and I had to create clear criteria in order to collect the suitable empirical data. The first criterion was that the websites needed to include information that was relevant enough for my research and also was sufficient enough for the analysing process. Therefore, I chose websites that contained information related to the ethical guidelines for Sámi tourism, Sámi people and cultures, and cultural sensitivity or cultural sustainability in tourism. Secondly, in order to gather enough empirical data, a broad range of websites had to be considered, while still trying to focus on Finnish Lapland. Consequently, websites from DMOs, safari companies, reindeer farms, and accommodation providers were selected. I consulted 30 tourism actors' websites and after going through a selection process, I chose eight websites from where to collect textual data, out of which, six were of tourism actors from Finnish Sápmi.

No method of data collection is without challenge, and in this case, one of the challenges was the limited mention of the Sámi people and cultures or the Sámi ethical guidelines amongst tourism actors' websites from across Finnish Lapland. Secondly, I realised that after eight websites, the information became repetitive, giving no additional valuable data. Initially, I considered including the visual data as well in the analysis process, however not all websites included relevant images. Consequently, the visual data from the websites was excluded from the analysis process.

As part of the data collection process, I took screen shots of the tourism websites and then transferred the text onto a word document, ensuring the information can easily be analysed. In order to not mention the tourism actors by name, in the analysis process I referred to them as tourism actor 1 (TA1), tourism actor 2 (TA2) and so on. This made it easier for me to use direct text from the tourism actors' websites in the analysis process.

3.3. Data analysis

After collecting the empirical data, I was posed with the questions: What do I do now? How do I analyse them? I do not have a long background in research, so I needed to use analysis method/s that did not feel too advanced for me and something that could be easily learned. Braun and Clarke (2006) consider thematic analysis to be perfect for the beginner researcher because it "does not require detailed theoretical and technological knowledge, like other qualitative approaches" (Nowell et al., 2017, p2). Furthermore, Nowell et al. (2017, p. 2) define thematic analysis as "a qualitative research method that can be widely used across a range of epistemologies and research questions". Since it offers theoretical freedom and flexibility to the researcher, thematic analysis can be used for a variety of research topics and on various different data. Therefore, because of its accessibility, freedom, and flexibility, I chose thematic analysis as the method for analysing the interview transcripts.

Besides advantages, there are disadvantages to any method of analysis, and in my case one particular thing falls into both categories. Even though thematic analysis offers flexibility for a study, according to Holloway and Todres (2003) flexibility can cause inconsistency in research. Fortunately, in the same study, Holloway and Todres (2003) specify that in order to avoid inconsistency, a researcher needs to make it clear their epistemological position, and that position should support the empirical statements of the study.

In the data analysis process, I was guided by Nowell et al.'s (2017) study on thematic analysis, which describes a six-step process towards analysing one's data. The first step was to get familiar with the data, which meant transcribing and then reading the interviews over and over again. While reading the interviews I took notes of emerging thoughts and of different code ideas ("challenges from tourism actors", "actions done by tourism actors", "actions for sustainability", "culturally sensitive behaviours", "future prospects" etc.). The second step of the process was to generate a first round of codes and by this, bringing a bit of structure to the data (Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 5-8). The coding process was done with the help of an online qualitative analysis software called "Delve". I preferred this method over the old-school approach of papers and colourful pens because to me it seemed more efficient in creating a codebook. After coding all three interviews, I had 35 codes, which was too many. I revised everything and, in the end, moved some snippets into different codes and deleted some other codes that did not have enough data to back them up or were not relevant to the research questions. After this, I was left with 24 codes and even though I still had a large number of codes, I grouped them together into five themes: cultural sensitivity, Sámi guidelines and their impact, challenges, possibilities, and future plans. With this, phase three was complete.

Following Nowell's (2017, p. 8) suggestion that researchers should not guide themselves too much by the research question, I came up with the themes through an inductive approach, meaning that themes emerged from the data and not from theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Continuing with phase four I reviewed my themes and decided to split the cultural sensitivity theme into two, namely "Understanding cultural sensitivity" and "Ways to enhance cultural sensitivity". At this stage I also realised that the codes I initially put under future plans could be moved under possibilities. For the fifth phase I revised and named all the themes in a suggestive way so that the reader is clear what each theme is about, and the last phase involved writing the report (Nowell et al., 2017). The themes and codes can be observed in Figure 3.
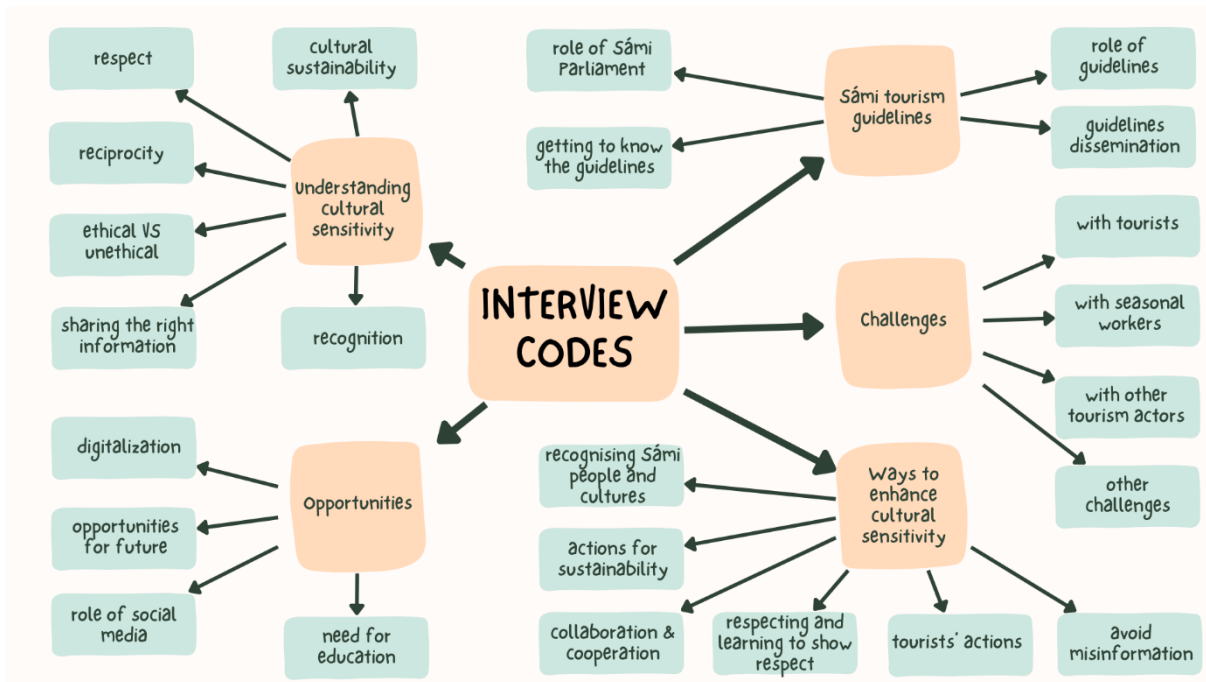
Figure 3. Codes from the interview data (Source: Author, 2024)

Given the qualitative nature of this thesis, it is important that all data collection and analysis methods align with qualitative methodologies. Thus, I opted to utilise content analysis for the online data, which Bernard and Ryan (2010, p. 288) defined as "a set of methods for systemically coding and analysing qualitative data". Furthermore, content analysis is often used when data already exists, eliminating the need for additional collection efforts (Gray, 2009, p. 424). Despite being considered as a more time-consuming method of analysis (Humble & Mozelius, 2022, p. 79), I chose content analysis for the online data because it aligns perfectly with this thesis. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005) there are three types of qualitative content analysis: conventional, directed, and summative, and in this thesis, I chose to apply conventional content analysis for two reasons. Firstly, this method is generally used when studies are trying to understand a phenomenon where the literature is limited (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1279), which is the case of my research. Secondly, this method is used when codes are created inductively meaning they derive from the data and not from theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1286), which is how I chose to code the online data.

After collecting the online data by taking screenshots of the relevant sections of the tourism actors' web pages and transferring the textual information into a Word document, I was ready to start the analysis process. In this part I was guided by Hsieh and Shannon's (2005) study on qualitative content analysis which describes a five-step process. Similar to thematic analysis,

content analysis starts with the researcher immersing themselves in the data (Humble & Mozelius, 2022), which for me meant I had to read over and over again the transferred textual data. While reading the text I started identifying key concepts and thoughts and was able to create initial codes. This second step connects directly with the third one, where I started creating labels for the codes that derived directly from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). After these three steps I ended up with 16 codes. Next, I organised and grouped the codes into two categories based on the connection between them (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279), and with that, the fourth step was concluded. Those codes and categories can be observed in Figure 4. For the coding process, I used again the online qualitative analysis software "Delve", because it worked efficiently during the coding process of the interviews data. Lastly, each category had to be defined, and in preparing to write the results, examples for each category and codes were selected (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This last step was also facilitated by the use of the online software because I could see under each code all the quotes connected to it.
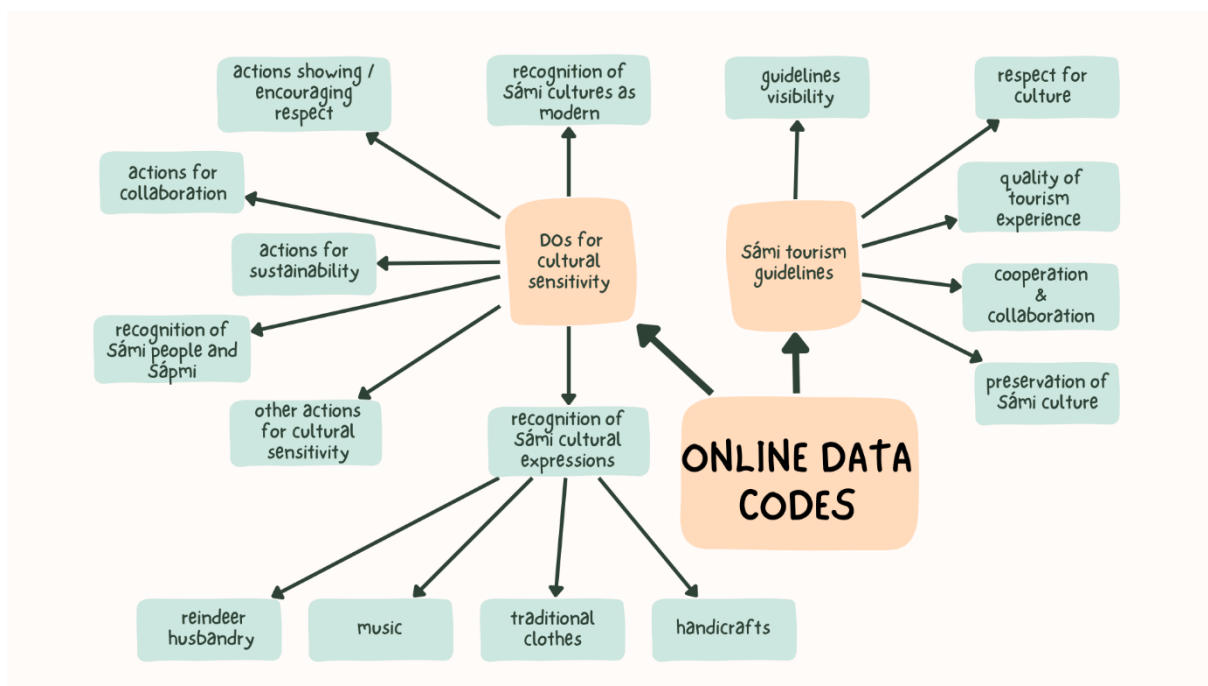
Figure 4. Codes from the online data (Source: Author, 2024)

