Strategic Website Based Communication Choices by Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland and their Influence on Danish Consumers

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Number of Keystrokes: 334,411

May 31, 2014

Master's degree in Tourism

Aalborg University

Acknowledgement

We would, first and foremost, like to thank and give a few special acknowledgments to:

Abstract

The aim with this research paper is to discover and explore how Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland have decided to represent themselves within their websites by looking at the visual, rhetorical and storytelling communication tools applied by the two organizations. After having analyzed the above mentioned tools within the website, interviews with potential Danish consumers are carried out and their views on the effects the tools have on them are analyzed.

To analyze the 'storytelling' and 'rhetorical' communication tools, Fog et al. (2004)'s four key elements of storytelling and adapted work on Aristotle's means of persuasion appeals where used. In terms of the visuals, Pennington et al. (2010)'s adapted version of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic model was used.

With both analyses in hand, the conclusions reached are summarized by the following: Visit Greenland's website appeared to use the various communication tools, discussed above, in a way which attempted to appeal towards consumers by impacting on their emotions. The interviewees stated that they are attracted by the website and that it indeed has an impact on their emotions which makes the website more memorable. Visit Iceland's old website used limited visuals and presented the information in an informative way which left consumers feeling uninspired and 'bored' of the website. Visit Iceland's new website introduced more visuals and emotionally appealing text, however it still does not reach the same level of Visit Greenland's website. The interviewees expressed positive sentiments towards the changes, saying that the website was an improvement when compared to the old Visit Iceland website.

The implications of the above can be argued to be, that destination marketing organizations should take into careful consideration their website's communication strategy and their consumers' needs and wants. Furthermore websites which attempt to appeal towards consumers' emotions seem to provide various benefits which could help increase a destinations overall competitiveness.

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For the sake of getting formalities accounted for prior to the project getting underway, we want to mention that in order to avoid repeatedly calling ourselves, "the authors of the project", we refer to ourselves by the personal pronouns of "we" and "our" throughout the project.

Chapter 1 Introduction

By 1960s Christaller (1964, in Müller et al., 2007) introduced the concept of 'peripheries' when referring to areas where Europeans were travelling for their holiday. Greenland (Müller et al., 2007) and Iceland (Aarsæther, 2004) can be regarded as what Christaller (1964, in Müller et al., 2007) calls 'peripheral' country, namely Nordic peripheries, due to several reasons. One of the reasons is Greenland's and Iceland's remote location, being situated in the North Atlantic which makes it isolated from both Europe and North America. Both nations are part of the Northern Periphery Programme, which *"aims to help peripheral and remote margins of Europe to develop their economic, social and environmental potential"* (Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013, 2007).

Greenland's status as a periphery is also due to the cold climate, which makes the living conditions harsh and constrains the infrastructure since 85% of the land is covered by the inland ice (Müller et al., 2007). In addition, from a tourism and economic perspective, Greenland can be further considered peripheral due to its tourism image seen as being a remote and unexplored Artic wilderness. Also, the high prices and difficult access strengthen this concept seeing that the actual tourism visitation is limited by these factors (Müller et al., 2007). On the contrast, according to Müller (et al., 2007), peripheries are sometimes regarded as exquisite areas.

Iceland also shares the characteristics of having a cold climate, and in addition to this, Sæþórsdóttir (2010) states that *"until now, Icelandic nature destinations have been characterized mainly by very limited infrastructure and little commercialization and can be considered underdeveloped with regard to recreation and tourism"* (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010). The previously mentioned are indicative of the fact that Iceland is a periphery nation. It is interesting to note that the Icelandic wilderness is under the protection of the Icelandic law, which is *"supposed to provide a primitive experience without constructions or motorized traffic as well as opportunities of finding solitude"* (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010). These facts further strengthen the idea that when it comes to the wilderness Iceland has limitations in terms of the infrastructure, which is one of the attributes of a peripheral country.

Despite the difficulties experienced in Greenland and Iceland, with regards to infrastructure and harsh living conditions, Greenland's and Iceland's tourism industry has undergone change and development over the past few years and is now regarded as a source of economic growth, employment and welfare (Hall & Jenkins, 1998 in Müller et al., 2007; Sæþórsdóttir, 2010).

