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SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

DEVELOPING HUNTING TOURISM IN ICELAND

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity (2007) hunting tourism is by definition conducted by hunters who may travel considerable distances from their home and/or own hunting grounds in order to hunt. These hunters differentiate from hunters, who most commonly hunt in the area where they reside and have hunting rights.

Hunting is one of the oldest ways of using natural resources. As such it has impacts flora and fauna and whole ecosystems. Hunting tourism can be placed under the niche category of consumptive wildlife tourism; a small special sector of tourism, which appeals to a well-defined market segment (Lovelock, 2008; Lovelock & Robinson, 2005). Lovelock (2008) defines consumptive wildlife tourism as “a form of leisure travel undertaken for the purpose of hunting or shooting game animals, or fishing for sports, either in natural sites or in areas created for these purposes” (p. 4). Activities that fall under consumptive wildlife tourism are listed in table 1.

Table 1. Consumptive wildlife tourism activities

Consumptive Wildlife Tourism				
Hunting Tourism			Fishing Tourism	
Big game/trophy	Small game	Skill hunting	Marine	Fresh water
Game ranching	Duck	Bow hunting	Coastal/estuary	Coarse
Big game	Game birds	Black powder	Charter boat	Fly
Safari	Rodents	Falconry	Spear	Adventure
Group	Small predators	Trapping	Big game	Indigenous
Indigenous	Ferreting	Songbirds	Indigenous	

(Source: Bauer & Herr, 2004 in Lovelock 2008:4)

Lovelock (2008) also claims that consumptive wildlife tourism is multidimensional besides the hunting experience itself. It is also culturally embedded, an adventure and an ecotourism experience. Similarly Radder (2005) has pointed out that the hunter’s experience is not necessarily driven by a single motive – such as to shoot animals, “but by a multidimensional set of interrelated, interdependent and overlapping motives” (p. 1143). These dimensions are i.e.:

- Spiritual: i.e. ideas of being in/experiencing the nature and reconnect with the land.
- Emotional: i.e. enjoying the challenge of the hunt, experiencing fun, and the thrill of the chase and adrenaline rush as well as having the senses heightened.
- Intellectual: i.e. experiencing new places, people, cultures, search for new adventure, seeing animals in natural environment and learning about wildlife.
- Biological: i.e. enjoying exercise/recreation, using the instincts and hunting for meat.

- Social: i.e. experiencing fellowship, being with family/friends and practicing heritage (Radder 2005).

Iceland has a short history of hunting tourism and the activities related to the sector are scattered. Hunting activities mainly take place in the shoulder and off season to regular tourism. Traditionally hunting is seen more as a hobby than a business opportunity and as a common right available to all, providing that they have a licence (Sigursteinsdóttir et al, 2007). Hunting in Iceland takes place both on private land and in commons. The commons refer to resources that are collectively owned. Landowners have the hunting rights to their own property and have a right to lease them, if they want. The current controlling system of hunting demands that all hunters in Iceland, who intend to hunt birds and/or mammals are required to obtain a firearms license and a hunting card. The latter is valid for one year at a time. All hunters with residency in Iceland, who have a valid hunting card and a firearm license, are allowed to hunt in commons as by definition, no one can legally prove their private ownership of these areas (Act 64/1994). Every year the hunters are required to issue a bag report for all game species that they caught that year, even if none was caught. Foreign hunters, who are not Icelandic residents, are only allowed to hunt on private land (Regulation 291/1995). Those hunters have to obtain a short-term hunting license from the National commissioner of the Icelandic Police in Reykjavík and a short-term hunting card from the Wildlife Management Division of the Environment Agency of Iceland before the hunting activities can take place.

A vast majority of hunters in Iceland are native hunters, 97% of them being men and 3% women. Approximately 5% of the Icelandic population, 20 years of age or older had a valid hunting card for the year 2009. The proportion has increased in the last few years, except in the years 2003 and 2004, when it decreased. This decrease is closely related to a collapse in the ptarmigan population and, as a consequence, ptarmigan hunting was temporarily banned. In 2009 there was an increased interest in hunting as can be seen in an increase of issued hunting cards and in an increased participation in hunting license courses. About 9% more hunting cards were issued in 2009 than 2008 and there were approximately 49% increase in the participants of the license courses. Increased interest in hunting can be detected especially among women. 197 women had valid hunting cards in the year 2000 but in 2009 they were already 317. From the year 2006, the number of women, who participate in license courses, has doubled with the greatest increase between the years 2008 and 2009. The 2008, 66 women participated in the license courses and in 2009 the number was 92. During the last few years the number of foreign hunters has been around 80-100 hunters per year or about 1% of all active hunters in Iceland (Information from The Wildlife Management Division of The Environment Agency of Iceland).

In the last few years the leasing of land has become more prominent with varying prices, mostly dependent on demand. Atlantic puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), Pink-footed geese (*Anser brachyrynchus*), Graylag geese (*Anser anser*) and Rock ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*), have been among the most popular game species in Iceland. According to the hunting regulations, it is not allowed to shoot a bird when it is sitting on a rock. For that reason the puffin is mainly hunted in pocket nets in Iceland. Ptarmigan hunting takes place both on private and common land. The population is not stable and it is estimated that major fluctuations occur on an average every 10 years. Ptarmigan hunting was banned in 2003 since estimations showed that the population had decreased immensely. Although there are no special legal limitation in terms of quantity of ptarmigan hunting, hunters are requested to limit it themselves to their personal needs. An earlier study indicates that the majority of hunters do limit the hunting themselves, when so requested and the main motivation to go ptarmigan hunting is first and foremost for enjoying a ptarmigan meal once or twice during the Christmas holidays (Umhverfisstofnun, 2003). In the past five years, the government has gradually shortened the ptarmigan hunting season; in 2005, the season lasted 45 days and in 2008 and 2009 the days were limited to 18.