Even though the two different data sets were analysed with different methods, the themes and categories that were created during the coding process were similar and, in some cases, exactly the same. Furthermore, the online data was supposed to be complimentary to the interviews as to understand the phenomenon of guidelines and their impact better than only three interviews could provide. For these reasons, I formed themes that combined the two analyses, and

presented the results together. By doing this I was able to give a full picture of what the data was about, making sure I captured all the important details. It also helped in making the research findings more complete, reliable, and easy to understand. The results are organised into four analysis and discussion chapters, each dedicated to a specific topic that came out from the interviews and online data, as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. Overview of the analysis and discussion chapters (Source: Author, 2024)

Chapter	Title	Topic	Origin of data
4	Tourism actors' understanding of cultural sensitivity	Themes tourism actors relate to cultural sensitivity and their connection to existing studies	interviews
5	Actions for enhancing cultural sensitivity	Ways tourism actors are enhancing cultural sensitivity and encouraging tourists to do the same. The actions are connected to respect, recognition, and reciprocity.	interviews & websites
6	The implementation and impact of the ethical guidelines for Sámi tourism	Dissemination and utilization of the Sámi tourism guidelines. Their impact on the tourism industry from Sápmi. Connection to enhancement of cultural sensitivity.	interviews & websites
7	Challenges and opportunities for enhancing cultural sensitivity	Limitations of the guidelines, challenges in enhancing cultural sensitivity. Opportunities for future improvement of the Sámi tourism guidelines and culturally sensitive tourism	interviews

3.4. Ethical considerations of research

In order for research to be ethically acceptable and credible it needs to be conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines of research (Drugge, 2022). For that purpose, The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK) created the guidelines for responsible conduct of research (RCR), with the aim of having reliable, integrous, and ethical research (TENK, 2012, p. 28). That is why from the very beginning considerations for ethical aspects of research have guided the preparation and the process of my thesis. This section shortly illustrates the ethical considerations in regard to my thesis.

One of the most important parts in order to have an ethical research is to give credit for the work and achievements of previous researchers (TENK, 2012). In my thesis, I studied and used other researchers' work, especially in my first and second chapters and therefore, special

attention was given to accurate citation of previous works. Citation is important in order to properly communicate the intellectual origins of the discussed issues. As previously stated, the primary data for the thesis will consist fully of interviews. Because my research includes interaction with people, close attention needed to be paid to the "Ethical principles for research with human participants". According to these ethical principles researchers should: a) respect the autonomy and privacy of research participants, b) not bring any harm to the research participants and c) respect cultural heritage and biodiversity (TENK, 2019, p. 50).

In order to ensure the autonomy, confidentiality, and privacy of study participants, a few steps were taken. A letter of consent was created by me, distributed to, and signed by the interviewed people. The letter of consent acts as an agreement to participate in the study and can be found attached to the thesis (Appendix 1). Next, I reminded the study participants that participation is voluntary and that they can discontinue their participation at any given moment. They were also informed about the content of my research, its aim, benefits and how the data will be processed, stored and for how long. Collecting and processing data is also part of ensuring privacy of participants and therefore voice recordings as part of data collection for this thesis will not be used for any other purpose. The recordings and notes will be handled only by me, the researcher, and will be kept in a secure location. Furthermore, the data will be anonymized to ensure the privacy of participants.

The principles of "no harm" mostly relates to physical or mental harm and they are mainly relevant in medical and psychology research, but social harm should be taken into consideration as well. When working with data collected from study participants, storing confidential information is paramount task for a researcher as well as anonymizing the text. "Respecting privacy is one of the most important norms of research ethics" (Söderlund, 2018) and if privacy is not respected, not only is the research not ethical but it can also create social harm for the study participants. Furthermore, to ensure the participants' anonymity the tourism actors are not mentioned by name in the text.

A point needs to be made about the background of the researcher, because the thesis deals with Indigenous related issues. I myself am neither Finnish nor Sámi, and as a foreigner I have an outsider's perspective on the matters discussed in this thesis. I will try to be as objective as I can, however because I have my own values, opinions, and emotions, my research cannot be fully objective. With that being said, because I am part of western academia, I had to pay

attention to be respectful and not be ignorant in my research. The reason for that can be found in Kuokkanen's (2008, p. 60) research, which tells us that the Western academia fails to recognize Indigenous epistemes and that Indigenous people are not heard and understood from their own framework when their matters are discussed in the academic world.

In order for research to be sensitive towards Indigenous peoples and cultures, ethical guidelines have been developed (Ryan & Aicken, 2005, p. 3), such as the World Indigenous Higher Education Consortium Research Standards (WINHEC, 2010) or the guidelines for research involving the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia (NHMCR, 2018). In regard to Sámi research there have been discussions about creating ethical guidelines, but at least for Finland there are no clear guidelines for research yet. According to the Sámi Council, a working group was established in 2018 with the aim of creating them (Holmberg, 2021).

4. TOURISM ACTORS' UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, cultural sensitivity is a relatively new concept used in tourism and there are many opinions on how this concept is defined (see Donohoe, 2011; Handapangoda et al., 2019; Hurst et al., 2020; Viken et al., 2021). In my interviews I did not ask the participants for the definition of cultural sensitivity, since defining the term was not the goal of the research. Even though participants were not asked to describe the concept, they still associated different themes, and actions with cultural sensitivity and culturally sensitive behaviour. And that is why the first theme that came out from the data was related to how tourism actors are understanding and what actions are relating to cultural sensitivity. This chapter does not include the online data as it would not be possible to know those tourism actors' perspective without directly talking to them.

The data showed the interviewed tourism actors use the term "cultural sensitivity" and understand the different aspects of it, each in their own way. During the interviews participants were asked to talk about improvement of cultural sensitivity in tourism, changes in behaviour, challenges of improving cultural sensitivity, and plans and hopes for the future, amongst other things. Throughout the discussions, participants connected cultural sensitivity with the following terms: respect and respectful behaviour, ethical behaviour, recognition of cultural differences and of past mistakes, and offering the correct information.

> The general atmosphere here (in Lapland) is that people are now quite sensitive, they know about the previous issues that existed and they guide the people to the right resources. (P1)

> It seems to be that nowadays some kind of lightbulb raises when you think "Okay this tour has cultural elements" or "We are crossing into Sápmi" or something similar. I think that businesses in general are more aware that this might require some sensitivity from their side, and we need to make sure that the information we have is correct and it's up to date. (P2)

> I think the travellers generally are very respectful, but they are just too excited, so we need to learn ways to guide the "current" (the group of tourists) to the right direction. (P3)

One of the most recurring theme participants connected with cultural sensitivity was *respect* and *respectful behaviour*. This is no surprise since Hurst et al. (2021) identified *respect* as the common thread through most of the studies on cultural sensitivity. When talking about the future, two of the participants mentioned respectful behaviour as something that still needs to be improved in order to enhance cultural sensitivity.

> Generally, I think it is a move into the right direction, trying to make tourists more culturally sensitive, it's a good thing to educate them to be more ethical and respectful of other cultures and other peoples. (P1)

> For the future we are thinking definitely to bring out even stronger the issues of cultural sensitivity and being respectful. (P3)

Viken et al. (2021) consider the notion of respect as one of the guiding principles for culturally sensitive relations, while Donohoe (2011, p. 37) talks in her study about "fostering intercultural awareness and respect […] and respect the socio-cultural value systems of the host community" as something that ecotourism stakeholders do in order to be culturally sensitive. Furthermore, Hurst et al. (2020) identified "respectful encounters" as one of the principles of culturally sensitive tourism. Therefore, you do not have to be a scholar to identify respect as the main principle for culturally sensitive tourism, as showed by the study participants.

Besides respect, Hurst et al. (2021) identified *ethics* as the third most common theme related to culturally sensitive tourism, something that also the participants recognized throughout our discussions. During the interviews, the first participant identified unethical behaviours as being one of the challenges for enhancing culturally sensitive tourism in their region.

> At least most of the complaints I hear it is about people behaving unethical by going to someone's property, peeking through the windows inside the house or stuff like that, taking pictures without permission of people wearing the Sámi traditional clothes. So, the challenge is to make people behave more ethical. (P1)

The third participant also discussed about unethical behaviours from the tourists' side but emphasized that by making tourists more ethical, they would get a step closer to culturally sensitive tourism. And the second interviewee mentioned that if we want to make tourists more culturally sensitive, than tourism actors need to guide them to the ethical touristic options.

> The main focus for us is that when the traveller comes here and is excited to learn about Sámi culture, we have a place to direct them. […] I think that making tourists

> more ethical and getting them the right information about the state of the culture
> will be a way to make cultural sensitivity better in tourism, at least in our area. (P3)

> Travelers are not only looking for information on how to be ethical, but they are
> also interested in the local culture of the destinations that they visit, so you have to
> guide them to the ethical options. (P2)

Even though the notion of culturally sensitive tourism is relatively new, the theme of ethics has been discussed in tourism for a long time, since sustainable tourism development started gaining more public attention (see Hultsman, 1995; Koščak & O'Rourke, 2020; Weeden, 2001). According to Weeden (2001, p.144) ethical tourism has been closely connected to sustainable tourism, but it goes beyond sustainability because it "recognises that tourism stakeholders need to take responsibility of their behaviour and attitudes". Furthermore, Hurst et al. (2021) mention in their study on cultural sensitivity that the notion of ethics in tourism relates to recognition of traditional knowledge and acknowledgment of cultural differences.

While *ethics* is a theme related to cultural sensitivity, so is *recognition*, and Viken et al. (2021) situated recognition as one of the three ethnorelative relations in their conceptualization of cultural sensitivity. Same as Hurst et al. (2021), Viken et al. (2021, p. 6) state that recognition is about acknowledgment of the other and of otherness. Recognition of cultural differences as a characteristic of cultural sensitivity was also identified by P1, explaining that tourists need to be made aware of the different cultural identities that exist in Lapland, the Sámi and the Lappish culture that have differences and similarities between them. While recognition of diversity and cultural differences is identified as an important aspect for cultural sensitivity (see Saari et al., 2020; Viken et al., 2021), other researchers brought attention to recognition of Indigenous cultures as contemporary cultures (see Amoamo, 2011; de Bernardi, 2020; Ren et al., 2020b). Similarly, the second and third participants connected cultural sensitivity with recognizing that cultures (Sámi cultures in this case) are modern, change over time and are not something historical.

> Cultures evolve all the time and that is something really important to take into
> consideration when talking about cultural sensitivity because somehow, we seem
> to put some kind of historical mark for Sámi culture and kind of a romantic image
> of how the cultures are. (P2)

> Also, maybe the tourists don't really understand that Sámi cultures can be modern,
> and they are evolving and ever-changing. (P3)

Besides connecting respect, ethics, and recognition to cultural sensitivity, the participants connected cultural appropriation, objectification, exoticization, and stereotyping as being culturally insensitive behaviours. This association is not surprising, as Viken et al. (2021, p. 4), in their conceptualisation of cultural sensitivity, identified appropriation, assimilation and stereotyping as ethnocentric ways of relating to cultural differences. When talking about how things have changed in tourism, participants gave examples of insensitive behaviour as something that is not seen anymore, in a more culturally sensitive tourism.

