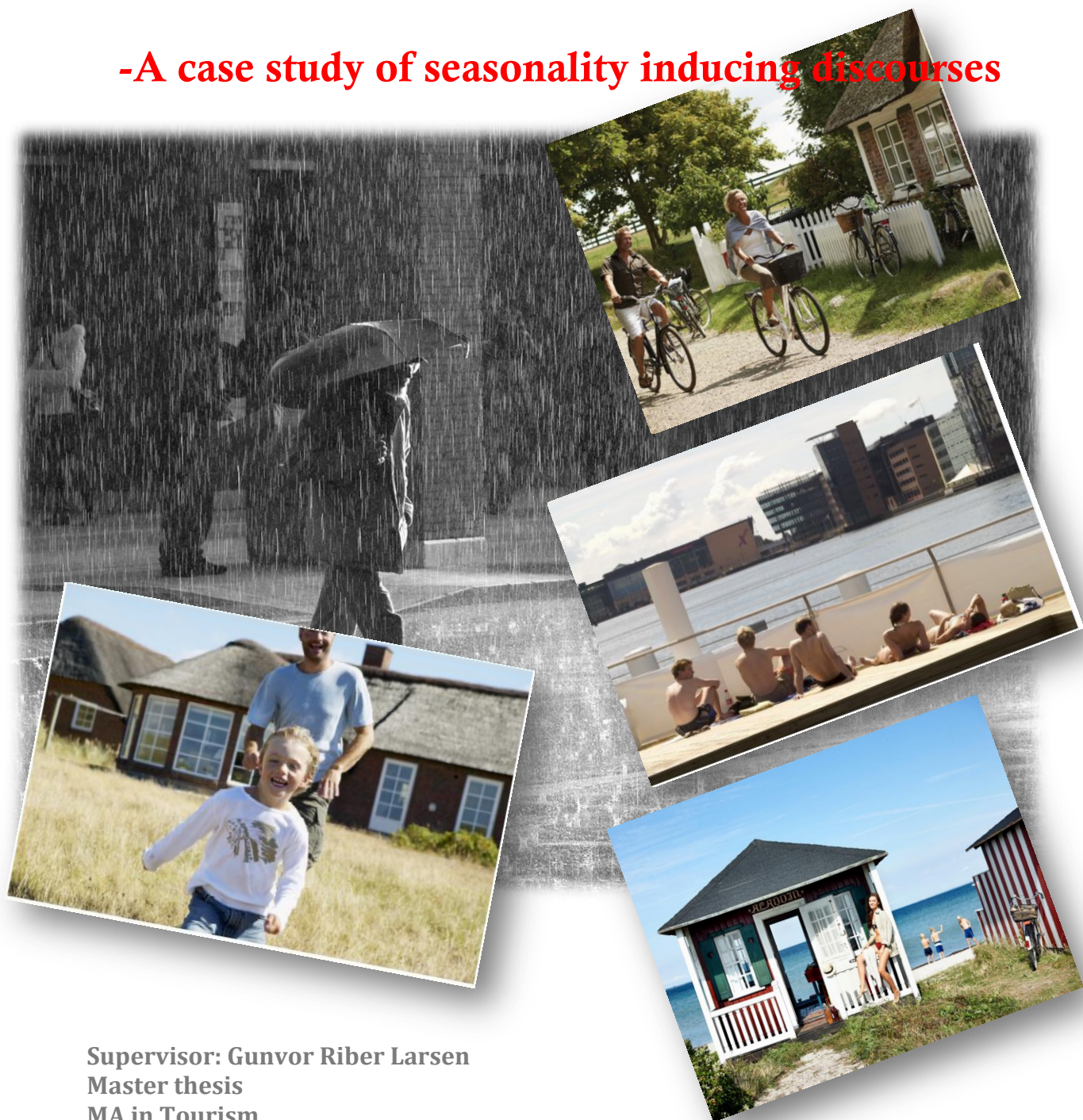


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Here Comes the Sun

-A case study of seasonality inducing discourses



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ABSTRACT

Seasonality has become one of the defining characteristics of the tourism industry, but the reason for its existence, perceived effects and the measures with which tourism stakeholders can seek influences is still being debated. Whether it is argued to be occurring because of natural or institutional factors such as the geographical location and institutionalized holiday patterns respectively; causing overcrowding in the peak season or if it is a necessity due to it allowing for locals and tourism business owners to recover from the peak season; and whether it can actually be influenced by way of differential pricing or focused market segmentation, seasonality is at its very core a much contested phenomenon.

Seeing that the general focal points mentioned above appears to be the foremost researched topics within the field, it was intended for this thesis to utilize a somewhat different approach in order to illuminate the subject matter from another angle for the reason that the current body of literature appears to have reached somewhat of stalemate in terms of furthering the understanding the intricacies of seasonality.

For the purpose of broadening the scope, we chose to utilize the theoretical framework provided by the concept of destination image. Consequently, it was decided that through the application of discourse analysis within a case study framework with North Jutland, Denmark at its center, this thesis should analyze and discuss how potential seasonality inducing destination images might arise from marketing related discourses and how overarching, strategic tourism related material might be considered the instigator thereof.

Utilizing this research framework it was found that tourism marketers in North Jutland extensively projects a destination image defined by exoticized images and phrasings revolving around the natural environment of the region. Meanwhile, it was not simply the environment but also the depicted functional traits such as activities (physical activities, shopping and arts and crafts) was framed within primarily summer settings, thus imbuing them with notion of being more “appropriate” to conduct within specific types of weather conditions (i.e. sun and blue skies). Furthermore, the arts and crafts were found to be a factor in relation to the perpetuation of the overall, romanticized discourse of the region and its natural surroundings. In terms of strategic material, it was observed that the general strategic papers related to the destination in question displayed a profound sense of ambiguity in relation to key, supposedly important, elements of the destination such as authenticity, weather as well as the so-called “lighthouse strategy” – concepts which were found to be lacking in terms of clear definition and consequently being open to interpretation, a central issue which is argued to be one of the main “culprits” of the extensively portrayed summer discourse.

In conclusion, it is suggested that strategy disseminators should adopt and implement more clear-cut, well defined conceptualizations of central strategy components. Furthermore, we advocate that a more nuanced view on the natural and institutional factors of seasonality as well as the notion of embracing the temporal fluctuations in terms of weather for the purpose of enabling the development of alternative tourism products that might attract more people in the shoulder and low season.

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1. INTRODUCTION

While not being specific to tourism, seasonality has become one of the major characteristics of the tourism sector (Butler, 2001) throughout its many years of development into becoming one of the most influential economic sectors in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. Thus, seasonality cannot simply be viewed as a characteristic pertaining to a specific part of the world, but it has instead evolved into a wide-encompassing phenomenon spanning a variety of geographical locations, political as well as weather climates.

The reasons for seasonality are multiple and many of them may be argued to be purely theoretical in nature (see Literature review) and lacking conclusive empirical evidence. However, it does not remove the concept of seasonality from the realm of importance for the reason that there are certainly statistics showing an intra-year disparity in the distribution of tourists and tourism expenditure. In terms of addressing the “issue”, the debate on its effects is an important aspect and there are not a general consensus on whether seasonality is a problem that should be “solved” and actively combatted; an aspect of tourism with which DMOs, travel agents and tourism operators should merely survive due to its apparent intricacy; or whether seasonality should actually be embraced because of its positive effects. Consequently, the discussion is not revolving around whether seasonality in tourism is indeed an actuality but the subject of debate is rather concerned with how it should be approached.

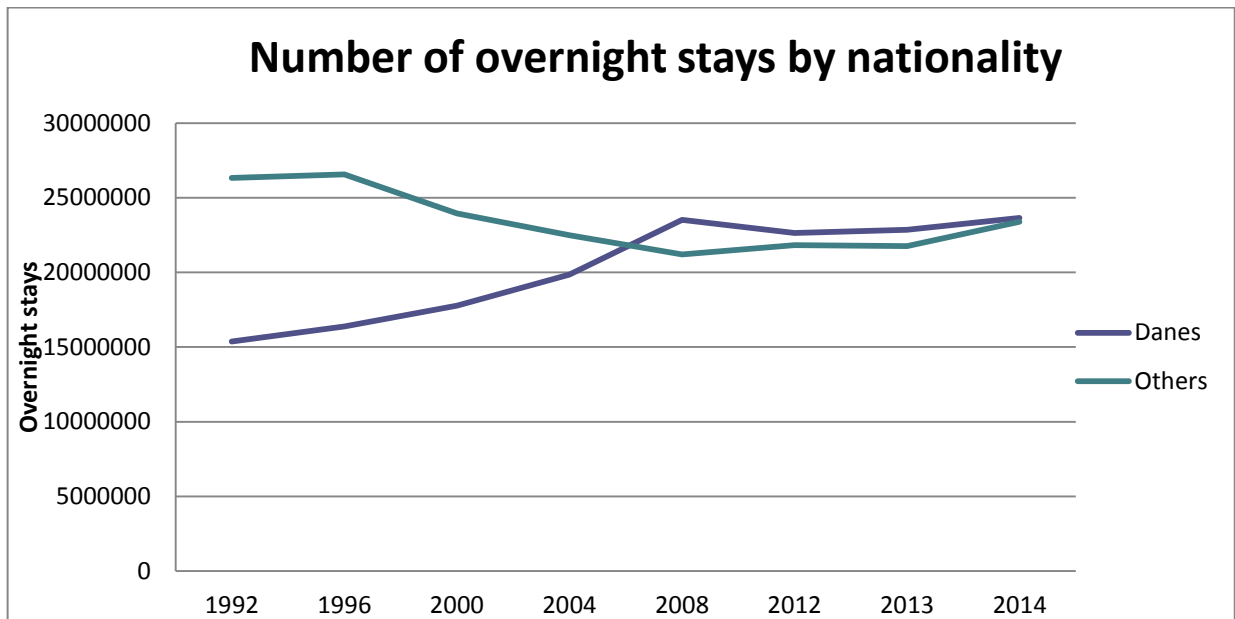
1.1. PROBLEM AREA

Danish tourism is certainly no stranger to seasonality and the tourism sector in Denmark can certainly be argued to be influenced by the phenomenon. Thus, in this section we will present statistical data suggesting the current level of the seasonality within North Jutland, consequently illuminating the importance of further investigation of seasonality within this geographical context. The statistical data has been retrieved from Danmarks Statistik (<http://danmarksstatistik.dk/da/>) and encompasses overnight stays as well as consumption. Concluding, data limitations in terms of measuring seasonality in North Jutland will be argued, and the problem formulation will be presented and discussed.

1.1.1. MEASURING SEASONALITY

Over the course of the last 20 years Denmark have seen a decline in the number of overnight stays made by foreign tourists. The number of foreign overnight stays is regularly used as an

indicator of the state of Danish tourism. As a result of this Denmark as a destination is viewed by some to have stagnated (D-6)¹.



Graph 1 - (Danmarks Statistik, 2015)

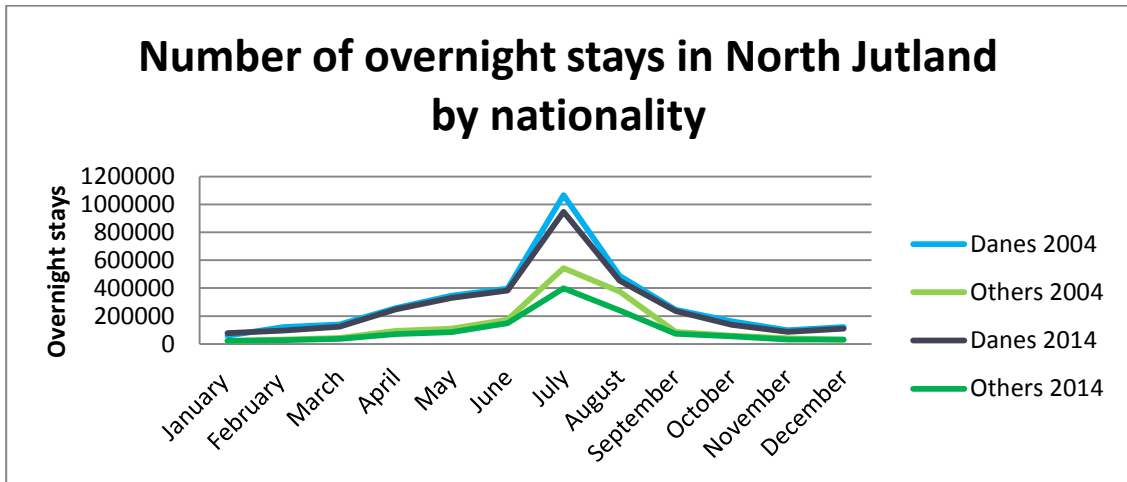
However, as seen below, if the subsequent rise in numbers of overnight stays made by domestic tourists is taken into account, the total number of tourists has actually risen.

| Overnight stays selected years | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| 1992 | 41684279 |
| 2004 | 42356865 |
| 2012 | 44468459 |
| 2013 | 44602888 |
| 2014 | 47035800 |

(Danmarks Statistik, 2015)

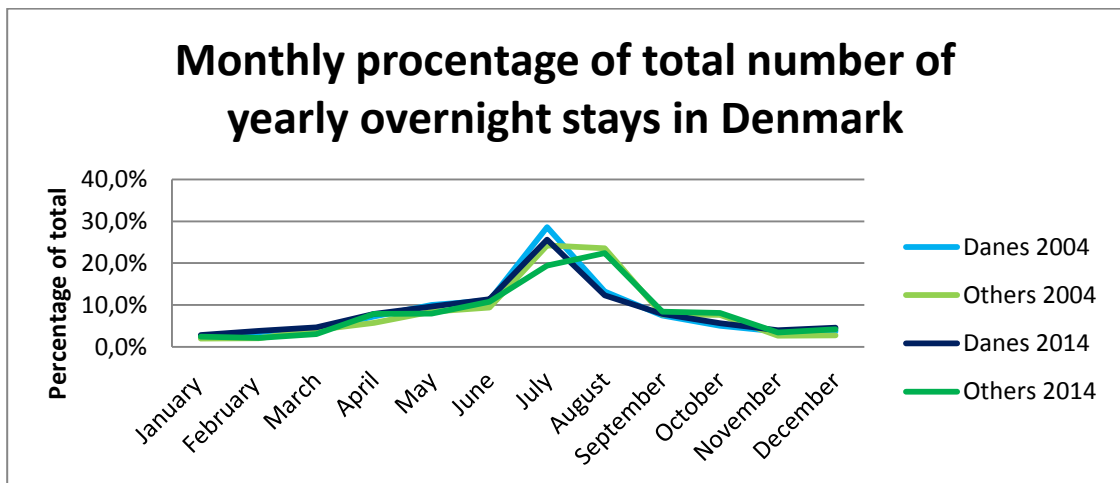
However, the region of North Jutland has experienced a decline in the number of overnight stays made by tourists over the course of the last 10 years, as indicated by the following graph.

¹ In this thesis we use a specific reference system in order to facilitate the referencing to the data sample. D-6 is a part thereof. See 4.3.3. *Referencing data*.



(Danmarks Statistik, 2015)

Regarding seasonality, it can be observed that there has been a decline in the percentage of overnight stays made within the peak months of July and August, both among the domestic and foreign tourists. Subsequently, a greater percentage of the total numbers of overnight stays are now made in what may be considered the low season. Furthermore, the patterns of foreign tourists have changed between 2004 and 2012, resulting in August now being the month in which most overnight stays are made by foreigners in Denmark.



(Danmarks Statistik, 2015)

The increased tourism activity outside the peak season could be interpreted as a sign that seasonality is becoming less significant in Danish tourism. However, there are some imitations to the statistical data that challenges this assumption.

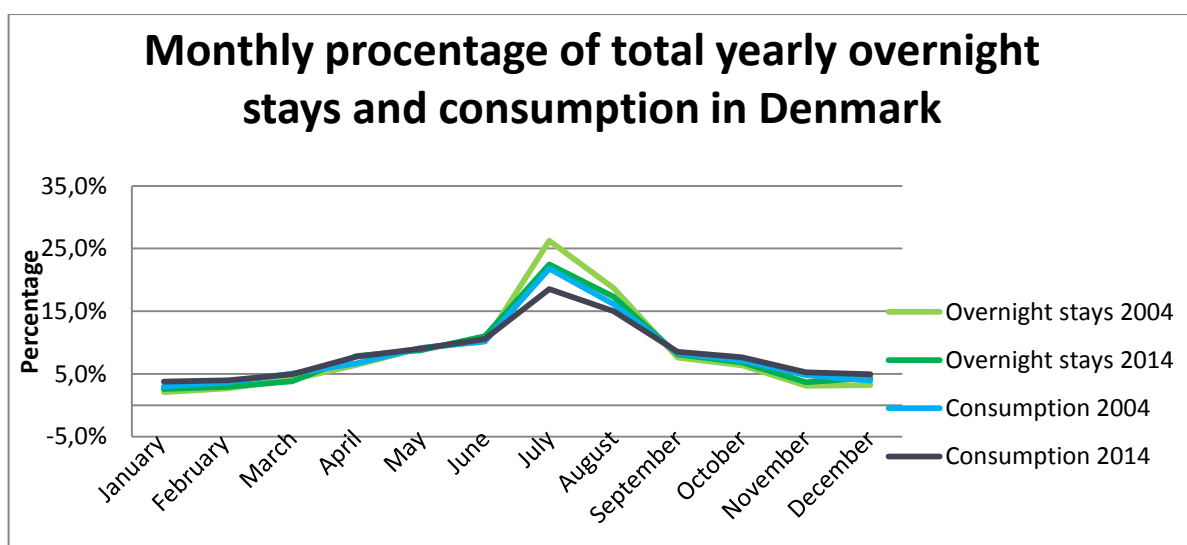
1.1.2. MEASURING SEASONALITY THROUGH TOURIST CONSUMPTION

It could be argued that seasonality should be measured in tourist activity, rather than measured in the number of overnight stays. In this section we will combine the previously presented data,

collected by “Danmarks statistik”, regarding the number of overnight stay with data concerning the daily consumption made by tourists of different nationalities. The data used to determine the daily consumption by nationality was collected by VisitDenmark through interviews and was used to determine average consumption in 2008², thereby hinting that this data is quite dated, which generates problems regarding the validity when used in combination with tourism figures from 2004/2014 (Nielsen, 2010). Although recent data regarding tourism consumption has been collected, the latest data divides consumption into a number of subcategories, which does not appear in the data measuring the number of overnight stays. Furthermore, as the consumption data does not include data regarding yachting, these figures will be excluded from the graphs. The rates of daily consumption by different nationalities and types of accommodations are presented below:

| | Danes | Norwegians | Swedes | Germans | Others |
|------------------------|---------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Hotels | kr. 930 | kr. 1.320 | kr. 1.130 | kr. 990 | kr. 1.240 |
| Holiday resorts | kr. 460 | kr. 730 | kr. 440 | kr. 360 | kr. 540 |
| Caravanning | kr. 260 | kr. 500 | kr. 400 | kr. 330 | kr. 350 |
| Youth hostels | kr. 710 | kr. 850 | kr. 820 | kr. 670 | kr. 840 |
| Holiday homes | kr. 330 | kr. 440 | kr. 400 | kr. 330 | kr. 350 |

(Nielsen, 2010).

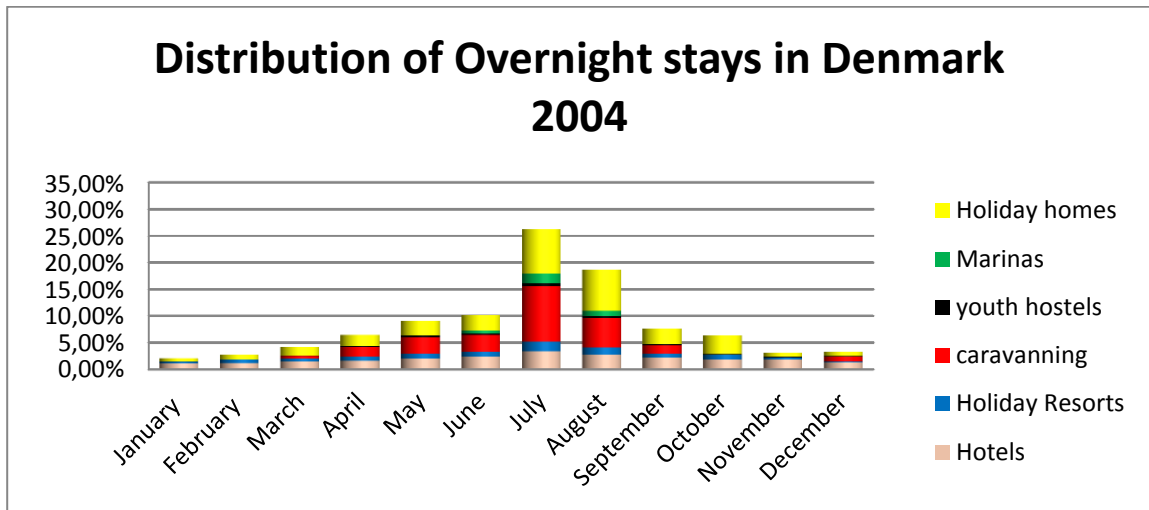


(Danmarks Statistik, 2015; Nielsen, 2010)

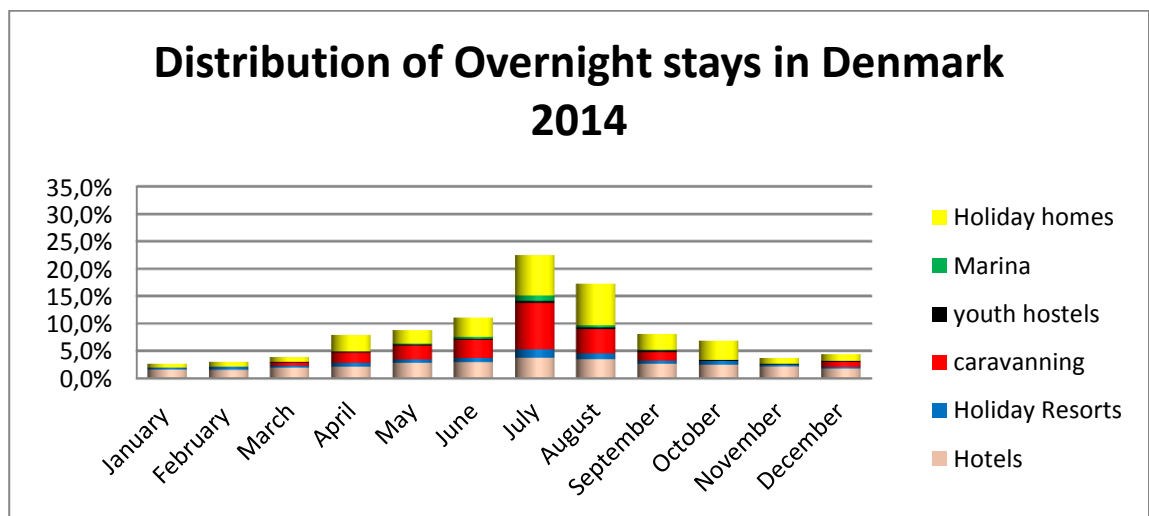
The previous graph shows that seasonality seems to be less prevailing when taken tourist spending into consideration. One of the explanations for this is that hotels and youth hostels are

² The actual report was published in 2010

not quite as affected by seasonality and has a higher average daily consumption than the other types of accommodations (see following graphs). We can also see that seasonality in the whole of Denmark seems to have declined, as relative tourism activity is declining in the peak season and rising in the low season.



