National park tourists and their integration to surrounding rural community

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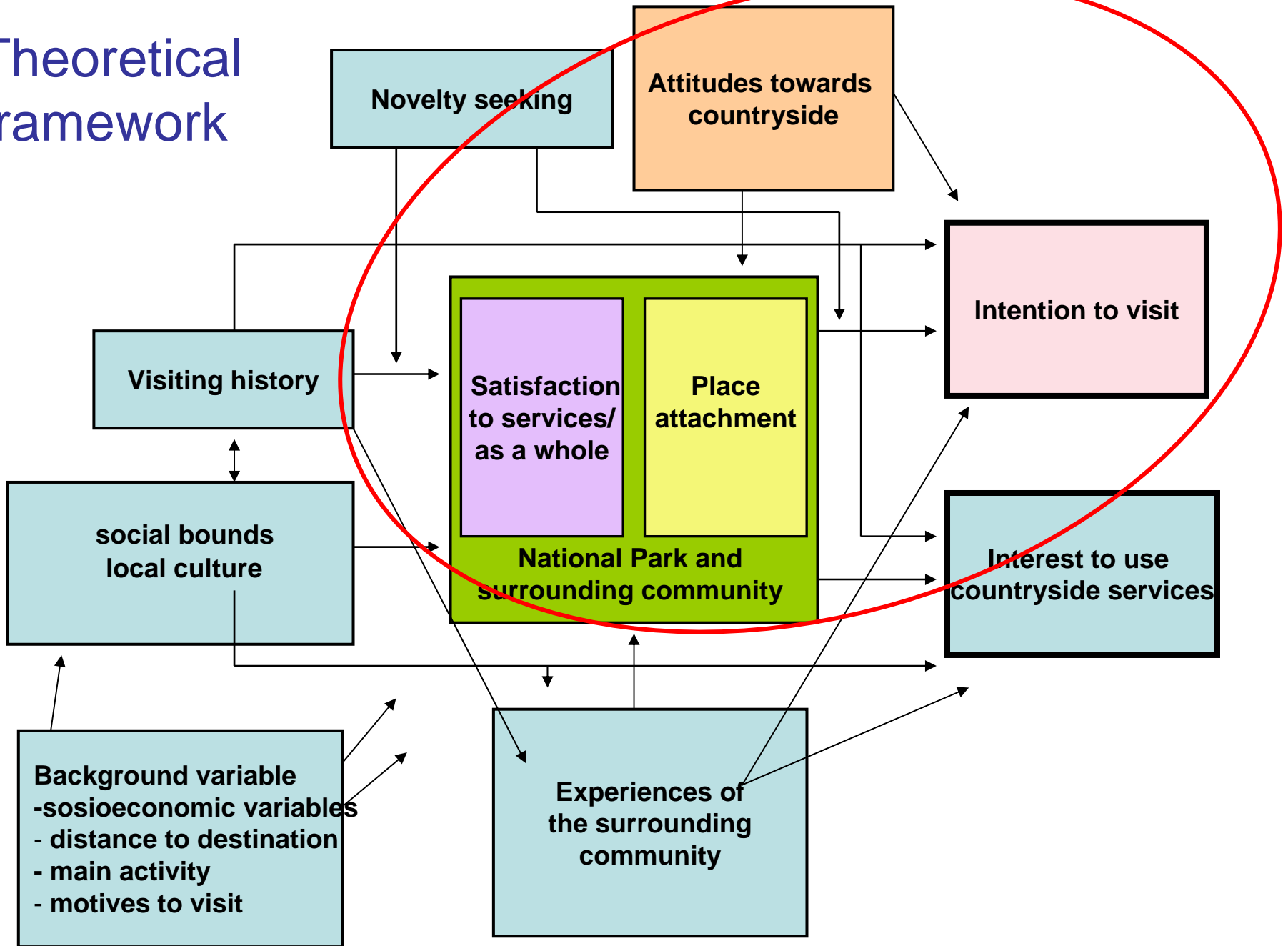Eija Pouta and Asta Sarkki

Background

- Nature tourism is seen as an opportunity to revitalize rural, declining communities
- National parks as attractions for nature tourism

Aim of the study

- *'Protected areas as a generator of rural vitality' – project*
  - *what kind of economic and social impacts the national park recreation and tourism has on the surrounding rural community, and what kind of interaction the NP visitors and the rural community have?*

- *This sub-study aims to explain the intentions for future visits*
  - *place attachment, attitudes towards rural areas, and the satisfaction with the services in rural communities*
  - *is it possible to encourage future visits*

Theoretical framework

- Novelty seeking
- Attitudes towards countryside
- Intention to visit
- Visiting history
- Satisfaction to services/ as a whole
- Place attachment
- National Park and surrounding community
- social bounds local culture
- Interest to use countryside services
- Background variable
  -sosioeconomic variables
  - distance to destination
  - main activity
  - motives to visit
- Experiences of the surrounding community

Theoretical concepts

- Place attachment: positive connection or bond between a person and a particular place
  - Place dependence
  - Place identity
    - (Williams et al1992, Williams and Patterson 1999 Kaltenborn & Williams 2002, Kyle et al. 2004, etc.)