> People strive to be more culturally sensitive. And they don't fake being Sámi. (P1)

> The travellers are more interested in authentic interactions and don't want to deal with cultural appropriation, they want to minimize the negative impact they have on the destinations that they visit. [...] So, in a way every one of us maybe became more culturally sensitive in the past years. (P2)

> I think within the past ten years we have gone from Disneyfying Sámi to a different point nowadays. People have become more respectful [...] in my opinion we have gone into a more culturally sensitive direction. (P3)

The interviewees showed they understood the concept of cultural sensitivity, however they also used the term cultural sensitivity interchangeably with cultural sustainability. The participants using these two terms synonymous is not surprising since cultural sustainability was identified as a theme related to cultural sensitivity by Saari et al. (2020). When asked about improvement of cultural sensitivity amongst local tourism actors two participants showed that they do not see a difference between the two terms. Furthermore, while discussing challenges, the second participant mixed up the two terms, which further shows that there is no clear distinction between cultural sensitivity and cultural sustainability.

> They are making efforts to be more culturally sensitive, at least that is my experience in the past 3 years that I have been here. I haven't seen anything really unethical during my time, but of course we could always be better. The topic of being more culturally sustainable comes up for discussion every now and then at the municipality level and in the DMO. (P1)

> Well from this point I think Sustainable Travel Finland program was and is excellent because these certifications that the companies get are often just about the environmental side, but then with STF program it has really shown companies and people in general that there is this cultural side that is important as well. [...] I think that this step we are taking towards a more sustainable world has to be including all these cultural sides. [...] I think we are on a very good path towards cultural sensitivity. (P3)

> I think that is too much expectations that DMOs can solve enormous problems when it comes to the many dimensions of cultural sustainability, I mean cultural sensitivity. (P2)

This confusion of using the two different terms as synonyms might arise from the fact that the two concepts have similar themes connecting them to each other. Same as cultural sensitivity, cultural sustainability is not an easily defined concept, understandings differing from researcher to researcher (Thimm, 2019, p. 205). Throsby (2003) acknowledged that cultural sustainability is a concept including six principles: material and non-material well-being, intergenerational equity, intra-generational equity, maintenance of diversity, precautionary principle, maintenance of cultural systems, and recognition of independence. The principle of recognition is also connected with cultural sensitivity according to studies by Viken et al. (2021) and Hurst et al. (2021). Soini and Birkeland (2014) organized the uses of the concept of cultural sustainability into seven categories: cultural heritage, cultural vitality, cultural diversity, economic viability, locality, eco-cultural resilience, and eco-cultural civilization. While locality is connected to cultural sustainability, it was also identified by Olsen et al. (2019) as one of the main characteristics of culturally sensitive tourism. Furthermore, Thimm (2019) mentioned in his study that the Pacific Asia Travel (2015) created a checklist for Indigenous tourism that included aspects of cultural sustainability (respect, community, protection, empowerment, consultation, and business). Whilst the notion of respect is connected to cultural sustainability in relation to Indigenous tourism, Viken et al. (2021) consider that respect is one of the three pillars of cultural sensitivity. Considering that researchers have connected the concept of cultural sustainability with the concept of cultural sensitivity based on their similar themes, it is no surprise that the participants did not see a difference between the two and so, used the terms synonymously.

Even though confusing at times, the concept of culturally sensitive tourism seems to be quite easily understood by tourism actors, who connect it with respect, ethical behaviour, recognition, sharing the right information, and generally the type of tourism that is beneficial for all parties involved in it. That is why I think that Viken et al.'s (2021) conceptualization is the best way to understand cultural sensitivity, because it aligns with peoples' understanding of the concept.

5. ACTIONS FOR ENHANCING CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Since the second sub-question for this thesis was "What actions are tourism actors taking in order to enhance cultural sensitivity?", the second theme that came out from both the interviews and the online data was the actions that the various tourism actors are doing in order to enhance cultural sensitivity/sustainability. Throughout the interviews, the participants mentioned concrete actions that they are taking, or their members are taking which they believe to be drivers for improving cultural sensitivity. Additionally, other tourism actors mention on their websites either actions that they are doing themselves or actions that they wish tourists would be doing which would enhance cultural sustainability. Although the websites do not mention cultural sensitivity directly, the actions mentioned can be connected to the three ethnorelative notions that Viken et al. (2021) use to conceptualise cultural sensitivity. Therefore, if we look at culturally sensitive tourism as something guided by respect, recognition, and reciprocity, then it is easy to identify the culturally sensitive actions that the tourism actors are taking.

While analysing the interviews and online data, I realised that the actions mentioned by the tourism actors can be grouped under the ethnorelative notions that Viken et al. (2021) use to conceptualise cultural sensitivity in tourism. The notion of respect is not surprisingly the most connected theme to cultural sensitivity since a number of different researchers identified respect as the most important part of culturally sensitive tourism (see Donohoe, 2011; Olsen et al., 2019; Viken et al., 2021). All three interviewees discuss about being respectful or showing respect towards the Sámi people and cultures in different ways.

P1 first mentioned that in their region the Sámi tourism is done only by the owner of the culture: "We don't have Finnish people or French or whoever is coming here and doing Sámi products. To my knowledge nobody is faking anything in this area anymore, which is good." Then they went on to explain how tourists are taken on tours and encouraged to go visit the SIIDA museum and the Sajos (Sámi Parliament) in order to learn about the Sámi cultures: "The entrepreneurs and all the companies operating here they first of all "sell" SIDA and Sajos. Everyone does tours there, and they sell day trips there to tourists. They encourage tourists to go and learn.". And lastly, they talked about how if they do not know the correct information then they go and ask someone from the Sámi community: "We are not scared to say, "I don't know" or "Now we need to ask someone who is Sámi". Although the first participant does not mention respect

directly, all the actions that they talk about are related to showing respect to the Sámi people and their cultures.

The second participant talked about creating a program for sustainability and how they included the respect for Sámi culture in there "One of the 7 principles in our program is that we respect cultural heritage" (P2). Besides that, they do not talk much about actions that they are doing which are directly related to respect for Sámi people and cultures, but one thing they do mentions is that in their opinion nowadays tourists are not being disrespectful and taking pictures of children or Sámi people in their traditional clothes "I think tourists are kind of coming back from that disrespectful direction and they started understanding that it is not always appropriate to take photos" (P2). This response was surprising because it contradicts with Kugapi et al.'s (2020) study where they identified taking of photographs in inappropriate circumstances by tourists as a problem that the Sámi are still confronting with.

Like the second participant, the third one does mention taking of photographs by tourists. While P2 thinks that taking pictures of Sámi people is not a problem anymore, P3 recognises it as an ongoing issue. However, P3 states that the Sámi tourism guidelines have helped them prevent these situations from occurring: "That's how we have now been able to prevent all these collisions, that there would be a Sámi wedding and tourists would go and take pictures, because of these ethical guidelines". Another action the third participant mentioned is their organized trips with travel agents in order for them to learn about the Sámi culture.

> "We do have these fun trips, which means that the travel agents come to the area and get to know it. And when they come, we always make sure that we visit SIIDA and the Sámi cultural centre in the Sámi Parliament, so they learn about the Sámi cultures or then we go to a genuine Sámi farm where people there get to tell how they wish to go about with tourism.". (P3)

This action is important because by doing tours in the Sámi Homeland, these travel agents learn to show respect to the Sámi people. According to Kramvig and Førde (2020), sharing stories about culture and tradition during these tours leads to a greater respect for the Sámi community. P3 also supports this idea, stating that thanks to these trips, "our tourism companies are very aware of how to be respectful and would never take advantage of the Sámi culture."

The interview participants were not the only tourism actors to show respect for Sámi people and cultures. As can be seen from the online data, all eight tourism actors' websites mention a

number of actions for sustainability that are connected to respect of Sámi people and cultures. These are either actions that the tourism actors are doing or actions that they encourage tourists or other tourism actors to do. An example from each tourism actors' website in relation to respect for Sámi people and cultures can be observed in Figure 5.

The owner is a Sámi reindeer herder so nurturing and respecting Sámi traditions comes to the fore in everything we do. We dress in traditional Sámi costumes when working with our guests, our ceiling lamp is made by hand from the horns of our own reindeer, we offer our guests meat from our own reindeer and we take small groups to the fells to get to know the reindeer herder's day as part of his real working day. (TA1)

Remember that you're a guest in someone's home, so respect their traditions and surroundings. (TA2)

We cherish the cultural heritage of our region. Our goal is the genuine and respectful presentation, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of culture. (TA4)

In our region, travel services that introduce Sámi culture, or are based on it, are only offered by entrepreneurs and families with a Sámi background, which guarantees that the information provided is correct and that visitors can enjoy authentic experiences. (TA5)

We strive for true, respectful representation of local cultures. We want to help strengthen cultural heritage and support cross-cultural dialogue. (TA6)

Please do not photograph local people or private property without permission. Photographing children is only allowed with the parents' approval. Remember to respect the private occasions part of the local culture: please do not disturb events such as weddings, funerals or other parties. (TA3)

Most of our employees are local to Inari area so we bring the authentic arctic culture for our customers to experience, year-round. (TA7)

Please respect the Sámi people and their culture. The Sámi who are not at service of the tourism sector do not wear Sámi outfits for tourists. [...] In order to preserve our cultural history, please make sure that your visit is respectful and leaves no traces. (TA8)

Figure 5. Actions of tourism actors related to respect (Source: tourism actors' websites)

Another ethnorelative notion that Viken et al. (2021) use to conceptualise cultural sensitivity is recognition. First, the notion of recognition can be connected to recognising cultural differences, meaning that Sámi cultures are unique and different from Finnish culture. The first participant talked about the importance of understanding these cultural differences, while the second participant talked about how cultures have many faces and even sub-cultures.

> Cultural sensitivity is not only about Sámi culture, but it can also be about the local Lappish culture as well. Understanding and seeing how the Sámi cultures and the Lappish one coexist, how they are different from each other but also what similarities they have. (P1)

> So, it's not easy to define that something is an authentic or not an authentic cultural product because cultures also have so many faces and I think that is the most

wonderful thing about cultures. There are as many definitions as there are people and also Sápmi is a large area, and you have subcultures instead of one culture. (P2)

Furthermore, other tourism actors from across Lapland showcase acknowledgement of cultural differences, traditional practices, and customs. This recognition was easily identified through their websites where they describe the Sámi peoples, their cultures, and acknowledge the multitude of Sámi cultural expressions. Some examples of recognition from the tourism actors' website is showcased in Figure 6.

The Sámi have their own languages and culture, which differ from those of ethnic Finns. In Finland, the Sámi speak three languages: North Sámi, Inari Sámi, and Skolt Sámi, which are different enough for the speakers to struggle to understand each other. (TA5)

The original Sámi handicraft can be recognised by the registered Sámi Duodji trademark. (TA3)

In Finland, the Sámi area consists of northern Lapland. Municipalities of Inari, Utsjoki, Enontekiö and northern Sodankylä are considered as the Sámi Homeland. (TA5)

The Sámi language, stories, music, as well as the most visible symbols of the Sámi culture – Sámi outfits and handicrafts – are essentially intertwined with, among other things, traditional Sámi livelihoods. (TA8)

A rich musical tradition is also closely related to the Sámi culture. The Sámi joik tradition is Sámi folk music and cultural heritage. Like the Sámi costume, joik is a versatile and polysemic form of music. (TA3)

The Sámi are the only indigenous people in the European Union and have been living here long before the current nation states existed. (TA2)

Reindeer husbandry is commonly associated with traditional Sámi livelihoods, along with fishing, hunting and handicrafts. (TA7)

Sámiland, Sápmi, or the so-called Sámi area extends to the territories of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Russia. (TA3)

Figure 6. Examples of recognition from tourism actors (Source: tourism actors' websites)

Another way that recognition can be shown is to acknowledge the historical context and the history of assimilation, stereotypization, and cultural appropriation. The first participant mentioned that they are aware of the culturally insensitive behaviours towards the Sámi that have happened in the past: "We are aware of the past issues, and I am sure that the tourism actors from our area are aware as well. […] they are making efforts to be more culturally sensitive and more ethical already." (P1). Additionally, one of the tourism actors' websites acknowledged some of the unethical behaviours and ask tourists to show respect and act accordingly: "Sámi culture has often been commercialized and misappropriated for monetary

gain, so please be sure you're learning about and visiting with the Sámi in a respectful, ethical way." (TA6). Furthermore, the third interview participant recognized the political context and mentioned the relationship between Finnish government and Sámi parliament: "in the past there has been stuff between our government and Sámi Parliament, and even now it's friction and it's sensitive at the moment" (P3). This side of recognition is something that Olsen et al. (2019, p. 13) mention in the ARCTISEN report: "cultural sensitivity requires recognition of historical, political, and socio-cultural contexts where tourism is being developed". Understanding the historical and political context provides insight into the ongoing challenges faced by the Sámi communities even to this day.

