

The Tourists and the Whales

A Study of how Tourist Perceptions Prevented a Tourism Crisis in the Faroe Islands



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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to identify the reason for how and why a potential tourism crisis was averted by looking at tourist motivations and perceptions in relation to the tourist destination in question. This was done through the case focus of the Faroe Islands, which as a result of ongoing foreign activist involvement in the local practice of whale killings in 2015 resulted in an updated whaling law, also called grindalóg, in the Faroe Islands, which unintentionally had consequences for the local tourism industry. The problem formulation addresses the area of a tourist perspective, where a focus on crisis management might seem initially more sensible. This is a less traditional approach but is highly suitable for answering qualitative based questions, which are considered necessary for this case. The data collection was conducted through a qualitative based methodological approach which included two focus groups of consisting of previous and potential future tourists of the Faroe Islands, as well as a series of semi-structured interviews with local tourism operators to create an overview of the case. The theoretical approach was largely based on tourist motivation for travelling, their perception of crisis triggering events in tourism, and tourist destination image formation. The data analysis gave an early impression that the impending tourism crisis which had been depicted particularly in local media, had in retrospect not been as severe as initially anticipated. From tourism operators' perspective, the limited effect was partly credited to the flourishing tourism industry, but they could not accurately and comprehensively explain why these numbers were still increasing despite of the law. This is where the focus groups provided some more qualified answers for the perpetuation of tourist visits. Here, the participants, although expressing negative emotions in connection to the law, saw a good connection between their motivations for travel and the attributes they were generally associated with the destination. Furthermore, participants' cognitive understanding of the grindalóg resulted in it being not considered severe enough to have a significant negative influence on the overall decision-making process as tourists. Participants would instead cope with the grindalóg by avoiding its potential consequences and this way they would retain a positive destination image and/or destination loyalty. This thesis provides insights into how the development of a potential tourism crisis can be understood by examining a relevant tourist segment in relation to destination.

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1. Introduction

1.1 An overview of the problem

In the spring of 2015, after years of foreign protests of the killings of whales in the Faroe Islands, an addition to the so-called grindalóg, or whaling law, was implemented. The addition stated that everyone who spotted a pilot whale off the coast of the Faroe Islands had to report it to the proper authorities, and failing to do so could result in prosecution, fines, and possibly imprisonment. (logir.fo) While the law was targeted at activist groups, different stakeholders in the tourism industry received multiple complaints and threats from activist, but also inquiries from worried tourists. As a result, the Faroese tourism industry feared a major tourism crisis that would affect the industry as a whole and slow down the recent progression in tourism. However, besides the cancellation of some cruise ships to the country, the industry as a whole did not suffer, the number of overnight stays has remained the same, and a crisis was practically averted. This thesis seeks to examine the reasons behind this. This will be done by focusing mainly on the primary target segment of tourists visiting the Faroe Islands, and how they are affected by the law compared to their travel motivations and their image of the Faroe Islands as a vacation destination.

1.2 A potential crisis - relevance and implications of a seeming crisis in the Faroese tourism industry

With the world continuously getting smaller, the tourism sector getting bigger and the pervasiveness of the internet as social media and the constant access to news in all forms providing tourists with information about destinations, tourism can get affected in many ways. Tourism industries across the world have been hit by numerous crisis in recent times such as terrorist attacks, political instability, economic recession, biosecurity threats and natural disasters (Ritchie, 2004, p. 669) and these have emerged on a range of different reasons and have varied in their extent and time span in terms of being short-term or long term. Different types of crisis can have different consequences. A terrorist attack or a natural disaster can make potential tourists fear for their lives and safety, while political decisions or cultural events that can be perceived as being controversial, can influence tourists in actively deselect a holiday destination because of boycotts and other factors. As an example, the terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015 had immediate and very clear measurable consequences for tourism in the city and the country of France as a whole (www.thelocal.fr), and have not begun to rebound before now, almost two years after the attacks (www.france24.com). This can be seen as a definite

crisis in tourism, due to a triggering event that caused tourists to cancel travels to the country, or not choose Paris as a desirable destination to visit. Another example of a crisis in tourism based on a completely different triggering factor, is the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States of America. This crisis is based on politics rather than a sudden negative event such as a terrorist attack, but still have consequences to the tourism industry, both as a direct consequence of travel bans against certain countries, but also due to tourists not considering the United States as being as attractive a destination due to the presidency. As a result, several media predict a so-called “Trump-Slump”, which affects the tourism industry severely in terms of a decline of foreign visitors (theguardian.com; time.com). While the Paris crisis had potential tourist fear for their own safety, one might argue that the decrease in interest in the United States as a vacation destination is a very conscious deselection based on political views or as an indirect protest of Trump and his policies. No matter the cause, potential tourists seem to be making a conscious choice in not selecting this destination, and it is felt economically. From a research perspective, it is interesting how cases like these where a crisis is presents seemingly affects tourism in the country greatly. These examples show that even in huge, well-established tourism destination, a crisis, in these examples both crisis concerning risks in safety due to terrorism, as well as negative views on politics and a country’s image, can affect the tourism industry greatly. A crisis, or potential crisis, is therefore highly relevant to examine. In the case of the Grindalóg and the Faroese tourism industry, it was the potential crisis and the rhetoric surrounding it that initially spawned an interest in this case. While the law was not meant for, nor targeting tourists, the law is in principle equal for everyone in the Faroe Islands, be it a tourists or not. Therefore, a crisis rhetoric was seen in articles from the Faroe Islands (kvf.fo) and discussions by activist on social media with very negative tones regarding the act of killing the pilot whales, called the grind, and the new addition to the Grindalóg (facebook.com/seashepherddenmark), fuelled our interest in the subject. Further, activist groups encouraged boycotts of the Faroe Islands as a vacation destination and of Faroese produce due to the act of the grind, which was seen in various media as well (planetexperts.com). This made us aware of the problems and their relevance to the tourism industry.

1.3 A crisis avoided - a case worth examining

Early in the process of researching the case, it was discovered that the negative impact on the tourism industry in the Faroe Islands was limited to the cancellation of cruise ships, and that the number of overnight stays were still rising in 2016 and 2017, despite of the law and the negative rhetoric and

predictions surrounding the case. That the crisis was eventually largely avoided did however make the case even more interesting to examine, and became the main reasons why this case was chosen. This indicates that tourism developments are not as straightforward as the media and the tourism stakeholders might depict it. In the context of a controversial law concerning a controversial act, it becomes clearer that there is more at play than simply a black and white scenario where tourists are very affected by a single triggering event. It also indicates that the crisis development depends on the nature of the triggering event, here the grindalóg, and how the tourists perceive this event.

Understanding what is a play when a potential crisis is ultimately averted, despite it being predicted to happen and to have dire consequences, can prove to be helpful in potential future crisis situations in tourism, not only in the Faroe Islands, but in other destinations as well, as tourism stakeholders might find this knowledge useful. This makes this case even more interesting to examine, than if a crisis did in fact occur.

1.4 Focusing on the Faroe Islands

The Faroe Islands is an interesting vacation destination to examine over other destinations where a crisis could occur in the tourism industry. First of all, the crisis was overall avoided, and second of all the Faroe Islands is a relatively small vacation destination compared to the extremely well-established holiday destinations, that are often the subject of a tourism crisis, such as for example Paris or the United States. It is argued that small island tourist destinations are very vulnerable to different crises, and a crisis with economic consequences will ripple through the economy of the entire destination (Pacheco et. al. in Lewis-Cameron and Roberts, 2010, p. 149). Based on this, one could assume that a crisis in a small island destination such as the Faroe Islands could have very serious consequences to the industry and the country as a whole, which makes it very interesting to why this did not occur in the first place. Examining the potential crisis in tourism in the Faroe Islands can allow us as researchers to identify and examine factors in tourism and tourist motivation surrounding a potential crisis, and if and how it is overcome, on a scale more manageable than in the big, well established tourist destinations. Furthermore, since the Faroe Islands are just starting to rise as a new player on the established tourism market, which will be outlined in the later case description, the destination is arguably more vulnerable to a tourism crisis that could potentially slow down the development, or completely put it to a stop. It is due to all of these factors indicating that such a small destination is very susceptible to a crisis to occur, that makes this case unique and very relevant to examine.

1.5 Focusing on the tourists

The focus on how a crisis was averted in the Faroe Islands will be on the tourist segment who are within the target group of the brand, and who are among the segment that is seeing the highest increase in the Faroe Islands. Most studies done on tourism crisis are mainly focused on the actions of the stakeholders and the crisis communication and management, with little focus on the tourists themselves (Garrod and Breitsohl, 2016, p. 217). In this case, we deem the tourist perspective as being the most relevant to examine, as the tourists after all are ultimately the ones who have to consider if a controversial event, such as the grindalóg will affect them, and they have the final decision in whether or not they want to travel to a destination. Focusing on the tourist segment will also allow us to get an in depth understanding of how the Faroe Islands is perceived as a vacation destination in the eyes of the tourists, their travel motivations, and how they perceive the act of the grind and the Grindalóg itself, in order to establish whether or not, and how, this affects their final decisions to travel.

1.6 Hypothesis, overview of data collecting, and problem statement.

It is our hypothesis that the absence of a real crisis in the Faroe Islands can partly be contributed to the target tourist segment of the Faroe Islands, their motivations for travelling, and their perception of the grind and the grindalóg. If the primary tourist segment is less susceptible to potential risk taking when travelling, have a positive perception of the grind as a cultural event, and are understanding towards the fact that the law was not meant to target them, it might explain why so many chose to travel to the Faroe Islands despite of the law.

The case and the hypothesis leads us to the following problem statement:

How can the absence of a tourism crisis, which was feared by local stakeholders in the Faroe Islands, be explained through a focus on the motivations and perceptions of the growing tourist segment in the Faroese tourism industry?

The research into analysing the case involves a field trip to the Faroe Islands, where interviews with key stakeholders lay the foundation for this thesis, by understanding just how the crisis played out and was perceived by the stakeholders, what was done to counter it, who the current tourist segments are, what the current brand is, and how the Faroe Islands is experienced as a vacation destination overall. The knowledge obtained here serves as the foundation for choosing interviewees from the segment most suitable, and as a foundation for understanding tourism in the Faroe Islands overall.

To answer the problem formulation, the thesis will be composed of a number of theories regarding tourists, in order to understand them from many different angles and get a full overview of the tourist in the target segment of the Faroe Islands. The analysis section based on the conversations with the tourists will then seek to analyse how each theoretical approach to understanding the tourist segment, can be used to explain how a crisis was avoided, both in their individual parts and as a whole.

2. Methodology

2.1 Philosophy of science

In order for the reader of this thesis to get a clear understanding of the research conducted, it is first of all relevant to specify the concrete approaches we as researchers will utilise. In academia, there is a large variety of different methods and methodologies that can be experienced as rather confusing and complicated. According to Kuhn (1970) a research paradigm can be described as "*the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed*" In this sense, a paradigm is a way of understanding and interpreting the world, and reflects different ways of thinking. In this respect, there are three main paradigms in social sciences that are worth highlighting. Because there are many variants of research inquiry, certain paradigms that are central to tourism studies (Jamal & Robinson, 2009, p. 673) will be discussed. These are positivism, post-positivism and constructivism. The following sections will discuss the ontological and epistemological approaches to this thesis to the readers, and validate the relevance and use of them in relation to the research conducted.

2.1.1 Ontology and Epistemology

This section on ontology and epistemology seeks to give a holistic view of respectively how knowledge is viewed and how we see ourselves in relation to this knowledge.

A paradigm in this context refers to a worldview and underlying theories and methodology of a particular scientific subject, thus they are meant to inspire a certain way of thinking and approach to the researcher's inquiry. In this sense, such a paradigm essentially is used by the researcher as a way to obtain knowledge and the paradigms can be characterized by the way their proponents respond to three basic questions. These can be characterized as the ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions. (Guba, 1990, p.18).

Ontology can be described as the branch of philosophy concerned with what there is to know, what is outside (Allen and Varga, 2007, p. 19-20). Guba describes ontology as being the question for what is "the nature of the knowable", and what is "the nature of reality". The epistemology, on the other hand, relates to what we know, and how we know what we know. It asks "What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?" (p. 18-20). Allen and Varga argue that these are not inseparable, but function with one another and influence one another. Finally, Guba describes that with the question of methodology, the researcher should ask: "*how*

should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?” (p. 18). To answer these questions, the researcher uses paradigms. According to Crane (1980), a paradigm is the beliefs, norms, and values shared by members of a group of scientists that engaged in studying specific problems in a research area. The different paradigms can be categorised and applied through their respective emphasises.

2.1.2 – Constructivism

The paradigm deemed relevant to this thesis is constructivism. Often seen as being directly opposite the paradigm of positivism, which places large emphasis on objectivity in that it focuses on what is known and can be determined, constructivism views, as the name implies, truth as being socially constructed and ever changing and is thus much more open (Guba, 1990, p. 25-27). In constructivism, there are several views on reality, and each are considered valid since realities can be seen in different lights and from different perspectives. Ontologically, if many interpretations can be made in any inquiry and if no fundamental process can determine truth or falsity, one has to take the position of relativism, which is the key to openness and the continuing search for ever more informed and sophisticated constructions (p. 26). So, the ontology of constructivism is that: “... *realities exists in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the person who holds them*” (p. 27). What there is to know, the knowable, is therefore hard to predict, as it exists in various forms, depending on the individual. The epistemology of constructivism describes that “*inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two*” (Ibid, p. 27). Therefore, here the relationship between the knower and the known is essential, and the knowledge of the world that can be gained from this relationship, is unpredictable before the interaction itself. Here, ontology and epistemology are evidently in many ways the same, and the distinction is almost non-existent. What can be known about the world, and the individual who comes to know things about the world are fused into a coherent whole. The findings are not a report of what is out there, but instead residues from the process of finding this knowledge, knowledge which is a human construction and a consequence of human activity that is never ultimately true, but in constant change. (Ibid, p. 26). This reflects our whole research approach as the objective of this thesis will be to obtain a better understanding of individual tourist motivations and experiences. The methods for data collecting will feature group discussions, where it is imperative that not one single truth is searched for, but rather the many truths that will be constructed in those settings through negotiations.

In continuation of the points made by Guba, when using constructivism as a epistemology, Mills, Bonner and Francis (2006) points out that *“Researchers, in their “humanness,” are part of the research endeavor rather than objective observers, and their values must be acknowledged by themselves and by their readers as an inevitable part of the outcome”* (p. 26), This means that we as researchers bring our own assumptions and worldviews, our own subjectivity, to the research, which is bound to influence results and analysis. This, we must acknowledge as being an influential factor. Especially in interviews, and to some degree focus group interviews, which is a substantial part of the data collection in this thesis, this subjectivity can occur, and influence the conversations through the questions asked. As a potential consequence, the data collected and the subsequent analysis can therefore potentially be slightly coloured.

We are examining tourist motivations and perceptions of a tourist destination. It is our belief that these motivations and perceptions are constructed by the tourists in various situations where truths are negotiated. In this sense the involved actors in this research, whether these are tourists or tourism organisers, are involved in constructing a reality or truth and this is something that a constructivist researcher fully acknowledges. During this investigation, we do not use a scientific method to unveil a particular truth or reality but rather we are aware of the fact that we as human beings are influencing what we essentially are trying to investigate rather than discovering the reality or truth of our case. Therefore, constructivism is the relevant paradigm in this thesis, over paradigms such as positivism and post-positivism, were a single or a few truths are regarded as universal. The constructivist paradigm naturally becomes the paradigm used in this thesis, due to the methodological approaches we find most fitting to conduct the research.

2.2 Qualitative data collection

Data collection in our inquiry will primarily be based on qualitative research methods. These methods, which will be elaborated below, fit well with the constructivist approach.

Although the attention on each type of method is unequal, both qualitative and quantitative data have their role in the general inquiry. While the analytical section will be based on qualitative data, existing quantitative data on the other hand will be used to supplement the initial desk research and assessed factors present in the case of the Faroe Islands as a tourist destination. Examples of such will be amount of overnight stays, economics, and other measurements made by tourism actors. The role of quantitative data will in this sense contribute to a better fundamental understanding of the current tourism situation and how it can be measured relatively, but are not part of our own generated data.

Qualitative research is intended to approach 'the world out there' and involves an exploratory approach to obtain information rather than objective measurements. This research fits the purpose of this thesis well since the object of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of the different mechanisms that are embedded in our case rather than merely measurable statistics. Also "qualitative research is no longer considered to be just simply 'not quantitative research' but has developed an identity of its own" (Kvale, 2007, p. 2). Furthermore, qualitative research can be defined as "*analysing experiences of individuals or groups*" which in this case relates to stakeholders and tourists whose experiences "*can be related to everyday or professional practices.*" (p. 2). Given our object of understanding the mechanisms of tourism motivations and tendencies in a particular socio-cultural context, this research method is highly suitable.

2.3 – Hermeneutics, pre-understandings, and the hermeneutic circle

In this thesis, hermeneutics is an essential part of the fluent and dynamic data gathering and subsequent analysis. Building on the ontological and epistemological assumptions shown and explained earlier, hermeneutics will come as a natural part of the methodology. As explained earlier, an essential part of the constructivist approach, is to recognise that the researcher(s) has values that must be recognised by themselves. Likewise, the researcher also has a number of presumptions about the topic at hand and the case they want to examine. These pre-understandings about the world, about the topics at hand and about the case we examine is a part of the hermeneutic methodology. Hermeneutics can be described as a methodology of interpretation (Mantzavinos, 2016), and includes these pre-understandings of topics. Pre-understandings follows the recognition that prior to any interpretations, we and the object of the interpretations exists, and that we belong to a "cultural world" in advance to these interpretations (Arnold and Fisher 1994, p. 56). The interpreter and that which is being interpreted is linked by a context of tradition, "the accumulation of the beliefs, theories, codes, metaphors, myths, events, practices, institutions, and ideologies ... that precede the interpretation (p. 56-57). Arnold and Fisher further argue that the pre-understandings can be the starting point for interpretation, acknowledging the subjectivity of the researchers in such pre-understandings, but moves past the subject/object distinguishes and acknowledging that all understandings are in part a product of the interpreter's pre-understanding (p. 57). The pre-understandings "*enables rather than constrains the interpreter*" (p. 57), and according to Sørensen et. al. (2010), it is the pre-understandings that makes understanding and interpreting a possibility (p. 128-129). Using hermeneutics fits naturally with the use of the paradigm of constructivism, as constructivism also

recognise that a pre-understanding is not only necessary in this type of research, but is inevitable. Therefore, we deem hermeneutics as a valid method to acknowledge in our preliminary research. The ideas of the hermeneutic circle are central to the hermeneutic philosophy (Arnold and Fisher 1994, p. 63), and is a process that further envelops and develops the pre-understandings of the researcher, by engaging in the topic. Mantzavinos (2016) explains that the hermeneutic circle is used to establish a reading for the whole text, and to do so, we appeal to readings of its partial expressions. Because we are trying to find meaning and sense, “*where expressions only make sense or not in relation to others, the readings of partial expressions depend on those of others, and ultimately of the whole*”, hence the circle. So, in order to understand the whole, we try to comprehend and understand the smaller parts, and to understand and comprehend the smaller parts, we try to understand the whole. By delving deep into the subject and the texts, a thorough understanding can develop. Kezar (2000) expands upon this:

“The circularity of understanding is that we understand in terms of what we already know. The more we engage the topic in reflection and practice, the deeper we come to know. Understanding develops as we become more engaged and concerned, through repeated experience, interaction with the issue in the real world, and reflection” (p. 386-387).

So, the further we as researchers delve into the subjects, examining both the case of the grind and the Faroe Islands as a vacation destination as a whole, as well as the smaller parts, and the more we engage in texts, real world interactions, observations etc. the more knowledge we gain, using the ideas of the hermeneutic circle. This thesis is constantly developing, and as our pre-understandings dictated the beginnings and initial research, our findings and further understandings of the case continue to do so. Because of this, this project is not written chronologically, but is being optimised, changed and developed as it progresses, with changes to the various parts being done fluently. In this thesis, this means that our introduction will change and be clarified as the most interesting aspects of the case unfolds and the methods will be clarified according to the findings. The different parts will therefore reflect our best understandings and findings in the case examined.

2.4 Methods

This section will feature the methods that will be utilised to best answer the problem formulation, by gathering relevant data.

2.4.1 Desk research

Desk research accounts for some of the initial data collection, providing information to help specify what specific case should be examined, why, and how. Here, desk research refers to the unspecified data collection made early in the research process, in order to get some initial understandings of the case. This consisted of online research by finding news articles describing the emerging crisis in the Faroe Islands and the circumstances surrounding it, as well as online sources with information on the number of visitors in the Faroe Islands and how this has developed before and after the implementation of the law. As it was seen in the introduction, the online research was used to find information on how the Grindalóg affected tourism, and ultimately altered the focus in this thesis to concern how a crisis was averted with a focus on the tourists. Furthermore, first hand impressions from visiting the Faroe Islands in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the country as a tourist destination, as well as of the cultural aspects surrounding this case are also a part of the early data collection process. The desk research and how it affects the approach and choice of methods in this thesis are reflective of the hermeneutic method, as it alters the different segments, as more information becomes available.

2.4.2 Interviews

Interviews are done in order to obtain data and to get to know the interviewee better, but the purpose of the gathering of the data varies depending on the research (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). There are a few approaches to using interviews as a method that are relevant to our research. Among the different interview methods that are relevant to us, we are choosing among four general types. These are: Informal and conversational interview, general interview guide approach, standardized, open-ended interview, and closed fixed-response interview. Of these, our research will be conducted through the general interview guide approach. As stated by Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, this approach is more structured than informal conversational interviews but still with a large degree of flexibility in its composition. McNamara (2009) states that the merits of this approach is that it gives the researcher the ability “...to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee; this provides more focus than the conversational approach, but still allows a

degree of freedom and adaptability in getting information from the interviewee.”(managementhelp.org). Since we are interviewing a number of different stakeholders within tourism in the Faroe Islands, but are looking for data within the same areas, this is relevant. Furthermore, the interviews will follow the structure of the semi-structured interview. These types of interviews are often scheduled in advance (as it is the case with the interviews conducted with stakeholders within tourism that will be conducted in this thesis), and are “*generally organised around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee / s*”, and are most commonly conducted only once, within 30 minutes to several hours (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006, p. 315). This is the structure that we intend to follow, as it will give us an open conversation concerning the topics and issues we seek in-depth information about.

As mentioned, the interviewees chosen are all stakeholders within the tourism industry in the Faroe Islands, such as the visit organisations Visit Faroe Islands and Visit Tórshavn, as well as GreenGate Incoming, a private company that provides and facilitates travels to the country. This correlates with the notions made by DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), who writes that when selecting interviewees, “*The sample of interviewees should be fairly homogenous and share critical similarities related to the research question.*” (p. 317). The stakeholders chosen are all likely to have information and opinions concerning the subject matter, and can potentially shed light on many of the aspects that are relevant to the thesis. The stakeholders are chosen based on their involvement in the Faroe Islands growing tourism industry and because they have possibly been impacted by and involved in the potential crisis in tourism that the grindalóg spawned. The data collected from these interviews, will primarily provide a thorough understanding of the Faroe Islands as a tourist destination, how the grindalóg impacted the tourism industry, and how it was handled by the different stakeholders, in order to establish if and how their actions have contributed to avoiding a crisis situation. The interviews can help us understand the data that can will be obtained through other methods, such as for example data and observations concerning the brand of the Faroe Islands, and put it into perspective. Most importantly, the interviews will serve as a precursor for the focus group interviews with potential tourists, as well as tourists who have already visited the Faroe Islands, since through a thorough understanding of the country as a tourist destination, we can get a preliminary understanding of the target groups of tourists, if and how they have reacted to the law, and how the stakeholders perceive the tourists’ motivations. The interviews with the tourism stakeholders were performed on site in the Faroe Islands, and are presented as such:

Stakeholder	Name of interviewee	Position	Duration of interview
Visit Faroe Islands	Guðrið Højgaard	Director of Tourism	1 hour, 35 minutes
GreenGate Incoming	Marni Hjalldafoss	Director and owner	35 minutes
Visit Tórshavn	Theresa Turidardóttir Kreutzmann	Director	1 hour, 15 minutes

For additional information, see appendix 1-3.

2.4.3 Focus Group interviews

A focus group is a useful data collection method since "*The purpose of a focus group is to better understand how people feel or think about an issue, idea, product, or service.*" (Krueger and Casey, 2015, p. 2). This method coincides well with our purpose of getting a better understanding of tourist motivations for travelling, travel experience, their understanding of and relation to the Faroe Islands as a vacation destination, and finally how the tourists react towards the grindalóg and a destination in "challenging time". It is also appropriate in relation to the qualitative data research that characterises this thesis. The format of study groups is an appropriate method, since "*focus groups work when participants feel comfortable, respected, and free to give their opinions without being judged.*" (p. 5), and these opinions and expressions are highly useful information to this research. In this particular case, a focus group essentially contributes with the representation of the tourists as a group, and how different perspectives and opinions are negotiated. It is important to consider that focus group are specifically useful for certain objectives while less useful for others. For example, focus groups participants tend to intellectualise meaning that in reflecting on one's behaviour there can likely be a portrayal oneself as a "thoughtful, rationale, and reflective individual" (Krueger and Casey, 2009, p. 13). Therefore, it is important to have in mind that the answers given, at least initially, are not necessarily conclusive, but rather, it is important to capture the interplay in the dialogue between the participants and how these might generate new information.