Goose hunting usually takes place in open fields, farmed lands or along riverbanks. The most commonly caught goose is the Greylag Goose which is mostly hunted in lowland Iceland in cultivated areas, where there is a high demand for hunting from the very beginning of the geese hunting season (20th of August) until most Greylag Geese have migrated to Europe in beginning of November. According to bag reports, 42.639 Greylag Geese were hunted in 2008, which makes the Greylag Goose the third most hunted game in Iceland after puffins (54.144) and ptarmigan (48.402) (Information from The Wildlife Management Division of The Environment Agency of Iceland).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Theme interviews were made in order to gauge the potential of hunting tourism in Iceland. These were done on the basis of identified key stakeholder groups for Icelandic hunting tourism. Four groups of stakeholders were identified. These are:

Landowners: Almost all cultivated land in Iceland is privately owned and the hunter is legally required to get landowners' permission to hunt on private land. Landowners have the hunting rights to their own property and have a right to lease or lend out their hunting rights if they want. According to the Icelandic *Act on Hunting and Control of Birds and Wild mammals* (Act 64/1994) the landowner has therefore complete control over who can hunt on his or her land. The landowners are also free to ban hunting on their lands or constrain hunting in any way they see fit. Although the landowners' rights to control hunting on private land is very clear in the law, there is an exception when it comes to reindeer hunting. Reindeer hunting rights are controlled

by the government. The landowners are predominantly farmers and thus hunting activities mainly take place in the low season of regular farming activities, amongst which tourism is also an activity for many. Both landowners who allow hunting on their land and landowner who don't allow hunting on their land are included in this stakeholder group.

Entrepreneurs in hunting tourism sector: In the past few years a number of hunting tourism companies has been initiated. The total number is difficult to estimate as many of these companies also provide other kinds of tourism products e.g. fishing tourism, accommodation, catering, guide services and different kinds of other activities. Icelandic hunting tourism companies mostly operate on private land, either their own land or leased from landowners.

Hunter organisations/hunters: In Iceland there are few hunting and shooting organisations but most of them are small and locally based. On a national scale Skotvís – Icelandic Hunting and Shooting Association is the biggest hunters' organisation in Iceland with approximately 2000 members. Skotvís was established in 1978 and the role of the organisation is in general to sustain a unified stance guarding the interests of those interested in shooting, hunting and nature conservation (Skotveiðifélag Íslands, Ed). Membership of a hunter organisation is not mandatory for hunters in Iceland and therefore it cannot be argued that the opinions of the organisations reflect that of all hunters in Iceland. Therefore, also hunters outside of hunters' organisations are included in this stakeholder group.

Policy makers and administration: Hunting and hunting tourism takes place in rural areas. It is therefore important to include those involved in rural development and in protecting the interests of rural resources and the rural sectors. These are thus one significant stakeholder group influencing the operational environment of hunting tourism. Organisations of landowners and agriculture as well as tourism are included in this stakeholder group. Tourism has considerable impact in rural Iceland and tourism activities and service offerings are constantly evolving. Municipalities and regional development associations are also included since they form the general framework for the rural development and take care of public interests.

Twenty interviews with individuals (14 men and 6 women) from these stakeholder groups were conducted in Iceland and are listed in table 2 below. Individuals were chosen by convenience sampling. It soon became evident that there was an overlap between the stakeholder groups. Four out of five interviewed entrepreneurs were also local hunters and/or landowners and three interviewed policy makers were also landowners. Such overlaps between stakeholder groups are inevitable.

Table 2. The interviewed representatives of different stakeholders groups and the interview codes

Landowners	Local/Recreational hunters	Policy makers and rural developers	Hunting tourism enterprises
Farmer, North-East of Iceland	Hunter, East of Iceland	Innovation centre Iceland	Hunting tourism company, North-East of Iceland
Farmer, East of Iceland	Hunter, capital area of Iceland	The Farmer Association of Iceland	Hunting tourism company, East of Iceland
Farmer, West of Iceland	Hunter, North of Iceland	Agricultural Association in Eyjafjordur	Hunting tourism company, East of Iceland
Landowner in Eyjafjordur	Hunter, East of Iceland	Agricultural Association in Vest of Iceland	Hunting tourism company, East of Iceland
Farmer, East of Iceland		Development centre of East-Iceland	Hunting tourism company, North of Iceland
		Icelandic Tourist Board	
L1, L2, L3, L4, L5	H1, H2, H3, H4	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6	E1, E2, E3, E4, E5

Individuals were initially contacted either by e-mail or by telephone. Almost everyone who was contacted was willing to participate or to recommend another person for the interview with only one exception. The interviews were conducted during the period of November 20th 2008 – March 24th 2009. The interviews were individual semi structured theme interviews varying in length from 30-90 minutes. It was explained that participants would remain anonymous in the report and quotes would not be traceable to them. The interviews were semi-structured which means they have a flexible agenda or list of themes to focus the interview although the order of discussion might vary from one interview to another. This kind of interview structure is more open and conversation-like and gives the participants an opportunity to give their opinion and explore the topics in question from variety of perspectives (Jennings, 2005).

The interviews were conducted in places of the participants' choice such as at their work, at their homes, cafés or at the University of Akureyri. Six interviews were telephone interviews since it was not possible to conduct them face-to-face. All of the interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the participants. The interviews were analysed with a joint transnational framework which based on the themes of the interviews. In addition a number of subthemes were identified, which the participants mentioned in the interviews without being asked about them.

The following report is based on the analysis of the interviews. No stand is taken as to whether the statements of the participants are right or wrong as they only reflect the participants' points of view as they appeared in the interviews.

DESCRIPTIONS OF HUNTING TOURISM

Interviewees were asked to give their own descriptions of what hunting as part of tourism consisted of. As one interviewee explained: “It is not tourism until you provide some kind of services” (L1).

Some stakeholders did not view game as the property of the provider of the service since they felt that no one can claim game as their property. One participant described it as follows:

The providers of hunting tourism are traditional providers of tourism with hunting service as their specialty. The game is not their property. What is being sold is the use of land and service linked to hunting, satisfy basic needs such as in food and drink and providing facilities for resting and recreation (H1).