An essential aspect of recognition involves understanding that Indigenous cultures, such as the Sámi cultures, are integral to contemporary life and are vibrant, dynamic, and modern. This type of recognition is necessary because as shown by researchers, the Sámi people and their cultures have often been represented as primitive, exotic, and uncivilized (see Lindholm, 2014; Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016; Saari, 2017). As can be seen from both the interviews and the online data, the tourism actors recognise the Sámi cultures as modern and part of everyday life. By doing this, the tourism industry can move into a more culturally sensitive direction and fight the stereotypization and primitivisation of Sámi cultures.

> Sámi cultures evolved, they are modern, cultures are not dead and live somewhere in the past, but they live in the present time, and they get elements from other cultures. Cultures all the time get elements and impacts from each other, and they also evolve with time. (P2)

> Let the tourists know that Sámi culture is present everywhere, that the person sitting next to you at the restaurant, speaking Finnish, might be Sámi, which I think that the travellers don't really understand that it's all around us and not just these people who are wearing the dresses are Sámi. (P3)

> The northernmost Lapland provides an opportunity to experience modern, everyday Sámi culture. (TA5)

> Although lean-tos, kotas and other traditional structures are still a part of the Sámi culture and environment all year round, people live in modern houses, dress in modern clothes and do not differ from Finns in their outward appearance. (TA7)

> Sámi culture includes their language, cultural heritage and cultural expressions, Sámi art, traditional knowledge of the Sámi, traditional livelihoods, and the modern ways of practicing them. (TA8)

This side of the notion of recognition was discussed by Viken et al. (2020) in their study where they also talked about how different Indigenous groups around the world are combining the old with the new and engaging contemporary issues with traditional Indigenous knowledge (Viken et al., 2021, p.7; see Amoamo, 2011; de Bernardi, 2020; Ren et al., 2020b). Furthermore, de Bernardi (2020) stated in their study that Sámi tourism actors wish for their culture to be recognised as contemporary, something that a part of tourism actors are already doing, as shown by both sets of data.

In addition to emphasizing respect and recognition, both interview participants and tourism actors' websites highlight initiatives focused on co-producing knowledge, fostering collaboration between Sámi and non-Sámi tourism stakeholders, and striving to make tourism a mutually beneficial industry. Moreover, there's a clear emphasis on reciprocity in tourism, with focus on ensuring that visitors contribute positively to the well-being of local communities while enjoying the experiences offered. As identified by Viken et al. (2021), reciprocity, in all of its facets, is the third ethnorelative notion connected to cultural sensitivity. In the same study, Viken et al. (2021) discuss about two types of reciprocity, between the hosts and the guests, and between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism actors. When it comes to reciprocity between hots and guests, some tourism actors across Lapland are encouraging tourists to exhibit reciprocity towards the Sámi peoples.

> We encourage understanding of, and respect for, local customs and beliefs. (TA4)

> Try to have a positive impact on the environment, economy, and culture of Lapland […] Please behave how you'd wish people visiting your home to behave. […] Allow the Sámi to maintain and transmit their culture to future generations without the negative effects of tourism.[…] Be the kind of guest anyone would love to invite for another visit! (TA8)

As highlighted by Sabourin's (2013, p. 306) definition, "reciprocity implies a concern for the others and creates a relationship which produces affective or ethical values, like friendship, trust and mutual understanding.". This notion aligns with Kuokkanen's (2017) understanding of reciprocity, which emphasizes the significance of receiving graciously within Indigenous thought. Based on Kuokkanen's (2017) idea of reciprocity, if the Sámi people are willing to share their cultures with tourists, it implies a reciprocal expectation that tourists should approach learning about the Sámi people and cultures with respect and ethical consideration. Several tourism actors encourage tourists to take tours, learn about Sámi cultures and from the

Sámi people, because they believe it is important for tourists to hear from the owners of the culture.

> Do talk to the locals as well, you might hear some of the best stories of your life! […] You can also hire a guide to learn more about reindeer herding and Sámi culture. (TA2)

> Sámi entrepreneurs want to make sure all guests have a unique but authentic Arctic experience, which is why some decided to start telling stories about the Sámi way of life. They see it as very important to talk about their own culture and the Indigenous Sámi people. (TA8)

> The preservation of culture is supported by the traveller learning about local culture while visiting our area. (TA3)

As mentioned already, Kramvig and Førde (2020) make a connection between stories shared in cultural settings and respect shown to the Sámi community, but in the same research they also connected storytelling to increased recognition. Through storytelling within Indigenous tourism settings, connections are created between storytellers and travellers, offering moments of hope for epistemic decolonization and reconciliation (Viken et al., 2021, p. 8). Furthermore, storytelling is seen as a great way to share the correct information to tourists about the local cultures and people (Kugapi et al., 2020, p. 24). Therefore, the encouragement of reciprocity between hosts and guests, as well as the practice of storytelling within Indigenous tourism, collectively emphasize the importance of respectful engagement and mutual learning between cultures.

Enhancing cultural sensitivity in tourism depends on host-guest reciprocity; however, the reciprocity displayed between Sámi and non-Sámi tourism actors holds equal, if not greater, importance. In the words of TA4 "Staff should be role models for tourists.", that is to say, if we expect tourists to act in a culturally sensitive way, then we should also expect the same from the people working in the tourism industry. The mutual assistance and collaboration is best exemplified through the traditional Sámi practice of *verdde.* In this tradition, people cultivate a mutually beneficial friendship, they trust and support each other, and offer help when required (Svensson &Viken, 2017). The best example of *verdde* in action is tourism actor 4, a company that goes out of its way to become part of the local community.

> We make a definite point of attending all local cultural events with our guides and either contributing our manpower or contributing financially to events that are important for the continued vibrancy of the community and for encouraging a sense

of shared responsibility, localised action and open communication. […] We also attempt to make any evening classes that guides are interested in participating. These tend to be local handicraft or language courses. In this way, the guides become, as much as possible, a part of the community and local people come to understand more about our business and the positive benefits from having responsible tourism companies operating in an area. (TA4)

The tradition of *verdde* helps promote collaboration between the Sámi and non-Sámi tourism actors. Collaboration inside the tourism industry was identified by the interviewees as paramount for the sustainable development of tourism and consider the cooperation with Sámi tourism actors an important step towards enhancing cultural sensitivity. In the words of P2 "collaboration is key, if you want to build a certain kind of tourism you really need to take into consideration the other stakeholders". There are already a few examples of collaboration happening inside tourism, especially between Sámi and non-Sámi tourism stakeholders.

> We seek and support local community involvement and partnership in tourism. […] We try at all times, for instance, to use locally owned accommodation and transport providers for our own products so as to spread financial benefits from the business amongst local people and operators. (TA4)

> All the content that we have related to Sámi people and cultures is now previewed by someone from the Sámi Parliament or by someone inside the Sámi community, to make sure that the information is correct, especially since we are sharing it with quite a big public. And then, once that content has been approved, we can use it in many different ways. (P2)

> In Inari-Saariselkä region I know that there are snowmobile companies and husky rides companies who are collaborating with the paliskunnat and with local herders. (P2)

Of course, there are always more actions that can be done to increase cultural sensitivity in tourism, however one thing that two of the interviewed tourism actors mention is that the work is never finished. They see cultural sensitivity as something that is continuously enhanced, and as something that can always be worked on. This opinion is also shared by Viken et al. (2021, p. 5), who view cultural sensitivity not as a learned competence that it is "finally achieved but as something that is constantly negotiated and consistently exercised".

> Well, it's an ongoing work, so all the time we try to improve the situation and strive to be more culturally sensitive. […] Increasing cultural sensitivity is a marathon run. We just need to keep on communicating and create materials such as the Sámi ethical guidelines and the visitor guidelines. (P1)

> The work that we are doing is ongoing and it's part of our everyday tasks […] I don't think that the work is ever ready. There is not a perfect model that works for everyone and there are compromises that have to be made, but we are on a good track when it comes to cultural sensitivity, at least in our area. (P3)

As mentioned in the second chapter Levinas (1969) did not credit the improvement of one's ethics to implementation of a set of rules or by guidelines, but he rather believed that sensitivity emerges through openness for others and encouraging genuine ethical interaction. Contrary to this Levinasian thought, the interviewed participants consider the Sámi tourism guidelines as drivers of change towards a more culturally sensitive tourism industry.

> I think when it comes to people's behaviour in tourism it has improved in the past years, at least in our region. Tourists and tourism entrepreneurs are more aware of the sensitivity issues, and I would say that the guidelines have helped us in helping them. You can't fully say that people are behaving better because of the guidelines, but I think they did play a role in it. (P1)

> Since the Sámi ethical guidelines have been accepted it has been very helpful for us, especially in what to tell and what to show and how to communicate about it and how to make sure that the message gets through to the tourists. […] we can really communicate better how should you go about it when you come to this area. And we can use them as guidance for how to talk about things, how to put the message out there and where. (P3)

While Levinas (1969) might not see guidelines as a driver for improved sensitivity, in their study Viken et al. (2021, p. 7) claimed that creation of labels and guidelines is directly connected with "enhancing recognition of cultural traditions, customs, and practices in Arctic tourism". Participants did not connect the creation of guidelines to increased recognition, however they considered the Sámi tourism guidelines as a driver of change towards better and something that helped the development of cultural sensitivity: "I think that the guidelines were a very much needed addition to all of us." (P3). This is also supported by studies on codes of conduct which have identified increased collaboration and communication amongst local tourism stakeholders as an effect of implementation of guides and codes (Cole, 2007, p. 449).

6. THE IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT OF THE ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR SÁMI TOURISM

One of the sub-questions formulated for this thesis was "How are tourism actors recognising and using the Sámi tourism guidelines?". Therefore, the third theme identified from both the interviews and online data relates to the Sámi tourism guidelines. In order to clearly understand the impact of these guidelines, I had to start by looking into the dissemination process first. Mason and Mowforth (1995) noted that effective dissemination is paramount for successful implementation of codes of conduct, reasoning that can be applied to guidelines as well. The Sámi tourism guidelines can be found on the Sámediggi website (both the Finnish and English versions), as are the illustrations and the other materials that were created based on the guidelines. Through interviews, I discovered that the Sámi Parliament directly disseminated the guidelines to certain municipalities and destination management organisations. They then shared the guidelines with other tourism actors in their area: "We try to make them [tourism actors] aware of the different guidelines." (P1), "We have distributed the news about these guidelines, they can be found as well from our website." (P2). Furthermore, P3 mentions that at least for their members it is required to familiarise themselves with the guidelines: "For our members we have this workspace, and the guidelines are there and it's mandatory for our new members to go through this space".