The focus group interviews are intended to mirror the sharing of information, search for data, and negotiation that could occur between tourists when planning a vacation. Romm (2015) notes that one of the advantages of focus groups is that participants learn from one another, and that they can exchange and build on one another's views. As it will be argued in the theory section, tourists' perceptions, considerations, and decisions, generally build on certain patterns and are generally based on these negotiations and information searching. During the interviews, we will present a scenario were the

Faroe Islands are to be considered a future potential travel destination, and present information regarding the brand, the grind and the grindalóg, to mirror the information search they would possibly conduct on these subjects. Ultimately, the results from the focus groups can be utilised to analyse how the target tourists responds to the grindalóg, how it affects their decisions, and if this can be among the reasons to why a crisis in tourism in the Faroe Islands seemingly did not occur. The focus group interviews can in this context be seen as superior to other forms of data collection, as this negotiation that mimics real life situations are not possible to the same extend in other types of interviews.

While doing interviews with tourism entities in the Faroe Islands provides good insight to the mechanisms of the local tourism, it also serves as a foundation for understanding tourism in the country, and the circumstances surrounding the supposed crisis of the grindalóg. To gain insights into the motivations of tourists whom the potential crisis in the Faroe Islands concerns, we plan to obtain information from tourists who have already visited as well as potential tourists considering visiting the destination. The focus group will be organized in Denmark where we will interview two different groups of individuals. Two groups are necessary, in order to be able to contrast and compare results of both groups, as well as providing a broader selection of different tourists and thus a broader field of data.

The respondents have been chosen based on a combination of a general interest in travelling, and their connection to the current brand of the Faroe Islands and the current rising tourism segment in the country, which will be outlined and analysed later. Furthermore, it is important that both groups have participants who have already visited the Faroe Islands. First, they can provide information on motivations on travelling to the country as well as perceptions of the destination from a non-hypothetical scenario perspective. Further, they will in each group serve as facilitators of word of mouth knowledge, as it could naturally occur in real conversations about travel destinations.

In total, seven respondents were found. They are represented as such:

Focus group 1:

Referred name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Occupation
G	Male	27	DK	Studying pedagogy
MA	Male	27	DK	Working part time jobs, has Bachelor's degree
ME	Female	23	DK	Studying construction engineering
J	Male	25	DK	Working as chemical engineer

The duration of the interview with focus group 1 was 1 hour 53 minutes.

Focus group 2:

Referred name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Occupation
P	Male	27	DK	Working as teacher at a public school
C	Male	27	DK	Working as a front end developer
JO	Male	26	USA	Studying international relations

The duration of the interview with focus group 2 was 1 hour 37 minutes.

For additional information, see appendix 4-5.

2.4.3.1 Structure and limitations of the focus group respondents

In order to identify the development that occurred after the crisis, the focus group data collection was based on a partly fictional scenario where participants are asked to relate to the whaling law as it is still in practice although it has been abolished at the time of the interview. This is done because it arguably will better mimic genuine reactions to an incident where tourists or potential tourists actually have to consider this law as part of their decision-making process. Both interviews were structured similarly, and examined the respondents' knowledge of the Faroe Islands, their motivations for travelling, and their travel experience. After this had been established, information was given on the grind, first through a film clip, where immediate reactions were examined, and then additional information was provided throughout to mimic the real search for information that can occur in such a group. Then, information on the Grindalóg was provided. Group 1 received much information on the law and whom it was supposed to target, and group 2 was initially given scarce information, and reactions were examined. Lastly, a film displaying the current brand of the Faroe Islands was shown, and data on the connections between brand and perceived image were gathered.

While the respondents were chosen based on their willingness to travel and their connection to the target segment of the brand and the current increasing travel segment of the Faroe Islands (as it will be analysed and argued later), we recognise that the group are somewhat homogeneous in terms of age and gender, and that this can possibly have some influence on the data collected. It must therefore be taken into account when analysing the results that the conversations might move in certain ways due to the lack of representation from other age groups or if there had been an equal division of genders.

3. Case

This section presents the relevant information about the Faroe Islands that is needed to get a comprehensive understanding of what kind of destination the event occurred in, why it happened, what kind of consequences it caused, and lastly why this matter.

The information provided in this section is based on desk research such as online articles that have covered the implementation of the grindalóg and the consequent discourse in the local media. Conducted interviews have also provided information on tourism conditions that tourism actors operate under. Furthermore, statistical data on national affairs had been used to gain an insight into the condition of the country.

Before diving into the core issue of the primary case presentation, which is the grindalóg, it is relevant to present the case destination and the surrounding factors Faroe Islands.

This will provide a more comprehensive view of the destination which in turn is beneficial when analysing both the cause and the effects of the grindalóg.

The importance of this section is given since significant information of the destination cannot be expected to be common knowledge. Furthermore, it is important to have an understanding of the society and the national tourism at the destination in order to be able to do a later full analysis of the current situation in the tourism industry.

3.1 About the destination.

The Faroe Islands is a self-governing archipelago, part of the Kingdom of Denmark and is located in the North Atlantic Ocean between Iceland, Scotland, and Norway. The country has a population of 49.935 as of Feb. 2017. (hagstova.fo). The country's main export is fishing industry including farmed fish and accounts for around 90 percent of the country's total export value (visitfaroeislands.com). The reliance on the natural goods that surround the country is not limited to seafood and extends to other food sources such as poultry. The fishing industry is however still heavily relied on the as the main export good. The unreliable and often harsh weather conditions, especially outside of high season of summer was something that was experienced at first hand during our research trip the to the country.

The power balance between the different industries' generated revenue can however be about to change for the country. As the figure below shows, this can be observed in the increasing amount of tourists visiting the country, with recent statistics showing a growing tourism industry.

Annual Overnight stays (accommodation)

2013	2014	2015	2016
132.265	139.250	159.167	159.759

Table 1: Source: Visit Faroe Islands Annual Report 2016

As table 1 shows, the increase in overnight stays has steadily increased over the last years. As it can be observed, there is no significant increase between 2015 and 2016 and this can likely be attributed to the solar eclipse event in march 2015 which attracted a record high number of tourists from all over the world. Therefore, the fact that the amount of overnight stays has remained the same indicates a significant growth.

3.2 A billion kroner tourism industry

Guðrið Højgaard, director of VisitFaroeIslands has stated that the goal and course for the faroese tourism is to will generate a billion kroners for the country. The investment, which has risen over recent years, is set to become a significant economic income source for the country and “add a second string to the bow”, so to speak, in terms of export value. (portal.fo)

The Annual Report from 2016 was followed by the bright subtext: "*More tourists through the airport, more tourists by sea, more overnight stays, and larger total revenue in the industry. At the moment, all numbers are pointing in the right direction.*"

This text reflects much of the report and one should bear in mind that because this is from an annual report of an organization that operates of public funding, the overall might be depicted overly positive. Nevertheless, there is little doubt concerning the steady tourism growth in the Faroe Islands and this development is relevant to take into consideration when depicting the importance of tourism to the Faroe Islands from an economic perspective.

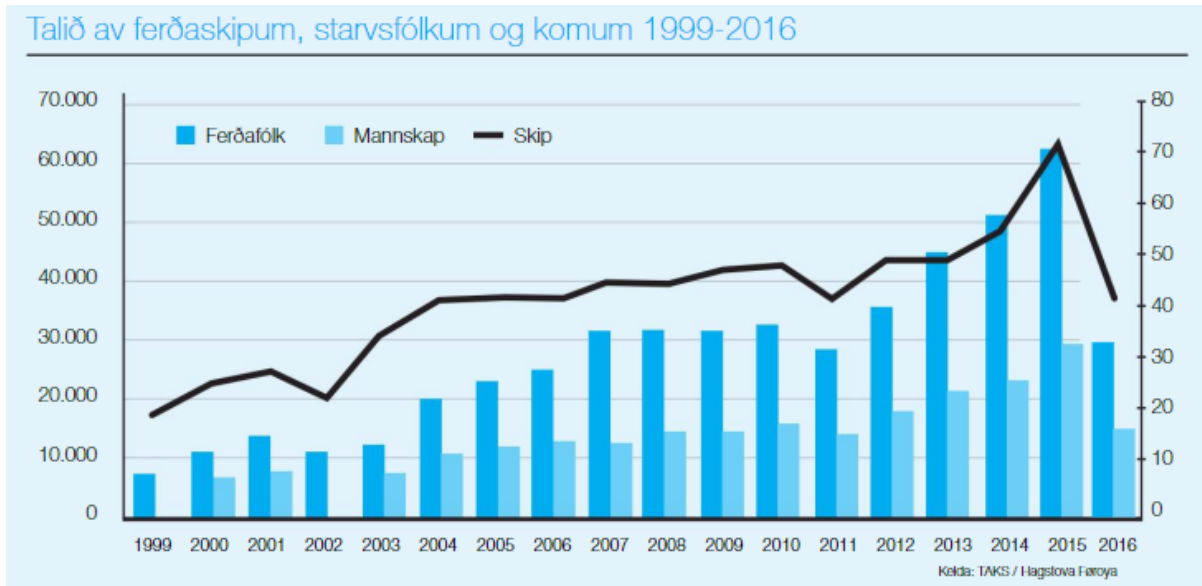


Table 2. Source: Visit Faroe Islands Annual Strategy 2016 (p. 9) Title: Amount of tourist ships, crew, and arrivals.

Ferðafólk = Tourists. Mannskap = Crew. Skip = Ships.

As this section indicates, tourism development can to a large extent be measured on a quantitative basis where the indicators such as number of tourists, revenue, increase in facilities such as accommodation and transportation signifies a destination that with a tourism industry in growth. This can give a good indication of the condition of the tourism in terms of activity and investment and thus an provides a fundamental understanding of what kind of destination the chosen case is embedded in and this makes this section a base for further and more qualitative based investigation.

Tourism has grown to become an important resource for the Faroe Islands. From being a country with great resources in terms of fish in the surrounding ocean but few alternative industries, the country has with tourism found a industry with potential to supplement and strengthen the national economy and the investment in tourism appears to be highly fruitful compared to the initial hopes and objectives. What is particular interesting with the tourism industry in this context is that its success is largely based on foreign people, in this case tourists, opinion of the destination. Therefore, national or events or phenomena might play into tourists' perception of the destination and thereby have an impact on the tourism industry.

3.3 Relevance of tourism growth

The figures outlined so far on the destination development are relevant because they depict a destination with a growing and dynamic tourism industry. The Faroe Islands was voted the most "authentic, unspoiled, and likely to remain so" islands group of 111 islands ranked by volunteer expert judges for the November/December 2007 issue of National Geographic Traveler magazine. (nationalgeographic.com) Furthermore, the country has been recommended as "the next destination to visit" by New York Times Travel Guide. (nytimes.com). This signifies an increased media exposure combined with better facilitation for more tourists which makes the destination more exposed to foreign attention.

This could be indication of a destination that is about to be exposed to a changing tourist segment. Especially in the interviews conducted with Visit Faroe Islands and Visit Tórshavn, it was indicated that the Faroe Islands is an "upcoming" destination and that this not only does this strengthen the image perception of the country but it also attracts new and younger tourists to the destination.

3.4 The grind

The previous section has identified a country and especially a tourism destination in growth where tourism facilitating initiatives have been identified. However, as mentioned, as relatively remote country, the Faroe Islands has traditionally been self-sustaining when it comes to food sources and the practice of killing whales "whaling" has been a part of this tradition. This means driving pilot whales to local shores and killing them on the beaches which, given the large amounts of blood in a whale, turns the surrounding ocean red. Images of these killing practises can naturally appear graphical to the viewer and this has resulted in negative reactions from particularly foreign organisations.

3.4.1 Criticism

Much of the criticism from activists (mainly Sea Shepherd) that is directed towards the faroese killings of pilot whales relates to the practice of killing the whales itself, the manner in which it is done, the potential threat towards the species population, and the unnecessary of killing whales, which is considered an outdated food source, when the Faroese people have access to other more industrialized produced food" (www.seashepherd.org)

The organisation recognises the connection between the Faroe Islands and tourism as they lastly state: *“The astonishing beauty of the Faroe Islands make them an appealing tourist destination, but a shadow is cast over the islands by the harsh reality of the cruel grind.” (Ibid.)*

Previous efforts to prevent the killing of pilot whales have been somewhat unsuccessful and it appears as the organisation might have seen a different approach to affect the Faroe Islands, if not directly, then economically through tourism since they expect a larger exposure on whaling in the country will result in more negative consequences for the country. (www.seashepherdglobal.org)

3.5 The Law

Initial proposals to tighten the existing the law in order to sanction those who actively break it was proposed already in 2014. Here it was argued that *“The reason for this proposition is the continuous campaign, the public threats, and the persistent activity at organizations such as Sea Shepherd and others who have their notified purpose of illegal behaviour in the Faroe Islands.” (ft.dk)*

In April/May 2015 a law regulation of the existing grindalóg implemented a punishment for everyone in the Faroe Islands, including tourists, who observed pilot whales and refrained from reporting it to local authorities. While it was meant to target those who actively interfered with whale killings, it now meant that tourists located in the Faroe Islands were obligated to report potential observations of pilot whales. (logir.fo) From the ministry of fisheries it was stated that the law would better equip the authorities for a “grindbattle” against activists. However, the battle would take a different turn than initially anticipated because of the general applicability it potentially had. (in.fo)

“At the moment, we are experiencing a boom in the number of tourists. The question is, if one is willing to risk it with this law where tourists are required to report whale observations.”

Theresa Turidardóttir Kreutzmann, director of Visit Tórshavn, 2015 (Ibid.)

In total, 4 cruise lines cancelled all of their ships’ planned visits to the Faroe Islands in 2016 resulting in a drop from 63 cruise ships in 2015 to 39 ships in 2016.

“In general we are talking about around 20.000 expected tourists fewer than in 2015. Granted, eight cruise ships visited in 2015 solely because of the solar eclipse event, but nevertheless, it is a huge number.” said Tróndur Sigurðsson from Tórshavn municipality in fall 2015 when interviewed by KVF about the challenge” (kvf.fo)

One of the tourism actors who arguably has felt the direct consequences of the law regulation was MB Tours, a company whose incoming department provides group travels and excursions to tourists, among these from cruise ships. (mb.fo) . Later, the same year (2015), Magni Mouritsen, company director, expressed concern for already experienced consequences. The company were notified of cancellation of scheduled arrivals to the Faroe Islands from several cruise ships. He stated that the cruise lines argued their cancellation on the base of passenger requests and that their main concern was the safety of all passengers and crew. Furthermore, the cancellation was a direct consequence of the grindalóg. (kvf.fo)

The negative consequences for the tourism industry resulted in a necessary clarification of the law and its intention. In July 2015, the Faroese government issued a statement in English regarding the Grindalóg. The statement intended to clarify the situation and potential confusion that had occurred as a result of the law. The statement, which appears to be mainly targeted at tourists addresses the reasoning behind the provision, the importance of having a grindalóg in the first place, and lastly the unlikelihood of an ordinary tourist becoming victim of the breaking the law. (government.fo)

Based on the reaction from local tourism stakeholders and the dramatic reduction of cruise ships, a tourism crisis as result of the grindalóg was feared. In this relation, it is relevant to clarify the contextual term “crisis” and how it applies to this case. The word “crisis” is used throughout this thesis, and “a crisis in tourism” is a term that is central to our hypothesis and problem formulation. When we are examining if and how a crisis in tourism was avoided in the Faroe Islands, it is central to explain what the term crisis covers, and ultimately establish whether or not a crisis did in fact occur in the Faroese tourism industry.

A crisis in tourism can mean several things. Keown-Mcmullan (1997) writes that there is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes a crisis, but from the work carried out in this field, three identified elements must be present, in order for a situation to develop into a crisis. The first is a triggering event that causes significant change or has the potential to cause significant change. This will cause a crisis if the management of a stakeholder feel that they are unable to cope with the change, which is the second element. The third element is if the trigger is so significant that it poses a threat to the survival of the organisation (p. 8-9).

3.6 Did the tourism industry in the Faroe Islands experience a crisis?

Whether or not there actually was a crisis in tourism in the Faroe Islands when the grindalóg was implemented 2015 is debatable. In relation to the elements presented by Keown-McMullan, it is clear that the first element is present here. The implementation of the law is the triggering event that brought all the major tourism stakeholders and government branches involved in tourism on edge, as they received numerous phone calls and emails with negative comments about the law. All three stakeholders interviewed in the Faroe Islands, being Visit Faroe Islands, Visit Tórshavn and GreenGate Incoming, all confirmed a great initial fear of losing a significant amount of tourists due to this. The second element is also confirmed as being present, as none of the stakeholders interviewed themselves had the authority to alter or remove the law, and overall felt that they could not directly counter the negative effects. As it has been established, tourism in the Faroe Islands is steadily increasing, and the law concerning the grind had no measurable negative effect on the number of overnight stays in the country that year or the following, meaning that the third element is not fulfilled here, indicating that a crisis situation was ultimately avoided.

However, for some stakeholders, such as the facilitators of the cruise ship vacations, it can be defined as a crisis. Since we are examining the case based on whether or not it posed a threat to the tourism industry on a national level, the crisis within individual organisations is of lesser importance.

Due to the aforementioned crisis rhetoric among key stakeholders in the Faroese tourism industry as well as their initial fear of it becoming a full-scale crisis with severe consequences, we will refer to the situation surrounding the implementation of the law concerning the grind, as a crisis or potential crisis in tourism in the Faroe Islands, although it never was so by its definition for the majority of stakeholders, and the country as a whole.

As it has been identified, there has been a significant impact on the cruise department of the Faroese tourism industry where a substantial reduction in cruise ships have accounted for the clearest evidence for a changed tourism demand. The question then becomes, if the overall tourism demand has remained practically unchanged why is it only a portion of the industry that has been affected and why the remaining tourist segment appears to be unaffected.

4. Theory

The theory section will feature the theories we deem most important to answer the problem formulation. Since the primary focus is on the tourists, we seek to examine them, their perceptions, motivations and image of the Faroe Islands, the grind and the grindalóg, through a number of theories. Each theory will be utilised to gain an understanding of these aspects from a particular angle, as well as provide information relevant in the following theories. Ultimately, the theories are also meant to collectively explain how a crisis in tourism was avoided.

4.1 Tourist Travel Motivations

Understanding tourist motivation when travelling is one of the key elements in understanding how a tourism crisis in a specific vacation destination affects the individual tourist. Travel motivations will account for a substantial part of the data collecting and analysis concerning the tourists themselves. Understanding certain tourist travel motivations that applies to the specific case of this thesis, can hopefully contribute to a better understanding of how tourists behave when confronted with potential risks when travelling.

Crompton (1979) explains that it is possible to describe the “who”, “when”, “where”, and “how” of tourism, but that it is more difficult to answer the question of “why”. The “why” is a critical factor underlying all tourist behaviour. In this thesis, we are not only examining the “why”, but also the “why not”, meaning that we are not only examining the motivations for wanting to travel to a specific vacation destination, but also the potential discouragement which can be asserted with subjects that are surrounded by controversy, and thus potentially creates a local tourism crisis. Understanding how the motivations for visiting weighs against the possible discouragement of the grindalóg, can help us to understand why tourists decided to visit a particular destination despite these discouraging factors. Motivation theory is especially suitable for trying to understand the reasons why people do travel to a specific destination, rather than those who choose not to. This section will include a theoretical perspective which is needed in order to conduct the following research. Since tourist travel motivations is a broad concept, this thesis focuses on the aspects within travel motivational theory that is deemed most important in understanding the circumstances in the case we are examining.

4.1.1 Defining tourist travel motivations

There is no universally accepted theoretical or conceptual framework to generally understand travel motivation. Chiang and Jogaratnam (2006) state that *"each travel motivational theory has its*

strengths and weaknesses, and more operationalisation and empirical support are needed" (p. 60). However, different motivation theories can be used to identify different research studies. This theory section includes a selection of motivation theories that are believed to suit this thesis structure well. Tourist motivations is a term that covers the factors that influence and acts as the deciding factors when tourists are choosing their travel destinations, modes of travel and accommodation. Many factors are at play when tourists plan and decide where to vacate, and according to Berkman and Gilson (1978), motivation theory is only one of the many variables that can be used to explain tourist behaviour. This is worth having in mind when investigating tourist behaviour, because it means that the research findings are limited to explore specific information relevant to chosen research case and not other different variables. Nonetheless, tourist travel motivation research is still considered a critical variable in explaining tourist behaviour, and motivation is an impelling and compelling force behind all behaviour (Crompton, 1979, p. 409-410). Gnoth (1997) explains that the desire for wanting to leave one's home and travel is an inner motive. The inner motive is related to the question of why, whereas more specific motivations determine the answers regarding where and what type of holiday one is seeking. Explaining the subject of travel needs generally revolves around a set of theories from a variety of scientific angles, where this theory section will outline and explain the theories that are most suitable in analysing the case of a tourism crisis in a specific destination, how tourists are affected by it in terms of their motivations, and how that affects their final choice of travel destination.

4.1.2 Push and Pull motives

When trying to understand the development of a challenging period or phenomenon in a local tourism environment and how it played out differently from what was initially anticipated, it can be useful to look at potential different motivations that tourists have had or have of a destination. This section explores the concept of push and pull motives of tourists in relation to a destination.

When it comes to travel motivations in tourism research, push and pull motives are a traditional and frequently used way to identify particular qualities in a destination compared to motives of tourist segment groups.

The study of motivational travel based on push and pull motives has been generally accepted by several tourism research studies and essentially suggests that people travel because they are pushed by internal or pulled by external forces of destination attributes. (Dann, 1981; Crompton, 1979; Uysal and Hagan, 1993; Zhang and Lam, 1999; Jang and Cai, 2002). Therefore, in identifying what pushes

or pulls tourists towards a travel destination contributes to fundamentally understanding why people travel.

In dealing with motives in a motivation section, it is, however, useful to define the meaning and differences between the two terms, motives and motivation. Gnoth (1997) distinguishes the meaning between these two terms. Motives are identified as more global and less situation-specific in nature than motivation, meaning that there are a range of solutions to the requirements set by the tourist. On the other hand, motivations are cognitive in nature, which indicate a more comprehensive interaction to fulfil the motivation, as Gnoth states: “*Although motives imply a direction and a target, only motivation actually include such targets or objects and refer to an interaction between motives and situations.*” (p. 291) In this sense, motives are seen as parts of a larger concept that is travel motivation which, based on different motives and situations, can include a much wider range of constructions. Whereas situations “contain clearly observable parameters that permit inferences indicating tourists' evaluations of specific objects and events in given situations... knowledge about motivations enables planners and managers to determine trends and usage levels of particular resources, but are forced to constantly monitor behaviour and survey motivations” (p. 292) The knowledge of tourist motivations is particularly useful since it encompasses the interaction between motives and situations and makes it more applicable to certain combinations or destinations.

As mentioned initially, the reason for including travel motivation theory is to be able to identify why people travel. This information will tell the researcher whether the tourists is interested in the particular destination or merely has a desire to travel. In his study, Crompton (1979) found that some respondents were relatively uninterested in the destination itself and rather “the destination served merely as a medium through which these motives could be satisfied.” (p. 415). Since the investigation of this thesis explores tourists' travel motivations in relation to a tourism destination crisis, and not travel motivations in general, it is interesting to consider that tourists who defy the negative attention on a destination would merely be motivated to have some motives satisfied. On the other hand, this might just contribute to an explanation to why a destination is deemed overall attractive by some tourists despite possibly being affected by a crisis based on factors that can possibly be seen as a risk by the tourists. It should be noted, however, that the disregard for factors that relate specifically to a certain destination, do not necessarily relate to more generally prioritised factors such as safety (as it will be explained in the Travel Career Pattern theory) and therefore such considerations are more

relevant when the basic needs have been met. The question then becomes; if tourists choose to defy a safety related factor where other have considered it decisive for their cancellation of planned travel, do these tourists make this decision based other motives that are fulfilled through the destination? This remains to be identified.

The study of travel motivation based on push and pull motives is performed in Compton's (1979) influential work that identifies tourist's motives for pleasure and classifies them based on the reasons behind travelling. Following Dann's (1977) earlier work, Crompton's identification includes nine different motives. Here, Crompton terms the push motives as socio-psychological while the pull motives are termed cultural. Of the identified motives, seven are classified as socio-psychological: (p. 415-419)

- Escape from a perceived mundane environment.
- Exploration and evaluation of self
- Relaxation
- Prestige
- Regression
- Enhancement of kinship relationships
- Facilitation of social interaction

Crompton notes that the socio-psychological motives were rarely identified in the early discussion and the respondents had trouble articulating them. This changed, however, as the interview proceeded and respondents elaborated more specifically on their motives.

The two remaining motives formed the alternate cultural category.

- Novelty
- Education (p. 419-421)

While the alternate cultural motives (pull) were found to be related to destination attributes, socio psychological motives (push), Crompton notes, were found to be unrelated to destination attributes and the emphasis shifted from the destination itself to function as a medium through which socio-psychological needs could be satisfied. (p. 412) This particular study particularly identifies the respondents' push motives as it can be seen in the listings above that reflect an identification socio-psychological motives. In the end, motives are inhabited by the potential tourists, in this case participants of the study, and these constitute the final result findings of a study research.

It is important to emphasize that push and pull motives, such as those listed above, are not certain fixed terms that necessarily should be applied to other case contexts, but are identifications that have suited the context they have been recognised in. Therefore, push and pull combinations vary based on different individual circumstances and preferences.