In order to attract tourists, these areas are making use of the pristine nature offerings, which appeal to tourists from central areas, due to the experiences and emotions these peripheral locations, can offer (Müller et al., 2007).

Greenland's decision to start focusing on tourism was taken due to the fact that the income generated by the fishing industry started to decline. This idea is underlined by Müller (et al., 2007) who notes that within the peripheries, tourism development is considered mainly due to some emerging marginality problems in terms of a decline in fishing, agriculture and forestry industry. As a consequence of the previously mentioned, tourism, minerals and oil became the core assets of Greenland which were taken advantage of, in order to balance the loss from other industries, as seen above. In regard to Iceland, the Icelandic government aimed to strengthen the tourism industry and make it one of the main economic sectors (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010).

In addition, Müller et al. (2007) states that *"ideas and stories of frontier, pioneer life and adventures in the great outdoors have certainly contributed to the mystique of peripheries and their inhabitants"* (Müller et al., 2007). In other words, the perceptual images of peripheries, containing ideas and stories about the pioneer life and outdoor adventures, kept a shade of novelty and interest for these areas.

The lack of resources and access to major marketing channels, has lead peripheries to regarding the Internet as the most appropriate solution to the posed issue. As a consequence, they began using Internet as a marketing tool (Müller et al., 2007).

One important aspect of the use of the Internet to market yourself is the use of effective image communications nationally and internationally (Anholt, 2003; Ries and Trout, 2001 in Gudlaugsson et. al, 2008). *"The destination's image influences both potential tourists' decision making behavior"* (Jenkins, 1999 in Gudlaugsson et.al, 2008) *"and the satisfaction level tourists experience at the destination"* (Chon, 1990 in Gudlaugsson et.al, 2008).

Moreover, the importance of images is that it affects the selection process within potential visitors' minds (Hunt, 1975 in Gudlaugsson, et.al, 2008). It is common for destinations to compete with each other based only on the images within the visitors' minds. This has led to tourism marketer's spending money, time and effort in trying to gain a competitive advantage in the form of a favorable image (Calantone et.al, 1989; Gartner, 1993 in Gudlaugsson, et.al, 2008). In order to do this, it is

important for the destination marketers and developers to understand tourist images of both their destinations and competing destinations (Baloglu et. al, 1999 in Gudlaugsson, et.al, 2008).

Further on, early advocates such as Pine and Gilmore (1998 in Hudson, 2009), and Schmitt (1999 in Hudson, 2009) suggested that unique and unforgettable experiences are crucial elements to destination competitiveness. In addition, in a competitive market place, destinations need to differentiate themselves and what better strategy to do so than appealing to consumers' emotions and ideal of having a pleasant experience (Williams, 2006 in Hudson, 2009).

The above brings us to the focus of this study, which consists of Visit Greenland's and Visit Iceland's websites. Interest in this topic lies within the fact that: *"the Internet, as no other communication medium, has added a "Globalized" dimension to the world"* (Internet World Stats, 2014). It is now possible to access just about any website from anywhere in the world. This has meant that *"almost any business can reach a very large market, directly, fast and economically, no matter the size or location of the business"* (Internet World Stats, 2014). As a consequence, peripheral nations such as Greenland and Iceland can now reach out to consumers in a manner which no other communication medium has allowed previously. Considering the attractions that these nations have, the Internet provides a convenient way for these nations to create certain representations of their countries through the usage of various communication tools, which include textual and visual media in the form of websites.

This project's aim is to find out which strategic communication choices are applied by Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland's websites, in their attempt to attract consumer's attention to their destination. Also since: *"Internet is increasingly being used as a platform to launch destination brands"* (Hudson, 2009), we would be looking at how websites apply communication tools within their sites and if these strategic tools have the wanted result.

This paper's focus is not to find out why the different nations have decided to promote their countries the way they have. Rather we attempt to discuss the various approaches and tools used within the websites and to find out through interviews with consumers which of the approaches and tools have the greatest influence on them and their decision making process. While we understand that a country may very well have complex and interesting reasons for creating the website the way they have, which stem from the country's history, politics, and culture among other things, within this paper we do not intend to explain in much depth those reasons.

Our goal lies primarily in finding out which 'communication tools' are used within the two sites and which had the most influence on the consumers. In this way we aim to be able to share with the tourism industry the 'communication tools' which consumers refer to, that have the greatest positive effect on them.