Interviewees were asked if they knew someone in hunting tourism in their area and most of them did know someone. Some stakeholders (mainly policy makers) mentioned reindeer hunting, which only take place in East Iceland, as an example of hunting tourism in Iceland. Several interviewees mentioned that hunting is more than just shooting game as one hunter described it:

Hunting is not only shooting the game but also experiencing the nature and enjoying an outdoor activity. You are lucky if you shoot animals and it is fun but if you’d talk to hunters you realise that experiencing the nature and the silence is far more exciting. In the nature you are just two or three friends talking together, waiting for the game, shooting the game, and again it is just you and your friends talking together (H4).

PUBLIC OPINION REGARDING HUNTING TOURISM

Interviewees were asked what kind of public opinion they perceived as related to hunting tourism and they were aware of. Some of them thought that public opinion was positive, some mentioned that it was unknown and other thought that the public opinion was generally indifferent. The interviewees were generally conscious that some people were against hunting for several different reasons.

Most interviewees thought that the public opinion towards hunting was positive as long as the hunters treated the resource (game) and nature with respect and with sustainable use in mind and were in harmony with other activity in the same area that the hunting is conducted. The interviewees also thought that the public would have very little tolerance towards hunters, if they treated the nature with no respect, e.g. leaving empty cartridges or wounded/dead game behind. The interviewees generally believed that the public opinion could influence the development of hunting tourism. For some stakeholder it was important that the local community was at peace with their hunting tourism business. The words of one of the policy makers exemplify this view:

It is very important that the hunting is at peace with other local residents. I do not think that the public opinion e.g. in the capital area, will interfere with hunting tourism in east Iceland mainly because the marketing is focused on specific groups. It is more important to be in peace with your neighbour since hunting grounds are not always in line with property boundaries on the map. I do not think that the public opinion generally matters, just the locals' (P4).

Some stakeholders were convinced that the public will welcome further development of hunting tourism as one explained:

I do not think that people are generally against hunting. Most Icelanders still have some connection to people in rural areas and that there is nothing wrong with using the resources of the land in a responsible way. We are the nation of fisheries. Flying bird or fish in the sea, it does not matter (H2).

One stakeholder also said: "The attitude in my community is positive as long as it can create jobs or income for the locals" (E4). A few interviewees believed the hunting tourism had a more positive image than hunting in general, since the public was generally supportive of the development of rural tourism. For example one stakeholder mentioned that: "There are a number of farmers and landowners who provide facilities and activities for tourists which have a positive image. If hunting is linked to tourism it would change the public opinion into a more positive direction" (P1).

Some stakeholders mentioned that the attitude towards geese hunting was different from the public attitudes to ptarmigan hunting. Some of them mentioned that some

people in Iceland consider geese of no value and that the goose population should be controlled with hunting. One landowner claimed that the goose population was large and hunting was unlikely to influence the population. A policy maker also explained this view and added that there were great potentials in geese hunting, since the goose population is so strong. This gives reason to believe that the social carrying capacity for geese hunting is higher than for example for ptarmigan hunting.

Some interviewees mentioned that news of common hunting grounds overcrowded by hunters during the ptarmigan hunting season could be shocking to the public and would lead to a negative reputation of ptarmigan hunting in general. The stakeholders also put negative reputation of hunting in relation to high volume hunting, of which the public generally disapproves.

Almost every interviewee had positive attitudes to the development of hunting tourism. Negative attitude could be detected from some hunters who feared that high prices could reduce their possibilities to hunt in some areas. The hunters were generally not against developing hunting tourism as long it still gave local hunters room to practice their hunting.

CONSEQUENCES OF HUNTING TOURISM

HUNTING TOURISM AND LOCAL HUNTING CULTURE

Interviewees were asked about the impact of hunting tourism on local hunting and Icelandic hunting culture. Everyone was conscious about that hunting tourism would have an impact on local hunting and possibly also the hunting culture. However, the interviewees did not agree about whether the impact would be positive or negative or to what extent.

Hunting tourism could indeed affect the possibilities of others and tradition and the roots in rural areas must be taken into consideration. [...] It could be risky to give "outsiders" privileges over local residents (P5).

This point of view was apparent with several policy makers. One hunter pointed out that "actual freedom in Iceland is to be able to walk around the nature, regardless of whether you are enjoying the nature as a photographer or as a hunter" (H3). The same hunter also said:

I see it as my right as an Icelandic citizen to be able to hunt in Icelandic nature and I don't have to pay many weeks' worth of salary to do it. I can just go and hunt if I get permission from a landowner just as I have always done it. If this is sacrificed for some tourism interests then I think it's a step back for hunting. There is a definite need to improve the hunting culture in Iceland but not when it comes to this (H3).

In regards of using the hunting rights, the policy makers agreed that locals and tourists should have equal opportunities, but some of them were sure that locals would not agree with this. As one interviewee put it: "Locals do not object while there is enough for everyone" (L4). Several others thought that at the moment there were enough hunting grounds for everyone because "there are only few landowners who have commercialised their hunting grounds" (H3). However, most interviewees knew that leases of hunting grounds and the sale of service in relation to hunting had increased. "Now, you have to pay for goose hunting and that is just natural. They [the landowners] own the fields" (E3). Most of the interviewees who hunt were worried about the development of hunting tourism and its potential impact on their own hunting activities. One of them said for example: "You have to have contacts with some landowners in order to practice goose hunting in Iceland. You can't hunt there anymore if the hunting rights have been bought by someone else" (H3). He continued:

I don't want to see hunting becoming a business in Iceland. I want this to be available for everyone. That it would be a privilege to be a hunter in Iceland and get some

game without having to pay more for the game than it would cost from the supermarket (H3).

Several others agreed with this point of view but no one doubted the landowner rights to control the privately owned hunting grounds. It was the landowner's decision what to do with the hunting rights. Most of the interviewees knew examples of hunters who did not respect the landowners' right and went hunting on privately owned land without permission. Some frustration could be detected amongst landowners when they talked about these hunters and they requested some sort of planning in order to prevent this kind of conduct. Other landowners also talked about the bad conduct of hunters. "Some don't even bother to pick up the dead birds. That should not be tolerated [...] no respect is shown to the nature" (P3).

