Master Thesis
Towards Community Sustainability:
Place Identity Formation in Ölands Skördefest

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Abstract

While discussions on the capacity of food tourism on promoting and maintaining the sustainability of host community have recently gained interest in tourism academia, the intersection between food events, tourism and sustainability need to be explored in a greater depth. This study focuses on place identity formation and examines how Ölands Skördefest shapes local residents’ place identity. In-depth interviews conducted with business representatives and tourism department members are themed analyzed through the lend of Identity Process Theory (IPT). The results illustrate how Ölands Skördefest shapes five components of place identity, and in particular how respondents felt about distinctiveness, belonging and self-efficacy. The study offers an understanding of how Ölands Skördefest contributes to promoting community sustainability through strengthening local place identity.

Keywords

Place identity formation, community sustainability, food event, food tourism, identity process theory, sustainable tourism
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1 Introduction

Food events and sustainable tourism are both prominent concepts explored by tourism scholars. Even though discussions on the potential role of food tourism in constructing and securing the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the host communities have recently attracted attention from tourism scholars, the intersection between food events, tourism and sustainability remains a niche research field. This is surprising as studies focused on food “add a missing perspective to the quest for sustainable tourism” (Scarpato, 2003, p.140). Moreover, research at the intersection between the three concepts exploring community sustainability in the food event tourism- will bridge knowledge on food events and sustainable tourism.

Given the growing interest in sustainable food tourism as well as the sustainability of event tourism, a systematic summary of current research on the two concepts is the first step to understand food event tourism from a sustainable perspective and to identify aims of this thesis project. Despite the regular idea of food event tourism and sustainability, this project also poses the thesis that food event tourism plays an important role in forming and enhancing local residents’ place identity.

The meaning and contribution of food have been extensively discussed by scholars. Especially in rural community research, food is a significant factor, which shows that food can socially influence the local residents. For instance, Hinrichs (2003) discussed the process of food system localization in a rural community, and the interactions and conflicts with the trend of globalization. Wells et al. (1999) positioned food and agricultural production as the community foundations that create relationships between people and places and extend network for local small-scale actions. Food security and quality is another eye-catching research topic in rural community research, which relates to the total well-being of the rural community (Quandt & Rao, 1999; Wilson, 2010; Shariff & Khor, 2008).
Food connects individual identities to places (Timothy & Ron, 2013). As Timothy and Ron (2013) argue, gastronomies have developed in different ways in different places and therefore food can be the prominent component of the uniqueness of place and sense of place. These studies demonstrate the significance of food as a significant promoter in identity construction, especially in rural community. Thus, in order to explore the capacity of food, tourism academia start seeking the possibility of combing food and tourism to promote rural community development, which leads to the debates and discussion of “food tourism” (Sims, 2009; Hall, 2005; Backe, 2013; Gössling & Mattsson, 2002). For instance, as Sims (2009) argues, food can be regarded as a material for providing authenticity, local food can play an important role in the sustainable tourism experience, and establish the connection between tourists and the region, and its culture and heritage.

Food tourism is an emerging tourism phenomenon defined as “the desire to experience a particular type of food or the produce of a specific region” (Hall & Sharples, 2008). Food event tourism, on the other hand, is about tourists’ participation in events that promote “locally sourced ingredients, traditional recipes and taking time to source, prepare and enjoy food” (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010). The interaction between food event and tourism can be also seen from the perspective of tourism development and planning. Within this perspective, tourism needs fundamental support from the food sector, to ensure that tourists satisfy their physical and mental expectations. This is so because the food is often either the primary or the secondary motivation for a destination choice (UNWTO, 2012). Moreover, due to the rapid growth of the food tourism and increasing numbers of food tourists, destination marketing organizations consider food as a unique tourism attraction (Mykletun & Gyimothy, 2010). Hence, the need for better knowledge about the role of food in a destination drives tourism research and discussions focused on food tourism (Andersson & Mossberg, 2017).

The growing interest in food tourism, the popularity, and growth of food-themed events has been well documented as well (Getz et al., 2014). More recently food-themed events have
attracted the attention of tourism scholars (Getz & Robinson, 2014; Getz et al., 2014; Getz et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2014). For instance, Getz et al. (2015) discussed the function of promoting food consumption, which implies that food tourism events can be regarded as an effective promoter in supply-side development and marketing connecting purchase side (restaurants and chefs) with produce side (fisheries and agricultural producers). Besides the marketing and economic promoting function, another trend in tourism research demonstrates scholars’ interest on the environmental and social sustainability of food and food events (Gössling & Hall, 2013; Fassio, 2017). Importantly, Fassio (2017) noted the possibility of cultural territorial reconnection through food tourism and extended the definition of “sustainable food event” from “food events with sustainable organic food” to “food events which operated in a sustainable and environment-friendly way”.

Some literature in tourism studies is dedicated to effects and impacts of food events on different local stakeholders (Cavicchi & Santini, 2014). However, the mainstream of food tourism research tends to focus on tourists (demand side). Consequently, the studies that explore foodies’ motivations and behaviors are well established (Getz & Robinson, 2014; Anderson & Mossberg, 2017; Getz et al., 2015). Organizational management, decision-making process, sustainable practice (mostly environmental aspect) and place branding are also mentioned by some studies (Fassio, 2017; Axelsen & Swan, 2010; Lee & Arcodia, 2011).

Food events are usually conceptualized as a driven force of economic and environmental progress and scholars tend to overlook local community perspective regarding residents as a rightful stakeholder in the food event. Moreover, past research has focused primarily on economic indicators as a way to assess impacts of food events on a local community (Brown et al., 2015). Research on how food events can socially affect the local community is rather scarce.

Even though scholars tend to overlook social effects of food events on local communities, some studies suggested that food events can make a contribution to local residents’ sense of place and
pride, because they relate to local products and culinary arts consumption (Hjalager and Corigliano, 2000; Che, Veeck & Veeck, 2005). Likewise, some tourism scholars noticed that identity formation can be positively or negatively influenced by tourism practices (Anglin, 2015; Ding, 2017; De Bres & Davis, 2001). Arguably, therefore, it is worth to further explore place identity as a special type of identity in the context of food event tourism. The impacts of the food event on the identity of host community residents can be used to assess social aspects of food event sustainability (Everett & Aitchison, 2008).

1.1 Purpose of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to explore ways in which Ölands skördefest is related to host community members’ cognition and sense of place. In particular, this project investigates how food events shape people’s place identity.

In-depth interviews were conducted with different event stakeholders, including event organizers, tourism department employees, hospitality industry employees, farm shop owners and local restaurant owners. These event stakeholders were chosen as respondents in the interview because they are directly connected with the food event, and they have been included in decision-making, promoting and local tourism sector.

This thesis examines the social influence of food events by employing the concept of place identity formation. It discusses the process of how food events contribute to the formation of place identity among members of the local community who participate in food event. Moreover, this project explores the “emergence of place identity” as the criteria to assess the social sustainability of food event tourism (Brown et al., 2015).
2 Context of the study

Öland, an island in Kalmar County known as the second largest Swedish island located in the Baltic Sea. Ölands skördefest – the Öland harvest festival- has grown to be the most popular harvest festival in Sweden that has attracted high numbers of visitors since 1997. Ölands skördefest has been hosted by more than 500 local businesses and over 1000 different activities take place every year around the island. Both permanent and temporary farms open their gates with the sale of their agricultural products and handicrafts, restaurants also promoting on their unique cuisine with local products. Ölands skördefest is operated by Ölands skördefest (SVB) AB and owned by Skördefestens Vänner Ideell Förening – an association included local individuals and companies who aim to promote Ölands skördefest as a popular event to ensure its long-term development. Ölands skördefest is organized for reviving an ancient farmer’s tradition of celebrating Michaelmas and harvesting agricultural products for the winter. Besides traditions, Ölands skördefest also aims to promote and support Öland’s fine cuisine, innovative culinary products and rich culture (“Ölands Skördefest – the story in English”, 2017).