In extension of this point, the listed motives above can be applied to different contexts with different outcomes. For example, a study by Uysal and Jurowski (1994) similarly defined push and pull as a concept that *“incorporates the theory that people travel because they are pushed into making this decision by internal forces and pulled by external forces of the destination.”* (p. 844). However, one of the study findings were that *“among pull motives, the escape motivations have the strongest effect on the rural pull factor grouping...”* (Ibid, p. 844). Kim & et al, (2003) investigated the influence of push and pull factors on national parks in Korea and found that accessibility and transportation among the main pull factors. Compared to the findings by Crompton, pull motives can vary greatly depending on the destination and the attributes it is perceived to possess. This is one example of a pull factor changing tourists’ perception of the destination and reinforces concept of the different variety of push and pull motives that can play into tourists’ ultimate travel choice. What is important to emphasize here is the different potential combinations of both motives and situations that play into the final travel decision made by the tourist and can be utilized by relevant tourism planners: *“Given the nature of the relationship between the push and pull factors, rural areas and small towns and villages seeking to attract tourists may focus on the escape motivation that satisfies such needs as doing nothing, experiencing a change, or a simpler life style. (p. 845)* This finding can also be relevant when further investigating the push and pull relationship of remote destinations and its tourists or desired tourists who want to fulfil the above-mentioned motivations. In this sense, one can argue that many pull factors are used by tourism promoters by appealing to the push factors that relevant tourist segments are believed to have. The push motives in this light can be identified in all people that travel or wish to travel while the pull motives are more specific to different destinations or types of travelling. This way, tourism providers can use the intrinsic motivators that characterise most push motivations and apply them to their own destination image and marketing.

Examining tourists different push and pull motives can be used to identify trip-related motivations and contribute to explain why tourists choose the particular destinations that they ultimately do. For instance, in relation to tourists choosing recreational destinations over cultural ones, and vice versa, Nikjoo and Ketabi (2015) found escape motivation to be a major factor for choosing tourist resorts for recreational purposes, whereas those travel for ego-enhancement do travel for more cultural

destinations and place great value on tourist attractions. This is knowledge is useful especially in identifying the relationship between the push and pull motivations in relation to destination offers. In qualitative research methods, such as interviews and focus groups, push and pull factors can be a good way to organize and make sense of the information provided by the participants as the responses can be highly different and based on entirely different motivations. Furthermore, organizing obtained data through the categorization of push and pull motives is also a useful way to subsequently compare this data to a particular destination image and investigate the relationship between these two identifications. Identifying such a relationship can contribute to a better understanding the process leading up to tourists' ultimate travel choices.

4.1.2.1 The interplay between push and pull motives and satisfaction

While the rate of overall travel satisfaction can be more straightforward to determine, either tourists are satisfied with their visit are or they are not, the reasons behind the overall satisfaction can vary. Here, tourist push and pull motivations can be used to explain why tourist were satisfied and in which motivation category the satisfaction is based on.

Khuong and Ha (2014) argue that "push and pull factors are the effective tools to explain and predict destination satisfaction and return intention of them" (p. 495). Knowing these factors can thus be highly useful for tourist destination planners consider in order to obtain optimal tourist satisfaction. Research shows that there is an interplay between both push travel motivations (Yoon & Uysal, 2005) and pull travel motivations, (Battour et al. (2012) that then relate to tourist satisfaction. The latter author found a clear connection between destination attributes and overall tourist satisfaction. Here, it was found that "the overall satisfaction is captured by the expectation of tourist about the destination, visit worth time and effort, overall satisfaction with holiday, and rating destination as vacation compared to similar countries visited" (p. 293). A tourist's destination can this way benefit by acquiring an understanding of what the tourists' overall satisfaction is based on and thereby knowing how well the destination relates to its tourists' motivations.

Further, satisfaction plays an important role in relation to tourists' travel loyalty. (Chi & Qu, 2008) Travel loyalty can benefit destinations that wish to secure recurring guest visitations as well further positive results such as recommendations to other potential future visitors who consequently might be encouraged to visit the destination.

Although customer satisfaction has been considered an essential business goal, customer loyalty is seen as a better predictor of actual behaviour (Ibid, p. 1). Therefore, tourist (customer) loyalty is considered a more appropriate indicator of tourist behaviour such, which is arguably more important as it results in returning visitors.

The awareness of tourists' loyalty to one's destination can be useful to indicate the successfulness of one's destination image and marketing in relation to tourists' ultimate experience of the destination. Whether the positive effects of tourists' destination loyalty are merely desirable by every destination can, however, be discussed. Although tourists' loyalty towards a destination indicates a destination with positive attributes and features, destination images can be very different in what they wish to achieve. If the goal is to get tourist to merely experience the destination and not necessarily strive for becoming a destination returning customers, then the tourist loyalty can potentially somewhat conflict with the intended destination image.

In this light, it is relevant to study the relation between tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty, as well as the destination image in order to discover if these correlates. This can be useful when looking at perceived destination image.

4.2 Pearce's Travel Career Pattern

Pearce's Travel Career Pattern is a theory that is highly relevant in this thesis. The model was originally developed as the Travel Career Ladder (as seen in Ryan, 1998, p. 938), and was based on Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. The Travel Career Ladder exclaims that the more experienced a tourist is, the more likely the tourists is to change his or her motives and ascend the ladder, seeking new motives. Pearce and Lee changed the concept of the Travel Career Ladder, to the more suitable "Travel Career Pattern" in 2005. The primary goal for redefining the method, was to examine and obtain information on "*pleasure travel motivation patterns and conceptualize it in relation to the travel career concept.*" (Pearce and Lee, 2005, p. 227). The new approach focused on understanding pleasure travel motivation generically, by Identifying a broad range of travel motive items for pleasure travel in general, to map out the underlying factors defining travel motivations, to measure travel experiences and relate travel motivation patterns to said experiences, and thereby adjust the Travel Career Ladder Theory into a more comprehensive travel motivation theory (Ibid, p. 227-228.) The Travel Career Pattern offers a theoretic framework for understanding tourist motivation for traveling to certain locations, their choice of transportation, choosing certain kinds of accommodation, and the overall travel experience they seek. The model represents a career within

leisure or tourism, with the core idea that people's motivation for travelling changes with their travel experience, as their travel pattern motives can change according to their life span and/or accumulated travel experiences (Pearce and Lee, 2005, p. 227).

4.2.1 Understanding experience

First of all, before explaining the new model based on the Travel Career Ladder, it is important to identify what experience means in this context. According to Dewey (1963) "*Experience may be best described as the cumulative changes in an individual's perspective of himself or herself, and his or her environment as a result of events and activities in his or her life*". Filep and Greenacre (2014) explains that since travel experience is a component of regular experience, the distinction between travel experience and other experiences is artificial. Therefore, it can be defined as the cumulative changes in a person's perspective of him or herself, as well as his or her environment, resulting from events and activities that comes from travelling (p. 25). Here, it should be noted that while many would possibly make a connection between the age of a tourist and his or her travel experience, but Filep and Greenacre (2014) argues that this connection is not always correct. They further argue that age is an unnecessary and possibly misleading factor of travel experience, and that travel experience should always be treated as a component of general experience (p. 34-35). These notions help give a general idea of a person's travel experience, based upon the aforementioned factors and definitions. However, examining experience is ambiguous and difficult, as travel experience is altered by prior experiences by the persons, and are highly subjective (Dewey, 1963, as cited in Filep and Greenacre, 2014, p. 25). Studies of the Travel Career Pattern shows that there are three main indicators of travel experience (Pearce and Lee, 2002, 2003). The first concerns the number of times a person has travelled, the second is the number of destinations a person has travelled to, and the third is the amount of time a person has spent travelling. These indicators help the researcher determine the accumulated travel experience of a tourist (Filep and Greenacre, 2014 p. 26).

Understanding how travel experience is defined is of relevance in this thesis. Since it is a term surrounded by much subjectivity, it is important to understand how the definition can help identify the actual experience of the tourists relevant to collect data from, based on the definitions established in this section. If this is done accordingly, the individual tourist can be placed in the Travel Career Pattern model, and the motives for travelling to a certain destination can be examined.

4.2.2 The Travel Career Pattern explained

The results from the comprehensive study made by Pearce and Lee, confirms and further develops certain aspects of the Travel Career Ladder. Patterns and combinations of multiple motives, which are influenced by previous travel experience and age could be used to identify travel motivations, and when examining the relationship between travel motivation and travel experience level, Pearce and Lee found that the notions of escape/relax, novelty, relationship, and self-development were the most important and core to all travellers (ibid. p. 235). This was also confirmed by other studies, and they go on to mention that the novelty seeking aspect has received considerable attention as one of the main forces behind all tourist behaviour (Ibid, p. 235), while the self-development motive has been understood and defined as “*seeking personal growth and/or a desire to learn and interact with a host culture and its community*” (Ibid, p. 235). When examining the relationship between travel motivation and travel experience, Pearce and Lee found that:

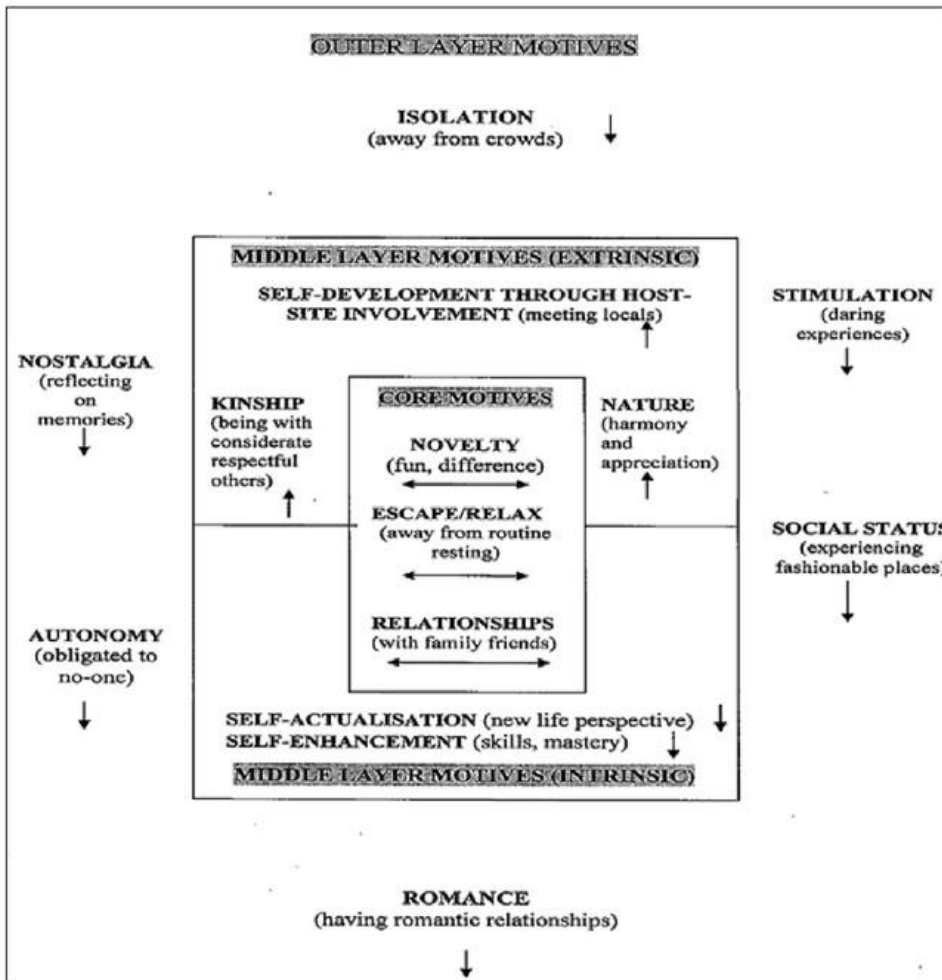
“people with high-travel-experience gave more emphasis to motivations regarding self-development through host-site involvement and nature seeking, [while] low-travel-experience-level people stressed more on other motivation factors such as stimulation, personal development, self-actualization, security, nostalgia, romance, and recognition.” (Ibid, p. 235).

This aspect is particularly interesting, as it is indicated that travel motives reflecting self-development through host-site involvement, by for example experiencing meeting the locals of a different culture, and experiencing the culture itself, were considered more important by more experienced travellers than the less experienced ones (Ibid, p. 235-236).

Whereas the new data mostly confirms and expands upon the original Travel Career Ladder, certain points contradicts it. For examples, the lower-travel experience group higher levels had more emphasis on motivations such as self-actualization and self-development.

The Travel Career Pattern approach can be illustrated conceptually as three layers of travel motivation, each with a different set of individual motivations. As mentioned, the most important, common core motives for tourists are novelty, escape/relax, and relationships. The next layer, which surrounds the core, includes the moderately important travel motives, including inner-oriented travel motives such as self-realisation, to the externally oriented motives such as nature and host-site involvement. The outer and final layer consists of common, relatively stable, and less important travel motives, such as nostalgia, isolation, social status and romantic relationships. Lee and Pearce (2003)

explains that pleasure travellers at all levels, no matter the layer of which they find themselves in, are influenced by the core motivations, the motivations most important and central, as well as the less important motives. As their travel career level develops, pleasure travellers' important motivations for travelling shifts from the internally oriented needs, to externally oriented needs. According to Woodside and Martin, the Travel Career Pattern model reveals much more meaningful information and explanations of the tourists motivations, than the previous model (p. 18).



TCP model - Pearce, Filep and Ross, (2011)

As seen in the model, and as it was outlined by Pearce and Lee 2005, the core motives of novelty, escape/relax and relationships are central to both experienced and inexperienced travellers. They write:

“According to the results, nature and host-site involvement motivation factors were generally more important to people with higher travel experience levels [...] compared

to those with lower travel experience levels [...] By way of contrast, the stimulation factor was not as important to the respondents with higher travel experience levels [...] compared to those with lower levels [...] (p. 234-235).

Personal development and self-actualization, which comprise the upper levels of TCL theory, turned out to be emphasized more as a travel motivational factor by the people within the lower travel experience stage.... "(p. 234). This means, that in terms of travel experience, and a travel career, the middle layer motivations are the most relevant to examine to determine experience. This is also the only layer that features a division between the higher and lower levels of the travel career.

Interviews with the tourism actors present in the Faroe Islands suggests that the rising segment of tourists to the country consists primarily of younger segments that are prone to seek direct contact to nature through personal experiences, as well as contact with local through host site involvement. The host-site involvement depicted as an externally oriented motivation in the middle layer motive in the travel career pattern model can arguably involve some risk taking, not present in the safer and less externally involved travel experiences. For these reasons, it is particularly relevant to examine if the externally oriented middle layer motives are among the participants motives for traveling. Furthermore, as it will be presented later as a part of the analysis, the brand of the Faroe Islands focuses heavily on experiencing nature directly, and directly getting involved with the local population in one way or another, which is also suggesting that tourists with these externally oriented travel motivations are central to the tourism of the country.

The Travel Career Pattern serves both as a validation of the previous model, as many aspects of said model was confirmed in the research provided by Pearce and Lee (2005). The older model can still be considered a viable model for identifying what segment a certain tourist might belong to, based on, among other factors, their travel and life experience. However, the more detailed, renewed version is more precise and accounts for more variables than the older model, and can therefore provide a more nuanced, precise categorisation of the individual tourist and his or her motives for travelling. In addition, identifying the type of tourists and understanding their motivations in relation to the Travel Career Ladder and the Travel Career Pattern is highly relevant in understanding some of the other aspects of travel motivation theory, which will be outlined and explained later in this section, as these approaches are only a part of the complex theoretical understanding of travel motivations. Dividing

tourists into groups based on these models can serve as the first step, and a smaller part, of understanding the full picture.

4.2.3 Tourist experience and risk taking

In the context of this thesis, it is relevant to elaborate on how influenced tourists are by risk, in accordance to their travel experience. Understanding how experienced the tourists who belong to the target segments visiting the Faroe Islands are, and how that affects their willingness to accept and deal with potential risk associated with traveling to the country can prove a vital part of why a crisis was ultimately absent.

While much study has been done on tourist risk taking, not much has been done on the link between tourism experience and risk taking when travelling. However, initial findings in a study conducted by Minnaert (2014), indicated that there is a link between tourism inexperience and anxiety when travelling (p. 285). She writes that: *“Inexperience and a lack of knowledge can be linked to increased levels of uncertainty in making (travel) decisions.”* (p. 286). Much literature on risk taking in tourism distinguishes between risk and uncertainty, where uncertainty covers a situation with an array of different unknown outcomes, while risk covers a set of known outcomes (Minnaert 2014, Williams and Baláz, 2011). Minnaert’s finding is relevant in both cases. In this thesis, whether the grindalog and the potential consequences of breaking it are known or not, the law will be referred to as a potential risk, as some factors surrounding the law will become known, if the tourists learn of the law itself. It can be derived from the study that anxiety for risk taking is less significant, the more experience the tourists have accumulated.

If uncertainty is found among the potential tourists in the focus group interview, it is relevant to connect it to Pearce’s theories on experience, in order to establish whether or not, or how, experience influences the decisions on travelling to the Faroe Islands with the potential risk of getting prosecuted due to the grindaløg.

4.2.4 Relevance of the Travel Career Pattern and tourist experience in this thesis

The Travel Career Pattern model can be used by us to identify the travel motivations of tourists relevant to our thesis. Identifying the travel motivations can help establish what kind of tourists we are interviewing, how experienced they are as travellers, and how this affects their choice of

destination. Especially their experience is exceedingly important to the research question posed in this thesis. Information gathered through interviews on location indicates that the rising segment of travellers are affected by their travel experience in their choice of destination. A possible connection between accumulated travel experiences and attitudes towards political and cultural aspects that might be considered controversial or ethically questionable is one of the key aspects that will be researched in this thesis, in order to examine how a potential crisis within tourism was avoided. Since tourists with more experience might be less prone to search for safety and security first, and therefore might be more inclined to take the risks associated with travel motives beyond the core motives presented in the model. Furthermore, using these approaches, we can examine how the tourist motives defines their mode of travel, how they perceive notions such as relaxation, security as well as other relevant factors, and if they utilise in self-development through host-site involvement and nature seeking, which is suitable information in this thesis. Building upon this, it is relevant to us to establish travel motivations of a tourist, since the motivations can help us understand how they relates to the specific attributes of a remote, smaller destination, that focuses their branding on nature, discovering the destination, and interacting with local culture. Examining how these correlates can establish a frame for understanding if and how the motivations for travelling to a specific destination overpowers the negative aspects in a potential crisis situation, and act as a starting point for delving deeper into understanding specific motivations for travelling.

4.3 Crisis perception theory

A central aspect of the chosen case relates to the term crisis. Even though the feared consequences of the grindalóg's potential damage were ultimately avoided, the tourists' perception of a destination crisis is vital to explain these avoided consequences.

Whereas up until this point there has been a focus on tourism motivation and that motivates the tourist to travel to and how this relates to a destination image, here, the direct link between a perception of a seemingly negative event and then tourists view of this event is explored.

This section looks at how tourists' perception of an incident, which in this case can be applied to the grindalóg in the Faroe Islands, affects their decision-making and view towards the destination.

In relation to the presented problem formulation of this thesis, the focus of this section serves the function of tourist perception in a more direct link to a crisis event rather than the general view of the

destination. In this relation, if the destination image has had an impact on the tourists, positive or negative, it is relevant to investigate the extent of this impact.

The term 'crisis incident' will be used throughout this section and covers the description of a potential crisis triggering event that is limited to a single action or occurrence that the negative consequences can be traced back to.

The primary focus of crisis events among tourism researchers has been on externally imposed events such as natural disasters. (Cioccio & Michael, 2007; Faulkner & Vikulov, 2001; Huang & Min, 2002; Hystad & Keller, 2008). The theoretical approach of this section, however, focuses on the investigation of a seemingly internally imposed incident where the problem is man-made, so to speak.

4.3.1 Crisis identification

According to Faulkner and Russell (2000) crises and disasters can be distinguished based on whether the cause is due to some internal organizational failure to act, which makes it a crisis, or an external event over which the organisation has no control, which can be applied to the definition of a disaster. In the case of a national law regulation, provided that the consequences are great enough, such an action would therefore be characterised as a crisis and not a disaster.

When it comes to the tourist perception of a destination, a somewhat similar logic is used to define the 'ethical nature' of a destination incident where Breitsohl and Garrod (2016) define the term unethical destination incident as "a crisis event that is perceived by stakeholder to be internally imposed (i.e. self-inflicted by one or more destination organisations) and unethical in nature". (p. 210) Identifying these two terms is relevant because there appears to be a connection between them. Whereas, a crisis is largely experienced by those whom it impacts, an unethical destination incident is a description used to describe the incident that initially had the potential to trigger a crisis.

4.3.1.1 Internal or external crisis

Internally imposed tourism crises have become increasingly relevant to study in recent years. The Arab Spring is an example of an internally imposed tourism crisis where much attention and resources have been used to restore a positive destination image and bring back tourists. (Avraham, 2015) Whether the tourism impact, such as in the case of the Arab Spring, can be internally attributed can be discussed. It can be argued that because much of the turmoil was internally created, tourism actors, although these might experience the financial losses from decreasing tourist traffic, are not

responsible for what occurs in the surrounding environment. Therefore, although such a crisis technically does not constitute as internally imposed, ultimately, the tourist perception of a crisis incident can however be crucial for how significant the impact becomes.

A tourism crisis such as the resulted by the Arab Spring can in some ways reflect the incident that much of this thesis focuses on. In both cases, the crises are politically associated. Also, crises neither have been caused internally from within the tourism industry but rather from other actors within the same environment/destination. A discussion on when and how a destination incident is internally or externally imposed and to whom is therefore important to elaborate on further in an embedded discussion section of this thesis.

Moreira (2007) argues that "Crises usually have an internal origin, related to the progressive development of vulnerabilities or to inadequate reactions to external changes" (p. 53) This statement supports the understanding of tourism crises emerging as a result of vulnerabilities, such as reacting properly against external challenges or changes.

The internal versus the external debate of determining the origin of a crisis will be relevant for two main reasons. First, whether an incident is internally or externally imposed can have an influence on tourists' ultimate desire to travel to the destination. Second, whether the incident is viewed internally or externally imposed can also tell something about how the subsequent reaction and communication of those responsible for the crisis will be.

4.3.2 Attribution Theory

In order to cast light over how a destination can be perceived in connection to a potential crisis incident, it is relevant to look at a factor that can potentially have a significant role in the ultimate perception of a destination. Here, attribution theory, a theory rooted in psychology, is a good place to start. As the name indicates, this theory is concerned with how behaviour and actions can be attributed in order to makes sense of this behaviour or action (Weiner, 1985). A way to measure this is through "The locus of control" which means to what degree can the behaviour be attributed to internal or external factors or reasons (p.53).

Whereas Weiner's attribution theory originated in and for an interpersonal context, Lee (2004) has shown that the theory can be applied further to different contexts (p 612). Extending the subject on attribution theory, Lee has investigated responses of consumers to negative information about an organization. Here, findings showed significant main effects to causal attribution and crisis response in relation to an organizational crisis. These effects included judgement of organizational

responsibility for the crisis and impression of the organization. Furthermore, the attribution placement also had an effect on both sympathy and trust on the organization. So, attribution theory can be useful in identifying consumers' reactions based on cognitions and subsequent emotions. However, an identification of attribution theory in an organizational context does not necessarily ensure a similar applicability in a tourism context.

The link between attribution theory and tourism is made by Breitsohl and Garrod who through a survey research investigated people's reactions and behaviour on a destination incident. This research is then put into a tourism context stating that "*Attribution theory holds that if an unethical incident is deemed to be due to forces over which the destination concerned had significant control, those affected will experience greater anger than if the incident was ascribed to forces over which the organisation had limited control*" (p. 211)

A theory used in this relation in identifying tourists' reaction is cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991), which also is grounded in psychology. It relates to the theory that individuals' emotions are extracted from their appraisals of events. The reactions caused by these emotions are different between people and this is reflected in the methodology used in this thesis. The cognitive appraisal in this context relates to the personal interpretation of a situation and the important part of this contribution is the way the tourist interprets the event and what is attributed as the main cause for the event.

By following Weiner's (1985) attribution theory, Breitsohl and Garrod (2016) argue that:

"Tourists are more likely to attribute responsibility for what they perceive to be external crises to forces outside of a destination's sphere of control, which generally leads to positive outcomes such as forgiveness and maintained loyalty. If the incident is deemed to be an internal crisis, however, responsibility is likely to be attributed to the destination and its constituent organisations, which is more likely to result in damaging behaviour on the part of tourists, including terminating their loyalty to the destination and spreading negative word of mouth (p. 210).

The essential argument here is that, based on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural elements of a destination image creation, an internally imposed crisis can likely be more damaging to a destination image in terms of tourist activity than an externally imposed crisis.



