Looking at Arctic tourism through the lens of cultural sensitivity

ARCTISEN – a transnational baseline report

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Lapland University Consortium
LUC TOURISM
Rovaniemi 2019

ARCTISEN

Promoting culturally sensitive tourism across the Arctic

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

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Partners: University of Lapland (Lead Partner), Finland
UiT The Arctic University of Norway
Northern Norway Tourist Board
Umeå University, Sweden
Ájtte - Mountain and Sámi museum, Sweden
Aalborg University, Denmark
University of Waterloo, Canada
WINTA - World Indigenous Tourism Alliance

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Contents

The ARCTISEN project

The ARCTISEN project

The Culturally Sensitive Tourism in the Arctic — ARCTISEN — project involves transnational cooperation between project partners from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Greenland, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden. The aim of the project is to introduce sensitivity as a core concept for an improved entrepreneurial business environment. Embracing the notion of sensitivity highlights the negative experiences of cultural exploitation and ensures that Indigenous peoples and other local communities control and determine how their cultures (i.e., what practices, ceremonies, and customs) are used in tourism.

The project is a contribution to inclusive and responsible tourism development with the aim of encouraging tourism entrepreneurship among previously underrepresented or misrepresented groups. The project will raise awareness related to, for instance, the sensitive use of cultural symbols and traditional livelihoods in tourism development together with culturally sensitive product development. By doing this, the project will create better opportunities for Indigenous and other local tourism entrepreneurs in the Arctic regions to utilize both their cultural heritage and contemporary and everyday lives in creating successful tourism products and services. The main result of the project will be achieved by improving and increasing transnational contacts, networks, and cooperation among different businesses and organizations.*

This report includes systematized information and built knowledge of the current practices of utilizing Indigenous and other local cultures in tourism in the project area. The project partners have interviewed start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), local destination management organizations (DMO), and other tourism actors about their business environments, product development, and capacity-building needs. In total, the partners conducted 44 interviews in Finland, 13 in Greenland, 23 in Norway, and 18 in Sweden.** The focus of the interviews lied in questions of agency and self-determination, but also on issues related to the use of cultural resources in tourism. The findings are elaborated on in the respective, more detailed national reports published for this project.***

This report offers cross-national comparisons to understand the multiple ways of drawing on place-based cultural resources in Arctic tourism, as well as a systematic collection of examples that represent suc-

* ARCTISEN Application, page 22.

** A commitment to developing relationships and following research ethics protocols in the Canadian context precluded the researchers from conducting interviews or other field research at the time of this report.

*** The national reports will be published in 2020 and available on the project's website: http://sensitivetourism.interreg-npa.eu/

cessful and challenging tourism ventures. First, we give a short introduction to the general issues in the ARCTISEN area and then present a review of how the concept of culturally sensitive tourism has been used in the scholarly literature in general and in the countries in the ARCTISEN project area in particular. Then, the report offers a general overview of legal, territorial, and cultural minority–majority challenges in tourism development in the project area.**** Thereafter, we move to discuss existing guidelines and certificates for culturally sensitive tourism and explore then travelers' interests toward, and awareness of, culturally sensitive tourism products. Finally, the report offers an overview of developmental needs in the project area and weaves together some joint conclusions.

**** A more comprehensive overview is found in the different national reports.

Figure 1. Characteristics of culturally sensitive tourism.

The project area

The project area

Making a joint report for the ARCTISEN project area faces many challenges. First, the different parts of the Arctic experienced distinct colonial processes that put dissimilar marks on different areas and populations. There are also large cultural variations among the people living in the Arctic, which is reflected in the limited area of the Arctic covered by the ARCTISEN project. For example, in 2016, there were 1.67 million Indigenous people in Canada and more than 50 different Indigenous nations, representing 4.9% of the total population.[1] The Sámi living in Finland, Norway, and Sweden are, quite insecurely, estimated to make up a population of about 50,000 to 120,000 people. In Greenland, with its approximately 56,000 inhabitants, the Inuits are a majority, and the Greenlandic Self-Government explicitly aims to establish the country as an independent nation state in the future.

Furthermore, the different areas in the Arctic are characterized by the nation states they belong to. In the project area, Canada, Finland, Greenland/Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have voted in favor of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, only Norway and Greenland (through Denmark) have ratified the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169, while the other countries rely on other types of jurisdictions for the protection of their Indigenous populations. In Sweden and Finland, it is argued that the convention is not yet ratified because of questions related to which land areas the convention refers to and which rights it relates to and for whom. Canada differs from the Nordic countries in the sense that the Nordic countries do not register ethnicity in their national censuses, and in this way, the question as to who is Indigenous is rendered more negotiable. In addition, the rules for entering the electoral roll for the different Sámi parliaments in the three Nordic countries have fundamental differences. There is also a European–American divide based on the European Council's convention on national minorities that are granted certain cultural rights — minorities that also inhabit the Norwegian part of the ARCTISEN project area.

In sum, instead of focusing on the simple division between Indigenous and non-indigenous people, it is important to be sensitive toward different nuances in cultures, languages, rights, political organizations, influences, economic conditions, and ways of living.

Despite the aforementioned differences, there are also similarities. Many regions in the project area have been historically represented as problematic and less-developed outskirts that cause problems for the more prosperous areas. Unfortunate-

ly, the populations in these less-developed areas have often been perceived as exotic and in need of steering from the wealthy areas of the nations. This has created a situation where the Arctic region has been portrayed from an outsider's perspective. This image seldom coincides with people's contemporary lives. Furthermore, the Arctic has always been highlighted as a barren wilderness, often in stark contrast to the local populations' own understanding of the cultured landscape they live in. With the exception of contemporary Greenland, the Arctic regions in the different countries are also national peripheries. Thereby, all people living in these areas are affected by the different national politics.