Ölands skördefest is considered an attraction that prolongs tourist season on Ölands. However, besides the extending the tourist season, the organizers of Ölands skördefest have the ambition to achieve a sense of togetherness across Öland island among local people, increasing focus and accessibility, and create better business opportunities on Öland through this unique event.
3 Literature Review

The literature review including existing researches on place identity and food events. Also, tourism-related research with the concept of place identity is mentioned, to emphasize the significance and application of studying place identity in tourism academia.

3.1 Place Identity

Place identity is considered a component of sustainability, and place identity formation process tends to be viewed as a part of sustainable development (Pol & Castrechini, 2002; Valera & Guàrdia, 2002; Uzzell et al., 2002). Several scholars have employed the concept of place identity to study the social and environmental sustainability of rural communities (e.g. Vaske & Kobrin, 2001; De Bres & Davis, 2001; Pol, 2002).

Gu and Ryan (2008) were first to introduce Breakwell’s (1986) identity process theory to discuss the impacts of tourism on local communities in China. They concluded that community place identity can be affected by tourism in terms of employment potential, length of residency and perceived intrusiveness of tourism. Gu and Ryan (2008) also found that local communities’ support and concerns about tourism development are affected by place identity. On the other hand, Manzo and Perkins (2006) suggested that place attachment and place identity can motivate cooperative efforts to improve one’s community. In other words, place identity contributes to community participation and empowerment in of a local community.

Overall literature suggests that place identity can either positively or negatively influence individual and community’s’ response to changes from tourism or other forms of development (Nukoo & Gursoy, 2012; Wang & Chen, 2015; Strzelecka et al., 2017), but it has rarely looked at how place identity can be shaped by changes due to tourism and related events. As such, Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012) investigated how resource-based occupational identity,
environmental identity, and gender identity can affect residents’ attitudes to tourism and their supportive behavior for more tourism. They found that while place identity has a direct bearing on resident support for tourism, it may not always influence residents’ attitudes toward tourism. Strzelecka et al. (2017) revealed place identity can directly influence how empowered tourism is to community residents. In other words, place identity determines how empowered residents can become from tourism development. Wang and Chen (2015) applied Breakwell’s (1986) model of identity process and used its four principles (distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy) to evaluate whether place identity can shape local residents’ support of tourism development. The results show that residents’ perception of tourism development is only affected by their levels of self-efficacy. Lee (2013) proposed a different perspective to understand how place identity can influence resident’s response to tourism. Namely, he incorporated the concept of place identity and place dependence and other place-related constructs as one aspect of community attachment, and he found out that community attachment can be a significant predictor of residents’ awareness of benefits from sustainable tourism (Lee, 2013). Other scholars found place identity might negatively influence local residents’ attitude towards tourism development when they regard tourism as a threat of changing their lifestyle, community and their relationship with local places (e.g. Kaján, 2014; Manzo and Perkins, 2006). For instance, Chen, Wang and Xu’s (2017) research shows how place identity affects the attitude of local people towards dark tourism development from a case study on post-disaster residents in a post-earthquake town. Most of the past literature, however, is concerned with the mechanism of how place identity impacts tourism-related phenomena, whereas the discussion on how tourism-related phenomena shape the formation of place identity is understudied.

Place identity can also play a significant role in promoting sustainable and environment-friendly behaviors. Vaske and Kobrin (2001) explained how attachment to local natural resources can facilitate environmentally responsible behavior (ERB) in an individual’s everyday life. In their article, Vaske and Kobrin (2001) used the concept of place identity to investigate
the relationship between place attachment and environmentally responsible behavior, and results of their study suggested that place identity was significantly related to ERB. These results imply that the strong place identity encourages environment-friendly behaviors. Finally, the research on place identity proposed that a place identity can influence individual’s environmental attitudes and social norms, which in turn leads to changing personal norms (Hernández et al., 2010). In other words, place identity is linked to environmental transgression.

Another discourse of place identity and tourism concerns the interaction between place identity and cultural sustainability. For instance, Jeong and Santos (2004) explore the conflicts between globalization, tradition and place identity through the Kangnung Dano festival in Korea. They found that the traditional festival can be regarded as a cultural framework for reconstructing place identity and achieving the balance within different types of conflicts. Vong (2013), on the other hand, examined the mediating role of place identity in heritage tourism, the result shows that residents’ place identity mediates between place attachment and perceptions heritage tourism. Finally, Yuen (2005) illustrated that the comprehension of place identity can be the motivation for individuals to participate in cultural conservation. In contrast, Ashworth (2013) suggested that heritage conservation is likely to construct place identity.

Some of the alternative effects of place identity on local communities were also noted by Devien-Wright (2009), who reported that place identity can promote the concept of “Not In My Back Yard” when a new development in the community disrupts pre-existing emotional attachments and threatens the process of identity. A similar perspective was presented by Wester-Herber (2004), who noted that place identity can be put at risk due to the planning process and land-use practices. Specifically, place identity can be affected in a negative way if changes are made to a landscape by the introduction of a high-risk and stigmatized industrial ventures (Wester-Herber, 2004).

In sum, the importance of study place identity also was discussed by different scholars from
various disciplines. For instance, from a psychological perspective, Bernardo and Palma-Oliveira (2016) demonstrated that place identity correlates with neighborhood satisfaction. Also, the interaction between tourism (and events) and place identity has been discussed by some tourism scholars (Getz, 2012). For instance, Dimache et al. (2017) show how museum visiting experience helps construct place identity by historical narratives. Hallak et al. (2012) concluded that place identity promoted the performance of community entrepreneurs by boosting their self-efficacy of local entrepreneurs and their support for the community.

According to the above discussion, place identity can influence individuals’ reaction, response, and attitude to the place on social and physical levels. For this thesis project, it is necessary to understand how place identity interacts with the activities conducted in the place (particularly food events) (Stedman et al., 2004). Thus, a review of food events is required.

3.2 Food Event

Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin was a French lawyer and politician, but well-known as a gourmet, who published famous work *Physiologie du goût* (The Physiology of Taste). Brillat-Savarin influenced the comprehension of modern gastronomy, and he is also the first scholar who proposed the connection between food and identity. According to his famous aphorism, “Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are.” (Brillat-Savarin, 1970, p.13), it is undoubted that food plays a significant role in constructing individual’s identity. More recently, the additional function of food is discussed, which contributes to identity formation process and establishes unique marker of local identity (Bell & Valentine, 1997; Caplan, 1997; Cook & Crang, 1996). Therefore, as a system of maintaining the consumption, production, and meaning of food, the discussion of food events’ role is inevitable.

