

# Triple Helix and Innovation Workshops in the Tourism Industry

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MASTER'S THESIS

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Appendices 7-10, the audio files of the interviews and the focus group, can be found on the USB flash drive enclosed.

## 1. Introduction

Tourism has been characterized by immense innovation throughout history, and as the tourism industry becomes increasingly competitive in today's globalized world, innovation plays an imperative role in staying ahead for not only companies and destinations, but also for all other stakeholders involved (Hall & Williams, 2008; Peters & Pikkemaat, 2006; Hjalager, 2002; Hjalager, 2010; Page, 2007). However, it is easier said than done, as one of the keys to innovation is cooperation which has proven rather difficult to achieve, especially in the tourism industry, which is dominated by small companies (Etzkowitz, 2008; Olsen & Hjalager, n.d.). The cooperation has to be not only between government institutions and firms in the tourism industry, but inclusion of universities is encouraged as well, this especially since the knowledge-producing institutions have become an important factor in innovation, and they have much to contribute to the tourism industry in terms of knowledge, which is important in new product development (Etzkowitz, 2008). This cooperation between these three stakeholders can be referred to as the Triple Helix interaction.

The Triple Helix model is something that has not been extensively scrutinized in the tourism research, however the need for it has been widely stressed, especially when talking about the universities' role in the innovation process (Hjalager, 2002; Hjalager, 2010; Svensson et al., 2005; Halkier, 2010, Olsen & Halkier n.d.). The model refers to the cooperation and interaction between universities, industry and the government, however, the literature and the practical implementations are mainly focused on the manufacturing and technology industry (Olsen & Halkier n.d.; Etzkowitz, 2008; Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997). This model suggests, that where mutual benefits exist in the intersection of the three stakeholders it may be possible to foster innovation (Page, 2009)

As universities act as research institutions they are, somewhat, key distributors of knowledge, meaning that they will spur new ideas and eventually income in the industry (Etzkowitz, 2008). This, however does not mean that the other two stakeholders are less important, or are not capable of generating their own ideas regarding to innovation, they are the actors that will potentially implement the new ideas.

Students and researchers in universities are a so called “*flow-through human capital*”, giving the universities an advantage over the other two actors in terms of research (Etzkowitz , 2008). Flow-through human capital refers to the students’ regular entry and graduation. This “*flow-through human capital*” is something that the other two stakeholders do not have, so they tend to ossify when it comes to generating new innovative ideas (Etzkowitz , 2008). This is an important notion concerning innovation in the tourism industry, and especially the role of the universities in the innovation process. The universities try not only cooperate and share knowledge with the other stakeholders themselves, but also try to get the students involved, so they could interact with the businesses and learn how things work in real life, in addition to their theoretical knowledge.

The cooperation between universities and other stakeholders usually occurs through different projects and workshops. This thesis investigated the role of innovation workshops in the Triple Helix interaction, as they could be a platform for knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is also an important factor in innovation, especially concerning smaller companies in the industry, as they often lack the resources for research themselves. In many cases, networking with other companies is not enough, as many do not possess the newest knowledge about the trends and developments in the industry. This is where universities come to play, as they are involved in researching the tourism industry, they have the new knowledge the companies need, thus cooperation is rendered a necessity. Interaction could be done, in addition to projects, through innovation workshops.

The workshops that this thesis will look at involve cooperation between different stakeholders. One example could be Solution Camp in Aalborg University, where students and companies are brought together to think of new ideas and concepts for the businesses involved. Also workshops involving only companies are taken into consideration when looking at the Triple Helix model in tourism industry in Northern Jutland.

This thesis aims to investigate innovation workshops in Aalborg University and how, and if, these workshops have any impact on the cooperation and innovation in the Triple Helix interaction. Another aspect that this thesis will study is the interaction between the universities and the private sector in Northern Jutland.

## 2. Problem Formulation

As mentioned earlier, this thesis aims to investigate the Triple Helix interaction in the region of Northern Jutland in Denmark. Additionally, as innovation has become increasingly important in the tourism industry, this thesis will also take a look at the role innovation workshops, such as Solution Camp, play in the tourism firms' innovation process and if they have any impact in the collaboration between the university, tourism firms and government institutions. The Triple Helix model is something that has not received much scrutiny in the tourism industry, even though it is as relevant as in any other industry. It is only very recently that the tourism researchers have realized the role and the importance of the Triple Helix in the tourism sector, and continuously stress the importance of further research. Additionally, as innovation plays an imperative role in the Triple Helix model, it is even more important to research the implications and benefits this interaction has, especially in the tourism industry.

Innovation workshops involving different actors in the Triple Helix model, can be a good platform for knowledge sharing and encourage collaboration. These two factors are important when talking about innovation, as both could potentially lead to innovation. Workshops could encourage the small firms to understand the benefits of collaboration and as the central theme in these workshops is knowledge sharing they could get new information from, for example, universities regarding the trends and developments in the tourism sector. This knowledge would then, in the long run, help them to be innovative in order to develop their own services and concepts, thusly making the businesses more sustainable. Taking the aforementioned into consideration, the central research question for this thesis has been framed as follows:

**How does the Triple Helix interaction affect innovation in the tourism industry and how does innovation workshops contribute to it? Taking Aalborg University and tourism actors in Northern Jutland as an example.**

Also as this is a rather complex issue to research, additional questions to assist answering the main question have been generated:

- What role do innovation workshops play in tourism firms' innovation processes?
- How do universities and private sector actors in the tourism industry interact?

### 3. Methodology

This section will elaborate on the paradigmatic and methodological aspects used in this thesis and will serve as a guideline to the research design, additionally explaining the point of departure taken in this research.

#### 3.1 Theory of Science

Theory of science section is meant for the researcher to explain how they see the world through the use of paradigms, how the specific paradigm will ultimately affect the research and the outcome of this thesis (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Taking into consideration the nature of this research, it is evident that this type of topic cannot be scrutinized by any other method than one that is of qualitative nature, because it investigates how stakeholders view and understand certain aspects in the Triple Helix model. Hence, it is wise to explore paradigms that are fit for a qualitative type of research.

Paradigms were first conceptualized by Kuhn (1962), who states that a paradigm is a collection of basic beliefs of how a research should be conducted, and how the results of this research should be interpreted (Guba, 1990; Kuhn, 1962; Bryman, 2012). Guba (1990) further claims that a paradigm is a “*basic set of beliefs that guides actions*”. Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (2005) describe paradigms as something that represents ones worldview “*that defines the nature of the ‘world’, individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts*”. Paradigm is not something that can be chosen, but is deeply embedded within us, thusly it shapes the research through the procedures used by the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Guba (1990) has categorized paradigms using the concepts of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Additionally, he has identified three different major paradigms: post-positivism, positivism and constructivism (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The paradigm shows the relationship the researcher has with the nature of knowledge through ontology and epistemology.

Ontology deals with the form and the nature of reality, asking the question “What is there that can be known?” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), meaning that it is concerned with whether “*social entities*

*can and should be considered objective entities that have reality external to social actors”* (Bryman, 2012).

Epistemology, on the other hand, asks the question “What is the relationship between the knower and the knowable, and what can be known?”. Meaning it is literally the theory of knowledge and decides how social phenomena will be studied in this thesis (Creswell, 2008; Holloway, 1997; Mason, 2002)

Taking into consideration the topic and the nature of this project, it is clear that it follows the constructivist paradigm, as defined by Guba (1990), because the knowledge in this thesis about the topic is created mainly through social interactions. It is important to state the paradigm this thesis follows, as the entire research is influenced by it and the related assumptions of the world, and will give the reader a guide how to interpret the findings.

Reality within the constructivist paradigm is socially constructed through innumerable social interactions, implying that social phenomena and categories are being constantly revised (Egholm, 2014; Bryman, 2012; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This, in turn means that there is no definite version of reality, but rather a version of it is presented (Bryman, 2012; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

The ontological approach within the constructivist paradigm is relativism, implying that realities are “*dependent for their form and content on the person who holds them*” (Guba, 1990), meaning that reality presented in this paper is not the ultimate truth, as they exist in multiple forms. Thusly, relativism, in this context, is a constant ongoing search for further sophisticated and informed constructions of reality (Guba, 1990). The previous indicates that it is impossible to find an ultimate truth to the topic discussed in this thesis, but rather shows the tendencies of it. This especially due to the notion that knowledge in this thesis is created through social interactions, more specifically interviews and a focus group, meaning if a different sampling would have been used for the data collection, the outcome would be different as a whole new range of realities would have been presented. One person’s reality of the topic of this thesis is not necessarily the next’s.

Within the constructivist paradigm, the epistemological approach is transactional and subjectivist, meaning that the findings are created during the interaction between the researcher and the

researched, fusing the two into a single entity (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Guba (1990) argues, that the only way to assess realities or constructs is through subjective interaction between researcher and the researched, this is due to the fact that relativism states that reality only exist in the minds of the individuals. The constructivist approach focuses on the individual and the interactions between the individual and their world (Guba, 1990). Because the researcher's actions affect the interaction with the researched, it indicates that the researcher holds partial responsibility for how the findings are created.

The methodological approach in the constructivist paradigm is hermeneutical, where the individual constructions are examined, compared and contrasted, with the aim of “*creating one or a few constructions on which there is substantial consensus*” (Guba, 1990). This means that the exchange of knowledge between different participants might eventually influence the outcome of the research. The central idea of hermeneutics is to reveal meanings of social phenomena, while simultaneously staying attentive to the social and historical context in which the phenomena takes place (Bryman, 2012).

### 3.2 Qualitative research

As this thesis follows the constructivist paradigm, there is a predisposition to use qualitative methods (Mir & Watson, 2000; Thompson & Walker, 1998; Schwandt, 1997). The key to understanding qualitative research is the notion that meaning is socially constructed by individuals through interaction with the world (Merriam, 2002). As this research is qualitative, it focuses on understanding people's attitudes, their motivations and behaviors (Desai, 2002), rather than answers that are measurable and thereby quantifiable, as the latter will not contribute to answering the problem formulation.

The goal of qualitative research is to understand a social phenomenon from multiple perspectives, while quantitative research focuses more on testing hypotheses or to determine if the predictive generalizations of a theory hold true (Jencik, 2011). As reality in qualitative research is socially constructed it is in line with the constructivist paradigm, and builds a complex and holistic picture of the phenomenon in hand, in this case the correlation between the Triple Helix, innovation workshops and innovation (Jencik, 2011). The research is value laden and the researchers does become part of the research, while trying to understand experiences and lives of the subjects or actors being researched (Jencik, 2011). While when using qualitative research, research is often



value free and the researcher does not interfere with the research, meaning research must be independent of the researcher, and this is something that does not fit into constructivist approach taken in this thesis (Jencik, 2011).

There is no unified definition of qualitative research method, but rather a multitude of understandings exist. Kvale (2007) has come up with a general definition by identifying similarities in the different definitions and states that it tries to understand, describe, and sometimes even explain social phenomena inside and out by analyzing discourses, thoughts, interactions, pictures etc., of certain groups of individuals. This definition is also fit to this thesis as it looks to investigate the opinions and perspectives of the stakeholders of the Triple Helix and their roles in, and opinions about, innovation in the tourism industry. Additionally, this thesis does not aim to develop new models or theories, but to contribute to tourism research in the form of new knowledge, especially since the Triple Helix, as a theory, has not been researched extensively in the field of tourism.

Qualitative research is often criticized for being too subjective, however, it is dependent of the researcher what is relevant and useful for a specific research (Bryman, 2012). As it has been mentioned earlier, any research is influenced by the writer, meaning that the outcome could be different if it was someone else conducting the research.

### 3.3 Data Collection

As mentioned earlier, this paper is of qualitative nature, this is due to the fact that this paper aims to research the opinions and assessments of the parties involved, thus collecting data through qualitative methods, rather than analyze the data collected in quantifiable values.

There are two different types of data collection methods – primary and secondary. Arbner and Bjerke (2009) define primary data as collecting new data through interviews, questionnaires, and direct observations, in other words, methods that require interaction by the researchers, either passively or actively.

This research thesis includes two different primary data collection methods, namely interviews and a focus group. It is rather usual to use multiple methods in qualitative research, as it augments trustworthiness (Veal, 2006), which is what this thesis aims to achieve. Each individual method has their own purpose and objective, however, together they contribute to answering the research

question. The data for this thesis is collected from all three stakeholders of the Triple Helix – university, industry and government institutions.

Secondary data, in accordance with Arbnor & Bjerke's (2009) definition, includes material that is previously collected by other researchers, this includes reports, studies, articles, and other relevant literature and helps to “*interpret primary data with more insight*” and is “*an essential component of a successful research design*” (Malhotra & Birks, 2005). However, a few considerations need to be taken into account when using secondary data, to be exact the issue of trustworthiness and compatibility (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009).

Regarding the issue of compatibility, it must be kept in mind, that the secondary data could have been created for another purpose and from other perspectives, thus it is likely that it might not be compatible with this research (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009). However, this issue could be avoided, to some extent, by carefully analyzing and choosing the relevant data for this thesis. Careful analysis is also imperative when it comes to the issue of trustworthiness of the secondary data used, as it might not be accurate or there is uncertainty about its correctness (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009; Malhotra & Birks, 2005). Due to this it is important not just to analyze it carefully, but also use critical consideration if and how the data is relevant, trustworthy and compatible.

In order to obtain sufficient overview of the topics discussed in this thesis, both primary and secondary data collected is thoroughly analyzed in order to gather the most relevant data for this paper.

### 3.3.1 Interviews

Interviews are one of the two major means of primary data collection, the other being, in this thesis, a focus group, and it is considered as the ‘gold standard’ in qualitative research, giving access to a great amount of data (Barbour, 2008; Hughes & Sharrock, 2007; Bryman, 2012; Kvale, 2007). Interviews, simply put, are a social encounter between the interviewer and the interviewee, and the data collection occurs through this social encounter (Barbour, 2008; Hughes & Sharrock, 2007).

The function of the interview is to gather certain information from the interviewees, whether it is about their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or relationships, so it is important to allow the interviewee room to express themselves in their own fashion (Richardson, et al., 1965; Smith, 1975; Hughes & Sharrock, 2007, Bryman, 2012). Because interview is an exchange between two people with a

common area of interest, it can result in the interviewer becoming aware of topics, which they have not thought of before conducting the interview.

However, interviews are not just about asking questions, emphasis is also on active listening (Barbour, 2008). As qualitative interviews seek to cover both factual and meaning level, latter being more difficult to do, it is important to listen not just descriptions and what is being said, but also what is said ‘between the lines’ (Kvale, 2007)

Qualitative interviews, in contrast to quantitative, seeks knowledge that is expressed in normal language, it works with words rather than numbers (Kvale, 2007). The focus is put on “*nuanced descriptions that depict the qualitative diversity, the many differences and varieties of a phenomenon*” and on not fixed categorizations (Kvale, 2007).

Qualitative interviews can be further categorized into structured and semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2012). In this thesis, however, semi-structured interviews were conducted, meaning that even though there was an interview guide that was prepared before the interviews, the questions asked during it do not necessarily follow on exactly in the way as outlined on the schedule (Bryman, 2012).

One of the reasons behind choosing semi-structured interviews was the flexibility. As it occurred on more than one occasion, observations were being made during the interviews by the interviewees that had not been considered beforehand by the researcher. In order to get the most out of the data collection, the semi-structured interviews gave a chance to follow up on these observations, in contrast to structured interviews where this would not be possible.

It must be mentioned that two of the interviews were conducted via email and thusly using structured interviews. This was done in order to accommodate the interviewees’ needs, as one of the interviewees did not feel comfortable speaking in English and thus asked the questions to be sent to him by email, and the second interviewee did not have the opportunity to meet face-to-face.

The reasoning for choosing interviews as a data collection method is simple, because this thesis focuses on researching different stakeholders’ opinions and attitudes towards the Triple Helix and innovation workshops, this method is ideal for attaining this kind of information. As mentioned earlier, not only does this method allow to gather information on factual level, but it also covers

the meanings level of what is being said during the interviews, giving access to more data than other types of methods would.

The questions of the interview depended on who was being interviewed, as different interviewees have different insights to the topics discussed. Even though questions depended on the interviewee, there are some questions that could be the same in two or more interviews. However, the topics discussed remained the same throughout every single interview, namely Triple Helix, innovation and knowledge. These topics were discussed because they were all linked in one way or another, meaning they are all intertwined and one cannot be discussed without mentioning the other two, whether it is directly or indirectly. Additionally, these topics are connected to the problem formulation and would ultimately help to answer the research questions.

The interviews conducted via email, consisted of 20 open-ended questions, giving the interviewees a chance to elaborate on their answers, thus giving more information about the topics researched in this thesis. Both of the interview questions were divided into three different themes that are in accordance with the theory and the research topic, namely innovation, collaboration with different stakeholders in Triple Helix interaction and innovation workshops. As these interviews were structured, it did not give an opportunity to change the questions depending on the answers they gave, as was done with the face-to-face interview, meaning that it was not possible to get as much information out of the interviews. However, doing the interviews via email gave the interviewees the chance to answer the questions on a time that was convenient to them and let them have extra time to think the answers through, what would not happen if they were done face-to-face. However, the interviewees only gave brief answers, even when it was asked to give as detailed answers as possible, even though this was the case, the answers still gave enough information to be useable for this thesis.

The aim was to interview all stakeholders in the Triple Helix interaction in Northern Jutland – Aalborg University, government institutions, such as DMOs<sup>1</sup>, and companies. This meant that the people being interviewed had to be carefully picked in order to have the right interviewees, who are in one way or another, connected to the topics discussed, in most cases through their profession(s). The interviewees included Henrik Halkier, the Dean of Faculty of Humanities in

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<sup>1</sup> Destination management organization

Aalborg University, Jesper Thinnesen, who is involved in Solution Camp, WOFIE and Creative Setup, and Camilla Knapp Pihl, Turismefremmedarbejder in VisitMariagerfjord. The two interviews conducted via email included Mette Green Clausen, sales and marketing manager in Skallerup Seaside Resort and Bo Samson from Blokhus Salt.

Interviewing these people would give insight to different aspects and views of the topics discussed. For example, Mr. Halkier would give insight from the universities perspective while Mr. Thinnesen would talk from the point of view of the workshop facilitator, *et cetera*.

Henrik Halkier was chosen to be interviewed due to the fact that he has written articles about Triple Helix and has also given speeches about it in the past, making him rather knowledgeable on the topic. He is also been involved in researches on a number of different issues in tourism industry, and thusly has some practical experience on collaboration in tourism industry in Northern Jutland. The questions that were asked from him were mostly related to the Triple Helix model for aforementioned reasons, as he could give a well-informed information from a tourism researcher's point of view.

Jesper Thinnesen is a facilitator of both Solution Camp and WOFIE, meaning he works together with both Aalborg University and different businesses. Additionally he owns his own company, that works with different firms in order to teach them creativity and innovation, by giving them appropriate tools and conducts workshops among the employees using those tools. As he works together with both students and companies, he has the insight about how the different stakeholders see innovation and how they see the innovation workshops. As he is personally very interested in creativity and innovation he also has much information about this topic in general.

The two companies Blokhus Salt and Skallerup Resort were chosen as they have been part of the innovation workshop Solution Camp, and could give their view on if and how beneficial these events are to companies involved, additionally they would give insight from the point of view of tourism firms on the Triple Helix model, innovation and knowledge sharing.

Camilla Knapp Pihl is working for VisitMariagerfjord, developing a destination that is rather far away from the university, thusly not really collaborating with them, they also have not been part of the workshops such as Solution Camp. She also works for VisitØsterHurup, and is a former employee of VisitAalborg and VisitHals. She was chosen to see the perspective of a destination

and companies that do not work together that well and how they are trying to change it, especially as this organization is rather new. As the region is dominated by small businesses, she could give an insight to how they operate and think, when it comes to collaboration and innovation, especially since other actors interviewed were more prone to be pro-collaboration, it was interesting to see the other side of the tourism firms.

All of the interviews conducted face-to-face were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcriptions of the interviews, audio files and the interviews done via email, can be found in the appendix. It should be added that both VisitAalborg and VisitNordjylland were contacted for an interview, as they both collaborate with Aalborg University and a number of tourism businesses in the region and would have given information about the situation in Northern Jutland region regarding the Triple Helix interaction, and if and how it works in practice. Unfortunately, after repeatedly trying to contact them both via email and phone, they regrettably were unwilling to conduct an interview, both due to lack of time and/or unwillingness to reply and collaborate.

### 3.3.2 Focus group

Another data collection method used in this thesis is a focus group, which is a small structured group of selected participants and is led by a moderator (Litosseliti, 2003). Similarly to interviews, the focus group is a social interaction between the participants and the moderator. Focus groups are used in order to “*explore specific topics, and individuals’ views and experiences, through group interaction*” (Litosseliti, 2003). Just as with the interviews, the participants respond to questions and comments, and should be allowed to do it in their own fashion without feeling any judgement (Litosseliti, 2003; Richardson, et al., 1965; Smith, 1975; Hughes & Sharrock, 2007, Bryman, 2012).

Greenbaum (1998) identifies three types of focus groups: full groups, mini groups and telephone groups. Typical focus groups consist of six to ten people, however, some researchers use as few as four to as many as twelve people (Kitzinger, 1995; Gross & Leinbach 1996 cited in Litosseliti, 2003). The focus group conducted for this thesis used four people, meaning it was a mini group. The advantage of using fewer people is that it gives people more opportunities to talk and they are easier to set up and manage, as they can take place in less formal settings. Smaller focus groups are used to explore complicated topics or to encourage detailed accounts, while larger groups could be difficult to manage, moderate and analyze (Litosseliti, 2003).

The moderator is an important part of the focus group, as they are in charge of introducing the topics that are being discussed and is in charge of facilitating (Kvale, 2007). The role of the moderator is to keep the group's focus on the topic discussed and guide it with thought out open ended questions, and doing so with minimal intervention (Litosseliti, 2003), as the aim is to let the participants express their thoughts, meaning the moderator will only interrupt when it is necessary. Another role of the moderator is to create an atmosphere where the participants can feel free to express their points of view on the topics (Kvale, 2007).

While the interviewees cannot feel pressured, it is at the same time important that all of the participants of the focus groups are active in order to gather as much information as possible. In addition to using verbal cues, the moderator can also use nonverbal means of communication, such as hand gestures or eye contact, in order to encourage people to talk (Greenbaum, 1998).

The participants used for the focus group were selected using specific criteria, namely they had to have a tourism background and taken part of innovation workshops, as they would be most capable of providing high-quality discussion about the topic being researched. The participants of the focus group had all studied tourism at one point during their academic career and/or worked in the industry, and had taken part of either Solution Camp or WOFIE, which are innovation workshops facilitated by Aalborg University. Using tourism students in the focus group would give insight about the university students' perspective and help to understand what their feelings towards the topic researched are as innovation workshop participants, this all in addition to the interviews conducted with other stakeholders in the Triple Helix. As they were all student and have worked in the industry, they see both the university perspective and the private sector perspective, additionally providing information on how students feel about collaboration and their engagement in innovation workshops. They also had valuable insight to issues that other interviewees and the researcher did not consider, and thus contributed greatly to this research.

### 3.4 Thematically driven qualitative content analysis

This chapter will discuss the methods used to conduct the data analysis in this thesis. As the data collected is qualitative by nature, it is also appropriate to use qualitative data analysis.

The analysis will be conducted using thematically driven qualitative content analysis. This method is used in order to help conduct an in-depth analysis and make sure nothing is overlooked in the

data collected. As the data collected covers many aspects from different viewpoints and the topic of the thesis is somewhat complex, using this type of analytical method will help to organize and conduct the analysis in a more sufficient way. Even though it includes thematic division the main focus in the analysis will be on the content of the interviews and the focus group.

In order to take full advantage of the data collected, the content of the interviews and the focus group is analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Differently from quantitative content analysis, qualitative content analysis focuses on the content of the information, rather than the structure or numbers. Using content analysis will not only help to interpret the data on a factual level, but also on latent meanings level, *“not in terms of the objective meaning or probable and improbable interpretations, but the latent meaning which you can communicate intersubjectively, taking hermeneutics into consideration”* (Kuckartz, 2014). This will help to analyze the transcripts of the interviews and the focus group more in depth, including what is being said ‘in between the lines’.

Content analysis started out as a qualitative method, however using it as it was originally meant is limited to manifest content and could overlook important latent meanings, this in turn makes it superficial, as much of the information will be overlooked (Kracauer, 1952; Kuckartz, 2014). However, Kracauer (1952), and many scholars after him, argue that this method should be regarded as qualitative, and this is based on three reasons:

- *“Meaning is often complex, holistic and context-dependent.*
- *Meaning is not always manifest and clear at first sight. Sometimes it is necessary to read a text in more detail to determine what exactly it means.*
- *Some aspects of meaning may appear only once in a text. This does not necessarily imply that such aspects are less important than aspects that are mentioned more frequently.”*  
(Kracauer, 1952)

This point of view is in coherence with the constructivist approach this thesis follows. It is not until recently that qualitative content analysis was accepted as a data analysis method, centered on the same essential base as Kracauer proposed, however, some scholars refer to this method as thematic coding (Schreier, 2012).