Even if they are perceived as peripheries by the southern core areas, growing global interests in the Arctic have brought new common challenges and opportunities to the region. In tourism, this has been strongly felt in rising tourism numbers, which has led to the overcrowding of visitors in fragile environments and in places that lack sufficient infrastructure, as well as the means to regulate the tourism business. The growth in tourism, however, has also brought new opportunities for entrepreneurs and attracts businesses from outside these local communities.

Nevertheless, in many, or maybe most, places in the Arctic, the challenge for local tourism entrepreneurs is to attract sufficient amounts of tourists to make their businesses economically viable. Overall, tourism growth in the Arctic has advantageous and negative effects on the local communities. Even though the Arctic region and those areas under consideration in this report display a high variety of cultures, national political policies, and impacts from tourism, they have in common that tourism is having an increasing effect on their societies and cultures. Arctic communities are usually small, and their ways of living and cultures are highly connected to nature.

Therefore, we suggest that responsible – and successful – tourism development requires heightened sensitivity. By cultural sensitivity, we refer to a sensitive approach toward the different ways in which cultures become used and transformed in tourism settings. In addition to having a respectful attitude, cultural sensitivity requires recognition of historical, political, and socio-cultural contexts where tourism is being developed.[2]

Therefore, we suggest that responsible—and successful—tourism development requires heightened sensitivity. By cultural sensitivity, we refer to a sensitive approach toward the different ways in which cultures become used and transformed in tourism settings.

The concept of culturally sensitive tourism in the academic literature

The concept of culturally sensitive tourism in the academic literature

General literature review of culturally sensitive tourism

In the academic literature, sensitivity and tourism are often associated with environmental sensitivity,[3] tourists' sensitivity to political changes and turmoil,[4] and changes in the prices of tourism destinations[5] and as being based on distance.[6] The concept has also been discussed in relation to cultural sensitivity toward tourists,[7] in tourism development work,[8] in human resources management,[9] and in destination management.[10] In relation to Indigenous populations, it has been pointed out that cultural awareness, sensitivity, and mutual relationships grounded on respect and feasibility are required in tourism development.[11]

There are also concepts related to sensitivity in tourism that might be worth mentioning. *Fragility* has been used to describe some communities' encounters with tourism[12] and the necessity of how tourism must always be seen in the long-term context of the communities with which it interacts. Their interests and traditions should always take precedence over any economic gains that can be derived from tourism development. *Care* has been used to describe similar ideas.[13] A call for emphasizing culture's role in *sustainable development*[14] builds upon many of the same ideas as in aforementioned publications.

In conclusion, Donohoe's[15] definition of ecotourism captures a more general idea of cultural sensitivity in tourism and beyond. Although Donohoe's conceptualization of cultural sensitivity somewhat overlooks the demand side of tourism and tourists' sensitivity toward distances, prices or sense of security, it underlines the importance of sensitive attitudes among a wide range of tourism actors.

Cultural sensitivity has, by Delphi consensus, where 100 ecotourism experts from 39 countries were consulted, been defined in the context of ecotourism by Donohoe[15] in the following way:

The extent to which those who implement, support, and participate in ecotourism: 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.

National reviews of culturally sensitive tourism

In all the countries in the ARCTISEN project area, the concept of cultural sensitivity has been employed in disciplines such as social work and education and in relation to environmental sustainability. In the literature, cultural sensitivity has mainly been a concept denoting the need for ethics, intercultural awareness and respect, and the idea of cultural relativism.

In Canada, the literature about cultural sensitivity is by far the most extensive. Terms such as cultural sensitivity/awareness/competence and culturally sensitive/appropriate are often used interchangeably to denote how non-Indigenous people and organizations should interact. Despite the frequency of their use, these terms are rarely defined, and the literature relies on descriptions of various features of a positive relationship, including, but not limited to, the concepts of trust, respect, tradition, culture, values, understanding, and ethics.[16]

Compared with the Canadian literature on culturally sensitive tourism, that of Greenland and the Nordic countries is less extensive. In the Nordic countries,[17] sensitivity has primarily been linked to environmental sustainability, carrying capacity, cultural representations, or, rather, exotification and cultural identity. In tourism, the concept has not been used, but similar, related concepts have been, such as respect, which is connected to the ways different cultures are represented in tourism and appears as a central theme in many of the reviewed studies.

An interesting observation that adds to the heterogeneity of the project area is that in the literature in Norway and Sweden, even if the representation of the Sámi in the respective countries might be deemed clandestine, the situation in Finland is quite frequently referred to as worse. This is an opinion that is also reflected by interviewees in this project, who refer to the — real or imaginary — situation in Finland when describing an unwanted development. Furthermore, research on the Norwegian national minority, the Kvens, and tourism seems to be non-existent.*

In Greenland, the term "cultural sensitivity" is used neither explicitly in any of the consulted literature on cultural and literature studies nor within political science and sociology.[18] Instead, other concepts are used to address cultural identity in Greenland, such as ethnic/Indigenous/Inuit and Greenlandic. Something that sets Greenland apart from the Indigenous populations in the Nordic countries is the idea of balancing an Indigenous identity and a national identity, often referred to as "ethnos"-based and "demos"-based identities.[19] This also entails, in the contemporary everyday life in Greenland, balancing tradition and modernity and dealing with hybridity.