Sequence of a tourist's reaction to an unethical destination incident. (Ibid, p. 210)

As the figure shows, tourist reaction happens as result of a process that includes some preceding phases which eventually culminates with future behaviour. Here, the tourist initially interprets the incident (cognition) and reacts subsequently. This first phase, therefore, is vital for the development of the following phases. This development can then be decisive for the final outcome of a tourism incident. *“Key findings of the paper showed that tourists undergo a cognition-emotion-behaviour sequence when confronted with an unethical incident at a destination of their choice”*. (p. 217) Assessing tourists' cognition, emotion, and behaviour sequence, i.e. how they perceive and make sense of a particular tourism incident, can though this identification sequence be used for deconstruction the overall perception of an unethical destination incident. Identifying the elements in this sequence can also provide an insight into the interconnectedness that is present throughout all elements. Therefore, this sequence will play an important role in identifying the process that tourists undergo when presented with the grindalóg and subsequently have to relate and react to the information provided. This means that for instance the reasons for a tourist's coping strategy, which is how they choose to act, and future behaviour can likely be traced back to the cognitive understanding and emotional response when he or she was informed of an unethical destination incident. The coping strategy that tourists choose can be divided into to categories, an internal or external coping strategy. The internal can be signified through avoidance, which means that the tourists simply chooses to ignore the potential consequences of the destination incident, whereas as the external can be the spread of negative WOM where the consequences of one's coping strategy is not limited to oneself but can also influence other potential tourists. In relation the coping strategy, a hypothesis was presented stating that *“The more likely a tourist is to use avoidance as coping strategy,*

the greater will be the positive effect on her or his destination loyalty” (p. 213) and was ultimately confirmed. A similar hypothesis is expected to be confirmed in connection to the data results of this thesis. This will ultimately contribute to an explanation of why significant negative consequences were ultimately avoided for the Faroese tourism industry.

As it will be discussed, the perception of severity in relation to a destination incident can play a significant role in terms of how tourists consequently decide to react. Here, severity refers to the perceived amount of damage caused by an incident (Coombs and Holladay, 2002) as well as the degree to which established expectations, such as the liberty to feel safe as a tourist, have been breached by the culprit. (Fediuk, Coombs and Botero, 2010) Of course, safety is a relative notion since different tourists might have individual expectations of when they feel safe.

4.3.3 Furthering the theory

Whereas Breitsohl and Garrod use Weiner’s attribution theory in the context of distinguishing between effects from internally and externally imposed crisis incidents, this thesis, while retaining the focus on tourist behaviour in relation to a tourism crisis incident, will look beyond these established findings and towards the reason behind a tourism industry avoiding the supposed crisis despite of it being arguably internally imposed. This focus of research at this point relatively undiscovered and the theoretical application on it at this point is limited.

The reactions and behaviour focused on so far has been tourists at the primary segment. On the other end of a tourism incident are tourism operators and other involved affected stakeholders.

Tourism planners and organizers arguably have detailed knowledge about the destination they operate and are situated in. Therefore, it is not relevant to investigate these actors’ image creation of a destination. However, local tourism operators will arguably have an opinion of incidents that is relevant to their occupation. What is relevant to ask in this situation is to whom this theory can be applied to. Is it exclusively intended to identify tourists’ reactions on events? What if the same theory was applied to the tourism actors’ own perception of destination incidents? This approach can arguably give an indication of if there has been a prediction of a crisis scenario from local actors, which ultimately might not coincide with tourists’ perception of the destination. Therefore, reports from these tourism actors are used to measure the experienced effect of the crisis, if there has been one.

4.3.4 Relevance of crisis theory

It should be stressed that the relevance of the study objects and findings (listed above) on unethical destination incidents are significant for the purpose of this research. One reason for this is the similar focus on the tourist perspective rather than exclusively on managerial remedies.

However, whereas the results from both Lee and Garrod & Breitsohl are based on a fictional scenario, and are tested on a hypothetical basis that can indicate tourist attitude towards a destination incident, the results that are found in this thesis will be applied to an actual destination incident and can thus be used to better understand the actual development of the incident and why the development might not have gone accordingly with some presumptions. Furthermore, since the thesis results will be based on a specific destination and destination related incident, the results will hopefully contribute with some answers to why things have played out the way they have.

4.3.5 Theoretical limitations

Although valid, findings referred to so far can be viewed as limited. The findings are based on some clear definitions that do not necessarily take into consideration the specific destination image creations. In Garrod and Breitsohl's research for example, it becomes clear when respondents are asked to relate to "an unethical destination incident" (p. 210). In the context of this thesis case, it cannot be presumed that the cognitive and emotional reactions definitively find the grindalóg to be unquestionably unethical. There can be a blurring between the perception of the internally imposed and externally imposed incidents. In this context, it is relevant to ask clarify whether tourists, in this case study participants, justify the decision behind the incident.

What attribution theory in this tourism context can be used to generally explain, is that many of the externally imposed crisis incidents (e.g. natural disasters, terrorist attack on Paris and NYC etc.) are more likely to recover faster from the damage impact. It can be argued that a reason for tourists returning relatively quickly after such crises is partly because the incidents were externally imposed and thus people react with forgiveness and maintained loyalty rather than terminating of loyalty and spread of negative WOM.

However, if this doesn't explain it entirely and tourists appear to retain a positive image of a destination despite of viewing an associated destination incident as internally imposed, there are other factors that might explain the positive view. Here, the reaction sequence and experienced severity of

the incident, which have been outlined in this section, will be used to identify how tourists might have reacted towards the grindalóg incident in the Faroe Islands.

4.4 Destination image formation

This section seeks to map out and explain some of the key aspects of the destination image formation that tourists develop for a certain destination. The theory revolves around understanding how the image of a destination motivates potential consumers to travel to this particular location (or to deselect the destination if the image is perceived as negative). In the context of this thesis, destination image formation theory is used to explain how the potential tourists view the Faroe Islands as a vacation destination, and how various factors, such as the grindalóg, affects this image negatively and/or positively, and how that ultimately affects their decisions in traveling to the destination.

In order to define destination image formation, it is first relevant to explain the concept of destination image, and its importance in tourism studies and the tourism sector. Destination image can be explained simply as the perceived image that a tourist or potential tourist have of a given destination, based on a number of factors. It can be defined as the mental and total impressions and perceptions that a tourist have about a specific destination (Lai and Li, 2015). San Martín and Rodriguez, (2008) notes that the image tourists might have of a destination is largely subjective because. This is because it is based on the perceptions that each tourist has of all of the destinations they have been to or have heard of. It is however a broad concept, not easily defined with a single definition. Several research studies show that the image of a destination is a valuable concept in understanding the destination selection process of tourists (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999, p. 868). This notion is backed by Chon (1990) who writes:

“The central postulates of the destination image studies are that a destination image has a crucial role in an individual's travel purchase related decision-making and that the individual traveller's satisfaction/dissatisfaction with a travel purchase largely depends on a comparison of his expectation about the destination, or a previously held destination image, and his perceived performance of the destination.” (p. 3)

4.4.1 Cognitive, affective and conative components

The expectations of a destination and what it has to offer, is part of a set of components that make up the process of destination image formation, and when examining this process, Gartner (1993)

identifies three key components, and specifies that the interrelationships between them will determine the product predisposition. These components are: cognitive, affective and conative (p. 193). The cognitive component is an evaluation of the known attributes surrounding the product, or the understanding of said product in an intellectual way. The cognitive component can be said to be images derived from fact, and can be seen as the sum of the beliefs and attitudes of an object, which then leads to some kind of internally accepted picture of that object's attributes. The forming of the cognitive image of an object is largely based on the amount of external stimuli received about it (Ibid, p. 193). Gartner writes: *“Due to the inability to pretest the tourism product, touristic images will often be based more on perceptions than reality. The process of forming cognitive images will determine which destinations move into the perceived, realistic and attainable opportunity sets.”* (p. 196).

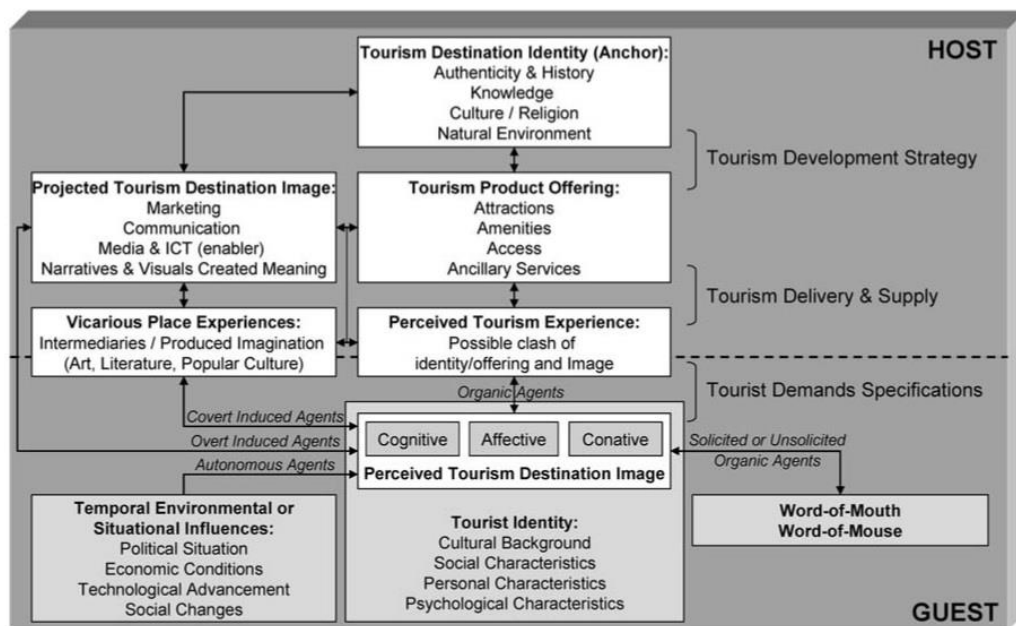
According to Boulding (1956), there is a relation between the affective component of an image, and the motives a tourist has for his or her selection of a destination. These motives determine what the tourist wish to obtain object being considered, and thus affecting the object valuation. In an example, Gartner explains that if for example we consider a destination exotic and the culture there different than our own, and we have travel motives to learn more about different cultures, then travelling to a place we consider exotic has more value to us, than travelling to a place which is more familiar. On the other hand, if we value safety and security, and we become aware of certain factors that could potentially jeopardise our safety and security in the destination we are considering, then that destination is valued less of an option (p. 196). So, the affective component is highly dependent on travel motivations, as well as the cognitive image the tourist has of the destination. Gartner writes that: *“The affective component of image becomes operational when the evaluation stage of destination selection begins.”* (p. 196).

The conative image component is an action component, meaning that when a decision is about to be made based on the considered destinations, processing internal and external information, the emotional and the rational considerations of a vacation destination, these are combined into an active choice. It depends on the destination images developed during the cognitive stage and the evaluated during the affective stage. One destination from the set of destinations (the evoked set) is then chosen (Ibid, p. 196). In short, one can say that the cognitive component is based on knowledge of the place, the affective component is based on emotions towards the place, and the conative component is how the tourist ultimately acts based on the first components. As mentioned, it is the interrelationship between the three components that is key to understanding why a tourist chooses one destination over the other, which the tourism stakeholders and actors will have to plan after accordingly.

4.4.2 Formation of the destination image in a tourist destination

Any person can build an image of a destination in their mind, without having actually ever been there. As explained earlier, this image is based on a number of factors, such as for example how the destination is presented through its brand, various media, word of mouth (and if the tourist actually have visited the destination before, their previous travel experience), and so on. The formation of the image will also be “based on historical, political, economic and social information which, in turn, will shape the image that the person already held” (Echtner and Richie, 1991, as cited in Lopes, 2011, p. 308). Based on the notions of the three components of destination image formation, as well as internal and external factors that surrounds the destination image formation, Govers, Go and Kumar (2009) sets up a three-gap tourism destination image formation model. (p. 16):

THE 3-GAP TOURISM DESTINATION IMAGE FORMATION MODEL



As the model show, the interplay between a variety of different factors, many previously mentioned here, and how they are communicated to the potential tourists, and how the tourists then perceive this information, comes together to form the destination image. This model highlights the three gaps that can occur in tourism development strategy, tourism delivery and supply, and tourist demands specifications.

As it is depicted in the model, the tourist identity plays a significant role in the cognitive, affective and conative components of their destination image formation. In the model, the temporal environmental or situational influences acts as autonomous agents, meaning that they are not directly influenced by the other agents, but rather influence them, both negatively and positively. Ethical political or cultural circumstances could here potentially create dissonance between image communicated and image perceived. Arguably, previously obtained travel experience is part of this identity, since it can alter certain characteristics. Drawing on the theories of tourist travel motivations, and specifically how the Travel Career Pattern approach, as well as push and pull motives, previously obtain travel experience can thus affect the three components of destination image formation. Tourists who have already obtained experience with the destination in question are also heavily influenced by this experience. Gartner writes: “*Prior experience with the product class, activity preface, knowledge or performance characteristics are a few of the factors that determine attitudinal position.*” (p. 192). This confirms that both visiting the destination before has influence on the image formation, but also that similar experiences with other destinations, types of holiday, as well as other factors that are comparable with the destination in question (or possibly experience that is nothing like what is found at the destination), all affects the destination image. Gartner also writes that “*Experience through prior travel to an area is not necessary for attitudes to be formed toward the type of image projected or acquired about a destination*” (p. 193), meaning that the formation of the destination image is also created with no prior experiences with the area. Here, the destination image is as mentioned influenced by other factors. As the model shows, no matter the tourist identity, many other factors and actors are at play in the process.

4.4.3 Brand and its connection to destination image

According to Govers, Go, and Kumar (2007), the formation of an image is a mental construction based on a flood of information, and among these are promotion directly transmitted from the tourism destination, in the form of for example advertising and brochures (p. 15). The advertisement and the promotion done by the destination can be described as their brand. Understanding what a brand is, and how it functions in relation to the destination image is highly relevant in the context of this thesis. The connection (or perhaps lack thereof) between destination brand and perceived destination image, can add the analysis, whether or not a positive brand image contributes to overcoming a crisis in tourism. Furthermore, understanding the merits of a particular brand, can help establish how the tourists perceives the brand, and how that influences their decision-making process.

Understanding what a brand is and how it functions is no simple matter, as it is a complex subject, that covers a wide array of sub-terms. While brand and branding is not central to this thesis, it is still relevant to examine some parts of this subject, in order to understand the destination image formation. This theory section will focus on some of the elemental aspects of brand image, and how it can be utilised in the context of destination image formation theory.

A brand can, in a simplified way, be described as “*a sign that distinguishes the goods of a company from those of another, while guaranteeing its origins*” (Coomber, 2002, p. 8). So, what is central, is that the branded product, or destination in this context, stands out from its competitors. Morgan and Pritchard (2004) explains that branding is among the most powerful marketing weapons available to destination marketers, in a world where tourists are increasingly seeking lifestyle fulfilment and experience, instead of simply searching for some of the more tangible elements of the destination product, such as accommodation and attractions (p. 60). They note that most destinations claims to have a unique culture to explore, landscapes and heritage, the friendliest people and the highest standard of customer service and facilities, and that this is expected from most destinations. Therefore, there is a need for destinations to create a unique identity and to differentiate themselves from their competitors. (p. 60). Additionally, countries often showcase their history, culture and beautiful scenery in their marketing, but many destinations have similar attributes. Therefore, it is critical to build a brand on something that uniquely connects the destination in question to the consumer. It must also be a proposition that other similar destinations cannot surpass or usurp, even if they are able to copy the value inherited within the brand (Ibid, p. 64-65). In this context, it is crucial that the targeted consumers recognise the unique values of the destination brand in question, and that they can connect with these values on a personal and emotional level. According to Morgan et al. (2002) argues that in contrast to consumer products, place products are much more complex (as cited in Hankinson, 2005, p. 25). They exist both as holistic entities and as collections of contributory elements or individual services and facilities, and therefore a place can have several functioning images associated with it (Hankinson, 2005, p. 25). Furthermore, a destination has intangible aspects such as culture, customs and history (Qu, Kim and Im, 2010, p. 466). A destination marketer will have to select a portfolio from these elements to form the basis of a destination product (Hankinson, 2005, p. 25). Additionally, the place product can be assembled by each visitor based on their experiences of a chosen set of contributory elements (Ashworth and Voogt, 1990, as cited in Hankinson, 2005, p. 25). Therefore, the destination marketers do not have full control of the product experience (Hankinson, 2005, p. 25). What it vastly important for the destination promoters when

creating a brand from the array of different aspects of the destination, is to create a brand that correlates with the push and pull motives and other travel motivations of their target segment. Qu, Kim and Im (2010) writes:

“Because of the complex nature of a destination to be a brand, generalization of the identity is inevitable. Brand identity is critical for generalization of desirable characteristics projected by supplier’s perspective. It explains the expectations of a supplier about how a brand should be perceived by its target market. Defining a target market is crucial because some aspects of a destination may seem positive to one segment while ineffective to another (p. 466).

When analysing the brand, Kim and Lehto (2013) points out that the destination image can be analysed from two different perspectives, first from the promotional activities from the hosts in the tourist industry, as well as news and information about the destination from multiple sources, and second from the perceived image by the tourists, which is generated from information from both direct and indirect sources, as well as personal experience (p. 120). This correlates with previous notions referred to in this thesis, and emphasises the importance of differentiating between the two. So, a brand identity that is in correlation with a defined target segment is vastly important, if the segments is to connect with the brand on a personal, emotional level. A study conducted by Kim and Lehto (2013) shows that in a particular case of destination promotion, promoting South Korea to an American segment, there was a disconnection between brand image and perceived image in the minds of the tourists (partly due to exposure in various media), which created several gaps in the brand strategy and host to guest communication, and was ultimately somewhat hurtful to the success of the brand. They write that, according to Harris and de Chernatony (2001), “active internal communication is needed to understand a destination’s brand identity. In the corporate branding literature, internal consistency and congruency, indicating that all members of an organization behave in accordance with the desired brand identity, are vital to the successful external communication of a brand (as cited in Kim and Lehto, 2013, p. 127).

In the context of the case examined in this thesis, one could assume that the negative spread of the grind and the law surrounding it, could create an incohesive brand identity, which is hard to control and correct by local tourism stakeholders. If this is reflected in the perceived destination image in the minds of the tourist, it can be examined and analysed accordingly, and be put into relation to the

potential crisis, and it can be examined if a potential incohesive brand identity had any effect on potential tourists. However, if there is a good connection between the destination brand image and the perceived image, and this image is appealing to the desired tourist segment, problems like the ones addressed in the case of the Korean brand can be avoided, and thus a destination can have a strong brand identity. This thesis seeks to examine if the target segment, which will be identified later, connects with the brand identity, and if they have the same cognitive and affective images of the destination, which can be identified in the destination brand.

4.4.4 Relevance of Destination image formation in this thesis

Understanding how the destination image formation functions in the minds of the tourists, is critical in analysing why or why not a tourist choose a certain destination. Destination image formation includes many of the internal and external travel motivation factors, push and pull factors, brand image and brand image interpretation. Identifying how an image of a certain destination is created with the cognitive, affective and conative components in the individual tourist as well as the tourist in a group context, and identifying how the image appears to them in all three components, can show us what they know of the destination, how they feel about it, and if these factors determine whether or not they will visit the destination. If they have already visited, it is then possible to examine how the cognitive, affective and conative components were prior to the visit, and if they have changed when considering the destination for a future revisit. As mentioned, identifying tourists according to the Travel Career Pattern, examining their push and pull motives plays an important part in analysing why they choose to (or choose not to) visit a certain destination. Identifying how their experience and motivations shape their choices, will be reflected in their identity as tourists, as seen in the 3-gap model. This will in turn will affect their perceived image of a destination, how they react on the image portrayed and identity presented by the destination, as well as other factors where the tourism identity is relevant.

While this thesis does not focus on the strategical aspects of promoting a tourism destination, as it is presented in the 3-gap model, understanding how the interplay between tourist and hosts destinations play a role in the image formation is still relevant. The 3-gap model can in the context of this thesis be used to identify connections between the destination image presented in the branding and information. If there is a clear connection between the destination brand image presented and the perceived destination image, we can examine how situational influenced influences the affective and thus the conative components of the destination image formation. If there is a gap between destination

and the tourists in relation to a possible dissonance, or clash, between the brand image and perceived image of the destination in question, these aspects can also be examined.

4.5 The Decision-making Process in tourism

The decision-making process within tourism can in brief be described as the set of travel destinations a tourist considers before purchasing a travel. The process of decision-making itself is also influenced by a variety of factors “*both psychological or internal variables, for example, attitudes, motivation, beliefs and intentions, and non-psychological or external variables [such as] time, pull factors and marketing mix.*” (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005, p. 815-816). Vinerean (2014) notes that consumer behaviour is difficult to research, especially within tourism, as it is a relatively significant expense, that has a lot of emotional value, and which will be a be among the most significant and relaxing periods of the year for the consumer (p. 67). Furthermore, Zaltman (2003) notes that the decision-making process is complex and often unconscious in the minds of the consumers (as cited in Vinerean, 2014, p. 67). The process is not fully developed theoretically (Ibid, p. 67).

Given the complexity and many nuances of the decision-making process, this thesis will focus on those aspects we deem important for understanding tourist behaviour and decision-making in the context of the case we are examining.

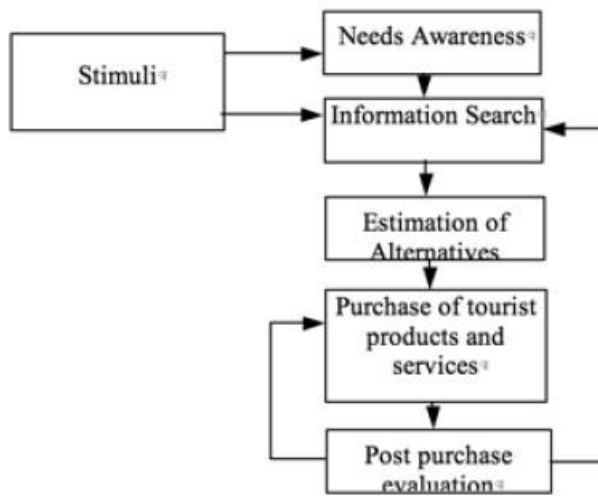
Concerning the decision-making process in tourism, it is relevant to discuss the evoked set of travel destinations. This set of evoked travel destinations is based upon Howard’s (1963) and Howards and Sheth's (1969) definition, which reads: “*the collection of brands the buyer actually considers in his purchase decision process*” and “*the brands that the buyer considers acceptable for his next purchase*” (as cited in Woodside and Sherrell, 1977, p. 14). In some way, the decision-making process is the combination of the aforementioned factors of motivation for choosing a holiday, as well as other determiners such as financial income, lifestyle etc., that comes together when the tourist makes his or her decision. According to Woodside and Sherrell, most tourists only consider a somewhat limited number of travel destinations when planning a vacation, since the mental process of evaluating and comparing the positive and negative aspects of more than 15 destinations is likely an unacceptable burden for most tourists (p. 14). The evoked sets are then the destinations that are left, which the consumers have awareness of (Ibid, p. 14). Within the list of travel destinations, there is a division between how the tourist perceive the different locations, where some are relevant in this thesis. These are the inert set, the inept set, and as mentioned, the evoked set. The inert set is consists of those brands within the product category, which the consumer is aware of, but has neither a positive of

negative evaluation of, due to the consumer having a lack information on the destination. The inept set consists of those brands that the consumer has rejected from his or her purchase decision, due to personal unpleasant experiences, or from negative feedback from other sources. As mentioned, the evoked set is the destinations that the consumer considers visiting within a within some time period (Ibid, p. 15). A study conducted by Woodside and Sherrell (1977) argues that the evoked set is often related to the area in which the survey or interviews are done, suggesting that tourists are more likely to consider vacationing within a regional area (p. 18). It is also suggested that travellers have only two to five travel destinations that they truly consider visiting within a foreseeable time period (lowering the earlier estimate of 15 evoked destinations), and, very noticeably, that no destinations in the evoked set were given negative attitude scores (Ibid, p. 17-18). This implicates that if a tourist has a negative attitude towards a destination, they will not consider it as a serious possibility for visiting within the near future.

With the notions of the different sets of travel destinations in mind, a deeper examination of the process itself is necessary. One of the commonly used models in analysing the decision-making process, is the classical decision-making model (Djeri, Plavša and Čerović, 2007, p. 71).

This model involves five phases, depicting how a potential tourist solves a problem by making a decision by ultimately choosing a tourist destination. The five phases are

- Need awareness
- Search for information
- Estimation of alternatives
- Decision about purchasing a tourist product or service
- Feedback after purchasing (Ibid, p. 71).



(*Decision-making process of potential tourists*, Djeri, Plavša and Čerović, 2007, p. 71)

The decision-making process begins when a potential tourist becomes aware of a certain need (Ibid, p. 71). This need can be examined by the previously described push factors, meaning that certain internal factors pushes the potential tourist to want to travel. If this need is strong enough, the potential tourist will then start searching for information on the destination offers where he or she can satisfy his or her needs. Predominantly, the search for information depends on the level of engagement by the tourist, as well as the process of obtaining information. In the next phase, the tourist can estimate, contrast and compare alternatives and criteria for choosing the most favourable destination, based on the information that he or she has available. In this phase, the attitudes towards the different types of offers within the tourist destinations are predominant. In the fourth phase, the potential tourist reaches the final destination by choosing among the different alternatives, thus turning into a consumer within the tourism sector. Finally, the process of decision-making ends with the tourist evaluating the purchase based on the level of satisfaction he or she has after returning home from the destination. The evaluation is among the key factors in future decision-making processes by the tourist (Ibid, p. 71).

This information provides us with a basic frame for understanding the process of decision-making itself, where aforementioned factors such as push and pull motives and the different sets of potential destinations affects the decision of the individual tourist.