- Consumer satisfaction and loyalty
    - (Baker & Crompton 2000, Tian-Cole & Crompton 2003, Hyfson et al. 2004)

- Attitudes towards countryside
    - (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980)

Data and methods

- Visitor survey data
  - questionnaire delivered at site together with a regular visitor survey conducted by Metsähallitus; shared data
  - questionnaire returned by mail

- Seitseminen NP, N=342
- Linnasaari NP, N=213
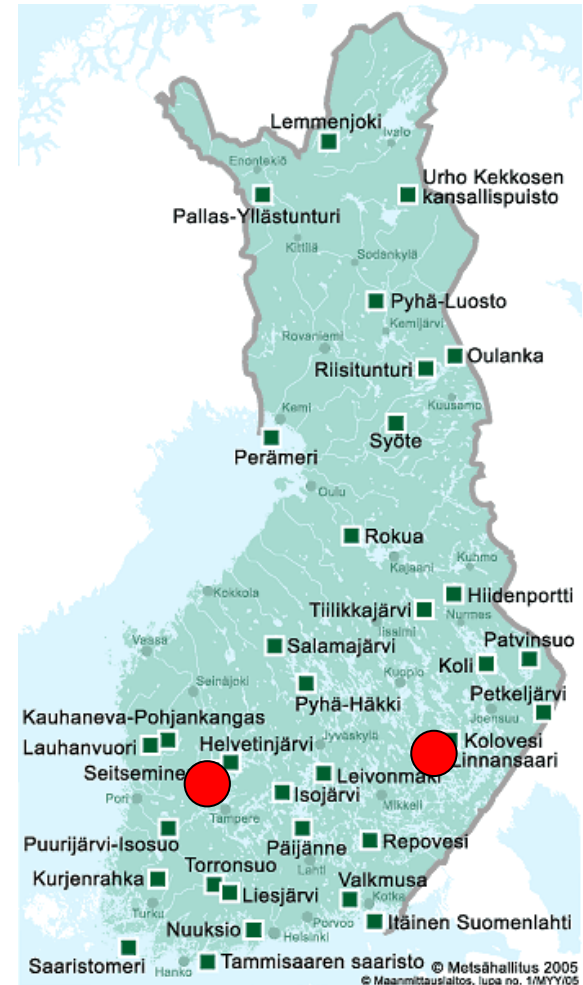
Measurement: visit intention

- Intention to visits in the region of National Park in future 5 years?

- Binary: Yes / No

- Descriptives: 2/3 intended to visit in five years

Measurement: Place dependence

- 4 scales (1-5) focusing on activities and place
  - This region provides best opportunities for my activities.
  - Visiting this area instead of any other area is more pleasant for me
- Alpha coefficient 0.73
- ➢ Sum variable
- ➢ Descriptives:
  - median score 2.5
  - 5 % highly dependent

Measurement: Place identity

- 4 scales (1-5) focusing on self/personality and place:
  - Visiting this area tells much about me and my personality
  - I feel that I can really be my self on visit to this area
- Alpha coefficient 0.74
- Sum variable
- Descriptives
  - median score 3
  - 17 % of respondents had high place identity (mean>4)

Measurement: attitude towards countryside

- Attitude toward the rural area around national park

- No references from previous literature

- 13 semantic differential scales

➢ Sum variable using all scales

➢ Descriptives: median score 3.8 (1-5)

Measurement: area satisfaction

- 16 items: transportation, shops, lodging, restaurants, program services, information, events, recreation opportunities, sceneries, staff, environment

- Satisfaction scale (1-5)