In terms of visuals, we looked at Peirce's semiotic model of representation and, in terms of the 'Communications' we discussed the rhetoric persuasion techniques and the storytelling elements found within the two chosen websites.

Furthermore, we believe that the present research would be relevant for the websites in questions, due to the fact that this study will analyze each website and it will show how different communication tools are used, and the extent to which these tools are used. Consumers' perceptions of the two websites will be regarded as well in order to see how the applied tools influence consumers' decisions. This could benefit the websites by providing them insight into the effects the various communication tools they use have on the website per se and the consumers they wish to attract.

To help us gather all the needed data in regards to the above mentioned aspects, we conducted 10 semi-structured interviews with a select group of individuals, who can contribute with knowledge, in order to get a more complete understanding of the process undertaken where all the involved parties will express their reasoning, opinions and ways of seeing the researched subject. The interviewees selected for the data collection are as follows:

- 1 interview with Franz Berliner- the web designer of Visit Greenland's website
- 1 interview with Ella Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing at Visit Greenland
- 1 interview with Sveinn Björnsson- Editor of Visit Iceland's new website
- 5 interviews with Danish individuals, based on Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website
- 2 interviews with Danish individuals, based on Visit Greenland's and the new Visit Iceland website
- 5 follow up interviews with Danish individuals (the same individuals who participated in our interviews based on Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website), based on Visit Iceland's new website

As seen above, five follow up interviews needed to be added, due to the fact that Visit Iceland's website changed in the middle of our data collection and we wanted to see how our interviewees regarded the changes and the new website per se.

A deeper discussion regarding the reasons for choosing these specific interviewees can be found within our Methodology part.

Before stating our research questions, we would like to introduce the reader to a few key concepts, in order to make sure that both the reader and researchers are as close to the same line of thought when regarding the posed researched questions for this study.

First, when referring to *strategic communication choices*, we mean the actual tools used by the two websites in their promotion of Greenland and Iceland as destinations, and also the means by which the websites are trying to attract consumers and invite them to visit Greenland. By *tools* we refer to the visuals, the rhetoric used within the text and storytelling techniques. For the sake of continuity we will refer to the rhetoric and storytelling as communications.

Second, the word *implications,* refers to the positive/ negative outcomes of using the chosen tools within the two websites. Further on, the word *effects,* highlights the concrete benefits/detriments that the usage of these tools have on both, the two websites per se and the consumers. Moreover, by *potential consumers* we imply a strict focus on the following group: Danish individuals. By *market communication* we refer to certain existing theories that help communicate the desired message to the audience. Such theories include: the communication triangle, brand identity, brand narrative and semiotics. In terms of the *decision making process*, we refer to whether or not the websites had any influence on their decision to consider both countries as possible travel destinations.

With the above in mind, our research questions can be found below.

1.1. Research questions

1.   Based on the concepts of market communication, what strategic communication choices do the websites, Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland, apply and what are the implications of using such strategic choices?

1.1.   What effects do these strategic choices have for both the website per se and potential consumers' perceptions of the website and decision making process with regards to making the decision to visit Greenland/Iceland?

Chapter 2 Methodology

2.1. The Choice of Research Area and Terminology

The goal of this study is to look at websites and gain a better understanding regarding the used communication choices and the actual tools that are selected and applied within websites in their attempt to appeal to consumers. An essential motivation in choosing this subject is related to the fact that we would like to see how the chosen tools affect consumers, namely consumers' decision making processes to visit a destination. The previously mentioned is strengthened by the following statements, portrayed by academics, which show that consumers, specifically their decisions in terms to travel to a certain destination, can be influenced, as seen below:

- Visual identity increased in importance (Schmitt, 1999 in Hunter, 2009) *since "images in potential visitors' minds affect the selection process and the destination's overall viability"* (Hunt, 1975 in Gudlaugsson et.al, 2008).
- *"Internationally, destinations often only compete based on the images in potential visitors' minds"* (Gudlaugsson et.al, 2008).
- The Internet users increased, as based on ITU data, *"there are an estimated 2,749 million Internet users in March, 2013"* (Internet World Stats, 2013)
- *"Internet is increasingly being used as a platform to launch destination brands."* (Hudson et.al, 2009)

The initial phase of this study was based on our pre-understandings of this topic, which according to Gadamer (in Outhwaite, 1985) is useful in the process of understanding of the subject matter.

