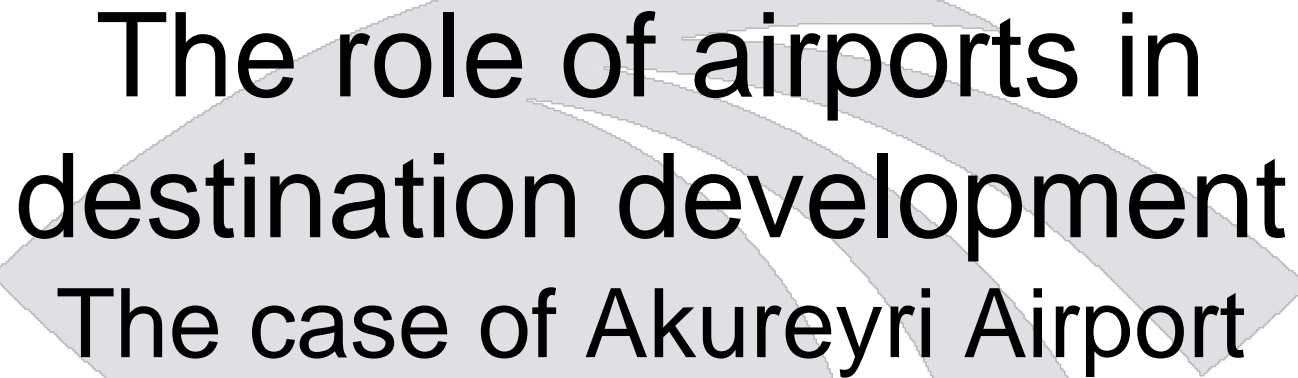


**19th Nordic Symposium in Nordic Tourism and Hospitality Research**  
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**The role of airports in  
destination development  
The case of Akureyri Airport**

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# Why international air traffic in peripheral areas?



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*islands in peripheral areas are often at a disadvantage due to their relative isolation and lack of affordable access (Mykletun, Crofts og Mykletun, 2001)*

- Airports are an important component of a destination's transport system:
  - Airports provide easier access
  - International access influences competitive advantage of areas (Enright & Newton, 2004)
  - Fare costs, travel time and distance travelled can be major factors in destination selection (Prideaux, 2000)
- Airports play a crucial role in tourism development in peripheral areas (Schürmann & Talaat, 2000)

*in this instance, airports act as operational spheres of influence for the development of international tourism (Halpern, 2008)*



- Seasonal changes of demand – a common problem in peripheral areas: how can the tourist season be extended?
  - Charter flights in some areas
  - Can an airport attract visitors to the destination?
  - The airport as a gateway to the destination – the tourism product is a key element