➢ Sum variable

➢ 3 factors for satisfaction components

Satisfaction components

	Factors		
	1 **Services**	**2** **Landscape & env.**	**3** **Personnel**
Public transportation	**.397**	.036	.033
Shops	**.500**	.068	.233
Lodging	**.629**	.083	.044
Restaurants & cafes	**.531**	.186	.169
Program services	**.666**	.025	.082
Gas stations	**.552**	.051	.122
Information	**.485**	.284	.180
Cultural events	**.656**	.036	.101
Outdoor recreation services	**.532**	.194	.125
Friendliness of staff	.258	.217	**.822**
Willingness of staff to serve	.240	.246	**.810**
Landscape	.138	**.579**	.133
No litter	.086	**.761**	.163
Peace	.091	**.802**	.015
Safety	.080	**.591**	.140

Logistic regression for future visits

	Coef-ficient	p-value	Exp(b)	Coef-ficient	p-value	Exp(b)
Place dependence	0.084	0.062	1.088	0.074	0.102	1.077
Place identity	0.142	0.000	1.152	0.144	0.000	1.155
Attitude towards countryside	0.030	0.137	1.030	0.040	0.041	1.041
Satisfaction	0.026	0.006	1.026			
-services sat.				0.030	0.023	1.031
-landscape & environment sat.				-0.047	0.253	0.954
-personnel sat.				0.069	0.259	1.071
Constant	-4.447	0.000	0.012	-3.995	0.000	0.018
n	438			438		
Proportion of correctly classified (%) cut point 0.50	71.5			71.4		
χ^2- test p-value	0.000			0.000		
Pseudo R^2	0.217			0.216		

Path model for future visits, alternative 1

* = Significant at p<0.05
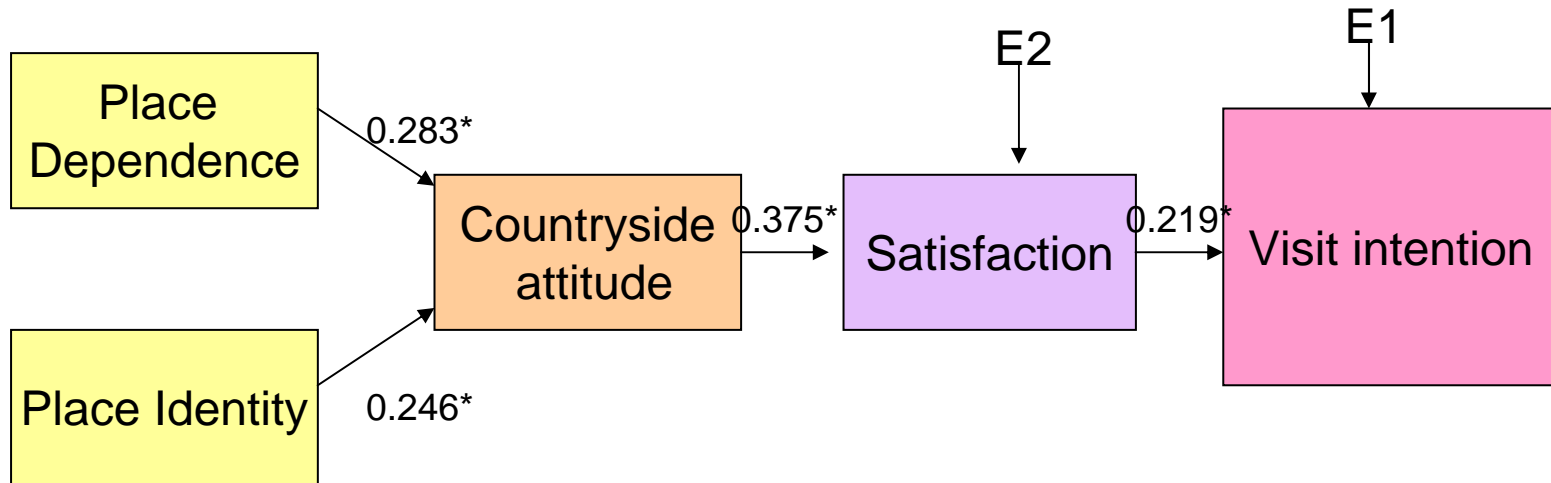
CORRELATIONS AMONG INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Dependence-Identity *