According to Getz and Robinson’s (2014) narrative, food events or agriculture-themed events are important for rural communities. Varies of positive impacts from food events have been
widely recognized. Hall and Sharples (2008) for instance identified the significant function of promoting urban and rural economic development. However, they emphasized the impacts on other aspects of sustainability such as in environmental and social dimensions are poorly studied.

Hall and Sharples (2008) also studied a number of food-related festivals and events all around the world and provided a product-perspective model to categorize food-related festivals and events: (1) generic food events without local focus, which implies ordinary food events in most of the context; (2) generic food events with focus on locality, the products on these events all come from a specific producing field; (3) multiple themed food events, which are not limited to one single product; (4) events with single category of products, they always focus on one particular product, like oyster or wine; (5) events with single specific product or food type, for instance, exhibition of products from one particular brand belongs to this type of food-related event.

However, research of Hall and Sharples (2008) is limited in the supply side of food events. Therefore, Getz and Robinson (2014) extended the researching field into demand side and explored the participants of food-related events – “foodies” as they call them. They showed the connection between being a foodie and participation in food-related events. They discover that most of the foodies are preferring a multidimensional special event experience. They also stated the importance of food event in the construction of destination experience, which has practical meaning for food tourism design and marketing.

Getz et al. (2015) continued to study the interaction between foodies and food-related events. The segmentation of different foodies is revealed in this study. According to authors’ categories, two different types of foodies are recognized: on one hand, the small segment, which will regard food experiences as main motivation of travel, called dynamic foodies, and these foodies prefer to specialist learning events; on the other hand, the large segment, called active foodies, who
prefer enjoyment events. Different level of involvement of food leads to a different lifestyle and travel attitude is also concluded in this article.

In sum, literature in food events study tend to have two main focal point: firstly, the demand side, which implies target client group of food events (foodies), discussions on client behaviour, motivation and marketing are mainstreams in this area; secondly, the supply side, which is focused on food and agriculture producer, for instance, local farmers and restaurant owners, positive impacts on supply side are also mentioned in these articles. However, local community, which is also a significant stakeholder in the food-related event, seems to be overlooked in food event research. Otherwise, even if the concept of sustainability and sustainable development are introduced in food event research, academics tend to pay more attention to environmental and economic sustainability, than social sustainability.

Food event as a particular type of events, the discussion on food events and place identity might be ignored in current tourism academia. Nonetheless, literature still identifies the interaction between general events and place identity. For instance, Davis (2016) claims that place identity plays an important role in constructing the environment for festivals. Likewise, Jaeger and Mykletun (2013) investigate three rural festivals in Finnmark, Norway and discover these festivals can influence place identity by establishing and displaying local culture and heritage. De Bres and Davis (2001) also examine how Rollin’ Down the River Festival (which held along the Kansas River) impact and construct positive self-identification of the local community.

Events can also shape and display the place and community. For instance, Derrett (2003) suggests that community-based events can reflect the values, interests, and aspirations of residents. Place-making is another keyword of event research, which implies event is regarded as an approach to motivate local stakeholders, increase social cohesion, enhance togetherness, avoid placelessness and create place brand (Richard, 2017; Barrera-Fernández & Hernández-Escampa, 2017; Coghlan et al., 2017).
3.3 Identity, Community, and Sustainability

Identity formation has been recognized as an indication of social sustainability (Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Pol et al., 2002; Pol & Castrechini, 2002; Pol, 2002; Jiménez-Domínguez & Aguilar, 2002; Hay, 2010). Particularly, researchers in the community and urban planning have been interested in the interactions between identity, community, and sustainability. For instance, Choi and Turk (2011) emphasize that sustainability should be reconsidered within a social and community context with respect to social identity and local culture, and social cohesiveness. However, in Choi and Turk’s (2011) introduction of tourism sustainability indicators, identity is not included as an integral concept for sustainability evaluation. In fact, they deconstructed the concept of identity into several independent indicators, such as local residents’ attitude, community cohesion, and retention of local customs and language. Therefore, even if the word “identity” might not be mentioned, the importance of identity in sustainability evaluation researches is recognized by academia.

To understand the sustainability within the context of community, the comprehension of the community should be clarified. The concept of “community” can be interpreted into different meanings in interdisciplinary perspectives, including political philosophy, sociology, anthropology, history and so forth (Delanty, 2003, p.4). As Day (2006, p.24) concluded, these expressions of the community show the need for “a particular way of organizing social relationships, a general quality of sociability, a mutual regard and a summons to undertake joint social actions.” According to Day (2006), the community should not be simplified as a positive grouping of people, but rather it should be conceptualized as a system which supports people’s value.

Day’s (2006) argument aligns well with the understanding that individuals’ sense of identity and belonging are important in urban development (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). Thus, in the context of urban planning, Pol (2002) introduced a framework named City-Identity-Sustainability (CIS) to provide a new perspective that comprehends the connection between
identity and sustainability. CIS emphasizes the importance of identity in urban searches and planning process (Pol, 2002):

“The City-Identity-Sustainability (CIS) Network assumes that sustainability is not possible without a well-established social fabric that allows people to recognize themselves as a group or as a community sharing prototypical features and having achieved certain levels of social cohesion”. (p.9)

Following Pol’s (2002) framework, community sustainability is established on the basis of common identity, whereas this identity is constructed by three components: identification, cohesion, and satisfaction. Pol (2002) noted that the process of sustainability formation happens within the physical environment of community: a shared symbolic universe. According to Pol’s (2002) narrative, sustainability within the community is not only a label for environmental concerns but also include all the components of the community, like social behaviors, values, lifestyles, forms of production, technologies and social constructions.

Similar views on the connection between identity and community sustainability are proposed by other scholars as well. For instance, Stedman (1999) used the attachment and meaning of the community and place (which can be considered as another interpretation of place identity) to assess local residents’ quality of life, and then evaluate the sustainability of a local community. Interestingly, Magis (2010) offered a new perspective to explain the role of identity in sustainability; namely, for Magis (2010) identity is concluded as a factor of community resilience and it can enhance community's capacity to absorb disturbance.
4 Conceptual Framework and Method

The literature review reveals the limitation of research on the interrelationship between place identity and food events. However, increasing discussion on place identity within tourism and events context, and debates on how place identity can influence local social sustainability, established the basis for this thesis project. In the light of the above, the concept and the meaning of place identity needs further conceptualization for the purpose of this thesis project. Thus, the following paragraphs explore the theoretical framework for conceptualizing the identity formation process.

4.1 Place Identity

In order to describe the relationship between place and individual, several concepts established from different perspectives, such as sense of place (Tuan, 1975) and place attachment (Stokols, 1981). Despite the distinct narratives, the three concepts – place identity, sense of place and place attachment – are connected to each other, and they all aim to interpret how individuals are shaped by the experience in a place and the relationship between the individual and a place.

The concept of place identity begins with Tuan’s (1977) definition of a place: a spatial setting has been given meaning. Stedman et al. (2004) enhance this idea, claiming that the place consists of the physical environment, activities conducted in that environment and social/psychological processes. Identity is a related concept and according to Stets and Biga (2003), it as “a set of meanings attached to the self that serves as a standard or reference that guides behavior in situations”.

Place identity was first described and explained by Proshansky (1978), who wrote:

“…with respect to the physical world, the person’s personal of self-identity is defined and
expressed by his or her place-identity: a complex pattern of beliefs, values, feelings, expectations, and preferences relevant to the nature of the physical world.” (p.160)

In Proshansky’s view, place identity is constructed by physical reality and it represents a part of self-identity. Also, his assumption shows the concept of place identity aims to grasp the relationships between individuals and places. Proshansky et al. (1983) pursued further studies of the concept and claimed that social environment should be included in the components of place.