The thematic aspect of the analysis will help to uncover the themes that emerge during primary data collection. Using this will help to organize, describe and interpret data in relation to the topics



discussed in this thesis (Boyatzis, 1998). Not only will this step include primary data, but it will also include the original themes from the academic literature in the analysis. This thematic aspect will be used to divide the content of the primary data into different themes and ultimately contribute to answering the research questions.

## 4. Theory

This chapter elaborates on the theories used in this thesis, and acts as a theoretical base for the analysis later on, ultimately assisting in answering the research question. The following theories presented act as tools enabling discussion and analysis of the data collected later on. The following chapter is divided into three sections, namely Triple Helix, innovation and knowledge. The theories presented are all interlinked, meaning that one cannot discuss one theory without mentioning the other two.

### 4.1 Triple Helix

The Triple Helix model suggests that where mutual benefits exist in the intersection of three stakeholders (government, industry and universities) it may be possible to foster innovation (Page, 2009). Since the introduction of the concept of knowledge-based society, the Triple Helix model has been developed in order to study the knowledge infrastructure within the networks of regional innovation systems (Etzkowitz, et al., 2002, Leydesdorff, et al., 2006, cited in Kim, et al., 2012).

According to Etzkowitz (2002, cited in Setyagung, et al., 2013) the Triple Helix refers to the relationship between the three stakeholders at different positions in the knowledge capitalization process. The model is based on the regional innovation environment concept and in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century it became a key component in many national and multinational innovation strategies (Setyagung, et al., 2013). Innovation is no longer limited to industry, as knowledge-producing institutions have an increasing importance in innovation, since knowledge itself has become an important factor in new product development. The expansion of the concept of innovation makes not only universities but also governments major actors in the innovation process (Etzkowitz, 2008).

Etzkowitz (2008) adds that the interaction between stakeholders involved is imperative to innovation in knowledge-based societies. The Triple Helix model has two levels, one being the interaction between the stakeholders, and other being the role exchange (Figure 2). In the Triple Helix interaction, the stakeholders take each other's roles, at the same time maintaining their primary roles and identities (Etzkowitz, 2008). Etzkowitz (2008) describes the roles of stakeholders, where university is the “*generative principle of knowledge-based societies*”, industry is the “*locus of production*”, and government “*the source of contractual relations that guarantee*

*stable interactions and exchange*”. As for the role exchange, an example could be that universities and governments “*act as entrepreneurs*” indicating that it is not limited to companies (Etzkowitz , 2008).

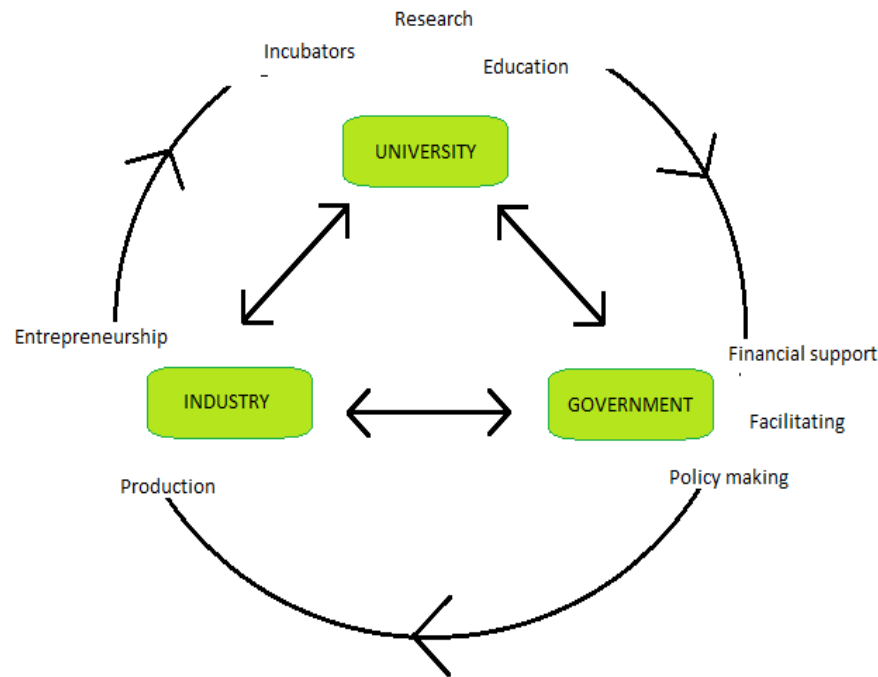


Figure 1 Triple Helix interaction

The triple Helix model comprises of three different elements: (1) it involves a more predominant role of the universities in the innovation processes together with, in the context of this thesis, the tourism industry and the government institutions; (2) there is movement toward more collaborative relationships between the university, industry and government, where innovation is an outcome of interaction between said stakeholders, rather than a suggestion from government; (3) and as mentioned previously, taking on each other’s roles, in a sense that they operate both horizontally in their own function and vertically in their new role (Etzkowitz , 2008; Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997; Olsen & Halkier, n.d.; Etzkowitz & Klofsten, 2005). It should be mentioned that this research focuses mostly on the first level of Triple Helix collaboration, and does not look that much into the second level of role exchange. This is due to the problem formulation that does not

require the investigation of the Triple Helix in depth, as it mostly focuses on the collaboration aspects of the model.

One of the competitive advantages of universities is its students as they bring new ideas as they have a “*flow-through of human capital*”, contrariwise to R&D units of companies and government laboratories that have a tendency to ossify (Etzkowitz , 2008). The universities also play a key role as they transfer technology, incubate new firms and take part in regional renewal efforts, these activities are based on expectations that they will spur new ideas and eventually income (Etzkowitz , 2008).

The modern university combines research and teaching and emerged in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It went from being largely an institution of higher education to assuming more social functions in both research and teaching, meaning that the “*differentiation of functions can be understood in terms of changes in the knowledge infrastructure*”, offering a specific setting for these functions, including scholarly learning, theorizing and experimental practices (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997). This all can be seen in most of modern universities, as it is not only about teaching and research anymore, but much emphasis is put on whether the teachings are useful to the society.

From the mid-twentieth century the universities have moved from the original ‘two-role model’ – teaching and research- to a ‘three-role model’, where the third role represents the universities’ focus on its direct relation to society (Sutz, 1997; Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997). This means that the universities have become a producer of goods and services instead of using intermediate agents to reach their end-users, now they market their capabilities, compete with both university and non-university agents to sell their intellectual production etc. The rules of the game have changed for the universities, where the rules that „*applied outside of academia are now a standard in university faculties too*“ (Sutz, 1997), making them carry out functions that are characteristic to enterprises. The third role has created a deep revolution with in the universities, in addition to transforming university-industry-government relations (Sutz, 1997).

Etzkowitz (2008) talks about entrepreneurial (modern) universities, where the heart of a mission is the capitalization of knowledge. This links universities to knowledge users and inaugurates the university as an economic actor. There are four pillars upon which entrepreneurial university rests on:

1. *“academic leadership able to formulate and implement a strategic vision;*
2. *legal control over academic resources, including physical property such as university buildings and intellectual property emanating from research;*
3. *organizational capacity to transfer technology through patenting, licensing, and incubation; and*
4. *an entrepreneurial ethos among administrators, faculty, and students.”* (Etzkowitz , 2008)

The university acts as an incubator, helping teachers and students to initiate new ventures through providing a support structure. *“Time and space, physical and social, is available to provide the groundwork for ‘new ventures’, whether political, intellectual, or commercial, that are exportable across highly permeable boundaries.”* (Etzkowitz , 2008)

Sigala and Baum (2003) stress that universities need to take challenges of knowledge economy seriously in order to equip the future workforce, they are creating with skills that will allow them to be flexible, creative and adaptable. This especially in the tourism industry, which is dominated by small operating units and subscribes to a culture that provides limited time for reflection, study or formal learning. While many educational institutions continue to focus on traditional technical skills, it has become clear that collaborative, communicative, information literacy and knowledge management skills are increasingly more important (Sigala & Baum, 2003). These skills will be beneficial for the future workforce and researchers to have to better the collaboration between the different stakeholders in the Triple Helix model, as they will help to communicate new knowledge to other stakeholders and help to realize the importance of collaboration and successful communication. Having these skills will ultimately help to foster innovation and be economically beneficial.

Firm-formation is of an increasing importance to innovation strategy. The typical innovation decision making process compares the relationship between profits from present technologies and the startup phase of products based on new technology (Etzkowitz , 2008). As industrial firms do not play as substantial role today as they used to, especially in the tourism industry, knowledge-based firms are emerging as an engine of economic growth (Etzkowitz , 2008). As knowledge based firms might not be as evident in the tourism sector, they do often emerge from academic research, which many tourism companies should consider. Firm strategy, its organizational

structure and rivalry with competitors can be affected by university research, as they can spawn new entrants to the tourism industry, or develop new substitute products or services.

The competitive advantage of any industry is a foremost concern of most governments, both regional and national. It is believed that the university-industry relation can help to tackle many issues by enhancing competitiveness in the industry and creating new specialized firms (Gulbrandsen, 1997). Governments have a strong interest in the tourism industry as it could have damaging effects to the environment when left uncontrolled, tourism also has major economic and social implications in terms of job creation and tax income (Page, 2009). Additionally, government involvement is about conflict resolution, while at the same time balancing tourism promotion, and guarding public interest on both local and national level (Page, 2009). Page (2009) further explains that, as there is a growing consensus that private sector tourism actors need to collaborate with the public sector in order to manage planning, control and development, governments need to take on a role of the facilitator, especially when adding universities in to the mix.

It is clear that the model was not developed for tourism and other service industries, as it does not take into consideration the specificities of said industries. However, the ‘three-role model’ of universities that form the basis of the model’s cooperation are also relevant when talking about tourism (Olsen & Halkier, n.d.). As mentioned before, there is a need for research on the role of universities in innovation in tourism industry, involving the need to raise the level of education in the industry and how the university’s research and development (R&D) could support innovation (Olsen & Halkier, n.d.; Hjalager, 2010). Olsen and Halkier (n.d.) claim that it is expected that, public institutions play a significant role in facilitating this connection, however, they say that R&D results must be of practical nature to the tourism SMEs if those results are expected to be applied in the industry. These results may include development of new products and services, ICT systems, marketing etc.

As innovation in tourism firms is mostly based on the practical experiences of firms, it calls for the “*potential usefulness of wider perspectives*” embodied by universities in the industry development, but also complicates the knowledge exchange between universities and tourism firms, creating a paradoxical situation (Olsen & Halkier, n.d.).

## 4.2 Innovation

Tourism has been characterized by immense innovation throughout history (Hjalager, 2010), and as the tourism industry becomes more competitive in today's globalized world, innovation plays an imperative role in staying ahead for not only companies and destinations, but also for all other stakeholders involved.

Schumpeter (1934), who is considered to be a pioneer of the innovation theory, described the concept of creative destruction upon which some of the innovation theories are based on. Creative destruction is a concept that deals with constant development of new products and subsequent replacement of the old ones. As this definition is more applicable to manufacturing, a more sufficient definition of innovation in the knowledge-based society would be by Kalthoff et al. (1999, cited in Hurley & Hult, 1998), who state that innovation is an *“activity which tends to create and apply new knowledge”*. Furthermore, Amabile (1996, cited in Hurley & Hult, 1998) agrees by stating that *“innovation stands for successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization”*. Another author that further confirms the previous definitions is Hjalager (2002) by claiming that *“innovations are either further developments of inventions or general ideas for making them into useful products*. Taking the previous definition in to consideration, it can be concluded that knowledge (management) and creativity play an important role in innovation and should not be overlooked when talking about innovation in knowledge-based society.

It is only recently that it was recognized that the service sector could act as a site of innovation, in the past it was mainly dominated by manufacturing, as it was believed this field was the main driver of economic change (Hall & Williams, 2008). The 1980s technology boom and the emerging service economy *“changed the notion of innovation to include immaterial products, with the result that service industries were also gradually recognized for their measurable innovative potential”* (Miles, 2003; OECD & Eurostat, 2005 cited in Hjalager, 2010) The increased attention to innovation in the tourism industry is welcomed as innovation research *“represents a meaningful and valuable way of understanding the economic dynamics of the sector, and deeper insights will be helpful for the industry and policy makers”* (Hjalager, 2010)

Poon (1993, cited in Hall & Williams, 2008) has noted that the tourism industry is in a crisis of change and uncertainty, as it is going through rapid and radical change facing many different challenges, such as new technology, more experienced consumers, environmental limits etc. Hall

and Williams (2008) further elaborate by claiming that tourism has always been subject to changes and the most frequently repeated observations in this industry “*concern the rate of growth of activities, tourist flows, employment and economic impacts over recent decades*” and it has, in recent years, been “*revolutionized by new technology, new markets, and new organizational forms*”.

Because of the constant change in tourism industry it is important to see innovation as systemic, or “*as integral to the tourism system as a whole*” (Hall & Williams, 2008). Innovation is not exclusive to elite places and individuals, rather it infiltrates all corners of tourism systems (Hall & Williams, 2008).

The challenge of tourism innovation is the characteristics of the industry, it is dominated by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), low education levels and high staff turnover due to seasonality. Additionally, it is rather easy to copy competitors’ innovations and as a result the trust levels between small tourism firms are low, thusly the collaboration between them needs to be facilitated by intermediate organizations, e.g. tourist boards (Olsen & Halkier, n.d; Hall & Williams, 2008; Hjalager, 2010; Cooper, 2006; Svensson et al, 2005). The public-sector initiatives in tourism often involve networks to improve collaboration and knowledge sharing among small firms to strengthen innovation in the region (Olsen & Halkier, n.d.; Hjalager, 2010). This means, that knowledge sharing and collaboration are an imperative part of innovation, and without it innovation cannot flourish, and thusly the enterprises as well as the region, will cease to be competitive on a larger scale.

#### 4.2.1 Typology of tourism innovation

Over time there has been created numerous criteria by which to classify innovation, and these classification have been created in order to fit the ever changing nature of tourism industry. The following section is only an illustration of some classifications that are used in tourism innovation research to give an overview and to demonstrate that many of these criteria share similar traits. It is important to understand that innovation cannot be categorized as just one certain thing, but it could be anything, either a product, a service, an idea or change in how an organization operates, *et cetera*. Innovation can be anything no matter how big or small, it depends if people see it as innovative.



### Shumpeter's 5 types of innovation

As the founding father of innovation theory, Schumpeter (1934) has identified five areas of innovation in which one can introduce innovation: (1) generation of new or improved products, (2) introduction of new production processes, (3) development of new sales markets, (4) development of new supply markets, and (5) reorganization and/or restructuring of the company (Peters & Pikkemaat, 2006). The innovative idea has to be bonded with a product or service for tourism industry uses (Ali & Frew, 2014). *“This categorization clearly distinguishes innovation from minor changes in the makeup and/or delivery of products in forms of extension of product lines, adding service components or product differentiation”* (Peters & Pikkemaat, 2006)

### Radical vs incremental innovation

Another classification of innovation refers to the degree of novelty. According to this there are two types of innovation, namely radical and incremental innovation. Scholars have long distinguished between radical and incremental innovation (Leifer, et al., 2000). Incremental innovation refers to improving or adding to existing products and services while radical innovation is concerned with creating fundamentally new products or services (Nagy, 2013).

Innovation in general is a strategic direction that is very risky, and the outcome is uncertain as with any new venture (Johnson, et al., 2011). As radical innovation is more risky of the two, many organizations have opted for incremental innovation as it does not involve as substantial changes and is more cost-efficient (Johnson, et al., 2011; Casali, et al., 2012)

However, as with any type of innovation, this concept is also relative and depends on what a company or an individual sees as either radical or incremental innovation. For some companies a radical innovation could be adding WIFI to a hotel, while an individual visiting the said hotel does not see it as something novel.

### Typology by Hjalager

Hjalager (2002) has divided innovation into five different categories, where innovations take place either in one or in a combination of these categories. This typology is inspired by the early works of Schumpeter, but has been adjusted to *“reflect the modern reality of a service sector”* (Hjalager, 2002). The categories include product, process, management, logistics, and institutional innovations.

The first category, product innovation, refers to changed or entirely new products or services that are developed to the stage of commercialization. The novelty of these products and services should be clearly evident to either producers, consumers, suppliers or competitors. (Hjalager, 2002)

Process innovation is concerned with raising the performance of existing operations, through new and improved technology or by redesigning the production line (Hjalager, 2002). In other words, it refers to backstage activities that aim to enhance an organizations efficiency and productivity (Nagy, 2013). Process innovation can result in subsequent product innovations (Hjalager, 2002).

The third category by Hjalager (2002) is management innovations, where new job profiles, collaborative structures, authority systems, etc. are created, often simultaneously when new products, services and production techniques are introduced. Management innovations can result in *“staff empowerment through job enrichment, decentralization, training, etc., or in deskilling enforced by the (re)introduction of scientific management methods”* (Hjalager, 2002).

Logistics innovations, the fourth category, deals with recomposition of external commercial relationships, potentially affecting the organization’s position in the value chain. Flows handled could be anything from materials to information and customers (Hjalager, 2002).

The last category, institutional innovations represent collaborative and regulatory structures in communities, meaning it goes beyond the individual enterprise. This type of innovations transect public and private sectors, setting out new rules of the game (Hjalager, 2002).

Abernathy and Clark approach

Hjalager (2002) has also adapted the Abernathy and Clark (1985, cited in Hjalager, 2002) model to tourism industry. This model was originally developed in order to explain the establishment and development of automobile industry, however Hjalager has theorized this model for tourism innovation and her work has been well cited in the literature (Peters & Pikkemaat, 2006; Ali & Frew, 2014). Despite the theoretical influence, not much research has been done in order to develop the model into further frameworks for tourism (Budeanu, 2012 cited in Ali & Frew, 2014).

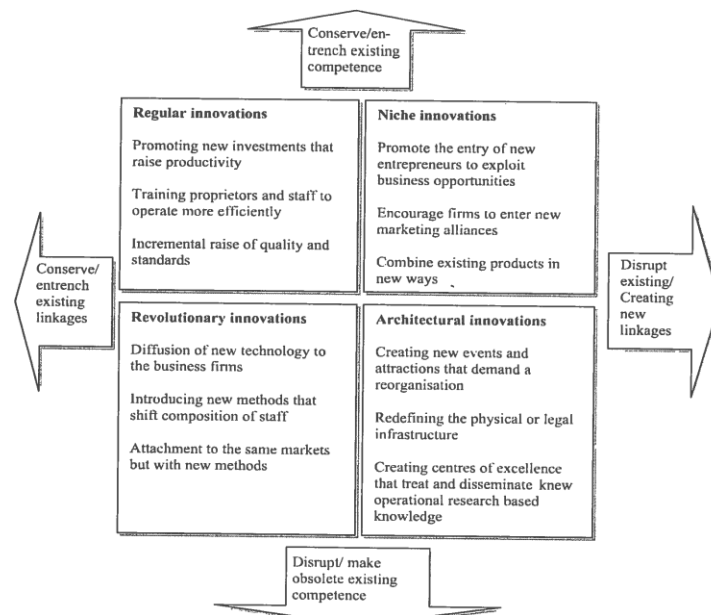


Figure 2 Abernathy and Clark model - A tourism perspective (Hjalager, 2002)

Abernathy and Clark (1985) developed a model in order to analyze the competitive implications of innovation based on the concept of transilience. Transilience, which is a concept also developed by Abernathy and Clark, is defined as “an innovation’s capacity to destroy established organizational competences – to make existing production plant obsolete, or the present skills of workers redundant, or established links with customers irrelevant” (Fairtlough, 2000). The Abernathy and Clark model divided innovation into two dimensions, namely market knowledge and technological capabilities of the organization (Ali & Frew, 2014). The horizontal axis of the model indicates whether “specific innovations make existing business linkages obsolete or they lead to an entrenchment of existing linkages between enterprises” (Hjalager, 2002) while the vertical axis “identifies the knowledge and competences needed for producing the product or service” (Ali & Frew, 2014).

Permutation of technological capabilities and market knowledge can help to achieve regular, niche, revolutionary and architectural innovation (Ali & Frew, 2014). Each type of innovation has different consequences in terms of knowledge and collaborative structures. The most wide-ranging are the architectural innovations, as they imply changes not only in the industry but also in the society they are implemented in, they tend to establish new rules that remodel the concept of tourism. One of the simplest examples of this could be ice hotels and bars, where new designers, builders, equipment, marketers etc., are needed (Hjalager, 2002).

The opposite of architectural innovations is the regular innovations, they tend to be rather incremental in nature, nevertheless, their impact can become quite considerable over a period of time. An example of regular innovation could be approaching new markets with same methods and products, for example a destination that is mostly family oriented could reach out to other target groups (Hjalager, 2002).

Revolutionary innovations have a radical effect on competences, while keeping external structures unchanged. A whole sector could be influenced by an aggregate shift in required skills and competences over a long period of time. An example of revolutionary innovations could be diffusion of new technology in an organization, changing or stopping the employees doing things they are used to (Hjalager, 2002).

The last type of innovation is niche innovations that tend to change the collaborative structures, however the basic competences and knowledge remains the same. In regards to tourism innovation, the main focus in this category is on opportunities. For example, establishing new marketing alliances, e.g. with tour operators in order to access new target groups (Hjalager, 2002).

#### 4.2.2 Drivers of tourism innovation

It is no longer adequate to view innovation in connection to isolated individual inventors and entrepreneurs, instead it has to be understood in broader economic, cultural and political terms. The innovation drivers may vary over time and space, and between different activities in tourism. There are also significant differences within the same sub-sectors, depending on the role the key individuals play, meaning that the landscape of tourism innovation and the drivers is incredibly complex (Hall & Williams, 2008).

Hall and Williams (2008) have identified seven different drivers for tourism innovation, these include competition, economic performance, demand-led innovation, technology, firm-level strategy and resources, individual entrepreneurship, and role of the state.

#### Competition

In general, competition serves as the main driver for innovation, which is also the case in tourism. There are many reasons for this: substitutions for different destinations and holiday activities; and reduction of travel barriers (e.g. cost) and increasing inward investments, which have had an immense effect on competition, as transnational companies compete against each other (OECD, 2003; Hall & Williams, 2008). In some areas competition can be possibly ruinous, for example for airlines where, for some, competition can lead to bankruptcy, especially if they are not capable or willing to compete with other airlines on same routes (Hall & Williams, 2008). In these environments, where competition is intensified, innovation is essential for survival, making organizations to seek out solutions that are not easy to copy by their rivals, meaning it is more of a process rather than product innovation that they are looking for (Rubin & Joy, 2005, Graham & Vowles, 2006, cited in Hall & Williams, 2008) .

#### Economic performance

It has been mentioned on multiple occasions, that innovation is one of the drivers of performance, especially in terms of productivity (e.g. automatic check-ins, budget airlines). Strongly performing organizations, in terms of profit, growth rates and turnover, are more likely to have significant resources required for major innovations (Hall & Williams, 2008). The more resources the organization has the more opportunities for innovation. In tourism there is more scope for incremental innovation, and less for investments in technology, meaning that “*past performance may be less of a guide to innovation in many sub-sections*” (Hall & Williams, 2008). Additionally, the relationship between economic performance and innovation tend to be cumulative: “*Asymmetries across firms in labor productivity and innovation performance not only tend to persist over time, but reinforce each other. Such cumulative mechanism underlies the ability of firms to exploit the opportunities offered by ICTs*” (Cainelli et al. 2005 cited in Hall & Williams, 2008)

#### Demand-led innovation

The literature on innovation has long recognized that innovation might be demand pulled, this is based on that “*cycles of output tend to lead cycles of patenting in the capital goods sector*” (Hall & Williams, 2008). The same applies to the service sector, however, it has not been researched extensively (Cainelli et al. 2005 cited in Hall & Williams, 2008). There are a number of factors that have shaped the growth of tourism demand, such as incomes, changes in working hours, age structure of population (Shaw & Willimas, 2002 cited in Hall & Williams, 2008). Immense increases in the number of tourists or demand distribution necessitate innovation, possibly in the form of replication, as more flights, package holidays *et cetera* are created based on the existing methods, or contribute to a more revolutionary innovation, such as a generation of larger aircraft. Another factor which could stimulate innovation is the changes in the type of demands, e.g. flexibility within the holidays contributed in self-catering holidays. Innovation may also stimulate demand, for example budget airlines have increased traffic between many countries (Hall & Williams, 2008).