(Danmarks Statistik, 2015)



(Danmarks Statistik, 2015)

The two previous graphs show that hotels make up a majority of the overnight stays from November to March, whereas they are less significant in the peak season. Although it may be difficult to observe in these graphs, the percentage of total overnight stays made in hotels during the low season has also seen a substantial rise, most likely due to the increase in urban tourism where hotels are the leading form of accommodation (Danmarks Statistik, 2015). Another interesting element is that August has become the preferred month for overnight stays in holiday homes, which further complicates the fact that overnight stays made in holiday homes are not

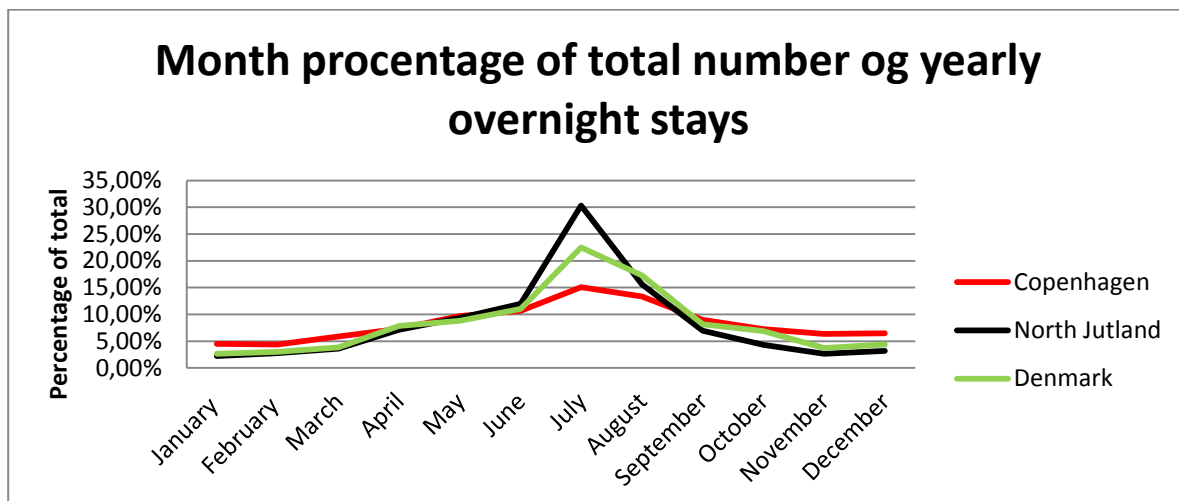
measured regionally, as this makes it difficult to determine the effects of this shift on tourism in North Jutland.

If North Jutland is observed in isolation, seasonality seems to be less predominating when measuring tourist consumption rather than overnight stays, which is constant with Denmark as a whole. However, unlike the overall tendency, consumption in the peak season of North Jutland has only declined slightly over the last 10 years. As noted previously, data regarding holiday homes are not available on a regional basis and have therefore been excluded from this data (Danmarks Statistik, 2015; Nielsen, 2010).

1.1.3. DATA LIMITATIONS

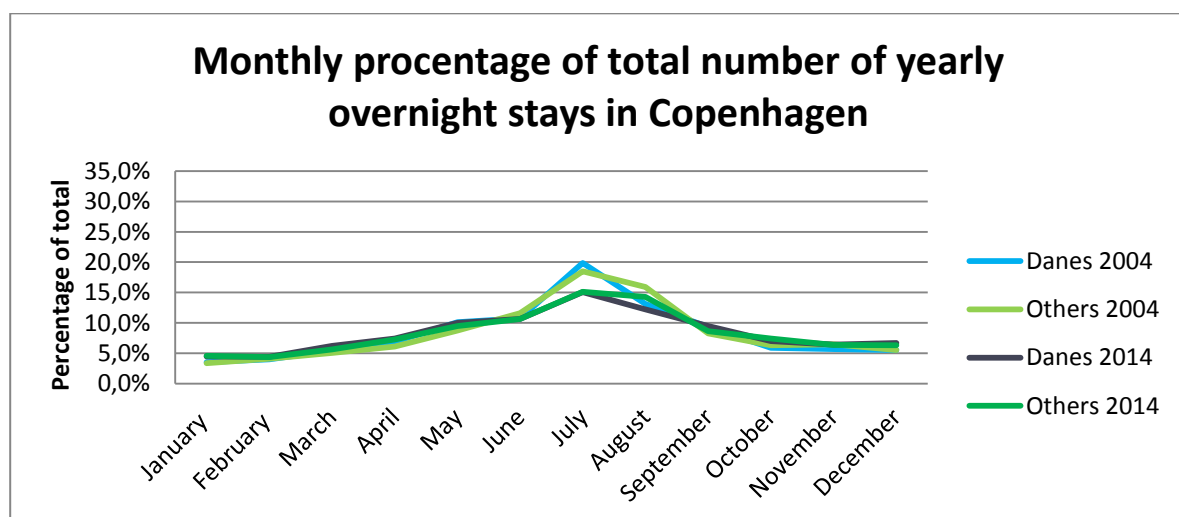
All statistics used in this section, have been extracted using data collected by “Danmarks Statistik”. Danmarks Statistik collects this data through surveys conducted by the places of accommodation. Therefore, these statistics does not include accommodations which are rented out privately. This could be viewed as a limitation for the reason that it could be speculated that new types of communications, predominately the internet, have made it possible for an increasing number of holiday home owners to rent out their places of accommodations privately, thus downgrading the reliability of the survey to some extent. Another important aspect is that the data is not collected among hotels, which has less than 40 beds; therefore this data can hardly be regarded as showing a complete picture of the total number of overnight stay within the Danish tourism industry (Danmarks Statistik, 2015).

Secondly, it should be noted that between 2004 and 2014, Copenhagen experienced a rise to nearly 3million yearly overnight stays, whereas Denmark as a whole saw a rise of approximately 4,7 million overnight stays (Danmarks Statistik, 2015). The graph below shows that seasonality is less predominating in Copenhagen when compared to the rest of the country. In this regard, North Jutland is experiencing an even more disproportionate yearly diffusion of overnight stays, indicating that the decrease in seasonality may be heavily influenced a large increase in urban tourism.

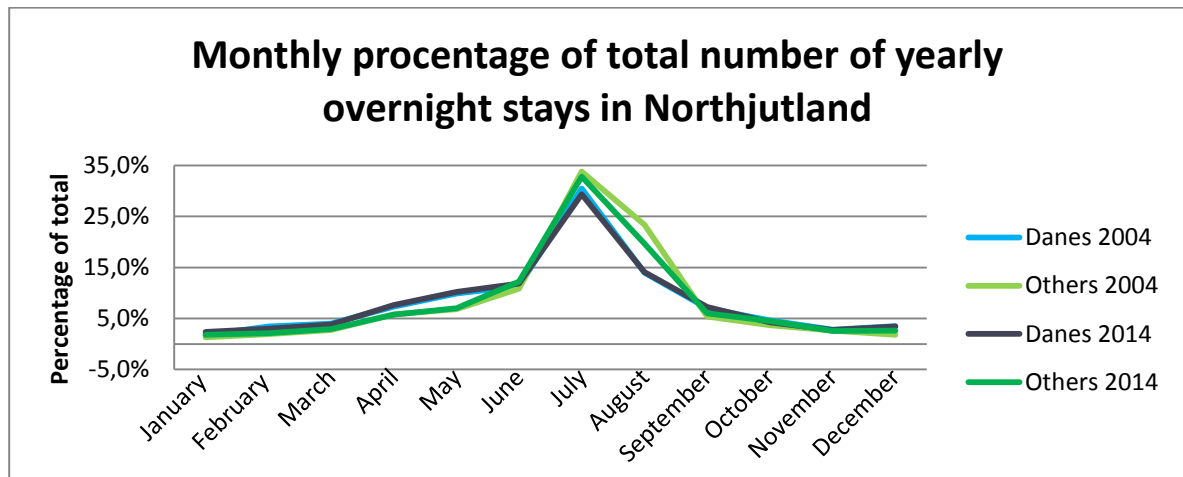


(Danmarks Statistik, 2015)

This is further supported if we compare the development in seasonality between 2004 and 2014 in the region of Copenhagen and the region of North Jutland. We can see that the relative tourism activity in Copenhagen seems to have decreased in the peak month of July, both among the Danish and foreign tourists. At the same time, there has been only a small decrease in the relative tourism activity in North Jutland in the month of July, and the relative distribution of tourists in 2014 seems almost indistinguishable from 2004. It is quite notable that the 2004 season and the 2014 season are so similar, seeing that the peak season of tourism activity among foreigners seems to have shifted towards August when taking at the whole of Denmark into consideration.



(Danmarks Statistik, 2015)



(Danmarks Statistik, 2015)

However, it must be also be noted that an additional limitation to the statistical data is the fact that overnight stays made in holiday homes are not collected regionally on a monthly basis. This can be seen as a serious limitation because second homes could be speculated to make up a far more significant amount of the total sum of overnight stays in rural areas, than they do in the capital. In Danish the very word for holiday homes (*sommerhus*) seems to suggest that holiday homes could be even more influenced by seasonality than the tourism sector as a whole (Tress, 2007). Lastly, North Jutland as a destination is not a homogenous entity, seeing that even though it contains areas which can be regarded as rural, it also contains one of the biggest cities of Denmark, and as a result seasonality will most likely more predominating in specific areas. These factors are limitations which make it difficult to measure the exact extent of seasonality in the region of North Jutland. The available statistical data does, however, indicate that seasonality does influence the Danish tourism industry, especially in North Jutland.

1.2. PROBLEM FORMULATION

On the basis of this quantitative material it seems justifiable to say that the tourism sector of North Jutland is indeed experiencing seasonal fluctuations. As for what the potential causes of these might be, in this particular geographical context, is a relatively unexplored phenomenon. As it will later be focused upon in the literature review, the concept of seasonality tends to be investigated primarily in terms of its potential sources, effects and manageability. However, the notion of approaching it from a discursive perspective has, to our knowledge not previously been attempted. The rationale, thus, rests in the notion of whether tourists might be conditioned to visiting destination at specific times of the year, as a consequence of seasonality induced marketing images. Consequently, the problem formulation on which this thesis is based is twofold. Firstly, we wish to determine the relationship between the projected destination image of North

Jutland and its capacities as a seasonality inducing factor. Secondly, through the examination of strategic, tourism material we seek to illuminate the underlying reasons why the seasonality inducing discourse has come into effect. Both parts will be sought illuminated through a case study framework which includes the previously mentioned discourse analysis approach as the central research method. Consequently, the problem formulation is formulated in the following manner.

How is current destination promotional material of North Jutland creating a destination image that acts as a seasonality inducing factor? How does overarching, strategic tourism related material influence the construction of said destination image?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following section, we will touch upon the existing academic literature on the subject of seasonality, and we will seek to illuminate some of the central theoretical thoughts on the issue in terms of reasons, effects and management of seasonality.

2.1. DEFINITION OF SEASONALITY

While the notion of seasonality is not solely linked to the field of tourism, seeing that it is also argued to be evident within other economic activities such as agriculture and manufacturing (Cannas, 2012), it is, however, an extremely common part of the field. Not just from the perspective of academia, but it is certainly also apparent to tourism operators, agencies, DMOs, etc. It has, in fact, been described as one of the “most” common features of tourism (Butler, 2001). Meanwhile, as noted by Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff (Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2010), paradoxically, the term is not associated with one particular, clear-cut definition. One commonly cited characterization, however, is that of Butler (2001), who delineates seasonality as a,

...temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment and admissions to attractions” (p. 5).

Conversely, it may be noted that this definition lacks a key component, for the reason that it only vaguely expresses the notion of the time-basis on which these imbalances takes place, that is to say, the cyclical and systematical pattern that is often attributed to the concept of seasonality (Hirschey et al. cited in Cannas, 2012, p. 41). With reference to the latter, Hylleberg (cited in Koc & Altinay, 2007) underlines this very notion by way of stating that “seasonality is (a) systematic, although not necessarily regular, intra-year movement (...)” (p. 227). Especially, the addition of the idea of regularity and how this may not necessarily be an inherent part of the phenomenon, is certainly of vital importance in terms of attempting to grasp the very nature of seasonality. This, however, can be considered a particular daunting task, when taking into consideration that allegedly, “there is no scientific theory on tourism seasonality” (Lundtorp, 2001, p. 23). This might well be due to the notion that there is an apparent lack of examinations of the subject based on longitudinal and in-depth research frameworks (Lundtorp & Baum, 2001). While this may be the case, efforts have indeed been made in terms of gaining a richer understanding of the phenomenon, and why it occurs. However, on a somewhat contradicting note, Getz and Nilsson (2004) suggest that there is a, “predictability of seasonality (which) makes it possible for busi-

nesses, lenders and investors to anticipate many of its effects” (p. 18). It should be noted, however, that these definitions do no mention the perhaps obvious fact, that seasonality is bound geographically, meaning that tourism does not siege to exist in the low season it simply moves to other locations (Klemm & Rawal, 2001).

2.2. REASONS FOR SEASONALITY

As mentioned widely within literature on seasonality, the very reasons for its occurrence has predominantly been attributed to two main categories, *natural* factors and *institutional* factors (Amelung, Nicholls, & Viner, 2007; Butler, 2001; Cuccia & Rizzo, 2011; Jang, 2004; Koc & Altinay, 2007; Rassing, Wanhill, & Lundtorp, 2001).

2.2.1. NATURAL FACTORS

The natural factors are generally thought of as aspects of a destination which cannot be altered or manipulated by decision-makers, whereas the institutional factors are susceptible to change (Cuccia & Rizzo, 2011). The cause for this is found in the notion that, with regards to seasonality, the natural ‘environment’ is generally associated with climate, weather and geographical location (Commons & Page, 2001). Natural factors are considered to be temperature, sunlight, daylight, rainfall, snowfall, etc. (Chung, 2009), but when considering the ongoing debate of climate changes, which has been featured in tourism seasonality literature (Amelung et al., 2007; Cannas, 2012), and how these alterations are suggested to be inflicted by human actions, the notion of natural factors as being beyond human influence may, to some extent, be disputed. This particular notion will be touched upon in 2.3. *Reconceptualizing the reasons of seasonality*. Gómez Martin (2005) adds to this discussion the important notion, relatively obvious as it may be, that a destination exists within a geographical space, and that this natural, physical environment may act, “(...) as a factor influencing the location of tourism, as a resource supporting a wide range of activities, and as an attraction in its own right” (p. 572).

2.2.2. INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Generally, the institutional aspects of seasonality are referred to as variable, theoretically ‘manageable’, and as a consequence thereof, they may be subject to alteration, seeing that,

The term “institutionalized seasonality” pertains to traditional temporal variations formed by human actions and policies, which are often enshrined in legislation...
...Institutional seasonality varies much more widely and with much less consistency of pattern than does its natural counterpart (...) (Cannas, 2012, p. 43).

What is not completely evident in the quote above is the underlying, irregular features pertaining to the concept of institutionalized seasonality, that is to say what these human actions and policies might, in fact, be. Butler (2001) notes that the institutionalized seasonality may be considered as being a consequence of religious, cultural, ethnic and social factors, and further points to the idea that there is a link between these and natural phenomena, hinting at the notion that the two forms of seasonality exist within the same realm, thus suggesting that they can also influence one another. As for the institutionalized factors, the summer holiday is suggested to be one of the main 'culprits' for the existence of seasonality within tourism (Ball, 1988; Butler, 2001; Koc & Altinay, 2007; Nadal, Font, & Rosselló, 2004). Another major influence in terms of seasonal travel is habits and traditions (Ashworth & Thomas, 1999; Cannas, 2012; Getz & Nilsson, 2004). The idea of traditions as being a source of seasonality was proposed by Butler (2001) who noted that the answer pertaining to the question of why many tourists are taking holidays in peak season is simply, "...because they have always done so and such habits tend to die hard" (p. 8). Furthermore, it is also suggested that prices for a specific destination, potential tourists' income, advertising expenditure, tourists' tastes (Nadal et al., 2004), sporting seasons, social pressure or fashion, as well as inertia (Butler, 2001) can be viewed as institutional factors influencing the occurrence of seasonality.

2.3. RECONCEPTUALIZING THE REASONS OF SEASONALITY

Finally, the intricacies involved with determining the 'origin' of seasonality are framed by Frances (1996) who suggests that while the seasonal fluctuations might be, "deterministic because of e.g. calendar and weather effects, some seasonal fluctuations may be caused by the behavior of economic agents" (p. 299). Thus, the seasonality may not be constant and equal to what has previously been experienced at a tourism destination. Ultimately, this is to be seen as an argument in favor of labelling the causes of seasonality as being the outcome of both natural and institutional factors. In other words, seasonality should be seen a 'co-created' phenomenon, rather than the product of a single entity. The very categorization of institutional factors is a testament to the intricacy of the subject, and the grouping of holiday patterns, prices, income, marketing and other economic aspects, and less tangible factors such as social pressure, fashion and inertia under the same heading is not without its issues. The division of the causes of seasonality into natural and institutional factors can be viewed as being somewhat artificial as the institutional factors themselves are perceived as consisting of different entities of a diverse nature. Therefore, the distinction between natural and institutional factors might instead be viewed as the result of analytical considerations in relation to simplifying the causes of seasonality into two groups, rather the sign of an ontological perception. This distinction could, however, be viewed

as misleading, as it may encourage the understanding that it is only institutional factors that can be addressed when dealing with seasonality, and further, that all institutional causes for seasonality can be influenced in the same degree. Therefore, it could be argued that there should be distinguished between different institutional factors for seasonality. For instance, whereas the economic factors may, to a certain extent, be considered 'controllable', the social factors can arguably be considered less prone to regulation. In other words, there appears to be an ostensible, if not completely clear, distinction between the different institutional factors. Consequently, it can be contended that there is a need for a third category of these factors, or a subdivision, which may be formulated in terms of the prospect and likelihood of regulation: one that might encompass the tangible features (prices, income, summer holiday etc.), and another subsection featuring the more socially oriented aspects.

Consequently, we propose that seasonality should rather be considered as being determined by a triadic relationship between (1) natural factors, (2) economic factors and (3) sociocultural factors. Natural factors are determined by way of its perceived suitability to conduct a particular activity. The participation in said activity stems from personal interests and motivations that are founded on the basis a variety of sociocultural factors that exist within a given, or multiple, physical (e.g. national, regional or local) or perceived (sub-cultural) environments. The interest and motivation, however, is also subject to alteration by institutional factors existing within the destination as well country of origin such as price levels and income, that is to say economic factors that might embolden or discourage the tourist from partaking in a given activity despite personal preferences. Therefore, institutional factors are not only affecting how the natural factor is perceived but are also affecting how other institutional factors are perceived.

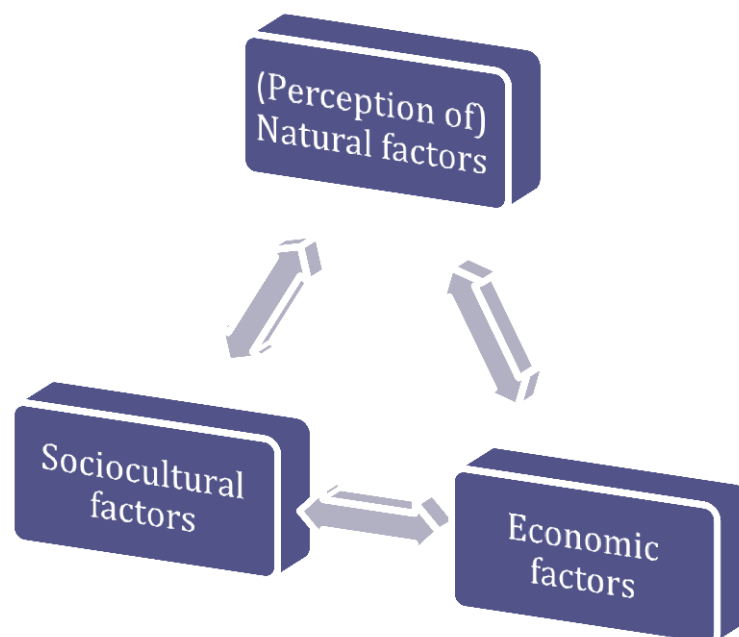


Figure 1 - Model detailing the triadic, multidirectional relationship between the three key determinants of tourism seasonality (source: Authors)

The nature of the relationship between the natural factors, economic factors and sociocultural factors is manifested in Figure 1. The reconceptualization is not only concerned with acknowledging the difference in the level of susceptibility to change associated with the institutional factors, but also that sociocultural and economic factors are indeed factoring into the perception of the “naturally” induced seasonality. In other words, this reconceptualization should not only be viewed as being descriptive of the behavior of the tourist in a seasonality context, but is also to be considered equally applicable to the study of how tourism stakeholders (DMOs, travel operators, locals, etc.) understand the natural and humanly created traits of their destination, and how these stakeholders subsequently choose to depict and utilize these within a tourism context. Lastly, we argue that the relationship between the different factors is not necessarily unidirectional. That is to say, pinpointing the causal links of different sets of factors in relation to the seasonality nature of a specific destination is not deemed possible to determine objectively due to the idea that we view the seasonality nature as ultimately being the product of manmade decisions, which rests on interpretations that are formed on the basis of social interaction, and the perception of the natural factors, as a result thereof, is something which may be influenced.

2.4. EFFECTS OF SEASONALITY

As described in the previous section, various theories regarding the potential sources of seasonality have been formulated. The diversity of theories concerning the reasons for the occurrence of seasonality in tourism also appears to be apparent in the discussion of its negative and positive effects.

2.4.1. *NEGATIVE EFFECTS*

According to tourism literature on seasonality, the negative impacts of seasonality are manifold, and, in contrast to the positive ones mentioned below, there seems to be a greater focus on economic aspects. In general terms, the negative effects appears to be wasted capacity, overcrowding, difficulty in terms of maintaining staff, lower quality, environmental damage, etc.

The notion of wasted capacity is associated with the low-season and Cooper (2005) asserts that,

As tourism is a service industry, it is not possible to stockpile the product – a hotel room that is unsold on a particular night, an unsold seat on a flight or an unsold theatre ticket all have an economic value of zero. Seasonality of demand therefore causes major problems for the tourist industry (p. 133).