Thus, the difference between place identity, sense of place, and place attachment can be identified: Altman and Low (1992) explain that the concept of sense of place refers to “how people become emotionally involved in places in which they have a sense of belonging”; whereas the concept of place attachment is explained by Stokols (1981) as the bond which connects people and their place – where they prefer to stay and feel comfortable. As Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) states, the concept of place attachment is broader than place identity. In other words, place identity is one component place attachment that is undistinguishably linked with the development and maintenance of the self.

4.2 Identity Process Theory

In identity-related researches, Breakwell (1986) developed identity process theory (IPT) to offer an explanation of the formation of identity. As Breakwell (1986) proposed, the concept of self-identity structure can deconstruct into its content and value/effect dimensions, whereas its structure is regulated by two main processes, which are assimilation-accommodation and evaluation. As Jaspal (2013) explains:

...The assimilation–accommodation process refers to the absorption of new information in the identity structure (e.g. coming out as gay) and the adjustment which takes place in order
for it to become part of the structure (e.g. self-definition as gay and downplaying one’s religion). The evaluation process confers meaning and value on the contents of identity (e.g. viewing one’s sexual identity as a positive thing but one’s religious identity negatively). (p.4)

With the comprehension of two processes of identity structure, Breakwell (1986) introduced four original principles which impact identity construction process: distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy – and these principles were introduced into tourism academia by Gu and Ryan (2008). However, some researchers proposed additional principles towards the theory, which are based on their personal understanding and are not generally accepted. For instance, Vignoles et al. (2002) suggested two principles: belonging, which implies the emotion of being aware of being accepted; and meaning, which refers to the need to find significance and purpose in one’s life.

The first principle distinctiveness is interpreted by Breakwell (1986) as “the establishment of a sense of personal uniqueness”, which implies place identity is conducted by the awareness of the difference between individuals and people from other places. The second principle continuity refers to the continuity of time and situation, Twigger–Ross and Uzzell (1996) explain it as the identity maintenance process within a particular length of time. The third principle self-esteem- the feeling of personal worth, which implies the capacity of individual positively evaluate of something he or she identified. And the fourth principle self-efficacy means “feeling confident and in control of one’s life”, and it refers to “the individual’s belief in their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands” (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Identity process theory (Breakwell, 1986) is used as the conceptual framework to organize this study. Five principles of identity process are applied to explore the sense of place identity among the stakeholders of Öland’s event. Therefore, the framework base on Breakwell’s (1986) original narrative and an adaption from Dixon et al. (2014) and Vignoles et al. (2002), five
principles are identified as components of place identity, will be used to frame the analysis of the data and to evaluate the interaction between food events and place identity (Figure 2 for illustrated conceptual framework).

![Figure 2. Principles of place identity formation in food event tourism](image)

**Distinctiveness.** To identify distinctiveness, Hommon (1990) suggests that distinctiveness can be confirmed by respondents distinguish him/herself from others. In order to distinguish the response which shows distinctiveness in interviews, the comparative use of identification is the standard to evaluate distinctiveness. For instance, respondents defining themselves are unique and different from people who do not live on Öland island.

**Belonging.** For belonging, Dixon et al. (2014) state this component is referred to the sense of being known and accepted by others, which can be identified when respondents mention their positive relationship with other members in the community.

**Continuity.** Dixon et al. (2014) explain that the sense of continuity is based on time and it contributes to the stability of person-place relations. For continuity, Twigger–Ross and Uzzell
(1996) claim two dimensions which can measure the level of continuity: place-referent, implies individuals feel attached because of past activities in the place, and it can be confirmed when respondents mention their experience on previous Ölands skördefest; place-congruent, implies individuals feel attached because of physical environment, and it can be recognized when respondents show their preference of Öland’s physical environment (for example restaurants, coffee shops and farms).

**Self-esteem.** To measure the level of self-esteem, it can be recognized by statements of pride in the area (Twigger–Ross and Uzzell, 1996). Respondents will express their self-esteem when they feel pride and explain how this place providing positive feeling to them.

**Self-efficacy.** As Dixon et al. (2014) argued, it refers to the motivation of promoting the identity projects that express “who we are” and “what we are worth”. To recognize self-efficacy in interviews, Wood and Bandura (1989) suggest that self-efficacy can be confirmed when respondents show their confidence and capacity to face situational demands. Twigger–Ross and Uzzell (1996) also proposed that self-efficacy will be noted when respondents refer to the ease (or not) with which they could carry out their daily life in the place.

The analysis is based on respondents’ answers, which show their level of place identity, also demonstrate the contribution of food events on shaping place identity by these five components. The main research question asks:

> How food events shape people’s place identity, and what aspects of food events contribute to the sense and comprehension of Ölands community?

Six sub-research questions were developed for this project based on the conceptual framework presented above:
RQ1: How Ölands skördefest shapes perceived distinctiveness of Öland’s people?
RQ2: How Ölands skördefest shapes belonging of Öland’s people?
RQ3: How Ölands skördefest shapes perceived continuity of Öland’s people?
RQ4: How Ölands skördefest shapes self-esteem of Öland’s people?
RQ5: How Ölands skördefest shapes self-efficacy of Öland’s people?
RQ6: Which aspects of food events contribute to the sense of community in Ölands?

4.3 Method

The construction and formation of place identity are established on individual and personal context (Proshansky, 1978; Stets and Biga, 2003), which implies that personal learning and experience is the foundation of place identity. Thus, the nature of the study object (place identity) leads the methodological positioning of this research to social constructivism, since this research aims to explore a type of subjective meaning of individuals experience (Creswell, 2014, p. 8).

The position of social constructivism also requires a suitable data collecting approach. In this qualitative research, individuals’ expression of their personal experience is the most convincible data to interpret and explain the interaction between food event and place identity formation. Thus, in-depth interview is suitable to fit in this research (Creswell, 2014, p. 20-21, p.190), for identifying respondents’ personal feeling and awareness of their place identity. Approximately 10 interviews with people in Öland were organized, and the respondents were selected on the basis of the following criteria. Firstly, Öland should be their habitual place, which implies they are not tourists or short-term residents. Secondly, respondents were mainly stakeholders who described themselves as related to the Ölands skördefest in some way. Other community members were also interviewed under the condition they demonstrated relation to and/or involvement in the event.
Respondents were mainly representatives of businesses included on the official website of Ölands Tourist Center ([https://www.oland.se](https://www.oland.se)), and the website dedicated to the event in 2017 ([https://visitoland.com/en/oland-harvest-festival/](https://visitoland.com/en/oland-harvest-festival/)) which provides the information on restaurants, hotels, coffee shops, pubs, farmers and food manufacturers on Ölands island. Respondents were directly or indirectly involved in Ölands skördefest: either participating in this event or getting benefits because of the tourists who are attracted by this event. In addition, most of the respondents located in two main places on Öland island: Borgholm and Färjestaden, because most of the business activities during Ölands skördefest are happening in both two towns. Special attention was given to ethical consideration in this research, to gain the true opinions and attitudes from respondents. In conducted interviews, respondents might express negative attitudes towards the event and the place, which is the sensitive part of the topic. Thus, nicknames are given to respondents to protect their privacy and encourage them to express their true idea.