During my online data collection process, I noticed that there is an absence of recognition of the Sámi tourism guidelines amongst tourism actors in Finnish Lapland. If the tourism actor was not based in Sápmi, or conducting their business there, then in majority of cases there would not be any mention of the guidelines on their websites, nor do they acknowledge Sámi people and cultures. While it is possible that tourism actors might be aware of the guidelines and might be using them, there is no recognition of them. This absence could be due to tourism actors considering irrelevant to mention Sámi people and cultures if they are not operating within Sápmi. An alternative would be that this absence of information indicates an effective implantation of the guidelines by the tourism actors. As the Sámi guidelines emphasize "If the Sámi or Sámi culture are not directly linked to the product or destination marketed, the symbols of the Sámi or Sámi culture and/or the Sámi language must not be utilised." (Sámi Parliament, 2018, p. 21). However, there are some tourism actors who do recognize the ethical guidelines and mention them on their websites: "To learn more about the Sámi, visit the Sámediggi website

and check out the Responsible Visitors' Guide to World of Sámi Culture. (TA2)", "The Sámi Parliament have drafted Ethical Guidelines for Sami Tourism. Other tips for responsible travel can be found there. (TA3)", "Learn about the ethical guidelines at Samediggi.fi. (TA6)". Additionally, TA6 tells tourism actors to "keep the principles on display in your operations because with the principles you communicate common goals to stakeholders." And TA4 encourages tourists and tourism workers to adhere to codes of conduct in order to promote responsible tourism.

Understanding how the tourism actors are using the guidelines can pose some challenges. While online data lacks clarity on how the tourism industry has implemented the guidelines, interviewees clearly explained how the guidelines have impacted their work since their creation. The participants mentioned that they use the guidelines to inform themselves on how to share the correct information to tourists, and to avoid stereotyping and mystifying the Sámi people and their cultures.

> Well, they were helpful in what and how to communicate about Sámi cultures and how to make sure that the tourists are getting the right information. (P3)

> It's a very good source of information to educate yourself so that you can share the right information and not perhaps some mystical stories that you might have heard in your childhood or learned from some TV programs or something like that. (P2)

By educating themselves about what information to share and in what way, the guidelines have helped the tourism actors improve their communication. This can clearly be seen from what P3 says: "if we write articles, blogs, or something like that, or we do some content for another company about our area then obviously if we want to bring out Sámi culture then we go to these guidelines and we check, just to make sure we are ethical". This impact of the guidelines is very important since misinformation has been one of the negative aspects of tourism, as highlighted by de Bernardi (2022) and Viken (2022) and has also been one of the reasons the guidelines were created in the first place (Sámi Parliament, 2018, p. 5). Through utilizing the guidelines for self-education, the tourism actors ensure that their marketing and communication accurately represent the real Sámi people and their cultures. Given that tourism marketing plays an important role in shaping tourists' expectations of a destination, as noted by de Bernardi (2022), the use of these guidelines helps prevent the continuation of stereotypization, thus promoting more authentic and respectful interactions between tourists and the Sámi community.

Generally, the tourism actors see the guidelines as an educational tool that helps with sustainability, clearly stated by P2: "In our sustainable development program we've taken them into consideration as an educational element.". Therefore, they have been using the guidelines to try and educate not only themselves but also the other tourism actors: "We've been using the material to educate tour operators that are operating in Finland or who are selling Finland so that they can represent the local cultures from Finland in an appropriate and authentic manner." (P2). Furthermore, P3 emphasized that the guidelines are also playing a role in educating tourists directly, providing them with cleare guidance on how to behave when visiting the region. Similarly, Holmes et al.'s (2016) Indigenized visitor code of conduct conveys Indigenous community's expectations for tourism behaviour. From this, it is clear that guidelines can have a significant impact in educating tour operators and tourists on how to appropriately engage with Indigenous cultures in Finland. Additionally, the participants noted that the implementation of guidelines led to better communication between tourism stakeholders and influenced their increased collaborations with Sámi entrepreneurs. This aligns with Cole's (2007, p. 449) findings on codes of conduct, where he observed that the production of such regulations promotes enhanced collaboration and communication amongst the local stakeholders.

Another aspect highlighted by the participants is the guidelines' ability to help non-Sámi tourism actors know how to conduct their business in an appropriate way. In P2's words: "I think that the guidelines the Sámi Parliament created are very useful for the non-Sámi people doing business in tourism, such as ourselves and others". This impact is important as the guidelines are not only aimed at Sámi tourism entrepreneurs but also at those outside the Indigenous community. According to the guidelines "the entire tourism industry must pay special attention to how and to what extent at a general level tourism can be practised responsibly and ethically sustainably within Sámi Homeland." (Sámi Parliament, 2018, p. 5). It is encouraging to see that non-Sámi tourism actors are recognizing the importance of integrating and applying the guidelines in their work. The guidelines emphasize that actors and operators from outside the Sámi community should particularly focus on respectfully representing and promoting Sámi culture in their marketing and communications (Sámi Parliament, 2018, p. 5).

While it is straightforward to grasp the guidelines' effect through the interviews, understanding how other tourism actors are putting them into practice based on online data poses a challenge.

Out of the eight websites that I analysed, only one specifies that they are actively using the ethical guidelines: "In our mission to ensure cultural sustainability, we are also proud to follow the ethical instructions of the Sámi Parliament of Finland regarding tourism in the Sámi region." (TA7). Even though the tourism actors do not explicitly detail how they are using the guidelines, their website content often implies implementation of the *Principles for Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism.*

First of all, tourism actors inform on their websites that Sámi people live on territories from Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia, highlighting the heterogeneity of Sámi cultures across these four countries. They also recognize the importance of Sámi people being the ones representing their culture and sharing it with tourists on their own terms. These actions directly align with Principle 1 (Recognising and respecting the value and richness of the Sámi cultural heritage) by recognising Sámi territorial rights, respecting the diversity of Sámi cultures, and emphasizing how vital it is for Sámi people to have ownership of their culture in tourism activities.

Second of all, tourism actors recognize the importance of tourism having a positive impact on the Sámi communities and to "not disturb the local people's everyday life" (TA3). This sentiment is shared by TA4 who tells that "Tourism should not change the lifestyles of peoples and communities unless they want it to do so" and by TA6 who emphasises that "tourism industry should not cause the loss of cultural heritage through its activities". Additionally, they urge tourists to respect Sámi peoples' privacy, to not take pictures unless given permission, to avoid trespassing, and to understand that not all Sámi individuals are involved in the tourism industry. All this shows that at least a part of tourism actors from Lapland prioritize the agency and autonomy of Sámi people. Furthermore, through the websites, tourism actors are communicating to tourists the need to avoid interfering with reindeer, by feeding, scaring, or disturbing them in any way. By promoting respectful behaviour, ensuring that tourism benefits the local communities, and working towards preserving Sámi cultural heritage, tourism actors are showing that they are familiar with Principles 2 (Protecting and maintaining the vitality of Sámi cultural heritage for future generations) of the Sámi tourism guidelines.

Thirdly, the tourism actors' websites show that they collaborate and cooperate with Sámi communities to create authentic experiences for tourists, end misinformation about Sámi people and cultures, reduce the negative effects of tourism on the local Indigenous communities, and

ensure tourism is a mutually beneficial industry. Not only do tourism actors support cross-cultural collaboration, but they also encourage other tourism actors from their area to collaborate with the local Sámi community. Additionally, Sámi owned and run companies are promoted on some of the tourism actors' websites and tourists are encouraged to experience the Sámi Homeland by booking activities with Sámi companies. Furthermore, according to the tourism actors' websites, preservation and respectful promotion of Sámi culture are considered important objectives in working towards culturally sustainable tourism. Based on this, it is clear that tourism actors are applying Principle 3 (Mutually beneficial understanding and co-operation), which emphasises the importance of building partnerships and promoting collaboration between tourism actors and Sámi communities.

Moreover, some of the tourism actors are recognizing the negative effects that tourism has had on the Sámi people and communities like, commodification and appropriation of culture. They are also fighting misinformation by sharing the correct information about Sámi people and cultures and urge tourists to learn about Sámi way of life, cultural heritage, and history by talking with Sámi people and listening to their stories or by going to SIIDA, Sajos, or other local museum and exhibitions. Overall, tourism actors are acknowledging the importance of Sámi people being able to transmit their culture to future generations without experiencing negative effects from tourism. These actions show a commitment to correcting past cultural transgressions and encouraging responsible and respectful tourism practices that prioritise the protection and promotion of Sámi cultural heritage, which aligns with Principle 4 (Issues featured in Sámi tourism – their recognition and correction).

According to the information provided on the tourism actors' websites, it appears that they are dedicated to creating positive impacts through tourism for both the local communities, including the Sámi, and the environment. On their sustainability and responsibility page, they outline their plans for improving sustainability, which extend beyond environmental or economic considerations to incorporate social and cultural sustainability as well. Additionally, TA4 highlights the importance of creating a "balance between tourists, the environment, and the locals in order for tourism to be a strength for local communities". TA4 also emphasises that involving locals in tourism planning processes is crucial for effectively addressing environmental and cultural concerns. Based on this, it can be seen that tourism actors are familiar with Principle 5 (Positive impact of Sámi tourism on Sámi people, their culture and environment), which recommends conducting responsible and sustainable tourism practices

that give priority to the well-being of local communities and the preservation of cultural and environmental integrity.

The tourism actors are actively disseminating truthful information regarding Sámi people and their diverse cultural expressions, including music, traditional clothing, arts, and handicrafts. Not only do the tourism websites inform about traditional Sámi livelihoods, but marketing of Sámi culture emphasises their contemporary and modern nature, recognizing their relevance in the present-day world. Moreover, the actors' websites promote a variety of local operators and service providers, prioritizing Sámi tourism activities. Notably, certain tourism actors like TA4, explicitly clarify that dogsledding is not part of Sámi culture. However, other tourism businesses, such as TA1, a Sámi owned and led business, does not provide the similar clarification about the glass igloos. Overall, it seems that tourism actors are familiar with Principle 6 (Responsible and ethically sustainable marketing and communications of Sámi tourism), which takes the tourism industry a step closer to having authentic Sámi cultural representation in tourism promotion.

Lastly, tourism actors are showing commitments to Principle 7 (High-quality visitor experiences – quality assurance) by using their websites to educate tourists about expected responsible behaviour when visiting the Sámi Homeland. This includes encouraging tourists to leave no trace of their travels and to have a respectful conduct in nature. Through the application of Principle 7, tourism actors are able to create positive and authentic visitor experiences.

All in all, it is clear that a part of Lapland's tourism sector is well-informed about the Sámi tourism guidelines. They recognise these guidelines, feature them on their websites, and implement them to the best of their abilities. By aligning their actions with the seven principles outlined in the guidelines, these tourism actors showcase respect, recognition, and reciprocity, which are key components of cultural sensitivity.

7. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCING CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

7.1. Challenges

The first part of this chapter (challenges) came directly from the interview question "What would you identify as challenges for enhancing cultural sensitivity in tourism?", but also popped up in discussion throughout the interviews. The participants told about their different complaints related to tourists, tourism actors in their area and also mentioned other challenges that they have encountered.

