In recent years many rural areas have faced a decrease in resource based industries leading to a population decline, an aging population and service closures. Tourism has, in many of these areas, been seen as a savior where some areas even reversed the trend of population decline through in-migration. The tourism industry, as a dominant player, puts an imprint on society, with extended services, tourism facilities and in some cases a sensed urbanity. These influences can attract in-migrants to perceive the destination as a possible place of residence. The importance of a ‘people’s climate’, raised by Richard Florida, to attract in-migrants has been discussed and used in many rural areas even though by so doing, the idea is taken out of its urban origins. A question then arises; could a rural tourism destination host a ‘people’s climate’, and in that way attract in-migrants?

The aim of this thesis is to investigate migration into tourism dominated rural areas with a particular interest on studying the characteristics of in-migrants to these areas, how this type of migration can be conceptualized and how various types of migration relate to tourism destinations as a place. This thesis adds to the literature on tourism related migration which in this work is captured through job-related and place-related migration where the importance of the tourism industry as an employer is studied alongside the importance of place amenities and lifestyle choices. It also discusses the usefulness of the creative class theory in rural tourism dominated areas. Through a mixed method approach with descriptive statistics and different interview studies conducted in three different, yet similar, mountain tourism destinations (Sälen and Idre, Sweden, and Wanaka, New Zealand) this thesis suggests that lifestyle and amenity migration are strongly related in studies of nature-based tourism destinations. It highlights the dual attachment to place among seasonal tourism workers and gives evidence of the need of a reconceptualization of the creative class theory if that theory is to be used in rural tourism destinations.