Respondents were contacted beforehand by phone and email, in which the academic purposes of research are explained, and anonymities are promised. The interviews lasted up to an hour, and respondents were encouraged to talk more about how their daily lives, careers or business are changed by Ölands skördefest. Respondents also reported their experiences, comprehensions, and senses on Ölands skördefest, also their emotions, feelings, and pride towards Ölands island. The basic information of interviewees is listed in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Born in Ölands?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algutsrum</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Farm Shop</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algutsrum</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Farm Shop</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Färjestaden</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Art Shop</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Färjestaden</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Tourist Informer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borgholm</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Tourist Informer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interviews with selected respondents were designed to enable evaluation of the local identity based on the five components of place identity (Table 2). Besides, questions about the attitude towards Öland’s tourism development will be mentioned, study the positive effects from local identity to local tourism development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Ölands skördefest makes Öland different from other places in Sweden?</td>
<td>Distinctiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes the experience of Ölands skördefest unique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which aspects of Ölands skördefest cannot be found in other events in Sweden?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Ölands skördefest promotes the unique way of life on Öland?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How this event shapes/change your relationship with the community?</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes you feel you are a part of Ölands skördefest?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Ölands skördefest enhance the togetherness of you and others?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What makes you feel Ölands skördefest is very meaningful to you, as a member of Öland?</td>
<td>Continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please tell me unforgettable memories on Ölands skördefest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel when people talk about this event on Öland?</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If media praises Öland because of Ölands skördefest, what is your feeling?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If media criticizes Öland because of Ölands skördefest, what is your feeling?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you about participating in Ölands skördefest and promoting community benefits?</td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Data analysis procedures

In order to analyze and explore the principles of place identity in the interview, the criteria were established based on the model of identity process theory (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2014). The expressions of five principles are proposed by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) and Jaspal and Breakwell (2014), which can be used to evaluate and analyze the data. According to Banister (2011) standards, the data analysis process in this research can be identified as “thematic analysis” and aims provide a coherent way of organizing and reading the interview material in relation to the specific research question (p.57). The transcripts were manually coded and interpreted according to five principles of identity process theory mentioned above.

From the conducted interviews, the aim of data analysis process was to identify respondents’ awareness and presentation which relate to five principles: distinctiveness, belonging, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. In initial coding, specific words, phrases, sentences, and expressions were set too much each component of place identity (examples of codes are illustrated in Table 3). For instance, if respondents mention they are “unique” or “different from other places in Sweden”, and these expressions are classified in the category of distinctiveness.

In vivo coding, which implies a coding method with the use of words from respondents’ own expressions (Saldaña, 2015), also used in data analysis, because this type of coding method might discover new narratives from respondents which are not expected might occur in the transcripts. Thus, during initial coding, data are categorized into different principles, which based on different codes. After initial coding, the process moves to the second phase of data analysis - identifying which component of identity formation process is influenced by the food
event, and which component can strongly shape the place identity through the event and how food event actually constructs and arrange the formation of place identity according to coded data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distinctiveness</strong></td>
<td>Unique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belonging</strong></td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuity</strong></td>
<td>Unforgettable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-esteem</strong></td>
<td>Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td>Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Examples of initial coding

5 Discussion of Results

In this research, findings and discussion are based on the initial research question: *how food events shape people’s place identity?* The findings indicate that food event - Ölands Skördefest in this research – has the possibility to influence all the components of the place identity formation process. Specifically, the data shows Ölands Skördefest’s significant effect on
shaping local residents’ distinctiveness, belonging and self-efficacy.

5.1 Distinctiveness

According to discussion and summary, respondents’ awareness of distinctiveness is evaluated by the comparative use of identification, which implies respondents’ expression of their uniqueness, and showing their differences in comparison to other people. During the interviews, the sense of distinctiveness was expressed by most of the respondents. Interestingly, the uniqueness and differences of Öland and Ölands Skördefest are interpreted from different perspectives. Thus, some of the residents can perceive their uniqueness and difference because of the event. For instance, several interviewees mentioned their attractive agricultural products and cuisines, which can be regarded as a component of distinctiveness construction, while at the same time are an important aspect of Ölands Skördefest. As Wells et al. (1999) claimed that food can establish the connection between people and place, these narratives provide evidence to support the idea of “food is a component of uniqueness of a place” (Bell & Valentine, 1997; Caplan, 1997; Cook & Crang, 1996; Timothy & Ron, 2013). Moreover, for Ölands Skördefest the uniqueness of local food and gastronomy has become the foundation of the event. Thus, the perception of distinctiveness has been established on the basis of local food, which is the most major aspect of the event:

...I think it’s a big event which attracting people coming here, everyone comes here for buying our agricultural products, even there is a big traffic chaos every year, people still keep coming, I think they are seeking for this type of experience. (A2)

People coming here for our special, organic food, which produced and cooked on Öland. For example, Öland is the biggest bean production area of Sweden with a long history, and we are trying to use our local brown bean to introduce Öland, also our idea, spirit and passion to our customers. (B2)
We have the best (agricultural) products in Sweden, that is the reason why we have this harvest festival. (B3)

The uniqueness of physical environment (for instance, geographic position, landscape, and weather) was also recognized by respondents. As Tuan’s (1977) narrative of spatial setting, also the discussion of Stedman et al. (2004) and Proshansky (1978), the importance of physical environment in place identity formation is examined – the physical place (Öland island) is given meaning by Ölands Skördefest. De Bres and Davis (2001) also concluded that the influence of natural environment needs to be included in the influences of the event in place identity formation. Accordingly, Ölands Skördefest is a driven force of attracting tourists from outside of the island, which implies it creates an opportunity for communications between local people and tourists. Thus, the information of special geographic situation and climate of Öland can be perceived by the local people due to their communication with outside tourists during Ölands Skördefest, which also have the capacity of influencing local people’s awareness of distinctiveness.

...some tourists from Stockholm used to talk with me, they really enjoy their holiday in Öland. They come here not only for the festival but also the air and sunlight of Öland, which is quite different from the northern area and they think they are more comfortable. (A1)

...I mean there are many other harvest festivals in Sweden, but the harvest festival on Öland is unique because it is on the island, you can’t find similar harvest festival experience outside Öland, that is the reason why they keep coming back. (B1)

The distinctiveness shaped by social environment also needs to be of concern. This aspect is mentioned by tourism-related respondents. From their perspectives, they believe Öland Skördefest is a special approach or system which shows the nature of communal harmony in
Öland, corporation and togetherness of the local residents and businesses, and they believe this type of positive relationship cannot be found in other places or other harvest festivals in Sweden. The similar finding also occurs in Manzo and Perkin’s research (2006), which claimed that the cooperative efforts can be motivated by place identity. Thus, the special relationship constructed by the event also can be considered as an aspect of food event, which promotes the awareness of distinctiveness:

The whole island gets together, works together, the small businesses, as well as the bigger businesses. Maybe the business just operates for fun, it is not professional, but it shows your passion, you want to show it to everyone. So, this event is welcoming everyone on the island come to join. That makes the festival unique. (A5)

When the event takes place Öland transforms into something quite different from what other events usually offer. Much of this is because of the cooperation between stakeholders and companies co-operating to sell their products. (A3)