#### Technology

This is still an important driver and is considered as one of the classic external drivers of innovation, even though the tourism sector relies more on bought-in technology rather than the one that is developed in-house. For example, internet has created opportunities for tourism businesses to advertise and sell their products and services online, and has created a need for new skills, organization and services. Additionally, technological innovations have given tourism industry new transport technologies, accounting systems etc. (Hall & Williams, 2008).

#### Firm-level strategy and resources

The degree of proactive innovation seeking and the type of the innovation is determined by the strategic aim of the firm, depending on whether it is defensive, expansive, revenue maximizing or quality focused. Resources also play a role here although it is not a driver of innovation by itself. Another factor that contributes to the innovation in the origination of innovation within a firm significantly are the organizational features, there is a classical division of organizational form, namely hierarchical and dispersed. This division is linked to requirements of incremental versus radical innovation (Tuchman & O'Reilly, 1996 cited in Hall & Williams, 2008). Organizations that have strongly centralized procedures are better equipped to manage continuous incremental innovations when it comes to products and processes, this allows innovations to be identified and

redistributed between departments and establishments. Radical innovations, in contrast, are preferred by more decentralized organizations that have entrepreneurial cultures (Hall & Williams, 2008).

#### Individual entrepreneurship

This driver is associated with revolutionary innovations, however, it is important in all types of innovation. Even though R&D departments in organizations tend to be focused on specialist suppliers, there is still considerable room for entrepreneurs to innovate in terms of products, processes and services. They can be employees of an organization, who innovate on behalf of that organization, or individuals who leave said organization to develop their own new idea or enterprise, which could revolutionize an entire sector or sub-sector. A great example of this would be Thomas Cook, who changed the whole travel industry by being the first to offer organized tours (Hall & Williams, 2008).

#### Role of the state

The state also serves an important role in tourism innovation through its involvement in destination management and marketing. The state provides the financial resources to support innovation through regional economic development programs, is involved in public-private relationships in terms of redevelopment and infrastructure, supports marketing innovations through destination branding, and provides a policy and regulatory environment that could encourage innovations (Hall & Williams, 2008). One of the recent examples of states' involvement could be Sweden's campaign celebrating 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of abolishment of censorship called The Swedish Number, where people all over the world can call a number and talk directly to a local.

#### 4.2.3 The regional innovation system

This section focuses on the regional innovation system (RIS) and leaves out the in-depth explanation of the national innovation system (NIS). As this thesis focuses only on one region in Denmark it is wise to explore the regional innovation system, and including NIS would not provide much explanatory value, especially due to the notion that the data collection was done in Northern Jutland and thusly the interviewees also based their comments on the region they operate in. Even though there will be some comparison between the NIS and RIS, it is merely to explain the concept of regional innovation system better.

It is well established in innovation literature, that “*territorial agglomeration provides the optimum context for an innovation-based learning economy promoting localized learning and endogenous regional economic development*” (Asheim & Coenen, 2004, cited in Hall & Williams, 2008). From this point of view innovation is fundamentally localized phenomenon, highly dependent on location specific resources, which are impossible to reproduce elsewhere, meaning that regional and local levels are important sites for innovation (Longhi & Keeble, 2004, cited in Hall & Williams, 2008). This perspective has been linked to two key concepts that are closely related to each other, namely regional innovation systems and clusters. However, it must be kept in mind, that even though they are closely related, they should not be conflated (Hall & Williams, 2008).

The concept of regional innovation system (RIS) first appeared several years after the development of national innovation system (NIS) in 1990s. Both national and regional innovation systems draw on the fact that innovation systems are complex interactions between actors in the network, with certain institutional features. However, differently from the national innovation system, the regional innovation system focuses on a much smaller scale of territorial analysis, and differs in terms of specific social situations within the innovation system (Hall & Williams, 2008). There are a number of definitions about RIS, however, all of them share a central trait of explaining how the regional institutional and cultural environment interacts with the private firms in order to influence the innovation process, so it shares many similarities with the Triple Helix model (Hall & Williams, 2008).

According to Lundvall and Borrás (1997, cited in Hall & Williams, 2008) “*the region is increasingly the level at which innovation is produced through regional networks of innovators, local clusters and the cross-fertilizing effects of research institutions*”. There are numerous reasons as to why it is important to understand that innovation systems have regional dimensions.

1. “*Important preconditions for innovation such as the qualification of the labor force, and the availability of educational institutions and research organizations are tied to specific regions [...] to assist in regional development.*”
2. “*Clusters are often highly localized, giving rise to networks between firms and public organizations at the regional level.*”



3. *Interactions between knowledge providers and firms such as university-industry links, knowledge spillovers and spin-offs are often localized since they work through the mobility of persons within local labor markets, and through face to face contacts between actors.*
4. *Regions have taken more active and stronger role in innovation policy in recent years.*
5. *Due to the interactions between firms, knowledge providers and policy actors, a common organizational culture may develop in a regional production system that, under certain conditions, supports collective learning and innovation, thereby contributing to a specific trajectory of development and innovation.*
6. *Within many countries, 'specific regions tend to bring about large share of the outcomes which, in the NIS framework, would be regarded as the accomplishments of national systems of innovation' (Oinas & Malecki, 2002, Tödting & Kaufmann 1998, cited in Hall & Williams, 2008).*

Regions are evidently shaped by the national level and also shape the national level themselves as well, however, they also have the capability to 'go their own ways' and "*contest to global challenges differently*", thusly deviating from national averages in regards to the "*configuration of the facilitators of innovation*", for example, education systems, technological and scientific capabilities, interactions with the innovation system, openness to external factors, etc.

This section illustrates that innovation is not something that an individual firm does, but it is something that requires collective effort from all actors in the region in order to be successful and benefit everyone in the Triple Helix model. As discussed earlier, in the Triple Helix section there is movement toward more collaborative relationships between the university, industry and government, where innovation is an outcome of interaction between said stakeholders, rather than a suggestion from government; and as mentioned previously, taking on each other's roles, in a sense that they operate both horizontally in their own function and vertically in their new role (Etzkowitz , 2008; Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997; Olsen & Halkier, n.d.; Etzkowitz & Klofsten, 2005) Not only will regional innovation improve the situation in the region itself, but will ultimately affect the national level as well. This shows that collaboration is imperative for competitiveness and innovation, benefiting all parties involved.

### 4.3 Knowledge

Hall and Williams (2008) claim that knowledge is a fundamental part of innovation, as innovation itself is a process of applying forms of knowledge. Chang and Chen (2004 cited in Hall & Williams, 2008) further elaborate that knowledge is not the same as information, it is something much more as it *“involves a wider process that involves cognitive structures that assimilate information and put it into a broader context, thereby allowing actions to be undertaken on that basis”*. Furthermore, Davenport and Prusak (1998 cited in Hawkins et al., 2015) agree by claiming that *“knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporation new experiences and information”*, making knowledge a critical part of innovation, competitiveness and productivity (Hall & Williams, 2008)

From the previous we can point out two different types of knowledge, namely, explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit, or codified knowledge, includes written and figurative documents, and databases. This type of knowledge helps organizations to purchase or generate different types of data sets, and it is mostly linked with IT development in different fields, i.e. collecting data about customer purchase behavior (Hall & Williams, 2008). Tacit knowledge on the other hand, is acquired by *“experience, observing, learning from and communicating with others, because this type of knowledge is accumulated from personal experience and installed in one’s reservoir of knowledge”* (Hawkins, et al., 2015). Both explicit and tacit knowledge are important in the tourism industry, also when talking about innovation and the Triple Helix model.

The concept of knowledge management suggests that individuals should share their ideas and knowledge to create value added products and services. A movement towards the knowledge management framework followed the transition to knowledge-based economy from matter based economy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Nielson, 2005, cited in Hawkins, et al., 2015). The knowledge management framework provides companies with an opportunity to capitalize on their intellectual assets (Hawkins, et al., 2015). A more detailed definition from Spender, claims that *“knowledge management is about identifying as wide a range of knowledge assets a possible – be they forms of knowledge, or knowing, or proficient practice at the individual, group, organizational, cluster, industry, region or national level- and bringing them into our theorizing about maximizing efficiency, profit, or market power”* (2005, cited in Hawkins, at al., 2015). Knowledge management

and knowledge sharing are also of an importance in innovation, as innovation in its essence is about idea generation, evaluation, development and testing, and without sharing knowledge the process of innovation would not be possible.

There are some challenges when it comes to knowledge sharing and management in the tourism industry, and thus the industry has not benefited from knowledge management that much. Because the sector is largely comprised of small and medium size enterprises, it means they often do not have the time or interest in research. (Hawkins, et al., 2015) Additionally, the fact that there are some trust issues among SMEs, due to the relative easiness of copying innovative solutions from competitors makes it even harder to share knowledge, thus intermediate organizations are an important part of sharing knowledge. There is a crucial need for stakeholder appreciation of knowledge and access to external knowledge is important in tourism destination development, as the nature of the industry involves interaction with stakeholders outside of the destination, thusly knowing what competitors elsewhere offers is crucial in ensuring competitive advantage on the market (Olsen & Halkier, n.d., Hawkins, et al., 2015)

In relation to the Triple Helix model, compared to manufacturing and technology industries, the SMEs collaboration with research bodies is thought to be not as relevant, and firms rarely have an R&D departments or other dedicated resources for innovation, because they are not practical in the eyes of the business owners (Hjalager, 2010; Olsen & Halkier, n.d.; Tether, 2005). When talking about developing links between tourism firms and knowledge institutions, it is important that the significance of tacit knowledge is taken into consideration, not only explicit knowledge. As research based knowledge might be relevant, it needs to be modifies to some extent before the tourism firms can see the benefit and potential gains from this knowledge, as firms have a more practice based approach to innovation (Olsen & Halkier, n.d.; Cooper, 2006; Svensson et al., 2005)

## 5. Analysis

The aim of this chapter is to thoroughly examine the data collected, namely from conducted interviews and the focus group. It is important to state that this thesis is qualitative, and investigates individuals' opinions and attitudes towards the researched topic (Bryman, 2012). As the thesis follows constructivist paradigm, which states that knowledge is created through numerous social interactions, it is important to mention that it betokens unambiguous truth and no one's knowledge or perception is preferable (Bryman, 2012; Egholm, 2014) As mentioned earlier, analysis in this thesis is done using thematically driven qualitative content analysis, meaning that the content of the data collection is analyzed.

Combining the primary data collected with literature reviewed for this thesis makes it possible to conduct an in-depth analysis about the collaboration between Aalborg University, tourism companies and government institutions, innovation and the role of innovation workshops in tourism industry in Aalborg and Norther Jutland region. Reviewing the interviews it become evident that this is a complex issue that has many aspects to it, as it is not always black and white and thus many different factors from many different actors need to be taken into consideration.

There were many themes that were reoccurring in the interviews and the focus group, some that were predetermined by the researcher, but also some that became evident throughout the conversations, as there can be many different themes that can be discussed, there was a need to narrow them down and pick the ones most relevant and most fit for this thesis. The themes picked are innovation, collaboration, knowledge sharing and workshops. These were picked as they entail all aspects being researched and also includes some aspects of the themes that were left out. As some exclusions were made, it means that this thesis will not describe the topics in full capacity, firstly, due to some lack of information, and secondly, due to exclusion of some information that was deemed irrelevant to this specific research topic.

### 5.1 Innovation

As mentioned before, innovation is an important part of tourism industry, especially due to the competitive and ever changing nature of the industry (Hall & Williams, 2008; Hjalager, 2002; Hjalager, 2010) As not many people know what innovation is, as pointed out by Thinnesen (Appendix 2), it is important to teach them, as innovation can be many different things depending

of a person and the knowledge they possess, as knowledge and innovation are closely linked, an interesting statement made in the focus group (Appendix 4). The different ways people see and define innovation is also illustrated earlier in this thesis, by describing some of the types of innovation there is.

As it became clear after conducting the interviews all of the stakeholders acknowledge the importance of innovation to a certain degree, some less some more. As tourism sector in Northern Jutland is dominated by small and micro sized enterprises, they do not do not cooperate much with universities, especially since they are more prone to practice the try and fail type of innovation, as Halkier puts it. Universities, as knowledge institutions, are not directly linked to innovation processes of small firms, for collaboration and interaction they usually use intermediaries, such as Visit-organizations (Appendix 1).

The companies interviewed acknowledged that innovation is very important in the tourism industry, especially due to the seasonality issue most companies face, so there's a need to find solutions that decrease the seasonal fluctuation of guests. This requires constant re-development to stay and make companies more attractive to visitors. This especially during a time where traditional ways of developing tourism do not work anymore, as was pointer out in the focus group. It is important to realize the importance of innovation, something not many tourism businesses do, because not using innovation and not understanding the importance could lead to destination dying (Appendix 5 & 6).

What was worrying was the answer from Skallerup Seaside Resort when they were asked how important innovation for the company is. As they said most of their guests are repeat customers (65%), the importance of innovation is, according to them, medium (Appendix 6). This is again the problem with a lot of companies as they have the mentality that if it is working why change it (Appendix 4). Of course, not all of the tourism firms are like that, as Bo Samson states, that because they are a small firm innovation is everything (Appendix 5), however it is a reoccurring thing among many small tourism firms. This problem was brought up by Halkier, Thinnesen, and the students that took part of the focus group (Appendix 1, 2 & 4).

As many tourism firms do not recognize the importance of innovation, they most often are not innovative as well, this especially with smaller companies who just want to keep the lifestyle (Appendix 1 & 2). Thinnesen explains, that the lack of interest in innovation could be due to the

fact that not many know exactly what innovation is and how to work with it. He says that it is important to teach them, as it gives them a broad skill set. However, the issue that he brings out about teaching innovation, is that as many companies are small, they only have a few employees, meaning that if they would take part of the workshops Thinnesen facilitates, they need to close down for a day or two, which in turn means that they lose profit (Appendix 2). This decreases their interest to take part of such activities, even though they are beneficial for them, indicating that small businesses do not think long-term, but rather see only what is good for them in the short-term (Appendix 2 & 3). For this to get better, Pihl says it's going to take a long time and it's going to be a hard process (Appendix 3). However, as was pointed out by the students that took part of the focus group, even though the innovation workshops teach different skills, they do not always lead to innovation, this especially when a company is conservative and is not willing to look outside of the box (Appendix 4).

According to Thinnesen, he has witnessed through his job that bigger companies are better at innovation, as they have people who are employed for that exact reason, they also have the resources to do it. However, differently from smaller companies, they do not have the opportunity to implement new concepts and ideas as fast, because they are bigger and it takes longer that it would for the small companies (Appendix 2).

Thinnesen also explains that the issue with companies lacking innovation is due to the culture in Denmark, people have to be taught from a young age to be innovative and think creatively in order for the situation to change. He states that in the long-run it will benefit all parties of the Triple Helix model – the university, government institutions and tourism industry - to be innovative, as those people will become the future employers and employees of those three stakeholders. This will not only benefit just tourism industry, but all other industries as well. Teaching innovation is needed for the country to sustain the welfare state Denmark is (Appendix 2).

Knowing what innovation is, is not enough, you have to know how to use it as it is rather risky (Appendix 2). Not knowing how to use innovation could lead to failure, which happens often, especially in tourism industry. Companies need to take in consideration what their customers want and need, and they are also more or less dependent on the qualities of the destination they operate in, including the surrounding businesses (Appendix 4).

Thinnesen claims that the governments have a problem when it comes to innovation. Government institutions want to be innovative, and they have realized the need for it, however due to the many rules and regulations it is very difficult for them to be innovative. It takes them a long time to make decisions, while innovation sometimes needs changes to be made rapidly. He says that this is again the problem with the current culture, and it needs to be changed (Appendix 2).

When comparing universities, businesses and government institutions, the focus group came to a conclusion that it is easiest for the companies to be innovative, as they do not have restrictive regulations and rules that the government has, and has the resources and sometimes skills that the universities lack. Innovation is also something they need in order to survive, however as stated before many companies are rather conservative and do not dare or want to change. Another factor that often restricts the companies is the risk that comes with innovation, as in case of failure it could be rather costly for them (Appendix 4).

## 5.2 Collaboration

Collaboration was another reoccurring theme in the interviews and the focus group, this section is linked to the Triple Helix model and its first level, which is collaboration between different stakeholders. As the concept of Triple Helix was rather foreign to many of the interviewees, a better wording was used – collaboration.

Just like with innovation, many most of the interviews acknowledge the importance of collaborating with different actors in tourism industry, whether it is businesses, universities or governments. While collaboration with businesses and government institutions is something that is evident and self-explanatory, it is the collaboration with universities seems to be a bit confusing, especially for businesses. There is a lot misunderstandings among interviewees what exactly is universities' role in the Triple Helix model.

As Halkier says, practitioners consider the Triple Helix to be the collaboration between the three stakeholders, which is the first level of the Triple Helix model, as defined by Etzkowitz (2008) earlier in this thesis. He also states that this model is relevant in tourism industry, especially since there needs to be a collaboration between stakeholders and assisting each other in areas other's might not be that strong in. For example businesses, as mentioned earlier, do not have much to do with research, so universities can help out with this, and in order to transfer universities'

knowledge to businesses intermediaries (usually Visit-organizations) are needed to translate the knowledge to businesses (Appendix 1). In this sense collaboration is rather important as it could contribute to innovation and thus make a destination sustainable.

It is only recently that government institutions and businesses in tourism industry recognize that universities can be collaborators, yet they still have a very limited role. However, as universities' collaboration is usually project-based it does bring up some challenges. Most of the agreements are short-term and with bigger companies, meaning that even though they are more targeted and an intense knowledge sharing occurs, it does end at one point and the momentum goes away, not changing anything in the long term. Longer collaboration, on the other hand, creates stability and trust, making promoting change easier, however it tends to go in one directions and often ignores other possibilities. Halkier points out that there is no one solution to collaboration with university, but rather it depends on the situation and the actors' preferences (Appendix 1).

Thinnesen points out that all actors need to interact, as it will benefit everyone, he adds that Danish society is based on Triple Helix interaction, and it is in desperate need of this culture that values innovation and collaboration more than ever, especially when they want to sustain themselves (Appendix 2).

The companies that were interviewed, stressed that it is important to collaborate as well, and they try to do it with other businesses in the region and the Visit-organizations, additionally they acknowledge that universities, and the students there, are useful in terms of the knowledge they possess, which is usually much fresher than theirs (Appendix 5 & 6). Samson adds that as there is an issue of seasonality in the area his company operates, it is important to work together with other businesses to solve this issue and attract more tourists together (Appendix 5). Clausen, on the other hand, focuses more on the marketing aspect of the region, and works together with some of the bigger attractions in Northern Jutland, such as Fårup Sommerland and Aalborg Zoo (Appendix 6).

Even though the companies interviewed for this thesis see the value of working together, there are still many that do not. Pihl, who is working together with a lot of small and micro-sized companies faces this issue on a daily basis. She states that, a lot of them do not see the bigger picture and the benefits that collaboration with others could bring, making it rather difficult for VisitMariagerfjord and other Visit-organizations to work with them. Pihl also states that it is rather new that there is an organization in the region that wants to attract tourists and does that without getting any profit,



so it takes some time for the companies to understand that they are there for their interest and to collaborate with them. The business owners are also afraid that if they do collaborate with other similar businesses they might steal their customers, and losing customers could be fatal for a business with a small revenue and customer base. It has created sort of a trust issue and businesses believe that they are better off on their own (Appendix 3). This trust issue is also something that has been discussed in the theory section, and is something that is predominant among the SMEs in the tourism industry especially (Olsen & Halkier, n.d.; Hall & Williams, 2008; Hjalager, 2010).

In discussing the collaboration with universities, Pihl says their organization does not do it enough. She says this could be due to the fact that they are not a university city and the universities in the region are rather far away from them, making it a little bit difficult to work together (Appendix 3). If the Visit-organization does not collaborate with the university, then the local businesses definitely do not work together with them. However, this is not only due to the distance, even when there is interest, there is the fundamental issue of businesses and universities using different languages to communicate, something that both Pihl and Halkier point out, so again the need for facilitators is brought up (Appendix 1 & 3).

Pihl, who has worked in other DMO's before, has seen many businesses that are collaborating with universities and businesses, and they are gaining a lot from it (Appendix 3). Not only is it beneficial for the businesses, but for the whole destination by bringing in more tourists, because, as stated earlier in this thesis, collaboration leads to knowledge sharing and which in turn leads to innovation (Hall & Williams, 2008). Small businesses need to realize that even though collaboration might not benefit them right away, it does help them in the long-run, and that is what they should think about more.

Right now the companies find working with university somewhat invasive, because some of them think that the researchers or students would just come and tell them what to do, they would have a hard time accepting the knowledge gained from this interaction due to the fact that they are outsiders. So even if they would do their research about the destination and the issues it is facing, it would be hard to convince the businesses of the benefits (Appendix 3). This is again due to the conservative culture and the trust issues companies have (Appendix 4).

Because a lot of tourism businesses are outdated, they are in desperate need of new and fresh information, so collaboration with the universities is needed. It would be beneficial for both sides,

as universities and their students would get knowledge about how things work in practice and businesses would get information about the academic side of tourism. The result of this interaction and working together on actual issues in the industry would result in innovation (Appendix 4).

As of now, many businesses are not aware what exactly universities do, and the universities might not always know what the businesses need (Appendix 1 & 4). The focus group suggested that the university should be more active in seeking collaboration partners in the industry itself, especially since they are not yet seen as equal partners for both government institutions and businesses. So it is about understanding the value of communication and change, as the practices that work now might not in a few years (Appendix 4). However, as stated before it is not something that is part of the Danish culture, as it tends to be rather conservative, and to changing this is a long and difficult process, that needs to be taught to people as early as possible (Appendix 2 & 4).

### 5.3 Knowledge sharing

Triple Helix revolves around the ability to share knowledge (Appendix 1). The difficult part of it, as mentioned earlier, is that the actors speak different languages, universities use the academic language and businesses more practical (Appendix 1 & 3). This is due to the different perspectives actors look at things, so intermediaries are needed for translating, this task often falls on the different DMOs, for example VisitNordjylland or other smaller counterparts (Appendix 1).

Innovation is sharing knowledge (Hall & Williams, 2008), you cannot have one without the other, yet knowledge sharing is something that is rather difficult for some, this is something that Thinnesen is very familiar with. Sharing knowledge leads to innovation, however, not everybody is comfortable doing it, also businesses do not want to share knowledge due to the trust issues and not seeing the benefits of it, this is especially the case with small businesses, as discussed earlier (Appendix 2).

Small companies need to share knowledge, and to do that they need to network. Businesses like to get knowledge, however, they themselves do not like to share it (Appendix 2 & 4). This makes the knowledge sharing process pointless, as it will not lead to innovation and will not help the businesses in any way. Thinnesen points out that it is smaller companies that need knowledge sharing the most, as bigger companies usually have the resources to hire people to work with

innovation and do not depend on knowledge sharing that much, and that is something smaller companies usually do not have (Appendix 2).

It was discussed in the focus group, knowledge sharing with companies is often one-sided, especially when it comes to university students (Appendix 4). This is an issue as companies get new knowledge that they do not have from the students, but are reluctant to share it (Appendix 2 & 4). Students who are the future employees need knowledge from the companies to prepare themselves to enter the job market and learn how the tourism industry functions in practice (Appendix 2 & 4). Thinnesen adds that the sooner the students get out there the better, so this is something that needs to change as well (Appendix 2). Companies need to embrace the knowledge that the students possess as well. The focus group pointed out, that in their experience many companies do not consider them as serious business partners, because they are students and due to the conservative nature of the companies. The universities and businesses need to communicate better, not only for the student's stake, but for their own as well. It is critical that knowledge sharing exists, but it needs to be a two way communication (Appendix 4).

Also, another problem with knowledge sharing, as with innovation and collaboration, is the culture, just like with the other discussed themes, sharing knowledge is not part of the Danish culture, and needs to be changed through the same process like the other two. Luckily the government has acknowledged the issues the current culture creates and are, according to Thinnesen, taking steps to change it (Appendix 2).

#### 5.4 Workshops

Innovation workshops are a good platform for knowledge sharing and interaction, whether it is between students/researchers and companies, or between companies and their employees (Appendix 1). When students are involved, as is the case with Solution Camp, where students are working with generating ideas for the company, it creates a platform for interaction that is much more informal than when researchers are involved, for example. This is because many companies think "It is only students", as Halkier puts it, however, this mindset lowers the barriers, whereas if it is researchers they consider it to be more serious. Halkier says these workshops are good as it makes the businesses understand, that the students are creative and innovative, and that is what Aalborg University is striving for (Appendix 1).

Thinnesen, who facilitates workshops involving companies and students, and just companies, says that students' attitude towards such events is often more positive and open minded than the companies'. The companies do not really want to do it the way Thinnesen does them, however, after trying it they often have positive feedback. He says, that these workshops are usually eye openers for companies when it comes to innovation and they are good for teaching them innovation, as businesses, especially the small ones, are lacking the skills and the tools to work with innovation. Knowledge in different parts of the company can evolve, as they have contact with other departments and people with different backgrounds during these workshops and share the knowledge they possess. Workshops are important for companies as they are not always good at teaching innovation themselves to their employees (Appendix 2).