E1-Dependence *

E1-Identity *

E2-Dependence *

E2-Identity *
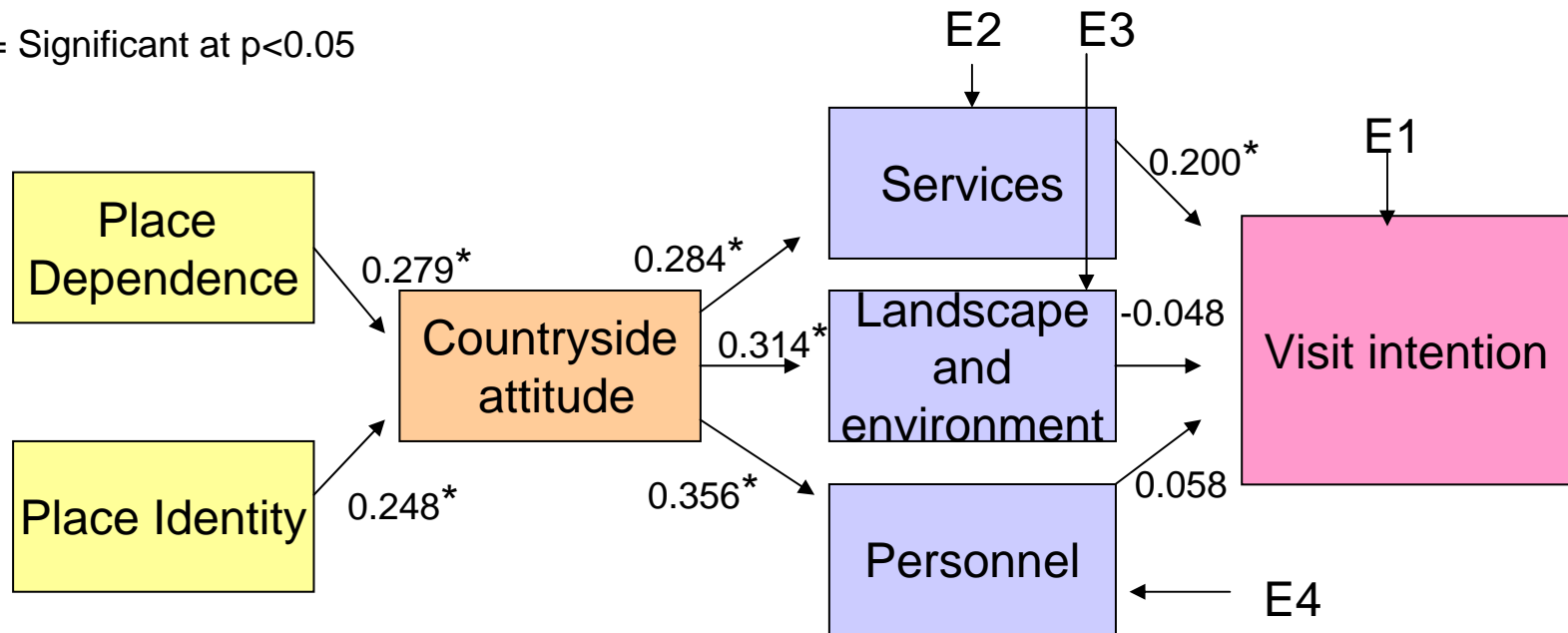
GOODNESS OF FIT SUMMARY FOR METHOD = ML (critical values)

Chi^2=0.598, p=0.439 (p>0.05)

NFI=0.999, CFI=1.000, GFI=0.999 (>0.950)

95% CL RMSEA=[0.000, 0.115] (<0.05)

Path model for future visits, alternative 2

* = Significant at p<0.05

Place Dependence → Countryside attitude: 0.279*

Place Identity → Countryside attitude: 0.248*

Countryside attitude → Services: 0.284*

Countryside attitude → Landscape and environment: 0.314*

Countryside attitude → Personnel: 0.356*

Services → Visit intention: 0.200*

Landscape and environment → Visit intention: -0.048

Personnel → Visit intention: 0.058

CORRELATIONS AMONG INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Dependence-Identity *

E1-Dependence *, E1-Identity *

E2-Dependence *, E2-Identity *

E2-E3 *, E3-E4 *

GOODNESS OF FIT SUMMARY FOR METHOD = ML (critical values)

Chi^2=4.031, p=0.545 (p>0.05)

NFI=0.995, CFI=1.000, GFI=0.997 (>0.950)

95% CL RMSEA=[0.000, 0.059] (<0.05)

Conclusion

- The path model shows the structure behind intention:

  – Place attachment and rural attitudes are important predictors of satisfaction and visit intention

- From the components of satisfaction only service satisfaction effects on visits intention

- Only small part of the variation of intention explained

How to continue

- SEM-modeling continues, including latent variables

- What is the role of economic variables (travel cost and income) in relation to psychological variables?

- Are re-visitors heavy spenders?

- How do the areas differ, and what are the reasons behind possible differences?

Thank you!