The participants agreed that a primary challenge to enhancing cultural sensitivity is connected to foreign tourism actors, especially the foreign seasonal workers. P3 mentioned that "when employees come here for a few months I don't think that they are given any kind of direction or ways to access these guidelines, or if they do it's not mandatory to get to know these". This issue aligns with findings from the Finnish ARCTISEN report, which notes that foreign guides might lack any training related to Sámi people and cultures (Kugapi et al., 2020). Additionally, P1 highlighted the important role of foreign tourism actors in enhancing cultural sensitivity, because they are often the ones who get asked questions by tourists, without knowing how to respond correctly. However, P3 told that "the seasonal workers don't need to have all the answers but at least know where to find them and where to guide the tourists to the right answers.". Kugapi et al.'s (2020, p. 26) study participants also identified foreign tourism actors as a challenge for cultural sensitivity and showed concern that their presence may diminish respect for local cultures and nature. Additionally, Olsen et al. (2019, p. 47) mentioned that lack of knowledge amongst foreign workers can lead to misrepresentation of local and Indigenous cultures. P3 suggested increasing the general knowledge of cultural sensitivity and educating foreign tourist actors.

When it comes to other challenges created by the tourism actors, P1 brought up the autonomy of tourism companies, saying that "there is not much we can do because in the end companies do what they want to do, and no one can force them to do something". Despite efforts to influence the behaviour of tourism companies by implementing sustainability workshops, participation is inconsistent, as P1 explains "in the end, travel and tourism companies might not

participate in the projects we organize for them." While municipalities and DMOs can encourage cultural sustainability, they lack the authority to force other tourism actors to act more culturally sustainable. This limitation extends to the Sámi tourism guidelines. P2 noted that generally it cannot be monitored how in depth the tourism actors are using the guidelines, and P1 emphasized that companies have the option to follow them or not. Similarly, participants in the ARCTISEN project observed the optional nature of Canada's own Indigenous guidelines, noting that they are not enforced by a policy and are not a requirement for the Indigenous or non-Indigenous tourism operators (Hurst et al., 2020, p. 26). Furthermore, Cole (2007) brought up the issues of tourists not complying with guidelines and codes of conduct, attributing this to the voluntary nature of such regulations, and also noted that people might simply dislike being told what to do.

P1 proposed a potential solution, suggesting that the Sámi tourism guidelines could be integrated into a certificate system or included in companies' sustainability reports. According to interviewees, at the moment, the Sámi tourism guidelines are included in the Sustainable Travel Finland program, and companies in the program need to make a self-assessment of their current state. If they are not familiar with the guidelines, then it becomes part of their action list. While this sounds like a good solution to ensure the guidelines are being implemented, the issue is that self-reporting is considered to lack credibility (Gössling, 2006).

During the interview, P2 highlighted the growing popularity of authentic Indigenous tourism products, leading to a growth in demand for Sámi experiences, however, this increase in demand brought its own set of challenges. According to P2, the main problem is the demand exceeding the available supply, leading to "non-Sámi tourism actors creating their own kind of Sámi products". This was also observed by Pettersson (2004), who noted that increase in Indigenous tourism demand may lead to a growth in commercialization and appropriation of Indigenous cultures. An example of this phenomenon is the creation of the controversial and highly insensitive 'Lapland Baptism', which is a tourism product presenting a false image of Sámi culture (Kugapi et al., 2020, p. 25). While this practice was not mentioned by interviewees or the tourism websites from this study, there are still other tourism websites marketing the 'Lapland Baptism' in their activities. In regard to the discrepancy between supply and demand, P2 proposes collaboration between Sámi and non-Sámi tourism entrepreneurs, seeing it as an opportunity for partnerships and Sámi cultural revitalization.

Another challenge that the participants identified relates to the Christmas tourism and its negative impact on the Sámi people and culture. P3 pointed out that the Santa Claus brand is so strong, that "it has overtaken everything else", and that there are still a lot of people coming to Lapland expecting to have a Disney-like experience, focused on taking photos and commercialized attractions. As a result, rather than experiencing the real Sámi culture, tourists will expect a staged performance, continuing the pattern of carnivalized Sáminess, as observed by Niskala and Ridanpää (2016) in previous tourism marketing materials. Additionally, P2 noted that the Santa Claus brand while not based on anyone's culture, it borrows elements from other cultures, including those from Sámi people. The history of Sámi being included in the Christmas image goes back to the mid-1980s, and the reason for this connection is the stereotypical portrayal of Sámi as reindeer herders (Suomi, 2010). This led to mixing Sámi people, reindeers, and Santa Claus in a magical and mystical narrative (Suomi, 2010), which persists even in contemporary media, as seen in the animated film "Klaus", where Sámi characters help Santa Claus make and deliver presents.

While tourism actors can create challenges that hinder the improvement of cultural sensitivity, P1 mentioned that the real difficulty is reaching the independent travellers effectively. P1 sees this as especially important since "a lot of individual tourists might go from airports or bus stops directly to the wilderness, and so there is no opportunity to check if they are informed about proper behaviour in the Sámi Homeland". P1's insight emphasizes the need for innovative ways to engage and educate independent travellers, to be sure they have the essential knowledge to respect the cultural and natural environments they encounter. Similarly, Mason and Mowforth (1995) highlighted the importance of disseminating codes of conduct in an efficient way so that their message is widely spread and reaches all tourists arriving at a destination. Reaching the correct information should not be a challenge for individual travellers since according to Tsaur et al. (2010) these types of tourists need to search for relevant information for their trips, process through which they gain knowledge about the language, regulations, customs, and culture of the travel destination. This aligns with P2's opinion that independent travellers are more informed when it comes to ethical and respectful travel practices. In their words: "I don't see that the individual travellers just suddenly appear here, they might even have a more direct source of information when it comes to how to travel ethically.".

While there are several challenges that hinder the improvement of culturally sensitive tourism, the study participants also identified opportunities and future possibilities for enhancing cultural sensitivity. These are discussed in the following sub-chapter.

7.2. Opportunities

The theme of opportunities emerged as participants discussed ideas for future enhancements in cultural sensitivity, identified areas for improvement, and emphasized potential routes for development. One of the most recurring theme connected with developing cultural sensitivity amongst different tourism stakeholders was education on historical, cultural, safety, and sustainability issues. Throughout the interviews, the participants mentioned multiple times that educating workers, especially seasonal workers, would be paramount for enhancing cultural sensitivity in the future. Additionally, at least one out of the eighth tourism actors' websites mentioned education as an important step to increase responsibility in tourism.

> Seasonal workers play a huge role. I would like to see projects done to get the seasonal workers more involved. […] We should help out the companies somehow to educate their seasonal workers and employees so that they would know everything about the local stuff, because many of the people come here […] just for the winter season so they could have at least some basic information about the cultural aspect and about the environmental. (P1)

> Well, I've been talking about creating awareness and education is about creating awareness. […] But we can't get the travellers to go through an educational program before arriving to Finland, so, because of that, educating the foreign operators as well as the local operators is the key to cultural sensitivity. (P2)

> It's important to understand that the seasonal workers don't need to have all the answers but at least to know where to find the right answers and where to guide the tourists to the right answers. […] I think that it should be mandatory to every seasonal worker here that they need to spend a day in Siida. Everybody should do that, then at least they would get this one day to know the culture and get to know about the painful parts of the history. (P3)

> Trained staff are the key to responsible tourism. Staff education and training should integrate environmental, cultural, social, and legal issues. (TA4)

Furthermore, P2 went on to say that "if you want to work here you need to be required to need to know and get to know about the cultures". The study participants from the ARCTISEN

project also recognized education for seasonal workers as an important part in improving cultural sensitivity (Kugapi et al., 2020; Olsen et al., 2019). It is to no surprise that tourism actors identified education and training of tourist and staff as an opportunity since Donohoe (2011, p. 40) remarked in her study that education and training can be a barrier to cultural sensitivity, but it can also be a potential opportunity. She further mentioned that lack of communication is a barrier to cultural sensitivity and that this barrier can be overcomed by investing in staff training and education (Donohoe, 2011). The importance of cultural knowledge has been highlighted by other researchers (see Lashley, 2017) and Kugapi et al.'s (2020) study participants suggested the creation of courses or something similar that can be shared with the tourism workers to improve their cultural knowledge. This is something that P1 mentioned as a possibility for the future to improve cultural sensitivity, and as show by P2 there are companies already creating educational material and courses for tourism workers.

> So, either locally as municipality / travel destination, or as a whole Lapland we could have education material provided to all the seasonal workers coming in. And then the companies should be more involved and be sure that all the seasonal workers would go through some kind of a training or have something to be sure they went through all the materials. (P1)

> So, we have like an e-learning system for travel agencies and tour operators, so the ones that do not operate in Finland, but to Finland. We have this educational platform for them where we inform them about all the cultural and environmental issues and safety matters. (P2)

Besides educating tourism workers, two of the participants discussed the need of educating the tourists or increasing their awareness about cultural related issues in order to improve cultural sensitivity. P1 noted that "educating the tourists could be at least one way to improve cultural sensitivity in tourism" and in P3's words: "increasing the general knowledge of culture is the way to go and we have a role in that as well. It is in our future plans to be even more active in the field so that we can improve cultural sensitivity". Additionally, as seen from the online data, there are tourism actors already educating tourists on responsibility: "Informing the tourists has an important role, travellers are actively informed of sustainable and responsible ways to explore our area." (TA3).

When it comes to actually educating or informing the tourists, P2 discusses how important it is to know how to convey the information to them so that it does not feel like they are being lectured. P2's suggestion is for the information to be delivered in a more positive way, "instead

of How NOT to… we switch to How To…". Because when you continuously tell tourists to not do something, they "might be afraid to do anything at that point, for the fear of being inappropriate and unethical" (P2). This issue of effectively communicating information to tourists was also discussed by Kugapi et al. (2020, p. 24) in the ARCTISEN report from Finland, where they suggested presenting guidelines in empathetic and humorous ways, rather than overwhelming destinations with "Do not..." signs. Furthermore, Malloy and Fennell (1998) emphasized the importance of knowing how to word and present codes of conduct, since their successful implementation can be linked to a positive presentation of their message. Considering this past research on guidelines and codes of conduct, the second participant's recommendation is perfect, they suggested that tourism actors put the emphasis on ways tourists can support local cultures and guide them to find the ethical options.

After you know what information to share and how, the next step would be where to share that information. P1 mentioned that social media could be used as a tool to increase tourists' awareness and influence them in behaving respectfully when travelling. This opinion is also shared by P3 who says that "social media nowadays is a really good tool that can be used in tourism, for sharing all this information […] I wouldn't say that we personally educate through our social media, but we bring awareness of the culture there.". The educational potential of social media has been researched from medical (Sahu et al., 2020), pedagogical (Gómez-Ortiz et al., 2023), and tourism (Garcia Henche, 2018) perspectives. Batat and Prentovic (2014) argue that social media can significantly impact the behaviour and beliefs of tourists, and as shown by Haque et al.'s (2021) study, social media has already been used to promote environmentally responsible behaviour among tourists. They also recommend DMOs to utilize social media not only for destination promotion but also for disseminating information and increase tourists' awareness. This aligns with the findings of Hajli and Lin (2014), who identified social media as a valuable e-learning tool for tourism education. Moreover, Mkono (2016) has emphasized the importance of showcasing Indigenous tourism voices on social media to correct years of misinformation. All these studies support the perspectives of the study participants that social media is an effective educational tool for tourists to learn about Sámi people and cultures.

Besides being an educational tool, social media provides a space for people to freely express their thoughts, viewpoints, and personal experiences (Sahu et al., 2020). This open platform lets people not only share their experiences but also highlight cases of cultural insensitivity, as pointed out by P1 and P3. They also suggested that social media works as a public forum where

unethical behaviour is brought to light and discussed extensively. This aspect of social media as a judge, where questionable actions are criticized and evaluated by the online community, emphasizes its growing influence as a platform for social accountability (Smith & Johnson, 2021). This transparency facilitated by social media platforms should encourage people and organizations to be more mindful of their actions and behaviours, knowing that they are subject to public scrutiny.