However, it could be a little difficult to do workshops with companies, as in many instances they do not have that many employees, and for the workshops to be beneficial it is ideal to have at least twelve people, if it is less than twelve it could be a little bit hard to share knowledge, however choosing the right methods to do it could make it successful (Appendix 2).

According to Thinnesen, there is no difference whether it is employees or students who generate the ideas, as companies have realized that students are more open and have access to new knowledge that the companies are in need of (Appendix 2). They need new blood and knowledge, and some companies do not have that, so they have started to take the workshops more seriously, especially when the students are involved (Appendix 2 & 4).

Pihl also agrees, that innovation workshops can be useful, however, it is not always easy to get companies to take part in them (Appendix 2). Similarly to collaboration, companies do not see their own gain and benefits it could have for them (Appendix 2, 3 & 4). Even though companies often do not show interest in these events, the ones that they have organized have been very successful (Appendix 3). Right now the DMO Pihl is working in is facilitating workshops to rebrand the area, and companies are more willing to take part of it, as it is more practical and they have been really collaborative, however it does require a lot of resources from them (Appendix 2 & 3). So, in order for it to be successful the companies need to be constantly informed about the process and the benefits it could foster. These workshops have also improved the collaboration between businesses in the destination and helped them to see the bigger picture, the companies are

starting to understand that they are stronger when they collaborate towards a common goal (Appendix 3).

However, the students that took part of the focus group, who have taken part of many different innovation workshops, stress that the organization of the workshops have to be well thought out, otherwise they are not going to be good. They say, that workshops are good for creativity, learning new skills and getting a lot of insight into how things work in real life. They also think that the companies benefit from the workshops in terms of new ideas and concepts, but also get inspiration and knowledge about what people are expecting from a tourism firm and the services they provide. The students would, however, like to know how, and if, the ideas they came up with were implemented, as this is something that is not implemented to be part of the workshops or the feedback later on. As these workshops are rather new in Denmark, the improvement is in progress and the facilitators are learning how to do better (Appendix 4).

As there is an issue with the collaboration in the tourism industry in Denmark, the workshops are a great way to eliminate this gap, by bringing together different actors of the Triple Helix model (Appendix 1, 2, 3 & 4). These innovation workshops could also help the society in the long run if the companies realized the benefits of the workshops and would take them seriously, accepting the knowledge they get from them. The students involved would be more motivated as well, if they know their ideas would be implemented in real life (Appendix 4). Workshops are good for the students as they give direct contact with the issues tourism firms are facing in the industry (Appendix 2 & 4). However, as mentioned before, knowledge sharing is often one-sided, and for the workshops to be successful, and benefit both sides, there needs to be a change towards the two-way communication. To get the full potential from the workshops the companies need to share knowledge from their side as well and take advantage of the students as much as possible (Appendix 2 & 4). Right now companies are reluctant to share knowledge, even if it will help to test out their ideas, again it has something to do with the conservative culture, where even if it is experts or professional from the tourism industry, they do not want to share knowledge due to the trust issue mentioned before, and the fear of competition (Appendix 2, 3 & 4).

The companies interviewed for this thesis, had both taken part of Solution Camp, and when asked about it from them they had very different comments about it (Appendix 5 & 6). Samson was more positive towards the workshop, as the idea of it sounded interesting to him, and he got many ideas

from the students that they will be trying to implement at Blokhus Salt. He also states that, since they are a small company they need input from others, and the workshops was a good way to do it. Additionally, the knowledge they received from the students was very useful (Appendix 5).

Clausen, on the other hand, while still relatively positive towards the workshops, did notice some shortcomings from the workshop. The Skallerup Seaside Resort took part of Solution Camp because have tried it before, however it does not play as big of a role in their innovation process as it does in Blokhus Salt. Even when they got some ideas from the students to develop the holiday center, Clausen says that they did not receive that much new knowledge from the students, as they knew too little about the company and the possibilities for the guests (Appendix 6). This might have something to do with the one-sided knowledge sharing that was pointed out before, if the company had given more information to the students, they would have gotten more out of the workshop (Appendix 4). Clausen also claims that these workshops are not that important for companies, but mostly for students (Appendix 6).

## 6. Discussion

The aim of the Triple Helix in essence is to study the knowledge infrastructure within network of regional innovation systems (Etzkowitz, et al., 2002, Leydesdorff, et al., 2006, cited in Kim, et al., 2012). Collaboration and interaction have become increasingly important in the tourism industry, and there is a move towards a more collaborative relationship among the three actors in Triple Helix, often resulting in innovation (Etzkowitz, 2008). It is evident in the analysis, that the interviews acknowledge the importance of collaboration, as working together will lead to a more competitive destination, this is because of the knowledge exchange that happens between the three actors.

However, not many companies have realized the advantages of working with the universities, and there is some confusion as to what exactly their role is. In the past universities have not taken much part in collaborating with businesses, however, after a shift towards ‘the three-role model’, that turned the focus on being more relative in societal aspects, they have been acknowledged as collaborators by government institutions (Appendix 1; Etzkowitz, 2008). According to Etzkowitz (2008), universities have become increasingly important when it comes to innovation, especially since knowledge itself has become an important factor in new product and service development. The importance of knowledge is also evident in the analysis, as many interviewees agree that companies often are outdated and are in need of new external knowledge (Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6). Universities are often the ones that are in possession of this new knowledge, thus the businesses in the tourism industry need to collaborate them, whether it is through different projects, workshops or hiring new graduates (Appendix 1, 2 & 4).

However, it is not only businesses that need to change, in order to develop, universities need to do that as well. As there are several challenges in the knowledge economy, universities need to take them seriously and equip the future workforce with skills to tackle those issues (Sigala & Baum, 2003). It was something that was also pointed out in the analysis that there is a need for change, as traditional ways are not sufficient, so people need more skills related to communication, collaboration, information literacy and knowledge management (Appendix 2 & 4; Sigala & Baum, 2003). These skills will equip the future workforce to change the cultural issues that were pointed out by Thinesen, and slowly change the culture in Denmark’s tourism industry to be more collaborative and innovative, and thusly more sustainable (Appendix 2).

As discussed in the analysis, university-industry relations can enhance competitiveness and innovation in the tourism industry, this especially through knowledge sharing that occurs in innovation workshops (Appendix 2 & 4; Gulbrandsen, 1997). However, there are some considerations that need to be taken into account in the university-industry collaboration, such as the language issue, where the information that comes from universities is often academic and for many businesses it is too heavy and does not possess that much value, as they are in more need of practical knowledge (Appendix 1 & 4). This means that government institutions need to take on a role as facilitators when universities are added to the collaboration, as they have the skills to translate the academic knowledge to the businesses, however, universities too need to produce R&D results that are more practical, if they are to be implemented by the businesses (Appendix 1; Olsen & Halkier, n.d.; Hjalager, 2010). This would lead to a more successful collaboration and innovation, as businesses would get more practical knowledge that they can actually use.

As the tourism industry is in a constant state of flux, innovation is integral to the tourism system as a whole (Hall & Williams, 2008). Constant development is needed, this can be done through knowledge sharing and collaboration, as discussed in the analysis (Appendix 1, 2 & 4). Public sector initiatives often improve collaboration among SMEs, like Pihl has illustrated in her example, innovation workshops often show them the benefits of working together, and ultimately this collaboration will strengthen innovation in the region (Appendix 3, Olsen & Halkier, n.d.; Hjalager, 2010). And it is on the regional level where innovation is produced, by the local businesses (Hall & Williams, 2008).

As discussed earlier, knowledge is a fundamental part of innovation, as innovation is a process of applying different forms of knowledge (Hall & Williams, 2008). Actors in the Triple Helix should share knowledge and ideas to create services and products that are appealing to tourists, and to market their business the right way (Appendix 1, 2 & 4; Hawkins, et al., 2015). Knowledge sharing and management is important in innovation, because, as mentioned before, innovation in its essence is about idea generation and without sharing knowledge the process of innovation is not possible (Hawkins, et al., 2015).

However, not many businesses in the tourism industry understand the value of knowledge they get from different actors, or the benefits of sharing knowledge themselves, and this is something that will prevent innovation (Appendix 1, 2 & 4). Another issue is what to do with this knowledge, as



innovation is something that is still a foreign concept for many companies, as they lack skills and methods to work with innovation, this issue could be tackled with the workshops discussed in the analysis, but this can only be possible if the companies are willing to cooperate (Appendix, 2).

In conclusion, collaboration and innovation in the tourism industry are complicated issues, as they are influenced by many different factors, many of them related to the SMEs that dominate the industry. It is often their lack of interest in collaboration and sharing knowledge that prevents innovation, even when understanding the necessity. This could be due to two fundamental reasons, first the trust issues many companies have, and the dominant conservative culture in Denmark. Thinesen has pointed out that this could be solved by a change in culture, starting to teach people from a young age the values and benefits of collaboration, innovation and knowledge sharing, as this is not part of the culture as of now, however, this change will be a hard and long process. Luckily many government institutions have acknowledged the issue and are slowly starting to take steps to change the situation for better, nevertheless, it does take a long time to change something, especially in culture.

## 7. Conclusion

This thesis aims to investigate how the Triple Helix interaction between different stakeholders in the tourism industry affect innovation and how innovation workshops contribute to it by taking Aalborg University and tourism actors in Northern Jutland as an example. In addition to the central research question, the thesis looked into the role of innovation workshops in tourism firms' innovation processes and how universities and the private sector interact.

Even though one of the companies interviewed for this thesis stated that, innovation workshops do not play that important of a role in their innovation process, it has become clear throughout the research, that it could be potentially beneficial to incorporate them as a part of the innovation process. This especially, since the core of the workshops is knowledge sharing, and knowledge is something that many small companies in the industry are in need of, whether they admit it or not. The second company interviewed, agreed to this statement by saying that small companies like theirs, need input from outside, as they do not possess the new knowledge themselves, and innovation workshops could be good eye-openers to new ideas and opportunities.

There were many instances where it became evident that the workshops could be a good platform for knowledge sharing, especially when it is between the university and the industry, as it would bring together the students and/or researchers from the universities, people who have the newest knowledge about the trends and developments in the industry, and businesses, who need this knowledge to develop and stay competitive. This means that incorporating innovation workshops into companies' innovation processes could be highly beneficial.

However, the issue in tourism industry is the companies' unwillingness to collaborate, this is due to two reasons: trust and culture. As the tourism industry is dominated by SMEs who often lack resources for innovation, and because it is relatively easy to copy others' innovations it has made the trust level among the companies rather low, meaning they are somewhat reluctant to share knowledge with, not only among each other, but with other stakeholders in the Triple Helix model.

Another issue, which became evident in one of the interviews, is culture. Specifically it is not part of the Danish culture to share knowledge, and sharing knowledge is an imperative part of collaboration. The process of changing this is going to be a long and hard process, but it is something that is needed in order to keep the tourism industry, not only Northern Jutland, but in

the whole country competitive, and thus sustainable. The government has acknowledged this issue and are working to improve the situation, by not only focusing on teaching innovation and knowledge sharing to university students, but are starting to involve other knowledge institutions as well.

When it comes to the university-industry interaction, there are some complications as well. One of the most important ones is perhaps the language barriers, which does limit their interaction, the complicated academic language is something that not many companies understand, as they use a more practical language. Thus, intermediaries are needed for translating the academic language to the companies and to present it in a way that has practical value to them. However, universities themselves need to include more practical aspects to their research, to be more relevant in the businesses in the industry. The latter could also solve the second issue that limits the collaboration with the universities, more precisely it is not clear for the companies what the universities role in this communication is.

Currently, universities' interaction is limited to different projects and workshops with the companies, however, even this does not happen as often, due to the little interest from the companies to interact. It is imperative that companies in the tourism industry understand the value of collaboration, as this is beneficial to them in the long-term by foster innovation and ultimately could have a positive economic effect, however, as it does not often prove to be beneficial short-term, they are not interested in collaboration. The universities themselves could be more proactive in this matter as well.

As it is clear from the aforementioned, the interaction between the different stakeholders in the Triple Helix model, does affect innovation. There is, however, much improvement in terms of collaboration between different stakeholders. As mentioned before, workshops could help to improve collaboration, as one of the interviewees has seen improvement after involving local companies in workshops regarding the regions branding, and the businesses have been more willing to work together with each other after that, which is something they have not done before. This shows, that workshops do improve the collaboration and make businesses understand the value and the benefits collaboration holds. Essentially workshops are about knowledge sharing and collaboration, and a result of it is often innovation. The skills and knowledge companies get from different actors of the Triple Helix model during the workshops and other interactions can be

used later in the respective companies for innovation. Nonetheless, there is the issue of teaching companies what innovation exactly is, as many have not worked with it before and are not entirely sure how to use innovation, as they do not have the skills or methods for tackling it, which can also be solved with workshops, but also with starting to teach people about innovation from early on.

One thing that the analysis does not cover is the second level of the Triple Helix model, which refers to the role exchange of the stakeholders. As the topic of collaboration is somewhat complicated and is something that all stakeholders struggle with, it might not be their first priority to take on others' their roles, however, it could happen without the stakeholders realizing it. However, as the situation is improving, it would be interesting to research this aspect as well. There is much research to be done on the Triple Helix and its implications on the tourism industry, not only from the perspective of innovation, but also from other, more general perspectives as well, especially as it is a rather novel theory in tourism industry.

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## Appendix 1

### Interview with Henrik Halkier, the dean of Faculty of Humanities in Aalborg University

*MM – Maarja Metsaots*

*HH – Henrik Halkier*

**00:00**

**MM:** Ok, so first of all, how would you define Triple Helix?

**HH:** How would I define Triple Helix? Well, umm, I'm thinking that, that, that the way it's normally conceived is like, it's a sort of... it's, it's a situation where you have collaboration between three different parties. One of them being the private firms others being public bodies like you know government or regional government or local government, and thirdly there is the, umm, theses the, there are the knowledge institutions like universities or research centers and so on. And I think often, umm, as I recall it, umm, in especially amongst practitioners out there, those who use it as part of describing, this is what we want to do and that's why we want to collaborate with, let's say, the universities as part of our project. Often just having the three of them seems to be the defining, umm, the what, what, what they are... what they think about when they say we are having a Triple Helix collaboration. Now as I recall the literature and its, it's as, as you may... I'm not quite sure how you picked up on the fact that I know about these things. (Laughter)

**MM:** I found some articles and ... (laughter)

**HH:** Because I'm not sure I've ever... The, the thing it's one of the few articles I wear, we've written the article and it got rejected.

**MM:** Ok

**HH:** Umm, so it's not actually published anywhere, but I guess it's also in, you know PowerPoint presentation and...

**MM:** Yes I found one of, umm...

**HH:** ... from conferences and so on. I remember talking about that conference in Norway some years back. However, as I recall literature, the, the, one of the defining things is actually that it's not just about the collaboration between the three things, but actually also that somehow the roles shift. Like, it's not just that they collaborate but they actually take on some of the roles that are usually traditionally seen as being performed by the other actors. So the, the, the governance, the public sector could play an entrepreneurial role, the private sector could be a governance, assume responsibility for the governance or something, and, and so on. I think, I think this is the, as I recall it, this is the official, if you go to the literature... What's this bloke called... Anyway, it's some years back. (Coughing) Then it's not just enough to have the three, umm, the, the three parties collaborating. That's, that's a starting point, but, but if, if it's to be, umm... compliant

with this sort of theoretical thinking about it there need to be this sort of overlapping of roles as well...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ...umm, that's, but... Sorry, I'll just switch this off. So, so, and, and, and I think, eh, I'm, I'm, I'm thinking often, when, when, when we... It's not just, it's not just practitioners out there, tourism policy people, tourism visit this that and the other, umm, that, that, that use this sort of basic definition of the Triple Helix. So I think I might well do it, do it as well, so, so the first thing I thought when, umm, I, I, got your email, was ahh yes of course, because I've been involved in these kinds of things...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ...but then if you apply the, the, the, the advanced definition... I'm not quite sure that I have, maybe we just collaborated, maybe we didn't shift responsibilities around...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... in the same way, but, yep, umm, so, so, umm, like two, two levels of definition, there's the... Etzkowitz is the guy's name. The guy who had the advanced definition.

**MM:** Yeah

**HH:** Umm, the, umm... I think I like, like the practitioners tend to, tend to think along the lines of in more basic terms...

**4:49**

**MM:** Mhm, but, umm, what is the importance of Triple Helix? Especially in tourism industry for example?

**HH:** I, I think the importance of the Triple Helix, err, concept is, is, is, is, err, mhm, I think it's particularly relevant in, in the context of the tourism industry because in this region and, and, and many other destinations the, err, the private sector is characterized by a lot of, of, of small or micro, micro-firms, basically, erm, the ones we think of as being big, like the, err, a-a-attractions like, err, Fårup Sommerland for instance, are really just medium-sized firms...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... compared to big firms elsewhere, but, but, but for us, of course, they are enormously big. And, and, and a lot of these tend to be, tend to, hmm, not to do much in terms of research and development, and have a very, sort of, I don't know, erhm, err, innovation through doing and inspiration and, err, you know, t-try and, try and fail kind of type, types, types of innovation. Whereas what happens if you have a Triple Helix is that you actually get, err, you, you, you bring a, you bring the knowledge institutions into, in-in-into, the pro, potentially bring them into the process of, erhm, process of innovation where, erhm, not perhaps by, by, by linking the, err, knowledge institutions and the firms directly, but very often by linking them indirectly through the, erhm, through the intermediaries of Visit.. Whatever. And, and, and, and then, then, then, then the firms out here because they, they, they, they assume the role of kind of translators or intermediaries or simply they, they act as a kind of, erhm, you know, they, they, they provide a sort of certification that: it's ok to talk to these guys they are not more com.. the-the-they can,

they can be useful and inspirational. So you don't, you, you, you, you should actually try to do this. So they are actually bringing firms to the meeting, for instance, if-if...

**MM:** mhm

**HH:** ... if, we have some sort of dissemination workshop and so on.

**07:27**

**MM:** Err, sss, I-I think you answered the next questions (laughter)

**HH:** OK.. right. Sorry for that

**MM:** OK. What about the events like Solution Camp?

**HH:** Mhm

**MM:** err, what is their role in it?

**HH:** I think, I think Solution, Solu, Solution Camp is one of, of, of, of a possible, err, for want of a better word, platforms that, that this interaction could take, take ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... place on ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... So, so it is actually a kind of setting which brings different, err, different, err, different actors, err, ac... Different ac, actors together whether they are public or private. But I think it depends a lot on how the setup is, what sort of external partners you bring in and how are they related to, to, to each other in advance. But, but, but, but, err, one of the great things about the Solution Camps is that, that is sort of is slightly more informal ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... I think. In the sense that the, the, the firms or, or, or the external guys tend to think, well, no. It is only students, so now I sound patronizing but, but I think they actually think like this. Ok, these are students, maybe we'll get some good ideas, maybe they are totally wild, and have crazy ideas. But let's see, let's see what happens. And that I think sometimes lowers the barriers because it's like, instead of, err, a group of students develop, trying to develop something its, its err, you know university, university employees and so on, it takes on a more sort, they really must know what they are talking about and they must take it serious so in that sense it becomes you, you, you increase the, err, threshold so to speak, and it is like, you know, if we engage in this we must be really serious about it. Because, you know, err, otherwise it's... I-I'm thinking that there is this sort of, err, there is this sort of, it, it alters the mental, mmm, barrier...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... so to speak. Err, for the, erhm, err, for the, for the external partners. It is like: we can try this out but, but we haven't committed ourselves. Whereas, if you actually give, engage with the researchers some-some-sometimes it is on a very sort of informal way, like, there has been a particular piece of research or development were done and there is a workshop for dissemination so you just go there and, and you can then just, you know, network with the other guys and go

away and shake your head. And that wasn't it for me. But ok, it was worth looking at. Whereas, if you start, if you actually start, in, in, in a model like this, if, if, if the start to, if, if, if money starts to become involved somehow, you know, it is a more serious commitment of time and resources and so on, and, and therefore I think in terms of, in terms of, erhm, in, I mean, the Solution Camps can be useful in their own right for, for the firms who are directly involved but I think they are even more important in relation to, err, improving the brand and the standing of, of the university in relation to the external partners on the one hand but also in terms of branding erhm, they'll find out that, you know, the students are serious and creative and useful and also, you know, all the things we would like graduates from this program ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... to be so, so therefore, it, it, it, it, it, it's, it's, it's may-maybe the last bit is not directly part of a Triple Helix kind of thing but, but certainly something that promotes in the long term, err, knowledge collaboration I think. Erhm, I am not quite sure whether they answered your question but ...

**MM:** Yeah, I think it did

**HH:** ok good

**11:38**

**MM:** Erhm, so what are some of the issue with Triple Helix?

**HH:** I-I think, I think some of the, I think some of the issue is, is the, erhm, is the organizational framework around which collaboration takes place. You could either have a so, and, and, and there are like two, I guess they are like two models and I, and, and both have their strengths and weaknesses, the one model is the one that is very organized, that is the one where you have a setup like partnerships so we sign an agreement us and Visit North Jutland and, erhm, whoever represents the private sector that, that in itself in this case would be difficult, because I am not aware of the fact that, whether there is a, I mean, there wouldn't be a, a, an association of tourism firms in North Jutland but then maybe let's just take, you know, the, the, the big attractions in Jutland or something, some sort of private body and then you have an ongoing collaboration for, for a period of time which of course creates stability and trust and so on, which, which, which is all very helpful, but, but, but perhaps also could, you know, tend to become, you know, i-it tends to, to, to settle into a particular trajectory so it goes in one direction rather than, and, and ignoring other possibilities ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... because it is not as if, you know, neither Visit, Visit Nor, Visit North Jutland, the private firms nor the university re-invent themselves every six months. We, I-I keep saying the same thing as I did two years ago by and large. It sort of takes a direction but basically we do this same thing so therefore if you have a long term collaboration you get stability, you get trust and in that sense perhaps promote change, err, more easily but it also tend to be set along a particular, particular direction. Whereas, and that is the other option, err, which would be a sort of temporary collaboration around a project so that would be a Triple Helix not as an organization but more as an as a sort of something you do in relation to a particular, erhm, attempt to, to create innovation for instance ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... erhm, there you have the advantage of it being very very targeted, its, this particular thing you want to (cough) bring about changing, but then of course, and that can be very useful a very intensive kind of knowledge, knowledge sharing but it also ends, then suddenly the money runs out and, and everyone disappears in, in different directions and maybe, you know, is the momentum kept, kept up is the development, err, just so, just sort, just sort of phffff (blowing air), mhm, largely disappear, err, so, so, so there are like pros and cons but I'm, I'm, I'm thinking this sort of ability over time versus the ability to, to, to adopt, adapt, adapt, to different, erhm, situation and you challenge this and so on, is, is the trade-off, I don't think there is any one solution to this ...

**MM:** mhm

**HH:** ... it is just, you know, it is very much a case of what fits that destination at this point in time, and what the actors they have in terms of preferences, and so on, err.

### 15.36

**MM:** Err, ok what is next, what about knowledge sharing in Triple Helix interaction?

**HH:** hmm, what, that's a, that's a really good question, I think it is a central question in the sense, that, that, the, a-a-a-a-lot of how Triple Helix is supposed to work revolves around this are you able, are you able to share knowledge and, and, and I'm thinking, I'm generally thinking that the one of difficulties here, on a sort of micro-level what, what, what creates the difficulties in making this work, is the fact that, erhm, mmmm, to some extent, the, the, the, the participant if you think about Triple Helix in relation to tourism tend to, tend to speak different languages like, you know, like the erhm, heavy and complicated language of the academic on the one side, and, and, the much more practical work that, that a lot of the small firms will inhabit and, and therefore, its, its really important, err, I think this particular model here, with the role of the intermediary like, like, like the Visit Something, that they are able to on one hand understand what the, err, the academics come up with. Even though we try to be, you know, clear and not use bizarre words and, and all the rest of it, err, we still, err, we still look at things in different ways, and, and one of the things, I'm, I mean one of the things that is worthwhile doing is of course that exactly this we look at it from a different angle. But sometimes looking at it from up here makes the picture seem really really strange if you stand down here and you are a firm and you can't really see it, err, you know, the, the role, of, of, of, of, of, of say Visit North Jutland becomes enormously important as a translator ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... like a lot of these guys out there have degrees, some of them have our degrees, that, you know, people we, we've been supervising over the years so they know how we speak and what we, when Anette says this, this is what it means translated into, because they are, they, they, they are a part of another language they, they are in a sense part of two language communities if you like, they are also able to speak with, erhm, speak with the firm, so therefore I think this sort of translation exercise is, is really important. You don't get the same problem if you go to big engineering firms and car companies and so on because the guys you'd meet there if you were a university working with, say design or electronics and so on, the guys you'd meet there in the

private firms would be your own graduates or the graduates of other universities, so, so, so this is why the sort of translator role I think is really important ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... erhm

**19:08**

**MM:** Err, if we talk about Denmark, so how do you see this Triple Helix interaction in the future?

**HH:** in, in relation to tourism?

**MM:** yes

**HH:** Erhm, I'm thinking, that, that, that, in some ways in recent years, like the last five, ten years or so, err, firstly there's been an important increase in, in, in the number of people engaged in, in the, both in tourism research and, and delivering study programs like, like the one you are at, there is a, somewhat similar one at Southern Denmark, and, and, and, and so on and so forth, err, so, so there are more people working on this at the one hand and on the other hand their role as potentially usual, useful collaborators is increasingly ...