4.5.1 Relevance of the decision-making process in this thesis

Understanding the decision-making process, what is available to the individual tourist and how he or she decides where to travel based on the many factors that are involved in this process, can help understand how a negative event affects this process. It is highly relevant to examine how a crisis at a tourism destination that directly concerns the tourist affects their decision-making process, as it is central in our thesis to examine how and why a tourist seemingly decides to travel despite these negative aspects of a destination. This theory can be used to determine if the destination is within the inert set or the evoked set, and how the negative aspects influences the choice of destination with these factors in mind. The negative aspects of the destination might influence the choice of destination differently, depending on whether the destination is within the evoked set, or the inert set. In the case of this particular thesis, consumers having the case destination in their inept set will be excluded, as it is much more relevant to examine tourists with the Faroe Islands in their evoked set, since it is their actions and decisions that ultimately decides the magnitude of a potential tourism crisis in the destination. The process itself, where the tourist theoretically goes through five phases when making a decision towards traveling to a destination, can help us understand how significant certain factors surrounding the case, both in term of the negative aspects of the case, as well as factors such as brand, destination image perception among others, affects each of the phases, and how that affects the final decision.

Furthermore, the notions of the decision-making process in tourism, is closely related to the Travel Career Ladder and the Travel Career Pattern, as well as the push and pull factors described earlier. Since the decision-making process is highly nuanced and complex, it involves many factors, where these are a substantial part of it.

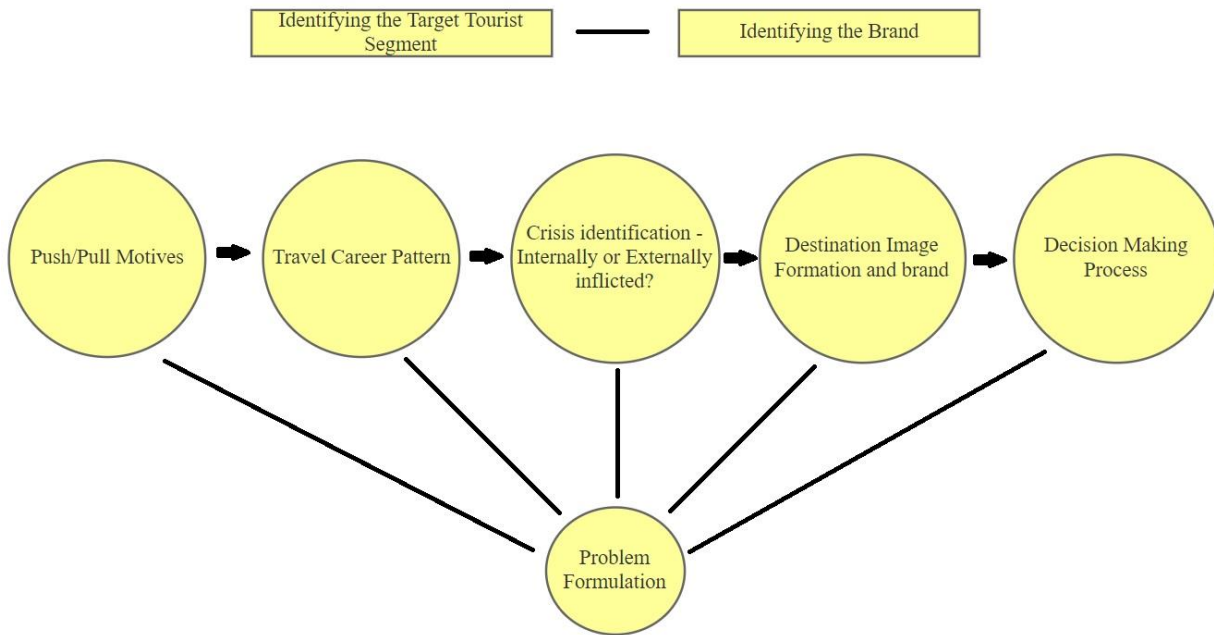
5. Analysis and discussion

5.1 Introduction to the analysis

Based on the methodological approach of data collection and the theory applied, the following analysis section seeks to answer how a crisis in tourism in the Faroe Islands was avoided.

Before analysing the data from the two focus group interviews, this analysis will start with a brief examination of both the current brand of the Faroe Islands and the primary tourist segment causing the present growth in tourism in the country. Identifying the brand is useful because it provides the reader with an overview of how the Faroe Islands is presented outwards, and as it will serve as base for connecting the brand with the destination image formation analysis featured later. Identifying the target tourist segment is done in order to verify the validity of the chosen segment interviewed, and to provide a basis for understanding the possible connections between the tourist motivations and the tourists currently visiting the Faroe Islands. A basic description of the participants of the focus group interviews will follow, in order to provide an overview of them prior to the analysis of the interviews themselves.

The analysis of the data gathered from the two focus group interviews will be structured around the different theory sections. Different, relevant parts of the two interviews will be set into context with, and analysed by using one theory at a time. We will examine how understanding the tourists through each of the theories separately provides answers to why a crisis in tourism was avoided, and what insight each theory can provide of the tourists thoughts and perspectives on the Faroe Islands as a vacation destination, the grind, the Grindalóg and other factors. Some theories have elements that the further analysis will build upon, such as pull and push motives, while the decision-making process analysis will use the results from the other parts. How each analysis provides information to the following sections, along with their individual take on answering the problem formulation, is seen in the following model. This model is a representation of the structure of the analysis.



When the theories have been applied to the interviews, and conclusions have been made on how they each contribute to the understanding of how a crisis in tourism was avoided from the perspective of the tourists, the conclusion will discuss if and how the results of these different analysis collectively can answer the problem formulation.

5.2 Identifying the brand of the Faroe Islands - Unspoiled, Unexplored, Unbelievable

This first analytical section seeks to identify the current brand identity of the Faroe Islands. This is done in order to ultimately examine the connection between the destination brand image, and the destination image perceived cognitively and affectively by the potential tourists. A disconnect between brand and perceived image can have a negative on tourism, while a good connection between brand and perceived image can, if what the brand represents is appealing to the target consumer groups, have a positive influence on them. Ultimately, the possible connections between the brand and the perceptions of the country, can be examined as a part of the decision-making process, and possibly provide one of the explanations of why a major crisis in tourism was in large avoided in the Faroe Islands.

The brand will be examined based on promotional material published by Visit Faroe Islands, which is the official tourism organisation and main provider of tourism material of the Faroe Islands, as well as the interviews conducted with them, and two other tourism stakeholders in the country; Visit Tórshavn and GreenGate Incoming. Analysing the brand from the published material is relevant,

since this material is what the typical tourists would see and use as a part of their evaluation process. The information provided by the tourism stakeholders in the Faroe Islands is relevant since they can confirm (or contradict, if their message is unclear) what can be analysed based on the published material.

Through the promotional material, such as a number of promotional films, the website of Visit Faroe Islands and a number of printed leaflets and pamphlets, reveals the main features that the brand focuses on. The Faroe Islands is described as “*Europe's best kept secret - Unfathomable beauty, mysteriously tucked away like a figment of a child's imagination*”, indicating that the Faroe Islands is branded as being undiscovered, possibly targeting “first movers” in tourism, meaning people who wants to be among the first to travel to a destination, and possibly become trend setters for the destination (www.visitfaroeislands.com). A large majority of the pictures featured on the website portrays the Faroese nature, with pictures of steep cliffs, mountains, the sea, as well as the wild weather. Furthermore, pictures of the Faroese people participating in events that are connected to their culture, such as festivals, dining together and sporting events, are shown along side with pictures of their traditional foods and drinks, as well as the wildlife present in the Faroese nature. These picture of wild, undisturbed nature, people engaging in sports and activities, and locals participating in cultural events, are also found in other aspects of the promotional material, such as promotional films made as a part of the overall brand (vimeo.com, summer and winter films). The majority of the people experiencing nature actively featured in the films and on the website, are relatively young, which might indicate that this brand caters to a younger tourism segment. Interestingly, most depictions of activities and cultural experiences are not seen from a typical tourist point of view, where tourists gaze on local customs, but instead it seems to depict just the locals, doing what they do in everyday life. This could mean that the brand wants to appeal to tourists who not only wants to be observers of the culture they visit, but instead wants to actively participate. It caters to them who wants authentic experiences and not staged experiences.

Guðrið Højgaard, the director of tourism at Visit Faroe Islands, explains that the brand is built upon statements from tourists concerning how they felt and experienced the country, from around 5000 people who have visited the Faroe Islands explaining. She states: “*Almost everyone who had been here described the Faroe Islands as [having] untamed nature, unpolluted, undiscovered, unexplored, and so on. [...] we chose to brand the Faroe Islands as something that is hard to describe. You have to experience it for yourself.*” About the target tourist segments of the brand, she said: “[*the brand*]

has a rather broad appeal. If you look at the guests who visited us in the past, it was mostly [people aged] 55 plus. We have rejuvenated the target audience [...] Because of this, we now have [tourists who are] trendy Londoners, who are 27 years old, work in cool places, and now wants to experience the Faroe Islands with their camera [...] we get people from all over the world.” Højgaard also explained that the target group for the new brand, is tourist in their late 20’s and upwards, and thus they are targeting a much younger segment than traditionally has visited the country. Concerning the types of tourists, Højgaard stated: *“If we look at interest groups, or segments, instead of demographic divisions, then it is nature and culture lovers, and people with special interests”*. Both GreenGate Incoming and Visit Tórshavn confirmed the overall notions of the brand and its target audience, and that the brand is a big part of their overall strategy.

5.2.1 Conclusions on the brand

From the published materials, as well as the interviews with key stakeholders within the Faroe Islands, the brand can be concluded to be targeted primarily at a younger segment than it has been in the past. Furthermore, the brand invites tourists to experiencing nature, sporting activities, local culture and people first hand, instead of simply observing it from afar. The uniqueness of the rough nature and weather is also in the forefront of the brand, and supports the notions that the tourists will have to experience it first-hand to fully understand it. In the videos and on the website, the traditional life of the Faroese people and their way of living is at centre of the cultural aspects promoted, and they encourage potential tourists to experience them first hand. Overall, the brand is targeted at adventurous types of tourists, who are not afraid of taking a few risks, both in terms of experiencing nature and weather on their own skin, as well as risking cultural encounters with a culture they might not be familiar with. Thus, this brand caters to tourists with travel motivations that include not only novelty, escapism/relaxation and relations, but also nature, self-development through host-site involvement, and self-enhancement through sports and activities. It caters to a segment that wants to explore and discover new things, instead of seeking the known and familiar.

5.3 Identifying the growing tourist segment in the Faroe Islands

This section aims to briefly identify the tourist segment who are visiting the Faroe Islands now, and in the years the current brand has existed, and whom the increase in tourism in the country can be contributed too. This is done based on the current brand campaign of the Faroe Islands, building upon the notions and conclusions made in the previous segment concerning the brand itself. Moreover,

Visit Faroe Islands and Visit Tórshavn have given some information on the tourist segments who are currently visiting and causing the massive increase in tourism since 2012.

Identifying the tourist segment that causes the increase in tourism is done in order to provide us with a solid basis for choosing the participants for our focus group interviews. Since we suggest a connection between avoiding a crisis in tourism in the Faroe Islands and the tourist segments who are considering visiting the Faroe Islands, choosing participants within the identified segment gives us the best opportunities to identify whether or not, and how, the decisions, motivations and thoughts of this segment helped avoid a crisis. The travel motivations and patterns of people who are not within the target segment of the brand, and are not currently considering visiting the Faroe Islands are deemed less significant in this context, as they are not part of a significant group that could affect tourism in the country negatively, if they decided not to go as a consequence of the grindalóg.

As it was established in the brand identification section, the brand is primarily targeting young, adventurous and active explorers, with the promises of visiting a country untouched by tourism (and in some cultural senses and aspects the modern world), where they can be the first to visit and explore. Through the interviews conducted with key stakeholders it was discovered that whom the brand targets, is very much representative of the general tourists who is cause of the growth in tourism in the country, since the representatives from both Visit Faroe Islands and Visit Tórshavn confirmed that they saw a very substantial increase in tourists that are much younger and more adventurous than it has previously been the case.

Since GreenGate Incoming is a travel agency that specialises in packaged deals, their typical tourists differ from the identified young explorers, and are more representative of the segment that has been at the core of travellers to the Faroe Islands before the new brand, Marni Hjallnafoss states. However, he also recognises that the young explorers are part of the boom in tourism, and that there has been a significant change in recent years, and since the implementation of the new brand strategy.

Since the number of overnight stays is increasing steadily, and the brand of the Faroe Islands is targeted towards a younger and more adventurous segment, it could indicate that the potential problems caused by the law regarding the grind is not affecting the old traditional segment. Furthermore, Hjallnafoss stated that the law had little to no effect on their primary segment. Therefore, it can be validated that we have chosen to focus on the younger, new segment, rather than the old segment that has a history of visiting. Additionally, it was confirmed by Hjallnafoss, that a substantial part of the tourists visiting are first time visitors, which combined with numbers showing

an increase in the younger segments, could indicate that the old segment is still loyal to the Faroe Islands as a tourist destination, with no significant drop in overnight stays due to the law or other factors.

The annually released report on tourism in the Faroe Islands from 2016, provides information on the age groups visiting the Faroe Islands. It shows in percentage, the age divisions of tourists with overnight stays (thus not counting for example cruise ship tourists). 10% are between the ages of 18-24, 21% are between 25-34, 14% are between 35-44, and the remaining 45% are 45 or older. Of these, 75% are first time visitors (Annual Tourism Report 2016, 2017, p. 13), which also indicates that these new age groups are part of the growth. This age division is very representative of the information provided by the stakeholders, as it confirms that the traditional segment accounts for more than half of the visitors, but that younger segments are making up a substantial part of the visitors.

5.3.1 Conclusions on identifying the growing tourism segment in the Faroe Islands

We can conclude that the new segment that is causing the increase in tourism in the Faroe Islands is a younger segment than it has previously been the case, based on the statements of the stakeholders, as well as the numbers found in the survey conducted by Visit Faroe Islands, with 45% of the visitors being below the age of 44, and 75% being first time visitors. The growing segment is adventurous and willing to explore nature and culture in person, and not just as observers. While new visitors and returning visitors of the older segment that has been (and still is) at the core of the tourist segment, we deem it more important to examine how and why the travel motivations and decisions made by the new segment is affected by the law concerning the grind in this context, as the core segment seem stable.

5.4 Basic description of the respondents of the focus group interviews

This section seeks to provide the reader with a short description of each of the individuals of both focus group interviews, and their thoughts on travelling, the Faroe Islands, and the whaling law. This is done, in order to provide an overview, which will be necessary in the following sections, as they focus on the interviews, both in general and in detail from individual responses and conversations. All respondents are Danish, except for JO, who is born in the USA, and has lived in Denmark for the past three years. One or more letters will be used to refer to each person in the analysis, as it is seen here.

5.4.1 Group 1

G:

G is a 27-year-old male, studying pedagogy. His oldest brother's boyfriend is from the Faroe Islands, and G has therefore for a number of years desired to visit the country, after hearing about it from them. G usually travels with his family, often to locations not seen as mainstream. He is very gregarious, and enjoys experiencing other cultures, their food and traditions, and is in this relation willing to try new things.

MA:

MA is a 28-year-old male, who is currently working temp jobs, before starting studying for a Master's degree in the autumn of 2017. He is the adventurous type, who has travelled all over the world, most of time on his own as a backpacker. He enjoys getting to know other cultures from the inside, and will mingle with both locals and other backpackers. He is very willing to try new things in the places he visits.

ME:

ME is a 24 year old female, currently studying civil engineering. She is the girlfriend of J, and they often travel together, as well as with their families. ME has always travelled with her family, and sees herself as bit of a security addict. She does however still enjoy experiencing different cultures, and loves experiencing nature, by being active in it. She has primarily travelled to big cities in Europe. ME has visited the Faroe Islands with J and his family, where they spend a lot of time hiking.

J:

J is a 25-year-old male, working as a chemical engineer. He is the boyfriend of ME, and they often travel together, with their families. Like ME, he enjoys being active in nature and experiencing different cultures. However, he is a bit more independent than ME in some aspects. Like ME, he has travelled to big cities in Europe, but has also been on a broad selection of different vacations, such as vacations focused on skiing, beach holidays, and hiking in the nature of Norway and Sweden, all with his family. J has visited the Faroe Islands with his family and ME, where they spend a lot of time hiking.

5.4.2 Group 2

C:

C is a 27-year-old male, who is working as a front-end web developer. He has travelled all over the world, primarily in Asia. He has both travelled alone, and with his girlfriend of many years, as well as with his family. He has spent several years living and studying in China. He is the adventurous type who prefers to experience other cultures from the inside, by participating in the everyday lives of the people he encounters. He is very active and loves experiencing nature.

P:

P is a 27-year-old male, who is working as a public-school teacher. He has mostly travelled with his family, and in later years with his girlfriend. He prefers to travel to warm locations, and to live at a hotel where he has a base to return to. He also enjoys being active in nature, but in contrast to the other respondents, besides hiking, most of the activities are tied to the offers made by tourist accommodations, such as scuba diving, river rafting and so on. He also enjoys experiencing different cultures, but at more of a distance than the other participants. Guided tours, restaurant visits and the likes represents most of his encounters with the other cultures. He has been to the Faroe Islands, when he visited a friend native to the country, where he saw Tórshavn and some of the mountains and natural sites.

JO:

JO is a 26-year-old male, studying international relations. He has travelled all over the world, and lived for several years in the United States, England, Spain and Denmark. He typically travels with his wife and family, and prefers destinations that are not so mainstream, but more different and unique. He likes to get away from other people, and enjoys camping in the wild away from civilization.

5.5 Push/pull motives

Based on the focus group interviews, this section seeks to identify the different push and pull motivations that can be associated with the respondents. If the importance of travelling, the longing of escaping one's perceived mundane environment, outweighs the potential risks associated with travelling and the negative aspects than can be derived from the implementation of the grindalóg, push motives of the tourists can partly explain why a crisis situation was ultimately avoided in the Faroe Islands. If correlations can be drawn between the push motives that are relevant to them, and

the pull motives they identify in the Faroe Islands, this information can be used in later segments to identify perceived brand image, and how the correlations between push/pull motives, the brand of the Faroe Islands, and the decision-making process ultimately affects their willingness to visit the destination. The findings in this part of the analysis will not have definitive conclusive links between the opinions, motivations and decisions of the interviewees and the case in question, but will rather serve as a base for the following analyses, as push/pull motives are at the base of motivational theory, which accounts for a substantial part of the rest of the analysis and the theories attached to it. The push/pull motives for travelling will then be utilised to understand travel experience in accordance to Pearce's Travel Career Pattern model and the theory connected to it, to destination image formation, satisfaction with the destination, both from previous visitors, as well as hints on what potential first time visitors might think, and lastly to the decision-making process. It is worth noting, that the push/pull motives were examined early in both interviews, before information of the grind and the grindalóg were provided. Therefore, getting the respondents to consider and discuss why they want to travel mimics the early stages of the decision-making process.

5.5.1 Push motives

First, the push motives of the interviewees are identified, based on the questions we asked, as and the interaction and conversations they had about the various subjects the conversations concerned. Both focus groups identified a number of different push factors, when asked what drives them to travel away on vacation. Among the most significant are escapism, relaxation, novelty and the enhancement of kinship relationships, expressed in a vast array of conversation and discussion.

Several members from both groups greatly emphasised that escapism, getting away from the mundane, everyday lives and everyday routines of home had great importance. As an example, in group 1, MA said about why he wants to travel: *"To get away from Denmark, [to get new impressions and other ways of thinking than they have in Aalborg]."* Others in group 1 picked up on this, and discussions were had on how the escapism aspect is of importance. G said that *"I know that I'm very leisurely, and that I'm comfortable with being in Denmark, but I also know, and this is something I actively think about, that I have to get out and experience something different, because I have to get new impressions so that i won't get trapped in a little bubble thinking [that everything I do is right and correct]."* This indicates that escapism to him is important, but in a slightly different way than the other respondents. He is not necessarily travelling only to escape the mundane, but to get a better understanding of himself and his conditions, by experiencing others. This statement also touches upon

the novelty motivation. In group 2, several escapism motives were also identified, especially by C and JO. C said: *“To get out of this, let’s call it a hamster wheel, you can travel far away to something where it is impossible to fall back in the old [routines], and get a lot of new experiences.”*, while JO stated that: *“It’s probably to get away from the big city life and all the people.”*

The need for relaxation was also discussed among the respondents, who all saw this as one of the key motivations for travelling, and getting away from the responsibilities and trivial everyday lives of home is seen as being relaxing by the participants. Although all had emphasis on relaxation, some group members had similar ideas of how they want to relax, while other individual group members had somewhat different opinions on what constitutes a relaxing vacation. While not asked directly, information about how the different group members found relaxation was found implicit in their conversations and reactions. In group 1, ME and J both preferred active vacations where they can experience nature first hand, while G sees himself as being a little too comfortable, while still wanting to be somewhat active during his vacations. In group 2, C’s idea of relaxation was also bound to being active. He said: *“I experience with my body, so I have to go out for a run in the mountains or the hills, and get nature under my skin”*. Both P and JO agreed that being active on the vacation was important, but JO also emphasised that he found relaxation in sometimes getting away from anyone, and being all alone with his travel companions, camping far away from civilization. P explained travelling to a destination with a warm climate was very central to him, but that he did not want to spend several days sunbathing on the beach. Instead, what seemed relaxing to him, was doing various activities, such as scuba diving, hiking, and visiting local restaurants.

The novelty seeking motive was perhaps the most universally identified motive among the respondents, and although they had different opinions to where and how they wanted to experience this novelty, it indicates that this motive is among the most important to them while travelling. The desire to experience new cultures and nature are novelty push motivations. Members from both groups mentioned and discussed that wanted to experience people, places and nature that are different from the familiarity of home, and that this was of great importance to them and amongst the most important factors when travelling. A few examples show this.

In group 1 ME immediately answered *“New cultures”* when the group was asked why they wanted to travel, and later elaborated by saying *“It’s the understanding of why people act differently [than back home]”*, indicating that this motive is very important to her. G reacted to her statements, and

elaborated on why this was also important to him. He said: *“When people say they are going to travel, the first thing you think of is [...] that they travel south to the heat. I have been to the Ukraine a couple of times, which people, and myself to be honest, find a little strange, but you experience something different from what you are used to.”*

In group 2, C stated that culture was very important to him while traveling. He said *“... the cultural differences put a new perspective on life... It is probably mostly these contrasts between people that is appealing to me.”* JO had more focus on the natural aspects of traveling, but did also state several times that culture was also important. He stated on why he wanted to travel: *“It’s probably nature. I like hiking and camping, and finding my own way. I think it’s exciting to find things that are not on the tourist websites, and getting a real cultural experience where you get into the real world, which [the locals] live in.”* In the two groups, there were however different approaches to how a new culture was best experienced, and how it acted as a push motive. MA from group 1 and C from group 2 both have vast experience in travelling alone, and are keen to meet, interact with and even live with persons from the country they visit for a certain amount of time. They both wish to experience a culture in the most authentic way possible, by participating in local customs and activities alongside with the locals. Other respondents, such as ME, J and G from group 1, as well as JO from group 2, wanted to interact with locals, their culture and customs, but on a less involved level. P from group 2 was the least involved in the local social interactions, but he still had interest in chatting to locals and meeting them in more traditional host-tourist interaction scenarios, such as when dining out or visiting local shops and activity facilitators.

Other than the escapism, relaxation and novelty motives, a social motive for traveling was identified among the respondents. In both groups, a majority agreed that they preferred travelling with friends, spouses and family, essentially to share their experiences with someone, they know, regardless of the destination and activities on the vacation. MA, however, expressed a preference of travelling alone and instead pursue meeting locals and other travellers in the destination he visits, usually as a backpacking tourist. According to MA, the temporary and new relationships is something that is vastly important to him when travelling, and emphasises his desire to interact directly with people from other cultures as a push motivation. At the other end of the spectrum is ME, who stated that she is a bit of a security addict, and travelling with people is vastly important to her. She cannot imagine doing it alone. J, the boyfriend of ME, also stated that while he enjoyed finding experiences on his

own while travelling, he could not imagine travelling alone either. The rest of the interviewees were placed somewhere between the opposites of MA and ME, and did all find it most enjoyable when they had friends, family and spouses to share their experiences with. From this it can be derived that the facilitation of social interaction is among the important push motives in the group of respondents.

In both groups, it is clear that many of the push travel motives are linked to the socio-psychological motives described by Crompton (1977), as escape from a mundane environment, exploration of the self, enhancement of kinship relationships and facilitations of social interaction were emphasised by several group members in varying degrees, only with few exceptions. These motivations are not necessarily bound to a destination, but are more universal. Some general notions about these push motives can be made, that can affect choice of destination. Travelling with friends, family or spouses was important to everyone in both groups, except for MA. This is of importance, as most travellers who travel with others are not alone in their decision-making process, but instead this is a part of a negotiation between them. This could have some effects on their decisions of whether or not they wish to travel to the Faroe Islands, and is therefore relevant to the decision-making process analysis in this hypothetical scenario.

5.5.2 Pull motives

After identifying the push motives of the respondents, the pull motives of the Faroe Islands were identified, as seen by the respondents. The pull motives of the Faroe Islands were examined throughout the interviews, both when participants were asked what they know about the Faroe Islands overall, and their general conversations about the destination, both from the participants who had already visited and told the rest of the groups about their experiences and thoughts, as well as the thoughts of those who had not visited. Additionally, we asked them what factors contributes in making the Faroe Islands a good vacation destination to visit (the more negative aspects of the country was also found through these conversations, as it will be reflected in other parts of the analysis).