As a consequence of this wasted capacity, there is a need to regain what is lost during the low season. This may result in the exact opposite of wasted capacity, and thus operating beyond ca-

capacity might well be considered a necessary strategy during peak season in order to compensate for the low demand during low season, which may result in over-crowding, over-booking, high prices etc. (Cooper, 2005). In relation to the latter and the notion of tourism assets as having a value of zero during low season, it has also been suggested that the high prices might even be perceived as “price gouging”, consequently leaving the tourist feeling a lack of value for money (Getz & Nilsson, 2004), thus suggesting that seasonality may be the cause of perceived low quality. The over-crowding of a tourism destination might also result in social and personal costs (Cannas, 2012). One consequence is found in the notion of locals feeling alienated from their own community during peak season (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012) due to an apparent over-crowding attributed to tourists, consequently creating the need for a low season as previously mentioned, on which it will be elaborated in section concerning positive effects.

Other negative factors relates to the labor aspect. Tosun (2002) argues that seasonality can be influencing a local population’s perspective on tourism jobs in a negative way. Temporary jobs within the context of seasonality have also been said to be characterized by definite negative aspects such as: the prospect of poorer working conditions than in other business sectors that are not prone to seasonality; a general sense of uncertainty on part of the employee due to a limited time commitment; involuntary unemployment in the low season and maybe even involuntary migration (Ball, 1988). As a consequence of this, maintaining regular, educated staff could prove to be an issue; particularly in peripheral regions, seeing that they are suggested to be especially susceptible to seasonal fluctuations (Rassing et al., 2001). As mentioned in the section above, value for money may be an issue due to overcrowding, but it has been argued that a lack thereof can also be attributed to temporary labor.

Lastly, an effect that, as it is evidenced in the next section, can also be considered positive, the extended downtime in between seasons has been noted to be a positive aspect in terms of avoiding large scale degradation of natural assets. While that may be the case, it has also been suggested that the environmental damage caused by overcrowding and running beyond capacity might have even more severe effects than those caused by a prolonged season. A theoretical example that could illuminate this notion might be that if a destination that is affected by extreme seasonality (a term that is somewhat arbitrary and defined in accordance with one’s own perception of what is “extreme” (Getz & Nilsson, 2004, p. 18)) additional construction of accommodation and other supporting structures might be needed in order to increase capacity, thus having a greater environmental impact (Hawkins & Roberts, 1994). In this context, however, it should be noted that this idea seems to be resting upon a concept of an extended peak season, where, instead of seeking additional tourist arrivals in the low season while maintaining the similar amount throughout the peak season, there is an allocation of tourist demand from peak

to low season. However, such an extension could prove to be bound by certain constraints for it to come to fruition, mainly in terms of the small business being cost-effective seeing that the prolonged season would require more man-hours and other operational costs but not necessarily more tourists, thus the economic impacts might not be considered worth the effort (Getz & Nilsson, 2004).

2.4.2. POSITIVE EFFECTS

The principal argument in terms of seasonality being a positive feature of tourism is associated with the notion of the low season providing a time for recovery (Butler, 2001; Goulding, Baum, & Morrison, 2005; Kastenholtz & Almeida, 2008). The basis of this notion is found in the argument that a destination can benefit greatly from a period of low activity, maybe even non-activity (Kastenholtz & Almeida, 2008). At first glance this notion may seem somewhat broad and non-specific; henceforth it should be clarified that this belief is to be considered from different points of view: both from an ecological, social and cultural (Kastenholtz & Almeida, 2008; Lee, Bergin-Seers, Galloway, Mahony, & McMurray, 2008). The proponents of this idea ultimately suggest that in order for a destination to remain 'healthy', its social, cultural and environmental resources needs to be reinvigorated for the purpose of not being drained completely (Goulding et al., 2005). In terms of the ecological aspect, it is suggested that seasonality is positive, seeing that the likely deterioration of natural features and landmarks as a consequence of overuse through the peak season may be avoided by way of lessening utilization through low-season or low season (Lee et al., 2008). Furthermore, within tourism literature there is a prevalent notion that a destination not only functions because of its natural resources, but also because of their human counterparts, and thus it has been argued that the social and cultural environment in which tourism takes place also is in need of restoration (Kastenholtz & Almeida, 2008). In other words, there may be a need for locals to recapture local, cultural identities that may be suppressed during an exhaustive high-season in which catering to the needs of tourists is given greater priority than their own.

As a final comment on the positive aspects, it may be debated whether prolonged restoration periods would indeed be needed if the peak season was not overcrowded, and tourist arrivals and spending was spread more consistently across a 12-month period. For the purpose a giving an overview of the negative and positive factors a table in which the positive and negative effects in terms of peak and low season have been produced. It should be noted that the studies that have been conducted in relation to seasonality can, to some extent, be said to view seasonality in terms of a peak season vs low season context, that is to say in terms of the possible benefits and disadvantages of these, as well as those of a "stable season", instead of the no-

tion of no season at all. Consequently, the table below may appear more negative than it might actually be.

| | Negative effects | Positive effects |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Peak season | Overcrowding Overbooking High prices Lack of value for money (Low quality) Negative social consequences for local population Degradation of natural environment | Temporary employment increase Maximum use of capacity |
| Low/Low season | Wasted capacity Involuntary unemployment | Recovery of local, cultural and human resources Environmental restoration |

Table 1 - Table depicting negative and positive effects of seasonality in relation to peak season and low season (source: Authors).

2.5. ADDRESSING SEASONALITY

Seasonality is an inherently complex issue, and one that may be considered pointless to continue to combat (Butler, 2001, p. 5). Nonetheless, throughout the literature several strategies on how to manage seasonality have been suggested, and primarily revolve around notions such as changing product mix, market diversification, differential pricing as well as facilitation by the state (see overview below for clarification) (Baum & Hagen, 1999; Commons & Page, 2001; Lee et al., 2008). These terms are somewhat generic and broad in their conception. Lee et al. (2008, pp. 6–7) provides an outline of the underpinnings of these strategies:

- The changing of product mix might involve development of the local environment, diversifying into niche and special interest markets, including events and festivals etc.
- Market diversification refers to the design of marketing campaigns directed at different markets as well as the alignment of tour operators and travel agents to sell products/services.
- Differential pricing might be carried out through seasonal pricing, group offers and off-peak season closure for the purpose of reducing costs.
- Facilitation by the state may refer to the staggering of holidays, infrastructural development, contributing with marketing and financial planning support services as well as

measures to increase labor market flexibility, development of local business networks etc. (see Lee et al., 2008 for a complete summary of strategies)

Cases have been identified in which tourism providers have successfully managed to lengthen their season, however, these tourism providers have seldom been limited by a single geographical position and can consequently move their tourism activities to new area which may possess different seasonal patterns (if any) (Klemm & Rawal, 2001). Therefore, successful strategies from a destination perspective are scarcer. As suggested in the previous sections the reasons and effects of seasonality are manifold and intricate, and thus it seems to be a natural outcome that the measures for dealing with seasonality are up for debate; a discussion that first and foremost rests on the perception of said effects as being positive or negative. Though the latter appears to be the prevalent notion, Koenig-Lewis and Bischoff (2010) highlights this central issue in terms of addressing seasonality,

...it is argued that the usual paradigm for strategy formulation in this area, whilst involving a sound analysis of objective performance data, largely ignores differences in the businesses' perceptions of seasonality and its impacts (p. 396).

Consequently, what this ultimately details is that through the top-down perspective in terms of contending seasonality a vital part of the tourism destination is ignored, that is to say, the regional and local actors that needs to be aligned in order for a strategy to come into effect. This, however, is not a straightforward and easily accomplished process. One of the issues and constraints have been noted to be lifestyle entrepreneurs (Getz & Nilsson, 2004) for the reason that the grounds on which their businesses have been established are not necessarily (predominantly) economic in nature (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000), and so they are not equally prone to accepting the same economic incentives as the profit-maximizing segment of tourism business owners. A major constraint in terms of extending the season is that SMEs are often a vital part of many tourism destinations and that the DMOs of these areas have no direct control over these private enterprises. Therefore, a particular strategy which might be beneficial to the destination as a whole might not be carried out if the local enterprises do not perceive the strategies as being feasible, seeing that it is the local enterprises and stakeholders and not the DMOs which are in charge of the local events (Albrechtsen, 2013).

2.6. AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO RESEARCHING SEASONALITY

Considering the very nature of a tourism destination as consisting of both a supply side and demand side properties, it can certainly be argued that seasonality should be viewed in a similar

way. However, the literature on the subject tends to focus considerably more on the supply side of the 'issue' (Jang, 2004), that is to say in terms of modelling, predicting and developing measures to overcome it, rather than to understand the reason for why the tourists flock to certain destinations during a particular period of time each year. In relation to this assumption, Hinch and Jackson (2000) suggests that one way to put greater emphasis on the demand side of the discussion would be to view seasonality through the lens of leisure-constraints studies, and approach the subject concerning the temporal fluctuations of tourists from a point of departure equal to the sentiment of, "why not?" – why do some people not participate in leisure in general or in particular activities for which they might have the desire "(p. 92). This certainly is a valid point when considering that, "it is not known whether tourists travel in the peak season because they want to, they have to or they have been conditioned to" (Rassing et al., 2001, p. 89).

Considering these assertions in relation to our proposed reconceptualization of underlying factors of seasonality, we argue that approaching the concept of seasonality through the application of destination image theory will provide fitting theoretical framework in which the issue can be tackled in a new way, which we contend is necessary, seeing that the study of seasonality appears to have reached somewhat of a deadlock in terms of causes and solutions to seasonality. For instance, it would seem that texts regarding seasonality are still referring to theory regarding natural and institutional factors for seasonality which appears to have received little revision.

To our knowledge, investigating seasonality as being the possible consequence of a projected destination image has yet to be done. In this thesis, the aspect of what the destination image is and how it is projected is viewed as being very important seeing that we contend that it may indeed affect whether the destination, on the part of the tourist, is viewed as a destination characterized by a high level of seasonality or whether it is perceived as an all-year attraction. Additionally, the way in which the destination image is projected, in terms of what it is and how it is presented, might also affect how tourism stakeholders within the destination perceives their destination, thereby further reinforcing the seasonal nature of the tourism sector of the area, and thus convincing or reaffirming both the tourists and the tourism actors that seasonality is "natural", and thus, practically impossible to influence. If seasonality was viewed as being, at least in part, the effect of a projected destination image, the tools used for influencing seasonality could perhaps be aimed more towards affecting how people perceive the destination e.g. the demand side rather than solely focusing on the supply side of a destination.

3. THEORY

In this section we will outline theoretical foundation on which the analysis will be based. Initially, we will present theory regarding the conceptualization of as well as the factors influencing destination image as well as thoughts on the concept of projected image of a tourism destination. In the section concerning projected image we will be drawing on discussions undertaken in the literature review. The inclusion of destination image as a theoretical foundation in this thesis has been selected due to the notion that seasonality has yet to be investigated in terms of its properties as a destination image, either intentionally or inadvertently. In other words, its relevancy in this thesis stems from the theoretical assumption that seasonality can be the consequence of a projected destination image.

3.1. DESTINATION IMAGE FORMATION

Upon review, the concept of destination image may come across as a rather unsolidified term that suffers from certain inadequacies in terms of its conceptualization (Beerli & Martín, 2004; C. M. Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2002). Echtner and Ritchie (2003) collected various definitions of destination image used in tourism studies from 1975 to 1990 and found that the conceptualizations utilized were often only vaguely outlined, and in some cases definitions of the term were in fact completely absent. The pervasiveness of destination image in tourism studies and its contended atheroretical character (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991) is somewhat paradoxical when considering that destination image has been argued to be constituting an important pillar in the formation of a destination's tourism development (Grosspietsch, 2006).

3.1.1. *DESTINATION IMAGE CONTINUUMS*

However, as indicated above, this should not be seen as an expression of a complete lack of conceptualizations of destination image and its underpinnings, seeing that some definition have indeed risen to prominence. Bui (2011) and Chen and Phou (2013), both citing Crompton (1970), assert that destination image is generally defined as a sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a tourism destination. Echtner and Ritchie (1993, 2003) provides a comprehensive conceptual framework of destination image in which destination image is defined by both functional as well as psychological characteristics. It is largely these two general conceptualizations on which the analysis and discussion will be founded in this thesis. Echtner and Ritchie (C. M. Echtner & Ritchie, 2003) outlines the functional-psychological features in the following manner,

A destination's image can include ratings on certain common functional characteristics, such as price levels, transportation infrastructure, types of accommodation, climate, etc. The destination can also be rated on very commonly considered psychological characteristics: level of friendliness, safety, quality of service expected, fame, etc. (p. 43).

These features, however, are not the sole determinants of the destination image. Destination image is argued to be based on three continuums: (1) functional-psychological, (2) attribute-holistic and (3) common-unique (C. M. Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). The attribute-holistic scale relates to the 'scope' through which the destination image is viewed. That is to say, destination image is formed on the basis of how individual features are perceived (e.g. climate, accommodation, friendliness of locals) as well as how the destination is viewed holistically by way of the creation of mental pictures and through imagery (C. M. Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). The third continuum relates to the notion of a destination possessing psychological-functional, holistic or individual traits that are either perceived as common features that are standards and does not distinguish the destination from others, whereas the unique spectrum of the continuum relates to attributes that may be deemed as singular, exclusive, extraordinary etc. (C. M. Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

The applicability of these continuums in relation to the examination of the seasonal nature of the tourism sector of North Jutland stems from the notion that it can be argued that the destination image is also defined in terms of economic, social and natural factors. Whereas we in the previous chapter argued that seasonality is formed on the basis of triadic relationship between the aforementioned factors, destination image can, to a certain extent, also be argued to be the result of the triadic relationship between the three continuums, which are constituted according to tangible and intangible characteristics. The non-unidirectional nature of the interaction between the different elements of the proposed seasonality reconceptualization, which is argued to be the cause of seasonality, is also evident in terms of destination image. More specifically, it is exemplified in the four quadrant system related to how destination image may be perceived, developed by Echtner and Ritchie (1993): (1) functional attributes, (2) psychological attributes, (3) functional holistic and (4) psychological holistic. Whereas 1 and 2 relates to individual tangible as well as intangible features within a destination, 3 and 4 is to be contemplated as tangible and intangible characteristics associated with the whole destination. For the purpose of clarifying how the interplay of these continuums feed into analysis and discussion presented in this, we have deemed it necessary to outline an example below detailing how the image of a destination might be perceived as being of a "seasonal character". The example is based on the premise of how a potential tourist might view a destination when visiting during low/low season.

While the model itself is that of Echtner and Ritchie (C. M. Echtner & Ritchie, 1993;2003) and the notions mentioned within the example are influenced by the cited texts, this exact example concerning the destination image of a hypothetical destination is one created for the illustrative purpose of how the destination might be perceived by a potential tourist, and thus should not be regarded as a research outcome. Furthermore, it should be noted that the example is also, to a certain extent, informed by the different elements listed in Table 2 in the literature review.

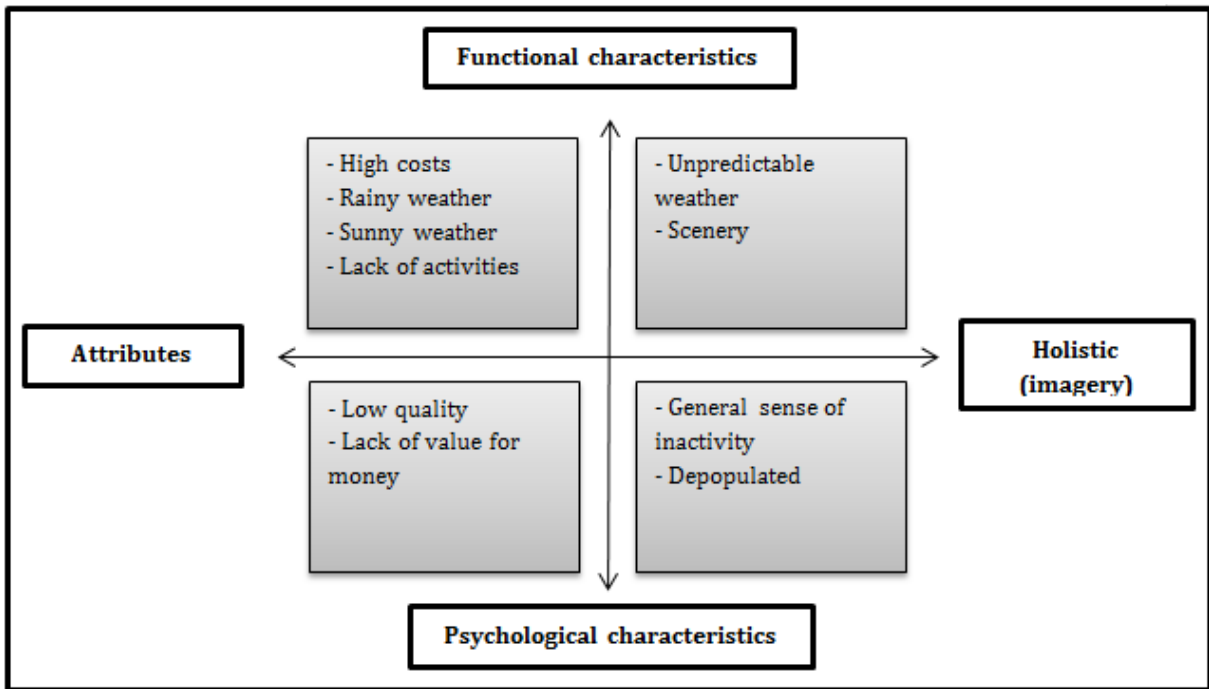


Figure 2 - Model adapted from Echtner and Ritchie (1993; 2003) detailing a hypothetical destination image formed in the mind of a tourist upon visitation.

Omitted from the model above is the concept of the common-unique continuum which is not as consequence of a lack of applicability in relation to seasonality, but because of illustrative limitations of the model that only allows for the illustration of two continuums at a time. That is to say, we might create four additional quadrants combining the common-unique continuum with the functional-psychological, and yet another four by linking the common-unique continuum with the attributes-holistic scale (see C. M. Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, pp. 10–11 for specific examples). However, it should be noted that this particular continuum is the most loosely defined in terms of conceptualization. As evidence of this, we may point to the study of Echtner and Ritchie (1993) in which a questionnaire survey was conducted and respondents were asked to list distinctive and unique tourist attractions of Jamaica. A commonly mentioned, unique feature was the beaches, but as noted by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) the beaches are far from being a feature specifically associated with that particular destination. Thus, this can be seen as evidence of the

interplay between the different continuums, in this case the common-unique and functional-psychological, for the reason that it can be theorized that the cause for determining the beaches as unique is because it, to a number of respondents, was not only associated with its functional properties, access to the sea, and thus, a variety of water sports and other water-related activities, but also had a profound psychological effect that transcended mere physical activity. Thus, this particular scale as well as the functional-psychological continuum is certainly prone to interpretation and dependent on previous experiences. In terms of the use of the different continuums, and contrary to the example outlined above, in this thesis we will be discerning the destination image through the examination of tourism marketing related brochures. That is to say, we are basing the perceived destination image within a pre-visitation scenario. Essentially, we will, to some extent, be viewing this marketing material as if we are first time visitors, considering the prospect of vacationing in North Jutland. Consequently, some of the examples of the elements of the destination image formation depicted in Figure 2 will not be featured in the actual analysis given that they are based on actual visitation experience with the area in question. More specifically, the selection of the attributes which will be touched in the analysis is based on the comprised list of 35 attributes by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) relevant to the formation of the image of the destination. The list is included below, where the individual traits are placed in terms of their “tangibility”. However, not all of these aspects will be considered in the analysis.

| Functional (physical, measurable) | | Psychological (abstract) |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Tourist sites/activities | Crowdedness | Hospitality/friendliness/receptiveness |
| National parks/wilderness activities | Cleanliness | Restful/relaxing |
| Historic sites/museums | Degree of urbanization | Atmosphere (familiar vs. exotic) |
| Beaches | Economic development/affluence | Opportunity for adventure |
| Fairs, exhibits, festivals | Extent of commercialization | Opportunity to increase knowledge |
| Scenery/natural attractions | Political stability | Family or adult oriented |
| Nightlife and entertainment | Accessibility | Quality of service |
| Shopping facilities | Personal safety | Fame/reputation |
| Facilities for information and tours | Ease of communication | |
| Sports facilities/activities | Customs/culture | |
| Local infrastructure/transportation | Different cuisine/food and drink | |
| Cities | | |
| Accommodation/restaurants | | |
| Architecture/buildings | | |
| Costs/price levels | | |
| Climate | | |

Figure 3 - Reproduction of Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) list of attributes influencing destination image.

3.1.2. COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE AND CONNOTATIVE PROCESSES

Somewhat continuing in the vein of the notion of interpretation and previous experiences, in terms of seasonality, the model presented in Figure 3 could also have been exemplified by way of shifting the premise, from a tourist forming a perception of the destination image upon visitation to a tourist who has yet to visit the specific destination. The destination image of the potential visitor would, therefore, be informed by sources like marketing material, word-of-mouth, previous tourism experiences, etc. (Agapito, Valle, & Mendes, 2013; Baloglu, 2000; Pereira, Correia, & Schutz, 2012; Pike & Ryan, 2004). It is through such a lens that the marketing material collected for this thesis has been analyzed.

Additionally conceptualized, constituting dynamics of destination image have been argued to revolve around cognitive, affective and connotative “behavior” (Baloglu & McCreary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Chen & Phou, 2013), which have been argued to be closely related to the three continuums described in the previous section (Chen & Uysal, 2002). Chen and Phou (2013) summarizes the cognitive and affective workings in the following manner,

The cognitive component involves beliefs and knowledge about the physical attributes of a destination, while the affective one refers to the appraisal of the affective quality of feelings toward the attributes and the surrounding environment (p. 270).

What can be derived from this assertion is that the cognitive and affective components do not exist in separate vacuums, but they are rather interrelated. This ties into the previously mentioned example of the “rating” of the beaches of Jamaica as being “unique”, seeing that functional attributes such as natural attributes and activities does not just exist in their physical, tangible form but also becomes intangible given the notion that the attributes are subjected to interpretation through which the character and appeal of said attributes is weighed according to both its perceived functional as well as psychological value. Accordingly, the two concepts should be contemplated in the following manner:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Cognitive | A destination image consists of what the tourist <i>knows</i> about the destination |
| Affective | A destination image consist of what the tourist <i>feels</i> about this knowledge |

Table 2 - adapted from Agapito, Valle and Mendes (2013)

As indicated in the table above, the cognitive assessment is a predecessor to the affective, which essentially is to be understood in the way that for an affective evaluation of a destination image

to take place it is necessary for the image to first be weighed cognitively (Baloglu, 2000), that is to say, the formation of the destination image and its consequent appeal in terms of its perceived functional attributes rests on the abovementioned belief and knowledge of the tourist. Furthermore, the information “gathering” undertaken have been found to be equally important to the formation of the destination image (Baloglu, 2000). That is to say, the variety (amount) of information sources, type of information sources and socio-psychological travel motivations forms an intricate web of influences which are argued to be decisive factors in the process of creating positive destination image and thus increasing the probability of visitation (Baloglu, 2000).