The sparse and, to a certain extent, outdated literature on culture and tourism in Greenland raises two questions that are still important. First, there is the issue of how the expected growing role and volume of tourism will have an impact on culture and identity. This is a question that relates to control, sustainability, ethics, and authenticity: all of them appearing in the other national reviews. Second, there is the question of how to develop a concept of sensitivity that consists of both nature and culture. According to Hynne,[20] nature and culture are, in many ways, inseparable in Greenland, and they form the "core story" of the national brand, which also bears resonance in parts of the general debate on tourism as a part of sustainable development.

* One reason for sensitivity not being used in Norway might be the connotations that the word carries in Norwegian. It was pointed out by an interviewee that sensitive/sensitivity is not a good word. It reminded people of sensitive, itchy skin, and the Sámi, like many minorities around the world, are often accused of being touchy (Norw. *hårsår*) and easily upset. The interviewee preferred justifiable (Norw. *forsvarlig*), something that is responsible, with consideration and knowledge.

Challenges in tourism development

Challenges in tourism development

Based on the interviews in the ARCTISEN countries, there seem to be three main legal, territorial, and cultural minority–majority challenges in tourism development. The first two are a combination of legal and territorial challenges that, in varying degrees, cause problems in different local communities and are linked to the challenges caused by the Nordic right of public access, which gives the right to roam, camp, and engage in certain activities, like the picking of berries and mushrooms, on all uncultivated land. The third, the cultural minority–majority challenge, is rather complex because of the national and local heterogeneity in the project area, but there are similar cultural challenges in tourism development in the ARCTISEN area. There are legal and joint issues that are challenging tourism development. These need to be taken into account when planning culturally sensitive tourism.

The Nordic right of public access

The Nordic right of public access causes both legal and territorial challenges in the ARCTISEN area. Individual tourists and external companies utilize this right that is primarily intended for locals. In the Nordic countries, there seems to be some confusion among the interviewees regarding the possibilities of regulating this right. Tourism might come into conflict with traditional land use as the increase in tourism adds to the general pressure on land in the forms of new infrastructure, extractive industries, and a general rise in new and old leisure activities. In particular, this causes problems for the reindeer herders and wildlife in general. In Norway, fishing tourism is also seen by many as unsustainable because of the lack of control of tourists' catches. In addition, foreign companies do not necessarily provide any local benefits and often lack sufficient cultural knowledge. In some areas, these companies also put pressure on local public services because of the risk being connected to "new" activities such as *randonnée* skiing in Norway or because of the amount of visitors like those coming to see the northern lights.

Although investors cannot own land in Greenland, they can gain exclusive rights to develop an area for commercial purposes through concessions. This is becoming an increasingly popular governmental tourism development tool that enables keeping the land open to the public.

Cultural challenges

Cultural minority–majority issues are rather complex in the heterogenous project area. In Greenland, there is no Indigenous minority, but colonial structures still exist, which is true also within tourism. Discussions have revolved around foreign, usually Danish,

guides coming to Greenland to work in the summer, often without sufficient cultural and local knowledge. The lack of local capacity, also in countries other than Greenland, is frequently given as an explanation for this practice. However, many feel concerned or offended by the ensuing lack of a local voice in tourism guiding.

Historical colonial structures are also visible in the discussions on whom can represent and sell products based on the Sámi cultures in the Nordic countries. Who can gain official recognition as Sámi, its implications, and the need for it vary in the three countries, as it does in different local communities. None of the Nordic countries have an official registration of the ethnicity of their populations.* The only register is those who have voluntarily enlisted in the electoral roll for the different Sámi parliaments. All countries have an objective criterion based on language. In Finland and Sweden, one of the parents or grandparents should have learned Sámi as their first language, while in Norway, this criterion extends to great-grandparents. Because a language shift and, thereby, a change in the national identity in terms of the national romantic ideology was one of the main targets for the nation states, how and when such a shift occurred, and where and by whom have become important for official recognition. Additionally, there are also huge differences in the importance of official recognition compared with what is regarded important in a local context.

Another colonial legacy is the emphasis on the reindeer herding culture as "the real Sámi," as found in the colonial ideology and perpetuated in parts of contemporary tourism. Because reindeer have become an important symbol in tourism, it is important to recognize the different national legislations that regulate reindeer herding in each country. Broadly speaking, in Finland, both Sámi and Finns can have reindeers, while in Sweden and Norway, reindeer herding is an occupation connected to certain Sámi families. Nevertheless, in all the countries, there are discussions on who can rightfully provide Sámi products.

Legal challenges

Canada differs from the other countries in the project area. Because of Canada's distinct colonial history and its more than 50 distinct Indigenous nations, relationships between Indigenous peoples and the state are legally negotiated in the form of treaties and land claim agreements, which include a variety of provisions that are unique to the communities involved. These treaties also include provisions that may have tourism implications, ranging from tourism-specific clauses to sections on the representation of peoples/culture, exclusive land governance, economic inclusivity, and social development.

Even though all the Nordic countries have implemented protection for Indigenous groups in their constitutions, Norway is the only one that has ratified the ILO Convention 169. In addition, in Norway, the Finnmark Act from 2005 handed the ownership of land in Finnmark back to the population in that county.** Approximately 45,000 km^2, or 96% of the area, is owned by an independent legal entity, *Finnmarkseiendommen*, on behalf of the population, regardless of ethnic identity and, as a basis for Sámi cultures.

From the outside, the Nordic countries are often seen as a single destination. Therefore, some Swedish interviewees pointed out that the different tax systems were a challenge and not to their advantage.

* See the respective national reports.

** At the moment, Finnmark is in the process of merging with the neighboring county of Troms as part of a national regional reform. If, and how, this will have an impact on *Finnmarkseiendommen* is not a prominent issue in the general debate.