Many of the interviewees talked about the hunting culture in Iceland, or the lack of one. One of them described hunting in Iceland as follows:

Hunting in Iceland is characterised by two things, bird hunting and hunting to survive and this usually is the fishermen's way of thinking, that is, to hunt as much as possible in the easiest possible way. At the same time many traditions abroad are characterised by a strict ethical approach to hunting, to respect the game. You get a strict upbringing as a hunter from an ethical point of view where high volume hunting is a negative thing. Strong traditions but here the traditions are weak, that is, the ethical point of view is defeated by high volume hunting (H3).

This hunter explained further that this was rooted in the fact that hunting in Iceland has mostly involved bird hunting and eliminating vermin. One of the interviewees thought that locals are more interested in hunting for the meat, but visitors would rather hunt to enjoy nature in a beautiful environment. Most of the interviewees were familiar with high volume hunting and were against it.

We are not interested in seeing hunters hunting without any limits and those hunters are profiting from selling the meat. But there is nothing wrong with people buying the hunting rights if their conduct in the hunting is responsible. The game is a limited resource (P5).

Some of the interviewees believed that high volume hunting was decreasing as typified by these quotes: "Some hunt for the meat, some enjoy experiencing the nature. There will always be hunters who behave badly and get greedy. This kind of behaviour often changes as the hunter gets older, especially if you go often out to hunt" (H2). "We are moving away from the meat market towards a focus on experience and closeness to nature" (P6). "We have to teach Icelanders to use the best of the hunting [...] Hunting is not only to walk around with a firearm and shoot. The game is a valuable resource (P6). "I like this kind of hunting [hunting tourism].

The aim of the hunting is no longer bringing 50 ptarmigans home. The focus is now on the experience of hunting which brings the hunting to a higher level” (L1).

Some of the interviewees described hunting and hunting experiences as a social event; to spend time with friends and hunters in natural surroundings exchanging good hunting stories. The hunting activities are not necessarily the biggest part of the hunting trip, although they are the purpose.

It’s a hobby. It’s not just to pull the trigger. It’s the experience to be out in rural areas, it is quiet and the surroundings are beautiful. Just to enjoy being outside and if you get to hunt anything, then you are lucky. It is fun to get some game, but the fellowship is also important. It is not just a question of hunting, but also experience and nature (H4).

All of the interviewees agreed that there was a lack of management in hunting in Iceland. One interviewee, who believed that hunting tourism could have positive impact on the hunting culture, described that “this brings hunting up to a higher level. I hope that those who are thinking about going into this business think like this too. They have certain responsibilities, responsibilities to landowners to preserve their land” (L5). Some of the interviewees were opposed to this: “We do have the management we need and all talk about hunting as part of tourism would encourage sustainable hunting for good is worthless to me. Just rubbish” (H3). A few of the interviewees also said that a settlement between landowners of leasing all of their hunting grounds for hunting tourism was not foreseen in the nearest future. Meanwhile, there should be enough room for both hunting tourism and recreational hunting.

IMPACTS OF HUNTING TOURISM ON OTHER RURAL ACTIVITIES

Interviewees were asked about impacts of hunting tourism on other rural activities. It appeared in their answers that hunting tourism could indeed go along with other activities in the area, but it also appeared that it is not always so easy to organise. Many interviewees pointed out that hunting tourism can easily go along with other tourism in the area, especially with farmers who have adopted tourism into their farm. It was also pointed out that even though the development of new activities in rural areas is often limited, new activities were usually welcomed: “Every new activity in rural areas is a positive thing” (P2).

Some interviewees, however, pointed out that hunting tourism does not always go along with other activities in the area, e.g. it would not be safe to conduct other kinds of nature-based tourism like hiking in the same areas as hunting during the hunting season for obvious reasons. One stakeholder mentioned some conflicts between hunters and other tourists and said:

Regarding reindeer hunting, it appears that there are fewer conflicts between tourists and hunters now, although they still occur. Now [...] guides for reindeer hunters are treating nature and the game with more respect and have been more careful and leave nothing behind (H1).

Interviewees also pointed out that not all landowners/farmers allow hunting on their land and hunters have to respect that. Potential conflicts between farmers and hunters regarding goose hunting and reindeer hunting were also mentioned. Some of the stakeholders knew examples of where the traffic of hunters (who go geese and/or reindeer hunting) disturbed sheep grazing in the heath lands during hunting seasons.

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF HUNTING TOURISM

The interviewees generally agreed that hunting tourism would have both positive and negative social impacts on rural societies and on hunting. The positive impacts involve amongst other things increased variety of jobs, promotion of regions, and increased information flow to hunters, such as where to they would be allowed to hunt in the area in question. The negative impacts mostly involve clashes with the hunting activities of locals and possible conflicts with other pre-existing businesses in the region.

Generally according to the results, it can be said that there must be space for both locals and visitors who hunt, in order to reach social acceptance of developing hunting tourism. If hunting tourism is well organised and in consent with society, it can be very positive and contributed to both society and the hunting activities in the area.

Interviewees all agreed that all supplementary activities in rural areas strengthens the areas as long as they harmony with other pre-existing activities. To have tourists visiting is generally considered positive. A few of the interviewees mentioned especially that the consensus with the local community was important. *“Good cooperation [with the local community] is necessary so that the tourism can work”* (E3). Another entrepreneur talked about his company’s policy about letting as much of the profit as possible remain within the local community and cooperated with other people in the area who sell products or service to tourists, e.g. craftspeople (E4).

One landowner talked about that he liked the idea that someone would be managing the hunting activities on his land, since he was very tired of hunters going about his land without permission.

Most of the time, the hunters have gone where they want without permission. They may say that they have asked permission from some farmer and have crossed over three landmark fences. It is very positive that there is someone to [...] take care of the hunters so they won’t go where they want and shooting everything that moves [...], someone who looks after how to go about and where is allowed to hunt (L1).