As we advanced, in order to have a clear focus and to narrow down our study, we have decided to specifically look into two websites which have as main goal the official promotion of two destinations, namely the websites of two destination marketing organizations (DMOs): Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland.

The reason behind the decision to focus on two DMO's websites lies within the fact that we wanted to have a balance and to look at two websites which serve the same aim, namely to attract tourists. Also, we have chosen the destinations Greenland and Iceland, due to the fact that these destinations offer similar products (such as the northern lights, whale watching and nature), yet each having its own individual and unique attractions/activities. At the same time, we wanted the destinations to be slightly on the same line in terms of the destination's features and products/services. With this we

mean to say that if we had chosen two highly distinct destinations, which possess different features and offer totally different products/services, the way we and our interviewees would have regarded the two destinations would have probably been on the basis of what we/they found appealing in terms of the offered experiences, rather than strictly focusing on the actual communication tools the websites used to appeal and convey a certain message to consumers.

2.2. Philosophy of Science

We consider Philosophy of Science an essential part within a study as this part gives the researcher the opportunity to explain to the readers the way the study is conducted and the motivations regarding the way the study was written in terms of the researcher's paradigm.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) define the concept of Paradigm as *"the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways"* (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:105).

We incline towards the concepts sustained by the constructivism paradigm, seeing that the constructivist paradigm *"asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision"* (Bryman, 2012:33).

The basic beliefs of the constructivist paradigm can be summarized within the answers of three fundamental questions, which are interconnected and influence each other (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108). These questions are:

- *"Ontological: What is the nature of the "Knowable"? Or, what is the nature of "reality"?*
- *Epistemological: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or Knowable)?*
- *Methodological: How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?"* (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:108).

Ontology within this study refers to the way the researchers see reality (Krauss, 2005:758). Regarding the ontology, we take a relativist stance, since we believe that reality is constructed from a set of multiple unique mental constructions which cannot reach an ultimate truth, as reality is dependent of each person holding their own constructions (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:110; Krauss,

2005:760). In other words, each individual can perceive reality differently, since individuals have diverse backgrounds, knowledge, experiences and ways of seeing the world, which influences their constructions. An example of this was found within our data collection, namely in terms of Visit Iceland's new website's focus, where interviewee 2 observed: *"there is a more focus on the activities"*, interviewee 3: *"the message that the site tries to convey is the idea of 'inspiredbyiceland'"*, interviewee 5: *"I noticed the concepts of 'inspiredbyiceland' and Iceland's 'secrets'"*. These quotes show that individuals see things differently, due to the fact that they filter what they regard through their own constructions, experiences, perceptions and interests.

Epistemology refers to the way in which the researchers come to know reality (Krauss, 2005:759). Epistemology is approached from a subjectivist perspective due to the fact that we consider that by being subjective, individuals' constructions are unlocked (Guba, 1990:26) allowing the investigator and the object of investigation to interactively connect in the process of knowledge gathering (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:111). The end result of the previously mentioned would be a fusion between the researchers' constructions and the constructions held by the subjects of investigation together with the constructions perceived from the academic material found (Krauss, 2005:759). Consequently, it is apparent that the conclusion of the study is influenced by both parties, the researchers' and the respondents' understandings, beliefs and perceptions.

Methodology represents the methods applied by the researchers in order to achieve the desired knowledge regarding the reality (Krauss, 2005:759). As for the methodological question, the researchers will be looking at two aspects. First, the *hermeneutic*, where the researchers (we) try to interpret and depict the various multiple existing constructions as accurately as possible, in order to compare and contrast afterwards these constructions through the usage of a *dialectical* interchange, which represents the second aspect regarded within this method (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:111). The purpose of this method is to reach a common sense and to achieve a more comprehensible construction, by bringing all these multiple diverse constructions into as much consensus as possible (Guba, 1990:26).

2.2.1. Hermeneutic Circle

The concept of understanding is central to the work of the German hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (Outhwaite, 1985). We decided to incorporate Gadamer's (2004) concept within this study in order to get a more complete understanding of the subject matter.