When asked what the participants knew about the Faroe Islands, they mentioned a large variety of attributes. They were especially enthusiastic about certain attributes that they would like to experience, which indicated that these are pull motivations that can be directly contributed to the destination. Among the first things mentioned by several persons in both groups, and then acknowledged by all other participants was the nature of the country, which was described as beautiful, breath-taking and unique. MA's first statement about the Faroe Islands was: "*I know there's*

beautiful nature, that's what I'm thinking [when thinking about the Faroe Islands].”, a statement that was recognised by the other participants, and especially developed upon later, when asked about what makes the destination attractive. In particular a conversation in group 1 between ME and J about their experiences emphasised the importance of nature as a pull motivation of the Faroe Islands. ME said: *“[the nature of the Faroe Islands] is really cool and beautiful. When you look at pictures from [the Faroe Islands] you think that they can't be taken there. It's much more beautiful in real life”*. J responded to this, and said: *“There's some incredibly cool nature there, but if you're a city person who don't go much out in nature, there isn't much to come to the Faroe Islands for”*. To this, ME quickly responded: *“I would consider myself a city person, and I gained a lot from it anyway”*. This would indicate that nature is considered a very strong pull motivation, since ME put emphasis on stating how she enjoyed it. In group 2, the nature aspect was also highlighted. P stated that the bad weather would be a discouraging factor: *“I think [the weather] scares a lot of the people I know, that you can't go to the beach. If you are at the beach, it means you have fallen 30 meters off a cliff.”*. To this, C responded: *“But I'm thinking, that if you go to the Faroe Islands, you're not going to go to the beach”*. This immediately got P to agree with him, and say: *“No exactly. That's what I'm thinking. If you go there, you go to experience something cultural, [and to] hike in these beautiful mountains, if this is the kind of vacation you are searching for.”*. These conversations, in both groups, indicate that the novelty nature pull motive is of great importance, and the negotiations within the conversations shows that individuals are trying to persuade the others when some of the other aspects are discussed. The participants who had visited before, and especially ME and J in group 1, used nature as a way to persuade the rest of the group that the destination was desirable to visit.

The universal notions about the desire to experience nature is of importance since it is heavily focused on through the marketing material promoted by stakeholders of the tourism industry in the Faroe Islands. Since all group members in one way or another emphasised experiencing beautiful and different nature than it is possible at home as being one of the key push factors, there is a clear link between the push motives of the participants, and the pull motives they identify in the Faroe Islands. The excitement about experiencing different cultures can be tied to both the novelty and the education motives, and was attributed to the Faroe Islands in both groups as well. J linked the notions of culture and nature, when he said: *“[The Faroe Islands has] a great tradition for fishing and living off the nature. Now, it is a modern society, but still with strong roots in the traditional way of living”*. As both experiencing nature and culture were motives he had proclaimed as being important to him, this statement shows that the Faroe Islands that can link these motives.

P also mentions a cultural aspect he finds exciting: “*[The Faroe Islands] has a very well-known festival, and I know that a lot of people from Denmark go there. It's located on a small island where you sail to, and then artists from different places in the world performs. It is supposedly very good.*”. Since several group members, both previous visitors and those who have never been, mentions the exciting culture on the Faroe Islands, and notes that one can learn about how they do things, and how it should be accepted even though it might differ from the culture they are used to from home, these motives functions as pull motives directly attributed with the Faroe Islands. Only a few respondents, most notably MA in group 1, had little to no knowledge about the culture in the Faroe Islands, but still found different cultures exciting in general, and after hearing about and discussing different aspects of the culture from the other respondents, also found the culture of the Faroe Islands interesting and a pull motivation for him.

While nature and culture were widely discussed as motivations, some pull motivations that were only connected to individuals were also identified. Among these was G's notion in group 1, that he had heard that the food culture was unique, and something he would like to experience for himself, while C and P pointed out that the unique animal life on the islands was part of experiencing nature, and also appealing. JO in group 2 noted that the Faroe Islands would be an ideal place to go on vacation with family, as the country has a very high level of security. Beside the more obvious pull motives identified, some factors were more unclear, whether they were seen as positive or negative. G noted that tourists have to be very careful when hiking in the mountains, and experiencing nature in the Faroe Islands in general, as it can be dangerous due to weather, heights and other factors. This caused some conversation in group 1 about safety and nature experiences, but was not necessarily perceived as being negative towards the destination by any of the respondents. Rather, it seemed to add an element of excitement to the destination, as all respondents recognised that being aware of potential dangers is important when travelling to such destinations. Due to the potential dangers of hiking and experiencing nature was not seen as negative, but rather a part of the experience, this can be seen as a pull factor for the more adventurous types.

Among the few negative aspects identified that can be attributed with the Faroe Islands as a vacation destination, was the weather and the steep prices, which especially P explained would be a demotivating factor. He explained that he wants to travel to a warm location and get good value for money when travelling. This can be attributed to the relaxation motivation, as P would not be able to

fulfil this in the Faroe Islands. The bad weather and the steep prices was recognised by the other participants in group 2, but was not necessarily seen as negative aspects by them.

5.5.3 Concluding remarks on push and pull motives, and reflexions on the results

This part of the analysis did not intent to conclude on how push and pull motives relates directly to the problem statement, but rather serve as a foundation for further analysis building on more complex theories. Push and pull motives are a rather basic understanding of why tourists travel, and the motives identified here largely corresponds with the motives we expected to identify.

However, there are still indications to how motives can act as counters to the negative image of the grindalóg. Most noticeably, there seems to be a clear connection between the push motives identified by the individual tourist and the pull motives they themselves identified as being present in the Faroe Islands. Only with a few exceptions, such as the cold and rainy weather that would possibly demotivate P to travel there again, most aspects of the country were seen as positive, and correlated directly with the push motives. This correlation between push and pull motives in the minds of the respondents, indicate that the Faroe Islands has a number of attributes that are appealing to most of them, in varying degrees. A strong correlation between push and pull motives might serve as a counter towards any negative emotions a potential tourist might have against a destination, and can therefore in this case, be part of the explanation to why the potential negative impact of the grindalóg did not have a substantial and widespread negative effect on tourism.

We acknowledge that the individuals in a focus group influence each other heavily, which can both have pros and cons. When identifying the different motives, it was clear that answers given by some individuals influenced others, by providing them with information and ideas they might not have come up with themselves. Some motives that were identified by one participant, was picked up and build upon by another. Since this part of the interviews were set to mimic the real-life interaction between travellers in the early stages of deciding whether or not, and where, to travel, the interacting between them and the subsequent influence they have on each other, also reflects how real negotiations could occur. This supports the validity of the results.

5.6 The tourists and Pearce's Travel Career Pattern approach

This part of the analysis seeks to identify the individual tourists who took part in the focus group interviews, in accordance with Pearce's Travel Career Pattern theory, and the theory that links experience and risk taking. While we are not seeking to analyse how travel career experience changes

the motivations, as more experience is gained, the results derived from analysing the participants can help create an overview of how they are expected to act and think in accordance to their current placement in the model. This can reflect how they prefer travelling, to what degree they seek safety, their willingness to experience other cultures and get involved themselves, and how they view factors such as safety and risk taking when travelling. It is our intention to explore how their placement in the Travel Career Pattern model relates to these factors. Ultimately, we expect that these findings can be put into perspective of how the potential crisis was avoided in the Faroe Islands. We expect a correlation between type of tourist and their experience, to their willingness to accept a certain risk when travelling to a foreign destination. We also expect a correlation between type and experience, and that the tourists have an understanding and acceptance of other destinations' cultural and legislative aspects being different from one's own, despite of expressing potential disagreement with these practices. We expect the potential tourists who are only or mostly internally motivated in the Travel Career Pattern model, to be more affected by conceived negative aspects of a derived from culture and/or legislation of a destination, than the tourists who are mostly externally motivated. The analysis will be based on both individual answers as well as reactions and conversations within the groups. It will here be structured, so that the participants are analysed in separate groups according to their placements in the model, and then their attitudes towards the previously mentioned aspects will be analysed and concluded upon.

When identifying push/pull motives, it was very clear that the core motives of novelty, escapism and relaxation was seen with all participants, and since the motivations are almost universal, they are not relevant to examine to determine experience and its connection to risk taking. In this part of the analysis it is therefore most relevant to examine which tourists have motives that can be related to the internally and externally related motives in order to establish how travel experience relates to the different aspects outlined concerning the Faroe Islands, travelling in general, and reactions and decisions towards the grindalóg. We recognise that some individuals might have motivations that touch upon some motivations not necessarily associated with the type we divide them by, but the division is made by what we interpret as their most significant motivations.

5.6.1 P and ME - the less experienced, internally motivated security seekers

Starting with the persons who had the least external motives, are P and ME, from group 1 and 2, respectively. P has the most emphasis on relaxation, novelty and relationships. He explained that he

cannot relax properly if the location is too cold, and that he primarily travels with his girlfriend and/or family, and wants to experience the destination with them. P does not, as it has been established, search for guest/host interactions to the same degree as the other participants, meaning that he does not indicate to have externally oriented motives that are associated with experienced travellers. While the novelty of meeting and experiencing other cultures is among his travel motivations, he is not directly engaged in host-site involvement, and does not search self-development through this. As mentioned, he mostly involves himself in interacting with the local culture through tourism facilitators, and not directly through the local hosts. In a conversation where C had told stories of him participating directly in the everyday lives of the people he encountered in China, P told a story from a previous vacation that stand in contrast to this very direct host-site involvement: *“When we were in Tenerife, you could pay for a guided tour to see some houses built into the rock. It was the last natives of the island who lived in these caves [...]. You could then go and see these houses, and buy some of the things they had crafted, and I’m sure they got some money from the tourist agencies. It was a private home, but it wasn’t like visiting a family privately.”* C then asked *“Did you feel it was only there for the tourists?”*, to which P answered *“Yes. 100 percent. 100 percent.”*. This story serves as a good example on how P does not have much of the externally oriented motive of host site involvement.

His motivations do however branch into a middle layer externally oriented motive, as experiencing nature was among the main reasons why he wanted to travel to a destination. P prefers to stay at hotels, and it can be derived from the interview that it is due to having a safe base to return to and plan the vacation from is important to him. This indicate a desired level of security, that can be connected to less experienced travellers.

ME also had great emphasis on the relaxation, novelty and especially the relationship travel motives, as it was seen in the analysis of push/pull motives, and did emphasise directly that she is a security addict. However, in some areas she did have other motivations than P, despite the similarities in their motivations. She emphasised nature and cultural encounters as being more important than P did, and did mention participating in cultural events herself, and not just observing, as it seemed the case with P. She, like the participants who are more defined by externally oriented motivations in the middle layer, wanted to interact with locals directly, and participate in whatever events would be held locally that would be a part of the culture of the destination she visited. The reason why she is in this analysis is not defined as being as experienced as the rest of the participants, is the self-proclaimed security addict element and the need to travel with family to gain security. She said: *“I like security. I really*

am a security addict, so having someone I know with me when I'm experiencing something new and interesting is important to me.". Through the conversations it became clear that the interest in the host-site involvement was only possible if she was with friends, family or her boyfriend J, and that this involvement was mostly initiated collectively. Therefore, ME is deemed to have the motive of host-site involvement to a lesser degree than other respondents, but more so than P has. Due to these factors, ME is here considered less experienced.

5.6.2 G, J, and JO - the moderately experienced, externally motivated adventurous travellers

G and J from group 1, as well as JO from group 2, expressed similar motivations for travelling and of the destinations they preferred visiting. While they still had very different opinions and motivations in some instances and to some subjects, the shared motivations makes it possible to group them together in the Travel Career Pattern model for the purpose of this analysis. The participants have different travel histories. J has for example travelled in a number of different ways such as big city vacations and skiing, while G primarily had travelled to less popular and more "unknown" destinations with his family, and JO had travelled all over the world and prefers camping away from the general population. However, they all shared some central travel motives. Among these is a desire to experience nature first hand, not only as observers, but actively, by hiking, camping (for some), and similar. More importantly, a strong and very clear interest of all three when they visit a new destination, which can be seen as one of the motivations that definitely defines them as being externally motivated, is the desire to not only observe or lightly touch upon, but actively experience other cultures and learn from them. The externally oriented motive of personal self-development through host site involvement can be derived from these motivations. There are multiple examples of how this is of importance to them. From the analysis of push/pull motives, where G talks about experiencing new cultures so that he will not be trapped in a "bubble", but instead get a new perspective on the world, is an example of the self-development through host site involvement motive as getting to know other cultures from the inside and not only as an observer requires direct involvement. Likewise, when JO in group stated that he wanted to get into the real world, both in terms of nature and getting into the world where locals have their everyday lives, indicate strong bonds to the externally oriented motives of self-development through host site involvement and experiencing nature first hand. However, while JO has travelled the world, and experienced many cultures in many different ways, he does not touch upon as many externally oriented motives as MA and C, whose travel experiences will be outlined in the next section. Therefore, JO is grouped with G

and J here, for the purpose of this analysis. As it was highlighted in the push/pull analysis, J also has motivations that group him in the middle layer section of the model, by wanting to interact with other cultures, and especially with nature. He says: *“I’ve tried a lot of different types of vacations [...] I’ve always thought back most fondly of, for example skiing in Norway. We have been on many vacations out at the lakes in Norway and Sweden, sailing in canoes [...] So I’ve never been on many city vacations, and they don’t mean much to me. I like getting out and try nature, and feel how nature is in the different destinations.”*. This focus on natural experiences is a lot stronger than it was seen with for example P and ME, and therefore it seems like a stronger motivation for J, confirming his placement in the model with JO and G, as a moderately experienced traveller.

As the theory suggests, travellers with experience that can be attributed to the middle layer of motivations in Pearce’s Travel Career Pattern model, are less susceptible to potential risk taking than those with lesser travel experience, and therefore it is not expected that the respondents most associated with the middle layers of motivation will be affected negatively in their decisions about travelling, as a result of the grindalóg.

5.6.3 MA and C - the very experienced, externally motivated backpackers and explorers

MA and C are in the context of Pearce’s theories the most experienced travellers. Both MA and C did from the beginning of the two interviews indicate that they were immensely experienced, both from the sheer number of travels they had conducted, the many different places they had visited all over the world, as well as their preferred modes of vacationing and their motivations for travelling. Based on the analysis of their push/pull motives, they can be seen as being adventurous travellers, as they both seeks vacations that can be considered to “extreme” in the eyes of other travellers, not necessarily with potentially dangerous activities, but instead by having very little security and planning involved in their vacation. C’s lack of security and planning is in directly contrasted by P’s need for safety, which is seen in a conversation between the two. After C had told of his ideas of relaxation, P said: *“Are you one of those types who would not mind just flying somewhere, get off the flight, and have no idea where you are going to sleep, or if you should go left or right?”*. The question was asked in a way that indicated that P himself would never travel like this. C answered: *“Preferably, I don’t want to have any idea where I end up when i get there [...] You get many different experiences, and it’s easier to seize the moment, saying that right now this is happening, we can go there and do this.”*. The contrast between the two during this interacting was clear, and emphasises how C needs very low levels of planning and security when traveling, indicating that he is an experienced tourist.

As mentioned, both MA and C wanted to get directly involved with the cultures they visited by participating in the everyday lives of regular people, and not through tourist facilitators or similar. MA said: *“What really sticks in my memory is to meet other people [in the destination], if you get in touch with the locals [...] in some way deeper than at the charter hotel. That’s what i remember after, and you won’t really get that on a charter vacation, I think.”*. This statement perfectly describes how the interaction with the destination hosts, is so important that it excludes certain types of travels for MA.

Additionally, both had a vast experience in backpacking and interacting with other backpackers, which indicate that they are both seeking kinship by being with considerate, respectful others, which is an externally oriented motivation as well. The kinship motivation could not be derived from the answers and conversations of the other participants to the same extent, which is partly why MA and C are seen as the most experienced travellers based on the Travel Career Pattern model. Both MA and C had several motives that be associated with the outer layer of the model. Especially MA expressed that being able to do what he wanted when travelling, and being obligated to no one was important. He wants to find his own way, and experience the destination and the culture as he sees fit, and not conducted by tourism agencies, or even rules and laws, as he indicated when he was told about the grindalóg. For C, the isolation motivation was very clear, and he directly stated that he was tired of going with the flow of tourists, and that he liked to go somewhere completely isolated. This was usually the case when he travelled with his girlfriend, while the desire to experience a culture from the inside was primarily identified as a motivation when he talked about his solo travels and long international stays.

Overall, C and MA can be argued as being experienced in the context of the Travel Career Pattern theory, and as it is the case with the respondents associated with JO, J and G, we expect that since MA and C can be considered very experienced travellers, they are less prone to be affected by potential risks.

5.6.4 Experience and risk taking of the respondents

After the division of the respondents, there are aspects of the analysis of the travel motivations and travel experience that both confirms and disconfirms the hypothesis made about the different groupings, and their attitude towards the grindalóg. As expected, both the respondents with some externally oriented motives, and those many, would ultimately not be influenced by the law to such

a degree that it would affect their ultimate decision to travel to the Faroe Islands, in the hypothetical decision we presented them with. Exactly why they want to visit despite of the law, can be attributed to several factors, where some will be outlined and analysed in later sections. Here, the focus is on how travel experience contributes to this. Based on Pearce's Travel Career Pattern model, the more experienced a tourist is, the more likely his or her motivations are to move beyond the basic, core motivations.

It can be derived from the answers given and the conversations between them, that the motivations such as self-development through host-site involvement outweighed tourists perception of potential negative outcomes by the law, and that getting involved with locals also meant that they would have to have a certain understanding that laws, rules and practises functions differently in other places. This indicates that this motive, as seen with somewhat experienced travellers directly counteracts the potential risks. Furthermore, for the very experienced travellers, the daring experiences motivation can also directly be associated with risk taking, and therefore a potential risk has less effect on them. The motivations of J, JO, G ,and especially those of MA and C, confirms the initial assumptions that the experienced tourists, both in terms of the number of travels they have been on, as well as their motivations and placement in the Travel Career Pattern model, are very affected by potential risks and uncertainty and uncertainty when travelling.

The results derived from the travel experience analysis of ME and P is very interesting. As indicated in the theory section, inexperienced travellers are more prone to be affected by potential risk taking when travelling, and are therefore often more courteous. Whether or not P and ME can be labeled as inexperienced tourists is debatable. The revised Travel Career Pattern theory by Pearce (2005) took emphasis away from experience being closely linked to the number of international travels conducted by the tourists, and made the definition more ambiguous. Experience accounts for many factors, and thus travel experience can be determined and analysed on accounts of the travel motivations mapped out by Pearce. Both P and ME are fairly well-travelled, but in different ways. ME has mostly visited big cities in Europe, while European destinations with a warmer climate than Denmark have appealed more to P. Both of them have been abroad on vacation multiple times, and does therefore not fit into the inexperienced category, if it is defined as having fewer than ten international vacations. However, according to them mostly sticking to the core motivations of travelling, and not having externally

oriented motivations to the same extent as the other respondents, they can in this sense be identified as being less experienced travellers.

Due to P and ME's placement in the model we expected them to be more prone to be affected negatively by what they were told of the grindalóg, both in terms of their attitude towards the law in general, their view on the Faroe Islands as an attractive destination, as well as their hypothetical decisions on travelling to the Faroe Islands. However, through the conversations and the analysis, it was discovered that this was not the case. Both P and ME would, also with the knowledge of a grindalóg, still chose to travel to the Faroe Islands if they had already considered it a destination they wanted to visit. ME expressed such a strong desire to revisit the destination, that such a law would not have a deterring factor. For P, the Faroe Islands is not among destinations he would usually travel to, but in the hypothetical scenario presented, the law and the grind would not affect his decision if he had plans to go there. Here, it is clear that P and ME stick out according to the theories of inexperienced travellers. The explanation to why, can be attributed to several factors. How they reacted towards the law, their feelings towards the law, and some general notions about it as well as the grind in general, has a substantial part of the explanation to why they are unaffected in their decisions, and their attitudes towards these aspects will be further examined in the "Crisis perception" analysis section. Their behaviour can also in part be explained by their motivations for travelling. As it has been established, the novelty motivation is important to most travellers, and was deemed very important by everyone in our focus groups. Novelty can in this case also be contributed to the fact that foreign cultures have rules and laws that are associated with them and their way of life, and therefore a part of the novelty aspect of a destination. Since both P and ME expressed some interest in the cultures they visit, albeit it being in different ways and to varying degrees, parallels between their interest in other cultures, and their willingness to accept that these cultures might have laws, traditions and practices that they might not agree with or want to be a part of, can be drawn. Especially ME sticks out here, as she has some externally oriented motivations, with much emphasis on the cultural encounters.

If Pearce's model is put aside, and experience is determined by the number of international vacations, both P and ME have travelled enough to be considered somewhat experienced travellers. In this sense, it can be assumed that they have accumulated enough knowledge and experience connected with being a tourist, that they acknowledge that travelling involves some kind of risks, which in turn means that they are less affected by potential risk.

5.6.5 Conclusions and speculations on the results of travel experience

It can be concluded, based on the travel experiences of the participants mentioned above, that travel experience plays into tourists' destination preferences, especially those who are more experienced travellers. In the case of the less experienced travellers, P and ME, there were some travel motivations that can be attributed to their reaction, and explain why they would want to travel there, despite their theoretical sensitivity to risk taking while travelling. However, just why these results differentiated from what was presented in the theory, can also be analysed in other ways, as it will be seen in later sections of the analysis. It is clear for all the participants, that experience only accounts for part of the explanation to why they would travel despite of the law, as this theory has a lot of generalisation and assumptions associated with it. Much of the analysis required a division of the tourists in order to group them by experience and build the analysis on this. This was largely possible, but as it was indicated several times that almost all of the respondents had motivations that reach away from the placement in the model we most associated them with, and this makes the final results somewhat blurry. This can have several explanations, and one of the biggest factors, is that a tourist and his or her motivations is a complex size to analyse, and it is hard, if not impossible to arrange tourists in simple boxes. Some can primarily have motivations that are seen as internally or externally oriented, but due to a large variety of factors, such as for example travel companions, specific prior experiences, habits and interests, just to mention a few, all can affect individual motivations. Furthermore, using focus group interviews as a method, might affect the individual respondent to answer in a certain way. They can be influenced by other respondents, and might answer in certain ways to gain acceptance among them. Additionally, some answers might be given to meet what expectations they might think we have as interviewers, and they might represent themselves as being more open, bolder and more willing to take risks, than it might actually be the case. Lastly, it is possible that there is a difference between how people say they would react in certain situations, and how they would actually react when placed in the situation, and since their stance in regards to the law was built on a hypothetical situation, rather than a situation they had actually experienced, some disconnection between speech and action is possible. Overall, it did however seem that answers given were genuine, as many motivating factors derived from actual travel stories provided by the respondents and therefore the conclusions made in this section can be contribute to explaining why a crisis was averted.

5.6.6 Relating travel experiences to cruise ship tourists

As an addition to the analysis on travel experience of the participants in the focus group interviews, we will make some suggestions to how and why travel experience plays a role in the cancellation of several cruise ships to the Faroe Islands, following the implementation of the grindalóg. This section will function not as a part of the answer of the problem formulation, but instead to provide an explanation to why so many cruise ships were cancelled, which is relevant to understanding why a crisis was feared in the first place. Since no interviews have been conducted with neither cruise ship tourists and tourists who could consider a cruise ship vacation, nor with any decision makers from the companies responsible for the cancellation, the assumptions made here are mostly based on theory as well as some information acquired from the tourism stakeholders in the Faroe Islands. In this context, we found the Travel Career Pattern theory to be the most suitable of the theories used in this thesis to provide some explanation to the cancellation.

Since the motivations of cruise ship tourists cannot be identified based on interviews, they can be assumed based on what a cruise envelops as a mode of vacationing. As argued in the case section, the reason for cruise ships cancelling their scheduled visit to the Faroe Islands was due to safety reasons which indicate that those who took the decisions are more sensitive when it comes to making decisions on behalf of very large group of tourists. Furthermore, this type of travel usually resembles an all-inclusive experience where meals are included in the price, and mostly take place on the ship. However, while this type of vacation does not require a great amount of involvement, it does offer the chance to experience something out of the ordinary, and to see many parts of the world, all in one vacation. The relaxation aspect is at the core of this type of travel and offers the opportunity to experience a wide range of short destination experiences and impressions on the route. With these factors in mind it can be argued that a cruise ship vacation envelops all of the core motivations identified by Pearce, that being escapism/relaxation, novelty and relationships. What sets the cruise tourists apart from the growing tourist segment to the Faroe Islands and the tourists that the brand targets, is the seeming lack of direct involvement in both nature and culture, which means that the externally oriented motives from the middle layer are not seen. Since the time that cruise tourists get to spend at each destination on the route is rather limited, it can be assumed that the average cruise ship tourist gets relatively little involvement in the local culture compared to tourists who actively choose the Faroe Islands as their primary destination. Therefore, cruise tourists arguably do not have as many possibilities to experience self-development through host-site involvement. With nature, the same assumptions apply. One could argue that experiencing the sea is a way of experiencing nature,

but it can also be seen as an experience that requires no direct involvement from the tourists themselves.

A cruise ship can have a number of activities, but because these are means to cater to a large and diverse audience, they are not likely to be very destination specific.

By identifying the motivations above, it can be assumed that the typical cruise ship tourist is mostly affiliated with the core motives and internally oriented motives, and can therefore be regarded as inexperienced according to Pearce's Travel Career Pattern approach. As stated, inexperienced tourists are more affected by potential risks, and therefore these tourists might be more prone to see the grindalóg as being threatening towards them and their personal safety as tourists, and towards their rights to stay uninvolved as tourists. Furthermore, it can be assumed that since these tourists visit a number of destinations, they are less likely to have a specific interest in each culture they visit. Therefore, it is possible that many of them will not have a profound understanding and acceptance that other cultures act in different ways, and have different rules and laws than they are used to, compared to experienced tourists who invest themselves in a particular culture.