Several interviewees talked about lack of management of hunting that could be beneficial both for hunters and those who have the hunting rights. Some interviewees explained that control would also entail more information for hunters about hunting grounds and those who would like to offer their land for hunting and those who don't. This would benefit those, who wish to preserve their private land. One interviewee took the example of a hunter who was fed up with the chaos and went on weekend to a tourism entrepreneur, who offered hunting. "Hunters want good hunting grounds where the hunting is controlled and where hunting is not conducted every day and the hunting grounds are left to "rest" in between. Then they know they will catch something" (H2).

He [had a wonderful weekend, shot a few birds, and got great food and lovely weather. It was all crème de la crème [...]] He had stopped struggling with asking some landowner's permission to hunt. Every field had been leased anyway. And if he got to hunt somewhere, there were ten other hunters there at the same time [...]] There were men everywhere (P6).

Some of the interviewees mentioned that not all hunters thought the development of hunting tourism was positive even though many pointed out some flaws in the current system. On the other hand another interviewee did not think that everyone could go alone hunting. "There is a certain regret of traditional hunting of birds and being able to go out and hunt with a certain feeling of freedom, but freedom is one of four basic social and emotional needs that need to be fulfilled in order for the human being to prosper" (H1).

Those hunters who want the service are the crème de la crème of hunters. Those who don't bother to pick up the empty cartridges and behave as they please are usually not the hunters who will hire a hunting guide. That is maybe the flaw that those hunters who behave well are taken care of while we should be taking care of those who don't. But that is difficult. Not everybody is willing to pay for hunting (L1).

Several interviewees pointed out that landowners had started to charge for access to hunting grounds and that was not acceptable to all hunters. A few of them mentioned that some hunters think that this development was controversial since they worried that hunting might become an expensive activity just like salmon fishing had become in some areas.

Some of the entrepreneurs have considered that different hunters have different needs. One entrepreneur described the development in his company: "*I have tried many things to find out what's interesting, what people enjoy*" (E3). However, some of the hunters were critical towards landowners and entrepreneurs who provide service to hunters. What they provide has to be relevant. One hunter had gone

hunting with a tourism entrepreneur who focused on providing service to hunters. He described his experience as follows:

I have once paid for hunting. We were four who went hunting together. I didn't like it [...] They took 15.000 kroner for each firearm which is very much considering what we got for our money [...] The guide had already set up decoys and everything was prepared before we came [...] I was disappointed that I didn't get to do it myself (H2).

It was pointed out by some of the stakeholders that those hunters, who have secured access to good hunting grounds, were satisfied with the arrangement there. However, some of the interviewees also pointed out that some hunters, particularly new hunters, face considerable entry-barriers, so to speak in terms of finding good hunting grounds. This was particularly mentioned in relation of hunters who lived in the capital area and have little connection with rural areas. The development of hunting tourism could be positive for those hunters. However, some stakeholders thought that the system was generally confusing for hunters or newcomers. One hunter described this:

There is a lot of chaos going on and some hunters don't have the resources to or the knowledge of figuring out the landmarks, what is allowed and what is not. They are insecure and don't even know how to gain access to land. It can be difficult [...] if you don't know the area or where to find the information (H2).

ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF HUNTING TOURISM

Interviewees agreed upon that hunting had impacts on nature and it is necessary to be aware of those limitations that nature and the game put on hunters and hunting tourism. Further development of hunting tourism can have both positive and negative ecological influence. The main positive impacts are more delivery of information and systematic monitoring of resources regarding to both the game and nature. The negative impact entail over exploitation of game populations and damage to nature.

Interviewees were well aware of the limitation of the game and the nature and using those resources require responsibility, especially in terms of making business out of hunting. According to the stakeholders, the limitations did not necessarily have to be negative since they could also be seen as an opportunity to encourage the development of a framework around hunting activities and the use of game. "Hunting should be within limits and there should be a framework around the use of game" (E4).

For instance take company X. You have one man who is responsible for 10 or 20 fields on which he controls all hunting activities. He takes care of the fields so no field is overhunted. He is responsible for paying the landowners and taking care of the hunters during the hunting (E3).

Interviewees agreed that the high volume hunting is socially and morally unacceptable and hunting should first and foremost be an outdoors activity, not a profession (hunting to sell meat). Control is therefore a vital aspect in terms of how to make use of the possibilities without over exploiting game populations in order to sustain hunting activities on prolonged basis. Like one entrepreneur said: “I also have to think about those hunters who have yet to come” (E1).

Some interviewees talked about lack of management and structure around hunting and hunting activities as mentioned earlier. Some talked about the fact that almost every year search rescue teams are called out to look for lost ptarmigan hunters in the commons: “They drive in to the blue and oops, they get lost in the fog! They can’t find their vehicle and don’t know which way to go. They don’t even have a phone or a compass. Many examples like this one could be prevented” (L1). Some interviewees connected management and safety together and many situations, like the one described above, could be prevented.

Some interviewees were very concerned about the nature and the equipment some hunters are using today. The stakeholders mentioned e.g. “Hunters are now using off-road vehicles, such as ATVs that damage the nature. The nature is so sensitive especially during wet autumns and then you can cause permanent damages” (P5). “You have to be very careful when it comes to hunting. The game is a limited resource and if everyone is focused on profiting from this, it can have serious consequences” (H1).

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF HUNTING

Interviewees generally thought that hunting tourism had both positive and negative economic impact on rural societies and hunting. The positive impact involve amongst other things income to the area, better use of tourism infrastructure outside of high season and the multiplier effect for other pre-existing activities in the area. The negative impacts mostly involve clashes with the hunting activities of locals and possible conflicts with other pre-existing businesses or activities in the region (e.g. sheep farming or other kinds of tourism). Most of these have already been discussed in earlier segments above, and some will also be discussed in the chapter concerning perceived opportunities and challenges later on.

Concerning the positive impacts, the interviewees generally thought that it was possible to get income from hunting. One hunter said: “If it is done sufficiently it can generate income in the local community, increase professionalism with tourism and improve locals’ access to the resource” (H1). Some of the interviewees were not sure whether payment should be required, especially if a landowner only provided access to

hunting grounds and no service. When asked about payment for ptarmigan hunting, a local hunter replied:

I have declined it, for paying maybe 5000 kroner for the shotgun in ptarmigan hunting.