Joint issues in tourism development

In the Nordic context, the Sámi Parliament of Finland raises some topics in their guidelines*** that are joint issues but that have different meanings in the three countries. For example, the Parliament's critique of sled dog businesses seems to divide opinions, particularly in Finland, but it is also an issue in Norway and Sweden. Despite having obvious potential for conflict with reindeer herding and being a rather new activity in all these countries, this seems primarily to be a question of the difference between locally founded businesses and companies coming from outside. Many of the incoming companies seem to lack the knowledge, skills, and perhaps also the will to communicate with other stakeholders; that is, they lack the competence and attitude necessary to reduce potential conflicts between reindeer herding and sled dog businesses.

The question of "locals versus outsiders" in tourism businesses is also an issue in the Greenlandic and Finnish contexts. However, in these cases, it is related to guides from other countries, their lack of cultural and local knowledge, and the perceived displacement of locals from jobs.

Nevertheless, the Nordic countries seem to share a joint challenge, one partly caused by the right of public access. This means that foreign companies and nationals can utilize uncultivated land for their own purposes in these Nordic countries. The right of public access causes not only a problem with companies from outside local communities, but also between minorities and majorities. The interviewees mentioned, for instance, the problems caused by individual tourists on reindeer herding land in Sweden and Norwegians' "wild snowmobiling" in Finland that disturbs local people, animals, and plants.

Cultural knowledge and the need to secure communication of a more contemporary image that communities can identify with are also joint issues. However, in the Nordic countries, this issue is linked to an ethnic component that does not seem to be particularly prominent in Greenland.

The question of who can rightfully use Sámi cultures and when it is regarded as an appropriation of an Indigenous culture is, once more, a question that is firmly embedded in the different national politics and legislation in Finland, Norway, and Sweden. In these countries, there seems to be an issue regarding the need for the dissemination of knowledge of the Sámi cultures. This is also prominent among entrepreneurs with a foundation in the reindeer herding industry, who point out that the animals are not an attraction but something you can learn about. Thereby, an emphasis on an educational perspective grounded in the local knowledge of nature and culture would be ideal in tourism development in all project countries.

*** Principles of Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism (2018).

Guidelines and certificates for culturally sensitive tourism

Guidelines and certificates for culturally sensitive tourism

At the international level, several conventions, declarations, guides, and guidelines already exist to protect the interests of Indigenous peoples and (should) also have an impact on tourism development in the ARCTISEN project area. Among these are the ILO Convention 169, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007 (UNDRIP), and the Larrakia Declaration (2012), which is arguably the most important statement of commitment from the international tourism industry because it intends to take on an active role in giving practical effect to the UNDRIP and the rights of Indigenous peoples through tourism. There are also national guidelines and certificates, which are presented next. (See Table 1.)

Canada

In Canada,[21] there are two main guides that have been developed with implications for culturally sensitive tourism across the country. The first is an internal resources guide by the Parks Canada Agency: *Promising Pathways: Strengthening Engagement and Relationships with Aboriginal Peoples in Parks Canada Heritage Places* (2014). This guide is primarily focused on outlining the agency's position/policy on reconciliation and relationships with Indigenous stakeholders on lands and water under its administration and providing frontline staff with a tangible checklist for activities to fulfill the policy requirements. The second is the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's (ITAC's) *National Guidelines* (2018), which is a publicly available business guide intended to help Indigenous tourism operators in the development and marketing of authentic Indigenous experiences. The Northwest Territories have developed local initiatives in parallel with those of the ITAC, but some of these initiatives are now defunct. The number of Indigenous-owned tourism businesses in Canada far exceeds the number of ITAC members, and although officials in various levels of government have recognized the ITAC's role as a center of excellence for Indigenous tourism, the role of the *National Guidelines* remains unclear.

Finland

In Finland,[22] national guidelines for a sustainable tourism industry include Metsähallitus' and UNESCO's Finnish World Heritage Sites' common (2016) *Principles of Sustainable Tourism* and Visit Finland's *Tips for Sustainability Communication* and *Tools for Sustainability and Communication*, both published in 2018, and *Principles for Sustainable Tourism*, updated in 2019.

Table 1. Guidelines and certificates for culturally sensitive tourism.

International	The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169 The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 2007 The Larrakia Declaration, 2012 The UN Global Compact Business Reference Guide: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2013 The WINTA & PATA Report on Indigenous Human Rights in Asia & the Pacific Region: Review, Analysis & Checklists, 2015 Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development, 2015 Akwé: Kon Guidelines Indigenous People & the Travel Industry – Global Good Practice Guidelines, 2017 UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics, 2017 European Parliament Resolution on Violation of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the World, including Land Grabbing, 2018 Sámi Duodji label (Nordic context)
Canada	Promising Pathways: Strengthening engagement and relationships with Aboriginal peoples in Parks Canada heritage places, 2014 Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) National Guidelines, 2018
Finland	Principles of sustainable tourism, Metsähallitus 2016 Tips for sustainability communication, Visit Finland, 2018 Tools for Sustainability and Communication, Visit Finland, 2018 National principles for sustainable tourism, Visit Finland, 2019 Picture Guidelines, Sámi Parliament of Finland, 2016 Principles of Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism, Sámi Parliament of Finland, 2018
Greenland	Sisimiut Community Guidelines 6 Dos and Don'ts of dog sledding , Visit Greenland 'How to kaffemik' , Visit Greenland
Norway	10 principles of sustainable tourism, Visit Norway
Sweden	Nature's Best quality label, Swedish Ecotourism Society, 2002 Sápmi Experience, Swedish Reindeer Herders' Union, 2011 The quality label Västerbotten Experience

As of the writing this report, several initiatives are being developed. This indicates that the industry and DMOs in Finland see a demand for guidelines that, in varying ways, include what can be labeled as cultural sensitivity. More specifically, the possibility of developing a certificate/label for the culturally sensitive use of Sámi cultures in tourism is viewed positively. In 2016, the Sámi Parliament in Finland first created *Picture Guidelines*, and two years later, it published a more overreaching document called *Principles of Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism* (2018). One relevant example of a quality certificate in Lapland is the Scandinavian *Duodji* label, which is used to guarantee the authenticity of Sámi handicrafts. Moreover, Visit Finland has launched a new quality certificate for sustainable tourism companies, and there are also plans to create ethical guidelines for tourists.

