Tourism Development in Resource Peripheries
Conflicting and Unifying Spaces in Northern Sweden

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Akademisk avhandling

som med vederbörligt tillstånd av Rektor vid Umeå universitet för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentligt försvar i S Hörsal 205, byggnad Samhällsvetarhuset, fredagen dagen den 18 oktober, kl. 13:00.
Avhandlingen kommer att försvaras på engelska.

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Abstract
The northern Swedish inland is a sparsely populated area with a historical dependence upon natural-resource extraction. Therefore, this region has traditionally been defined as a resource periphery for extractive purposes. However, the rise of tourism challenges this narrative by producing a pleasure periphery for touristic purposes. A pleasure periphery in this context is linked to nature-based tourism that sells dreams of pristine nature and/or vast wilderness. This touristic “story” therefore becomes an antithesis to the region’s industrial past. The overlapping touristic and extractive spaces, and their seemingly conflicting development narratives, constitute the theoretical approach to tourism development in the scope of this thesis. Further, this thesis adds to theorizing tourism development in northern peripheries, by contesting established development theories against each other in a northern Swedish setting. Multiple methods using both quantitative and qualitative data are used to answer the questions in this thesis.

Three conclusions can be derived based on the empirical findings. Firstly, established tourism development theories are at risk of being invalid in more peripheral settings. As an example, protected areas constitute a poor development strategy, and are not producing tourism employment as shown in studies from more densely populated regions. Other destination-development theories presupposing urban-like infrastructure, which is absent in peripheries, also become invalid. Secondly, conflicts between tourism and extractive industries do occur at the discursive level where they tend to be described in dualistic terms. However, in terms of labor-market processes, findings show that tourism and resource extraction are actually rather interrelated. Within mining tourism, such a related diversification occurs due to the spatial distribution of mining and tourism skills and the interaction between them. Thirdly, the location of tourism destinations is broadly governed by resource-extractive infrastructure. Therefore, tourism destinations are normally located in places that have previously been made accessible via investments in the resource-extractive sector. Hence, resource extraction projects (unintentionally) produce accessibility to the touristic “wilderness”.

In summary, resource extraction becomes a precondition for tourism development in northern Sweden, rather than a conflicting land-use competitor. Therefore, planners and decision makers should consider incorporating aspects of tourism in future plans for resource extraction as these industries often spatially overlap, intertwine, and consequently form a development symbiosis in northern resource peripheries.

Keywords
Tourism development, labor market transformation, related diversification, path dependence resource periphery, pleasure periphery,