I have declined and phoned the next landowner where I know I can hunt for free.

When there are no facilities being provided and you can get it for free elsewhere, then

I think it is OK (H2).

Even though most interviewees were positive towards paying something for access to hunting grounds, one hunter also warned that prices should be kept within limits. Some interviewees also worried about development in pricing and the affect on domestic hunters. "You have to be careful with the prices and the word of mouth, that someone isn't selling access to too many. Rumours of that kind of business spread out very fast amongst hunters (H2)". "I think that it will not take much for hunting to become an elite sport just like it is today in salmon fishing. It can cost a workingman a whole month's salary to practice salmon fishing" (H3).

Another interviewee pointed out that it could not be guaranteed that the profit of hunting tourism would remain within the local community and exemplified: "considerable amount of profit of hunting tourism around foreign hunters leaves the local community when external travel agencies organise the trips, here I am talking about reindeer hunting" (H1).

PERCEIVED OPPORTUNITIES IN HUNTING TOURISM

Interviewees were asked about opportunity and the possible growth potential of hunting tourism and who would benefit from it. Almost every interviewee saw hunting and hunting tourism as an opportunity both regarding to the game and the services for hunters.

Interviewees mentioned mainly goose, ptarmigan, guillemots and fox as potential species in hunting. As one stakeholder said: “The opportunities in hunting definitely lie in guillemots, goose and fox. The fox is an opportunity. Municipality pay a lot for fox hunting and that is something worth thinking about for the tourism companies. The fox is a vermin” (P4). More interviewees mentioned fox hunting as potential for hunting and one described the fox as a “clever opponent like the devil himself” (L1). One stakeholder pointed out that fox hunting is conducted like deer hunting in other countries (H3). Some interviewees mentioned that the population of the pink-footed goose is very strong and has enlarged in the last few years and “pink-footed goose is a bird which you can’t hunt everywhere” (H2).

Most interviewees mentioned that many farmers have adapted tourism as part of their farm activities with great success and hunting could easily be adopted to be one of the activities offered to the tourists by these farmers. Landowners/farmers who are not involved with tourism can also use their opportunities e.g. by offering hunting grounds and cooperating with those who provide actual tourism services. Most of the interviewees saw hunting tourism as an opportunity to create jobs in rural areas along with increased income by creating tourism in the shoulder or off season to regular tourism. Initiatives of hunting tourism could therefore help expand the tourist season in Iceland. By providing the hunters with service such as accommodation, sustenance and other kinds of additional service the infrastructure of tourism in rural areas close to the hunting grounds could be used for hunters. As one stakeholder said: “A lot of accommodation facilities are empty in the autumns, especially in October and November. There are a lot of summer cottages that are in use in June, July and August and already in September, they are empty” (H2). Some of the stakeholders, however, pointed out that not everyone should consider going into the business of hunting tourism.

Take for instance one landowner who is selling accommodation and food, with guidance. [...] We have a good example at Company A [which shall remain anonymous] where one individual has maybe started with being a guide and spotted an opportunity. He starts building up his company. [...] And other individuals, farmers who provide accommodation or what ever you have (P5).

It was very clear in interviewee’s mind that those, who want to make hunting a business opportunity for themselves, must have secure access to hunting grounds,

offer what hunters need and want to concentrate on providing service. Some interviewees were also convinced that the potential of the area for hunting tourism depended on location. A part of the interviewees were convinced that the best location would be nearby the capital area but others thought that it would be more suitable for sparsely populated areas and argued that there are fewer conflicts with other activities and thus less need for monitoring and regulatory operational environment little framework.

Better operational environment for hunting and hunting activities is something that most interviewees also mentioned and placed emphasis on. The operational environment also reflects the ecological part of hunting and preservation of the environment, which in turn would create an opportunity to control the hunting activities by diminishing high volume hunting and encourage quality. As one stakeholder said: "There are obvious opportunities in geese and ptarmigan hunting, first and foremost by designing a framework so that landowners are selling access to their land in an organised manner. Then there are possibilities to provide service in relation to that" (E2). Some stakeholders also mentioned that better operational environment could increase income for those who provide access to hunting grounds and those who provide services to hunters. One stakeholder said:

We need better operational environment around hunting to maximise the revenue of hunting which we are not doing today. We are just hunting, hunting to provide food. The framework has to come from the people not from the government. Landowners and hunters need to set the framework together with help from support system as regional development and tourism companies (P6).

The weakening links between the rural and the urban along with expanding generational differences will probably change hunters' needs in the future. Hunters may have to travel considerable distances from their home in order to hunt. This creates opportunities for the tourism sector to provide services to fulfil the basic needs of these hunters' e.g. accommodation, food and drink and providing facilities for recreation. These hunters differentiate from local hunters, who hunt mostly in the area where they reside and have hunting rights. These hunters may not necessarily be familiar with the hunting grounds, which create other opportunities to provide services for the hunters e.g. guiding. One of the interviewed entrepreneurs mentioned that the generational changes of hunters were followed by changes in demand and the needs of the hunters. Today hunters are already getting used to that landowners might demand payment of some sort for allowing them hunt, but the next generation of hunters might increasingly want also to go hunting in the presence of a guide.

PERCEIVED CHALLENGES IN HUNTING TOURISM

Interviewees were asked about perceived challenges in hunting tourism. Interviewees mentioned a few basic facts that could be obstacle for the development of hunting tourism; e.g. short hunting season, weather conditions, game population, hunting rights, local people and the economic recession.

The interviewees agreed that hunting tourism would probably never become the main source of livelihood for anyone. One stakeholder said: “The hunting days are relatively few per year and the weather is unpredictable. It is very hard to start a business with so many unpredictable factors. It is not a good investment” (P5). Interviewees also talked about the weather conditions. In Iceland, good weather means a shorter hunting season because the geese are still up in the mountains along with the sheep. It can be difficult for hunters to hunt the geese up in the mountains without the risk of harming the sheep. Some of the stakeholders also discussed Icelandic game populations and that there are only a few the game species to hunt in Iceland, especially in the eyes of foreign hunters. “We overestimate what we have here in Iceland [...] we are not that special” (E4) said one stakeholder. This was particularly discussed since foreign hunters are not allowed to hunt in commons, which limits their game possibilities: “In Iceland, you can only hunt few species and you can only offer foreign hunter to hunt goose and ptarmigan” (H3), said one hunter.