In addition to enhancing cultural sensitivity, the importance of teaching tourists about Sámi people and cultures is emphasized by the potential of digitalization. As highlighted by McGinnis et al. (2020), sharing information through digital technologies could play a significant role in preserving Indigenous knowledge. P3's view on how easily information is accessible through digital tools is highly relevant here: "since every single spot in the world is accessible with our phones, and information is in general so easily accessible to us why wouldn't we also make access to the Sámi culture more available to the world.". This shows the significant advantage of using digital tools, helping tourists access information regardless of their location, and interact with Indigenous cultures without the need to physically travel to specific destinations. However, as P3 also points out, sometimes there is a discrepancy between the digitalization levels of tourists and the regions themselves. Recognizing this gap, it becomes crucial to use digital tools to make Indigenous cultures more accessible worldwide. This necessity is further highlighted by P2's observation that many tourists express interest in learning about Sámi people and cultures when traveling to Finland but are unable to visit the Sámi Homeland. This raises the question posed by P2: 'how to get tourists the information if they cannot go?'". Besides social media, other digital tools that can facilitate the sharing of Indigenous knowledge are multimedia, websites, and mobile apps (McGinnis et al., 2020). By utilizing these digital tools, Indigenous communities could share their knowledge without the need for in-person interactions (Butler & Hinch, 2007). Additionally, they could empower themselves by directly impacting the tourists' satisfaction and the branding of their destination (Mkono, 2016).

On top of the opportunities for enhancing cultural sensitivity mentioned above, P1 drew attention to the potential of the Sámi Made trademark, a certificate that exists to ensure that the product was made by someone inside the Sámi community (Saami Council, 2022). P1 sees this label as a positive thing to influence cultural sensitivity in tourism: "And then there is the new Sámi certificate project. The Sámi Made project is definitely something that will help with

increasing cultural sensitivity in the future". The Sámi Made is a new label that was created, additionally to the Sámi Duodji, so as to be used for all types of products made by Sámi people, not only the traditional handicrafts (Saami Council, 2022). This new label is seen as an opportunity not only by the study participant, but also by the Sámi Council's project manager, Reetta Tornensis, who thinks that "the introduction of official marks improves the opportunities for the Sámi people to exploit their own culture commercially, but on their own terms." (Yle News, 2023). Not surprisingly, labels like the Sámi Duodji and Sámi Made are seen as opportunities for improving cultural sensitivity since Viken et al. (2021, p. 7) connected the creation of labels to increased recognition for the Indigenous communities.

8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As shown by previous research on Indigenous tourism, there are positive and negative impacts that tourism created for Indigenous communities (see Altman, 1988; Hurst et al., 2020; Leu et al., 2018; Olsen et al., 2019; Viken, 2006; Whitford and Ruhanen, 2009; Zoomers, 2010), and more often than not, the negatives outnumbered the positives (see Crick, 1989; Hall et al., 2008; Lui & Lu, 2014; McIntosh, 2004; Whitford & Ruhanen, 2016). The main negative effects of tourism on indigenous communities, identified by previous research, are commodification of culture, stereotyping, exoticization, cultural appropriation, assimilation, and invented traditions (Crick, 1989; Smith, 2003; Viken et al, 2021; Zoomers, 2010). The Sámi also experienced these negative effects (de Bernardi, 2022; Keskitalo et al., 2021; Kugapi et al., 2020; Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016; Viken, 2022; Viken & Müller, 2006), which is why the Sámi Parliament created the "Principles for Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism". The guidelines address these negative impacts and emphasise the need to "terminate tourism exploiting the Sámi culture and eliminate incorrect information about the Sámi distributed through tourism" (Sámi parliament, 2018, p. 5). Those negative effects have also been discussed by researchers studying cultural sensitivity in tourism, and Viken et al. (2021) identified stereotyping, assimilation, and appropriation as culturally insensitive behaviours. Furthermore, Viken et al. (2021) identified as key relations for culturally sensitive behaviour the notions of recognition, respect, and reciprocity, which are emphasised and encouraged in the Sámi tourism guidelines.

For this reason, I chose to explore the impact of the Sámi tourism guidelines through the context of cultural sensitivity. This master's thesis aimed to increase the understanding of Indigenous tourism guidelines as a phenomenon and of their role in enhancing culturally sensitive tourism. This was facilitated through the discussion of the findings of two sets of empirical data: three interviews with tourism actors and information from eight tourism actors' websites. Thematic analysis was used for interview transcripts and content analysis for online data. The tourism actors considered in this study were destination management organisations, municipalities, safari companies, reindeer farms, and accommodation providers, and the websites chosen were the ones acknowledging Sámi people, cultures, and the Sámi tourism guidelines. Therefore, even though there are numerous tourism actors across Lapland that discuss their actions for cultural sustainability and cultural sensitivity on their websites, the results of this thesis are

focused on the actions of those tourism actors that actively recognise the Sámi. My initial intention was to explore the role of the Sámi tourism guidelines across the broader Finnish Lapland region; however, the findings of this thesis predominantly centre on Sámi Homeland. The reason for this is that two-thirds of the interviewees and the majority of the selected websites (six out of eight) are conducting their business in Finnish Sápmi. Consequently, the results of this study cannot be generalised for Finnish Lapland as a whole.

The main objectives of this research explored tourism actors' understanding of cultural sensitivity, implementation and utilization of Sámi tourism guidelines by tourism actors, the actions tourism actors are doing to improve cultural sensitivity and discussed challenges and opportunities for that improvement. The main research question, **"What role do the ethical guidelines for Sámi tourism have in enhancing cultural sensitivity?"**, is gradually answered through the sub-questions.

While there are various understandings and conceptualizations for cultural sensitivity (see Donohoe, 2010; Olsen et al., 2019; Viken et al., 2021), the study participants were not asked directly to define the concept or to offer any clarifications of their understanding of it, but nonetheless, through the interviews a first theme surfaced, which was tourism actors' understanding of cultural sensitivity in tourism. They associated the concept with respect, ethical behaviour, recognition of cultural differences, and offering correct information about Sámi cultures, and they also emphasized the importance of respectful behaviour and ethical conduct in enhancing cultural sensitivity. Additionally, culturally insensitive behaviours such as appropriation, objectification, and stereotyping were identified as issues that tourism actors aim to address and correct. It is important that tourism actors connect cultural sensitivity to respect, recognition, and various notions of reciprocity since these three themes are the ones used by Viken et al. (2021) to conceptualize cultural sensitivity and their conceptualisation was the guiding theoretical approach for this thesis.

The second theme that was discussed in the findings came from both sets of data and addressed directly one of the sub-questions **"What actions are tourism actors taking in order to enhance cultural sensitivity?"**. The findings identified that through various actions tourism actors demonstrate respect, recognition, and reciprocity for Sámi people and cultures, aligning with Viken et al.'s (2021) ethnorelative notions of cultural sensitivity. Firstly, in relation to respect, tourism actors prioritize authentic Sámi experiences, ensuring that Sámi-owned

businesses are responsible for Sámi tourism products. They encourage tourists to visit Sámi cultural sites like the SIIDA museum and the Sámi Parliament, fostering understanding and appreciation of Sámi cultures. Some actors integrate respect for Sámi culture into sustainability programs, emphasizing principles such as respecting cultural heritage. Additionally, they aim to educate both tourists and staff about the importance of cultural sensitivity, with TA4 noting that the tourism staff needs to act responsibly and understand that it is not only the responsibility of tourists to behave in an appropriate way towards Sámi people. Tourism actors also address issues like inappropriate photography of Sámi people and urge tourists to ask for permission beforehand. Moreover, some tourism actors organize trips for travel agents to learn about Sámi culture firsthand, emphasizing the importance of cultural immersion and storytelling in fostering respect. Finally, tourism actors' websites highlight actions promoting respect for Sámi people and cultures, such as offering authentic experiences, respecting traditions, and private occasions, and supporting cultural revitalization and cross-cultural dialogue. While some believe tourists are becoming more respectful, others acknowledge ongoing challenges but highlight the role of the Sámi tourism guidelines in preventing disrespectful behaviours. Overall, tourism actors demonstrate respect for Sámi people and cultures through inclusive practices, educational initiatives, and ethical guidelines, aiming to enhance cultural sensitivity and promote sustainable tourism development.

In relation to recognition, tourism actors show understanding and appreciating for uniqueness of Sámi cultures, and they recognize the coexistence of Sámi and Lappish cultures, acknowledging both their differences and similarities. They recognize the diversity within Sámi culture and emphasize that authenticity can take many forms. Additionally, the tourism actors acknowledge past injustices, such as cultural appropriation and assimilation, demonstrating an understanding of the historical and political context surrounding Sámi communities. They strive to be culturally sensitive and ethical in their practices, learning from past mistakes. Moreover, the actors portray Sámi culture as vibrant, dynamic, and modern, challenging stereotypes of primitiveness or exoticism, and highlight that Sámi culture is an important part of contemporary life, evolving with time. They emphasize that Sámi culture is not confined to traditional symbols or attire but is present in everyday life and encourage tourists to recognize that Sámi individuals may not always fit stereotypical images and may be part of modern society in various ways. Overall, tourism actors demonstrate recognition of Sámi people and cultures through inclusive representations, acknowledgment of diversity, understanding of historical context, and

promotion of modern cultural expressions. These actions contribute to fostering cultural sensitivity and promoting respectful engagement with Sámi communities in tourism contexts.

The findings show that when it comes to reciprocity, tourism actors showcase two types of it, host-guest, and host-host. Related to reciprocity between hosts and guests, the tourism actors encourage tourists to exhibit reciprocity towards the Sámi people by respecting local customs, engaging in cultural learning experiences, and contributing positively to the well-being of local communities. They emphasize the importance of behaving as respectful guests, fostering mutual understanding, and allowing the Sámi to maintain their culture without negative impacts from tourism. Additionally, tourism actors promote storytelling and cultural learning experiences as ways for fostering reciprocity between hosts and guests. By sharing stories and insights into Sámi culture, tourists can engage in meaningful interactions, gain a deeper understanding of local customs, and contribute to the preservation of Indigenous knowledge. Related to reciprocity amongst hosts, tourism actors prioritize collaboration and mutual assistance between Sámi and non-Sámi stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of shared responsibility and community involvement in tourism development. They actively seek partnerships with local communities, support cultural events, and participate in local activities. Furthermore, the Sámi tradition of *verdde,* rooted in mutual support and friendship (Svensson &Viken, 2017), serves as a guiding principle for collaboration between Sámi and non-Sámi tourism actors. By cultivating relationships based on trust, support, and shared responsibility, tourism actors work together to promote sustainable tourism practices and enhance cultural sensitivity. Overall, tourism actors demonstrate reciprocity through their commitment to respectful engagement, cultural exchange, collaboration, and mutual support with both tourists and the Sámi community. These actions contribute to fostering positive relationships, mutual understanding, and sustainable tourism development in the region.