Gadamer regards *understanding* as a holistic process, which functions within a hermeneutic circle, where we move back and forth between the academic material and the researcher's whole understanding of the academic material and of the subject's matter, in order to achieve a more complete understanding of the topic at hand. In other words, it can be said that the researchers undertake a continual circular movement back and forth between the researchers' understandings/constructions and academic sources (Gadamer in Outhwaite, 1985:23).

According to Gadamer, before we reach a complete understanding, we first face a pre-understanding, where the preconceptions the researchers have, make interpretation and understanding possible (Gadamer in Outhwaite, 1985:24).

In addition, Gadamer states that understanding is merging the researchers' constructions of the world with the constructions of the ones who wrote the academic material (Gadamer in Outhwaite, 1985:25). This assertion is similar to what Guba and Lincoln (1994) noted as could be seen above.

In order to reach a more profound understanding of the academic material, the researchers have to be open-minded, since the researchers have to project themselves into the place of the authors who have written the academic material chosen to be used for the interpreter's research (Gadamer in Outhwaite, 1985:25). Moreover, the interpreter has to *"project before himself a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text"* (Gadamer, 2004). This 'meaning' is regarded by the researchers from their own perspectives which is influenced by their personal beliefs, values and culture (Outhwaite, 1985). In other words, the 'meaning' is based on our personal interpretations of the material.

2.2.2. Double Hermeneutic Circle

Going further, the concept of double – hermeneutics was introduced by Giddens (Outhwaite, 1985), which at its most is similar with the single hermeneutic circle, adding however another dimension to the concept, namely an inner circle. The inner circle enhances the process of understanding through the addition of the interviewees and other involved actors within the investigation (Mills et al., 2009). Their constructions are as equally important to be understood as the academic sources are, since it adds an extra perspective within the study. The idea is that in order to reach a fuller understanding of the subject matter, the researchers constantly moves back and forth between the academic material, the interviewees' constructions and their own constructions (Mills et al., 2009).

The above is similar with what Guba (1990) mentioned in terms of individuals' constructions, namely within the approach taken regarding the methodological question discussed earlier. Initially the researcher attempts to depict individuals' constructions as accurately as possible, so that afterwards these constructions can be compared and contrasted in order to reach a consensus (Guba, 1990). Further, Guba (1990) noted that researchers should not try to change individuals' ways of seeing the world, but the researchers should try to describe to their respondents, their own constructions which would indirectly influence the respondents' constructions (Guba, 1990:27). When collecting our data, we did not try to impose our constructions to the interviewees, but rather suggest and guide them through the questions we posed within the interviews.

An example to better emphasize and conceptualize the earlier mentioned will be presented in terms of the knowledge generation process undertaken within this study, where the double hermeneutic circle was encountered. In the present case, the knowledge gathering process encompassed two stages. The first stage is represented by the actual interview, where the constructions of the researchers merged with the constructions of the interviewees during the active participation of data collection. The second stage is comprised of the interaction between the resulting merged construction (from the first stage) together with the researchers' understandings and constructions of the academic material and texts used. The previously mentioned clearly shows that we continually circulate between the interviewees' answers and the used academic material (Mills et al., 2009), which will help us to reach a more complete understanding.

With the above in mind, we can move further to the ideas sustained by Phillips (1995) regarding the constructivist paradigm, which have as focus certain critiques, addressed below:

- Constructivists are relativists, as could be seen earlier. This revolves around the idea that the academic material found cannot be used by other authors under other constructions, since that specific material is valid only within the context and constructions of the author that has written it. In addition, the material might have been written with another context in mind, the author even sustaining the concepts of another paradigm (Phillips, 1995). Nevertheless, having acknowledged the above, we will use the found academic material in order to have a basis for the present study and to be able to write our analysis.

The concept of self-refutation basically refers to the fact that 'everyone is right and no one is wrong' (Phillips, 1995). In other words, a discussed subject is valid only within that particular construction. As discussed earlier, each individual is different, having diverse constructions being based on their perceptions, experiences, understandings, and ways of seeing the world. This in turn leads to individuals perceiving the same subject differently. As a consequence, within the context of this study, what might be a successful tool used by a website to attract consumers for one interviewee, could be totally disregarded and even not noticed by another interviewee, and vice versa. An example is that of interviewee's 4 case, who did not notice any story being told within Visit Greenland's website when reviewing the website, while several of the other interviewees noticed a certain story being told and even feeling a part of it. Also, in terms of the used visuals within Visit Greenland's website, interviewee 4 said that *"Greenland in terms of visuals is flashy due to the bright colours which stand out a lot and it looks like ads"* (Interviewee 4- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

- , whereas the other interviewees had only appreciative comments regarding the visuals. Having acknowledged the above, we are attempting to see how our interviewees react and interpret the tools used by the chosen websites, in the sites effort to appeal towards consumers.