Several interviewees mentioned that game populations were limited resources that should be looked after carefully. One interviewee pointed out that “geese hunting is also offered in other countries than Iceland” (E2). Another interviewee mentioned population fluctuations as a challenge. He also talked about other challenges and potential negative impacts:

...natural challenges, for example. If the ptarmigan population collapses. Some people are also opposed to hunting [...] Different things in society could also negatively influence hunting e.g. if ATVs are overused in order to move the game in front of hikers. Also if people don't respect nature, then they are simply not doing themselves any favours. (P5)

Many of the interviewees pointed out that many farmers (landowners) do not allow hunting. Some of them also pointed out that the people themselves (or their mindset) could pose as a challenge to the development of hunting tourism. It was e.g. mentioned that some farmers don't consider this kind of business worth the effort and don't believe that it could be profitable – not to mention those who simply are against hunting.

However, it is not only farmers or landowners who might be against hunting and stand in the way of the development of hunting tourism. Several interviewees mentioned that many hunters did not like that kind of development, mostly because of its effect

on their own hunting activities. As one interviewee said: “The development of hunting tourism can be hindered by hunters. Many hunters are not ready to change their hunting activities and want to hunt just as they have always done. They are the target group and if the target group doesn’t want this, then what is the purpose?” (P2).

The interviewees had different opinions about whether the economic collapse in Iceland would influence the development of hunting tourism. One interviewee said: “The number of hunters who need much service decreases in times like these” (H2). One entrepreneur admitted that pricing was an obstacle in hunting tourism and could prove prohibitive, especially for domestic hunters, since: “the hunting package is *expensive*” (E5). Several interviewees thought that money should be invested in marketing of hunting tourism, regardless of the state of the economy. “Some men are just hunters in their hearts and those men will always do what’s necessary to go hunting, even to pay for hunting grounds” (E2). “It is a tradition for some hunters to go reindeer hunting and they will not make an exception” (H4).

FUTURE TRENDS OF HUNTING TOURISM

Interviewees were also asked about their opinions on the future trends of hunting tourism in Iceland. Their reflections about the future were both positive and negative. Some of the interviewees predicted a continuous demand in geese and ptarmigan hunting although the attitude towards hunting in general would probably change. Some of the stakeholders saw growth potentials in tourism around reindeer hunting. Some of them saw the sector's biggest opportunities being the increasing service level around the hunters, since the quota and therefore the amount of reindeer hunting was unlikely to increase in the nearest future. There were, however, also a few stakeholders, who saw opportunities in increasing the reindeer quota e.g. by allowing migrating reindeer herds to settle in new areas in Iceland. "The value of tourism will generally increase in Iceland in the next few years and hunting tourism will develop in the same way. I see special potentials for tourism around reindeer hunting, particularly if they will migrate to other areas" (H1).

The stakeholders predicted that there would always be people for and against hunting. Some of the stakeholders predicted that there will always be hunters since being a hunter is a part of the human nature. However, it was also pointed out that the game populations are limited resource that should be treated sustainably and with respect. It was also mentioned by a few stakeholders that hunting activities should be controlled without the risk of policing. As one hunter said: "[game populations] are limited resource but it can easily be destroyed by greed and too many restrictions" (H1). Most of the interviewees thought that high volume hunting was not acceptable and that kind of hunting would decrease in the future. Instead of focusing the hunting activities as much as possible on bag, the focus of the hunting activities should be on the experience.

Some of the stakeholders predicted that service for hunters will increase in the future and that there will be an increased supply of them as well as an increased demand from hunters. Increased services, however, are likely to be followed by increased costs of hunting. Some stakeholders predicted that landowners will more and more charge hunters for access to hunting grounds on privately owned land. In that relation, some of the stakeholders mentioned that hunting tourism will mainly be offered on tourism farms and other places in the future, since: "it has been considered easy to pay and take a package" (E5).

Some of the experienced hunters were worried about the possibility that increased costs would prohibit them to practice their hunting activities as usual. Like one of them said: "Whatever will happen in the development of hunting, it will probably make it more difficult for me to practice my hobby because it will probably just cost me more. No matter what the changes will be, it will cost more" (H3). Some of the

stakeholders predicted that the domestic market for hunting would decrease due to the economic situation in Iceland. "Hunting tourism will decrease in the next few years. There will be less money in it. Hunting is expensive and so, today the domestic market will decrease. People can't afford this today!" (H4).

Regardless of increased costs or an increased service, most of the stakeholders thought that there would always be hunting grounds available for local hunters. These might not necessarily be the best hunting grounds, since they are more likely to have higher leases due to greater demand. Some of the stakeholders also predicted that there will always be landowners who will not charge for access to their hunting grounds. Therefore, there would still be a change for some hunters to go hunting for free as they have always done. As one of the interviewee said: "I think that we are far away from reaching an agreement about creating a business of hunting. Some people sell access to their land and that will probably increase, but there will always be some people who will not do that" (P5).

Some interviewees also thought that there will always be landowners who are not interested in allowing hunting. There will also be many who are simply against hunting. That view might gain increased popularity in the future: "Of course there are groups who don't want to allow hunting and that opinion could increase in the future. I don't hear much about it but it wouldn't surprise me if people would be against this just like whale hunting" (L5).

There were also predictions that tourism would continue to develop and increase in Iceland in the future and also hunting tourism as part of it. Some predicted that hunting tourism would become more professional in the future and that some hunters would require some sort of service in relation to their hunting activities. Therefore, great potentials was foreseen for future development of hunting tourism. One of the stakeholders said: "People are discovering that this is a resource that has always been there, but they haven't been creating service around it. There is definitively a market for it" (P5).