The ongoing effort to enhance cultural sensitivity was emphasized, with actors viewing it as a continuous process rather than a fixed achievement, which is the same opinion that Viken et al. (2021) share in their study. Ethical guidelines and codes of conduct are seen as helpful tools in guiding behaviour and fostering positive change in the tourism industry. So next, the findings of the study addressed the second research sub-question **"How are the Sámi tourism guidelines recognized and used by tourism actors in Finnish Lapland?"**. Interviews revealed that actors recognise the guidelines, help with their dissemination, and use them for self-education and improving communication to avoid stereotypes. They also serve as tools for

promoting respect for Sámi people and cultures, improving marketing and communication of tourism actors, and promoting collaboration among stakeholders. Additionally, online data analysis showed mixed recognition of the guidelines among tourism actors from Lapland. Some explicitly mention their use of the guidelines, while others imply adherence through their website content. Key themes identified from the websites include recognition of Sámi cultural heritage, positive impact on local communities, collaboration with Sámi entrepreneurs, and responsible marketing and communication. Overall, a portion of Lapland's tourism sector demonstrates awareness and implementation of the guidelines, aligning their actions with the principles outlined to promote cultural sensitivity, respect, and reciprocity in Sámi tourism.

Therefore, to answer the main research question, the findings showed that the ethical guidelines for Sámi tourism play a crucial role in promoting cultural sensitivity by guiding behaviour, fostering respect and recognition, and encouraging mutual understanding and collaboration among stakeholders. While challenges such as voluntary nature of guidelines and autonomy of tourism actors exist, integrating the guidelines into certification systems could provide a solution to enhance enforcement and ensure their effective implementation.

Through the analysis of interviews, I was able to identify a fourth theme, "Challenges and opportunities for enhancing cultural sensitivity". The study participants discussed issues such as inadequate training for foreign seasonal workers, limited influence over tourism companies' behaviour, and the imbalance between demand and supply for authentic Indigenous experiences. Additionally, they also brough up the negative effects of Christmas tourism on Sámi culture and the difficulty of educating independent travellers effectively. On the other hand, the interviewees identified main opportunities for enhancing cultural sensitivity through education and awareness initiatives. They emphasized the importance of educating tourism stakeholders, particularly seasonal workers, about historical, cultural, safety, and sustainability issues. Suggestions include mandatory training programs and visits to cultural centres for seasonal workers. Educating tourists is also considered important, and they emphasised knowing how to share the message of the guidelines in a positive way, focusing on ways tourist can support Sámi cultures. Additionally, the tourism actors identified social media as a valuable tool for both education and accountability in promoting respectful behaviour. Also, digitalization was highlighted as a means to make Indigenous cultures more accessible worldwide, with potential through multimedia, websites, and mobile apps. Moreover, the Sámi Made label is seen as a positive initiative to promote cultural sensitivity by ensuring products

are made by Sámi people. Overall, education, social media, digital tools, and certification systems are seen as opportunities to enhance culturally sensitive tourism in the future.

Although several tourism actors in Lapland are aware of and use the Sámi tourism guidelines, interviewees expressed a desire to see more visual materials created based on the guidelines, something they could easily share with tourists. However, it is worth noting that there already exists visual material in the form of the Visitors' Guide to Responsible Tourism in Sámi Homeland (Sámediggi, 2022a), created as a visual alternative to the guidelines to efficiently share their message to tourists. Despite this resource being available, tourism actors either are unaware of their existence, or do not acknowledge it. To address this, it's essential for the Sámi Parliament to ensure the visibility of the visitor's guide across the entire tourism industry, thus enhancing its accessibility and utilization among tourism stakeholders.

While policies and government regulations for sustainable tourism (see Viken, 2022; Weaver, 2010; Whitford & Ruhanen, 2010), and tourism codes of conduct (see Cole, 2007 ; Fennell & Malloy 2007; Mason & Mowforth, 1996) have been extensively researched and their impact and effectiveness studied, there is a gap in literature on the phenomenon of Indigenous tourism guidelines and their impact. One thing that previous research tells us is that whatever type of rules and regulations are implemented, there is always a level of ineffectiveness (Altman, 1988; Cole, 2007; Berke & Conroy, 2000; Bramwell, 2004; Whitford et al., 2001), especially if these regulations are voluntary in nature. Existing literature on Indigenous tourism guidelines primarily focuses on Arctic nations (see Holmes et al., 2016; Hurst et al., 2020; Kugapi et al. 2020; Olsen et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2020a), emphasizing their role in promoting cultural sensitivity and recognizing Indigenous cultures. However, research on the effectiveness of these guidelines remains insufficient.

This master's thesis contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon of Indigenous tourism guidelines and increases the awareness of the guidelines effectiveness in fostering cultural sensitivity withing tourism. The outcomes of this exploratory research build upon existing literature on Indigenous tourism guidelines, and cultural sensitivity in tourism, addressing a gap in research by providing empirical examples of the role and impact of Sámi tourism guidelines. As indigenous tourism gains popularity, it is important to understand the influence of Indigenous tourism guidelines on the tourism industry, moving away from historical patterns of stereotyping, appropriation, and assimilation and going towards a more culturally sensitive

tourism. Given the explorative nature of this study and the limited existing literature, the issues of Indigenous tourism guidelines and culturally sensitive tourism need to be studied further.

Like any other research, also mine had limitations and challenges, which impacted the scope and depth of my study. Despite reaching out to approximately 20 destination management organizations and municipalities, I was only able to conduct three interviews. This limited participation could be due to various factors. Firstly, the political climate in Finland, particularly discussions between the Finnish government and the Sámi Parliament, may have influenced the reluctance of tourism actors to participate in the study. It is possible that during less politically charged times, non-Sámi tourism actors might have been more willing to contribute to research on the topic of Sámi tourism guidelines. Secondly, when contacting tourism actors, I was told by several of them that the issue of Sámi tourism guidelines and their role in enhancing cultural sensitivity in tourism did not concern them. Additionally, during online data collection, it became clear that in most cases, recognition of Sámi tourism guidelines and of Sámi people and cultures was showcased on the websites if the tourism actors were conducting their business in Sámi Homeland. This further highlights the limited acknowledgment of the Sámi tourism guidelines within the broader tourism landscape of Lapland. The lack of participants, as well as limited sample of websites to collect data from, restricted the depth of my research findings. Consequently, even though I aimed for my study to offer a better perspective on the phenomenon of Indigenous tourism guidelines in Lapland, it ended up focused on Sámi territories within the country. As a result, I propose several possibilities for future research to enhance understanding of the phenomenon and address the limitations encountered.

Future studies should aim to involve a larger and more diverse sample of interviewees, and research efforts could extend beyond the Sámi territories, to examine the recognition and utilization of Indigenous tourism guidelines by tourism actors across Finland. This broader perspective would offer a more holistic understanding of the guidelines' applicability and effectiveness nationwide. Additionally, applying survey methodologies could facilitate broader participation among tourism actors, potentially capturing a more comprehensive range of perspectives. Another possibility for future research would be to incorporate the voices of Sámi entrepreneurs, as stakeholders directly involved in cultural tourism initiatives. Their insights could shed light on the efficiency of Sámi tourism guidelines in fostering positive impacts within their community. Moreover, engaging with representatives from the Sámi Parliament who contributed to the development of the guidelines could provide valuable insights into

whether the desired objectives have been achieved and how implementation challenges can be addressed. Additionally, exploring Indigenous tourism guidelines from various Arctic regions and comparing their effectiveness could provide valuable insights. While the studies in the ARCTISEN project have already looked at guidelines through the context of improving cultural sensitivity (see Hurst et al., 2020; Kugapi et al. 2020; Olsen et al., 2019; Ren et al., 2020a), future studies could examine these guidelines through the context of postcolonial narratives. Lastly, future research could focus on how implementation of Indigenous tourism guidelines affects the marketing and communication strategies related to Indigenous cultures. By exploring these paths, future research efforts can enhance the understanding of Indigenous tourism guidelines in Finland, and of them generally as a phenomenon, it could tackle the encountered limitations, and explore new dimensions of research on the topic. It is worth noting here that since most of the studies on Indigenous tourism guidelines are from Arctic countries, and Indigenous tourism is present all around the world, there is a need for future research on the phenomenon of Indigenous tourism guidelines to be conducted at a more global scale.

Fostering mutual respect and understanding across cultures is paramount for creating positive travel experiences. By enhancing cultural sensitivity tourism can contribute to the preservation of cultural diversity and well-being of host communities, especially in the case of Indigenous peoples and cultures. Through initiatives such as prioritizing authentic Sámi experiences, honouring cultural traditions, collaborating closely with Sámi communities, and promoting sustainable practices, part of the tourism actors from Finnish Lapland contribute to a tourism environment that respects and celebrates the cultural heritage and identity of the Sámi people. Overall, their actions reflect a conscientious approach to tourism that values cultural sensitivity and responsible engagement with Indigenous communities.

As both researchers and study participants observed, the work of cultural sensitivity is ongoing and cannot be considered complete. Therefore, it is essential to continually encourage culturally sensitive behaviours, promote them through actions, and utilize various tools. While the saying "Practice makes perfect" exists, it is important to acknowledge that perfection is unattainable as we are all humans. Instead, in the field of enhancing cultural sensitivity in tourism, our focus should be on continuously trying to do better, and just like TA8 encouraged the tourists: "Be the kind of guest anyone would love to invite for another visit!".

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APPENDIX 1: Letter of consent

Dear Participant,

My name is Doriana Plesa. I am Master student at University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland under the supervision of Professor Outi Rantala (outi.rantala@ulapland.fi) and Postdoctoral researcher Emily Höckert (emily.hockert@ulapland.fi). You are invited to participate in my master thesis study titled "Exploring the role of Principles for responsible and ethically sustainable Sámi tourism in enhancing cultural sensitivity". The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of the guidelines for Sámi tourism on the tourism industry, and their role in improving cultural sensitivity The result of the study will be published as part of my master thesis, which is conducted as part of the master's degree program in Northern Tourism (NoTo).

By signing this letter, you give consent to use the interview material confidentially and exclusively for research purposes. The research follows the principles for responsible conduct of research dictated by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research. The data will be handled anonymously. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw your permission even after signing this document, by informing the below mentioned contact person.

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor if you would need further information regarding the study and the use of the research data.

Sincerely,
Doriana Plesa
Northern Tourism Master student
Phone:
Email:

_____

I give consent to use the interview as data for the purpose mentioned above.

_____   _____   _____
         Signature   Date   Name

APPENDIX 2: Interview guideline

Introduction:

- explain the thesis topic and the themes that will be discussed during the interview

- explain the rights of the participant

- asking if it is okay to record the interview

- get the signature on consent form

Warm-up:

Could you tell about your organisation's work and its role in the tourism industry?

Theme 1: Implementation of ethical guidelines

Q1: There are different guidelines for tourism development, what kind of role do these guidelines have in your organisation's work?

- If they do not yet use the guidelines for Sámi tourism: Briefly explain what they are and connect to the second theme, trying to see if any actions done by the visit organisation in the past 4 years relate to any of the 7 principles.
  Q2: How do you think the dissemination process could be improved?

- If they use the guidelines for Sámi tourism:
  Q2: How did you learn about the guidelines, and how has your organisation implemented them?

Theme 2: Actions for culturally sensitive tourism

What actions have been taken to improve cultural sensitivity in tourism?

Theme 3: Challenges

Q1: In your opinion, what have been so far the challenges in building a more responsible and ethical tourism?

Q2: What kind of challenges, if any, you had with the implementation of the guidelines?

Theme 4: Disseminating and implementing the ethical guidelines in the future

- If they did not implement the guidelines so far:

Q1: What actions do you think could be taken by your organisation in order to implement the guidelines?

Q2: How do you see your role in disseminating the ethical guidelines?

Q3: What kind of role do you see your organisation playing in improving cultural sensitivity in tourism in the future?

- If they implemented the guidelines already:

Q1: How do you see your role in disseminating the ethical guidelines?

Q2: What kind of role do you see your organisation playing in improving cultural sensitivity in tourism in the future?

Closing:

Thank you for the interview!