**19:57 – 20:49: interruption**

**HH:** ... OK, let's see where we were erhm ...

**MM:** Triple Helix

**HH:** In Denmark, yes,

**MM:** yes

**HH:** and then what has had changed, and what I was about to say was that its gradually, we've come to a state where both the public bodies like, the ministry and Visit this-that-and-the-other, both at the regional and local level increasingly recognize that, that the knowledge institutions can be useful collaboration partners, and also, which is a new thing that only goes back, like two or three years, err, or four perhaps the, the, the private sector organization that represents hotels and restaurants and what not, erhm, increasingly recognize that we are interesting too which is great of course so you, in theory you have the Triple Helix kind of thing this sounds like a sort of national level Triple Helix, it doesn't quite function like that in my view because the, erhm, the private guys have very very little, err, very relatively weak links to their own members in terms of what, what if they can't kind of, you know, they, th-the-the, they don't get the the knowledge institutions into contact with, erhm, the, err, with erhm, with, err, with with their members. It's like its only at the very top-level national-level kind of thing, or possibly local level kind of thing. So it's, it's getting better but its, we are not quite there, err, part of this of course is that the, err, you know, the, err, the, the national interest organizations are, err, what is the word? In a sense a kind of translators just like, just, they are in the same role as, the, they know damn well that if, if they send the average tourist academic out to speak to the average member, hmm, it is not necessarily something that is going to be a great success. So that is part of it but, but but, erhm, I don't know, I'm, erhm, I'm, I'm, I'm still thinking that in terms of err, its, its, it, its still very much if you think of it as three partners you still have a large public sector, a large private

sector and, and, and, we have as knowledge, as, as knowledge institutions a very limited role still ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... we accept, we, we accept ...

**MM:** (coughing)

**HH:** ... the sense that it seem to be good and they love the fact that we are so many people and we do so many interesting things yet they keep ignoring us for all sorts of reasons because they have their own kind of things they think ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... are important, and, and, err, their own agendas and, and so on, so ...

**23:49**

**MM:** But how do you think it can be changed?

**HH:** I am thinking the most important way of changing is exactly what we are doing just at the moment, err, namely, we have concrete projects and collaborations, err, in this case funded by the so-called innovation, 'innovationsfond' innovation foundation I guess. Erhm, (coughing), where we actually work, do research on things relating to innovation in coastal tourism on one hand and have an ongoing dialogue with, you know, public and private, erhm, private firms and, and, and public destination organizations about the research, the results and so on. So I think, con, the only way of actually getting to the point where, you know, seeing is not believing, doing is in a sense, sys, or, or experiencing that this is actually quite use, this could be put to, to, to, to use in the firms as well. I think its, is, is, is what matters. ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... so doing specific projects I think is the only way forward

**MM:** Okay

**25:04**

**MM:** Err, ok, if you take Aalborg University ...

**HH:** Mhm

**MM:** ... I mean, right now, what is their role in there, is it just projects or .. ?

**HH:** Err, well, we ki, we, we, we kind of have several roles in a sense that, that, that the, err, in the sense that, err, in the sense that on one hand we are involved in, in this type of project, project and have been for the last 10-15 years or so and currently, and Anette Therkelsen is the, err, leader of a, un, a, an, a national project that involves not just Aalborg but also Copenhagen Business School, Roskilde University, and Southern Denmark University, and others, about innovation, in, in, in coastal tourism and that's just, you know, the biggest of, of a series of projects we've done over the years. And in parallel with this we've then sat on a number of, err, national in a sense Triple Helix type committees err, like the, err, the Board of Visit Nordjylland like the, erhm, things like, err, the, err, being being part of, of, of , of the, erhm, err, the, the, the,

the group that organizes annual meetings between the industry, err, ministry, and, and tourist researchers in, erhm, in Copenhagen we have a sort of on Tourism day, the international tourism day, we have this sort of tradition of going to the Stock Exchange and debating some sort of topic on the basis of presentations from researchers on the one hand, and the guys from the, the, the, the public and private side of the tourism industry, err, on, on the other. So we are trying to make contributions ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... in a variety of ways, but if you look at it as terms of what do we spend our time on its certainly much more projects than it is this sort of high-level, high-level thing. I think.

**27:18**

**MM:** So, err, do you collaborate more with the 'visit' organizations or private sector?

**HH:** if you count it up there is the, the, the number of, the, I think that the, it's the 'visit' organizations that would win by some distance but it also depends on what, what, what's the definition of how do you measure, like ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... if you measure in like how many, tim, hours you spend at the meeting tables the visit-guys wins ...

**MM:** Yearh

**HH:** ... with a far distance obviously, but some of the project are actually about, you know, wha, where, wha, wha, where you go out and speak to firms and businesses and what not and the results are more, relev, are easily as relevant for the private businesses as, as for the visit organization, so, so, so I guess the visit organizations are important, but, but indirectly often the firms are also very important ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... erhm

**28:20**

**MM:** But how much of the projects that you do, err, are kind of being implemented with the ..

**HH:** That, that's a very, that's a very good question and that that really depends, that varies a lot from project to project. Some projects have had a very sort of direct, direct impacts on what the visit organizations were doing in terms of marketing strategies and, and, and so on. Other projects were, like creating a catalogue of various ways of, there was a big project which Anette also headed up on, on, on, on holiday homes and the possible innovation or changing, of, of, of the way holiday homes are, err, (coughing) organized and the holiday home areas and so on, and that was, that was more a series of potential blueprints like, it could be like this, it could be like, it could be like this this on the one hand and there was a, sort of, consumer study as well on how the users of holiday homes see, err, see things, err, so, erhm, so, so and, and, and some of these things are sort of, if you think about it we've done a lot of studies, and Annette in particular and Bodil as well, on, on the consumer side of things, which is like, you know, a kind of background



information. It is very difficult to see is it implemented or is it not. Do they take it into account? Sometimes we can see it, sometimes we, err, we can't, sometimes I guess we even suspect they, they shake their heads and, the, and ignore it. Err, so, so, so in that sense it, its, it, its not as if everything we do gets, trans, gets, gets, translated into action on the ground erhm, I think there is much more emphasis on sort of in a sense inspa, inspiring and showing new ways ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... which may then be picked up either immediately or perhaps a bit later, erhm, I guess

**MM:** OK, I think i'm, I'm out of questions

**HH:** and, in which case can I then answer a question you didn't answer, or rather ...

**MM:** Yes

**HH:** Erhm, sorry ask, or rather, elaborate on the last bit because I think a lot, a lot of the things in terms of imple, having an effe, the research having an effect is actually the way it tends to, to influence the thinking in the Visit ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... organizations about what are the understanding, what are the issues, why didn't it work when we tried to do this. On the one hand so we will try to do something else, err, next time around, erhm, and also kind of, you know, broadening their mindset they tend to, you know, people tend, if people are good at something they tend to keep doing it, and, and refining it, kind of, sometimes we come in from, from, from a different angle and ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... and, and, err, help them think in, think in different ways I guess

**MM:** Yearh, but in my experience it's like the visit organizations can change their thinking and ...

**HH:** Mhm

**MM:** ... you know, find new things but it ...

**HH:** Mhm

**MM:** ... its problem with the firms

**HH:** That, that is absolutely correct, that is absolutely right, I am sorry it's my phone, it is ringing like mad today

**MM:** (laughter) it is fine

**HH:** Normally, I go several days without it ringing at all

**MM:** But just today

**HH:** Yearh, Yearh Yearh

**32:01**

**MM:** But I mean, how could that be changed that it's the firms that ...

**HH:** Mhm

**MM:** ... kind of change their thinking too

**HH:** I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm thinking partly if we have more projects with more extensive involvement from firms that would be ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... that would be nice, but I think the way to, to reach this is still to go through the visit, the visit organizations, and the visit organizations bringing knowledge institutions and the firms together and, and, and the firms discovering that these guys aren't as bad as you would ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... as, as we thought, because there is a lot of sort of mutual prejudice like, you know, small tourist firms are, are not innova, not innovative, have fewer, ha, have, err, want to keep lifestyle businesses, want to keep doing what they've always done and so on, and,

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... and, true, some are like that, others are completely different, erhm, so, it is about trying to reach out to, to, to, to the guys who do want to do something slightly, slightly different

**MM:** Yeah

**HH:** Erhm, but then again, it is also like, you know, the ones who are really, really innovative often like, you know, (in a whisper) they don't need the university, they don't need public policy, they just need to be left alone and do their thing. It is the guys there in the middle I think are, are the interesting ones ...

**MM:** Mhm

**HH:** ... I think those are the ones where, where, where some sensible policies might make a difference, erhm, yeah, OK

**MM:** Yeah, thank you (laughter) ok, and now I have to figure out how to turn it off.

## Appendix 2

### Interview with Jesper Thinnesen

*MM – Maarja Metsaots*

*JT – Jesper Thinnesen*

**00:00**

**MM:** ... Should be working.

**JT:** Yeah

**00:01**

**MM:** So, umm, what is it that you do?

**JT:** What I do? Umm, basically I have my own company, working with innovation and creativity. And , umm, I've been on the university for quite some time because I've been an external lecturer, but, umm, when you have a five years period it's kind of over, so for some years now I've been connected to the university, but I'm not employed.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** But I think they are gonna do that right now.

**MM:** OK

**JT:** But a half time employee here and then I can still run my own company.

**MM:** Mhm

**JT:** As a consultant.

**00:34**

**MM:** Yeah so what is it that your company does?

**JT:** umm, basically teach innovation, creativity...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Talk to companies, municipalities, do workshops, try to crack some problems that they have, maybe teach them some methods within creativity, you know...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So basically creativity and innovation.

**00:54**

**MM:** Ok. So why do you think these innovation workshops are important?

**JT:** Yeah, oh, I think there's a lot of things that's important within innovation. Innovation is quite interesting because it's been around for like forever, 30-35 years or something. People don't even quite know, a lot of people don't know yet what it is I think...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So, umm, I think it's interesting to maybe put some more creativity, put some more skill into it maybe with working together, qui... Reinvent some kind of innovation maybe more, umm, pointed towards teaching, universities, high schools, you know college and so on. Umm, and I think it's important because universi... Umm, innovation is kind of as basic tool, you know it doesn't matter if you are on a history course or you are economy course, I think innovation is important for every student.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So that's why innovation is important, because... Innovation workshops, because...

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** It really is a broad skillset, that everybody need I think, because it's also good for the state that, you know, and the school and the university, you know, you mentioned the Triple Helix of course. Its kind of cover...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... all of the stuff there's... So yeah, that's a lot of good things.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** Yeah.

**02:14**

**MM:** What about the, umm, bad things? Is there any? (Laughter)

**JT:** Yeah sometimes there is, because, umm... People are very different. And innovation is still, I think, in my opinion, a lot of things to do about open up, talk to each other, dare do things that you maybe normal don't do so. I don't think everybody are so confident with working with innovation...

**MM:** Mhm

**JT:** So you really need to work with some people, need them to open up, and some people find it very difficult. So maybe they'll have a very bad experience working with innovation, maybe they'll just say no no it's nothing for me and so on...

**MM:** Yeah

**JT:** So what is very hard about innovation is it's, you really have to, umm, tackle it very different from person to person. So there is bad things. Sometimes you... There's also kind of hard to work with innovation, because you meet a lot of people's are like: ahhh, ohh we don't like it, its bullshit, you know...

**MM:** Mhm

**JT:** ...it's crazy, so we really have to say: no come on, come on. And we'll have to do it in different ways so...

**03:13**

**MM:** Yeah. So is it harder with bigger groups then? Or is it easier?

**JT:** Ohhh, it's really depends of what you want to do. If you want to make a workshop...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...then I think it's easier with bigger groups, then again that depends on what is a big group. Because WOFIE is really...

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** ... huge. That's 200 people. Umm, normal when we have Solution Camp it's about 20 people.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** And I can feel with the method I am using, it's basically creative platform from Aalborg University, then it's from 12 or less, or less than 12 then it's little bit hard to get this energy...

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** ... sharing knowledge. But still of course you can do innovation two, one, four, five and a lot of smaller companies have to do that, so it's, it's different, difficult to say. But you have to use different tools.

**04:00**

**MM:** Yeah. Umm, so... So what is the role of the students in these workshops? Is it just to think of new ideas or...

**JT:** Again it depend, because some, some workshop is mainly where they have to come up with new ideas...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...some workshops, workshops are more like they have to learn new methods within creativity, some workshops are kind of a mix of that. And if we have Solution camps, the matchmaking here the Aalborg University, then it's more to make matchmaking between companies and students, and them the other things is kind of a spinoff, their ideas, their methods...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... and so on. So it really depends. But you can do everything, but then role of the students is of course to participate, be open minded, come with all their knowledge, umm, feel free to share their knowledge and hopefully do that, that's their role, but...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...there is a lot purpose in different workshops we do at university, so... Basically it's a little bit hard to say. They have different roles.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** Just ask if I don't answer enough, because is really sometimes, some of the answers are hard to say yes-no to.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** So you just, umm, if I have to elaborate (inaudible)

**05:13**

**MM:** Umm, so how much do you interact with for example government or obviously a lot with the university, but...

**JT:** Yeah.

**MM:** and the companies?

**JT:** The government maybe not so much, because, umm, it's basically university, companies...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...of course students.

**05:32**

**MM:** Yeah. But what about for example, this regional things like, for example VisitAalborg or kommunes or...

**JT:** Yeah. Of course we have, umm, some workshops with the Aalborg municipality. We have workshops regarding what we all Region Nordjylland, which is also kind of a government institution I would say.

**MM:** Mhm

**JT:** So yes, and basically a lot of what we do are actually funded, you can say, by the government. It's by the EU.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Or by the Region Nordjylland, which also are from the EU.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** So it is funded, that's of course because they, they really know how important innovation is and also because Northern Jutland, could be something called Udkantsdanmark...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** It could be a little bit hard to get workplaces up here, and umm, educated, umm, work power. So then we get maybe a little bit more money from the government to make workshops, umm, training courses and so on up here. But basically, I think mainly we work with government is

because they want us to do something, they want us to maybe make connections between companies and students...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...In northern part of Jutland. And then they have the funding for it, give us the funding.

**06:44**

**MM:** Okay. So it's just mainly funding?

**JT:** Yeah. Of course we have done some workshop with, with the government with the, we have one now where we have to something called Access to Innovation, but they want to make, umm, what you call... Optimize refugee camps...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... around in the world. And that's kind of an government plan, but they also have a lot of private company, they have some, umm, municipality from Aalborg is in here. Umm, we have done some, umm, educational, umm, what do you call that? Ministry something.

**MM:** Education ministry?

**JT:** Yeah...

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** I think you call it that. So they are there, but not so much...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... because, basically what I do is like smaller companies, but also municipalities, private and with the Solution Camp.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** But Solution Camp is mainly to make matchmaking between the companies and students.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Umm, but it's funded by government.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** So I think that's the classic Triple Helix sometimes that the government know they importance and they know they students is gonna be part of the government...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Hopefully work in Denmark and hopefully be, be more innovative and also the, umm, the companies, so, so that's why they are gonna fund it I think.

**07:56**

**MM:** Yeah. But do the companies understand how important it is to ...

**JT:** Umm, not always, I think. But that's easy for me to say, because companies think a lot about the money of course.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** And, it, that's always little bit funny about innovation, because I always say, how can you afford not to be innovative. And then they say how can I afford to take two days and do this?

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** And that's of course easy for me to say because I am funded in a way and they are not.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** So they really have, so I understand that, but I, I really honestly believe that not every company, umm, understand the importance of innovation.

**MM:** Mhm

**JT:** That they, they look at it a little bit short terms, so I think they can be better at that. But a lot of companies know that and want to work with the university, students and so on. And they can see the long term benefits of that.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** But a lot of companies are not good at innovation, they don't know the importance, they don't know how to come up with the ideas, they don't know how to, umm, you know, see the value in ideas, they don't know how to, umm, test their idea on the customers, and so on. So they are not very good at innovation.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Sadly. I think, umm, so there's a long way to go, but still just I can see it's just being more and more important in Denmark.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** See it with the workshops, with the creative thinking and so on, and so on. But yes, a lot of companies, I don't think they see it...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** They think it's important, but they don't know how to it.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** They know innovation is important, but they don't know what it is. (Inaudible)

**09:25**

**MM:** But do you also do workshops where there's just the people from a company?

**JT:** Yeah. That's mainly when I do it with my own company.

**MM:** Mhm.



**JT:** Because when we do it with university and it funded, that kind of the purpose with the matchmaking.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** Student-company. And when I do it it's of course my own company and then I do it because the company want to have new ideas and they want to teach some creative innovation methods and so on. So of course the companies who want that is (inaudible) want to do something with innovation of course. Probably a lot of companies do a lot of stuff, but still it is basically with companies, municipalities alone when I do it.

**10:01**

**MM:** Okay. But is there a different when you do it with the just companies and the students?

**JT:** Yeah I think so, I think so. I think mainly the students are more positive...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...towards innovation. Maybe a director of a company say: Now we need innovation and he makes this big workshop and you can see a lot of his employees don't think they need innovation. Not in the way I'm doing it...

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** ... at least so. While students are more open-minded, they can see that this is cool, this is nice...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... this is new techniques, tools we can use. And they are more positive, but of course it's very, very different, some students don't like it either, and so on. So...

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** Umm, so it is different. But you can say in a way when you, when I am working with company then its more about, umm, tools, the problems. When I work with the students its more about the matchmaking, so it's...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... kind of two aims, even though we are actually starting to, umm, move that a little bit, because we, umm, we have some connection now with some of the students around here and some of the lectors they really want to have more innovation and creativity. So they're gonna, so we gonna have a whole classes now, where they attend Solution Camp. It's not like that in the older days, because then was just like voluntary, some from...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...umm, distu..., umm, from this direction, some from this direction, so we really mixed today. We have a lot of Solution Camp but it's from one direction.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** From example tourism and so on.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** And that's very cool, because then you can start to put in some teaching, umm, and that that's a (inaudible) is important, but we haven't done it yet, because there was not the aim, the aim was to make matchmaking.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So I think we are, e-e-e-evolving a little bit and maybe we can do some more, maybe get some more funding, because now we can get more important and we can maybe get a bit more connected to the university, because they are gonna use us now, for...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... for like, umm, the skillset, creativity and innovation. So, so hopefully that will change a little bit. I hope. Let's see. Yeah.

**11:54**

**MM:** Mhm. But I mean if you, with the ideas for example they come up in this workshop...

**JT:** Yeah.

**MM:** ... do you think the companies take it more seriously when it's, umm, like when the people who work for them came up with it, or when it was the students?

**JT:** No I actually think it's very even, because, umm, the companies know that a lot of the students have maybe a more open-minded, umm, way of thinking, some of the students actually know more than the company, because they have access to the new knowledge and the company know that.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** They, they both need like new young blood sometimes you can say that, but they also need new knowledge and maybe some of the companies don't have either.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** So they take it very seriously, I think. I don't think they, umm, they just look at the ideas and, and basically it's a method we're using, it's very ...

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** ... difficult to see whether ideas come from, is it from a student or from, umm, umm, employee. That's the kind of the method, because that's not important, it's the idea that it's important so.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** So no, I don't think that.

**13:02**

**MM:** Okay, I think you've answered some of the questions here. Okay, umm, do you think and how do these workshops improve the Triple Helix interaction with the government and companies and university?

**JT:** Yeah, the Triple Helix that's easiest like government and, umm, and companies and, umm, and, umm, university or some... You can say it's like, umm, what do you call it, a chain of value in a way...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... because when... I've seen some problems in the university when you teach innovation and creativity, because it's not in our culture, and that's because of our school system. So in a way you really have to start in a school system, where they are young, start to teach creativity and innovation so they used to it and so on so forth. And what happens with those guys, those guys of course finish school, maybe go to high school, maybe go to university and then they go out and work in Denmark or Estonia or wherever. And of course that's a benefit for the industry and for the government.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Because if you have strong innovative industry, umm, then you, umm, in Denmark we need that because we have high salary, so you need really innovative people, yeah.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** To pay the high taxes, to have the welfare system and government running and so on. So we are based on the high umm, what do you call it? People in Denmark are quite educated, high education, that's our society, you need to sustain that you really need innovation, I think. And umm, industry also, they also need to be very innovative, because we don't have a lot of, like, of course we have some farming and fishing...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... and those things, but baibli... basically it is like, you call it, umm knowledge companies, industry...

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** ... so we really need innovation. So the kind of the Triple Helix is really important, also you need the university to kind of use their knowledge in the industry, we shouldn't be kind of an ivory tower, where the students are in here, teaching things and maybe when they finish they come out there, this, this thing about mixing them before the... The sooner the better the students can come out to the companies, I think.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** That's my personally, umm, attitude to towards... that's important, because then they can put their knowledge out in the company and the company can give them knowledge. Of course they also need knowledge from univer... university. And the better they are in the industry, the companies, the better the government will do also, so Triple Helix I think it's important within innovation of course. Umm, that's what the whole society is based on, in Denmark I know also a lot of other...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...European countries to be sure. So, umm, It's, it's about making this culture I think, because you can say that, that the university students are the coming leaders of..

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** Or the future leaders of this companies and in the government, so...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So yes it is really important.

**MM:** Umm, let me see what else do I have here. I think you have answered most of the questions.

**JT:** Yeah, but you just ask again.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** Because sometimes it can be hard to answer short on those questions, because (laughter) it's very interesting.

**16:19**

**MM:** Okay, so how important are these workshops in the innovation process, for example a company? Or if they're important?

**JT:** Yeah, that's hard for me to say. I can only say from my own perspective, but sometimes the workshop can be kind of the eye opener...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... for innovation because it's very difficult for, umm, company to say suddenly the, the company director say now we need innovation, we need to do that and that. And then he have to teach it, he have to do it. Maybe he's not an expert. If you make a workshop where you kind of involving most of the company, then it's easier to use the tools and use the culture...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... afterwards. So in my older times as a consultant we have some, umm, teaching sessions, some workshops, and call what you want them, three-four days and maybe one from each company would maybe there were 20 people from 20 company. And what we experienced was very difficult for those people to come home and say: ooh, I did this great course...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... now you, now I have to teach you. They couldn't do that. So I think, I con... I use workshops a lot, if the company agree of course, to have a lot of people gather it, like WOFIE in a way, just of course more oriented of creativity and innovation...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...then they all there maybe one day, two days. So they all get the tools and see if they like it. So in that, umm, in that part I think workshops can be very important. And of course practical,

they can have new ideas of course, if they have workshop for students, with other people. Maybe some of the, umm, company employees never say anything because they're not allowed to do it...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...but they're very clever because they're down in the production, they know everything about production, but they don't have a director who, umm, say that's ok, he doesn't care, so we have a workshop ,umm, with the right tools then suddenly all the knowledge from other parts of the company can, umm, evolve...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...and they can see it, so that's also important about a workshop. So there's some practical things but also the it's, it's a good way to start the culture, I think, if they like it. So yes I think workshops are very important, but again it's also difficult but quite... you have to shut down for one or two days.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** That's quite expensive also for some companies, umm, so. Workshops I think you should use sometimes. And then hopefully they can carry on their ideas and the tools on their own smaller divisions, (inaudible) companies, maybe they have a develop team, so on. So workshops are important I think, because it's actually quite difficult to make a workshop, to facilitate a workshop. Umm, and lot of companies can't do that. Also when you ask are they good at innovation, probably not and if they are they are not very good at teaching innovation, so...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** they're setting some people who maybe have innovative skills and that's not enough. So yeah. Umm, workshops are quite important.