Greenland

There is no overarching certification in Greenland[23] for tourism operators, local guiding, experiences, or souvenirs. Plans to undertake certification for Greenlandic stone products, among others gems and soapstone, are in the government's pipeline. The Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators is currently working to develop site-specific guidelines. A local guide to Sisimiut has already been developed in collaboration with Arctic Circle Business, and a second one for Nuuk is in the making. As the tourism sector is continually witnessing a steady growth in Greenland, the largest tourism actors, such as Visit Greenland, are taking on a more explicit role in shifting tourism in a sustainable direction. Visit Greenland has initiated a '*How to kaffemik*' guideline for visitors to understand the popular activity, which entails coming into people's homes during special occasions, and a guide for dog sled mushers on how to handle and inform guests during trips on the ice. Besides these scattered initiatives, no labels or guidelines exist in Greenlandic tourism. This might indicate that guidelines most often are instigated because of a problem and that, because of its still relatively small size, tourism is so far not perceived as a much contested field outside of cruise tourism, where we are also seeing the first guidelines being made.

Norway

As in Finland, the Norwegian[24] guidelines are primarily on sustainable tourism, even if they frequently include culture as an element. Sustainability, of which culture is an element, is also emphasized in public policy documents. The Norwegian Sámi Parliament has general guidelines related to land and the environment, with overall goals and aims to ensure that the natural resources based in Sámi areas are managed with a vision to safeguard future generations, with a basis for existence and the opportunity to develop the Sámi cultures.[25] The *Duodji* label, as a pan-Nordic label, is being used for handicrafts. Additionally, the Norwegian Sámi Parliament is currently considering the implementation of the *Principles of Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism*, developed by the Sámi Parliament in Finland. In nature-based tourism, the *Akwé: Kon Guidelines* have gained some attention but have not been implemented extensively. The national DMO, Visit Norway, has visions for sustainable tourism in 2030 and 2050. In 2030, Norway should have achieved a position as one of the world's most sought after tourism destinations for sustainable nature and culture-based experiences. The *Sustainable Destination* label is a tool for the sustainable development of businesses and destinations when it comes to the environment, the local community, cultural heritage, and the economy.[26]

Sweden

In Sweden,[27] national policy documents have been presented that mention cultural tourism and Sámi dimensions, while the implementation of the suggestions has been scarce. In 2002, the Swedish Ecotourism Society introduced the *Nature's Best* quality label. The basic principles of Nature's Best formed the foundation of the *Sápmi Experience* label, too. The label was launched in 2011 in the context of the project, Visit Sápmi, hosted by Sámiid Riikkasearvi — the Swedish Reindeer Herders' Union (SSR). It is aimed at strengthening and stimulating Sámi tourism as a complementary industry and offering an in-place alternative to reindeer herding. The program was highly appreciated by the companies involved and had high credibility. However, some years later, the label faded away because of a lack of long-term funding. Another *Nature's Best* spin-off has recently been launched by Visit Västerbotten in Lapland, the public regional tourism organization.[28] The quality label, *Västerbotten Experience*, is the consequence of an ambitious program to align the regional tourism industry with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC) objectives for sustainability within the tourism industry. Hence, although clear policies and labeling programs for culturally sensitive tourism are absent, there has been the tradition of quality labels comprising cultural dimensions. Sámi stakeholders have initiated one of the quality schemes, and Sámi tourism companies have participated in all of them. However, currently, there is no explicit or coherent Sámi tourism strategy.

Interviewees' opinions of the guidelines

In both Finland and Norway, the tourism companies interviewed were either not aware of the guidelines or did not see them as relevant to their individual businesses. Interestingly, in both countries, the younger generation seemed to be more positive about the guidelines than the older generation. In Finland, some of the interviewees pointed out that instead of seeing the ethical guidelines of the Sámi Parliament as rules or obligations — or as a way to forbid certain products — they should be seen as an ideal that the Sámi Parliament wishes everybody to follow. In Sweden, none of the companies raised the issue of guidelines and rather emphasized the need for dialogue and communication and, one can argue, public leadership. Some mentioned the need for the certification of guides in nature reserves and of the Sámi cultures. This connection between Arctic nature and culture was also mentioned by the interviewees in the other countries, and it resonated with a line in the academic literature.[29]

In Greenland,[30] those who want guidelines seem to be institutions and larger DMOs. This is mainly based on knowledge of the situation elsewhere and a wish to be at the forefront of the expected development. A few of the small companies interviewed raised this opinion. One argued that guidelines would be "very un-Greenlandic." The interviewee explained, "*Traditionally, you are allowed to do what you want to do. Nobody comes after you. It is good and bad. It is for sure very laid back…. In general, I think guidelines telling people on how to behave, that is not the way things normally work here.*" This might indicate that many of the entrepreneurs and start-ups are firmly embedded in the local community, and like many small local companies in Norway and Sweden, they relate to local norms. As a Norwegian interviewee said, he normally asked his grandmother whether certain things were acceptable or not. At the same time, these attitudes seem to relate to a certain number of tourists, and the need for guidelines probably grows accordingly with tourist numbers.