Compared to tourists who travel to the Faroe Islands themselves, the Faroe Islands is merely one of many destinations that is visited by cruise ships and the cruise lines ultimately decide the final route and included destinations. The decisions of cancelling cruise ships is therefore likely made by a few persons, perhaps based on the types of customers they have, and on inquiries made by them. The cancellations should therefore be seen in the light of a general caution from the perspective of the cruise lines rather than indicating how other tourists react.

As it has been outlined in the case section, cruise lines' decision of cancelled visits is, beyond general safety, rooted in individual tourists' concern for the law. It can therefore be assumed that cruise ships host some more cautious tourist types than for example those who participated in our focus groups who accept the potential risk associated with visiting the Faroe Islands.

Of course, one cannot generalise all tourists on cruise ships, as cruise ships probably include many different types of tourists who have equally varying reasons for choosing their travel method as other tourists, but this is nonetheless what cruise lines are doing when they make a collective decision on behalf of all passengers and crew in terms of what they wish to expose them to.

5.7 Crisis Perception in relation to the grindalóg

As it has been highlighted earlier in the crisis theory section, it is important to establish the nature of the perception of the whaling law, since the event can be perceived differently depending on from

which perspective it is viewed from. Here, the nature does not relate to the technicalities and consequences of the law, as these have already been identified, but more to the how it can be differently interpreted by different sides. In order to be able to assert the cognitive, emotional and behavioural reaction to the event, it is essential to make an initial identification of respondents view on whether the incident was internally or externally inflicted. However, before the primary perspective of the tourists is considered, it is relevant to include the perspective of the other implicated parties, those who implemented the law, and those who have protested and warned about the potential consequences the law could have, being the tourism operators. Thus, the different views of whether the destination incident reason can be attributed to external or internal reasons can be placed into three different perspectives:

- The government legislator perspective
- The tourism operator perspective
- The tourist perspective

The first perspective of the incident is that of the governmental legislator, which was responsible for the law. From this perspective, the law regulation is at least indirectly externally imposed. The argument here is that the law regulation has been made as a response and defence against the foreign criticism and particularly activism targeted towards the Faroese practice of pilot whale killings (in.fo). From this viewpoint, the actual reason for the negative repercussions should be attributed to external forces that then have come to influence the tourism industry as well.

The perception of the whether the incident has been internally or externally imposed might very well have played into the reaction from the legislative institution that followed after the law was criticized, where a defensive position is taken. The first perspective of the incident is that of the governmental institution responsible for the law. From this perspective, the law regulation is at least indirectly externally imposed. The argument here is that the law regulation has been made as a response and defence against the foreign criticism and particularly activism targeting the Faroese practice of pilot whale killings. From this viewpoint, the actual reason for the negative repercussions should be attributed to external forces that then have come to influence the tourism industry as well. The perception of whether the incident has been internally or externally imposed is fundamental to determine in order to evaluate how attribution of the destination incident has played a role in the ultimate perception of the destination incident.

The second perspective is that of the tourism planners and operators. In the context of this thesis, all tourism entities (incoming and visit organisations) that spoke about the nature of the law regulation, expressed a strong discontent as well as irritation with the potential consequences it could have for local tourism actors. From this perspective, the law regulation has been made by authorities that do not have any direct relation to the tourism industry, but have the potential to impact the tourism industry as a whole. Therefore, the law regulation is viewed as something that has impacted the tourism industry within the destination but has done so through external forces. The discontent expressed by local tourism actors over the law regulation speaks for an industry that has felt illegitimately victimised because of some affairs that should not be associated with the tourism industry.

It should be noted that tourism actors should not be perceived entirely equally in this relation. For example, two of the interviewed organisations that represent tourism actors in this context are not private (Visit Faroe Islands is an underlying governmental organisation and Visit Tórshavn represents Tórshavn municipality). However, although the roles of private and governmental organisations can appear blurry, the perspective of tourism entities is a perceived distinction between the two sides in this case.

The fact that the incident has been differently viewed, both as being internally or externally imposed, can also play a role in how stakeholders have reacted since the incident. For example, tourism operators expressed a separation between themselves and the problematic situation.

When asked about the reaction and response towards whaling related enquiries, tourism stakeholders answered that their focus areas are associated with tasks related primarily to the tourism industry and that since a whaling law constructed by the fishing ministry has little to do with the contemporary tourism industry, such enquiries have typically been forwarded to the appropriate authority, in this case the fishing ministry and the political branch to which this concern. This response of pointing to the responsible authority has been done for two main reasons. First, as pointed out, relates to the “not our table attitude” where enquiries are received as misdirected. Second, the nature of the communication content has in some cases been deemed to be so inappropriate and misplaced that it has not been considered worth using resources on. Such content is typically characterised as protests against the practice and comes from people whose intention is to end whaling in the Faroe Islands rather than actually consider visiting the destination.

The fact that received enquiries and potential concerns about the law have been treated as if they have been misdirected, enforces the experienced disconnection between the interviewed tourism operator and the incident that has affected the tourism industry.

Because the incident is considered to be beyond what can be associated to the tourism industry, the foreign reactions that have followed the incident have been treated accordingly.

The stakeholders state that when criticism or grind related enquiries have been received, they have been forwarded to the proper authorities. This approach has been used for two main reasons. First, tourist actors feel there is not much they are able to do since the law applies to everyone, including tourists. Secondly, by forwarding received enquiries to the responsible authority, tourism actors are also renouncing any responsibility of the law and possible associations to it.

The perception of an incident being internally or externally imposed is in this context not merely limited to identifying whether the destination incident is unethical in nature, it can be used as an indication of how different stakeholders see themselves and others in relation to the case.

The different perceptions from the law maker on the one hand and tourism operators on the other can in this context be a way to identify and partially explain how different reactions developed as a response to the incident.

The third of the perspectives, and arguably the most important one, is that of the foreign tourists. This is especially important since the tourists are the ones contributing to the growing tourism industry. The conducted focus group interviews, which were comprised by entirely foreign tourists (not Faroese), showed a consensus towards the incident being internally caused. Here, the incident was argued to be internally imposed. The general opinion here was that since the incident had emerged and was enforced within the destination, it was in the destination's own power to establish and abolish the law. In this connection, G expressed that "*Even though [the law] is because of the activists, it is still those who have implemented the law who are responsible. Outside of context, it does not make any sense.*". This statement was supported by the remaining participants of the group. What is worth noting here is the fact that the destination as a whole entity can be attributed the responsibility for the incident, in the eyes of the respondents. If tourist views a destination specific action or incident to be important to their ultimate motivation to visit the destination, there is little, if any, perceived separation between the local tourism industry and governmental institutions. Therefore, the incident is in fact attributed to internally imposed factors. Furthering the argument on the attribution of the incident to be internally imposed, is the fact that tourism operators experienced a significant attention

from both activists and tourists, which could have directed their attention towards the lawmakers. The fact that focused on tourism operators can be an indication of foreign tourists perceiving the grindalóg to be a “destination responsibility” rather than merely a governmental institution responsibility.

What is ultimately the most important perspective, is that of the tourists. Not only are they a primary, driving objective of this thesis, but furthermore, this is the perspective that arguably has the largest impact on the prosperity of the Faroese tourism industry. Therefore, the potential crisis a triggering event like the grindalóg could have, should be analysed based on their perspective, despite it not correlating with that of the government legislators.

5.7.1 Is the incident unethical?

Garrod and Breitsohl identify a destination incident is unethical when “*a crisis event that is perceived by stakeholders to be internally imposed (i.e. self-inflicted by one or more destination organizations) and unethical in nature.*” (p. 210). This identification creates some possibilities as well as issues that are worth clarifying and discussing. First of all, as discussed in the section above, a perception of a destination incident can vary depending on from where it is perceived. Although stakeholders, which in this case would refer to tourism actors, are highlighted as the decisive factor in identifying whether a destination incident is unethical or not, it is not given that these have the same perception of the event as tourists or the responsible organisation or institution. If this was the case, both stakeholders and tourists would have to share a view of the incident being internally imposed. Since this is not the case, it is equally important to look at tourists, in the identification process of the destination incident nature.

The internal discussions on who was to blame for the grindalóg were relatively short and affected by a general agreement of where responsibility was to be placed. Here, although it was acknowledged that the law could be justified as a response against activists’ activities, main responsibility is put on the governmental institution responsible for the law. The reason for this responsibility attribution is primarily the formulation of the law which is seen as fundamentally flawed and misguided and is thus seen as a self-imposed mistake that can be resolved by the governmental institution itself. Put differently, the governmental institution is perceived as being in full control of any potential negative effects that have resulted from the grindalóg and thus there is little sympathy for them in this context.

In order to analyse the most prominent reactions towards the “unethical” incident, it is relevant to generate a general pattern of the perceptions identified among the focus group participants. These perceptions can show how tourists might react to such a scenario and thus give an indication of how tourists may have perceived and acted upon the incident. The conceptual model used here is based on Lazarus’ (1991) cognitive appraisal theory which, as outlined earlier in the theory section, involves deconstructing the reaction into a four-stage sequence.

These stages include the initial cognitive understanding of the incident, the subsequent emotions created by that understanding, the coping strategy in which relates to the immediate actions taken as a consequence, and future behaviour relates to such terms destination loyalty (intention to revisit) and future word of mouth (WOM).

The reactions caused internally as well as between the two groups do vary between the participants. This signifies the cognitive appraisal theory to how tourists react when presented with particular destination incidents and that tourists’ reactions are grounded in their appraisals, which, as showed, varied between the participants. The following section will present some sequences of reactions that focus members went through and starts with the cognitive understanding.

5.7.2 Cognitions

Focus group participants’ cognitive understanding of the incident was achieved through a presentation of the law regulation. In group 1, this included the relevant elements in the law, to whom it applies, and potential consequences of not complying to it, but also who it was supposed to target and why it was implemented from a government perspective. Group 2 were initially only presented with the basic information on the law. This partially was done in order to mimic the different levels of information that tourists can be expected to encounter when searching for relevant information online or through various other media.

When asked to relate to the law regulation, there were immediately several questions regarding the construction and applicability of the law. Questions such as MA asking “*How is this even going to be upheld?*” expressing a confusion on the law’s actual practice and J asking “*What is the actual purpose?*” implying that there might be some potentially hidden agenda behind the law, expressed an immediate confusion of the law’s purpose and enforcement. In group 2, JO said: “*I think it would be a weird trial. You saw the whale? No, I didn’t! Yes, you did!*”, mimicking an odd situation in a courtroom, and thus expressing that the law will be difficult to enforce in practice. During both focus group conversations, participants spent a fairly large amount of time on trying to achieve a more

comprehensive understanding of the law. Ultimately, the cognitive understanding of the situation affected much of the remaining reaction process because participants failed to fully comprehend the necessity of the law in its current formulation.

Immediately after presenting the law, both to focus group 1 and 2, it became evident that no one had ever heard of the law. Therefore, respondents acted genuinely surprised after the information. It should be noted that participants' reactions therefore arguably reflect genuine responses of tourists that hear about and are confronted with the law, when they decide to travel to the Faroe Islands, or perhaps even during their visit to the country.

5.7.3 Emotions

The emotions that were identified after participants cognitive understandings of the incident were mixed but generally negative. After being informed that the law technically applies to everyone located in the country, including tourists, participants were asked how they would react to the potential scenario of being forced to report an observation of whales in the Faroe Islands, the emotions from MA was a mix of humour as well as a sign of anger and protest stating: "*Fuck the man! That is not for them to decide.*". MA saw the law as a fundamentally wrong attempt to force tourists to submit to specific actions that they could be uncomfortable with. The fact that the participant expressed himself with cursing indicates a that his statement is emotionally charged, in this case with anger, and this shows that the emotional opinion of the law was initially negative.

During our interviews in the Faroe Islands, local tourism destination actors stated that most of the grind related enquiries that had been received were from somewhat confused tourists, who were worried and unsure on how to relate the law. Emotions of worriedness were not identified in the focus groups sessions and participants did not express genuine fear related to the law regulation. However, it is important to distinguish the different settings in which the information about the law is being delivered. First, focus group participants do not have to relate and potentially immediately comply to a law in the same way as a tourist receiving the same information at the location. Second, the reactions that tourism actors reported to have experienced around the time of the law are reflected in the immediate confusion that emerged in the focus group sessions. Focus group participants were equally confused by the technical and practical applicability of the law as reported tourist experiences.

When asked how one would react to having to comply with the law one initial reaction from MA was: "*How the hell is one supposed to abide by it?[...] the law is messed up.*". This attitude towards the

law was generally supported among participants with most agreeing that there is no sensible reason for targeting tourists. Therefore, group 1 came to the conclusion that the genuine problem was in the formulation of the law.

After the first reactions had settled, some participants reacted with amusement when unsuccessfully trying to setup different scenarios in which the law could apply. Questions such as “what if one does this” or “if one does not do this” were raised, touching upon the unclarity that surrounds the law and the potential ramifications of defying it, knowingly or unknowingly. Here, participants seemed to have difficulties comprehending how the law would pose a genuine threat towards them as tourists. This way, the perceived absurdity of local authorities trying to enforce the law became amusing for some respondents. The reactions that followed participants expressed emotions are presented in the coping strategy below.

5.7.4 Coping Strategy

Tourists’ coping strategy is a critical part of the overall reaction because it relates to their concrete behaviour in connection to destination incident. Asked how one would behave as a tourist in the Faroe Islands knowing about the law, most focus group members stated that they would either choose to ignore their knowledge of the law i.e. pretend they had not heard of it or simply choose to not to report a potential observation of pilot whales since, realistically, the chance of being caught and accused is so minimal.

Avoidance was identified as the prevailing coping strategy among focus group members. This strategy is to a largely rooted in the members’ understanding of the law and the limited risk connected to it. In relation to this, J stated: *“I do not feel I am doing anything wrong if I am a fly on the wall. Law is law but I generally have a relaxed attitude [... laws serves as] guidelines for appropriate behaviour [...] and because the law is not targeted at me anyway.”*. This quote well encapsulates the focus group members’ general coping strategy of avoidance. All members responded that they remained willing to travel to the Faroe Islands with a confidence that if one did not seek to get involved in potential whale observation, there would not be a problem for them as tourists. Avoidance behaviour, in this sense, *“allows the individual emotional relief and can be defined as consumers’ attempt to regulate their emotions through the mental or physical detachment from a harmful or distressing situation.”* (Garrod and Breitsohl, p. 213). Because the law was experienced as being so easy to avoid, all participants therefore saw avoidance as a coping strategy in which the law had no influence on them whatsoever. This way, the chosen coping strategy would not only result in the

absence of an evident conflict with any authority, but also, because the coping strategy is internally based, it would mean that respondents would refrain from using an external coping strategy such as spreading negative WOM.

From the perspective of tourist operators in the Faroe Islands, the coping strategy that focus group members seem to choose is arguably positive for the country's tourism industry. Given tourism operators' own view of the law as misplaced, avoidance has no effect on tourists' activity compared to spread of negative WOM which can have potential serious negative consequences of future tourist traffic to the destination.

5.7.5 Future Behaviour:

Future revisit behaviour relies largely on the successfulness of avoidance as a coping strategy. All focus group members expressed a continued destination loyalty given that they were unaffected by the law. However, should one in fact be punished as a consequence of the law, then this would have a direct negative influence on potential future travels. MA stated: *"If I was in fact caught [and punished], I would get bad perception of the country and would not return ever again."* This reaction is based on the hypothetical scenario where the tourist is actually convicted and thus this behaviour is not believed to become relevant and realistically affect the tourists' future behaviour under normal circumstances where avoidance is successful.

The hypothesis presented in the theory section, which concerns the positive effects on destination loyalty because of a coping strategy of avoidance, is here confirmed. Especially ME, who had visited the destination earlier, expressed a continued desire to revisit the destination since the grindalóg had proven to play no influence what so ever on her visit before.

Avoidance will be used in such a way that it neutralises the potential effect a law regulation would have. When asked whether the law would affect one's decision to travel to the Faroe Islands, ME stated: *"I am going back there, that's for sure."* signifying a continuing destination loyalty.

Overall, it can be concluded that participants reacted with initial negative emotions towards information on the destination incident. However, despite of the negative perception of the incident, nearly all participants stated that avoidance would be an effective coping strategy. Ultimately, all participants expressed a continued desire to travel to the destination despite of their perception of the law. Thus destination loyalty is retained for all participants as well as negative word of mouth is not expressed as a natural consequence of the incident unless ultimate circumstances such as prosecution are targeted at the individual.

5.7.6 Determining whether attribution is a factor

This crisis related section initially started with identification of what can be argued to be an unethical destination incident. While it can be concluded that the destination incident was in fact internally imposed based on the tourists' perception, this conclusion does not explain why, based on the opinions in the conducted focus groups, tourists are still largely unaffected by the incident both when it comes to coping strategy and future behaviour. In this sense, this analysis on tourist perceptions of the grindalóg so far seem more to refute attribution theory as a key factor for terminated destination loyalty or negative WOM. The tourists' continued desire to visit the destination is also backed by numbers of tourist traffic which denote a continued positive development. Therefore, the question that still needs to be answered in summarising this section is this: If potential future tourists find the particular destination incident unethical, why have the effects not been more severe? This question is central to the following sections where reasons for the continued growth of the Faroese tourism industry are discussed.

5.6.7 Severity of the Grindalóg

As proposed in the theory section, a reason that can justify tourists' perception of the unethical destination incident, is the hypothesis that *"The more severe a tourist perceives the unethical incident to be, the stronger will be the hostile emotions she or he experiences."*

In this context, the limited hostile emotions experienced by tourists in this case can be ascribed to the severity of the grindalóg. Tourists simply do not consider the grindalóg severe and threatening enough that it genuinely affects their travel decision. As it has been outlined earlier, the apparent reactions towards the law have indicated a general casual and relaxed attitude towards complying with the official requirements. Essentially, tourists' behaviour towards a destination incident is closely related to severity of the incident, the risk associated with one visit to the destination. This is signified through the chosen coping strategy of avoidance where focus groups members consider the law to be somewhat irrelevant for their general conduct as tourists in the Faroe Islands.

It can be argued that if the destination incident was more severe, in case if it was a terrorist attack where tourists might genuinely fear for their safety, the hypothesis could be confirmed.

This is an example of how avoidance as a coping strategy can have different effects. (psychological and practical). Whereas avoidance can be a strategy to ignore the potential severity of for example a terrorist attack, avoidance as a strategy should in this case be seen as a result of the limited severity

of the law that tourists experience. Regarding the decision to visit the Faroe Islands despite of the grindalóg, tourists expressed a confidence in a visit unaffected by the law. Among the tourists that had visited the country, ME stated that that it was strange that so little focus had been on informing about the law if it was in fact important to enforce it.

J stated that "*I would ignore it and I was not aware of it when we were there [at the Faroe Islands]*". He further implied that because the influence during their visit was non-existent, the problem would arguably not happen in the future either.

As mentioned before, no participants in the focus group were aware of the existence of a grindalóg. This could give an indication of how relevant it is for tourists. During our interviews with tourism operators, it was explained that the usual procedure, when it comes to informing tourists about the grindalóg, was to answer the received questions (or forward them) rather than actively providing unsolicited information. If such information was in fact considered critical or at least somewhat important, tourism operators would arguably consider to inform tourists directly, without prior inquiries. When no tourism operators, at least those we interviewed, are concerned with informing tourists about the law, it can be assumed that the operators do not consider the law severe for tourists and see it as a matter that is practically irrelevant to tourists and will do more harm than good in terms of the potential unnecessary confusion that could emerge among tourists. Severity in this context creates a different hypothesis. Instead of predicting strong reactions caused by a severe destination incident, we argue here that the less severe tourists have perceived the incident to be, the less hostile emotions he or she experiences and based on the data provided by focus group members, this hypothesis is confirmed to be true.

In relation to the different types of experience travellers have according to the Travel Career Pattern theory, the lack of severity of the grindalóg might serve as the most significant explanation to why even the less experienced types would travel to the destination. As the theory stated, they should be more vulnerable to risks when traveling. Despite both ME and P perceived the law as being negative overall, they did not really see it as being severe, and thus not a big risk, if a risk at all. If they deem the travel risk-free in relation to the law, it should not matter that they are less experienced in this sense.

So, why are tourists experiencing the law to ultimately be less severe than it could have been anticipated? Based on focus group members' expressions there are two main reasons for their

attribution of the destination incident as less severe. These reasons are the law itself and then the practice itself.

As it has been identified above in the section on emotions, focus group members did express initial emotions such as irritation and confusion. As the discussion proceeded these emotions did however shift towards an understanding and consideration for some sort of whaling law that would prevent activists from interfering with the practice. Once the initial confusion concerning the law had settled, the main issue became the formulation law formulation, which was perceived as an irritation rather than genuine fear of risk taking. The coping strategy of avoidance further indicates a general consideration of the destination incident as not particularly severe. Thus, in terms of the law, destination incident severity is considered low and this can play a significant role in the overall behavior of tourists. Another aspect of the incident that is worth considering, is the tourists view of the practice itself. This aspect does not consider the law but merely the local practice of killing pilot whales at the destination. Here, participants generally expressed understanding and respect for the practice, particularly those who had visited the destination.

The reactions to the grind came after participants were presented with a video clip of a grind.

Initially, there was some mixed perceptions of the grind, but they were quickly turned around as a result of the negotiations present in a conversation. As an example, C's immediate reaction was negative. He said: *"It's a bit macabre that they just lure the animals to the coast, and butcher them by hand [...] It is an endangered species i think, that you should not butcher just to butcher it [...] They do it the next day to, i guess."* To this, P responded: *"It's a part of their culture. I think they have much control on when to do it, and don't [kill] everything they see. They have a quota, so i guess takes place under controlled conditions"*. This changed C's perception of the grind to be overall positive, and can be seen as a reflection of the negotiations and sharing of information that could occur in a real-life scenario where potential tourists learn of the grind.

After some discussion, although some sympathy was expressed concerning the killing of whales, this discussion quickly shifted towards a more rational and less emotional perspective of the grind. It was compared to industrial meat production elsewhere and thus the killings were not only justified as being equally bad or worse, but were also highlighted as an example of good animal welfare compared to for example animals for in captivity. J said: *I think it would be interesting to place a camera crew in a regular abattoir, and film something similar [...] Nowadays, people have no connection to where the hell their meat comes from, it just comes from the supermarket"*. After some more discussion, he added: *"Personally, I think it's better to take animals that have been out in nature, and do it*

sustainable so you don't make them extinct, instead of breeding them in small cages [...]". This added to the general discussion in group 1, and there was agreement on the connections between the traditional meat industry and the grind, and that hunting free animals could be seen as a better practice than this. This was also the case in group 2.

Furthermore, the grind was linked to the traditions of culture of the Faroe Islands, which contributed to a positive image of the practice. In group 2, P said: *"It is a fishing society, so it's in their culture [to get food from the sea]."* Similar notions were made in group 1.

Due to these arguments, among others, the practice is never truly considered as a deterring factor for tourists. The severity of the tourism incident as well as the practice that it is based upon, can, in this case, rather than measure hostile emotions, be used as an argument for why hostile emotions have not occurred in the first place.

5.8 Destination image formation

This section of the analysis seeks to analyse how the Faroe Islands is perceived as a tourist destination in the eyes of the focus group, as representatives of potential and prior tourists at the destination. Ultimately, the purpose of analysing the perceived destination image will be to determine how the tourists overall regard the destination, and to determine if the grindalóg, despite not seen as a risk, affects the overall image of the destination negatively. Determining the image of the Faroe Islands serves as part of understanding how the crisis was averted, should it prove that the tourists' overall image of the Faroe Islands is perceived as positive, and that the law has little to no overall effect. This part of the analysis is largely based on many of the concluding remarks made in the previous sections, as they all serve in determining the image of the country. In the focus group interviews, the perceived image of the Faroe Islands was examined throughout, both prior to the film clip concerning the grind, and the law was introduced, after, and finally after the Summer film from the Faroese brand was shown, in order to give a complete overview of the image, the law, and the effect it had.

5.8.1 The cognitive component

The cognitive component builds primarily on the factual knowledge the respondents had of the Faroe Islands, which of they were directly asked. In group 1, the uniqueness of the nature was mentioned by both MA and ME, while G mentioned that they have a very different food culture. J noted that the people live by and of the nature, have strong roots to it, and live of the sea. ME also mentioned the

weather, and described it as an “island climate”, referring to a rapidly changing weather. MA was quickly noted that he knew of the killing of whales, but did not describe it as something negative.

In group 2, the natural aspects and the weather of the destination was likewise highlighted by several group members. JO mentioned he had heard it was one of the countries with highest amount of rainfall in the world (a cognitive notion that has no ground in reality, but does show that he considers the country as a “rainy destination”), while P mentioned the cold, but unique landscape. The low population, unique architecture of the houses, the national football team, the many islands, as well as other known attributes of the country was also mentioned here.

As cognitive knowledge of the destination is largely based upon the amount of external stimuli received said destination, it was evident that ME, J, and P had the biggest amount of knowledge, while the rest of the respondents had a relatively limited amount. Neither C, JO, or MA could directly pinpoint where they had their knowledge of the country from, but pointed at unspecified, general news they had seen on TV, and unspecified word of mouth. G had the largest amount of knowledge amongst the participants who had not visited the destination, which was retrieved mostly through word of mouth, due to his brother’s boyfriend being Faroese.