The importance of this discussion in relation to the concept of seasonality and the analysis in general rest on the notion that we will essentially be assuming the role of a potential tourist, that is to say, the interpreter of the gathered marketing material. Thus, we will be subjecting the text and images to our own beliefs and knowledge. Consequently, seeing that this is a study into the perceived nature of seasonality in tourism sector of North Jutland the analysis and our perception of the destination image will be influenced by the assertions of previous authors, that is to say the ideas of the potential benefits and weaknesses of seasonality and concepts of why the phenomenon occurs (as presented in the literature review). Also, given the notion that both authors of this thesis are “natives” to region to which the study refers, the local knowledge that arises thereof cannot be completely discarded and will, therefore, to a lesser extent, be factoring into the outcome of the analysis as well.

3.1.2.1. The conative element

Also, until this point we have been discounting the notion of the connotative element. According to the literature on this particular aspect, the connotative is essentially to be equated with behavior (Pike & Ryan, 2004), that is to say, the effect of the cognitive and affective considerations detailed above. The aspects, thus, revolves around the prospects of visitation, recommendation to others, re-visitiation, etc. (Agapito et al., 2013; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Pike & Ryan, 2004). On the topic of the validity of the behavioral aspect in the destination image seems to have some validity in this discussion when considering the dual purpose of the destination image, which revolve around both pre as well as post visitation behavior. That is to say,

Destination image plays two important roles in behaviors: (1) to influence the destination choice decision-making process and (2) to condition the after-decision-making behaviors including participation (on-site experience), evaluation (satisfaction) and future behavioral intentions (intention to revisit and willingness to recommend) (Chen & Tsai, 2007, p. 1116)

Thus, we may argue that the destination image process has not come full circle until the actual visitation and subsequent evaluation, recommendation, possible re-visitation etc. have been concluded, and, according Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez (2001), the key to possible re-visitation and positive recommendations is not found specifically in neither the pre, during or post-visitation stages, but hinges on the consistency of the overall destination image. That is to say, positive confirmation of pre-visitation expectations equals a higher change of post-visitation recommendation, whereas the opposite is the case if the pre-visitation expectations are not perceived to be met sufficiently by the destination.

Bringing the subject of seasonality into the discussion, seasonal fluctuation, as insinuated in literature review, can also be argued as being the outcome of the behavior on the part of the tourist, especially when considering the underlying social constructs of tradition, inertia, etc. The conative aspect will in this thesis be treated in a related, but still somewhat different manner. In other words, the way in which the conative aspects become visible within the construct of this thesis is closely related to the problem formulation, seeing that we, to some extent, seek to investigate how projected signs of North Jutland as being a destination characterized by seasonality might condition tourist to act in terms of travelling to the destination specific times during the year.

3.2. PROJECTED IMAGE

Whereas the section above deals with the intricacies of how the destination image may be constructed (perceived) in the minds of the receiver, this section will revolve around the theoretical considerations on the part of marketer/disseminator, that is to say in terms of the projected (intended) image. Contrary to the perceived image as being a construct of a “visitor’s subjective evaluations and opinions of a destination”, the projected image is to be understood as the “combined product of government authority and private commercial efforts. It is the strategy of generating a singular and iconic representation of a place or a showcase of ideal features” (Hunter, 2012, p. 422). In terms of showcasing these ‘ideal features’, it has been suggested that the destination image should focus on few strong, key points-of-difference. thus setting the destination apart from competitor destinations, rather than possessing a multifaceted nature which might discourage visitation due to a perceived sense of blurriness in terms of what the destination might ‘offer’ (Therkelsen 2007, cited in Ren & Blichfeldt, 2011). This assertion relates to the discussion of one clear, distinct image as being the most favorable from a tourism destination point of view (Ren & Blichfeldt, 2011). However, as noted by Ren and Blichfeldt (2011), this view may indeed be contended, and the heterogeneity of a destination might be equally, if not more, appealing to a post-modern traveler. Thus, from a destination marketing point of view, it

may indeed be discussed whether the creation and preservation of one clear image is more of an impediment rather than an actual strength, and if it might even be a seasonality inducing factor. If marketers does indeed have a tendency to only thesis one clear image, it might be speculated that this (policy) could deter marketers/disseminators from projecting a heterogeneous image, for instance an image that displays Denmark both in the low season and in the peak season. Essentially the result of this could be that the potential tourists are given the perception that the destination should not be visited outside the peak season and thereby perpetuate or perhaps creating even further division between the peak season and the low season.

3.2.1. PROJECTED VS. PERCEIVED IMAGES

As indicated previously, a possible implication of the one clear image strategy is that the tourists who are visiting the destination might not have had an experience which is similar to the image that is being projected. This could be argued to be far more likely in a destination with a single image, as other images which are perhaps contradictory to the single image, is ignored. A diverse, or perhaps even somewhat contradicting, set of images on the other hand might give the tourist a better understanding of what to expect of the destination. In terms of seasonality it would seem to be difficult to portray a destination as having (e.g. unpredictable weather) because the very notion of unpredictability connects poorly with the idea of one clear image. Relating to this notion of one clear image, Connell (2005) frames the a central issue, in the context of the relationship between the destination marketing and television induced tourism on the Isle of Mull in the United Kingdom, by way of pondering,

If visitors to Balamory just want to see the colored houses and go home again, how should their needs be met? Will they, and is it unrealistic to expect them to, be interested in other facets of Mull? (Connell, 2005, p. 773)

What can essentially be derived thereof is that the lack of balance that might be caused of one-image strategy. That is to say, in terms of whether such an approach, by solely framing the most well-known features, can indeed be the cause of tourist visiting on the basis of rather narrow rationales, thus, limiting the overall, positive impact seeing that they may not have any interest in the area beyond what the one-clear image disseminated by the DMO has promised. Also, Connell (2005) appears to be suggesting that rather than projecting an image, which the destination realistically cannot match upon visitation by tourist, marketing should rather bridge the gap between promotion and reality. In the context of projected and perceived destination image Blichfeldt (2003) suggests that it is somewhat of a paradox that destination branding is often viewed as a tool for altering customers' thoughts regarding destinations, rather than being used

in order to understand the thoughts of the tourists. Thus, both Blichfeldt (2003) and Connell (2005) seem to suggest that the projected image should have its roots in the tourist's perception of the image, seeing that the projected image of a destination may affect but does not single-handedly control this perception. In fact, unlike Connell and Blichfeldt who questions the effect that image projection has on image perception, Hunter (2012) writes that usually, although there might be exceptions, "it is thought that promotion and experience are involved together in a dynamic and circular negotiation process" (p. 422). The implication of this is twofold. Firstly, this suggests that the perceived image is affected by the projected image of a destination and vice versa. Secondly, if the perceived image and the projected image are affecting one another, one might argue that both are inadvertently affecting themselves, exemplified in the notion that if a destination image projection is successful in encouraging the tourists to perceive the destination image in a particular manner (e.g. as a thriving, and lively summer destination), then it might be speculated that the perceived image might inspire the marketer to keep molding the destination image accordingly. A potential result thereof is that if the projected destination image proves successful it leads to a state of self-perpetuation, and thus, it creates the illusion that there is no alternative to the currently projected destination image.

Furthermore, the potential adverse effects of a simple image is, according to Ren and Blichfeldt (2011), not limited to the consumers for the reason that one image of what the destination is, or what it should and should not be, is unlikely to tie well into the differing values of all of the stakeholders of the tourism destination. The worst case scenario would be if the one-clear image is downright contradictory to the values or beliefs of certain stakeholders, thus, leaving them feeling alienated from the brand. In relation to this notion, the claim could be made that a brand which has little or no support from its stakeholders may have little or perhaps even an contradictory effect on the destination itself, seeing that the projected destination image to which the stakeholders are suggested to be adhering, courtesy of the marketing material, may not be perceived as such by the tourist seeing that the promise made in said material by the disseminator is not necessarily kept by all of the local tourism enterprises. This might affect the post-visitation aspect by way of limiting the chances of re-visitation and recommendation to others.

Like previously stated in terms of how the formation of the destination image on the part of the tourist is based cognitive, affective and conative processes, so it may be argued that the creation of the projected image is molded in a similar way, where key features are cognitively chosen in order to highlight specific features of the destination on the basis of the knowledge and beliefs of the disseminators; a selection that is then sought to be attributed with affective qualities with which the target audience can identify, consequently, increasing the chances of

visitation. Thus, we argue that is not simply what is shown (e.g. activities, landmarks and nature, that is to say ,tangible features) that is important in terms of projecting a destination image, but also the emotive response that the disseminators have sought to evoke. This aspect of the marketing material will be touched upon in the analysis.

3.2.2. PROJECTED DESTINATION IMAGE IN A SEASONALITY CONTEXT

Reflecting on the theoretical nature of this discussion there is a definite need to put this into the context of seasonality and its applicability in terms of researching this particular subject. Primarily, there is an apparent comparability in terms of the 'sources' of both concepts. We have previously argued that seasonality can be considered the outcome of an intricate relationship between natural, economic and sociocultural factors; that is to say palpable and seemingly intangible features. Much like seasonality, these rather broad categories can be argued to be equally important to the formation of destination image.

Considering the consistent nature of seasonality from a marketing perspective, an additional underlying reason for this perpetuating pattern of seasonal fluctuation might stem from the idea that tourism marketers often display a rather rigid understanding of the destination attributes (functional as well as psychological), which may be argued to originate from the repetition of said seasonality pattern, and thus tourism marketers might find themselves in a position where they end up considering the current tourist segments, as the only viable way in which their destination can be marketed. This can be viewed as problematic seeing that we may argue that seasonality itself can become self-inducing, through projected destination image and subsequent perception of the tourist. If this is seen in connection with theory regarding institutional and natural factors for seasonality, the case can be made that seasonality inducing factors, which are generally understood to be of a natural character, have evolved from the state of being considered natural, because of the status as being "naturally" occurring phenomena that are fairly predictable but uncontrollable, thus, from a tourism perspective, necessitating the development of proper coping mechanisms (development of specific tourism concepts and associated activities), to essentially being determined as such because the original perception of what the most emotionally attractive and visually interesting destination image has become institutionalized.

In other words, as the institutional factors are reinforced, through the repeated projection of the destination image, the understanding of the institutional factors for seasonality, is in risk of becoming increasingly uncontested which would factor into the notion of institutional factors of seasonality seemingly ending up being understood to be just as rigid and uncontrollable as the natural factors for seasonality. Relating this to the subject matter at hand, the seasonality configuration, thus, can be argued to be perpetuating relatively consistent and somewhat

predictable travel patterns because it is constantly reinforcing the destination image and the emotive “values” (e.g. restful, relaxing, familiar and/or exotic) of its constituting key traits and attributes (e.g. nature, activities, events and/or types of accommodation).

Thus, drawing on the theoretical discussion on one clear image, it seems valid to hypothesize that if a tourist’s perception of the destination image, is that a destination should only be visited at certain times of the year (the theoretical consequence of a projected destination image), the destination marketer will perhaps feel inclined only to thesis this image for the reason that it would seem to be a poor marketing strategy to disseminate a destination image that does not match the tourist’s perception. This rationale as well as the consequent effects of leaving this notion of linking seasonality and destination image uncontested, is that that the strategy towards addressing seasonality is never truly revised, and as a result of this marketers will be projecting an image that appeals to the same segments time after time.

In conjunction, the theoretical discussion on destination image formation and projected destination image serves as the theoretical foundation on which the analysis is build. Both will be factoring into the analysis of marketing as well as strategic material, seeing that arguments made in relation to strategic material will be interconnected with the marketing material, which is essentially done in order to illuminate how marketing related elements can be argued to form a seasonality inducing discourse, while also discussing the possible rationales behind its dissemination.

4. METHODOLOGY

In this section we will outline the methodological foundation on which this thesis rests. Initially, the philosophical foundation on which the thesis is based, social constructivism, will be discussed in relation to seasonality and destination image. In the following sections, methodological considerations regarding discourse analysis will be presented and discussed for the purpose of outlining the methodological underpinnings and subsequent operationalization of the method in the analysis; consequently, the term discourse will be presented in relation to its hermeneutic and semiotic underpinnings and applicability to the examination of the link between seasonality and destination image. In continuance thereof, a discussion on the case study structure of the thesis is presented and, lastly, the chapter concludes with reflections on the nature of the data sample in terms of the selection and gathering of marketing and strategic material.

4.1. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM IN THE CONTEXT OF SEASONALITY AND DESTINATION IMAGE

Social constructivism is the methodological foundation on which this thesis rests, which essentially denotes that our understanding of reality is constructed (Appleton, 2002; Collin, 2012; Jonassen, 1991; Tuli, 2011; Wahyuni, 2012). That is to say, that although an objective reality may exist, it is impossible to establish what this objective reality is, as we are all affected by our own pre-understandings (Wahyuni, 2012). This social constructivism understanding in which it is the understanding of the world that is viewed as being constructed, is also known as epistemological social constructivism (Collin, 2012).

In the literature review the concept of natural and institutional factors influencing seasonality, was established. Although we agree that this division is somewhat valid, as shown in that particular section, we also sought to challenge some of the aspects of this classification from a social constructivism point of departure, seeing that it can be reasoned that it creates the illusion that it is only the institutional factors of seasonality that can be “affected” in order to address the seasonality of a destination. From the perspective of epistemological social constructivism, we suggest that the natural factors for seasonality represent part of seasonality which is objectively real. However, seeing that we are affected by different pre-understandings we will view these natural factors for seasonality differently. As noted earlier in the thesis the institutional factors for seasonality seems quite heterogeneous; therefore, these factors have been divided into two groups. One of these groups can be viewed as being structural, institutional factors (holiday patterns, tourist income, destination prices etc.). These factors can for the most part be argued to be factors that are not particularly susceptible to change in the sense that they are largely beyond the immediate reach of tourism policy decision makers. The second group of institutional factors for seasonality is the factors which could be identified as being sociocultural

factors. These include tastes, inertia, fashions, etc. It is argued that these socio-cultural factors are influencing how natural factors for seasonality are interpreted. Therefore, our position is that natural factors for seasonality are not necessarily determining for the seasonality of a destination, seeing that our interpretation of these depends on institutional factors which are susceptible to change.

Furthermore, destination image as a concept is intrinsically tied to the social constructivism paradigm. As discussed in the foregoing chapter, the destination formation process is founded on varieties of different destination aspects and characteristics, both tangible and intangible alike, which are not necessarily considered equally important to all tourists. The seemingly intangible, psychological attributes are, to some extent, argued to be based on the physically observable “objects” such as nature, events and locals, that is to say the tourists’ interpretation thereof. Thus, rather than being observed objectively by the tourist, or extracted by the marketer and projected in the marketing material in the same manner, the destination image is socially constructed and negotiated on the basis of beliefs, knowledge, previous experience, etc.

4.2. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS, HERMENEUTICS AND SEMIOTICS

The main focus of the analysis is to address the potential existence of a, perhaps unintentionally, seasonality-inducing destination image and discussing the possible reasons for why such a destination image is projected. We have found that discourse analysis is an appropriate way through which such a premise can be actively explored. Jørgensen and Phillips (1999) states that the concept of discourse can be understood as a “certain way of speaking of and understanding the world” (p.9). Thus, discourse analysis does not only refer to the specific words and sentence constructs that are written or spoken, but also focuses on how these words and phrases manifest and the potential reasons why the disseminator of a text addresses a concept or issue in a specific manner (Brown & Yule, 1983; Fairclough, 2003; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). However, it is appropriate to shed light on the notion that discourse in general, and certainly also in this thesis, is not thought of as being constituted by one, single text (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Thus, the operationalization of discourse analysis in this thesis stems from the understanding that, like Phillips and Hardy (2002), we define discourse as, “as an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being” (p. 3).

The existence of discourses stems from larger bodies of interconnected texts, where certain perspectives and stances (e.g. philosophical, political, economic and social) are addressed and formulated in analogous ways in terms of phrasing and overall tone and perceived message (Brown & Yule, 1983; Fairclough, 2003; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Decoding such discursive ele-

ments is, on the other hand, not an exact science. In this regard, discussing the role of the discourse analyst Brown and Yule (1983) assert that,

He will attempt to describe the linguistic forms which occur in his data, relative to the environments in which they occur. In this sense, discourse analysis is (...) a way of studying language. It may be regarded as a set of techniques rather than a theoretically predetermined system for the writing of linguistic rules. The discourse analyst attempts to discover regularities in his data and to describe them (p. 23).

Considering this statement in the context of problem formulation of this thesis, the notion of regularities is mirrored in this thesis in the sense that rather than serving the purpose of proving the existence of a definite and complete “seasonality inducing discourse”, discourse analysis is featured rather to illuminate the presence of specific elements of a seasonality inducing discourse that is embedded within tourism marketing material, which may, or may not, lead to disproportional yearly tourism activity. Furthermore, as Brown and Yules (1983) also appears to be suggesting, the discourse analysis will not adhere to a specific, prearranged, analytical framework but will rather be rooted in the literature review and the theoretical discussion. This, essentially, means that the social constructivism nature of discourse analysis truly becomes evident, in this thesis, in the way that the analytical framework is constructed according to the concept of seasonality and its suggested link to the theory of destination image. This notion is profoundly associated with the following sentiment of Appleton (2002), who emphasizes the fundamental, epistemological supposition of social constructivism in the following manner “...knowledge is constructed rather than discovered” (p. 89).

This leads us to the notion of hermeneutics and semiotics. With regards to discourse analysis, hermeneutics is an essential concept for the reason that the identification as well as subsequent interpretation and understanding of a perceived discourse is influenced by existence and knowledge of other discourses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999). What this ultimately means is that the discourse analyst is not exempt from being influenced by other discourses, much like the disseminators of the texts that are analyzed, and thus, what the hermeneutics refers to as the researchers pre-understandings (Berg-Sørensen, 2010; Gilje & Grimen, 2010) also factors into the operationalization and outcome of the discourse analysis. In other words, while another “reality” may exist in relation to the body of text selected for analysis, marketing and strategic alike, we will only seek to grasp the nature of the text in relation to the concepts of seasonality and destination image. The notion of pre-understanding is ultimately comparable to what the semiotic tradition labels as “collateral experience” (Pennington & Thomsen, 2010) or “collateral in-

formation” (Knudsen & Rickly-Boyd, 2012). Semiotics can ultimately be thought of as “the study of signs and sign systems” (Hopkins, 1998, p. 68), whereas the concept of a *sign* at its very core can be described as “something that stands for something else” (p. 68). This rather vague explanation is somewhat related to the notion of collateral experience and pre-understanding seeing that in order for something to be identified as a sign of an object the interpreter must have some previous experience, that is to say, possess knowledge of that object (Metro-Roland, 2009; Pennington & Thomsen, 2010). Ultimately, the outcome of the analysis depends on our “ability” to recognize discursive signs of a seasonality inducing, destination image elements, which, likewise, is predicated on our pre-understanding (collateral knowledge) of the concepts of seasonality and destination image formation and projection. Thus, considering the notion that a sign “not only stands for something, but it also stands for something to somebody” (Charlotte M. Echtner, 1999, p. 48) the pre-understanding that is formed on the basis of the discussion on the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis is decisive in the connection that are perceived between certain discursive elements and their subsequent characterization as being “seasonality inducing”.

4.2.1. DISCOURSE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ‘CONTEXT’

Thus, the notion of hermeneutics and the researchers pre-understanding also factors into the context in which discourses are perceived. On the concept of determining the appropriate context through which a discourse should be interpreted, the researcher needs to be aware of the notion that, “the meaning of a part can only be understood in the context of the whole; however, the meaning of whole is only accessible via its parts” (Wodak, 2011, p. 624), consequently drawing allusions to the central premise of the hermeneutic circle. Wodak (2011), for all intents and purposes, points to the notion that the concept of the hermeneutic circle is to be considered a key component in the process of construing potential meanings of a text.

However, not surprisingly, merely defining what a context actually means in relation to discourse analysis is a rather broad subject in and of itself. In terms of how a text may be approached through discourse analysis, Brown & Yule (1983) notes three methods: a) sentence-as-object, b) text as product and c) discourse-as-process. The major distinction between the three is found in the notion that the first two are context restricted in the sense that they are limited to taking into consideration the ‘relationship’ between different syntaxes in a single sentence (a) and the links and cohesiveness between different sentences within a text (b), but without considering the overarching motivations and possible intensions of the producer and/or receiver (c). More specifically, discourse-as-process moves beyond by way of considering these motives through the notion that text is a dynamic form through which meaning is negotiated rather pre-determined by the very existence of the text (Brown & Yule, 1983). This negotiation may pro-

voke incoherence between the *intended* message and the *perceived* message, which essentially means that the textual message is prone to interpretation. This notion correlates with the assumption of destination image as ultimately being a concept that might both be projected as well as perceived in a given way, but whose fundamental meaning is the result of negotiation between disseminator and receiver.

The different analytical elements proposed above can essentially be viewed as three-step structure to discriminate between the different layers constituting a discourse. This is very much in line with Fairclough (2003), who suggest that the meaning-making process through discourse has three separate analytical elements, which in conjunction shape the discourse: (a) the production of the text, (b) the text itself and (c) the reception of the text. Elaborating on this notion, Fairclough (2003) notes that it is the interaction between these elements that construct meaning and he emphasizes the importance of taking into account, “the institutional position, interests, values, intentions, desires etc. of producers; the relations between different elements of the text; and the institutional position, knowledge, purposes, values etc. of the receiver” (p. 10). Thus, Brown and Yule (1983) and Fairclough (2003) appears to be understanding the concept of context in relation to discourse analysis similarly to the assertion of Phillips and Hardy (2002) who distinguish between two different types of contexts: the *proximate* and the *distal*. Where the proximate context appears to be concerned with the immediate features of the text(s), such as occasion, setting, structure of text as well as the capacities in which people speak (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The proximate context can, to some extent, be argued to share resemblance with the previously discussed sentence-as-object and text-as-product approaches. Conversely, through the distal context the scope is broadened to include aspects such as, “social class, the ethnic composition of the participants, the institutions or sites where discourse occurs, and the ecological, regional, and cultural settings” (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 19). (p. 10).

4.2.1.1. THE DESTINATION IMAGE/SEASONALITY DISCOURSE CONTEXT

The importance of context is imperative in terms of discourse analysis, as highlighted by Fairclough (2003). Consequently, we deem it appropriate to outline how this discussion on context is operationalized in this thesis.