According to local people’s expression and explanation, evidence shows that Ölands Skördefest has the probability of shaping local residents’ perception of distinctness from a different perspective, as Derrett (2003) mentioned, the unique value, interest, and aspiration are expressed by the local community-based event, which can lead to the awareness of distinctiveness. Particularly, the uniqueness of positive community relationship which is revealed by the narratives from respondents also shows Ölands Skördefest’s influence on another component of place identity formation – belonging. These finding also confirm the arguments from De Bres and Davis (2001), also Jaeger and Mykletun (2013), which stated that local special themed event can shape and influence positive self-identification of the local community by establishing the local culture.
5.2 Belonging

Belonging, which refers to the sense of being known and accepted by others (Dixon et al., 2014), is evaluated by respondents’ perception of the positive relationship with the local community. From newcomers’ perspectives, an interesting finding reveals, which shows that Ölands Skördefest has the probability to enhance newcomers’ belonging because Ölands Skördefest is a big event and it is constructed on the level of the whole island. Therefore, all the residents on Öland island have the opportunity to get involved and participate in this event, these actions make them feel accepted and involved by the community:

*This event definitely changes my relationship with the community. Actually, I don’t really have business relationships with other local people, but this event creates the friendship, that brings us a lot of joy. Whatever the weather is during that period, I and my friends are happy in the festival.* (B1)

*Personally, I am so happy to join this big event, I really enjoy the feeling working with other people during the festival, that makes me feel I am a part of this big thing.* (A7)

The positive connection which established by food consumption also mentioned in the interview, as Getz et al. (2015) discussed, food event can be considered as a promoter of enhancing the relationship between produce side and purchase side. Fassio (2017) also mentioned the positive connection between stakeholders in sustainable food event, which can increase the value of the community and the capacity of action from both individual and community level:

*I think this event change our relationship with the community. It is a big event and you have to work with others. For example, we will discuss with other business owners before the festival. Otherwise, we also have a business connection with some restaurants.* (A2)

The stories are different from the view of event organization and local tourism department.
Their expressions show their awareness and aims of “creating belonging” for the whole Öland island. According to the narratives, one of the significant values of Ölands Skördefest is that enhance the small business owners’ togetherness with the big business owners. The understanding of belonging is established within the context of the economic environment. These narratives can combine with Hall and Sharples’ (2008), also Getz and Andersson’s (2010) discussions, which showed the positive and stable business network within the stakeholders can be constructed by the event. Thus, the positive relationship is interpreted as “Big players help small players” – which implies enhancing the involvement of small business owners in a big market - on the managerial and decision-making level, and Ölands Skördefest is the stage for them to promote their products:

'Since I am a co-worker work in this festival for the whole year long, I get to know everyone around the island, from the north to the south, and these people think this festival can bring the community together, and everyone is proud to be a part of Ölands skördefest. This is our achievement. (A5)

The co-operation between different types of people, with different types of interests coming together to create something extraordinary for the tourist. (A3)

The event has brought a lot to Öland over the years. Smaller companies which don't have an opportunity to have their business open all year around are given the chance to be heard of and to offer their products to people all over Sweden and the world. Thus, this has shaped a close relationship with the community. (A3)

The importance of the togetherness of business community also can be interpreted on the contrary. Three respondents gave their opinions, to explain how these cooperation and relationships play a significant role in sustaining healthy economic situation. Refer to Huang and Stewart’s (1996) research, this type of togetherness can be considered as community
solidarity, which will occur in many rural communities, and the narratives from respondents also confirm that community solidarity will be dramatically influenced by tourism development:

(If Ölands skördefest stops,) Many small businesses will disappear. Ölands skördefest is the most important event on the island. As I mentioned before, July is the most intense tourist season of the year. However, the business owners can sell more during the harvest festival weekend than the whole month of July. So, it is very, very important. The main idea of the organization and Ölands skördefest is that the big businesses can help and support the small businesses. (A4)

...If the festival shut down, all the things will be closed during August. (A1)

The harvest festival is the biggest part of this island, everyone comes here during the summer, so the local community always concerns about that. If this event stop, it will destroy the economy. (B1)

The previous narratives show Ölands Skördefest creates community togetherness from two different dimensions: on one hand, participation of the event create an involvement with local community, which enhance the sense of belonging and understanding of the place (Rogers & Anastasiadou, 2011), which might influence newcomers’ sense of belonging; on the other hand, community solidarity is generated and sustained by business owners across the whole island, and it is shaped by local tourism development (Huang & Stewart, 1996). The definitions of positive relationship are different, different positions in the event establish different explanation. Specifically, the expressions of business connection, can support the statement of Hall and Sharples (2008), which emphasize the economic significance of food event in rural community. The result suggests that business connection and network are not the only positive consequences which need consideration, positive human relationships and friendship are also can be a part of belonging construction.
5.3 Continuity

The long period of this event creates the continuity for local community. Refer to Twigger–Ross and Uzzell’s (1996) viewpoint of two dimensions of measuring the level of continuity, the expressions of place-referent continuity can be found in respondents’ narratives. As Twigger–Ross and Uzzell (1996) claimed, place-referent continuity can be evaluated by how the environment creates the connection between past activities and self-understanding at present time. In this case, Ölands Skördefest as a specific activity which is organised yearly, can create a continuous experience for local residents. Some of the respondents are representatives of local businesses, thus the business activities during the harvest festival are the main materials which format their senses of continuity:

...The crowded people. Even I can see the same scene every year, it still makes me unforgettable...the busiest weekend in the whole year. But it feels good, everyone is working hard and make our best to create good experience to our customers. (B2)

Last year’s harvest festival makes me impressed, even if we were so tired after a long day work, we made everyone happy and having a good experience. (A2)

The similar narratives also occur from the perspective of event organizers and tourism-related staffs. The difference is, instead of the description of hard-working and fatigue, they seem more focused on their achievements, which implies what they have done during the festival and how they create good memory and experience for the tourists.

The opening of the festival, it takes place in different places of the island every year. So last year is very special, it was in a little village in Vickleby, everyone was so happy and got involved in the activities, everyone wanted to the best one and that is really impressive. (A5)

Besides the memories of the working time, the good experience with friends and family also
can be an aspect of construct the senses of continuity. The harvest festival provides the environment and atmosphere for local residents to enjoy and maintain the relationships:

I have unforgettable memories for every year! Do you know the costume for the Halloween? We dress special costumes in the shop for the harvest festival every year, with my families: me and my wife, my sister is here, my father is here... we have different themes every year. We are creating a good memory with my family in the festival, we have done this tradition for 7 years, people come here during the festival for seeing what we are dressing this year. (B1)

Overall, the expressions of memories from the respondents – which related to the event - can be regarded as the evidence of place-referent continuity. The findings also relate to Gu and Ryan’s (2008) discussion on place identity and community impacts of tourism, which concluded that years of residency can influence the degree of place attachment and place identity, and then influence residents’ attitude towards tourism development. Additional, local residents are attached with Öland because of their past experiences in Ölands Skördefest. Therefore, the memories of the event, is another aspect of the event which shaped the place identity. Two main sections of residents’ daily life, work and leisure, are both included in this continuity formation process. Refer to the interpretation of Dixon et al. (2014), the event can be considered as a promoter which established a stable person-place relationship, which implies the event bounded local residents and the place for a long period. In addition, the statement of Azara et al. (2018) also can be discussed within these responses, which argues that the continuity created by the event can provide special positioning for tourism development and maintain the uniqueness of the community (also links to the component of distinctiveness). However, another dimension of Twigger–Ross and Uzzell’s (1996) explanation, the expression of place-congruent continuity does not occur in the interviews.
5.4 Self-esteem