**19:16**

**MM:** Have you gotten any feedback from the companies or...?

**JT:** Yes I have got feedback and umm, basically, umm, every company likes it and they think it's great and nobody don't like innovation. Of course some of the skills or tools I use are not for everybody, but basically the feedback is it's, it's not easy to go out and do those...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...things, to facilitate workshops, to use the creative tools. It takes some, some, umm, years of experience. Of course I know that, but, umm, but also some of the tools are very easy, you know the feedba... How, how didn't we come up with that before, so it, is it just so simple? Yes it is, it's simple, you know. So I got a lot of feedback, umm, basically positive feedback, umm, companies would like to do it, but they just don't know how.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So they really want tools. Umm, practical, easy tools. Umm, and of course also workshop is a good why for the company to meet students. If we are just sitting around on the table like we do, you know, maybe there's four-five students and the company, that's maybe a little bit different setup. But when I have a workshop like working together, you know...

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** ... a little bit like you tried in WOFIE.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** But not so much. We do it more like break down barriers, they have to feel comfortable with each other. Imagine you're a young student with a older director or something. That can be a little bit difficult, so they really need to open up. So they have a whole day where they are working together and that's a good thing for the company to see the students. Okay I really like this group, I like this person, she is very clever, I want to work more with that girl.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** That's maybe a bit more easier than, umm... workshop, than it is when you're talking on the phone and you're emailing or you're just sitting at one hour meeting. So workshops can be really good also, at Solution Camp here we do the matchmaking, it's a whole different way to work with the students.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** For the companies I think. That's a really great thing about it also.

**21:13**

**MM:** Umm, what about the knowledge sharing process? What is the...

**JT:** Knowledge sharing process... Yeah, but one of the theory actually in our way of using creativity is that creativity is sharing knowledge.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Its part of creativity to share knowledge. And of course if you want to share knowledge, it's very difficult because we are all different. Maybe you think you know a lot and you think you're very clever and good at stuff, and then you don't have a problem with sharing knowledge, because if you're up here, maybe you are working with a person who not used to share knowledge...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...don't think they know a lot of stuff, so they're just more quiet and don't wanna share knowledge. That's one thing, one thing is people don't like to share knowledge, because knowledge is power. Maybe a little bit old fashion way to, umm, to look at the world, but those guys are out there, because if you won't share knowledge you don't make innovation, but they don't know that they use it as a power. So, about sharing knowledge, it is, it's about making the right platform you really have to... people need to meet...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... on the right platform. Okay, I know the theory have got a little bit crazy platform. But that's also a part of it. You really need the right tools and platform.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** People need to be safe among each other. They shouldn't, the, the new young employee or the new young student shouldn't be afraid to say something to the director.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** And, and be afraid of the director think she's stupid or something. Because that's a common thing, we don't wanna appear stupid.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** Of course not. Then maybe sometimes we better just shut up. Maybe you have a culture in a company when if you say something wrong people will almost hit you in the head or something, you know. That kind of culture.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So you really have to with some companies to work a lot about sharing knowledge, they're not used to it, also students.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So that's again about culture. If you have this culture from smaller classes, it's kind of solving itself, because everybody go to school. Somebody stop at the normal school, somebody continue at college, somebody come to university and so on. But then you gonna crab the society if you get them in school. That's something they are working a lot about in Denmark hope to get more creativity and innovation in the school system also. It's a long way to go but still, instead of starting at the wrong way at the universities and then maybe work it down. I like that concept, because then it's gonna solve itself, because then people are gonna come out in the companies, they're used to sharing knowledge in the school system, they're encouraged to think that way. Of course you cannot do it like this (flicks finger), it takes time, but I think we are going that way, but, but people are very different and you have to acknowledge that.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So, sharing knowledge process are really, really difficult.

**23:38**

**MM:** Yeah. You mentioned that this students now they have like fresher information...

**JT:** Yeah.

**MM:** ... and skills and things like that, but do you think the companies they're perceptive to this new knowledge coming in and...

**JT:** Yeah, they are. Again it's of course two different very... You can have a, umm, tourist student, she knows probably a lot about tourism, she has some new stuff which the company don't know...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...with tourism, but the company of course is really, umm, have a lot of knowledge about using it and organizations having a company, economy and so on. So they still, of course, are the student maybe don't know a lot about being in a company, but they have a lot of knowledge which the company could use. The company have a lot of knowledge about being in a company...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... but maybe they need the new knowledge from the university. The scientist at the university come up with stuff, the corporation at the university comes up with a lot of stuff which the company maybe not... don't have. Especially if the company know they're good at networking, you know, talking with other company, where should they get it from. So I think they take it very serious, they know the students have something...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...they could use, but the students also know that the company have something they can use. So you just have to learn from each other. Of course it's not every student who knows more than the companies, some students don't know so much maybe as you expect them to, some know a lot, and probably has something to do about what they are reading I think. I think if you're economy student, this is of course my own perception, I don't know, I don't know how much you know there you can teach hard core, umm, company about economy. I don't know, but if you're tourism student, if you're student within, I don't know, some other fields, umm, design and development, I think you can have a lot of new tools to a company. So, I think they take it very serious, that's what I have seen at the least I can say.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** At the Solution Camp, the company take it serious.

**25:32**

**MM:** Yeah. But what about the government institutions?

**JT:** Yeah, that's a good question (Laughter). I really don't know. I, I... This is again... This is my own opinion, you can't...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** From my own experience... I think government institutions have some problems. For example municipalities, they really like to be innovative, but they have so many rules from the government, they also of course are part of the government, they have so many rules and so many restrictions, they have a really hard time working with innovation. Innovation says somethings, sometimes to take some risks, to do something, ok we have to do it now, and that is somethings doesn't fit very well with the government institutions.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Cause it's big, it's huge, it takes time. They're maybe always under pressure right now and so on, been under pressure for many years. So the government inst... Governmental institutions have a really hard time with innovation, in my experience. They like it, but they really don't know how to do it.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So, again I think one of the solution, really long term solution is again we have to start with the future employer of the governments, you know. We have to make the whole country, more a culture, where it's more creative.



**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** So then of course it would also spread up. It's really a matter of time I think, if, if you (inaudible) a lot about innovation, creativity, because they will be there and some kind. But the governments have a hard time, and there's a lot of explanation for that, well aware of it. It's not, it's maybe not because they don't want it, but it's really hard for them. It's easier for a company. Company are far more innovative and open-minded...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...and take it more fast. Students also, but government institutions are really though...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... slow. And that's a paradox, you can say, at the university they want to be innovative but that's really hard in a university if you ask me.

**27:27**

**MM:** But do you think it depends of the industry too? Like depending which industry it is? Because I used to work in this Visit-organization...

**JT:** Yeah.

**MM:** ...and that's a government institution...

**JT:** Mhm.

**MM:** ...and they were really trying to get all the companies to be innovative...

**JT:** Yeah.

**MM:** ...they used students and everything, but the companies were the ones who were kind of reluctant.

**JT:** Yeah, I think you probably have some, some example in this way. Also because as I know it the Visit... VisitDenmark, VisitAalborg and so on are quite new, it's a quite new focus on the...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Umm, or, at least again it's kind of a new focus on, umm, tourism because we really need more tourism, we've not been very good at it, at least as I know, but you probably know more about that. So, now we really wanna focus on tourism, say Denmark, Denmark is good at. So probably they have some, make also smaller institution, people really are into innovation, where, umm, if you take a municipality, I know in municipality is a huge organization and so on. I think it's different but you, yeah, probably you have some other examples, but I-i-i don't...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...know, umm, like I said before not every industry or companies are good at innovation either.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** Of course if you have two players who won't like it or don't know how to do it then you really have a problem of course.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** But if you have one who can do, maybe they can push a little bit to the industry. But I-i-I think the government in the Triple Helix are more heavy than the industry and so forth. Umm, they have more problems...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Umm, they more problems working with innovation because they are so restricted, there's a huge... they have to have, umm, allowance, no not allowance, you know, umm... Access or they have to say, somebody have to say yes and another have to say yes and they have to say yes and it takes like half a year and then it's really difficult to be innovative.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** But it's nice you have seen something else, because probably it is out there but in my experience the government have a hard time with innovation.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** But they like it and try it.

**29:25**

**MM:** But what about the companies, do you see a difference if it's a big company or umm, small one?

**JT:** Yeah, actually some of the bigger companies in Denmark I have worked with, for example Lego and Grundfos, they are really good at innovation, they know the... it's important.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Umm, hvo... where the smaller companies they could be very for two, three, four, ten people. They, umm, they should be really lucky if they have one or two persons who know about innovation. So in a bigger company there's a lot of people working with innovation, they have innovations human resource development, they have, umm, development departments and so on. So they have a lot of people who are really experts, where the smaller companies are really, umm, depending of networking, umm, maybe working with students, the, umm, matchmaking and so on. So I think smaller companies, umm, have a harder time. But then on the other hand, and again smaller companies are faster to take solutions of course. If they really have a good idea and so they can do like this (flicks finger) ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ...where the larger companies again, like, the government maybe have some more steps to consider and so on, so again it's a... it's a both... it can go both ways, but I think the big companies in Denmark are quite good at innovation if you ask me like that. But there are a lot of the smaller companies who aren't.

**30:43**

**MM:** Yeah. But do you think it's because of the resources, money and...

**JT:** You can call it resources, maybe not so much money, again, umm, everything comes down to money I guess, but in a smaller company, maybe it's a family owned company, maybe they don't have umm, education, not that I say education is the same as innovation, they have never worked so much with innovation, they have never networked with university, maybe none of the employees are from the university, they have never touched innovation. So if you have four-five people in this company how should you work with innovation? Then you have to teach yourself innovation that could be a little bit though. But you have a large company they probably have 20 or 25 people working with innovation every day, teaching innovation, so...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So it's of course something wi-with resources. But again if this small company suddenly have a, umm, a expert within innovation, maybe they employ an expert, because they have the money for it, then it could be a whole different way, because then it's a small company with an expert. And then it's maybe easier to, to make some innovation in the company.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** But I think small company really need to network, they really need to have, umm, knowledge from other companies. Share knowledge, that's the problem with smaller companies, they don't like to share knowledge. They like to have knowledge but they don't like to give knowledge, that's a problem by networking. And larger companies maybe don't need that, that much if you ask me.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Because they also networking. So it's depends... But I think a lot of small companies struggling with innovation because they don't have the money, they don't have the time, they don't have the, the human resources to do it.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** The knowledge... so, umm, again it's easy to say yes or no, but I would probably say all the big companies they know how to work with the innovation, for sure.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Some of the small companies do, but a lot of them don't. That's my experience. Of course I don't know every small company, but they need help.

**32:05**

**MM:** Mhm. But, umm, how do you find companies, umm, you work with?

**JT:** That's a good question, because I'm not a marketing man. I'm not good at, at market... umm, marketing, so. What I'm lucky, where I'm lucky is that I have a really, umm, broad network, because I work at a university, because I work a different places, also at the same time I have my own company, so people basically see what I do and then they ask me if I would do that.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** For them. So the company, umm... For example Lego, that's a huge company, you know, they're very famous and they attended a Solution Camp in this university. It was a special Solution

Camp with a lot of scientists and so on, but still they really loved it, so they say: would you like to come to Lego and make some Solution Camps or workshops. And I just said yes.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So I don't pinpoint them, umm... If I was a really good, umm, marketing guy then I should of course look into companies and maybe try to target some of the companies, smaller companies like, umm, talked about and say I-i-I think they probably need innovation and creativity. But I don't do that.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So...

**MM:** But you don't go out and...

**JT:** No.

**MM:** At all?

**JT:** (Inaudible) I go out, but it's only when they call me and ask...

**MM:** Okay.

**JT:** if I want to do... So that's, that's just the way I... I'm not good at marketing, don't like that, so umm. Maybe that's also why it's good for me to have a job, umm, umm, besides my own company, you know.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So I can meet some people. Also just for the economy of course, but yeah. I maybe a little bit special there. Don't use that as a guideline.

(Laughter)

**JT:** Hopefully a lot of companies are better to do that so. But it's working.

**MM:** Okay, that's good.

**JT:** That's actually working fine with my own way of thinking innovation and creativity. I don't push things.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** So, but, umm...

**34:26**

**MM:** But do you think it could be better or...

**JT:** Yeah it could be. Umm, if, if I really, umm... Again I'm only myself, but if everything goes well and I earn a lot of money I could consider hiring people, you know, make my own little company. But then of course I would have a marketing guy or a girl do that for me. I don't wanna do that. (Laughter) So it could be better yeah, if I wanted that, but, umm, I'm actually quite happy

at my own. For me it's more important to work in a institution like the Aalborg University or in a huge school. I also teach some high schools.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** Because I think I really like innovation and creativity. Then I have a much larger, larger audience. It's... I'm okay economical, I have okay economy. In Denmark you have a okay economy if you have a high education...

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** ... I think, if you get a job, it's no problem. So for me it's more important like to reach so many people as possible. And if you are in a university you have a huge network, you know institutions, company, students.

**MM:** Mhm.

**JT:** You can do WOFIE, you know, and all kind of workshops, you can work with the region, Nordjylland. So it's much more than I can do alone in my own little company.

**MM:** Okay.

**JT:** So I really like that way to have more influence, in a positive way of course. So that's why I would like to do that more. So I always have something where I work some half time beside my own company and I really like that.

**MM:** That's good. I think, I think I don't have any more questions.

**JT:** Yeah.

**MM:** Thank you.

**JT:** Yeah you're welcome. And good luck with it.

**MM:** Yeah.

**JT:** So, umm, of course I ....

## Appendix 3

### Interview with Camilla Knapp Pihl, from VisitMariagerfjord

*MM – Maarja Metsaots*

*CP – Camilla Knapp Pihl*

**00:00**

**MM:** So, this paper, err, how does your company interact with other DMO's? or, yearh, in the region, do you do something together or is it just you're on your own..

**CP:** Well, the thing is we are, erhm, a public ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... organization. Err, so we do a lot of stuff with other, both private and public, err, organizations ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... and companies, umm, we are like the official, umm, err, the, err, how do you say it, entrance to the area...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... but in that sense, we cooperate with all the others to make it a better destination for the guests ...

**MM:** Ok so ...

**CP:** does that make sense?

**MM:** Yearh

**01:13**

**MM:** So is it more branding or is it also ...

**CP:** Yearh, exactly, it's about branding the, the destination ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... to other, to guests and tourist and in order to have, err, something to brand, you know, something to, to, to do, we need to, to engage other DMO's and companies ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... and we can't lift it on our own, and we won't. It is not our business, err, it's to brand ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... all the activities and the organizations and private, err, companies.

**MM:** Yearh. (clears throat)

**01:55**

**MM:** But, erhm, is it just branding that you do or is it also kind of guide, yearh, if you do branding then you kind of guide the companies there too, but how does, how does that work, is it like, could it be better, or?

**CP:** It could be a lot better. Erhm, we know what's trending within tourism ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... what the guests want, what, what, erhm, what, what guests find attractive and what they want from their holiday, err, and, then we cooperate with, err, private sector mostly, erhm, to meet those goals ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... erhm, to see ok, there's a big request for hiking, ok, how can we, err, brand our destination in hiking ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... err, or biking, or, err food, err, what's, what initiatives can we do to make our destination attractive within these parameters.

**MM:** Ok, err...

**CP:** Let me know if it doesn't make sense

**MM:** Yearh, no it does, I'm just trying to figure out what I was trying to say (laughing)

**CP:** (laughing) Sorry.

**03:17**

**MM:** But err, do you think that the companies are willing to cooperate with you ...

**CP:** Erhm

**MM:** ... or do they think that they know better?

**CP:** Our issue is, that a lot of the companies are one-man companies ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... err, and don't have large budgets, don't have many resources to be creative and innovative, erhm, and therefore they're like, no I can't be part of that ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... Because I don't have the time, the resources, and they're lacking erhm, the bigger picture ...

**MM:** Yearh

**CP:** ... It's very, err, one for himself, erhm, so a broad collaboration is really hard ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... 'cause it's like, well, if I do this then, erhm, let's say you make a, err, an activity where it is including a lunch and err, a hike ...

**MM:** Yearh

**CP:** ... and err, an afternoon snack or something. Then they're much like, erhm, they don't see their own gain ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... in it, from it so they're not doing it ...

**MM:** Yearh

**CP:** ... and are afraid that, erhm, that if they collaborate with, erhm, other, erhm, like a restaurant, if two restaurants should do something together that will never happen 'cause it'll be like, no because then they're gonna go there ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... instead of here. So, they're very in to making their own branding and like I can do it on my own.

**05:03**

**MM:** But how do you think it could be fixed?

**CP:** (exhales) I don't know. Erhm ...

**MM:** How do you ..

**CP:** I think in time erhm, it's really, in, in our destination it's really new that you have this organization who wants to, err, bring more tourists ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**CP:** ... Err, and who doesn't have any profit, doesn't need any profit, err, from it ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**CP:** ... we are not a private, we don't need, err, you know ...

**MM:** Yearh.

**CP:** ... Yearh, erhm, so it's gonna take time for them to, to really comprehend and realize that we're doing this in their interest and not for our own gain ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**CP:** ... so if, I hope in time they'll see it, but I am not sure

**06:00**

**MM:** OK. So it's kind of hard to get them to collaborate?



**CP:** Err, yearh, very. But yes, but erhm, but hmm, I really see that it's because it's, erhm, they're, they're, err, really small businesses ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... so they don't have the resources.

**MM:** Yearh

**06:22**

**MM:** Err, do you do anything with universities or research institutions? Do you collaborate with them?

**CP:** Erhm, no.

**MM:** Not at all?

**CP:** Not enough. Erhm, basically no. Err, but whether it's because err, it's not a university city ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**CP:** ... I don't know. If, if you had like a university in the area, err, it might be easier. But still, there's a huge gap between these small business owners and academics and universities ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**CP:** ... it is two different worlds, and I have a hard time seeing how it's gonna collaborate.

**MM:** Yearh.

**07:11**

**MM:** Err, some people also think that these DMO's they should be, ah, what's the word, intermediaries ...

**CP:** Mhm.

**MM:** ... like they should ...

**CP:** Mhm

**MM:** ... facilitate ...

**CP:** Mhm

**MM:** ... the convers... Like knowledge exchange between the universities and the companies ...

**CP:** Mhm.

**MM:** ... do you think you could that in a way, in your company?

**CP:** I guess we could but I-I can't quite see how again 'cause ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**CP:** ... it's two, two different worlds ...

**MM:** Yeah.

**CP:** ... and if these small businesses don't, erhm, have the eye for, erhm, innovation ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ...in the same sense, erhm, it's very like, it is paying the bills, it's going great, people are happy, I don't need to do any more.

**MM:** OK

**08:10**

**MM:** Err, so, but err, what did I wanna say (laughter), but do you think this innovation aspect it could be better if all three stakeholders could like work together in a way?

**CP:** I think in time. Err, but not within a one-year period ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... two-year period, three year, erhm, it, it's a long and hard process ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... I think. But yearh, I think it would be, erhm, doable, and I think it would, 'cause I know the, the organizations I know who do it, and, and, and, and who does use, erhm, the university for, you know, developing ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... strategies and theories and, erhm, are, err, gaining on it, erhm, but there's, I-I really think the big issue is the small businesses and their ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... resources. And there's like yearh it's fine but I can't see how its gonna ...

**MM:** Yearh, help me.

**CP:** ... Yearh help me, erhm, they lack the big picture again ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... it is not for the destination. What, what I think you need to do is to be, to somehow, how I don't know, if you find a way please let me know erhm, err, to somehow make them realize that innovation, and err, working together will be useful for all ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... for the entire destination, err, and hence also oneself ...

**MM:** Yeah.

**CP:** ... 'cause it'll bring more guests, and visitors and sell more beers or whatever, ice creams (laughter)

**10:15**

**MM:** What about these innovation workshops, so you haven't really done those (laughter)

**CP:** No (laughter) erhm

**MM:** No, but then do you think it would be useful for the small companies or business owners?

**CP:** I think it could be useful. But I don't think you'll get them to do it.

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** Umm, again 'cause it's, err, I think it's too abstract, umm, for many of, of, the business ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**CP:** ... owners.

**10:57**

**MM:** But what if, erhm, for example your DMO would, err, facilitate this workshop, do you think they would take part of it, or?

**CP:** In Øster Hurup, we've done a lot of, erhm, workshops with the, erhm, with the citizens and the business owners erhm, in order to, erhm, change the city. We are doing this really huge project, erhm, changing the city in the image and brand, erhm, but very practical, erhm, like making it more attractive ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... what do we need to do. And they have been involved in that a lot, erhm, and it's been great but it's been a three year period and it is until now that they are really understanding how important it is and how great it is for them to have a say in it ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... Erhm, but also it's taking a lot of resources from them. Erhm, so they really need to erhm, be well informed about it, erhm, what it is gonna be, and how it is gonna be and what it is gonna do for all them ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... before they, they could do it ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... be part of it – makes sense?

**MM:** Yes.

**CP:** There's a lot about how you communicate it ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**CP:** ... Err, sell it to them.

**12:43**

**MM:** But err, after doing this workshops do you see that it's improving like the cooperation between different ...

**CP:** Yearh, a lot. A lot. And the fact that we, as an organization, have been like the facilitators as you say, erhm, has also gathered a lot of the different stakeholders ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... Erhm, in a, in working together, err, which they've never done before, so yearh, its, it's been improving ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**CP:** ... err, the 'sammenhold' (laugther) err, I don't know.

**13:24**

**MM:** Err, but do you think this workshop has contributed to innovation in general, in the region, destination?

**CP:** Erhm, partly yearh, erhm, 'cause it's given, given them a, erhm, a face, of somekind ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... Erhm, that are, err, I, believing that we are stronger together, erhm, and so they are more willing to expand their horizon ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... in some way. So yearh. Kinda.

**14:04**

**MM:** But if you, mmm, if you would add in like the knowledge that the universities have for example and include those into the workshops do you think the small business owners would understand the bigger picture or

**CP:** Some might ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**CP:** But there would also be a lot who would distance themselves to it, for it, from it.

**14:35**

**MM:** Why do you think they would distance themselves?

**CP:** Erhm, 'cause it's, err, 'cause it would, i-I think a lot, some of them would find it invasive ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... Erhm, that students would come and tell them how to do things.

**14:54**

**MM:** What if it is not the students it is researchers?

**CP:** Same.

**MM:** Same.

**CP:** Yearh

**MM:** OK

**CP:** Err, it is some, it is very much when you come from the outside ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... it is really hard to be let in to this circle.

**15:11**

**MM:** Do you think it is the same even though they've researched the industry and that area and everything like that?

**CP:** I don't know

**MM:** If they had done their homework?

**CP:** (laughter) it would help but still they, it would be, erhm, I really think that it would be very erhm, hard to convince them ...

**MM:** Mhm.

**15:40**

**MM:** OK. You said that, erhm, you work with like trends and things like that – where do you get this information from?

**CP:** Err, from Visit Denmark and ...

**MM:** Mhm

**CP:** ... Visit Nordjylland. Basically.

**MM:** OK. Just a sec.

## Appendix 4

### **Focus group**

*MM – Maarja Metsaots*

*EC – Eugenio Conti*

*SB - Sandra Bødker Bejarano*

*AB - Ana-Maria Balescu*

*TK – Thomas Westergaard Knapp*

**00:00**

**MM:** Ok. So, I'm just gonna start with the questions.

**EC:** Umm, yeah. Can I ask you one thing? I've never done any... This is focus group right?

**MM:** Yeah.

**EC:** Never done any.

**SB:** Me neither.

(Laughter)

**MM:** It's just... I just answer... ask a question and then you kind of answer it.

**EC:** But you ask a question to me and...

**MM:** All of you.

**EC:** So one question for all of us, okay.

**MM:** Yes, and then you kind of discuss it.

**EC:** Ok, so yeah, so...

**AB:** It's like a discussion, she asks these questions...

**MM:** Yeah.

**EC:** Aah.

**AB:** ...and then we will discuss it.

**EC:** Ok.

**MM:** Okay. Jeez it all a mess. Okay these, umm, innovation workshops, why do you think it's like important or it's not important or...

**SB:** I think the only reason I went to it was because we had to (Laughter).

**MM:** But I mean did you get anything out of it?

**EC:** You mean the one in Frederikshavn or...?

**MM:** Both.

**EC:** Aah, okay.

**AB:** Well for me...it depends a lot about organization.

**MM:** Mhm.

**AB:** Cause it like the organization, if the organization is not good workshop is not gonna be good. And...

**MM:** Yeah.

**AB:** To be honest like the ones we... I've been they weren't that...

**SB:** I only went to WOFIE and I think it was kind of like messy.

**AB:** Yeah.

**SB:** Also because there were those people who already had ideas who came there.

**MM:** Mhm.

**AB:** Yeah.

**SB:** And then us other people were like (laughter) I don't know what to do.

**MM:** But I mean if you take like Solution Camp for example or other workshops where you have to think ideas for a certain company or region or something...

**?:** Mhm.

**SB:** Oh I think the one in Frederikshavn it was much better. I mean we were smaller groups and we had, umm, more specific tasks and it was more creative.