Brown and Yule (1983) frames the central issue terms of defining context by way of stating that one of the very starting points should be to pose the question, “what are the relevant facts of context of the utterance(?)” (p. 35). The relevant facts determining the context in which the data sample will be analysed is determined by the previous theoretical discussion on destination image and seasonality. Thus, the way that the utilization of discourse analysis will be evident in this regard is partly through the use of the theoretical concepts on destination image

formation, that is to say, in terms of how the functional and perceived psychological attributes and destination characteristics presented in tourism marketing brochures, from a discourse analysis perspective, can be argued to thesis an image of seasonality. In connection to this, the notion should be emphasized that given the hermeneutic nature of destination image, these individual elements will be contrasted to the “whole”. The meaning of “whole” in this instance should be understood as twofold, seeing that references will be made to the whole of the text from which specific quotes and visual samples are extracted, but should on specific occasions be viewed as a designation of the overall body of text analyzed. This is in line with the notion that a single text does not produce a discourse, but should rather be considered in terms of its properties as being part or a manifestation of a discourse (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Furthermore, this perceived image will then subsequently be juxtaposed to the possible rationale behind the projected image, thus including discussions as to possible reason why marketers have chosen to depict its tourism product in a specific manner, consequently seeking to take into account possible institutional (economic, social and natural) considerations on the part of the disseminator. Finally, in this thesis, given visual properties of tourism marketing, both text and visual representation will be subjected to discourse analysis.

4.3. CASE STUDY

The discourse context also ties into the notion of the case study framework that we will be employing. In this thesis the issue of seasonality will be studied through empirical data consisting of marketing material collected from the region of North Jutland, which have been chosen as our case area. A case in this thesis are defined as being a unit of study (Appleton, 2002). North Jutland was selected as the unit of study, because it matched the criteria which we had determined beforehand. The criteria for selection were that the case should be a region of Denmark with tourism activity and should be affected by seasonality. Lastly, a sufficient amount of tourism material should be available within the region in order to carry out a discourse analysis. After selecting the case area, boundaries within the case area were identified. Baxter and Jack (2008) argue that these boundaries are important in order to outline which elements within the case area that will not be studied. Therefore, apart from defining the physical boundaries of the case, we have also limited ourselves theoretical and methodological by narrowing down our research to be concentrated on the investigation of destination image, through different types of promotional tourism material available within North Jutland. The amount of strategic material available within the case area was, on the other hand, not perceived as being a criterion on which the case should be selected. Meanwhile, a criterion that was deemed important was that the strategic material should be having a perceived effect on the selected case area.

Within the paradigm of social constructivism, cases are used in order to study phenomena in their natural environment. These phenomena are, according to the paradigm, always dependent on the specific context in which they exist. As a consequence thereof it should be emphasized that the aim of this thesis is not to generalize the findings of this thesis into theory which applies to any non-specific, geographical location which possesses a tourism sector, but rather to research the specific phenomenon within its own unique setting (Appleton, 2002). Thus, the findings of this study should not be seen as evidence of a general trend within tourism as a whole. On the other hand, it should be argued that due to the link between destination image and seasonality being researched through the method of discourse analysis, this approach is deemed replicable in a different geographic context, seeing that criteria, on which the case was selected, were few. Thus, it could be argued to be quite straightforward to pick out other case areas using these criteria. Consequently, even though the results might not be generalized, in a theoretical sense, to be universally true for a larger body of geographical areas, the method of using discourse analysis as a tool for researching the image projection in order to study the phenomenon of seasonality could certainly be applied to other cases. It should, therefore, be noted that even though the case in question, in accordance with the social constructivism understanding, should be understood as a phenomenon in its own unique setting, the research design consisting of the examination of seasonality through a discourse analysis approach to assessing destination image might still be applicable to other contexts (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

4.3. DATA

In the following section, we will discuss the tourism marketing and strategic material which will be the focus of our analysis, along with the criteria on which this tourism material was selected. In this thesis we make a distinction between external and internal tourism material. The external tourism material is promotional material which is aimed towards tourists, while internal tourism material is regarded as being material which is directed towards the tourism industry.

4.3.1. EXTERNAL MATERIAL

The collected external material consists primarily of tourism brochures that cover a whole municipality as well as those representing specific towns. The primary reason for this selection is that VisitNordjylland divides the destination of North Jutland into subsections which consists of these municipalities, which all release tourism material that covers their municipality in its entirety. However, there are two notable exceptions to this. VisitAalborg releases two guides which are considerably smaller than those of the other municipalities. One of these guides covers the city of Aalborg, while the other covers the coastal areas of the municipality. The other exception is the municipalities of Hjørring and Frederikshavn that publish a brochure that covers both

municipalities in conjunction. This is done through the inter-municipality tourism collaboration initiative known as *Top of Denmark*. However, we contend that in general the different municipality wide tourism material is fairly comparable due to the general layout, types of tourism information provided and sources of publication (primarily DMOs), and thus it will be analyzed according to the research design set out in the previous sections.

Furthermore, a substantial amount of tourism marketing material from within the different municipalities has also been collected. That is to say, brochures that cover specific towns, and thus are providing more locally-oriented information, has been included for the purpose of identifying common denominators in relation to potential seasonality inducing discourses on a 'local' as well as destination-wide (that is to say municipality wide) tourism marketing level. However, during the data collection it was discovered that some municipalities displayed a much broader output in terms of these locally-oriented brochures.

Thus, the inclusion of promotional material regarding specific municipalities in the data sample might appear disproportionate to that of other municipalities. Notwithstanding, the material is still relevant to include seeing that it is illustrative of the general marketing (and tourism guiding efforts), and that the potentially perceived image of North Jutland as being a seasonal tourism destination is based on a variety of sources with which the tourist is not necessarily familiar. That is to say, tourists may not be distinguishing between destinations and municipalities in the sense that we as researchers do. Also, in this regard, it may be argued that the disproportionality in the locally-based material is an indication of a skewed marketing effort, which can be seen as a result of institutional (structural, economic and political) considerations that have divided North Jutland into minor sub-destinations (exemplified by the tourism collaboration between the municipalities of Hjørring and Frederikshavn). Thus, from this mere observation it can be theorized that there is not a state of equilibrium in terms of the individual ability, funds and subsequent marketing power of the municipalities in terms of promoting the local destination to tourists. This notion of power is important to consider from a discourse perspective. Dijk (1997) notes that "...those groups who control (the) most influential discourse also have more chances to control the minds and actions of others" (p. 355). Consequently, the destination image sought by some of these sub-destinations might overshadow those who lack a similar level of marketing power. This exercise of power, however, on the part of the municipalities and other alternative tourism destination networks is not necessarily intentional, seeing that discourse disseminators are not necessarily cognizant about such power relations (Nissen & Vardinghus-Nielsen, 2007) and the effect it might have on their surroundings, which for all intents and purposes is particularly difficult to assess (Kwon, Clarke, & Wodak, 2009). Ultimately, in the mind of the tourist, this disproportional exposure to certain destinations might create the

perception that some sub-destination images are representative of the whole, and thus, their potentially perceived seasonal nature to be descriptive to other sub-destinations.

Furthermore, the external material consists of eight videos used for promotion of different areas of North Jutland on the website of VisitNordjylland (VisitNordjylland, 2015). These videos have been analyzed with a focus on the natural surroundings depicted and the tourism activities presented herein, if any.

The external material was gathered partly through desk research, which involved a considerable use of the internet and partly through actual visitation to local tourism offices in North Jutland. The criteria, upon which the marketing brochures was chosen, revolve primarily around the notion of the brochures being representative of tourism in North Jutland, the previously noted municipality-wide and more locally oriented material, as well as the notion that the material has been published within the time interval 2014-2015; a delineation which is based on considerations of basing the analysis on recently published tourism marketing brochures which is easily available to the tourists, online and/or on the site of the destination, and thus, of a contemporary nature. In this regard, it should be emphasized that tourism marketing brochures covering the whole region of North Jutland which adhered to the criteria set out above were not identified, seeing that the latest versions of *Alletiders Nordjylland* and *Mit Nordjylland*, both encompassing the region as a whole, were of a relatively outdated character (published in 2011 and 2012, respectively), consequently, resulting in them being omitted from the analysis.

4.3.2. INTERNAL MATERIAL

Unsurprisingly, the internal tourism material is scarcer and more difficult to acquire compared to the external tourism material. However, such material ultimately was acquired. Like the external material, the internal tourism material was collected through the use of desk research via the internet; meanwhile, it was also investigated whether the local tourism offices received any tourism material for use, internally, within the tourism offices. However, all the tourism office personnel that were approached noted that no such material had been received. Among the inquired was the head of a local tourism office, who noted that to his knowledge this particular kind of strategic material was not being disseminated. Even when taking into account that not all of the inquired employees were specifically associated with the marketing efforts of the destination, the general knowledge of a marketing strategy among said tourism office personnel points to the notion that the involvement of local tourism offices in defining the intended destination image might be rather limited, and which might be seen as a minor indication that issues concerning destination image is not immediately addressed on a local level. Specifically, the inclusion of strategic material has been made for the purpose of investigating whether there is evi-

dence of possible discursive links, or lack thereof, between the strategic material and the published tourism marketing brochures. That is to say, whether a possible seasonality inducing discourse may stem from the way in which the material frames the destination and strategic priority areas of the tourism sector in North Jutland, and thus fostering the perpetuation of the potential current seasonality nature of the tourism sector of the region.

4.3.3. REFERENCING DATA

The tourism material that will be the subject of our analysis has been coded in order to create an easily accessible overview of the overall body of data. When referencing these sources the code to the material in question will be provided (followed by a page number if a specific quote or picture is included). An example of said quoting system is outlined below:

Example: (B-5, p.2)

A list detailing the specific codes of the different material can be found in the appendix.

Some material features texts written in English, German and/or Danish. However, as the wording of these languages tends to differ, we will sometimes quote a text that we have translated from Danish, rather than use the marketers own English version of that text, seeing that we, in several cases, experienced that specific Danish wordings were either not translated into English, or if a translation on the part of the disseminator had indeed been carried out the phrasing had been significantly changed. Thus, we will be applying the letter “T” in cases where we have conducted the translation of a quote, whereas the omission of “T” signals that the English quote is, in fact, the translation of the disseminator of text in question. An example is provided below:

Example: (B-5(T), p.2)

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In the analysis, we seek to analyze how seasonality is being projected through tourism material in North Jutland. Our analysis will be two folded; firstly we will establish the projected image of North Jutland through a textual and visual discourse analysis of the collected tourism promotion material, that is to say, the image projected towards the tourists. In this section, the different themes presented within the texts are identified and analyzed. Promotional videos made by VisitNordjylland will also be included in this part of the analysis. Thus, in this section we will also be exploring the different discursive paradoxes in terms of the differences between the visual and textual projected image presented in the promotional material, but also in terms of the seasonality that these may evoke in the mind of the tourist. The last part also ties into the second section which includes a discourse analysis of the strategic material in order to explore the link between the projected destination image of the promotional material and the strategic material, thus examining if the apparent seasonality inducing discourse of the promotional material may stem from an overarching, strategic discourse.

5.1. THEMES

Upon review the textual and image material that has been compiled through the collection of destination promotional brochures have been categorized and divided into different themes in accordance with Brent and Ritchie's (1993) list of attributes influencing the creation of destination image. Consequently, the major themes identified are:

- Nature
- Activities
- Shopping
- Gastronomy
- Arts and crafts

5.1.1. NATURAL ATTRIBUTES

In terms of the destination image of North Jutland, one of the major focal points of the promotional material revolves around the notion of the natural attributes of the region, both as depicted through the text and imagery.

Particularly the visual representations of the promotional material examined extensively depict North Jutland during what can be considered the peak season; an assertion which is based on the observation of milder weather conditions and warmer climate is being greatly illustrated. A prevalent motive in these instances appears to be the beach and coastline of the region, which is most often portrayed in "favorable" weather conditions, that is to say warm and

sunny and featuring bright, white sand, dunes and calm waters. Another indication of the seemingly comfortable climate manifests through the clothing of the tourists that, within this particular setting, are wearing shorts, summer tops, bathing suits, etc.



(A-13, FrontPage)



(A-5, FrontPage)

Accompanying these visuals there is often text material providing a general statement about the destination that seeks to frame its general, tangible attributes, which often concentrates on the these specific natural traits. In *Blokhus – Oplevelser Ved Vesterhavet*, the introduction features the following statement,

Accompanying the onshore wind and the big sea gulls a panoramic view of white sand banks, dunes and architectural summer cottages manifests before your eyes. The sun spreads its warm light from a clear, blue sky that manages to provide the illusion that here there is higher to the ceiling³. The summer is youthful, hopeful and, in this moment, infinite (B-2(T), p. 4).

³ The translation “higher to the ceiling” is a very direct translation of the Danish text that reads “højere til loftet”. However, this is not necessarily to be considered the most appropriate translation, seeing that it is not deemed to possess the same metaphorical meaning that the Danish expression suggests. This view appears to be shared with the disseminator of the text, who has completed neglected to translate the term.

Through the statement the disseminator seeks to frame the experience of the tourist within a single moment, almost giving the destination a magical feel to it by way of introducing the place as being able to provide *illusions* of being within an environment that is more than meets the eye and offers an unprecedented degree of freedom, which may not exist within the tourist's home environment. This, in combination with the summer sun, injects the tourist with a sense of being rejuvenated. In this regard, the town of Skagen is suggested to possess similar "abilities", if we are to believe the following headline that simply reads, "Spring – vitality and energy" (B-13, p. 7).

In the context of destination image theory, the destination image as depicted in the examples above is predicated primarily on functional, tangible characteristics such as sun, sky, beach and animal life, which in conjunction are subsequently attributed with abilities beyond what is traditionally associated with them, thus given the destination a unique, psychological dimension as well. A similar example is found in *Læsø – Rig På Ro Og Gode Oplevelser* (A-4). While not being specifically associated with the prevalent sun and sand narrative, it utilizes a similar technique,

The island where everything seems more powerful. More present. Where the stillness is deafening, the darkness unending, the scent elevating and the light, the sky, well, Nature herself laid out in all her splendour to a degree that I cannot remember having sensed elsewhere (A-4, p. 4).

Yet again, the nature is imbued with a psychological characteristic, more specifically through the mentioning of the nature, light and sky as being 'embracing' and the juxtaposition of silence as being 'deafening', consequently reinforcing the notion of the destination as being a place of "tranquility". The message is supported through scenery depicted in the adjacent images, in which forest areas and lakes are portrayed without a single individual present (see picture below). Additionally, the destination is given a sense of uniqueness by way stating that these qualities have not been experienced by the narrator anywhere else.



(A-4, p. 4-5)

In terms of fusing psychological characteristics with functional traits, *Toppen af Danmark* employs a somewhat similar discursive device,

Through generations the Top of Denmark has been a fancied holiday destination with its distinctive nature, wide, sandy beaches and the ever-present sea. A sea that can be seen, heard as well as tasted when the salty winds sweeps across the land. And a sea, which reflection of the sunlight, has resulted in the region to also be known as the Land of Light (A-13(T), p. 3).

In comparison to the previous example of this discursive phenomenon, this statement is much more subtle. While still focusing on the “main” attributes of the region, the region is described as a realm of light. By the mentioning of “light”, the opposite, “dark”, may subconsciously be created. The “light” and “dark” may be also be associated with “positive” and “negative”, thus subsequently generating that sense that this region is not just physically bright, but that it may also be bright (i.e. positive) in an abstract sense.

Similarly to this nonrepresentational notion, a brochure describing Blokhus, and the municipality in which it is situated, provides the notion of the destination as being the “Scandinavian Riviera”, thus creating a familiar frame of reference,

The beaches of Jammerbugten are fine, white and sandy and well-known for being among the best in Europe. Not without reason, Jammerbugten has often been called the “Scandinavian Riviera” in newspapers and magazines. Like a shimmering pearl, located meters from the beach, in a perfect harmony of green and white, you’ll find Blokhus, the white seaside city (B-2, p. 11).

The passage attributes a sense of exoticism to the destination through the forming of parallels between Mediterranean tourism destinations such as the French and Italian Riviera and that of Jammerbugten. Mimicking the feel of these destinations may certainly be argued to create some positive, mental imagery. However, from this statement it is not entirely clear which aspects are indeed to be expected upon visitation, seeing that the comparison is simply based on the overall feel, that is to say, the holistic imagery of the destination, rather than outlining specific attributes beyond being in close proximity to the beach. Thus, the justification of the comparison in question can be argued to be somewhat lacking.

However, these examples are not illustrative of a destination-wide trend within the reviewed material in terms of fusing the natural traits with psychological effects. In fact, such examples are actually relatively scarce. The most prominent uses of nature within the promotional material relates to its physical appearance and practical usage. In other words, throughout the marketing material the depictions of the natural attributes appear to be resting mostly on notions of functional traits. One such example is found in relation to the town of Løkken, where one of the introducing phases under the headline “Wonderful beach holiday on white, sandy beach” is formulated in the following manner,

Løkken has one of the greatest beaches in Northern Europe, miles long, with fine sand. During the summer, the five hundred private, white-painted beach huts are lined up along the beach. They reflect both sun and moonlight in their own special way... (B-5, p. 4-5).

Only physical, tangible aspects are depicted herein and there appears to be a definite notion of seasonality to the discourse, seeing that the beach huts are mentioned to just being present a limited amount of time each year. This is not necessarily to be seen as problematic in and of itself. However, these referenced beach huts, also named the “White City”, are so prominently featured in the brochure, as well promotional video material (C-1), that one might come to expect them as one of the defining characteristics of the destination. Thus, the notion of Løkken as being a town prone to seasonality is further evoked and reinforced.



(B-5, p. 4-5)



(B-5, p.12)



(B-5, front page)

A similar example is found in relation to the town of Asaa, situated on the east coast of North Jutland, where another introductory description portrays the destination as being situated in the

...corner of Vendsyssel summerland... ...Throughout the summer, the Kattegat invites swimmers to take a dip. The sand is white and the waves gentle – ideal for children (B-3, p. 4).

The destination is framed within a rather direct, summer-related discourse by the mere mentioning of “summer” twice, but also due to the notion that the usage and level of appropriateness of the sea as a place for “swimming only” is limited to this specific time of year. A similar notion in terms of indicating a period of time where the sea is suitable for water related activities is found in relation to the coastal town of Tversted. It is detailed in the brochure that, “First and foremost it is the sea and the beautiful beach that attracts visitors” (B-8(T), p. 4) while later informing that

Throughout the peak season, you will find assistance, both lifeguards and municipality guides, on the beach... (B-8(T), p. 4).

In other words, it might be deduced that when in the shoulder or low season, the same level of service or safety is not to be expected. These two declarations form a somewhat problematic statement for the reason that the main tourism asset of the town is argued to be the beach and sea, but the utilization of these assets on the part of the tourist is indicated to only be securely accessible during the peak season. While not referring to a specific town within North Jutland and to a certain extent tying into the notions of activities, which will be discussed in the coming section, under the heading “Clean, white beaches as far as the eye can see” Top of Denmark describes one of its core tourism features by way of stating that,

“A day on the beach is one of the highlights of the vacation, with swimming, sun-bathing, relaxation, play in the dunes and a nice picnic basket. Even out of the bathing season the beach is a lovely experience – a breezy hike, windsurfing or fishing” (A-13(T), p.20).

When examining the quote in its isolated form, it may not come off as terribly problematic from a seasonality perspective for the reason that it describes what may be experienced out of the “bathing season”. However, when observing it within the context of the brochure it becomes apparent that there is a disconnection between the text and the visual representations, seeing that the beach-related, summer activities is prominently depicted in terms of bathing, playing and biking on the beach, whereas the advertised shoulder and low season activities are completely absent from in the visual representations (illustrated below). Thus, there is no depiction of these seasonal variations in relation to the natural attributes, which is most likely to be a consequence of the conscious decision to utilize weather as a marketing ploy in order to make the destination appear as attractive, warm and welcoming as possible, that is to say, by portraying the natural environs in warm bright colors, instead of depicting the ruggedness of the nature.

Rene, hvide strande så langt øjet rækker

De hundredvis af kilometer brede, hvide sandstrande er Toppen af Danmarks søkystande. Med herligt badeliv, når solen skinner, med travetur, windsurfing og drageflyvning, når det blæser, og med fiskeri året rundt.

En dag på stranden hæver vi feriens højdepunkt: Med badning, solbrydning, afslapning, leg i køleskabe og en god madkurv. Og så uden for badesæsonen er stranden en dejlig oplevelse – en frok travetur, windsurfing eller fiskeri.

På Skagerakysten fra Løkken til Skagen finder du de bredeste sandstrande med plads til både leg og afslapning. Det er tilvælt at køre i bil til de fleste steder på stranden, især i de høje sommermåneder til særlige strandgæster. Sæger du lidt væk fra nedkørslerne, er der som regel god plads – også til at spille bold eller lege med drage.

Badestrande er af høj kvalitet ved alle strandene i Toppen af Danmark. På Skagerakysten er der ofte bølger, som mange godt kan lide. Der kan dog også være understrøm, som man skal tage sig i agt for. Er du ikke en habit svømmer, anbefales det at bade inden for lavvands tider. Børn bør ikke bade alene. På østkysten er strandene kendetegnet ved lavere vand og mindre bølger. Her finder du også dejlige sandkilder og klitter. Bølgekysten har mere energi af strandkilder, og der er gode chancer for at finde rav. Her er det som hovedregel ikke muligt at køre i bil på stranden, man må parkere bag klitbakken.

På strandene ved Løkken, Tønder og på Palmestranden i Frederikshavn er der livredderstationer i badesæsonen. I vinterhalvåret, fra 1. oktober til 1. april, må du lade din hund løbe frit på stranden, mens den om sommeren skal være i snor.





Alle strandene er udelukkende offentligt og reserveret på grønne områder. Opstår der en nedkørselsituation, kan du angive strandens adresse, så hjælpen bliver sendt til det rigtige sted.

(A-13, p.20-21)

However, such an example, in which the ungentleness of the nature appears to be actively used in the marketing material, has been identified. Thy embraces this particular notion in that it on the front-page of its brochure promotes the duality of the destination by way of framing the area under the catchphrase “Wholly natural – gentle and rugged” (A-12(T)). On the back-page the words ‘gentle’ and ‘rugged’ are placed in an opposite order, which may be perceived as an indication that the two aspects are equally presented within the confines of the destination. The visual representations in this respect are also reversed. Whereas the front-page is characterized by pictures depicting the calmness of the natural environment, the back-page features violent seas and windsurfing. The ruggedness is also featured within the brochure where the ‘brutality’ of nature is portrayed by way of including images of wildlife (deer as well as a fox carrying off its prey) where the nature, in contrast to the majority of the beach-centered tourism, is shown by way of utilizing a much more muted color palette, thus, refraining from inducing the same sense of warmth and welcoming through the inclusion of the sun (A-12, p. 6-7). Consequently, it can be argued that the intended destination image sought by the DMO is that of a destination which possesses nuances in its offering of the tourism experiences related to the natural environs.

Similarly the coastal town of Lønstrup is described as being in “...known for its rugged nature with its steep slopes and the proud white lighthouse that stands tall between the sand banks...” (B-6(T), p.37). However, this proposed ruggedness is not inherently apparent within the accompanying visuals that are consistently depicting said natural attributes and lighthouse with clear blue skies and sun, thus still imbuing the scenery with a sense of exoticism.

