

How sustainable is hunting tourism in Scotland?

A review of stakeholder
perceptions

David Watts, University of Aberdeen

Colin Hunter, University of Aberdeen

Stefano Fiorini, Indiana University
Bloomington

Presentation structure

1. Research context and method
2. Hunting tourism in Scotland
3. Analysis
 - Ecological sustainability
 - Economic sustainability
 - Social sustainability
4. Summary

Research context

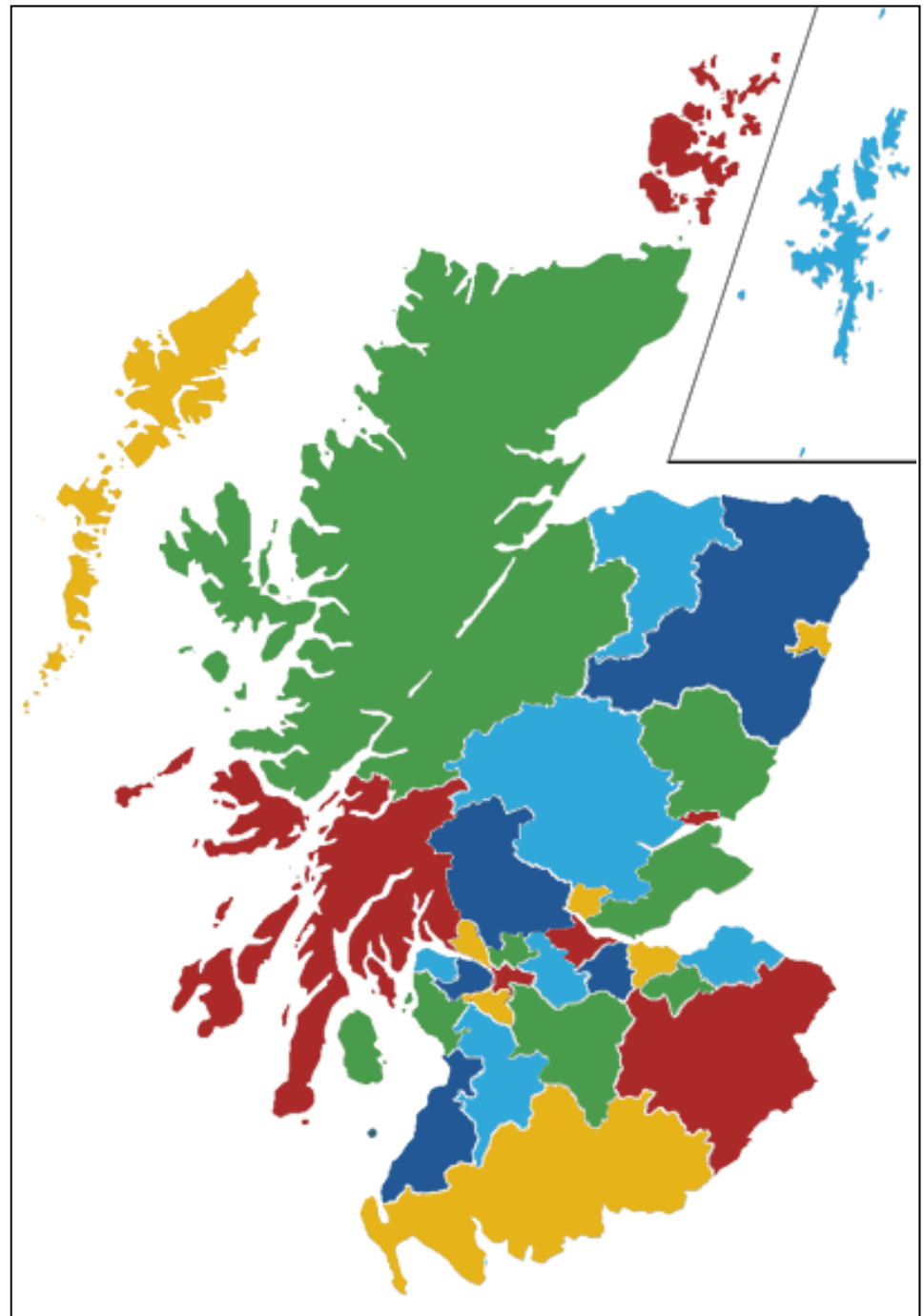
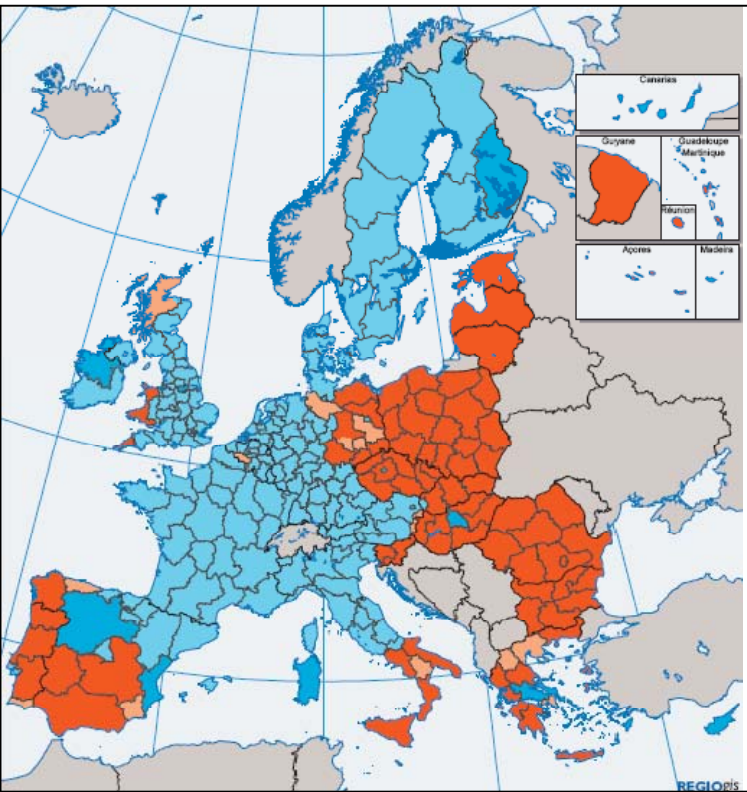