**MM:** Mhm.

**SB:** And I think that one was much better.

**EC:** For me it the opposite actually, cause the one in Frederikshavn lasted for like only one day, and umm, it was very superficial in my opinion, but umm, the other one, umm... Maybe because it was like enough to end up with a good group.

**MM:** Mhm

**EC:** I got a lot of insights about umm, how... There were a lot of people studying like entrepreneur or something like that, and umm, I got lot of insights about, umm, like how to

develop an idea and from the very start, because I come from humanities, like my Bachelor's is from humanities and we kind of lack this kind of how to put things in practice, you know.

**MM:** Mhm.

**EC:** And, umm, actually when I had my internship, umm, this semester, umm, next semester that was about business planning and I... I-I see that I kind of you know like, umm, use what I...E-e-even as a (inaudible) you start with something then you move to something else, then you move to something else, so like, you know steps.

**MM:** Mhm.

**EC:** And of course it was very, very superficial. (inaudible)

**?:** Yeah

(Inaudible)

**SB:** Yeah it's true, I think I also like kind of realized how hard it is to like put an idea into work, that I thought that it would be easier maybe, I don't know.

**EC:** But they should definitely improve something, because for example, umm, basically we had, umm, a business (inaudible) one of those business (inaudible) you know. And, umm, and basically they are like, yeah, you know everybody develop apps.

**MM:** Mhm.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** So don't develop an app. And then who win? An app.

(Laughter)

**EC:** Are you kidding me?

(Laughter)

**03:40**

**MM:** But umm, do you feel like you contributed in any way in that Solution Camp? You think it could've been useful to...

**AB:** To get involved afterwards?

**MM:** Yeah.

**AB:** Yeah. Like it would have been nice to see if our ideas are going somewhere or they are coming...

**04:00**

**MM:** But do you think it's useful for... I don't exactly know who you worked the ideas out for, guess it was the kommune or...



**AB:** Yeah-yeah, ahh, umm...

**MM:** Do you think it's useful for them?

**AB:** Yes. I mean, okay if we were, we were taking in consideration what kind of persons are at the, the, the presentation.

**MM:** Mhm.

**AB:** Yeah, I think we helped them somehow. Because what I don't (inaudible), but they were a bit, like old (laughter) and they, I, like, you could see that the, the whole event, the whole thing it was bit out of there, umm... There, umm, like they didn't never experience this kind of event.

**MM:** Mhm.

**AB:** And coming, having this kind of ev... wo...wo... group from student, umm, bringing them some ideas and sh... showing them how to do the the-they supposed to do the thing, I think they, they got some, some help and inspiration somehow. Maybe they never used our ideas, but at least they know the direction and what people are expecting.

(Coughing)

**MM:** Mhm.

**AB:** Yep.

**TK:** And that's personally why I think that the Solution Camps and workshops and so on, are... can be beneficial, because as you say I think there are a lot of companies and organizations are relatively outdated.

**AB:** Yeah.

**TK:** Umm, so, so I think that it's, it's a good idea to sort of engage the students...

**AB:** Mhm.

**TK:** ...in this talk. And it can be beneficial both ways and it should be ideally. I mean, you probab... you... The students participating should probably get some insight into how it actually works. I mean, how does this organization work or how does... and in this case the kommune, probably actually a good thing, because how do they actually work, and how can we contribute here. And also, I mean, again because the kommune probably working in some like some outdated, umm, ways and so on, it' probably good for them to, to hear from students and also students from different backgrounds...

**AB:** Mhm.

**TK:** ... to see what do they actually think about this and do they have some good ideas, because that is, you know, innovation you know...

**AB:** Yeah, yeah.

**TK:** You sit together and brainstorm something and then suddenly boom...

**AB:** Mhm.

**TK:** ...You have a new concept.

**AB:** Yeah.

**TK:** I think.

**AB:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**TH:** So...

**EC:** Yeah, the problem is that, umm, innovation, like if your goal is innovation like to have something innovative, then you have to work more on it, because it is not necessarily the case that, umm, people that don't know each other they get together in a group, they start working on idea, and then you're gonna produce something innovative.

?: Mhm.

**TK:** Yeah.

**EC:** Like many times you simply apply this schemes, you know, you like, reasoning in a conservative way.

**TK:** Yeah. And that's not really innovative (sneeze) if you just, you know, work in like these boxes, so...

**EC:** Yes. Yes.

**TK:** so, yeah I agree. But isn't it also like a relatively new concept here in Denmark that we actually engaging the students into, like, the practices of a, of a actual organization? So I mean we have to start somewhere...

?: Mhm.

**EC:** Oh, yeah.

**TH:** So, umm, if this can be sort of beginning to...

**EC:** So this is something new, like...

**TK:** I don't know I'm just assuming, because I mean, it's the first time I've sort of heard about the things and participated in, in things like that.

**SB:** I also think that WOFIE is kind of new.

**TK:** Yeah exactly, exactly. Umm, so you know, they... I think they are also, you know, developing each year and..

?: (inaudible) every year, yeah.

**TK:** ... find out what is the best way to do it.

**SB:** Yeah.

**TK:** Umm, I hope.

**EC:** Oh yeah.

**SB:** Who is organizing WOFIE? (Inaudible)

**SB:** Somebody from Aalborg University.

**MM:** It was, umm, I can't remember...

**TK:** But WWOIE is an organization themselves, right?

**MM:** It's like part of the university.

**TK:** Ahh, ok.

**SB:** Yeah.

**MM:** (Inaudible) I don't remember the name right now.

**SB:** Mkm.

**MM:** Had an interview with that guy.

**SB:** Really? (Laughter)

**MM:** Yes. (Laughter) I can't remember the name right now.

**EC:** The one with the red hair?

**MM:** Yeah.

**EC:** Oh, yeah that guy was great actually.

**?:** Mhm.

**08:13**

**MM:** Umm, but, umm, where (inaudible). But I mean talking about innovation, I mean, how important is it, like, today in tourism industry for example?

**AB:** Well...

**EC:** It's fundamental. Like today is like the most important thing

**AB:** Yeah, but... In our second semester we had, like our, topic of our projects were innovation, write something about innovation and what we found out with our project is that, umm, innovation is relative and is based on the knowledge of the user.

**?:** Mhm.

**AB:** Like the one who's using innovation, so... Like, it can be important at the... Based... on the level of the, the knowledge, the person who's using. Cause for example we had, we were talking with some resorts and they were using wireless as an innovative tool, whereas we had and other resort and they had to build up and restore the, the resort, so... I think it depends on.

**MM:** Mhm.

**AB:** And its relative on one actor to another I think.

**?:** Yeah.

**TK:** I really like that idea that in-innovation is like a relative concept.

**AB:** But that...

**TK:** I actually never considered that. That's actually really interesting, because I mean it depends on sort of...

**AB:** Yeah, yeah.

**TK:** ... on the user and the consumer.

**AB:** Yeah. I...

**TK:** I suppose when...i-i-i-innovation is useful for now because you get, like, new consumers I mean, they are doing things differently, so any ,umm, business or anything, industry should also adapt to that.

**?:** Mhm.

**TK:** But...

**AB:** Then again like, innovation depend... it's, it's, umm, based on, on the, umm one, like the knowledge of the person...

**TK:** Yeah.

**AB:** And again we are going back to the knowledge and how everybody sees the things.

**TK:** Yeah.

**AB:** Umm, what's, what is their view concerning that particular, I don't know... Thing.

**TK:** That's actually really interesting, I think.

**EC:** Yeah, but there are some things that are, like, objectively in need of innovation. Like, it doesn't depend on, like... If you don't see that, then it's your fault if you don't see that. It's not re... Like, there is still the need, like, umm, traditional way to develop tourism they are, umm, outdated and they create a lot of negative externalities.

**AB:** Yeah, but...

**EC:** So... Like really, I mean... I am, in my thesis I am actually, umm, writing about that, like there are countries that need that. If you if, you don't, if you aren't gonna do it, because the destination planners over there, they are too conservative and they don't see the thing then they are gonna die.

**?:** Yeah.

**EC:** That's ...

**SB:** I think that if a certain time, but eventually it will die if it doesn't change.

**EC:** Yes, exactly.

**TK:** But I mean can't you also argue that innovation is not necessarily necessary for all destinations, I mean people are still gonna go to Mallorca...

**SB:** Mhm.

**TK:** Regardless of how they develop.

**EC:** Well it depends, it depends.

**AB:** It depends again about the, umm, the target group. Like if you're working only with, umm, families, how much innovation can you use for them or if you are using, umm, Millennials, well.... There you have to....

**EC:** Innovation can be also to broaden the market.

**AB:** To, sorry?

**EC:** To broaden the market.

**SB:** Mhm.

**EC:** For some destinations this is just, just this is innovation.

**AB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Like, umm, because... And finding ways to broaden the markets.

**SB:** Yeah, it's like Mallorca, there's a lot of destinations alike Mallorca but if other destinations does something extraordinary then people would go there and ....

**TK:** Yeah, yeah, but I'm just saying that if you target... I mean you have your, umm, family, you know, they will, what they want is, you know, a beach, a pool, nice weather.

**AB:** Yeah.

**TK:** Right?

**?:** And all-inclusive.

**TK:** Yeah, right? So, I mean they probably don't need anything else, but that. I mean, they're gonna go there for a week and then they're gonna come back next year, and the year after that.

**?:** Yeah.

**EC:** Yeah, the problem is that, look, I come from a city that, umm, that, umm, made this demand (inaudible) innovation for tourism, okay. We, we built more 10 000 hotels in, in less than 20 years.

**TK:** Mhm.

**SB:** Woah.

**EC:** Just to attract families.

**TK:** Yeah.

**EC:** Yes.

**AB:** How is that working?

**EC:** This, this worked until the, umm, 80s 90s. Then what happened is that new countries came out, came out, like Egypt, Croatia, umm, Bulgaria, umm, with this, the same concept, basically they copied, no.

**?:** Mhm.

**EC:** Hotel-family...

**?:** Copycat.

**EC:** Yeah, activities for families, but the thing is they can offer prices that we cannot afford.

**TK:** Yeah.

**SB:** Mhm.

**EC:** So, were done. If we... If you don't at some point, you know, like you have to consider that the world is not waiting for you.

**TK:** Yeah

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Yeah. So fortunately, now there is administration that, that acknowledged the fact that there is need to maybe build something innovative over the historical center. What we have, others don't have.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** You see, you, you change the way you communicate your destination maybe.

**SB:** Yeah, the branding...

**TK:** But doesn't that again depend on, the target group?

**EC:** But...

**TK:** Then, then you probably targeting like Minel... Millennials or something, need something different than just... a pool, a beach...

**EC:** It depends it depends, because it's not like white and black, you know. That's the thing. And, umm, it's complicate to explain but, umm... I think that you have a control of, a degree of control of your destination (inaudible). Yeah.

**AB:** What a certain degree? I mean depends of a destination, because sometimes the destination is starting to promote itself and (inaudible) I mean for example, Ibiza. Like people over there (coughing), yeah, it was considering that a party, and at some point they started, they wanted to change a bit the image of the island, but...

**SB:** No, it's too late.

**AB:** Yeah, it has the own personality and nobody can change that.

**SB:** Yeah.

**TK:** Yeah. I, I don't know if... Can I ask a question?

**MM:** Yes.

**TK:** Umm, can there be a, umm, a negative effect of innovation? Let's say, I mean, I don't know, let's just take Mallorca for example, right. It's worked for let's say 20-30 years, whatever. What if they started to brand themselves in a completely different way, and then the, like normal target group would sort of disappear, because this is not the Mallorca that we know.

**SB:** I think it can fail.

**AB:** Yeah.

**TK:** I mean could that be like a, umm, negative effect of innovation.

**AB:** Yeah, yeah.

**EC:** Well, it...

**AB:** I mean...

**EC:** No, no, no.

**AB:** I mean if you don't know how use... cause, again knowledge and how you use the...

**TK:** Yeah, yeah.

**AB:** ...the innovation, if you don't know how to use it of course it's gonna fail.

**TK:** Yeah.

**AB:** And I think that happens with everything in the tourist, umm sector.

**TK:** Aha.

**AB:** like if you don't how to use, I don't know, umm, for example Ibiza, if you want to rebrand it...

**TK:** Yeah.

**AB:** ...of course everybody is just gonna be like what are you doing.

**TK:** Yeah, yeah.

**SB:** Also if it's not based on proper information...

**AB:** Yeah, yeah.

**SB:** ...like, if they just choose to just change it, without knowing if people really wanted or not.

**AB:** Yeah.

**EC:** And with destination there is, with destinations there is a problem, it is like related with their nature, umm, it's like place embedded products.

**AB:** Yeah.

**EC:** It means that I can, I can, if I am a good marketer I can advertise, umm, cigarettes, associating the cigarettes with, umm, freedom.

**TK:** Yeah.

**SB:** Mhm.

**EC:** I can do that.

**TK:** Yeah.

**EC:** It's like a freedom experience, based on something that is healthy, you know. But with destinations you cannot, umm, the touch so much, you know. Cannot be so much independent from the qualities of the destination, so the mistake for me in that sense is acknowledging that there are problems, and there are a lot in the way the Ibiza is been promoting itself in these years, but then thinking that you can be something totally different, just because of marketing. You cannot, you can... you must always start from what you have, and then you can you know...

**AB:** Step by step.

**EC:** Yeah.

**TK:** Ok.

**EC:** Try to find your ways. Like Ibiza could be, could start branding itself as something innovative for the events that oh, that it hosts.

**?:** Mhm.

**EC:** Like, steal lot of people, you know, maybe steal a lot of youngsters, but doing maybe something different than being drunk in the strange streets.

**?:** Yeah.

**16:59**



**MM:** But if we take, umm, yeah, Denmark for example, do you think there's, like, a lack of innovation?

**EC:** I... don't... think so.

**AB:** I think that geographical position...

**SB:** It sucks.

**AB:** Yeah.

(Laughter)

**AB:** It's not like, you can't like...

**SB:** It's hard to promote other...

**AB:** Yeah.

**SB:** ...things, than there are...

**AB:** I mean, because it's a small country and you have Copenhagen and then the rest of the country, which it's not that well promoted, and then yeah, you have Aarhus as a very... university.

**MM:** Yeah.

**SB:** But it's nice that they are starting to,, like, in smaller cities to make all this story telling thing, where they like try to include the tourists more and history of the small cities. I don't know if you saw that.

**AB:** No.

**SB:** Like, I don't remember where, I think it's like, umm... For example in Nibe, near the coast, where they're trying to like tell a story with the city, like to make it more interesting and not just make it a boring city. So I think they are trying to be more innovative, but it's just really slow.

**TK:** But, yeah, but, but to me it seems that the Danish tourists, umm, industries or businesses or whatever you call them, they have sort of also like knowledge that there is a problem...

**SB:** Yeah.

**TK:** ...and they are trying to, to do something about that.

**SB:** Yeah. It's like in recent years...

**TK:** I don't know if they are doing the right thing or not, but at least they are trying to...

**SB:** Yeah.

**TK:** ...to find different ways of approaching tourists and so on. There's also been a lot of talk about, umm, like the Vikings and the Viking heritage...

**SB:** Yeah, like making more stories.

**TK:** Yeah, exactly, exactly. Like sort of try to attract people, like go away from, you know, the Little Mermaid, but then, then (Laughter) sort of...then, then sort of embrace like the, umm, the old Viking culture and maybe make some more villages...

**SB:** Yeah.

**TK:** ...about the, like with that.

**SB:** Yeah.

**TK:** Umm...

**SB:** So like differentiate the country more.

**TK:** Yeah. And I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing, but it's just I think important to notice that it has been, seems like it's been acknowledged in, umm, the community.

**AB:** But you know what, the thing that... What I managed to, to see so far everybody is trying to promote the costal part of like the... edges of Denmark, and everybody is so focused on that, and they forget about all th-the heritage and culture and whatever. And they try so much to work with, with how to promote the, the, the sea, how we can promote the,, the, coastal part of Denmark, and that is the only thing that the community, communities, umm, government knows. And it's just like, ok you can focus on that, but like...

**SB:** But it's not that great.

**AB:** Try to work, yeah, try to work on with different things to...

**SB:** Yeah.

**AB:** So...

**TK:** Yeah.

**MM:** But do you think it could be changed if, for example, the companies and the Visit-organizations, for example, and then maybe the university worked together?

**EC:** The thing is that I think it is how you work together.

**MM:** Mhm.

**EC:** Because sometimes you can have like very interesting ideas about how to work together, but maybe they don't work, because each institution has its own cultures, its own organizational culture, way to reason, way to see things, and maybe they are again conservative, so they are like, yeah you collaborate towards that thing, but we are A and you are B.

**?:** Mmh.

**SB:** I also think it's more or less like VisitDenmark who decides what to promote and stuff...

**MM:** Yeah.

**EC:** Like Denmark is an, is an umbrella, you know, like when you say like Denmark need innovation.

**MM:** Mhm.

**EC:** Yeah, but who in Denmark need innovation? What kind of innovation? Because we are talking about different, no? Organizations, different groups with different groups and... Yeah.

**TK:** But can't you argue that, as you say that the, you know let's say that the organization is here A and the students are here B, isn't that what you're trying to, to, to do with the Solution Camps and workshops? Like to meet here? Or at least to interchange the ideas.

**EC:** That is the goal and what I get is that they are trying to teach me something more that, you know, more than (Inaudible)

**TK:** Yeah, yeah, okay.

**EC:** Yeah, I-I get, I get it as a, umm, different concept of learning, you know, and teaching. More to ways more like umm, initiative based, more like creative...

**SB:** I think that maybe like the educations need to be more like, like, I don't know, like umm, like to teach us more, exactly how to change these things, because we can get ideas but we don't know how to do it in real life.

**AB:** But for that I (inaudible)

**TK:** Yeah.

**SB:** Yeah that's true, but we have had the workshops before that. So maybe...

**TK:** Yeah, but I think it's too bad if it's more like as a teaching tool instead of as a tool for the organization, I think that would help a lot. Also on innovation, because the students will see it differently.

**SB:** Mhm.

**TK:** And especially since it's international program I think it would be very helpful for the organizations to listen to, to, to the ones of, of, of the people who study studying (inaudible)

**EC:** Yeah, yeah. Again too many times it's a matter of culture, like...

**TK:** Yeah.

**EC:** Umm, maybe you have people in your organization for example that are, like yeah you know ok maybe it's international thing, but maybe someone that come from Canada don't have any idea about what I need.

**TK:** Yeah

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** And then maybe there is someone that is from, I don't know, from Odense that is like, I don't know, these guys are from Aalborg they don't have any idea what I need, and then...

**SB:** Yeah.

**SC:** Maybe you have one that is from different name, but for them who for them said it is for them no, no they don't have any idea of what (Inaudible).

**TK:** But isn't that sort of the thing that innovation should, should... Isn't that the reason to have something called innovation and Solution Camp sort of, sort of to overcome this, you know, cultural umm, limit or something. I mean isn't that sort of the reason why we have concept called innovation that you have to think outside of your, like, cul...

**SB:** (Inaudible)

**TK:** Yeah, yeah. Your cultural classification or whatever.

**EC:** Yeah, yeah. You have to, that's why before I said that sometimes you simply need it.

**TK:** Yeah.

**EC:** Then it's complicated, still... Yeah. Actually we have this, umm, I have this example because the second semester project I was writing about, umm, how tour operators, umm, react when a destination is hit by a terrorist attack, and it was interesting, because I was working with, with Rune, with a Danish guy and we kind of addressed both Danish tour operators and Italian one. And it was amazing how different are the ways, you know tour operator yeah...

**SB:** Mhm.

**EC:** And I have the this sensation that both models need to get something out from the other, you know, like the Danish ones, I have d... I have the, I have the feeling that they should be more proactive and, and, and sure about what they can do in terms of communication with the customer, whereas they were more passive, like they really know everything, we are here just to sell stuff, you know. Whereas ours were more like, no come on we need to engage, like communication, blablabla. But the same time, umm, it's true, I mean, and you, you cannot communicate so much like, umm, as you wish, you know the things. You should have like a sort of, umm, like trust base, you know, and consider the other not just a source of money, umm, someone you want to deliver, I don't know, sincere experience. But then again it's, yeah, we, I realized that, he realized that, but I'm pretty sure if we are gonna bring this to, to some of those tour operators they will be like, umm, yeah but you know but we already, we have already been doing things, like we were used to like for 10 years and...

**SB:** Yeah.

**MM:** Yeah, and it works and then...

**EC:** Mainly say yeah it's interesting, it's very interesting, but then like, they don't change anything.

(Laughter)

**MM:** But I mean, going back to this workshops do you think they should act like, umm, knowledge sharing kind of thingy between yeah, the students and the universities and, yeah, the companies for example?

**AB:** Well I think they are doing that already, like knowledge sharing.

**MM:** Yeah.

**AB:** But maybe do it in a different way. Cause they are just presenting something and then it's just, everything it's in the air.

**?:** Mhm.

**SB:** Yeah, it feels kind of random.

**AB:** Yeah.

**SB:** Like WOFIE was just kind of like ugh. Like you didn't even know where you were going.

**AB:** Yeah, and every time when you were asking something, annoyed, I don't know where, pfff... They didn't want to say that much, I understand the concept, but a bit more structure...

**?:** Yeah.

**AB:** Because we are still, we are newbies in this industry and we need structure at the beginning, so we understand how everything functions.

**SB:** Yeah.

**AB:** And afterwards you can just but, but us out there and just whatever, like find your place in the...

**MM:** So it was more like one sided this knowledge sharing part?

**AB:** Yeah, yeah. Definitely.

**TK:** Also I think we should, I mean, as you said before, we need some pro-activeness also from the Danish, umm, in this case the Danish organizations and so on, we have to in... embrace the knowledge the students do have...

**?:** Mhm.

**TK:** ... and, umm. I think they are very conservative...

**SB:** Yeah

**TK:** If you're doing start-ups or innovation or whatever. It's more like, yeah we've done this for 10 years and it works, but you know it only works to a certain degree, if you wanna develop then you have to listen to what we are saying. And then again, then again, it is knowledge sharing and it should go both ways, but it seems like, as you all said that it's only going one way, and that's to the students. So...

**EC:** Also because, I mean we are students...

**MM:** Yeah, so they...do you think that they don't take you seriously or...

**EC:** Not as a business partner.

**AB:** Yeah.

**SB:** I think they should more like work with the organization, like university and the organizations, and like to make them see how they can work with us.

**AB:** But again, that's the thing that I had my internship project with umm, about, umm, internships companies, and the thing is that what I managed to find out is that, umm, company and the, the, university they don't communicate at all, they are like so you find an internship, good, fine, and that's it.

**SB:** Yeah, it's true.

**AB:** And afterwards they don't, they don't comm... the university is not contacting the, the umm, company and not the company the, the, the...

**SB:** Mhm

**AB:** ...university so they don't know what's happening with the student. So they can start from there, so they can understand how the student feels and what he can do for the company and afterwards, based on this kind of internships to make some kind of workshops and apply them in company cases or un-university cases and, and so on and so forth. So the communication between the company and the university doesn't exist or it is, but it's not that relative it's just administrative communication.

**EC:** Yeah, but again it's because the university is institution with it's culture, it's goals and they just care about students producing papers.

**AB:** Yeah, but again, like, why do you have a problem if you, if you, if you're not interested about, umm, the student and how he further later on in he's career life, whatever, can work in the industry.

**EC:** But maybe in their view they are in a different way, you know. From, maybe for them producing papers is something that helps you, helps the student in the end.

**SB:** And it's easier, it doesn't take time. I mean, because they don't have the sources to do it.

**EC:** and how do you get funds?

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Basing on what? Basing on people that graduate, maybe, basing on people that... basing on papers you produce. Yeah. So if you engage in something that is very innovative and it's risky, yeah, because you put a lot of money and something that, umm...

**SB:** It has to work.

**EC:** And with the public sector is even more, you know, conservative, yeah.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Because...

**SB:** They don't take chances.

**EC:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. But it would be great. Actually I-I-I-I developed from my internship and idea about different tourism in the Maldives and, umm, I think that this idea not only can be, umm, can be implemented by traditional, umm, operators in Maldives, but is being implemented. Like, the, the moment which someone, like, big, a big hotel chain become aware of the existing of this thing is like, it tries to implement it.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Yeah. Umm, because it's, it's interesting. But then again as you said, like, you finish it and you cannot count on the university as a network, to de, to, to diffuse that idea.

**SB:** No.

**AB:** No.

**SB:** you have to do it yourself entirely.

**AB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Yes, yes, yes, yes.

**SB:** You're on your own.

**30:38**

**MM:** Okay, umm, I mean right now, if you take, you know Aalborg as an example, the university and the VisitNordjylland they work together with, like, different projects and research, and they're trying to get the different tourism companies to kind of work with them and kind of use the knowledge they have, but it's not really working that great. How do you think it could be fixed?