In general, most of the respondents expressed their self-esteem in different ways. The evidence shows that Ölands Skördefest is the main source of generating positive feeling towards the place, and the involvement of this event can strongly impact the construction of local residents’ self-esteem. Specifically, when talking about the reason why they feel proud of the place and the event, three respondents mentioned they are receiving positive evaluation and feedback from the tourists, which can make them feel proud:

Because I am a part of it, I will feel proud when I heard people are making positive comments on it. (B1)

...I will have a positive feeling about that. After your preparation, a lot of work, that makes me happy when people are having a good experience during the festival. For me, if we can create a good experience which keeps people coming back, it provides positive feedback to me and it makes me proud. (A2)

We are happy and proud of people’s positive evaluation. And most people – first-time visitors – they usually come back five or six times, they come back every year. Around 92% of the visitors come back in the next year. So far, the positive side is bigger than the negative side. (A5)

When receiving negative evaluation from outside, some respondents show their motivation and intention to fix the issue, instead of feeling embarrassed and indignant. These responses also link to the perception of self-efficacy, which implies showing the manageability and confidence of meeting and coping the current issues:

As the event is quite large, it is more likely that a critique will be directed towards an independent stakeholder or company, as in this case we will try solving the problem which
might occur at the given time. If this is not possible our part is to help in any way we can, but we are no included to give a solution. (A3)

...It depends on what the problem is, I mean everything in this event can be improved. (A2)

However, one respondent shows another pattern of responding negative evaluation, ignoring and disinteresting, which means the influence of harvest festival is not inevitable and necessary in self-esteem formation process.

(The evaluation from outside) doesn’t matter to me, because I already do my best to what I have to do. (A1)

These results indicate different possibilities of the event in self-esteem construction. In general, the event can provide positive evaluations from tourists, which can confirm their achievement and hard work. In this case, self-esteem and pride are enhanced by the perception of uniqueness and value of community culture and traditional knowledge, which implies psychological empowerment will occurs (Scheyvens, 1999). Boley and McGehee (2014) also interpret the boost of self-esteem as physiological empowerment because local residents recognize their uniqueness (also leads to the sense of distinctiveness) and believe they have special resources and skills which can be shared with tourists. Likewise, the findings of self-esteem are corresponding with the result of Boley et al. (2018), which noticed that residents’ sense of distinctiveness leads to physiological empowerment. Besides, the suggestion of consider raising the sense of distinctiveness to enhance the support of tourism (Boley et al., 2018) is supported by respondents’ positive expressions in this research. In essence, self-esteem – or psychological empowerment – will influenced by tourism development (Boley & McGehee, 2014), and this statement also be expressed by respondents’ narratives in this case. However, the event might not be strong enough to influence residents’ establishment of self-esteem, because ignoring and disinteresting of local resident also occur in the interview.
5.5 Self-efficacy

Because of the nature of Öland harvest festival, all the respondents express their self-efficacy towards the event and the place. Most of the respondents agreed Öland harvest festival plays an important role in extending the tourism season on Öland and therefore it helps to mitigate unemployment, and all respondents believed this event changed or improved their business. These narratives can be explained by the similar study from Nunkoo and Gursoy (2012), which demonstrate identity can affect the supportive behaviour for tourism:

_Since I work in tourism industry, of course Ölands skördefest plays a big role in my job. Because so many visitors come during the fall, otherwise our most intense tourist season – from mid-summer until two or three weeks into July, then the number will slowly go down. Thanks to the harvest festival, which take place in the end of September, people are coming back. The end of August doesn’t mean the end of tourist season on the island, the harvest festival is extending the season, so that is the reason why it plays an important role – not only for the people who are working in tourism field like me, but also every business owner on the island. (A4)_

_...I think this event plays a big role in my business, also others, it provides an opportunity for making money or getting jobs, tourists just come here and spend a lot of money. (B1)_

At the same time, most of the respondents showed their capacity of discovering problems during their participation in the event and their willingness of proposing the problems. These narratives can prove Ölands Skördefest is able to strongly shape local residents’ self-efficacy. Two main issues, traffic problem and prolonging the tourist season are mentioned by the respondents:

_Personally, I think we can promote horse riding activities, using our beautiful landscape, it is a good way to experience than driving. It can be organized during September or early spring because during the summer there are too many cars. We also want to prolong the tourist season to the early spring. (A2)_
I think we need improvement. The tourism organization can do much better – I mean the organization of harvest festival is ok, but the one who in charge of total tourism development of Öland can do better. And I also heard people complain, which always about the traffic situation, it is not too many people, I think it is too many cars. (B1)

These narratives, which showed respondents’ concern about tourism development, political empowerment can be recognized (Scheyvens, 1999). As a matter of fact, political empowerment can be comprehended as local residents’ manageability of the direction of community tourism development (Boley & McGehee, 2014), which is also an expression of political self-efficacy. Thus, when the opinions are proposed, and local residents are willing to propose their opinions, self-efficacy can be identified. Following quotes from interviews also reveal the strong self-efficacy during the event:

Traffic jam always is the problem. We need some good solution: a new road, new public transportation... whatever, I just want them to fix it. (A6)

We hope we can extend a little bit our season... I mean, we have good selling during summer time and harvest festival, but the income on other time of the year, especially in the winter, compared to harvest festival weekend, there is a big gap. (B2)

For instance, the organization is trying to develop a little sister of Ölands skördefest – Ölands Spirar, the spring festival. The organization wants to extend the tourists season again in the spring. However, it is not as popular as Ölands skördefest. But they are trying to make it bigger and better. In my personal opinion, I think the spring in Öland is better than the fall, so that is what I would like to see, and I hope Ölands Spirar can be as big and popular as the harvest festival. That could be better in the future. (A4)
These expressions show the willingness of solving the problem, which can be regarded as an indicator of local residents’ awareness and support of community tourism development. Thus, the interaction of self-efficacy, place identity and support behavior – which proposed by Hallak et al. (2012) – can be interpreted in this special context.

However, place-protect actions are unexpected. As Devien-Wright (2009) concluded the connection between place identity and place-protect behavior, one respondent talked about the concern on the change of daily life environment – which was caused because of the tourism development and infrastructure construction. This narrative indicates the intention of protecting the living environment:

...I think it's already too many people come here in the summer. Also, local government is building a new road which only is used for six weeks in the whole year. We are living here, and I think we don’t need this road heading to the northern part of the island. We have a lot of beautiful, small roads in the countryside, if you come to this island by car, you don't have to drive on that new straight big road, it is better to experience the island by the small roads. (A1)

In sum, the evidence suggests that high level of participation and engagement of Öland harvest festival can be linked higher level of self-efficacy. All the respondents showed higher self-efficacy about the event and the sense of controllability in the interview, which implies everyone has his or her own approach and perspective to discover the issues, also has different opinion and interpretation of coping with these issues. Thus, the issues occur in the event can be considered as a special aspect, which also has the possibility of influencing place identity. In addition, these narratives exposing the powerful influence of Ölands Skördefest on local residents’ self-efficacy, also demonstrate existing debates on how place identity influence residents’ attitude towards tourism development (Strzelecka et al., 2017; Wang & Chen, 2015; Kaján, 2014; Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Chen, Wang & Xu, 2017), both positive and negative attitudes are found in respondents’ expressions. However, it is hard to identify respondents’
level of self-efficacy before the event was created, so this possibility is existing: only local residents with initial high self-efficacy are willing to be involved because they believe the event will bring benefits to them.
6 Conclusion

The main question of this research was: how food events shape people’s place identity, and what aspects of food events contribute to the sense and comprehension of Ölands community? To answer this question, this study explored how Ölands skördefest is related to host community members’ cognition and sense of place identity within the framework of identity process theory.