In general, there seems to be a floating line between a wish for guidelines, the need to disseminate knowledge on the Arctic cultures in the tourist industry, and the importance of a local foundation of businesses for securing sensitive, feasible practices. Once more, the opinions raised in the interviews reflect the heterogeneity in the ARCTISEN project area. The conflicts and needs for guidelines must primarily be understood in the local context because of national differences, the local heterogeneity, and the often highly different impact of tourism on the local communities. As an interviewee from Sweden said, it is difficult to find certification that fits all. Nevertheless, most interviewees expressed the need for ethical reflection and sensitivity in their work.

Tourists' perspectives of culturally sensitive tourism

Tourists' perspectives of culturally sensitive tourism

In addition to the interviews with a wide range of tourism stakeholders, the baseline study included an online study of 30 travelers. The purpose of the study was to explore respondents' interest toward, and awareness of, culturally sensitive tourism products. Nearly all the respondents (90%) had visited the Arctic region, and more than half (62%) had taken part in tourism services based on Indigenous/local culture, and despite a lot of variety in their motivations for visiting the area, most of them were satisfied with the experiences they had partaken in. When asked to mention what kind of Indigenous/local experiences they were primarily interested in, food, culture, and learning about everyday life were specified. Even if this survey cannot definitively be the basis for any conclusions, it adds to what was revealed by the interviews about the demand for culturally sensitive tourism products and services.

One of the interviewees summarized the mainstream demand for tourism products in the Finnish Arctic in the following way: the "holy trinity of tourism here includes Santa, snowmobiles, and sled dogs." The list of "the holy trinity" should probably be updated with the luxury glass "igloos" that have emerged onto the Nordic tourism scene in recent years. Anyhow, the interviewees noticed an increasing demand for cultural products and services that enable tourists to get a glimpse of local lifestyles. It seems important for many tourists to receive correct information, to have personal experiences with locals, and to experience authentic things, for instance, through "home visits" or "renting-a-local." An increased interest is also developing toward Sámi handicrafts and other kinds of locally produced souvenirs. Moreover, many entrepreneurs underline the importance of offering culturally sensitive products and services in various price categories.

With Santa as a Finnish exception, the demands in the other countries are nature related. This not only refers to sightseeing, but also to other nature-based activities, like dog sledging, sailing, fishing, northern light hunting, randonnée skiing, and other activities set in the Arctic landscapes. The close relationship between nature and cultures is something that could be developed into more culture-based products through storytelling and utilizing contemporary local life, in addition to developing the existing demand for authentic local products, using both traditional products and creating new designs from traditional patterns. Several of the Swedish interviewees emphasized an interest in developing locally based, authentic products. In particular, the

educational aspect of tourism, to tell tourists about nature and the culture from a local perspective, is something that, according to the interviewees, should be further developed. Developing such products requires not only heightened knowledge of local cultures, but also skills on how to share the products with tourists.

A general challenge for tourism in the ARCTISEN project area is the fixed, stereotypical image of the Indigenous populations, one still communicated through many types of adverts and existing in the minds of tourists, that does not bear much resemblance to the contemporary life unfolding in communities. Here, the explicit strategy of Visit Greenland, as mentioned by many interviewees in Greenland, offers an example of how to brand Indigenous everyday life in the Arctic in a highly contemporary and modern fashion. This strategy is something that the other countries in the ARCTISEN project area can learn and draw inspiration from.

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Capacity development in the project area

Capacity development in the project area

When considering the need for capacity development, it is difficult to generalize this for the ARCTISEN project area. Tourism is distributed rather unevenly, and several destinations experience what can be labeled a seasonal "overtourism." In other places, the lack of tourists is the main challenge for start-ups and SMEs, and outside the main hubs, there is a need for developing better infrastructure. Despite the Nordic part of the Arctic probably being the most accessible and having the best infrastructure in the Arctic, accessibility is still an issue for businesses located outside the main destinations.

As stated in the national report of Greenland, although there is a general interest in building critical mass, both in terms of visitor numbers, offers and experiences, and tourism staff, the perceived large-scale and top-down focus on tourism development, which is mainly focused around infrastructure, is viewed as a threat to sustainable and locally anchored tourism. There is a need to develop local partnerships and cooperation, not only among tourist businesses, but also with other local actors.

The need for infrastructure and accessibility was highlighted in Sweden, while this need in the other countries is highly dependent on being located on the periphery of the major destinations. Also, Sweden differs in the sense that there is a concern regarding the demographics within the tourism industry. There is a need for younger people to engage.

Another joint issue is the need for better knowledge of local culture and history and to develop products that can meet the tourists' interests in culture and history. This issue is connected to the impact of foreign companies and guides that might have little or no knowledge of local culture and nature. Interviewees in all the countries brought up tourists' growing interest in the contemporary everyday lives of the Indigenous peoples and the need to develop new products that provide for this.

New services: "How we really live"

Nature is still the main attraction in the ARCTISEN project area, but many stakeholders see that additional products based on culture or accentuating the close relationship between local culture and nature could be developed. In all the countries, stakeholders have emphasized that local everyday life could be a part of tourism products by involving tourists through storytelling or educational products. This applies to seemingly more "exotic" activities like hunting and reindeer herding, but also to more mundane forms of modern, contemporary life. In this way, it could be possible to counter the rather misleading image of the local culture held by many tourists, as well

as introduce a transformative element into products, as one interviewee said, by presenting "how we really live."