- Objective: to support the development of sustainable hunting tourism that will diversify the economic activity of peripheral regions in Northern Europe.
- This presentation is based on Work Package 2: The attitude environment and social framework related to hunting tourism

Research method

- Qualitative, semi-structured interviews
- Recorded, transcribed, & coded manually
- 25 stakeholders interviewed:
 - 7 Hunting tourism sector entrepreneurs & employees
 - 6 Hunting tourism sector representative bodies (e.g. Scottish Gamekeepers Association)
 - 5 Conservation and animal welfare bodies
 - 4 Statutory bodies (e.g. Scottish Govt)
 - 2 Tourism promotion bodies
 - 1 Hunting tourist

Scotland: Location & local authorities



Key game (excl. fish)

Red grouse

Lagopus lagopus

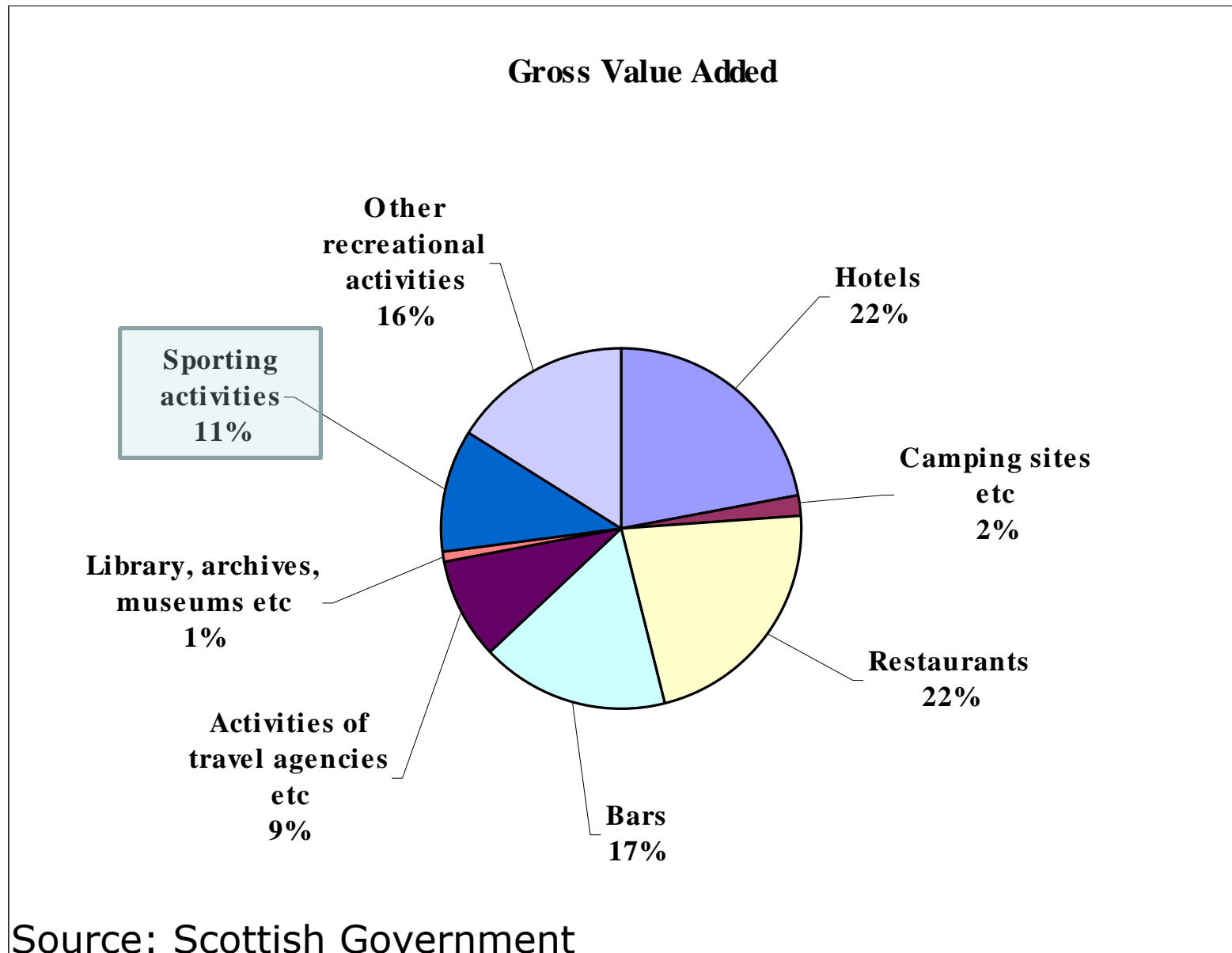
Red deer

Cervus elaphus

Hunting tourism in Scotland

- Economic significance

Tourism in Scotland (2006)



Hunting tourism in Scotland

- Economic significance
 - Direct GVA of shooting tourism \approx €40 million
 - Total GVA supported by shooting tourism \approx €205 million
 - FTE jobs supported \approx 11,000
 - Total paid workers \approx 58,000

Source: Public and Corporate Economic Consultants (2006)

Hunting tourism in Scotland

- Historical context
 - Declining profitability of sheep farming
 - Emergence of the 'sporting estate'
 - Facilitated by new laws against poaching (1828) and trespass (1832)
 - Made fashionable among the rich by Queen Victoria's purchase of Balmoral
 - A C19 'consumption countryside'?

Continuities

- Hunting tourism still attracts members of the landed elite and the very rich (social)
- Sporting estates own half of all private land in Scotland's Highlands & Islands (economic, social)
- Deer, heather and hills & mountains are still the most popular types of animal, plant and habitat in Scotland (social, ecological)

Ecological sustainability (I)