In short, the results show that all five principles of place identity formation process – distinctiveness, belonging, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Breakwell, 1986; Dixon et al., 2014) – are influenced and shaped by Ölands skördefest.

The first sub-question asked: “How Ölands skördefest shapes perceived distinctiveness of Öland’s people?” which leads the discussion on the uniqueness of Ölands skördefest, and how the uniqueness be recognized by the people in Öland. The narratives show the uniqueness is established from three different perspectives: Food is the most important component for distinctiveness construction, which also confirm the significance of food in identity formation process (Bell & Valentine, 1997; Caplan, 1997; Cook & Crang, 1996; Timothy & Ron, 2013). Besides, referring to initial exploration of the concept of place by Tuan (1977) and Proshansky (1978), the distinctiveness also can be recognized by the physical environment, and the discussion also confirms De Bres and Davis’s (2001) statement of the importance of natural environment in place identity formation. Finally, literature refers to the claim of Manzo and Perkin (2006), the positive social connection also contributes to the sense of distinctiveness.

The second sub-question asked: “How Ölands skördefest shapes belonging of Öland’s people?”, which focused on how Ölands skördefest generate the sense of acceptance among the community. As previous narratives, the sense of belonging is shaped by two sides. On one hand, the participation and involvement can make new residents feel more accepted by the community; on the other hand, according to the special mechanism of “Big players help small players” in Ölands skördefest, belonging can be interpreted as the capacity of constructing and maintaining
stable business network in this context, and this aspect is well-discussed by Fassio (2017), Hall and Sharples (2008), also Getz and Andersson (2010).

The third sub-question asked: “How Ölands skördefest shapes perceived continuity of Öland’s people?” and showed the consideration of the length of residency on the island and the former participation in the event. Referring to Twigger–Ross and Uzzell’s (1996) explanation on place-referent continuity, the respondents showed their previous experience related to the event from two aspects: working experience and leisure life. The responses also proved the argument of Dixon et al. (2014), which proposed that event can establish stable place-people connections in a long period.

The fourth sub-question asked: “How Ölands skördefest shapes self-esteem of Öland’s people?” which aimed to explore how local residents receive positive evaluation and emotion from Ölands skördefest. These responses showed the pride and positive attitudes towards Ölands skördefest occur because of the participation and involvement. Additionally, the concept of physiological empowerment can be introduced to the discussion on self-esteem (Boley & McGehee, 2014; Boley et al., 2018), which claims that the sense of distinctiveness can enhance local residents’ self-esteem and raise residents’ level of tourism support.

The fifth sub-question asked: “How Ölands skördefest shapes self-efficacy of Öland’s people?” which intended to discover the confidence and capacity of coping with the different situation of local residents. The finding demonstrates that high degree of participation of respondents leads to strong expressions of self-efficacy, which implies the willingness and controllability of coping the issues (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Similarly, the discussion of political empowerment (Scheyvens, 1999; Boley & McGehee, 2014) is relating to the expressions of self-efficacy, which focus on the local community’s manageability of tourism development direction. Moreover, it should be noticed that the self-efficacy also can be expressed as place-protect behavior in the context of tourism development, which is generated because of the change of
daily life environment (Devien-Wright, 2009).

The last sub-question was related to the general discussion on event evaluation and ask: “Which aspects of food events contribute to the sense of community in Ölands?”. After the discussion, several aspects of food event were identified which will likely influence local residents’ sense and comprehension of their home communities. Not only the positive aspects of food event, like the enhancement of togetherness and promotion of local food and culture, can shape the components of place identity formation, but also the negative aspects (for instance, local living environment transformation because of tourism development), can play a significant role in affecting place identity formation process. Through in-depth interviews with the respondents from different sectors of the event, different narratives and stories on the event express the influences are different towards different individuals. The reason of occurring various comprehensions is that food event is a complex system, which included the different levels of involvement and participation, also different situation (managerial level or operational level) which the respondents are located in the event.

This research not only examined how tourism practice shape place identity, but also supporting the theoretical argument of place identity can influence tourism practice. These positive or negative expressions of respondents reveal the unstoppable debates on the interaction between place identity and local tourism development, the complex conflicts and reactions of local residents still need exploration in a future study.

Furthermore, this research also has special concern on the discussion of constructing community sustainability is occurring within the context of food event. For instance, just as Choi and Turk’s (2011) argument, the enhancement of social cohesiveness and respects of community culture are indicated by respondents’ positive responses and their experiences during the event. Especially, the most significant components of community sustainability occur in Ölands skördefest, are enhancements of local residents’ empowerment and
participation. As Lyons et al. (2001) and Scheyvens (1999) claimed, empowerment leads to sustainability in the community, which implies the event provides a platform for the local community to access controllability and shares the benefits from the event. Referring to Boley and McGehee (2014), also Boely et al. (2018), the components of place identity formation can be comprehended as psychological and political empowerments, and the empowerments have the capacity of promoting community tourism development and residents’ attitude towards tourism development. Place identity’s contribution on local tourism supportive behaviors and attitudes also can be recognized by respondents’ narratives, which emphasizing in the debates on sustainable tourism development (Wang & Chen, 2015; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Chen et al., 2017). Hence, from the perspective of sustainable development, Ölands skördefest can be considered a successful case (Scheyvens, 1999).

From practical perspective, this study tries to make a contribution in festival and event management, special for a food event. In this case, the positive feeling towards the event and the place can determine stakeholders’ positive attitude towards the event, which leads to the enhancement of event stakeholders’ passion for decision-making and participation. Thus, the measures of place identity can be considered as a part of social sustainability evaluation in event management. However, this study is limited in that it uses a small sample of respondents to understand the identity formation process. Thus, the qualitative research based on a small scale might affect the credibility of data, which implies a larger scale research is needed in future as well. Moreover, as the conclusion and analysis are constructed within Ölands skördefest and this event plays the most significant role in Oland agricultural community as well as local tourism sector. The interpretation of the results is limited to the specific case of Ölands skördefest.

While realizing some limitations of the case study, this research provides an opportunity for further studies focused on exploring the interplay within food tourism, community sustainability, and place identity. Especially, the discussion of how food event affects the
identity of the rural community and local residents can be studied in different contexts. For instance, the contribution of food event on place identity formation within an emerging market can be discussed, because emerging countries exist large-scale industrial food productions and exports, and they are different from small-scale local organic farming and consumption in developed countries. Within these contexts, food might be regarded as a commodity, not the promoter and carrier of sustainable development. According to different interpretations and attitudes towards food, food event might influence local residents’ emotion and attachment with another mechanism. In addition, some aspects of food event which have a capacity of shaping place identity are not yet clear, including the scale of the event, political support from government and stakeholders’ empowerment, which can be examined in future research.
7 References


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