Local everyday tourism products were also pointed out as something that could be developed, similar to activities such as feeding the sled dogs or joining a *kaffemik*[*] in Greenland and washing carpets in Finland. As pointed out by a Finnish interviewee: "*We just need a little inspiration of how to turn them* [simple mundane activities] *into products and services.*" The reported demand for services that reflect contemporary local life indicates that there is a need for innovation in marketing and developing products based on local life and nature, as well as in strengthening local traditional handicrafts and developing product designs that can cater to different customer segments.

Local cultures as tourism products

Traditional handicrafts are something that could be turned into tourism products and services. Some outlets sell more expensive things to both locals and tourists, and in the Nordic context, there are certifications like the *Duodji* label for Sámi handicrafts. In Greenland, such certifications are under development for some items. Hence, there is still an issue of authenticity because less expensive objects are often produced in other places or by industrial means. Products based on traditional designs are something that could be developed. Hence, once more, there is an issue with by whom.

In the three Nordic countries, there is, in various degrees, a need for a clarification of how and by whom Sámi cultures can be made into tourism products. This debate has been the most prominent in Finland, despite also being present in Norway and Sweden. In Sweden, Sámi tourism is not contested in the same ways as it is in Finland—Sámi tourism is offered by Sámi companies only—and there are only a few examples of actual conflicts. In Norway, the debate seems to be more blurred because the distinction of Sámi/non-Sámi is not clear.

Guidelines that can educate tourists are required. Also, in the tourism business, there is a need to develop the knowledge of Sámi cultures. Many stakeholders use their own experiences that can be firmly traced to parts of Sámi society, while a more general knowledge of Sámi cultures and history might be absent. For others, colonializing processes have resulted in the local Sámi cultures and history becoming less known and often invisible to outsiders, and the general Sámi cultures and history have not been communicated in schools or in the public.[**] Therefore, there are expressed needs for learning more about Sámi cultures and history.

> *"We just need a little inspiration of how to turn them* [simple mundane activities] *into products and services."*

* https://visitgreenland.com/articles/kaffemik-in-greenland/

** In Norway, Finland, and Sweden, the population has experienced long-lasting policies aimed at assimilating the population into the dominant national culture. As in Norway, where the people along the coastline were labeled "The people without a past," the local history and languages of a Sámi and/or Kven past were not communicated to new generations. The consequence is that this past is often invisible to outsiders and little known, even by many locals. See more in the national reports.

Best practices of culturally sensitive Arctic tourism

Best practices of culturally sensitive Arctic tourism

In Greenland, there is a comparatively low level of conflict and although drum dancing and the use of *tupilaks** as part of tourism products were pointed out by some as controversial, no recurrent examples were given of improper products in the interviews. This is probably because of the current, relatively low number of tourists. Once more, the concerns about culturally insensitivity seem to occur along the expansive growth in tourism.

Finland, then, becomes a contrast because of the high impact of tourism in Lapland. Examples of best practices are Finnish companies that direct customers to Sámi entrepreneurs or cooperate with them when customers want products based on Sámi cultures. Cooperation is at the core of cultural sensitivity. More concretely, the interviewees pointed toward engaging tourists in making handicrafts, home visits, or other activities in a local context. In these, there seems to be an educational element also present within what the Swedish interviewees emphasize as good products.

Many of the Swedish interviewees pointed out products and services giving the tourists an understanding of everyday life by educating them through personal meetings, for instance, encounters with reindeer herders and local artisans. Good relations between guides and reindeer herders or other parts of the community are also key to a sensitive product. The same applies, as in Finland, to sharing knowledge. In addition, the issues of respect and authenticity were mentioned in quite a few discussions.

In Norway, several interviewees mentioned *Duodji*, design, and modern food inspired by traditions. Local cooperation is important, and many pointed out products based on introducing tourists to local everyday life, such as the reindeer industry and the community in general, as good products. The latter implies that local heterogeneity is exposed and that guides are related to local ethics and the present local values. Even if not explicitly stated, many of these examples relate to educational tourism, where local culture becomes key to reflection and new knowledge.

* In Greenlandic, the word "tupilak" means an ancestor's soul or spirit, and previously, reference was made to mysterious, sinister spirits when using this expression. (See https://visitgreenland.com/about-greenland/greenlandic-tupilak/)

Best practices of culturally sensitive tourism in the Arctic:

- Sámi companies that present their own cultures
- Cooperation with Sámi and other local entrepreneurs
- Personal meetings and home visits offering a platform for understanding everyday life and an educational element
- Sharing knowledge of the local culture(s)
- Local handicrafts, such as *Duodji*
- Understanding and respecting local ethics and values

Conclusions

Conclusions

As stated from the outset, the ARCTISEN project area covers five countries, and data gathering through interviews has been conducted in four countries. In addition to the national differences, the area covers huge cultural variations, different colonial histories, and a large variety in the impact of tourism on local communities. We are also dealing with an area where the Indigenous populations are a majority in Greenland while in the Nordic countries, the situation is quite different. In addition to the differences in the number of indigenous in the total population, there are also fundamental differences in legislation that frames the important industries.[31] In particular, these differences are important in the different legislation for reindeer herding as an important symbol for Sámi cultures. Norway is the only country that has ratified the ILO 169 convention, and the Norwegian legislation is more inclusive concerning who can be regarded as Sámi. In addition, Canada differs regarding both its colonial history and this history's impact on contemporary society, and the total population and diversity of its Indigenous nations.