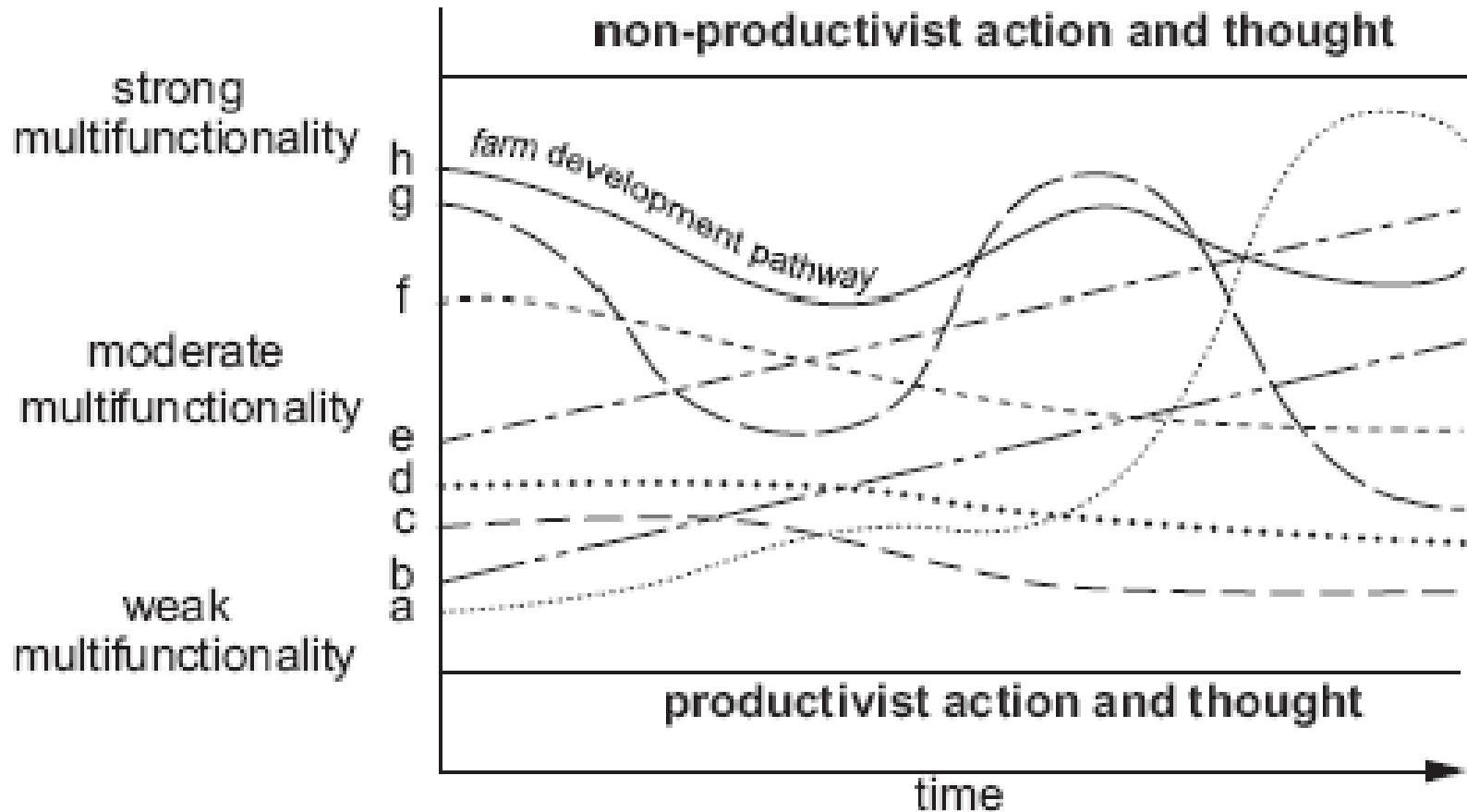
'Compared with lots of other countries... there is [almost] no natural tree line whatsoever, which implies there is something not quite right. Now, having said that, you have then also got this situation where the heather moorland that's been created, totally artificially, or certainly expanded artificially, by years of burning and...heavy grazing...' (Conservationist)

'There is no evidence that it [hunting] is producing environmental damage; on the contrary it appears to be producing healthy upland ecosystems which then provide a wide range of very acceptable ecosystem services, such as water filtration and water management' (Representative of hunting tourism sector)

Ecological sustainability (II)

- Nevertheless, conservation and hunting tourism land management techniques are similar
- Instead, it is the means towards which they aim that differ
- This is analogous to the situation in farming, and it seems reasonable to locate their actions within the multifunctionality model developed by Hollander (2004) & Wilson (2007, 2008)

Wilson's model of agricultural multifunctionality



Source: Wilson (2008: 368)

Economic sustainability

- Most interviewees emphasised employment and multiplier effects
- Several also said that sporting estates tend to run at a loss
 - Several researchers argue that this is because they are managed for consumption, not production
 - However, interviewees identified underlying economic difficulties
 - Hunting tourism sector representatives claim that estate owners provide public goods at private expense

Social sustainability (I)

- Isolation from rural 'realities' has contributed to 'distorted' perceptions among the general public
- Some interviewees felt they are engaged in a war of attrition with those who seek to ban hunting
- High volume shoots (e.g. Driven pheasant, partridge and grouse) increasingly called into question

Social sustainability (II)

- Hunting tourism still perceived as elitist
 - Sector still plays on its aristocratic heritage in marketing
- Lack of local engagement:
 - In estate management (where many smallholders will be tenants);
 - In deer management (which are a common resource)

Summary

- Scotland's hunting tourism sector perceived as vulnerable across all three sustainability axes
- To some extent, the sector appears to be imprisoned by its heritage
- Can a move towards greater multifunctionality – across all three axes – improve its sustainability?