CONCLUSION

The term “hunting tourism” as a concept is relatively new, but it involves hunters travelling considerable distances from their home and/or own hunting grounds in order to hunt. Hunters’ access to hunting grounds can be different from one to another. It is more likely that the longer distance from their hunting ground the weaker the contact the hunter has to the region and vice versa. Therefore, the tourists apt to be hunting do not always have a strong social contact to rural regions and local people. This also influences the social sustainability of hunting. Social sustainability and cooperation are considered among the most important factors in developing hunting tourism. It is clear that many stakeholders have to be involved, when developing hunting tourism. This report has provided an overview stakeholder opinions related to the development of hunting tourism in Iceland.

Most of the interviewees linked the concept of “hunting tourism” with services related to hunting, such as accommodation, hunting grounds and guiding. Several interviewees put the hunter’s experience as the focal point of hunting activities. At the same time it was pointed out that hunting was more than shooting game. Hunting and the hunting experience was sometimes described as a social event, e.g. spending time with friends and family in the nature. Reindeer hunting, which only take place in East Iceland, was sometime mentioned as an example of hunting tourism in Iceland.

The interviewees had different opinions when asked about how they valued public opinion on hunting and hunting tourism at the moment. Some of them thought it was positive, some mentioned that no one knew the public opinion and others thought that the public opinion was generally indifferent. Most of the respondents thought that the public opinion is likely to be positive as long as the hunters treated the resource (game) and nature with respect and in a sustainable way. It was also highlighted that hunting tourism must be in harmony with other activities in the same area. It was also pointed out that the public had very little tolerance towards hunters, who behave recklessly in the nature. Therefore the hunter’s respect towards game and nature was thought to be especially important.

All of the interviewees were conscious about that an increase in hunting tourism would have an impact on local hunting and possibly also the hunting culture. However, the interviewees did not agree about whether the impact would be positive or negative and to what extent. It was pointed out that non-local hunters might be prioritised over local hunters e.g. because of income they generate, but it was also pointed out that at the moment there were enough hunting grounds for everyone. Many of the interviewees knew that access to hunting grounds was increasingly being sold out and service provided e.g. in geese hunting. Most of the interviewees, who were hunters

themselves, worried about the likely impact on their own hunting activities and were especially worried about an increased cost and getting worse hunting grounds for themselves. No one, however, questioned the right of the landowner to dispose of his/her hunting rights. Most of the interviewees were familiar with high volume hunting and were against it. Some of the interviewees believed that high volume hunting was decreasing. In stead the focus would be on the nature experience.

All of the interviewees agreed that there was lack of hunting management in Iceland. Some of the interviewees mentioned the necessary management would possibly follow, if hunting was commercialised, but the management should also guarantee that the locals would be able to hunt as well. Not everyone agreed with this opinion.

The interviewees generally agreed that hunting tourism would have both positive and negative social, ecological and economic impacts on rural societies and on hunting.

Table 3. Positive and negative social, ecological and economic impacts of hunting tourism

Social impacts	Ecological impacts	Economic impacts
Positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased variety of jobs ● Promotion of regions ● Information flow to hunters 	Positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information flow to hunters ● Systematic monitoring 	Positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Income to the area ● Better use of tourism infrastructure ● Multiplier effect
Negative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local hunters ● Possible conflicts with other businesses 	Negative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unsustainable use of resources (game, nature) 	Negative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased price for local hunters ● Possible conflicts with other businesses/activities

Generally, it can be said that there should be possibilities for both locals and visitors, who hunt in order to reach social acceptance of developing hunting tourism. If hunting tourism is well organised and in consent with the society it can be very positive and contributed to both society and the hunting activities in the area.

The interviewees agreed that hunting has impacts on the nature and that it would be necessary to be aware of the limitations natural environments and game populations place on hunting and hunting tourism activities. Many of the interviewees pointed out that hunting tourism could fit well with the existing tourism in their region, especially farm tourism. Some interviewees pointed on the other hand, pointed out that hunting tourism does not always go along with other activity in the area. For example it would not be safe to conduct other kinds of nature tourism in the same areas as hunting during the hunting season for obvious reasons. Potential conflicts between sheep farmers and hunters regarding goose hunting and reindeer hunting were mentioned. Interviewees also pointed out that not all landowners/ farmers allow hunting on their land and hunters have to respect that.

Almost every interviewee saw hunting and hunting tourism as an opportunity both regarding to the game and new services for hunters/tourists. Many interviewees mentioned that farmers have adapted tourism into their farming with great success and hunting could easily be adopted to be one of the activities offered by these farmers. Landowners/farmers who are not offering tourism services can also use other opportunities e.g. by offering hunting grounds and cooperating with those who provide service to tourists. There are also opportunities for tourism companies to get better use of their facilities in the shoulder season or off-season to regular tourism. Initiatives of hunting tourism could therefore help expand the tourist season in Iceland. Interviewees mentioned mainly geese, ptarmigan, seabirds and fox as potential game species for hunting tourism.

Some interviewees were also convinced that the opportunities to develop the hunting tourism depended on location. Better operational environment for hunting and hunting activities is something that most of the interviewees also mentioned and emphasised. It was pointed out that better framework could e.g. increase income, make hunting grounds more available for hunters and encourage responsible hunting. Most interviewees saw hunting tourism as an opportunity to create jobs in rural areas along with increased income. According to the interviewees, many factors could challenge the development of hunting tourism e.g. short hunting season, weather conditions, population fluctuations of game, hunting rights, the society and the economic recession. The interviewees agreed that hunting tourism would probably never become the main source of livelihood for anyone.

Some of the interviewees predicted that the hunting would be more professional in the future and hunting tourism will increase. Some also predicted that the attitude towards hunting would probably change. It was pointed out that many people are simply against hunting and this opinion would gain in popularity in the future. Some of the interviewees also saw that hunting tourism would increasingly be offered by farmers/landowners. Most of the interviewees thought that high volume hunting was not acceptable and that kind of hunting would decrease in the future. Instead of focusing the hunting activities as much as possible on bad, the focus of the hunting activities would be on the nature experience.

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