**AB:** What, like, how they are working together?

**MM:** It's, umm, different projects. For example, they had recently this thing to develop costal tourism, for example.

(Laughter)

**SB:** Maybe they can come and present it as a project. Like, semester project and then say we need five students to work on this as a semester project or something like that or...

**MM:** But the issue right now is that the smaller companies they don't really wanna take part of it, because they don't see the benefit in it, because they're knowledge comes from like a more practical perspective.

**SB:** Yeah.

**MM:** Instead of more academic, so they don't see this academic knowledge that useful, but it kind of is, but how could that be fixed? What do you think?

**SB:** I don't know if it would be possible, maybe if they could, like... If a company takes then some students and help them, like, gain more knowledge, practical knowledge and they could get some money or something, I don't know.

**AB:** Yeah, but you know what's the thing, like, when you're working with... You are a student and you're trying to work with a company they don't take you seriously, cause if you ask the right questions they will not answer you. And they will be like, ahh, but this is confidential I can't tell you. So again, like, the level of the pra... the project or whatev... The outcomes of the students' project they will be just like, maybe it's true, maybe it's relevant, because the companies again, they don't want to get involved and again the university didn't present it the, the...

**?:** Mhm.

**AB:** They have to do this, because maybe this, their, their answers will be relevant for, the outcomes of the project and the students are an important tool for this, to learn and to give you free research basically.

**?:** Mhm.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Yes that the thing, free research, because the problem is for me a way to overcome this is that the university finally, but here I'm speaking about the university in general, like...

**AB:** Yeah.

**EC:** I had the same experience in Italy, the same. University should accept they are not like, umm, an island in the middle of the ocean that leave now like, no. They must do practical stuff. It's not about producing papers, because I can't produce a paper that's like, written with, like I don't know what, umm, ten thousand pages and there's nothing in it. It's a simple mind exercise, it's not useful. The must be ready to be more practical, because then businesses, because they need practicality, I mean, otherwise the will not survive, if I don't see the, the, the rationale between a thing and i-i-i-in within a thing, then they don't invest in it because, it's risky and (inaudible)money on it, it's, I'm not like the government that, you know, I have money, I have always had money, I can put here, there and whatever. No. So like the university must accept the fact that, if students again, it's not that the university doing that, but if the students want to be more practical, they want to engage in something more practical, then they should be able to do that. If I want my thesis to be a business model, if I want my thesis to be, like, something that is practical...

**SB:** Mhm.

**EC:** And put lot of hours of my day on it, then university should not only accept it, but encourage.



**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Because, umm, it's about having a different, again different culture, different, umm, mind structure.

**TK:** I think, umm, the problem is actually very umm, elementary, and I think the problem is about communication. I think, umm, the problem is that the businesses don't necessarily know what exactly it is that university does and on the other hand students don't necessarily know x exactly what it is that the company wants.

**AB:** Mhm.

**TK:** Umm, so I think it's entirely based on communications and, and a huge, like floor there that the university is not better at engaging in the community and so on. So I really think it's just about communication.

**AB:** But that's the thing the, the university and the company they don't know how to engage together in order to... Cause they have the student over there, but they don't engage in anyhow and they don't have any kind of agreement, okay, so do this for me and I do this for you and we're gonna use the students to do our work.

**TK:** Yeah, but I would also, I mean, I don't necessarily think it's only, you know, the universities and the different businesses and corporations and so on. I think it's also about, like, some pro-activeness from the students. I mean it could be students to say, you know, I really want to do this with a business, then, you know, you can go outside of the university and then actually contact...

**SB:** Mhm.

**TK:** ...the relevant business, and go back to the university and say, hey, I can write this with this and this company.

**SB:** (Inaudible) because like, the students we're like we don't know how to do it or they don't know what they can actually do, because I feel like most of the people I have talked to they have no idea what they are able to do.

**TK:** Yeah. No, I agree, but...

**SB:** And people ask you, so what can you do, I was like I don't know.

**TK:** Yeah, no, no, yeah.

**SB:** I know a lot of theories, but...

**TK:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, so yeah. When I'm graduating, what can you do, I don't know, because I'm ok at reading and writing, but that's sort of it.

(Laughter)

**TK:** I guess, umm, yeah no I agree, but I think it's also about again the communication part.

**SB:** Yeah.

**TK:** The universities sort of telling the community, you know, we have this group of students and they can do all of this work.

**SB:** Yeah.

**TK:** You can get it for free and they can get experience. That's a win-win situation.

**SB:** Yeah.

**TK:** If you just know how to use it.

**36:59**

**MM:** I mean, but if you leave out the students, but, for a second, and just focus on the university, where the researchers actually do the work and everything. It's still a problem where the companies don't wanna get involved or they don't wanna accept the knowledge they get from there.

**SB:** Mhm.

**AB:** Because, again it's about tradition, like the culture of the company and the way they see, the academics. Like they see all, the, they... From my perspective I think they perceive the academics as, ohh, you just read about lot of things, you don't know about practical stuff.

**SB:** Yeah.

**TK:** You know I agree. I also think the problem there is actually the academic part in it because I think a lot of the organizations are using all of the theories without knowing that they are using the theories.

**AB:** Ahh, yeah, yeah.

**TK:** So the second you put Triple Helix whatever on it then they say, no we don't do that, even though that's actually exactly what you doing.

**AB:** Yeah, exactly.

**TK:** You just don't think about it.

**AB:** Because again like... Okay, academics they read a bunch of things and they have an idea how the industry works on the, in the paper and they are especially studying on this, like, tourism industry, but the thing is that companies sometimes they are, they are built with people from different backgrounds and they have no idea what the guy from, from the tourism , umm, department from Aalborg University saying, even though he may use the same theories.

**SB:** Mhm.

**AB:** So, again it's maybe universities and companies they can, umm, teach each other how the industry is working so the university can teach somehow the, the people who are coming from

different university, uni... diff... different backgrounds and then to teach them how they are using the pract... the practical tools.

?: Mhm.

AB: With their, I don't know, pff, philosophy background and his...

SB: Yeah.

AB: ...like, I don't know managing a hotel.

**39:00**

MM: But do you think these workshops would help? For example if, I mean, even without the students, if it's like between the...

AB: Yeah.

MM: ...university and companies?

AB: Yes.

SB: Yeah I think it would be better, if it was between university and company.

AB: Yeah.

EC: Yeah, but then, umm, both subjects need to, especially the university, they need to accept, umm, two-way communication.

?: Mhm.

EC: It is... I am, I am really supposed to discuss my, my basis, you know, what I think is usefulness for me. It's, it's not just producing papers, it's about, yeah, like, really the (inaudible) in innovation.

?: Yeah.

EC: I really, yeah, exactly. Even, umm, when there's a need to do that, you know, it's even more critical and this knowledge share actually exists, and it's not just on paper, yeah.

**39:53**

MM: So you think it's important that all of them, the three stakeholders, university government and companies work together?

AB: Stay how?

MM: Stakeholders.

AB: Aah, stakeholders.

EC: It is very important, but as it is important, it is difficult. Because we are talking about three big subjects.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Very big. With their own old culture and old way to communicate, based on their political assumptions as well.

**?:** Mhm.

**EC:** Because many times, th, there is this idea in the private sector that, you know the government is just like, umm, umm, bullshit, you know.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Just like, umm, wasting tax payers money and universities they are really, like, something...

**MM:** Yeah, somewhere there, doing their own thing.

**EC:** Exactly.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** And then maybe the universities, I don't know how is it here in Denmark, but in universities maybe the, like the environment sometimes is politicized, so like, they have idea towards the government, like negative, very negative, ver-very positive. So the attempt of having discussion many times commutates into a arguing against each other, you know.

**?:** Mhm.

**EC:** Yeah. Or not communicating at all.

**SB:** Yeah.

**AB:** Mhm.

**EC:** Yeah. So you have to do it, umm, wisely and umm...

**AB:** Step-by-step.

**EC:** Step-by-step. It's complicated.

**AB:** It's like introducing a baby into the world, teaching them how to walk and talk and (inaudible)

**MM:** You wanted to say something?

**TK:** Yes I guess I could. Umm, I-I agree with what you're saying, I mean, personally I'm against, like, privatizing, umm, and so on. I'm pro large public sector and so on, right. But I think that is also part of the problem, because, you know, universities are part of public sector, you know, they get funding from the government and so on.

**SB:** Mhm.

**TK:** So you won't, you won't see the government go in and say please do this for us, because we need, you know, new students and we need entrepreneurs for private sector and blablabla, right.

But the thing is also that then it's gonna be a really long term change, because it is gonna have to be an investment then, also from the, the government and the universities, because, you know they are paying, you know, per research paper and per graduate. But you still you have to, you have to change it so it's not gonna be theoretical but it's also gonna be practical. The problem is that if it's gonna be, become practical then you lose some of the theoretical part. Hence you know, the papers and perhaps the graduates. So it has to be a really, really, really long term change, that you would have to do if you gonna make this full out collaboration between the universities and the government.

**EC:** Again, it's like, again as you were saying it's about communication because of the fact that, that maybe the private sector is convinced that the government is just wasting you know tax payer money.

**TK:** Yeah.

**EC:** (Inaudible) it's not true, actually I don't, I don't, I don't think this is entirely true as well, because, I mean, you get a lot... Here especially you get lot of, umm, services, you get lot of, umm, like, umm, help in developing, umm, a new business, like I can see that some friends of mine are trying to build u start-ups, you know, here you get a lot of, really like, consultancy and help, you can get loan with, umm...

**SB:** A lot of (inaudible)

**EC:** ... low interest rate. And if, if everything's, umm, left to the private, then it would be a mess. So it's yeah, about communicating, no I mean we are here for you, you know, we are, we are doing things for you.

**TK:** But, what, what I just realized, which I kind of think is kind of ironic, is that you know, I mean if you look at some of the culture in Denmark, especially now, you know, you kind of have to have a university degree to go into like, high paying job, or jobs in general. But that's kind of ironic, because then you, you know what the university is about, you know, it's like you don't know what's going on there, it's not like you get to the other side and then you just sort of forget everything. So technically it's shouldn't be hard to make that connection between...

**EC:** Yeah.

**TK:** Because, I mean, if you go out in a high paying job in Visit Denmark, you know, after you graduate in August or something, right, then you know what's going on. But I think you're right, then it's because of the cul... like the organizational culture, that you can't sort of interact with the old students even though you know exactly what's going on, and it might be helpful.

**?:** Yeah.

**TK:** So I think you are right that it has to do with, you know, conservative culture.

**EC:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Also because, maybe the conservatism is in the human resource selection maybe, not in the entire organization but in the human resource division. Maybe they have the idea, that the one that work well in VisitDenmark is one that has a degree that can come from that university. Because maybe it's just that division, you know.

**TK:** Yeah.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Even one single division can be, you know, yeah.

**MM:** Just a second (Laughter)

**45:10**

**MM:** But do you think, like, these workshops, umm, they could benefit the society some way, if the companies would take it, like, seriously, that you know what the students come up with or yeah...

**AB:** Maybe, if they applied the things that they learned from the workshops. Of course, I mean, if it's a positive, umm, like, umm, workshop and they, they really take into consideration the new knowledge and they applied somehow in real life, of course the society will get, like, every positive thing...

**?:** Mhm.

**AB:** ...is gonna effect somehow the society and the back tourism involvement process.

**SB:** Yeah, I also think that the students will be more motivated if they knew that it might be applied in real life.

**AB:** Mhm, yeah.

**SB:** Because, WOFIE was just like why would I even care, because it's not gonna go anywhere anyways. Like you just feel like that.

**EC:** Yeah, I also feel that most of the things I got From WOFIE are actually from members of my group, more than someone from the WOFIE organization itself.

**SB:** Mhm.

**EC:** Because they were, umm, like studying, umm, entrepreneurship, like, and they knew you know.

**SB:** Yeah, so all the people already had the background.

**EC:** Yes, like, when, okay. I have to, to develop a new idea, they were really like really into it and they were like yeah now we're gonna go outside, we're gonna ask people about what they think... We were developing a baby monitor (Laughter)... what do you think about this baby monitor and, umm, we're gonna do, umm, amazing market analysis and blablabla. They were really into it, especially one guy, umm, I remember, he was really, really into it, and, and that involved me. But I remember seeing that day the other groups. Probably yours I don't remember.

**SB:** Yeah

**EC:** They were just sitting and...

**SB:** I was too, I was just sitting, like staring at each other.

**EC:** Yeah.

**AB:** To be honest, I just quit after the third day.

**?:** Hmm.

**AB:** Because my group it wasn't that good and when we were asking something, nobody was giving us any answers and, ugh, at some point... and we were all, I mean me and another colleague, we were arguing with a, the one person who was like no, no, all the time...

**EC:** Mhm.

**AB:** ...was putting no in.

**SB:** Mhm. But also people who already had an idea they came to WOFIE like to realize that idea.

**AB:** Yeah.

**SB:** So they already made it up beforehand.

**AB:** The, and there was some other things I think so...

**SB:** Yeah. It sucked. (Laughter)

**MM:** What about the Solution Camp, for example, you think that's more, could benefit everyone else more than the WOFIE?

**AB:** I think... Well, even though it was shorter and, what you said, uhh it was direct, we had a direct contact with a commune, and I think that was better, because we had the direct actor which was involved in the, the actual issue, whereas in WOFIE was just, like, some people organized something and lets do something nice. But in, in, umm, Frederikshavn it was the actual commune and we were able to talk with the people who are working there, and they are really gonna get involved in the process of organizing the whole, umm, whole event, and I think Frederikshavn was more, had more, umm, positive outcomes both for the students, from my perspective, and both for them as the, the commune. That's it.

**48:58**

**MM:** But do you think they should take more these kinds of events?

**AB:** Yes. Yes. Cause I mean there are, I know there are a punch of, of, of small events like sports events, for example, and not just in whole Denmark, and they can involve the students before and they can bring some, well some ideas...

**?:** Mhm.

**AB:** ...there. Or show them how they are starting the process of organizing from a political government...all the things that are coming together to, to, to build all of this event. So yeah I think it will be beneficial for both sides. Kommune, students, universities, companies.

?: Mhm.

AB; Umm.

49:45

MM: So they should take more advantage of it?

AB: Yeah.

MM: Do you want to say something.

TK: No, no. It's just I'm just thinking, because I do think that, you know, the different cities in Denmark and so on are also starting to ack... Not necessarily in the tour, tourism sector, but...

AB: Yeah.

TK: Umm, starting to realize the potential and the value of, you know, start-ups and innovation and...

AB: Mhm.

TK: ...ent-entrepreneurship and so on. Just take Aalborg for example, just opened up a start-up, umm, café.

AB: Ahh, yeah.

TK: Where people can go and share, you know, the ideas and there's some presentations and they can get help to actually, make their ideas come true and so on. And I think just a change like that, just, you know, a place like that is, is a sign that, that these things are becoming more popular and they are helpful. I mean so...

AB: I'm just wondering what like, how much improvement got the companies from Aalborg from this café?

TK: I don't think necessarily the, the companies...

AB: But how much success they has so far? Cause I know they're not open every week.

TK: Yeah. Yeah, but I think, I-I think it's relatively well visited, umm, at least amongst some of my friends and so on, I think they actually enjoy it very much, because you get your, your feedback and so on.

?: Mhm.

TK: I don't necessarily think it's good for the companies, I actually think it's, it's kind of bad for the companies, because this could potentially lead to a lot of new businesses opening.

AB: Yeah, yeah.

TK: Which would technically would be okay for Denmark, but not necessarily for the local, umm...



**51:15**

**MM:** But what if the companies collaborated with the start-ups?

**TK:** Exactly, that might be even better.

**AB:** But there are companies who are collaborating.

**TK:** Probably.

**EC:** It's very complicated.

**?:** Yeah.

**MM:** Mhm.

**TK:** But I don't know that much about it, but I just think that the fact that there is something like this...

**?:** Mhm.

**TK:** ...which is completely new...

**?:** Mhm.

**TK:** ... a new concept, I've never heard about it before...

**?:** Mhm.

**TK:** ... it's just a sign that this has become more and more popular and people are benefiting from it, because otherwise they wouldn't open something like this.

**AB:** Yeah.

**TK:** But to be fair, I don't know if the café is private or... But I think it's Aalborg Kommune, umm...

**AB:** Yeah, it's Aalborg Kommune...

**TK:** ...municipalities...

**AB:** Yeah, and, and some students...

**TK:** Yeah.

**AB:** ...who are like, umm, some people from Aalborg Kommune and...

**TK:** Yeah, but I'm just saying just that something like this is opened...

**AB:** Yeah.

**TK:** ... also shows that it's starting to be a bigger thing.

**AB:** And it was, it's, it's organized with the students, yeah with the student's help.

**TK:** Yeah so I mean, the, the...

**AB:** And some students who...

**TK:** So you actually have some kind of collaboration between the government and university, or the students there.

**AB:** But, like, how many cases are like that?

**TK:** True.

**AB:** Because you're not lucky every day.

**TK:** That's true, that's true. But, but still, it's a start.

**AB:** Yeah, yeah. Like an example.

**EC:** Yeah, the problem of the competition is, I think, the most difficult to works with. That private, umm... I think nothing is, okay, the private business on one hand is the most innovative one, because you need to innovate otherwise you die, no one is gonna...

**TK:** So they also have the freedom to do it.

**EC:** Yes.

**SB:** Mhm.

**EC:** Yes, but on the other hand, I think that nothing, nothing is more conservative than them, when it comes to risk, you know. Like yeah, and so perceived risk. If I open myself to new, to new people them I'm kind of sharing secrets, you know.

**SB:** Mhm.

**EC:** Why should I do that, you know? Like, there is this, I don't know, paranoia, you know.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Yeah, that they have... Actually I had to face this, umm, many times that, umm, for my case studies, during my studies, that they didn't want to speak with you, to, like, to share knowledge, you know.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** They didn't want to, and they was like, yeah but, I mean, if you do that I can tell you if this is good, if this is not good and maybe you, you don't agree, but it's an opinion, you know.

**SB:** Mhm.

**EC:** But they were like, nah, no because then someone can imitate, you know, and like, you have this thing. And there's this thing of competition, yeah. Like why should I, should I tell to a student and they can maybe access to a government funded program to open a start-up, how to do things, cause then I will face a competitor, that maybe pay less taxes than I-I-I do.

**SB:** Yeah.

**EC:** Why should I tell him even how to do his stuff, hmm...

**TK:** But Aalborg Kommune actually offers, you know, umm, consultancy if you want to start up your own business and so on. Go in and brainstorm with you, and then they can help you to (inaudible)

**EC:** Yeah, but then it's like communication between you and the commune.

**TK:** Yeah, that's true.

**EC:** Yeah. It's better than nothing of course it's a huge thing. Yeah, but...

**SB:** Mhm.

**EC:** Yeah. Then you don't have, like, that triangle you know.

**TK:** That's true.

**MM:** I think we're done. I'm out of questions. Do you wanna talk more?

**TK:** No.

## Appendix 5

### Interview with Bo Samson from Blokhus Salt

*Done via email*

1. Why did your company decide to partake in the workshop?  
**We think that the idea, with many young people, with many good ideas sounded really exciting**
2. How did your company benefit from the workshop?  
**There were many ideas that we had even been thinking about that belvedere corroborated and which we will put into practice**
3. What role does the workshop play in your innovation process?  
**There are several ideas that we want to make**
4. Why do you think these kinds of workshops are important?  
**I think that a small company like ours need input from outside**
5. How do you think these workshops contribute innovation in general?  
**I think that opens your eyes to new ideas and opportunity**
6. How do you think these workshops contribute to knowledge sharing?  
**I do not entirely that I understand your question?, But it can only be good sea ice to share experiences**
7. How would you describe the students that took part of the workshop? Was the knowledge they shared in any way relevant or new to you?  
**Their knowledge and ideas is something we will use in the future, there were a number of things which will be difficult to complete because of severe laws in Denmark**
8. How important is innovation in tourism industry in your opinion?  
**It's very important that we work in an area where a season issue is very short, and we must do something to make longer.**
9. How would you describe the level of innovation in your company?  
**I personally believe that we are doing a huge work to develop**

10. How important is innovation in your company?

**It means everything**

11. Could these workshops improve the collaboration between different stakeholders and how? (university, government institutions, tourism firms)

**I think it is a great advantage for companies is called to get the students to visit,, new ideas, new initiatives, but it may also be beneficial for the students to get out in real life. There are many ideas which can not be done, because of the severe laws**

12. Is there anything you would change in the workshops?

**I like the concept, but also think that we had too little time**

13. How much and why does your company interact/collaborate with government institutions? (e.g. VisitNordjylland, municipality)

**We use our municipality very much, they are the ones who have created a good contact with the university, we also visit nordjylland and a lot Visitjammerbugten. I believe that it is important that we can cooperate with the public**

14. How much and why does your company interact/collaborate with universities? Are you involved in projects, workshops, research etc. other than Solution Camp?

**We will do everything that cooperation with universities as possible. right now we have asked for help / ideas for bath with concentrated salt water, we also spurt for help to a website.**

15. How much and why does your company interact/collaborate with other tourism firms in the region?

**We are in the business association distination Blokhús. where we have reasonable cooperation. We have relationships with some of rental offices. But we would like us more partners, as for example Fårup Summerland.**

16. Do you think that working together with different companies and institutions in the region is important? Why?

**Cooperation with others in the region is very important. Although we in Blokhús-Salt is open every day all year long, we do not only draw more tourists to the area.**

17. What are the challenges in collaboration now and how could it be made better?

**I thought that one of the challenges is that not all attractioner / stores, will work. We still have too many stores that have closed in winter, which is not getting more tourists here.**

18. Do you think that it is important to work together with universities, especially in relation to tourism? Why?

**I believe that cooperation with the university, has the great advantage that it typically young people with fresh ideas, often from many different countries**

19. What are the challenges to knowledge sharing with different companies and institutions?

**The challenges are well time we're all busy, the cost of doing tourist business is indeed great, and the money should be recouped by the very employees.**

20. What role, in your opinion, does the university play in tourism sector in general?

**Perhaps develop new concepts, along with new and small businesses.**

## Appendix 6

### Interview with Mette Green Clausen from Skallerup Seaside Resort

*Done via email*

1. Why did your company decide to partake in the workshop?  
**Earlier we have been part of a workshop**
2. How did your company benefit from the workshop?  
**The workshop has contributed with some ideas to continue the development of the holiday center**
3. What role does the workshop play in your innovation process?  
**Quite little**
4. Why do you think these kinds of workshops are important?  
**Mostly for the students – less for the companies**
5. How do you think these workshops contribute innovation in general?  
**Too little verses the costs**
6. How do you think these workshops contribute to knowledge sharing?  
**Too little**
7. How would you describe the students that took part of the workshop? Was the knowledge they shared in any way relevant or new to you?  
**We did not achieve new knowledge as the students knew too little about the holiday center and the current possibilities for the guests. Therefore the suggestions of new activities etc. were pointing at current activities**
8. How important is innovation in tourism industry in your opinion?  
**Very important as we have to innovate and continuously re-develop ourselves**
9. How would you describe the level of innovation in your company?  
**Medium to medium/high**
10. How important is innovation in your company?  
**Medium, as our guests often mention that they like to return to a well-known spot (65% are repeaters)**

11. Could these workshops improve the collaboration between different stakeholders and how? (university, government institutions, tourism firms)  
**Not in the form that the workshop is held at the time being**
12. Is there anything you would change in the workshops?  
**The students have to know more about the company to be able to contribute with useful knowledge**
13. How much and why does your company interact/collaborate with government institutions? (e.g. VisitNordjylland, municipality)  
**Networking, branding Nordjylland,**
14. How much and why does your company interact/collaborate with universities? Are you involved in projects, workshops, research etc. other than Solution Camp?  
**From time to another we participate in projects for students (bachelor etc.) – This spring we have been involved with groups from the studies Kommunikation and Interaktive digitale medier**
15. How much and why does your company interact/collaborate with other tourism firms in the region?  
**We interact with most of the larger attractions as Fårup, Nordsøen, Aalborg Zoo, but also with e.g. Lønstrup, Hjørring Revyen and Dana Cup**
16. Do you think that working together with different companies and institutions in the region is important? Why?  
**Yes, because we have to stand together to sell and do marketing for the region of Nordjylland to attract more guests**
17. What are the challenges in collaboration now and how could it be made better?  
**We have nice cooperation in Nordjylland – VisitNordjylland is a very qualified facilitator**
18. Do you think that it is important to work together with universities, especially in relation to tourism? Why?  
**Universities bring the newest knowledge on many spots to us**
19. What are the challenges to knowledge sharing with different companies and institutions?  
**We are very open about knowledge sharing – I do not meet problems with knowledge sharing**



20. What role, in your opinion, does the university play in tourism sector in general?

**Education of well-skilled students/workers who will participate in the continuing development of the tourism. Influences to and has effect on public opinion upon tourism**