The cognitive knowledge in itself is not enough to influence the choice of destination, nor is it enough to conclude whether or not the Faroe Islands can be seen as an attractive destination. This is where the motivations for travelling are relevant, in order to create a connection between the knowledge the respondents have of the destination, and the motivations they may or may not have for visiting a destination with these aspects present. This is seen as the affective component.

5.8.2 The affective component

The affective component, meaning how the potential tourists emotionally connects with certain aspects of the destination, was clearly identifiable in the interviews. These results draw directly from the pull motives associated with Faroe Islands identified earlier, and therefore they will only be briefly outlined here. Knowledge about the cultural and natural aspects of the Faroe Islands was in both groups very associated with feelings, as it was seen as being amongst the primary pull factors of the country, and since all participants themselves considered these aspects as being valuable to them they can be considered part of the affective components. Some of the cognitive knowledge expressed by individuals, was also connected to their affective image. As an example, G’s knowledge of the unique food, also served as a motivation for visiting. Later in the interview in group 1, it became clear that to G, the grind itself was seen as an affective component, as he would not only want to observe it, but

also participate to some extent given the opportunity. While not directly functioning as an affective component to the rest in the group, none in both group 1 nor 2, had negative emotions connected to the destination as a direct result of the grind. Overall, prior to being introduced to the grindalóg, there was little negative affective images of the destination that could devalue the destination image. The weather was among the few, and was only seen as a devaluing factor by P, since it clearly created a dissonance between his motivations for travelling, and the destination in question.

Overall, all participants had a positive affective image of the destination that prior to information of the law, to varying degrees served as an encouragement to travel.

5.8.3 The conative component

The conative component serves as the decisions taken based on external stimuli (knowledge about the destination) and internal stimuli (emotional attachment to attributes at the destination), about whether or not the destination image is positive enough to be worth visiting. This component, and how it is affected by factors such as the grindalóg, will be further developed in the decision-making process analysis. It can however be noted that prior to the information given on the grindalóg, the overall positive destination image of the Faroe Islands was encouraging enough that most participants seriously considered visiting the destination and ME knew for certain that she would. The interrelationship between the cognitive and affective image had overall no major dissonances due to negative perceptions of the country and what they saw as the major pull motives of it.

5.8.4 Formation of the destination image - the role of the grind and the grindalóg

This section seeks to analyse how the current brand of the Faroe Islands had an effect of the formation of the destination image, and of the information given on the grindalóg in different stages affected the overall destination image, positively or negatively. In the context of the focus group interviews, it was clear that few participants had extensive knowledge of the Faroe Islands, and that none had knowledge from promotional material provided by the tourism facilitators. All knowledge held by those who had not visited, was obtained by word of mouth from friends and family, and to a limited extend from news and other media. If this is put into the context of the 3-gap Tourism Destination Image Formation Model, the influence of the overt induced agents, the tourism stakeholders who facilitate the brand for example, is practically eliminated. They project the tourism destination image, and as the communications by them has not been received by these potential tourists, they have no influence in this matter. The presence of prior visitors to the Faroe Islands in both focus groups

therefore provided with information through word of mouth, which was observed as the mostly positive details on the prior visitors' affective image of the country unfolded in the conversations. Arguably, the word of mouth presented here greatly represents how word of mouth would be spread in everyday conversations between friends and families. As Gartner (1993) noted, those with prior experience with the products, have an image that is greatly influenced by this experience, and it was clearly seen how the positive image was spread in the groups. Also participants who had not visited, but who had been on vacations at destinations with some similarities, also let their prior experience influence the affective image they had of the country. This could for example be JO's and MA's prior experience with hiking in Norway, which shares some similar aspects. All the prior experience shared in the groups contributes to the positive image. In this way, the method of focus group interviews generates and provides data of each individual respondent, that they would not be able to obtain through other methods, thus giving a good indication of how word of mouth plays a considerable role in the destination image formation.

When the act of the grind itself was presented, it did not alter the affective image of the destination. As it was discussed and analysed in the crisis perception, after the act was discussed among the participants in both groups, no one associated the act itself with negative emotions. The grind can here be seen as a part of the tourism destination identity, rooted in cultural and historical and thus authentic practices, which is not directly projected by the overt induced agents, due to the controversy surrounding it. However, as tourism operators also expressed, the grind, and the protests against it, is a subject that frequently appears in local and international media and sometimes with a negative spin. This can be seen as the actions of covert agents, as they are not following directions of overt agents. In the focus groups, we as interviewers acted as both covert and overt agents when different amount of information, both on the grind, the law, and lastly the brand. The initial reactions were mostly positive, with the exception from C, who believed the grind whales to be endangered. After some conversations, where P talked about the practice and how controlled it was, C quickly disregarded the previous negative statements. As it was seen in the crisis perception analysis, the overall understanding of the cultural and historical aspects of the practise, as well as the comparison to normal slaughterhouses and the practices found here, the grind had no negative impact on the destination image, perhaps on the contrary. In some ways, after these aspects had been discussed, the knowledge concerning the grind enforced the positive affective image of a destination in touch with its own culture and historical heritage, thereby having the direct opposite effect of what could arguably be assumed based on the bloody and violent imagery presented to them.

The law was by the potential tourists perceived as internally inflicted, and can therefore in the 3-gap model be attributed to the Temporal Environmental or Situational Influences category, reflecting a politically unethical situation caused by autonomous agents. According to the theory, this can directly influence the cognitive, affective, and ultimately the conative components of the tourist image formation process. Since the law itself was perceived negatively, but the actual enforcement of it was unrealistic and the respondents found little risk associated with it, it can be deemed as insignificant as a factor in these components. It does have an effect, but too small for it to tip the scales and counter the positive affective images that each respondent had.

5.8.5 Destination image formation and the “Un” brand

Since no one, not even prior visitors in the groups, knew of the “Un” brand, nor had seen the Summer and Winter films which, based on our interview with Visit Faroe Islands, are believed to be the most wide ranging marketing products associated with the brand, prior connections between brand and the cognitive, affective, and conative components could not be made. However, as the final part of both interviews, the Summer film was displayed and possible connections between the brand seen in the film, and the three components, were made. The film is in the model seen as promotional material produced and communicated by overt induced agents, and intends to communicate the attractions and aspects that are representatives of the authenticity, history, culture, nature and so on, that is associated with the destination. In order to establish the effectiveness of this, the participants were asked about their opinions of the film, and if it correlated with their perception of the destination. As pointed out by Kim and Lehto (2013), the connectedness between the brand and the information from different other sources, as well as the personal experiences of the tourists, is one way to analyse a destination image. Since the respondents, who had not visited the country, had obtained much of their knowledge of the Faroe Islands during the interview sessions, it was, to a large degree, this information that was compared to the images and impressions from the film. For the most part, what was displayed, both explicit and implicit in the Summer film, was well received by the respondents. In Group 1, G noted how life there was depicted in a low, quiet tempo, how you could experience nature first hand, and how fishing seemed very important to the local population. MA noted that it displayed people being close to nature, and that it was spot on with displaying the animal life. In group two, the connection between the culture and nature was also noticed, and especially the connection to the sea was noted. P also highlighted the focus on exploring and the unknown.

On the connections between the cognitive and affective images and what the film shown and represented, all participants in both groups overall felt that the film hit all the right notes when it came to represent what they believe the Faroe Islands has to offer, although be it somewhat glamorized. Nature, culture, cuisine, and the opportunities to be active were the elements most recognised in the groups, and were seen almost universally as being positive aspects that raises the value of the brand. Especially those who had been there before agreed on the connections between what they had seen and experienced, and much of what was portrayed in the film. By some participants, it was also indirectly indicated that some of the things shown are unique to the Faroe Islands, thus partly confirming that the brand distinguishes the destination from potential competitors. One aspect was in both groups identified as being in contrast to the perceived image. The age of most of the people shown, both those who can be deemed as tourists, as well as local inhabitants, were deemed younger than what the groups thought as being representative for the country. This was not a factor that would discourage them from visiting, but was seen as a gap between perceived reality and the film.

5.8.6 Conclusions on destination image formation

Overall, it can be concluded that the destination image that in both focus groups, both the prior visitors of the Faroe Islands as well as those who have never visited, the overall cognitive and affective images they have of the destination are positive and largely correlates with their travel motivations and travel experience. The destination image was in this interview for the majority unfolded as the conversations went on, more information was given, and films regarding the grind and the brand were shown. Therefore, the focus groups in one way function as a reflection on how a destination image can be formed in real life. Potential tourists with limited knowledge got informed by tourists who had already visited and discussed the information. The films on the grind and on the brand and the information concerning the law presented by us, are representative of the information search that will typically occur once a destination is in the evoked destination set, and a vacation is being planned. Since the act of the grind was ultimately regarded as positive, it can be concluded that it did not have a negative effect on the affective image of the destination. Even though the grindalóg was regarded as negative, it was regarded as so insignificant on a larger scale, that it did not affect the affective image of the destination negatively. The overall link between the perceived destination image and the brand serves as a positive factor in countering the initial negative aspects of the law. A strong connection between both brand and image, as well as between the perceived image and the general and specific travel motivations of the tourists also here indicates that the Faroe Islands are considered a good destination

to travel to in the segment interviewed. The good connection between brand and perceived image was expected, since the brand is built upon the cognitive and affective images of previous tourists, based on information provided to us by Visit Faroe Islands. This also shows that the respondents function well as representatives of tourists who have either visited, or are within the target groups of the brand in some way.

Through the conversations, it was observed how the destination image formation is organic, changing with every piece of new information, images, and so on. Many factors are at play, and some of these were found and analysed in the conversations. While we recognise that group members influence each other, and that this can potentially alter the final results, it seemed as the opinions on the country, the brand, the grind, and the law were sincere and reflective of the information we were given by the tourism stakeholders on the target segments and the responses they have had of their destination image.

5.9 The decision-making process in relation to the grindalóg

The decision-making process does in this thesis partly serve as a preface to the conclusion, as the essential point throughout this section is to highlight the different factors that to a smaller or larger degree affect the tourists' destination decision. This decision builds upon all the considerations done on the destination, how it is perceived, if it correlates with the motivations for traveling, and how this is affected by potential negative factors, and can therefore be seen as a culmination of all of these preceding conclusions. The decision-making process is perhaps the most crucial step for tourist to make when choosing their travel destination. Essentially, this section seeks to identify the tourist's' final decision of whether or not to travel to the Faroe Islands. As it has been outlined in the connected theory section, the decision-making process is a by no means a straightforward process and involves many nuances that play into the process, where those relevant to this thesis have been identified in the previous analysis sections. In this relation, it is relevant to consider how tourists have arrived at their decision to choose a destination. In answering how different factors affect the decision-making process, it is relevant to look into some of the identifications that were made during the focus group sessions where participants had varying experiences in their travel habits.

5.9.1 Travel decisions that refutes the traditional decision-making process

In this relation, it is important to consider the travel behaviour of both those who have visited the destination and those who consider it in a hypothetical scenario. This first section focuses on the participants who had already visited the Faroe Islands prior to the interviews, both P, who visited before the implementation of the law, and ME and J, who visited when the law was in effect. It is relevant to examine these cases, as the decisions made here, did not follow the five phases presented in the theory section, and few to none of the aforementioned factors were present in the decision-making process. The notions and conclusions made here, are included in this analysis as they further emphasise the complexity of tourism behaviour and decisions, and so that the results from the more hypothetical decisions on travelling to the Faroe Islands should therefore take into account that other factors, which are harder to predict might be present.

J and ME travelled along with J's family as part of a family trip that J's parents had chosen. Therefore, J and ME's trip was much influenced by J's parents' decision-making process, which ultimately resulted in them travelling to the Faroe Islands. In this sense, J and ME's main reason for choosing Faroe Islands as a destination is first and foremost due to an external factor. Furthermore, it should be noted that both J and ME's travel motivations are quite relevant in this context because they both identified as tourists who prefer to travel with family, or at least other people, and this has arguably made their decision-making process relatively straightforward considering that the question they need to ask themselves is whether they wish to go or not. The decision to travel to the Faroe Islands was ultimately close connected to J's family's travel plans and this then became a significant pull factor for the couple. Similarly, P chose to visit because of a Faroese friend who accompanied him through the stay. As these participants are example of, family or friendly relations are in some cases decisive for a tourist's choice of destination.

The point emphasised in this section is that in the decision-making process there are many factors that are worth considering. This is not to say that the phases in the decision-making model are not present. Tourists still go through the first phase (need awareness) when they ask themselves whether they wish to travel or not. The second phase, search for information, is also present as tourists can search for information after having decided to travel to a destination. The third phase, which is the estimation of alternatives, is where the identified decision-making behaviour begins to deviate from the decision-making model since the consideration for alternatives was already made by others. Similarly, the purchase decision that traditionally would follow is already made initially in the

process. The point emphasized here, is that tourists have different reasons for wishing to travel to a particular destination and these reasons do not always follow the same pattern or phases that could be expected. Instead, the main factor becomes the social connection rather than cultural attributes associated with that destination.

5.9.2 The decision-making process in the hypothetical scenario

Contrary to the prior decisions of those who had actually visited, the decisions in the context of the interviews were based on the conversations and the information provided throughout the interviews. These decisions, and the processes that lead up to them, are largely based on all of the different factors that have been presented in the analysis, such as motives, crisis perception and destination image formation, as the questions regarding their decision of whether or not to travel to the Faroe Islands were taken after most of these aspects were discussed.

Building on the decision-making process model, the first step is the need awareness. Based on the conclusions made in the push/pull analysis, it is very clear that all participants in both groups had a great desire to travel, particularly due to the need for escapism, relaxation and novelty. In the decision-making process, the need awareness step is therefore easily visible, and a likely factor to trigger for all participants, which comes as no surprise as all chosen participants had showed some interest in travelling. In the next step, the search for information of where to travel, there are many interesting factors present. From the analysis of push/pull motives, as well as the travel experience analysis, it is clear that for all participants, there are many clear connections between their push motives for travelling and the cognitive and affective image they had of the Faroe Islands prior to seeing the brand video. The nature and cultural aspects are here perhaps the strongest connection between motivations and perceived image of the destination, while some individual motivations such as self-enhancement through activities and new-life perspectives from visiting other cultures and trying new things also were connected with the destination. In the context of the decision-making process, this means that the Faroe Islands was within the evoked destination set, as everyone could see it as a destination they would actually consider visiting, and therefore it would be among the destinations of which they would search for information. The only exception here is P, where his desire to visit a destination with warm weather and relatively low prices is very much in contrast to the Faroe Islands as a vacation destination. To him, the Faroe Islands can, prior to his visit, arguably be seen as being in the inert set, as he was aware of it, but has neither negative or positive emotions towards the destination yet. As mentioned, his reasons for actually visiting are attributed to factors that are not taken into account in

the theory included in this thesis. It is likely at the information searching stage, that potential negative aspects would be found by the tourists. Here, they can get informed on the law and take it into account in their estimation of alternatives. However, for this to have genuine influence, the participants' negative perception of the grindalóg would have to affect their willingness to travel to the destination. It was estimated, before conducting the focus groups, that negative perceptions could play into participants' ultimate willingness to travel to the Faroe Islands, but was, however, concluded that the law would not remove the Faroe Islands from the evoked set of destinations to anyone in either group. Due to the nature of this thesis, the problem formulation, and the hypothesis made, we decided to eliminate the following step in the decision-making process, the search for alternatives, as it was more relevant to us to examine how the participants would react if they had already decided upon the Faroe Islands as the destination they wanted to visit, and because the law was not reason enough to remove the Faroe Islands as an evoked destination to anyone. Therefore, alternatives to the Faroe Islands were not discussed.

As identified in participants' push/pull motivations, it is clear that the motivations for travelling are much more important and far outweighs the potential risks that, in this case, are associated with travelling. It was also clear that travel experience and the motivations associated with experience had a role to play in evaluating risks against the fulfilment of the motivations for travelling, and that these motivations could be directly asserted with natural and cultural aspects identified as being present in the Faroe Islands. The conclusions made about crisis perception are amongst the most important to why the final decisions is not affected by the grindalóg. Since all participants see the practice itself as being ethically sound and responsible, and seeing the law as not being severe, hard to enforce in practice, and easy to avoid, it is clear that this has little to no effect on the decisions once they have been made. Even before the decision is made, we also know that the grindalóg does not affect the destination image severely enough, that it is seen as an inept destination. Correlation between the cognitive and affective images of the Faroe Islands and the brand presented to the participants were clear, and in varying degrees in correlation with a number of motivations for all respondents. This indicates that they saw the Faroe Islands as being an attractive destination, leading back to it being in their evoked destination set. It was clear that although the law was perceived as negative, and as an internally inflicted unethical decision (and thus affecting the perceived tourism destination image through autonomous agents), it did not alter the perceived destination image enough that it would change the ultimate decision.

After all of these factors have been considered, and the final decision has been made to visit the Faroe Islands, there is one phase left of the decision-making process, which can possibly be attributed to why a crisis situation was largely avoided. In the last phase, feedback after purchasing, we did identify some potential negative aspects of the law that could possibly have influenced future decisions. As mentioned in the crisis perception section, some respondents stated that had they been arrested or fined as a consequence of the law, they would not come back, and would not recommend the destination to others. These opinions are likely reflective of the majority of tourists who would visit the destination, and are therefore reflective of the tourists who have actually visited the Faroe Islands while this law was in effect. Since not a single tourist has been arrested or prosecuted on the basis of this law, no tourists have spread negative word of mouth of the Faroe Islands on accounts of being arrested or prosecuted. This can possibly be one of the reasons for why none of the respondents knew about the law before participating in the interviews.

5.9.3 Concluding remarks on decision-making process and the grindalóg

The results of the decision-making process here are almost entirely hypothetical, as ME was the only one who directly expressed plans to visit the Faroe Islands again in the future. As the analysis has shown throughout, many aspects besides those presented in this thesis, are at play when a travel decision is to be made. Therefore, it can not be completely proven that the law would not have a negative effect in the decision-making process. Possible influence from other group members might have influenced certain answers in the direction individuals in the group were taking the conversations. Furthermore, since the decision-making process does not always follow these five phases, as it was seen with P, ME, and J in their previous travels to the Faroe Islands, it cannot be concluded that actual decisions on travelling to the Faroe Islands would not be taken differently. It is possible that travellers who deem the law a risk not worth taking, would travel anyway if the decision was made with or by other family members, friends or spouses.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this thesis has been to answer why a tourism crisis was averted in the Faroe Islands, after the implementation of the whaling law that could potentially affect visiting tourists. By focusing on the target tourism segment of the country, through a number of theories. Each theory was included to shed light on different aspects of the tourists, and analyse how they each contribute to understanding their decisions in travelling to the Faroe Islands. It was also the objective that each theory would add elements useful in the next, as these theories are based upon similar aspects.

Using focus group interviews with groups of potential and prior visitors within the Faroe Islands characterises the results in this thesis, and proved to have many advantages. The groups were chosen specifically from a demographic similar to that which is currently seen in the Faroe Islands, as it was the thoughts and decisions from these types of tourists that was deemed most relevant to examine. The conversations in both groups reflected the real interaction, discussions, negotiations and sharing of information that would possibly occur in a real life scenario, where the Faroe Islands would be discussed as a vacation destination. This reflection of a real life scenario makes the results valid, as they can be utilised to make assumptions of how groups of tourists would react when considering a vacation to the Faroe Islands in 2015 when the grindalóg was implemented. Since this method of data collecting is within the constructivist methodological approach, the results can only function as assumptions, since the truths negotiated within the groups can only really be seen as truths in that particular context, and is therefore not necessarily representative of each real life negotiation that took place with tourists in this period. In a focus group, not all results could be anticipated, and not all conclusions on why they travel to a particular destination could be explained. This is due to the fact that some choices are made on less predictable foundations, such as the reasons why some focus group members had visited the Faroe Islands. This signifies the constructivist approach, where there are no absolute truths, but that these are continuously negotiated. Ultimately, the focus group method provided a rich array of detailed data on each participant, that would not be found in such detail through a positivist approach of data collection.

Through the focus group interviews, it was discovered that when each theory was applied to their answers, discussions, conversations and the general negotiation that took place, the theories could confirm previous assumptions and hypothesis.

Analysing push/pull motives added to the general understanding of why the participants wanted to travel, and showed that each individual in varying degrees had motives that can be connected to the Faroe Islands. While not a determining factor, it can be concluded that the connection added to the attractiveness of the Faroe Islands as a vacation destination. These motives also proved to serve as a foundation of several of the other analysis sections.

Building upon the push/pull motivations, the analysis of how travel experience influences the willingness to take risks when travelling proved that the groups consisted of individuals with different levels of experience. As expected, the most experienced did not consider the grindalóg a significant risk, but contrary to the hypothesis, neither did the less experienced. This indicates that while travel experience did have some significance to the willingness to take risks, other factors outweigh its significance in this particular case, with these particular groups.

Among the theories that proved to have the highest significance in understanding how a crisis was avoided, was the crisis perception theory. It proved that despite the participants saw the crisis as being internally inflicted, which according to the theory would add to the severity of the crisis, the law was deemed so unrealistic to enforce and unlikely to be targeted on them as tourists, that they did see it as being a severe risk. This in turn leads to them coping with the knowledge of the law by avoiding it and practically ignoring its existence. This same strategy can be assumed to have been used by tourists “in real life” who have directly played into the averted tourism crisis, given that they were familiar with the grindalóg. This strategy has a resemblance to that of the tourism stakeholders which even further downplays the negative effects that potentially could have occurred.

The destination image formation was build on the tourist perceptions of the destination, and showed that a very positive image was formed of the Faroe Islands, based on prior perceptions and knowledge of the destination, combined with the knowledge that was obtained by the individual tourist during the conversations and discussions, as well as with the information provided by us. It could be concluded that the grindalóg, despite being seen as internally inflicted and negative, did not alter the overall positive image of the destination. Therefore, the destination image is deemed a very important factor in why a crisis was absent.

Finally, the decision-making process theory showed that all of the previous perceptions of the destination, the types of tourists and their experience, their view on the grindalóg, and the final destination image in their perceptions came together. The process reflected that each tourist took many factors into account, but ultimately the law and the grind would not change their final decision to travel to the Faroe Islands, had they already chosen to do so. Nor did the law remove the Faroe

Islands from the evoked set of destinations, from those who had the Faroe Islands in this category of destinations.

Overall, it can be concluded that each theory has provided insights into why a crisis was avoided, but combined they provide a much more comprehensive picture. Some theories did prove to provide more insight and clearer answers to the problem formulation than others ultimately did. By using these theories in combination with one another, it proves that the individual tourist is complex, and that the truths about why they perceived the destination as they did, and their ultimate decisions on travelling, were constructed based on their negotiation of individual perspectives, opinions, experience, and so on. The overall conclusion is therefore, that based on these focus groups, a crisis was avoided since several aspects on what a tourist from within the target group of the Faroe Islands does, thinks, and negotiates within a group setting, links so many positive aspects with the Faroe Islands as a vacation destination, that they far outweigh a law that the tourists deem insignificant, and a risk they see as less severe and easily avoidable.

The analysis and conclusions made in this thesis can add to the understanding of how future potential crisis might play out. It has provided an insight into a tourist perception of the Faroe Islands in connection to a controversial incident which is not only unexplored in relation to the particular case, but also relatively unconventional approach to tourism crisis research. The results found in this process can be valuable for local stakeholders who wish to obtain an insight into how tourist might perceive and consequently react to unethical destinations incidents, rather than merely focusing on crisis management. The view on negative incidents at tourism destinations has traditionally been treated with a focus on tourism crisis management approach where internal factors have been highlighted as the main focus of attention. It has been understood here that the focus on internal destination affairs is insufficient when it comes to investigating the reason for an unpredicted development and. In this relation, whereas crisis management seeks to answer the question “what can be done?”, the look on tourist motivation and perception of the given destination incident has presented an answer to why it developed the way it did. So, how can the presented findings be applied and utilised at tourism destinations in the most useful way? The answer to this question lies in the focus of tourists’ reactions towards a specific destination incident. Tourism operators as well as tourism planners can benefit of knowing their customer's’ sensitivity towards potentially damaging incidents, and how they perceive their destination. As this particular case has identified, customers

have proven to be not as sensitive towards the incident in question. Whether such a development would have played out similarly in a different location, with a different triggering event, or with a different segment of tourists, can only be speculated upon without further research. However, as outlined in this case, tourism operators have arguably acted correctly in their handling of the challenges they faced in this particular case, even though they ultimately were not responsible for the challenges associated with the grindalóg.

6.1 Further Research

Further research into tourism crisis with a focus on the tourists themselves could help establish a broader picture of how tourists react to a crisis incident. By examining other crisis scenarios, where one or more factors are different than it was the case in this thesis, could add to this.

Analysing different segments, a different triggering event, both internally and externally imposed, and different vacation destinations could add to the overall understanding of how tourists react, and thus how the relevant stakeholders should manage the crisis. Further, in the particular case of the Faroe Islands and the grindalóg, it would be relevant to examine in detail how the crisis management was handled in the different tourist organisations and on a national level, and compare and contrast the results to the findings in this thesis, in order to create a fuller picture of how a crisis was averted. It could in this context also be relevant to examine the cruise ship tourists in full, in order to establish how the crisis management could be targeted towards solving the problems that rose with the cancellations of the cruise ships. Overall, analysing crisis through the tourists, seems to give a very comprehensive picture of what factors are at play. Therefore, further analysis from this perspective can possibly provide much new and interesting knowledge to tourism studies.

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