Within in a seasonality context, the heavy focus on these specific natural traits of the region is to be considered limiting factor. As it was suggested in the literature review, a factor such as fluctuations in terms of weather is one of those important aspects of a destination with which the DMO cannot manipulate. It could be argued that the projected image largely presents something that is only apparent or 'accessible' when the weather allows it, seeing that it is only when the sun is shining that the sand is white and the skies are blue and that it is only when the wind is not sweeping towards the coasts that the broad beaches are actually 'present'. As it is only a few of the costal destinations which projects an image which challenges the general narrative of "sun, blue skies and white sand", the elusive nature of these attributes are largely avoided by marketers, thus it may not appear as such from a consumer perspective before the act of visitation.

5.1.2. ACTIVITIES

A major theme in the collected tourism material is the subject of activities. Activities are not a clearly defined entity. Thus, activities can refer to sports activities; other types of physical activities, cultural activities and events. Although activities are not per definition connected to the subject of seasonality, it could be argued that the depiction of these activities could lead to the tourist getting the impression that the different activities of the destinations are only appropriate to be practiced at certain times of the year.

5.1.2.1. PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

In terms of the activities that are proposed to be available in North Jutland, bicycling/mountainbiking, horseback riding, marathons, windsurfing, golf as well as walks have been identified as common denominators. As it was evident in the section regarding nature, the collected tourism material do on occasion use a wording which appeals to the emotions of the potential tourists. Generally, however, the promotion of sports activities in material in question seems to focus more on appealing to the functional, logical considerations, rather than to the emotional, psychological considerations of the tourists. For instance, there is a tendency to factually list the different activities available in the given area when addressing sport activities and the figurative, romantic word constellations characteristic to the descriptions of nature is generally downplayed,

The nature in and around the Forest of Rold and the Hills of Rebild is perfectly suited to different types of physical activity – running, cycling, swimming, MTB, hiking, fitness and much more (A-9, p.13).

A similar tendency can be found when analyzing the imagery present in the sections regarding sport activities. Here people who are excising these activities seem to be the main focus, whereas the location in these images only serves as background as seen in the picture below.



(A-9, p.16)

Notice that the text that is included in the picture emphasizes that the Forest of Rold and the Hills of Rebild are “the best training location...” indicating a functional, logical selling point. The natural environment is thus attributed with function beyond being a source of mere scenery and sightseeing. Pictures showing sports activities seems to be less likely to induce an image of seasonality than images presenting nature or other types of leisure-focused, physical activities. Sports activities are generally a theme which is featured in most of the tourism brochures. However, sports activities are perhaps most frequently depicted in the material from “VisitRebild”. It may be theorized that the reason for this is that this is the only municipality which does not contain any coastal areas.

Even though the imagery showing sport activities seems to be projecting less seasonality than images related to other aspects, it could be argued that seasonality is still being projected. However, rather than being done through imagery seasonality in relations to sports activities is primarily apparent through the written discourse. The tourism brochure of Rebild features a section called “All year round activities” (A-9, p.7) which includes a sub header entitled “9 good reasons to visit the Forest of Rold and the Rebild Hills” (A-9, p.7). Nine events are listed within this section; the first event has a starting date of the 16th of May while the final event takes place on the 29th of November with the last sport activity taking place on the 13th of September. Con-

sidering this fact, it may be suggested that there are some discrepancies between the headers and the actual contents of this specific section. The header, as an introductory device, frames the context in which the following text should be viewed (Brown & Yule, 1983). Thus, it could be argued that the marketers want to thesis an image of Rebild as being an all-year destination, and thus one may expect to find a list of activities covering a 12-month period, rather than seven, which is the case in this particular example. However, this ultimately is not provided. Consequently, the notion of “all-year round” actives may appear to be a marketing ploy rather than what is actually offered. *Toppen af Danmark Magasinet* has a similar list, where all sporting events are listed from the 10th of May to the 17th of October. This is in spite of them earlier mentioning that,

Whether its summer or winter, whenever you visit the Top of Denmark something exciting is happening – from small, intimate to big events (A-13(T), p.9).

The physical activities do not only include sport activities. Where the sport activities seem to be marketed towards athletes, these other physical activities are directed towards tourists who might also engage in other forms of activities as seen in the marketing material from VisitThy,

Thy offers many kinds of activities. You will find something for both children, young people and adults... ..The west coast invites you to go for a surf, learn to surf with a local surf school or even try your hand at sea kayaking! What about a cruise on the fiord or trip by canoe? If you are a golfer you will find wonderful golf courses in Klitmøller and in Sydthy. In several places you will find a lot of nice mini-golf courses (A-12, p.15).

This is then followed by the subsequent text,

If the weather is not too inviting, you can visit one of the family swimming pools and waterparks in the area: Sydthy Swimming Pool in Hurup, Thy Hallen in Thisted or Vigsø Holiday Centre (A-12, p.15).

Thereby it seems to be signalled that certain physical activities should only be practiced within the peak season. The pictures presented in the section seem to enhance this perception seeing that the neighbouring images primarily feature sunny weather. We might again refer to the front-back page structure of said brochure seeing that beyond the apparent reference to the nature of the area, the “gentle and rugged” narrative might be understood in this context as the juxtaposition between tranquil activities and the more action-packed activities (the latter being epitomized in the representation of windsurfing) (A-12, front-back page).

In terms of more tranquil activities, the tourism material entitled “Læsø” markets the activity of seaweed harvesting, which is described in the following manner,

The best time of year to harvest seaweed is in springtime, in April-June, although the seaweed grows all year round (A-4, p.21).

This would suggest that this would be an activity which should be arranged in the spring time or early summer. However, the guided tours in which tourists can harvest seaweed are only available from the 29 June to 24 August (A-4, p. 21). A different, conflicting message can be observed in the marketing material related to the city of Brønderslev where it is proclaimed that,

During the whole late spring - and partly in summertime - the Rhododendron Park in Brønderslev is filled with an explosion of impressions of colours and fragrances (A-1, p.7).

Even though this might suggest that the best time for a visit in this park would be in the late spring, it is later mentioned that activities are held “throughout the summer” (A-1 (T), p.7), which suggest that the park should primarily be visited in the summertime due to the idea that the presence of additional activities might provide a “better” experience, than what can otherwise be expected out of the summer season.

In relation to the notion of activities, the brochure detailing the activities being facilitated in and around the city of Hjørring provides the following statement,

In the diverse and beautiful natural landscape around Hjørring, you can find everything from mountain bike and running trails to golf (B-12, p.5)

Like in the previous example the reader is provided with clear cut, specific examples of the idea that rather than being utilized as mere scenery, the nature is being depicted as a place for physical action, thus forming a connection between possible tourist preferences and interests and the environment. That is to say, the physical attributes of the destination are not isolated, but through the reference of the corporeal activities as being an alternative way to explore said environs a perceived increase in its value as tourism destination might occur, if it matches the preferences of the receiver (tourist). In this instance, however, contrary to the previous example neither the diverse landscapes nor the actual activities in question are put on visual display. Thus, it may be argued that there is a lack of an immediate key reference that does not surface in the proximity of said declaration. However, it should be noted that later on visual representations of some of the mentioned activities are provided, but, with reference to the previously dis-

cussed prevalent summer setting, they are all depicted within a sunny, green and overall lush setting resembling that of a summer's day (B-12, p.40-47).



(B-12, p.40-41)

In addition, and as it has previously suggested, the reason for these depictions may indeed rests on discussions of how the tourism area and its tourism activities are illustrated so that it emerges in its most attractive and welcomingly form as possible. The deliberations that have been undertaken have ostensibly resulted in the agreement that a summer setting is the most appropriate. However, it may consequently be argued that this also results in the unintentional notion that the activities are perceived to either not be possible or perhaps even undesirably to perform out of the summer months. Thus, it could be argued that there is a sense of dependency between nature and activity, in which the different activities merely becomes the vessel by which nature can be explored, thus resulting in the notion that the physical activities are considered subordinate to the nature.

To a certain extent it may then be discussed if the marketing related treatment of said activities in terms of their illustration (both written and visually) connects the activities to the heading of natural seasonality inducing factors. In other words, mountain-biking and running is not inherently dependent on the summer setting, although it may be preferable to some, but

with exception of few examples, the promotional material in general ostensibly provides visual representations forming a link between the activity and the appropriate season in which it should be undertaken, that is to say, primarily summer. Other examples include that of Løkken. In this case, however, the concept of seasonality is somewhat more distinguishable in that it is suggested that there are limitations which are determining which activities can be performed at certain times,

Do you wish a long stay in Løkken? Then a holiday home is the perfect choice for you. You can relax between your outings and trips to the beach. Here is space for ballgames and fun. If the weather acts up, you have lots of space for cozy indoor activities. Even outside the main season, a holiday home gives you a nice break from the stress of everyday life (B-5 (T), P.50).

In this text-sample it is not only suggested that the activities can only be practiced at certain times of the year, but also that the weather can be a limitation to the practice of activities within the peak season itself. Relating this to the previously discussed portrayals of the natural attributes, it is also deemed important to discuss the appropriateness in terms of creating such an exoticized version of the destination of Northern Jutland, which due to its geographical position and climate does not muster such weather conditions (sun and blue skies) on a year-round basis. It might indeed prove counterproductive from a seasonality perspective if the receiver has previous experience with the differing weather conditions of Denmark, and thus these depictions may be perceived as downright untruthful. We may contend that the frequency with which the marketers portray the destination with reference to what can be arguably be termed as natural factors of seasonality (sun, sea and wide beaches) is indeed problematic. The superficiality of their usage as motivational factors imposes certain perceived, but not necessarily natural, restrictions on when the destination can be deemed appropriate for visitation. This notion is subsequently connected to the activities that are performed on the basis of this, essentially artificial, social construct. In other words, tourism activities becomes associated with different climate, weather-related conditions that lies beyond the "reach" of the DMOs, and thus the activities becomes entrapped within this construct and are consequently "restricted" by said understanding of good and bad weather. For example, just because it is raining and skies are grey, a bike-ride or a stroll through the dunes may be equally satisfying in comparison to the same activity performed on a sunny day.

It is not only in the written texts that such a conflicting notion can be observed, seeing that there is also an intra-textual conflict between the text and the imagery. In relation to Løkken

both outdoor and indoor activities are listed, however, as seen below, the imagery surrounding this text are all pictures of activities in or near water.

Aktiv ferie, frisk luft og masser af plads

Du får i Løkken mulighed for at holde aktiv ferie fyldt med aktiviteter og arrangementer.
Stranden er den perfekte ramme til vandaktiviteter og til gå- og løbeture. På faldere til både vandret og cykelture langs Vestkysten på turistbussenet.
Rundt om Løkken er der masser af tilbud om golf, orienteringsløb, fiskeri, ridning, fodboldgolf og regvær.
Indendørs er der mulighed for golfart, paintball, læsergame og bowling samt svømning, fitness og badminten.
Planlægger du en tjeve og udfordrende dag med firma, familie, venner, skole eller idrettsforening? Så kontakt Action House, Eventpark Løkken, Løkken Idrettscenter, Idrettscenter Vendsyssel eller Løkken Funpark og Fodboldgolf.
Hold øje med aktiviteter og arrangementer på loekken.dk eller på [facebook.com/loekken.dk](https://www.facebook.com/loekken.dk)

Active holiday
In Løkken you have plenty of ways to be active and various events to choose from. The beach is the perfect spot for water sports as well as hiking and jogging. You can get leaflets and personal tips for hiking and biking along the West Coast at your local Tourist Office in Jyllandsgade.
In Løkken and the countryside, you can play golf, go orienteering, go fishing, go riding, play football golf and drive a regway. If you wish to stay indoors, you can try go-carting, paintballing, teamworking and bowling. In addition, you can enjoy swimming, fitness and badminton.
Are you planning a fun and exciting day with your colleagues, family, friends, classmates or sports club?
Contact Action House, Eventpark Løkken, Løkken Idrettscenter or Løkken Fishing Park and Football golf. See more activities and events at loekken.dk.
TIP: Join the Vesterhavsmarch – walk along the North Sea between Løkken and Blokhus – on July 12th 2015.

Aktivurlaub
In Løkken bietet wir Ihnen die Möglichkeit einen aktiven Urlaub mit vielen Aktivitäten und Veranstaltungen zu verbringen. Der Strand lädt zum Wassersport, Laufen und Spazieren ein. Im Touristenbüro sind Faltblätter mit sowohl Wanderwegen als Fährverbindungen entlang der Westküste erhältlich. In Løkken können gibt es viele spannende Freizeitangebote für den Aktivurlaub: Golfspielen, Orientierungsläufe, Angeln, Reiten, Fußballgolf, und Segeln.
Als Innenaktivitäten können Sie z.B. Golfart, Paintball, Lagerspiele und Bowling sowie Schwimmen, Fitness und Badminton ausprobieren.
Wollen Sie auch das gesamte Paket für den Geburtstag oder Familienausflug bei Action House, Eventpark Løkken, Løkken Idrettscenter (Sportzentrum) oder Løkken Funpark und Fußballgolf?
Suchen Sie weitere Freizeitangebote und Veranstaltungen auf loekken.dk.
TIPP: Nordseemarch (Vesterhavsmarch) am 12. Juli 2015 zwischen Løkken und Blokhus.

ICV SleepWell
ICV SleepWell er et af de bedste steder at sove i Løkken. Vi har et stort udvalg af værelser og suite værelser, der er perfekte til alle typer af rejser. Kontakt os på www.icv.dk for mere information.

IDRÆTSCENTER Vendsyssel
- Bygger på...
- Hver dag åbent kl. 08.00 - 18.00. Vi har et stort udvalg af aktiviteter og tilbud til alle.
- Løkkenvej 17, 9800 VÅ - 98 96 15 92

Event-Park Løkken
PAY AND PLAY FODBOLDGOLF KOSTER KUN 75 kr. pr. voksen og 50 kr. pr. barn
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Golfklubben skal betales i forvejen på kr. 200.000. Alle 25-årige skal betale indmeldingspenge på kr. 100.000. Løkkenvej 17, 9800 VÅ. SE MERE PÅ [WWW.EVENT-PARK.DK](http://www.event-park.dk) • FODBOLD-POOL

(B-5 p.14-15)

The picture above exemplifies a common notion within the promotional tourism material where it is the location-based activities, which are dependent on the natural environment, that are highlighted through the images for the purpose of presenting the primary selling points.

Lastly, it should be discussed whether or not psychical activities can be regarded as a unique selling point of a destination, as almost every piece of gathered tourism material seems to emphasize that there are psychical activities in which the tourist can engage. On the basis of the reviewed material, psychical activities therefore seems to be something which, according to the DMOs, must be present within a destination, something that the marketers feel necessitated to include, rather than being something that is actively used as a key selling point to attract tourists as the majority of the activities are shown to be of secondary interest in that they are merely the way through which the primary attraction, nature, should be explored. However, an alternative strategy seems to be utilized by VisitLæsø given its heavy emphasis on relaxation. In other words, in terms of destination image, Læsø to a greater extent, when compared to its counterparts in North Jutland, seeks to differentiate and create a destination image that puts a greater

emphasis on the psychological aspects of the destination, and consequently forms a link between its limited tourism assets and the potentially beneficial effect it may have on the mental well-being of the tourist. This is exemplified in the tagline “Rich in restful experiences” which seems to confirm this desired image of being a destination of serenity, as it signals that the experiences are not “active” but restful, or perhaps even induce the perception that the tourism experience is “calming”. A similar projection is found in the tourism material associated with the coastal town of Lønstrup, where it is emphasized that there are no discotheques within the town (B-6, p. 3). Consequently, this may come off as an somewhat odd aspect to disclose to the tourist, but it could be argued it is a very deliberate action in that it indicates that the town seeks a particular tourism audience, which will relish in the calmness of the town. That is to say, the mentioning of this very particular aspect attributes to the town as possessing the psychological attribute of serenity.

Seeing that activities does not appear to be used as a serious differentiation factor, and rather as being something that the destination should possess, thus having a complimentary, supportive character, we may contend that this is an considerable issue. That is to say, its complimentary character is argued to stem from the self-perpetuating seasonality nature of the tourism in North Jutland where the sun/sandy beaches/blue skies-narrative is an all-encompassing, overshadowing marketing tool that does not form a significantly noticeable linkage between functional and psychological aspect of the destination. That is to say, there does not appear to be any consistency in terms of linking psychological attributes associated with activities with functional traits. Also, as a consequence of this, rather than being seen as a single unit/destination in its own right, North Jutland appears rather fragmented in that the marketing induces a sense of competition existing between the different intra-regional destinations in the sense that they are essentially offering the same product with only few noticeable differences. If considering this homogeneity and apparent state of competition in terms of the common-unique continuum, it becomes problematic. The advertised ‘unique’ elements may be comprehended as rather common through the mere repetition. This notion is exemplified in the following quote from the *Thy 2015* brochure where it is stated that,

“We, the inhabitants of Thy, knows for sure we have some of Denmark’s most beautiful, diverse, and unique landscape” (A-12, p.3).

Also, the following statement concerning Løkken is problematic in a somewhat similar manner,

“Løkken is one of the best seaside towns in Denmark. With its location on the west coast of Northern Jutland, and providing direct access to one of Denmark’s best beaches, the

small town transforms into a grand vacation area during the summer. If the weather proves unfitting for beach activities, the atmosphere of the town still ensures a unique experience” (B-5(T), p.48).

According to this statement, the tourism experience of Løkken hinges on the beach and the summer weather conditions, and it is somewhat insinuated, probably inadvertently, that outside the peak season one of its main assets, the beach, is of a less attracting character, and that there is no alternative usage of this asset beyond the traditional sand and bathing related activities. Thus, rather than standing apart the different municipalities, coastal destinations in particular, thesis rather identical images, with less well defined, singular features. This is particularly troublesome in terms of the seasonality discussion in that there are no underlying or fleshed-out, activity related selling points that are encouraging visitation in the low-season.

5.1.2.2. SHOPPING

The notion of shopping is a prominent feature within the brochures, especially in terms of the major cities. Hjørring appears to put a great emphasis on this particular notion. In relation to the nature of the city it is detailed as possessing something for “...each and every one” (B-12, p.5), and subsequent to this claim the shopping experience is described in the following manner,

New exciting shops and boutiques add to the bustling town life all the time, so there is always something new to see and do. Whether you enjoy the relaxing alley scenes or indoor shopping center, Hjørring has it all (B-12, p.5).

In other words, it described as possessing a wide range of tourism-related products and thus covering a lot of ground in terms of who might constitute the potential target audience. Frederikshavn is depicted in a somewhat similar way,

Frederikshavn has everything that you’d expect of a city, although its modest size means that everything is on your doorstep. Here you’ll find lots of specialty shops, well-assorted supermarkets and pleasant network of pedestrian streets that provide access to a multitude of cafés, bars and restaurants to suit all tastes (B-4, p.3)

Essentially, the two cities are portrayed as providing to whomever the tourist might be seeing that the features embedded in the destination are of an all-encompassing, universal character. Consequently, one can argue that these quotes, to some extent, provides the notion that the specific target audience for the destinations in question is rather undefined, which might thesis the image of destination that is somewhat lacking in terms of specific “attractions” and activities. This “something for everybody” approach can ultimately result in the perception that the desti-

nation image is rather vague in terms of appeal. On a related note, a noteworthy example deemed fitting to discuss in this context is that of Brønderslev which is also extensively portrayed as a city for shopping, but as evidenced in the actual quote there are connotations of certain seasonal limitations to this status, when examined from a discourse perspective,

Brønderslev is an active commercial town, which is to give you good experiences throughout the year. In summertime, they arrange several “open by night” events and shopkeeper as well as market days with an impressive and interesting range of everyday commodities and special deals (B-3, p.3)

The open-by-night events in this case is highlighted as special features that due to a variety of different reason may be interesting to the tourist, which in its essence centers on the notion of creating a different, alternative shopping milieu through the changing of the traditional layout of vendors where the tourist can experience the city in whole new way. From a seasonality perspective, however, there is one major issue with this statement, which revolves around the notion that these “special” events appear to be restricted to the peak, summer season, as stated literally in the quote. Thus, on one hand it is argued to be attractive throughout the whole year, but, on the other, from a tourist point of view you are subjected to the idea that the city is actually more interesting during the summer, seeing that this period is attributed with additional interesting features related to the functional aspects of the destination. Also, in terms of combatting seasonality, placing such special events within a period where tourism overnight stays generally peak can to some extent be seen as redundant in terms of attracting additional tourists, whereas it from consumption perspective is somewhat understandable. Notwithstanding this view, such events can positively be argued as being an institutional factor, one that is subject to change through managing, as it is not intrinsically bound to any particular type of geographical “limitation” (such as weather), although some types of weather might seem preferable. An example similar to that of Brønderslev is found in the brochure of Thy, where it is noted in relation to the town of Hurup, that,

But Hurup is especially known for “Store Torvedage” (Big Market Days) that occur every Monday throughout the summer. So popular that thousands visit every Monday, and that tourists are booking their summer holiday because of them (A-12(T), p.46).

Thus, this attraction is suggested to be an attraction that in and of itself is worth the price of admission. From a seasonality perspective, however, it is, to some extent, implied that its particular power of attraction is indeed strong, but not so strong that the same concept would measure up to this on a scale of attractiveness had it been organized at another time of the year. This asser-

tion can certainly and, in fact, should be considered provocative and the reasoning behind it is founded in the notion that shopping, as stated above, is not a concept that is necessarily inherently defined by seasonality, but it is being used, probably inadvertently, as source of perpetuation of said seasonality by highlighting such activities in already tourist populous periods, while overshadowing those shopping-related opportunities and events that are available during the low-season. In this case, meanwhile, there is one discursive hint as to why it is indeed organized at this particular time, which is embodied in the mentioning of the shopping activities happening “...in the open” (A-12(T), p.46), thus the seasonal changes in terms of weather is added as an influential factor on the expectations of the tourist and on the actual proceedings of the event. In the brochure of Skagen, we find another example of the proposed, advertised link between shopping and summer weather,

A day in the town with shopping and relaxation at a café is an integral part of any holiday, not least in Skagen. The harbor and the shopping precinct have their own particular soul and thousands of visitors on a summer day... ..Special offers and good service are all part of the shopping experience. Traders in Skagen are well aware of this, and meeting their customers in person is for them the very essence of their business (B-13, pp. 104-105).

According to this statement, the shopping experience within the confines of the area is characterized by its own particular “soul”, and while it is not inherently clear, it may be theorized that this soul is defined in terms of the human resources enabling the experience, that is to say the “traders”, who are imbued with the psychological, destination image attributes of friendliness and service mindedness which in conjunction with the “special” nature of their business is resulting in the shopping experience as being an unique characteristic rather than simply common. Also, the uniqueness of said experience may also be argued to be depending on the season in which it is conducted, seeing that the marketer frames the experience within a summer holiday context. As noted previously in relation to nature, the reason for this might be grounded in the notion of the marketers seeking to create the most favorable mental image of the destination, but in the effort to do this notion of being a destination effected by seasonality is also insinuated, not only through the wording but also the visuals, as depicted below, where the skies are blue, the weather dry and the people are wearing summer clothing.