# North Iceland



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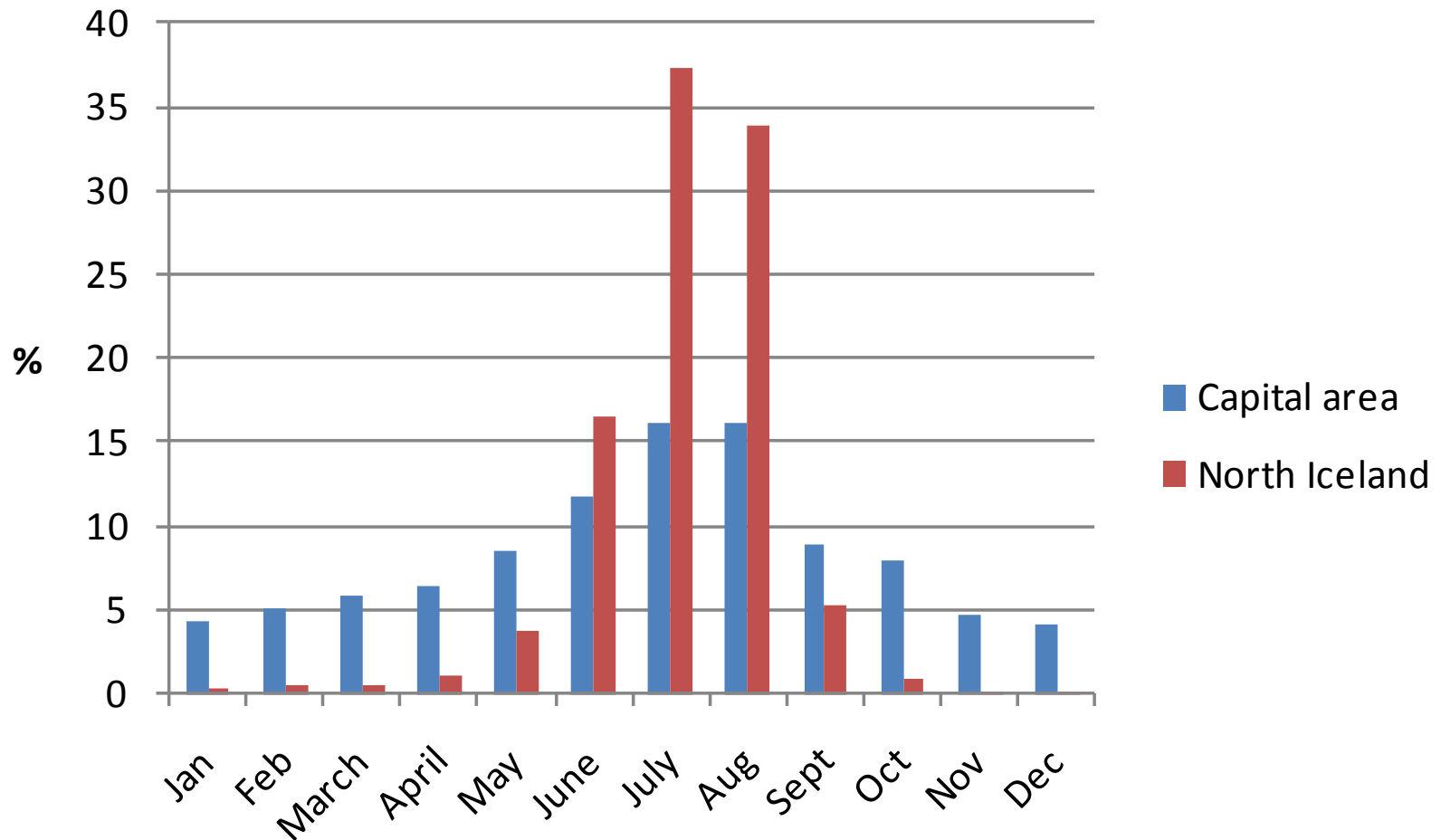


- Scarcely populated area
  - approx. 40.000 inhabitants in N-Iceland, more than 50% live in the Akureyri-region
- As a peripheral area
  - Relatively far away from Keflavík Airport, where 97% of all outbound passengers
- Seasonal tourism demand

# Overnight stays of foreign tourists in 2009



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Source: Statistics Iceland, 2010

# International flights via Akureyri



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- Big matter of interest => New route to Iceland
  - Scheduled flights Akureyri-Copenhagen since 2006 (only during summer)
- Future vision: regular flights all year round



# Impact of international flights?



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# The respondents



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- 80% of the respondents arrived in Iceland via Akureyri Airport, 20% in Keflavík
- Have been to Iceland before, most of them 1-2 times
- 46% only stayed in North Iceland
- Purpose of trip:
  - Holiday (65,5%)
  - Visiting friends and/or relatives (34%)

# Average length of stay in North Iceland



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- Visitors arriving via Keflavík airport: 1,8 nights (statistics from the visitor survey in Kef. 2004)
- Visitors arriving via Akureyri in 2009:

**7,3 nights**

# Something to think about



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- Is North Iceland developing as a destination?
- Now: Regular flights only available during the summer (the high season)
  - Is it possible to extend the season?
  - Stability and patience
  - Charter flights?
  - A deal with a travel agency?

What do you think?