In Finland, the main challenge for the Sámi minority and the Finnish majority in the tourism business is the misuse of Sámi cultural markers in advertising and other tourism business activities. The discussion around this topic has continued for decades. This challenge is also connected to the increased amount of tourism that can, in some places, be described as "overtourism." In contrast, in Greenland, the lack of cultural controversies or clearly identified problems in how tourism products are developed and marketed in a culturally sensitive way seems to be connected to the still moderate numbers of tourists. In Tromsø, Norway, which in recent years has become a hotspot for Arctic tourism, there has been a heated debate on how and by whom Sámi cultures can be used in tourism, and it has also triggered the debate elsewhere, while in Sweden, there are few examples of actual conflicts. Despite being present in most places where the interviews were conducted, the question of sensitivity seems to be moderated by the numbers of tourists. In particular, this seems to be the case for local entrepreneurs, who are often able to navigate in the local communities' ethnic landscapes when the impact of tourism is moderate.

The issue of the numbers of tourists also relates to a second issue: foreign companies and guides that seasonally, or permanently, use these areas for their own purposes. Once more, connected to certain places, and, in some cases, to certain activities, these companies might mean that local communities do not benefit from income and work. Additionally, there might

also be a misrepresentation of local and Indigenous cultures because of a lack of knowledge, resulting in harm being done to local livelihoods and to the Indigenous communities as a whole. Moreover, companies should engage in respectful negotiations with local communities to ensure that the control of tourism development and representation remain in local hands.

There seems to be a growing awareness and increased willingness by both DMOs and companies in the area to address sensitivity in the issues of representation in marketing and in the question of who can sell certain products. In Greenland, the national marketing foundation is presented as moving in a positive direction in developing the image of Greenland and Greenlanders, and there are several projects searching for similar possibilities in the Nordic countries. The same phenomenon can be observed among businesses that experience that they have to update their practices.

As is the case in Finland, and partially in Norway, there are more and more tourism companies who subcontract Sámi entrepreneurs to offer services based on Sámi cultures instead of trying to provide those services themselves.

In Finland, the non-Sámi tourism companies have lessened the use of Sámi cultural markers in their marketing, and on a more general level, the local tourism actors interviewed in the three countries see sustainable, responsible, and culturally sensitive tourism as more and more important. Once more, the benefit of subcontracting must be understood regarding the numbers of tourists and the particular types of tourism in certain places. However, while becoming only a subcontractor might provide a secure income, the services need to be fitted to a certain category and time frame so that there is a lack of control over the services offered to tourists.

Even though there are huge discrepancies in the ARCTISEN project area, there seem to be some similarities. First, many people share a desire to present a more contemporary, updated image of the area. This entails a need for better local control of how the local cultures are represented and sold, as well as knowledge and skills for developing tourism products out of what are locally regarded as rather mundane activities. By whom and how this control should be obtained seems to be the main question that divides the Nordic countries. Second, even though nature is still the main attraction in Arctic tourism, there is an interest in developing products based on local culture that can educate visitors and show how the heterogeneous everyday life in these areas is firmly connected to particular relationships with nature. In sum, it seems important to enhance cultural and historical knowledge and to share inspiration among both locals and guests.

There exists an interest in developing products based on local culture that can educate visitors and show how the heterogeneous everyday life in these areas is firmly connected to particular relationships with nature.

Notes and references

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Notes

1. Statistics Canada, 2017.

2. Viken, Höckert, & Grimwood, 2019.

3. Butler, 2018; Fitchett & Hoogendoorn, 2019; Rantala & Mäkinen, 2018; Scott & Lemieux, 2010; Smith, 1990; Tervo-Kankare, 2008;

Wilkins, Urioste-Stone, Weiskittel & Gabe, 2018.

4. Poon, 1988.

5. Dellaert & Lindberg, 2003; Nicolau, 2012.

6. Nicolau, 2008.

7. Hogg, Liao, & O'Gorman, 2014.

8. Rai, 2011; Wall, 1993.

9. Becherel & Cooper, 2002.

10. Komatsu & Liu, 2007.

11. Chang, Cheng, & Chen, 2018; Guntoro & Udomsade, 2006; Hall, Mitchell, & Keelan, 1992.

12. Price & Smith, 1996.

13. Eger, Scarles, & Miller, 2019.

14. Höckert, 2015; Höckert, 2018; Lee et al., 2017; Saarinen, 2006; Soinio & Birkeland, 2014.

15. Donohoe, 2011.

16. Hurst, Grimwood, & Lemelin, 2019.

17. Saari, Höckert, Lüthje, Kugapi, & Mazzullo, forthcoming; Viken, 2019.

18. Chimirri & Ren, 2019.

19. See Chimirri & Ren, 2019.

20. Hynne, 2002, p. 31.

21. Hurst, Grimwood, & Lemelin, 2019.

22. Kugapi, Höckert, Lüthje, Nuccio, & Saari, 2019.

23. Chimirri & Ren, 2019.

24. Jæger, n.d.

25. Sámediggi/Sametinget, 2016, p. 19.

26. Visit Norway, 2019.

27. Müller & de Bernardi, forthcoming.

28. Visit Västerbotten in Lapland, 2019.

29. See Höckert, 2015; Lee et al., 2017; Saarinen, 2006; Soinio & Birkeland, 2014.

30. Chimirri & Ren, 2019.

31. Viken, 2006.

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Looking at Arctic tourism through the lens of cultural sensitivity.
ARCTISEN – a transnational baseline report

This transnational report approaches current tourism development in the Arctic through the lens of cultural sensitivity. What does cultural sensitivity mean? In which ways can Indigenous peoples and other local communities utilize their cultural heritage and contemporary life in creating successful tourism products and services? Based on a tourist survey and interviews among tourism actors, the report offers an overview and cross-national comparison across the project areas of Canada, Finland, Greenland, Norway, and Sweden.