Shopping

- gør en god handel



Ferishopping med tilhørende cafébesøg og hygge i bymiljøet er særlig attraktivt i Skagen, hvor udbuddet af specialforretninger er i særklasse.

En dag i byen med shopping og caféliv hører til enhver ferie, ikke mindst i Skagen. Havnen og gågaden har sin helt egen sjæl og tiltrækker tusinder på en sommerdag. I Skagen finder du et formidabelt udvalg af specialforretninger. Alle førende mærkevarer er repræsenteret her, så uanset om du vil forkele dig selv, din familie eller nogle derjernerne med en lille gave, så finder du helt bestemt noget godt. Til den gode shopping-oplevelse hører både gode tilbud og god betjening. Det ved de handlende, og for dem er det personlige møde med kunderne selve drifkraften i at drive forretning. Også Aalborg har et godt udvalg af specialforretninger og et højt kvalitetsniveau både når det gælder varesortiment og betjening.

Shopping - give yourself a treat

A day in the town with shopping and relaxation at a café is an integral part of any holiday, not least in Skagen. The harbour and the shopping precinct have their own particular soul and attract thousands of visitors on a summer day. In Skagen you'll find a fantastic choice of specialist shops. All the leading brands are represented here, so regardless of whether you wish to indulge yourself, treat your family or a loved one back at home with a gift, you're sure to find something suitable. Special offers and good service are all part of the shopping experience. Traders in Skagen are well aware of this, and meeting their customers in person is for them the very essence of their business. Aalborg also boasts a good range of specialist shops and a high level of quality, both in terms of choice and service.

Shopping - verwöhnen Sie sich selbst

Ein Tag in der Stadt mit Shopping und Cafébesuch gehört zu jedem Urlaub, nicht zuletzt in Skagen. Hafen und Fußgängerzone haben ihre ganz eigene Seele und ziehen an einem Sommertag Tausende an. In Skagen gibt es eine hervorragende Auswahl an Fachgeschäften. Alle führenden Marken sind hier vertreten. Ob Sie also sich selbst, Ihre Familie oder Dahoimgeliebte mit einem kleinen Geschenk verwöhnen möchten – hier finden Sie bestimmt etwas Passendes. Zu einem positiven Einkaufserlebnis gehören gute Angebote und guter Service. Das wissen die Geschäftsinhaber, die den persönlichen Kontakt zu ihren Kunden daher besonders pflegen. Auch Aalborg verfügt über eine gute Auswahl an Fachgeschäften und ein hohes Qualitätsniveau in Warensortiment und Service.

De mange gæster i Skagen giver basis for et stort og diversificeret udbud af mode- og specialforretninger. Hvert isse gør shoppingturen til en særlig oplevelse.

(B-13, pp. 104-105)

5.1.2.3. GASTRONOMY

Another theme which is featured prominently in the collected tourism marketing material is the gastronomic experiences within the different areas of North Jutland. Different areas of North Jutland have been able to identify local products that are different from those found in other areas. In the material from VisitVesthimmerland the local clams are highlighted as a local specialty, which tourist might further explore through the proceedings of the local clam harvest festival (A-5, p. 36). Similarly, in the case of Thy, local cheese, fish, mushrooms and brews are all mentioned in the section entitled "Taste Thy" (A-12 (T) p. 26), whereas Læsø seems to put a lot of effort into the theme of gastronomy in that it is stated that both a Scampi festival and two other gastronomically themed events, called "The day of the sea" and "The day of the food", are held. Additionally, seaweed and mushroom harvesting, and the honey and herbs of the island are all mentioned within the material from Læsø (A-4). Thus, gastronomy in these instances is to some extent defined as being a local, unique functional feature that is very much idiosyncratic to the physical confines in which it is experienced.

However, this notion is far from being all-encompassing to the destination of North Jutland. In other tourism material which mentions the aspect of gastronomy, it is the location and the wide range of different foods that is mentioned, rather than the notion of said food being

made of local produce (A-9; B-2; B-6), thus it might be speculated whether the gastronomic properties of the destination are promoted because it is viewed as being a unique selling point of the destination, or if it is simply considered a requirement which should be present within a destination, thus not possessing any distinct properties that might encourage travel. That is to say, the main attraction in relation to gastronomy is often highlighted to be the place more so than the gastronomy in itself. This ties into the notion that in several cases the gathered tourism brochures have a section which showcases the gastronomy elements of the destination, but only contains advertisements from the different restaurants in the area (B-5; A-7; B-2)

5.1.2.4. ARTS AND CRAFTS

The local arts and crafts of a given area are often featured within the tourism marketing material associated with North Jutland. Arts and handicrafts seems to be portrayed as something uniquely connected with the specific area, and it is often emphasized that the artists are people who actually live and/or work in the area and who can often be met in the various galleries and workshops.

In many of the town's galleries you can meet the artists themselves, whose painting are inspired by the grand nature of the area (B-6,(T)p. 15).

As indicated in the previous quote it would appear that some effort is being put into placing the arts and crafts of a specific area into a geographical context, given that the artisans are inspired by "the area". There is a definite notion of a close relationship between the nature and the physical object that is created by the artisans. Thus, like the activities, the arts and crafts are to a certain extent fused with a similar notion of being a vessel, or, perhaps more appropriately, a lens through which the nature and townscape can also be experienced. That is to say, gallery owners as well as painters seek to inject the paintings with a sense of naturalism and frame them, pun intended, within the actual environment in which the tourism experience is carried out. Subsequently, this may also be interpreted as an indication that the nature is of a unique and inspiring character which may offer more than what immediate meets the eye. Consequently, this way of framing the arts and crafts experience indicates a merging of both functional and psychological attributes. The depiction of Skagen and its arts and crafts milieu carries some resemblance to the characterization mentioned above,

Skagen continues to inspire artists with its light, its scenery and its unique atmosphere, and the town and region are therefore still teeming with artists. You can meet them in the galleries and workshops or out in the dunes with easels and sketch pads (B-13, p. 29).

What is ultimately implied in this instance is that the town has a time-honored tradition of being a place ripe with artisans that mainly due to its highlighted functional attributes, the light and natural backdrop, and the more psychologically-centered trait, atmosphere, has become a source for creativeness. Thus, when considering the general depiction of the scenery in the brochure we deem it appropriate to suggest that the light and scenery to which it is referred in the text is the one present during the summer, peak season. Also, the mentioning of the “unique atmosphere” is interesting, and perhaps somewhat problematic. The notion of atmosphere is an inherently subjective feature, which may stem from the aforementioned light and nature, as well as the townscape, activities, the local people, gastronomy, and the art itself, to name a few. This assertion appear to correlate with manner in which the marketers seek to frame the unique atmosphere,

The atmosphere in Skagen on a summer day is absolutely unique. The town and the harbor buzz with life and you can enjoy a meal outdoors. The inner harbor basins resemble a forest of yacht masts and two tractor-pulled “Sandormen” buses run at full speed taking people out to the tip of the Grenen where you can stand with a foot in each of the two seas that meet there. Go for a dip in the sea or a walk along the beach; visit a gallery or spend a few hours shopping (B-13, p.7).

Thus, as implied herein, the atmosphere of the town is ultimately dependent on the tourists themselves and the activities in which they choose to participate. In other words, what is problematic (and somewhat paradoxical) is that the experience of the atmosphere is ultimately predicated on the active decision of the tourist, and consequently the atmosphere is subject to change and not to be regarded as a single, constant attribute. Thus, marketing the atmosphere as “unique” might both be seen as the usage of a familiar marketing trope to which the post-modern tourist have grown increasingly accustomed, but also as being a sign of a psychological, destination image attribute that is essentially undefinable given its co-created nature. It may subsequently be speculated that the description of the physical, functional traits carries more weight in the mind of the tourist rather than the mere notion of a “unique atmosphere”, seeing that the former is the foundation on which the latter is constructed. Simultaneously, however, it can also be argued that this notion of co-creation, where the destination is offering a variety of possibilities and the tourist may pick and choose, is, in fact, a good selling point seeing that it lends a great amount of freedom to the tourist. Another problematic notion in terms of the depiction of atmosphere highlighted in this example is that this unique atmosphere is also grounded in the general ‘intensity’ of tourism activity. That is to say, whether or not there are many tourists present and if there are actually business venues catering to said tourists. Thus, in rela-

tion to this general idea of atmosphere in terms of arts and crafts, we suggested that within the context of the brochure in which it is mentioned, the atmosphere acts as a source of inspiration that is intrinsically linked to the notion of Skagen as a tourism destination, which when considering the image examples below is related to summer weather and “summer-related” activities.



(B-13, pp.6-7)

In terms of the arts and crafts milieu as being a meeting ground and the nature as a source of inspiration, a somewhat related thematic message is projected in the following quote related to the *Læsø Art Festival*, which also focuses on the proposed inspiration link between nature and art,

As usual, artists will be invited, alongside artist-craftsmen and songwriters from the mainland and beyond, who, in cooperation with the local artists, will attempt to create unique experiences to be enjoyed in conjunction with Læsø's gorgeous natural environment (A-4, p.37).

While the case can certainly be made that this example once more underlines the notion of the arts and crafts of the region as being "inspired" by the surroundings, this activity appears to extend beyond the "inspired by" category, seeing that it is suggested that the art of this particular event should be viewed within the natural setting that is its source of inspiration, for the reason

that it cannot be categorized as a mere “reproduction” of nature, but is suggested to be more of an “extension” of said natural environment (see picture below).



(A-4, p. 37)

Thus, it is to be contemplated as an additional way to experience this alleged “gorgeous natural environment” of Læsø. An underlying notion to this is that the art is inherently bound to the destination in which it has been produced and upon removal from said milieu it would essentially lose (some of) its “meaning”. Meanwhile, it also suggested that the experience of the art festival extends beyond the mere viewing, and that audiences may interact even more closely with the artists seeing that, “workshops and the inclusion of the audience will be important elements in Læsø Art Festival” (A-4, p.37). Consequently, it is implied that there is sense of participation in the creational development, and thus the tourist may even play a part in the physical, artistic outcome of the festival. However, as it is also indicated in said example the festival is set during the month of July. Thus, it may be argued that not only is it an event which to some degree may be viewed as an immediate, seasonality perpetuating factor; it may simultaneously be viewed as fostering a continuous, romantic portrayal of the natural environs of the region (the source of inspiration) seeing that these, during the summer period, is most likely to be of its “best behavior” (i.e. sun and blue skies). This notion of romanticism is more than just insinuated in the brochure of Skagen, and it may certainly be theorized, when considering the notion of seasonal tourism fluctuations as occurring because of traditions that have evolved over the course of generations, the apparent marketing focus on nature, the sea and the blue sky might indeed originate of some of the most popularized portrayals of the region, as detailed in the brochure of Skagen concerning its arts and crafts tradition,

The other artists arrived in the summer, and, with Brøndums Hotel as their base, they drew on mutual inspiration to commit the fishing population and magnificent scenery to canvas for posterity (B-13, p.25).

A continuance of this tradition appears to be suggested in that it is allegedly still possible to find artists within the natural environs of the area, with “...easels and sketch pads” (B-13, p.29). Thus, the intended, idealized destination image of the region, or perhaps more accurately that of the municipalities of Frederikshavn and Hjørring can indeed be argued to revolve around the romanticized, natural, summer environs.

Furthermore, the two introductory quotes in this section as well as the discussion related to Læsø also pointed to the notion of arts and crafts experience as entailing cultural exchange aspect. Thus, the marketing material advocates that the arts and crafts experience is not delimited to “seeing” and “buying” said objects, but also to possibly learn about the intricacies behind the making of the objects, such as the specific artifices as well as the life of being an artist. This type of depiction of the arts and craft experience actually appears to be quite common, that is to say, the notion of the destination as being a meeting place and a source of interaction between the tourist and the artist is strongly emphasized by marketers. The coastal town of Sæby appears to be marketed according to a similar idea,

Sæby’s historic pedestrian street, Algade, contains a large number of galleries, workshops and shops selling arts and crafts. There are works of art to suit all tastes and often the chance to meet the artists themselves (B-11, p.19).

The context, in which it occurs, much like the previous example of Skagen, is characterized by the summer setting and the chance to meet the artist. Also, important to notice in this example as well, is the proclamation that there are arts and crafts suited for “all tastes”. However, the arts and craft experience is also limited in certain instances, “Throughout the summer, exiting art is exhibited in Gl. Købmandsgård” (B-11, p.18), thus somewhat limiting the period of time in which tourist can actually experience the attraction, in other words, limiting it to the peak season. In a section detailing art and culture, Thy also informs that,

The local history can be experienced in the museum of Thisted. Besides the permanent displays of the museum, additional, varying exhibits are offered throughout the year. During the summer a series of “Thy-fortællinger” (Thy Stories) take place and on certain days a storyteller attached to a special place in Thy will narrate (A-12, p.21).

We have previously touched on this particular aspect in relation to shopping and the possible reasoning behind it, that is to say the notion of highlighting “special” events happening during a period where the number tourism overnight stays peaks, instead of placing them in lesser populated periods, where they might attribute to a seasonal-levelling in terms of tourism visitation. From a seasonality perspective, what is particular interesting in this instance is the notion that the marketer suggest that there is something happening throughout the year, while subsequently highlighting an activity available during the summer. From a purely hypothetical perspective, the reason for highlighting this activity might be that this is truly a unique experience providing interesting information about the area, information that might otherwise be inaccessible. From a receiver’s perspective, however, a more critical, conjectural view might link the highlighting of these events to a lack of other (equally) interesting arts and culture events out of the peak season, which is a view that essentially revolves around the idea of referring to “varying exhibits throughout the year” while neglecting to elaborate on what the exhibits might be, thus signaling that its inclusion is merely a marketing ploy, rather than an actual fact.

Concluding, seeing that none of the visuals presented in the sections of tourism material describing arts and craft challenge the general image of blue skies and white sands, art and crafts can hardly be argued to be a theme which is actively utilized as a seasonality reducing factor (A-4, B-1, B-6, B-8). The fact that events involving the artisans often take place within the peak season seems to imply that art related tourism is primarily happening within the peak season (A-4, B-5, B-8). For the purpose of nuancing, to some extent it might be considered natural that artisans use primarily the summer to cater to tourists seeing that this is currently the period in which most tourists visit the destination of North Jutland, and as a consequence thereof the potential of making sales is perceived to be higher.

5.2. STRATEGIC MATERIAL

In the second part of the analysis we will explore how overarching, strategic tourism material, and the discourses embedded herein, can be argued to influence the construction of the destination image that was analyzed in the previous section. Consequently, in this section of the analysis we will be drawing on the previous section in which we sought to explore how the destination image of North Jutland is portrayed, and how this portrayal can be argued to be projecting a seasonality inducing image. That is to say, we will be linking the findings presented in that section with key, discursive traits observed in the strategic material for the purpose of presenting a discussion on possible reasons why this seasonality induced destination image is indeed apparent in the marketing material. Lastly, it should be clarified that strategic material, in this thesis,

is material which has been made for internal use and is, as a consequence thereof, primarily intended for use within the tourism industry.

5.2.1. INTERTEXTUALITY AND THEMES

One of the very central themes of the strategic material, unsurprisingly, revolves around the future direction of the tourism sector. While on the subject of seasonality some of the gathered strategic material appears to have been produced for the sole purpose of addressing the seasonality nature, both in terms of Denmark as whole but also specifically to destinations within the confines of North Jutland. However, from the outset one might infer that the concept of seasonality is not one that is currently being addressed seeing that the identified strategic material in question is rather dated (D-7; D-11; D-13). Meanwhile, before jumping to conclusions one should also keep in mind that the notion of seasonality, given its economic, natural and social intricacies is not a phenomena that is necessarily to be considered reversible in a short period of time, and thus the reason for not having identified additional, similar strategic material in the time between the latest publication and now might be seen as sign of DMOs seeking to let proposed strategies run their course. Meanwhile, notions of seasonality have also been identified in additional strategic material that addresses the nature of the tourism sector of North Jutland and Denmark in general. The reason for the inclusion of the latter stems from the perceived nature of these reports that appears to have (or at least to be intended to have) a trickle-down effect, which essentially is to be understood in the way that more narrowly focused strategy material, in terms of the geographical area that it encompasses, tends to make reference to concepts and strategies that figures in previously published strategy material covering larger areas, often in a very literal way. In other words, it can be argued that there is definite sense of intertextuality to the body of strategy material gathered. It is from this intertextuality that the focal points of this part of the analysis stem. The notion of climate and activities organically led to related strategic material addressing authenticity and subsequently to the concept of the so-called lighthouse strategy, as a consequence of this interrelated character of the strategy material. Consequently, the focal points of the analysis are as detailed below:

- Climate and activities
- Authenticity and activities
- The “lighthouse” strategy

5.2.2. CLIMATE AND ACTIVITIES

As evidenced in the preceding section of the analysis, the focus on nature and activities in the marketing brochures were indicated to being central focal points, both in terms of physical, gas-

tronic as well as arts and crafts and shopping related activities. It was argued that especially physical activities and arts and crafts appear to hinge greatly on the natural environs. This environment was predominantly depicted, both textually and visually, in “attractive“ weather conditions (sunny and blue skies) that was suggested to resemble those occurring during the peak season of North Jutland. The notion of climate and its connection to activities is also addressed in some of the strategic material, either specifically or implicitly, and while there are definite, discursive notions herein concerning the appropriateness of portraying the region in this exoticized manner, there are also perceptions, which appears to be signaling that a continuation of the marketing strategy is suitable to the destination...

In terms of visuals, *Fyrtårn Nordjylland- Nordjysk turismestrategi 2011 – 2013* can certainly be argued to frame the destination of North Jutland in the same manner that was witnessed in the marketing material (see pictures below).



(D-6, p. 56)



(D-6, p. 10)

Given the nature of the strategic material, the visual depictions included are perhaps not the features on which potential readers will immediately focus. However, its discursive ties to the general visual representations of the marketing material are noticeable, and as previously stated in the methodology section, the power that a discourse possess is particularly difficult to access. Notwithstanding, the illustrations above can be perceived as sign on how to appropriately depict the destination in terms of functional attributes, and upon review of the specific strategy paper,

these appear to primarily revolve around the nature, drawing heavily on beach environments as evidenced by the examples above. When considering the following statement, the focus on nature is further emphasized,

The setting of tourism in North Jutland, which all visitors know/recognize, is our light, sea and nature. This is our unique characteristic and we must never put this asset at risk, but should instead protect and showcase it every time the opportunity is offered. On the other hand, it is important to make it clear that the time, where the beach, sea, scenery and nature in and of itself could drive the tourism forwards, has definitively come to an end. The light, sea and nature is a necessity but not a sufficient condition for growth and development (D-6(T), p. 26).

Thus, it is established that the main asset of the region is, in fact, the natural, functional attributes while simultaneously suggesting that these are not adequate in their own right in terms of attracting tourists. The notion of the natural attributes certainly appears to transcend this strategy material. However, as noted multiple times, the way in which this key feature is framed in the brochures and videos almost exclusively adheres to the use of a bright, summer-related narrative, which is essentially problematic if we are to believe the findings presented in *Ferie i Kystdanmark – Warum nicht?*,

Furthermore, the inconstant weather causes that vacations are only considered for a short period, and exactly because the weather can be a challenge it is criticized that there is not enough (tourism) offers (activities) for days with bad weather (D-5(T), p. 62).

This statement to some extent points towards a similar understanding of the concept of natural seasonality factors, exemplified in the notion that weather is suggested to be inconstant, and consequently perceived as a challenge, thus fostering the notion that this issue is one that can actually be overcome and that the "solution" is found in the development and implementation of additional tourism activities. In other words, there is an apparent insinuation that there is no such thing as "bad" weather, and it is purely a question of addressing the issue of changing weather patterns by way of adjusting the tourism offer to these. However, in the last part of the statement this notion is somewhat deflated in the sense that it is literally acknowledged that "bad" weather is indeed "real". It is important to acknowledge the duality in this particular statement. In other words, the textual context, a section concerning the findings based on interviews with potential tourist, in which the statement appears suggests that this is the perception

of the respondents (i.e. potential tourists), but as proposed above, it is simultaneously insinuated that this deficiency is one to be corrected.

In continuance, considering the (general) destination image projected in the brochures featured in the data sample of this thesis, the following statement provides a somewhat problematic statement seeing that it is highlighted that,

A decisive, common factor that separates the Northern European holiday region from others is the perception of the weather. It is described as “often rainy”, “less sunny”, “cool”, “varying”, etc. With regards to this, the regions are particularly suited for people who are not deeply absorbed in good weather. Northern Europe is not suited for people who attach particular importance to warmth and intensive sunbathing (D-5(T), p.76).

There is an apparent contrast between what is indirectly suggested in this statement⁴, which is that an appropriate strategy is not to focus extensively on the summer-related attributes of North Jutland, and what is ultimately projected in the brochures, which is that the primary, overshadowing selling point is suggested to be the natural environment and to a lesser degree the activities that can be conducted within said environment. In addition, the assertion that there is actually such a concept as bad weather is suggested once more, evidenced by the mentioning of Northern Europe, of which North Jutland is invariably a part, as being suited for people to whom “good” weather conditions is not a major concern. It is simultaneously argued that North Jutland is located within a geographical area that does not provide a milieu compatible or attractive to tourists, who rank sun related activities as the most important. This assertion renders the previously mentioned notion of the presence of a “Scandinavian Riviera” in North Jutland somewhat questionable, and connecting the latter with the findings of said strategy material certainly creates some confusion as to what attributes of the destination that actually justifies such a comparison, as previously indicated. Notwithstanding, there appears to be a clear delineation between what can be determined good and bad weather. If this claim is, in fact, true then it can be argued that the very nature of the destination image portrayed in the analyzed marketing material is paradoxical, seeing that, at least parts of North Jutland, according to the two cited statements above, is characterized by bad weather while concurrently lacking the attributes to handle the alleged bad weather. The reason behind this paradox, as it has previously been indicated, is not necessarily due to a lack of knowledge concerning the issue of North Jutland being a seasonal tourism destination, but rather because of a lack of proper coping mechanisms. That is

⁴ As a disclaimer, it should be noted that the report in question was published in November 2014, and due to this limited timespan the potential (intended) effects on the marketing material has not necessarily had adequate time to come to fruition yet.

to say, the disproportional depiction of the region in terms of summer vs. other seasons might indeed stem from the notion that there is not a significant amount of activities or events to which the marketers can actively divert the tourists' attention for the purpose of encouraging shoulder and low season travel.

Meanwhile, in a related report, focusing on Swedish tourists, coastal Denmark (Northern Jutland included) is said to possess some attractiveness beyond the peak season,

Furthermore, the analysis suggests that Coastal Denmark has the potential to attract potential, Swedish tourists in the shoulder season, specifically in the early and late summer where the weather is still relatively dependable, but where Coastal Denmark is not competing with sun vacation to bathing beaches (D-4, p.10).

Though, while we should not succumb to the temptation of being overly critical and acknowledging that the statement above should certainly be recognized as a valid notion in terms of attracting tourist throughout different periods, the quote does not signal a noticeable, impending departure from the existing marketing formula. That is not necessarily only a point of critique, in that it, from a discursive perspective, suggests a certain level of incremental innovation based on the notion that the region already possesses some of the main attributes necessary for such a "season expansion" to come into effect. According to the disseminator of this statement and as previously indicated in relation to *Fyrtårn Nordjylland- Nordjysk turismstrategi 2011 - 2013*, however, these attributes are mainly of natural character. The institutional factors are not touched upon in this case, but are latter emphasized in the following manner,

Seeing that most of the activities that the swedes demand do not specifically require sunshine and warm weather, it would be easy to experience the Danish authenticity out of the high summer. On the other hand, there is a barrier (related to this) for the reason that during these periods there is an even more limited range of activities, experiences and attractions available than throughout the peak season. The supply already appears only to be meeting the swedes' high expectations to a limited extent (D-4, p.62).

5.2.3. AUTHENTICITY AND ACTIVITIES

Thus, the key to unlock the "out of the peak season potential" of the coastal areas is found in the development of authentic experiences, and as the wording of this statement suggests the coastal areas lack some essential elements, mainly in terms of the availability of activities. To some extent, this final quote in the preceding statement appears to be formulated on the basis of the seasonal nature of the coastal destinations, North Jutland included, that seasonality is by not

only a naturally induced problem but instead stems from institutional factors, seeing that the destination is said to lack the proper humanly controlled resources necessary for sustaining out of peak season tourist visitation and activity. However, if subverted, this notion can indeed also be viewed as a sign of the perception of the appropriateness of weather. In connection with the previously presented concept of bad weather as being a “real” phenomenon it is essentially presumed that the sunny and rainy partout necessitates different activities. That is to say, the disseminator suggests that the existence of weather perceived as bad fosters the need for alternatives in order for the destination to maintain a high level of tourist appeal, essentially disseminating the message that the climate and weather is a naturally induced issue with which the DMO and local tourism agents need to cope rather than “embrace”. Additionally, in terms of the quote above, it is not entirely clear whether it is the activities, experiences and attractions, which are supporting the natural occurring authenticity, that are limited during the low-season, or if it is suggesting that authentic experiences themselves that are “closed” during this period. The idea that it is activities, experiences and attraction themselves that are authentic could indicate that authenticity is perceived as being associated with factors for seasonality, which could be considered institutional rather than natural, suggesting that the presence of authenticity is somewhat dependent on whether there is a tourism demand for it. Therefore, it could be argued that authenticity, at least to a certain degree, can be viewed as being seasonal. The same strategic material later describes that some tourism attractions, experiences and activities can be considered authentic, further implying that authenticity is here considered an institutional factor for seasonality (D-4, p. 15). In this instance we might interject that the lack specific examples as to what these authentic experiences may be leaves some room for interpretation. Connecting this notion to the first part of the analysis, and the previously presented claim that nature is considered the most unique feature of the region, this may be viewed as an indication that these proposed, but non-specific, authentic experiences might involve the inclusion of nature in a small or major capacity. Consequently, it should be questioned whether this is desirable, as it could be argued that authenticity as a result of this ends up being dependent on natural seasonality factors. In other words, factors which, as opposed to institutional factors for seasonality, cannot be directly influenced. Furthermore, as mentioned within the analysis of the marketing material, the natural attributes presented within the brochures can be seen as being quite elusive as some of the marketed features (e.g. the broad beaches and blue skies), are only evident in certain weather conditions. It could, therefore, be further questioned why activities, experiences and attractions are often portrayed in unison with the often quite elusive characteristics of the nature presented within the strategic tourism material, and if this makes these authentic traits of the destination vulnerable to seasonality.

As a whole, the inclusion of authenticity in the report as a part of the central terminology is problematic in the sense that throughout the text it is never concretely clarified what these “authentic experiences” might specifically be; examples that might enable/inspire DMOs and local tourism management to develop and implement such authentic experiences. Instead the disseminator(s) only provides a vague explanation which seems quite ambiguous,

The potential, Swedish tourists, to a great extent, demand authentic experiences during their holiday. Authentic experiences can be described as experiences that feel real and truthful to the individual tourist, and are unique to the specific holiday destination, that is to say, attached to one locality (D-4, (T) p.7).

On the other hand, this ambiguity might be purposefully employed, and thus completely intentional. “Authentic”, “real” and “truthful” are hardly clear-cut terms unaccustomed to different interpretations, and with the added notion of being “unique” to the destination this certainly lends credence to the idea of this report not being produced for the purpose of acting as a well-defined blueprint of future tourism development, but it is rather designed to provide a loose framework containing thoughts on general trends to which the destination stakeholders can choose to adhere. Observing the actual tourism material of North Jutland, makes it apparent that authenticity is not as frequently mentioned in some of material as opposed to the strategic material. This might indicate that either is authenticity replaced by other words relating to authenticity, for instance “unique”, in the marketing material and that the term authenticity is perhaps intended only to be used “behind the scenes”. Alternatively it could suggest that the tourism stakeholders are not heeding the suggestions presented within the strategic material, which in itself can be seen as a result of not being able to comprehend the message of the strategic material, or perhaps it is the result of conscious decision based on the rationale that marketer does not wish to use familiar, and as previous indicated, potentially nonsensical tropes.

Consequently, we may argue that a report such as this appear to be intended to be a debate catalyst that can be used in order to spark intra-destination discussion on what features of the area might be worth developing and market as authentic, real, truthful, etc., thus resembling a mix of a bottom-up and top-down approach where the former interprets the guidelines of the latter, within the context of one’s local area.

5.2.4. THE “LIGHTHOUSE” STRATEGY

The ambiguity of the statements above, in terms of the usage and strategic focus on authenticity, also provides fodder for a discussion on the actual nature of the material in general, which as suggested in the final part of the preceding section, from local or regional DMO perspective may

be argued to be more of an inspirational character, rather than a clear-cut framework. The point of departure for such a discussion may appropriately be the notion of a proposed “lighthouse” strategy that is referenced in several strategy papers (D-3; D-4; D-6; D-8; D-10; D-11; D-12; D-13). This concept is considered an important strategic element in the material in which it is featured. While it is concept that has been expressed in terms of being an overall strategy for tourism in Denmark, it has, due to the previously observed trickle-down effect of the strategic material, also been identified in texts specifically associated with North Jutland.

Vores Rejse (D-10), strategic material issued by VisitDenmark as a statement as to how Denmark should evolve as tourism destination towards 2015, provides the following delineation of the concept of “lighthouses” in a tourism context,

“Lighthouses” with international power of attraction (themes, businesses, events or geographical areas). The selected “lighthouses” share and actively communicate the same promise that Denmark epitomizes (D-10(T), p. 41).

Using another metaphor the lighthouse strategy ultimately is argued to entail the creation and subsequent promotion of beacons towards which foreign tourists will direct. Meanwhile, the nature of selection of who determines which types of tourists that should ultimately be targeted resembles that of the previously noted bottom-up approach, seeing that,

Actors within Danish tourism collaborate in terms of which target audiences and brands should be marketed in order to strengthen the international competitiveness of Denmark (D-10(T), p. 41).

From a discourse perspective, these statements are, consequently, signaling that the projected destination image of Denmark is to be co-created rather than being exclusively determined by a single entity. Notwithstanding, we might argue that there is a sense of one-clear image embedded in this notion, both through the mentioning that the lighthouse and the promotion thereof should adhere to the brand “promise” of Denmark, but also through the notion that VisitDenmark, at the time of publication, was supposedly to lead the development of the method by which these lighthouses should be selected,

The definition and selection of the international “lighthouses”, “shared stories” and/or “sub-brands” is formed on the basis of objective criteria that reflect both the tourists’ perception of the power of attraction of the participating brands and the cooperativeness and will to invest on the part of the participating parties (tourism actors). The

method is developed by VisitDenmark with contributions from universities and other knowledge suppliers (D-10(T), p. 41).

Throughout Vores Rejse, the notion of what “Danmarksbrandet” (the brand of Denmark) actually entails is not defined in the actual report, which is somewhat paradoxical seeing that it supposedly constitutes one of the very pillars of the proposed tourism marketing strategy, as well as being concept to which the lighthouse strategy adheres. Thus, we might interject that there is a lack of key reference in terms of the values of the brand, and it can, consequently, through the theoretical lens of destination image be theorized that Danmarksbrandet is open for interpretation by regional and local DMOs. We have previously indicated that the social constructivism character of destination image factors into both its projected nature as well as consequent reception/perception on part of the tourist, and given this nature what can ultimately be deemed a tourism lighthouse carries no immediate, clear-cut “restrictions” beyond the fact that it has to be a tourism related event, theme, geographical area etc. that relates to one or several prioritized market segments (see D-10, p. 23(appendix) for an elaboration on these) that in actual fact cover a large variety of different target audiences (families, retired couples, business conventions, among others) which essentially renders one of the opening statements of the strategic paper slightly paradoxical,

”The past shows that Danish tourism has not succeeded in terms of being “something for everybody”. We are more or less invisible and unclear internationally, among other things because we have not prioritized “providing a lot for selected, value-generating target audiences”, that do find the unique Danish experiences worth visiting and paying for. We know that there is a great amount of them. We know what their traveling motives are and we have described them” (D-10,(T) p.4).

In view of this lack of interpretational restrictions, the regional and local DMOs ultimately define on which key tourism features the marketing should be focused in order to appeal to the potential target audience. While not being specifically associated with the marketing, *Ferie i Kystdanmark – Varför Inte* presents the notion that the town of Skagen, located in the northernmost of North Jutland, is one of the most three most often cited tourism lighthouses of coastal Denmark among Swedish tourists, while the two other are the Danish west coast in its totality and LEGOLAND (D-4, p. 29). Thus, the rather loose conceptualization of the lighthouse term is evident in sense that a theme park, a town as well as the entire western coastal area of Denmark can equally be deemed a lighthouse “attraction”.

Specifically in relation to North Jutland, *Fyrtårn Nordjylland- Nordjysk turismestrategi 2011 – 2013* refers extensively to the lighthouse concept. With reference to the seaside towns of the region, the disseminators of the plan provides following statement,

In recent years the strongest brands of North Jutland has experienced a boost in terms of quality and image. It is important to maintain and further strengthen these regional lighthouses (D-6, p. 38).

Subsequently, it is interjected in the strategic plan that the way in which the image of the destination can be improved is partly through the approach of transferring the key bathing culture elements of yore into a contemporary context in order to achieve a revival of the, "...the classic bathing culture, history, aesthetic, décor, rituals, activities" (D-6, p. 39). Given the general depiction of the coastal areas of North Jutland in the marketing material and the previously mentioned notion of a "romantic" portrayal of the region being prevalent, we might interject that the revival in question has to some extent happened, at least in terms of a destination image point of view on the aesthetics (the grand natural landscape, including beaches and water as well as the focus on artisans) and to some degree in relation to activities (water-related activities of various sorts). Thus, VisitNordjylland has identified the seaside towns as lighthouses with the power of attraction to entice tourists to visit the destination. It can be noted that the selection of this intended image and the underlying, embedded functional destination image elements, such as nature and activities, rests on the very notion that these seaside towns have traditionally been considered as being defined by said traits. Consequently, in order to avoid disrupting this image, for the reason that it has proved prosperous to the destination, regardless of its seasonality nature of it, it is to some extent sought rebranded (as a cultural and historic experience) rather than discarded in order not disrupt the destination image. However, considering the seasonal nature of the seaside towns of North Jutland, we might infer that utilizing these as lighthouses in the marketing strategy is problematic in the sense that if it is main power of attraction rests on features that are only available in relatively short periods, the intended trickle-down effect of this marketing approach is indeed questionable.

Especially, when considering the intangible manner in which certain aspect of the strategic material are presented. The fact that key terms like authenticity, lighthouses and the "promise" of Danish tourism, are, at best, only vaguely defined creates an environment in which the suggestions of the strategic material can be interpreted in a number of different ways. As a result thereof, the regional and local tourism actors might be inclined to identify their local "lighthouse" according to the activities, experiences and attractions that is currently attracting the

most tourists, seeing that these have perhaps, over the course of many years, proved to attract a national as well as international audience. Thus, given this notion and the findings of the first part of the analysis as well as the seasonality pattern of tourism in North Jutland that was presented in the introduction, the primary lighthouses, that is to say key focal points in the marketing context, appears to have been determined to be nature, and thus, the activities and experiences are anchored in and primarily revolve around this particular functional feature in question, that according to the projected destination image is of a rather seasonal character. Meanwhile, as touched upon previously, a successful, seasonality defined destination image focusing on unique, localized experiences might indeed still be deemed considerably more preferable than an image that is ineffective altogether.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this thesis was to investigate the destination image of North Jutland in order to explore whether a seasonality inducing image was projected through the tourism material within the destination. Through a discourse analysis of the selected tourism material covering brochures and promotional videos, a number of different, recurring themes were identified which revolved around natural attributes, physical activities, shopping, gastronomy and art and crafts. As a counterpoint to this material it was deemed appropriate to examine the possible, underlying rationales behind the projected destination image. In relation to this part of the thesis, a series of selected tourism related strategy papers were explored, again through the theoretical and methodological lenses of destination image and discourse analysis, respectively; a process through which the concept of weather, activities, authenticity and the so-called lighthouse strategies were identified as being important elements.

In terms of how the current promotional material of North Jutland is creating a destination image that acts as a seasonality inducing factor, it was discovered that the natural attributes are often described within a context, both in terms of text and visuals, which can fittingly be termed as a summer narrative, or more appropriately, discourse. The exoticized depictions, however, was found not only to affect the depiction of the natural attributes, but also the portrayal of the activities such as physical activities, arts and crafts and to a lesser degree shopping for the reason that these functional traits were discursively depicted in the context of the natural environment, thus projecting the summer-related discourse onto these activities. In other words, as consequence thereof, the activities are often depicted as being secondary to the nature and as mere vessels through which the natural environs can be experienced in different ways which ultimately results in nature becoming the lynchpin that holds the tourism offerings in the region together. Consequently, some activities, mainly physical activities, are attributed with the idea of being more preferable within certain weather scenarios, while others, the arts and crafts, to some degree can be considered to be an element which does not only appear to be focusing extensively on the natural, functional attributes of the destination, but also to be an important aspect in the potential perpetuation of the romantic, idealized destination image, which appears to be present within the majority of the analyzed marketing material.

Consequently, with reference to how overarching, strategic tourism related material influences the construction of the perceived seasonality-inducing destination image detailed above, strategic material was found to be characterized by great level of intertextuality which was manifested through a considerable amount of cross-text-referencing. This notion also appears to have had an impact in terms of the issues and strategies addressed, and thus it was ar-

gued that the overarching, strategic material to some extent could be attributed with the notion of having a trickle-down effect, seeing that concepts defined herein was reproduced in more locally focus strategy material. One of the most commonly cited strategic focal points was established to be the so-called “lighthouse” strategy. Meanwhile, the concept itself, from a discursive point of view, appeared somewhat elusive for the reason that the delineation of the brand values to which it was suggested to adhere was rather undefined, and thus lacked key points of reference. Furthermore, what actually constitutes a lighthouse also appeared vague, which was also found to be the case in terms of the manner in which authenticity was addressed. The concept of authentic experiences was discussed in relation to its capacity as being a potential catalyst of out of peak season travel, but the concept was presented in a very ambiguous way, exemplified in the notion that the concept of authenticity seemed to be left quite open for interpretation on the part of regional and local DMOs. Consequently, we argue that the tourism DMOs appears to be at liberty to portray a destination image of their own choice and that this has resulted in the different DMOs projecting images which were likely predicated on the attractions, experiences and activities that have previously proved successful. In the case of North Jutland that is to say through the depiction of its foremost unique attribute, nature; a functional attribute that was found in some instances to be equally glorified in both strategy and marketing material.

A recommendation arising from this thesis, may center on the notion that the disseminators of strategic material seeking to formulate strategies on how to reduce the influence of seasonality within Danish tourism should first and foremost consider revising the way in which seasonality is addressed discursively. This requires that seasonality is actively addressed within the strategic material and ensuring that the suggestions presented within the material are less vague and prone to interpretation. Secondly we suggest that local DMO’s works towards changing the structure of their tourism material, seeing that an alternative structure, in which the experiences, activities to a greater extend are divided thematically, might create a more suitable foundation on which opposing projections can be made without conflicting with the overall image of the material. Finally, we consider it of paramount importance that tourism stakeholders seeking to address seasonality adopt a more nuanced standpoint in terms of how seasonality is viewed. That is to say, we argue that adhering too strictly to concept of natural seasonality factors as being completely beyond influence may become an issue, and thus we advocate that DMOs in an increasing degree should seek to acknowledge the possibility of embracing the weather patterns characterizing the different seasons, which might enable tourism operators to create a more diversified tourism offering and related marketing material in which it is activities that are the central focal point rather than the natural attributes, consequently differentiating while not completely ignoring the existent destination image. Thus, we believe that the pro-

posed revision in terms of the relationship between natural and institutional factors for seasonality is important in order to alter the way in which tourism policy is made in order to create an environment where the natural factors for seasonality is no longer simply ignored.

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APPENDIX

DATA REFERENCES

| Ref. Number | Name | Year | Municipality | Communicator |
|-------------|---|------|------------------------|---------------------|
| A-1 | Brønderslev | 2014 | Brønderslev | Nordjyske |
| A-2 | Den gode historie Toppen af Danmark | 2015 | Frederikshavn/Hjørring | Toppen af Danmark |
| A-3 | Jammerbugten turist guide 2014 | 2014 | Jammerbugten | VisitJammerbugten |
| A-4 | Læsø. Rich in restful experiences | 2015 | Læsø | VisitLæsø |
| A-5 | Made in Vesthimmerland 2014 | 2014 | Vesthimmerland | VisitVesthimmerland |
| A-6 | Mariagerfjord – fyldt med gode oplevelser | 2014 | Mariagerfjord | VisitMariagerfjord |
| A-7 | Mors 2015 | 2015 | Morsø | VisitMors |
| A-8 | Oktoberoplevelser i Jammerbugten 2014 | 2014 | Jammerbugten | VisitJammerbugten |
| A-9 | Rebild 2015 | 2015 | Rebild | VisitRebild |
| A-10 | The bay of Denmark - Jammerbugten | 2013 | Jammerbugten | VisitJammerbugten |
| A-11 | Thy 2014 | 2014 | Thy | VisitThy |
| A-12 | Thy 2015 | 2015 | Thy | VisitThy |
| A-13 | Toppen af Danmark magasinet | 2015 | Frederikshavn/hjørring | Toppen af Danmark |

| Ref. Number | Name | Year | Area | Communicator |
|-------------|--|------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| B-1 | Bindslevsguiden 2014-2015 | 2014 | Bindslev | Bindslev |
| B-2 | Blokhush | 2015 | Blokhush | VisitJammerbugten |
| B-3 | Brønderslev Kommune - Asaa-Dronninglund-Hjallerup 2014 | 2015 | Brønderslev | Dronninglund Turistforening |
| B-4 | Frederikshavn | 2015 | Frederikshavn | Toppen af Danmark |
| B-5 | Løkken | 2015 | Løkken | Toppen af Danmark |
| B-6 | Lønstrup | 2015 | Lønstrup | Toppen af Danmark |
| B-7 | Sindal - Lige i hjertet | | Sindal | Sindal Udviklingsscenter |
| B-8 | Tversted | 2015 | Tversted | Toppen af Danmark |
| B-9 | Aalborg Kyst | 2015 | Aalborg omegn | Toppen af Danmark |
| B-10 | Aalborg guide | 2015 | Aalborg | VisitThy |
| B-11 | Sæby | 2015 | Sæby | Toppen af Danmark |
| B-12 | Hjørring | 2015 | Hjørring | Toppen af Danmark |

| | | | | |
|------|--------|------|--------|-------------------|
| B-13 | Skagen | 2015 | Skagen | Toppen af Danmark |
|------|--------|------|--------|-------------------|

| Ref. Number | Name | Year | Municipality | Kommunicator |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|------|----------------|------------------|
| C-1 | Paragliding i Løkken | 2015 | Hjørring | VisitNordjylland |
| C-2 | Skagen | 2015 | Frederikshavn | VisitNordjylland |
| C-3 | Voergaard Slot | 2015 | Bønderslev | VisitNordjylland |
| C-4 | Nationalpark Thy, Hanklit og Mors | 2015 | Thy/Mors | VisitNordjylland |
| C-5 | Aalborg | 2015 | Aalborg | VisitNordjylland |
| C-6 | Limfjordens Guld | 2015 | Vesthimmerland | VisitNordjylland |
| C-7 | Rold & Rebild Bakker | 2015 | Rebild | VisitNordjylland |
| C-8 | Store Oksø & Mariagerfjord | 2015 | Mariagerfjord | VisitNordjylland |
| C-9 | Cold Hawaii, Klitmøller | 2015 | Thy | VisitNordjylland |

(Notice: these videos are available on <http://www.visitnordjylland.dk/>)

| Ref. Number | Name | Year | Kommunicator |
|-------------|---|------|---|
| D-1 | Aftale om Vækstplan for dansk turisme | 2014 | VækstMinisteriet |
| D-2 | ANBEFALINGER Juni 2013 | 2013 | Vækstteam for Turisme og Oplevelsesøkonomi |
| D-3 | En forretningsudviklingsvej for turismefremmesystemet i Nordjylland | 2012 | Pluss for VisitNordjylland |
| D-4 | Ferie i Kystdanmark - Varför inte? | 2014 | Made by Epinion, for VisitDenmark, Videncenter for Kystturisme and Region Syddanmark |
| D-5 | Ferie i Kystdanmark - Warum nicht? | 2014 | Made by TNS Gallup, for VisitDenmark, Videncenter for Kystturisme and Region Syddanmark |
| D-6 | Fyrtårn Nordjylland- Nordjysk turismestrategi 2011 - 2013 | 2011 | VisitNordjylland |
| D-7 | Helårsturisme - kort fortalt ! | 2007 | VisitDenmark |
| D-8 | Lysets Land 2020 - Vækst via netværk | 2011 | Toppen af Danmark |
| D-9 | Slutevaluering af udvalgte delprojekter under Fyrtårn Nordjylland | 2013 | Ib Analyse for Region Nordjylland |
| D-10 | Vores Rejse -DEN FÆLLES STRATEGI FOR DANSK TURISME MOD 2015 | 2009 | VisitDenmark |
| D-11 | Vækstprojekt - helårskystturisme | 2006 | Niras for VisitDenmark |

| | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| D-12 | Årsberetning 2008 | 2008 | VisitDenmark |
| D-13 | Jammerbugten og de fire årstider | 2008 | Jammerbugt Kommune |

| Ref. Number | Name | Year | Area | Communicator |
|-------------|------------------------|------|---------------|------------------|
| E-1 | Alletiders Nordjylland | 2011 | North Jutland | VisitNordjylland |
| E-2 | Mit Nordjylland | 2012 | North Jutland | VisitNordjylland |