2.3. Research Strategy and Method

In the beginning of this study, we had a general level of pre-understanding about the chosen topic, which evolved once the research advanced. The pre-understandings formed in terms of certain strategic communication tools, and the way websites make use of these tools in order to attract consumers, were limited. A part of our interviewees, namely the Danish consumers were in the same situation as us, since they had no prior knowledge about websites' choices in regards to different strategic communication tools or any tools as such. Prior knowledge in terms of the two chosen destinations is not relevant within this study, as we are strictly focusing on the way Danish consumers regard the usage of certain tools within the destinations' websites.

However, three of the chosen interviewees, namely the website designer and the senior consultant of Visit Greenland, and the website editor of Visit Iceland, have prior knowledge about the subject matter, in terms of certain communication tools used to appeal consumers which they have applied within their websites. It should be further mentioned and clarified that these three interviewees have

prior knowledge about Greenland and Iceland, due to their direct involvement within the process of marketing these two destinations, respectively website development and design.

In regards to the senior consultant of Visit Greenland and the website editor of Visit Iceland, it can be said that they were the ones who had the richest prior knowledge from all the interviewees, due to the fact that, they helped created the whole concept of branding Greenland/Iceland. They are the ones who have chosen the diverse strategic communication tools, in order to transmit to the audience the desired message about the destinations Greenland and Iceland. Yet, both websites have different web designers and web developers, which means that the sites are different, being visible when reviewing the two websites too, and in the same time, both websites are competing in one way or another with each other in their attempt to attract tourists to visit Greenland over Iceland and vice versa.

We regard the above mentioned as being beneficial for this study, as we will get direct insight from the ones who created these websites and we will get a closer understanding in terms of the whole concept and decisions behind the strategic communication tools chosen/applied. This would bring relevant information that can be analyzed and compared afterwards with Danish consumers' perceptions in terms of the applied strategic communication tools. By doing so, we will find out how these individuals regard the websites as a whole, and especially the communication tools chosen to convey the wanted messages.

Furthermore, the chosen interviewees for this study are interviewees who had and still have contact with the Internet. It is essential for the purpose of this research to know how to navigate the Internet and use a website, since the theme is in connection with websites and the interviewee's stance towards the effects that the tools used by websites in order to convey certain messages to the audience, have upon consumers' decisions to travel to the promoted destinations. However, it has to be mentioned that the experience within the cyberspace does not have to be very high, but enough to allow users to get around and be familiar with the Internet and website's usage. On the contrast, if we would have chosen interviewees who have not used the Internet, we would not have been able to collect the needed data, as the given answers would not have a proper base.

When researching the topic at hand, we observed that the perspective taken within this study, namely specific strategic communication tools used by websites in their attempt to attract

consumers to travel to a destination, has not been discussed before. As a consequence, we decided to apply the following **research strategy:**

- o Look at the available material in terms of market communication, specifically at different strategic communication tools and choose the most adequate for the website's analysis.
- o Make an analysis of the two chosen websites -Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland- in order to identify the applied communication tools, and the ways the two websites make use of these tools in order to attract tourists.
- o Collect first hand data in order to get different perspectives upon the researched subject, so as a deeper understanding about the used communication tools within websites could be reached. In addition, first hand data was used to find out Danish consumers' perceptions in terms of the effects the usage of these tools might have upon their decision making process to travel to Greenland/Iceland and also the benefits the usage of these tools have upon the website per se.

  We would like to specify that prior to the actual interview; our interviewees (Danish consumers) will be introduced to our topic and will be given one day to individually navigate through the analyzed websites, namely www.greenland.com and www.visiticeland.com. The following day, the actual interview will be held. The reason behind this decision lies within the fact that we consider that the interviewees need time to get familiar with the websites, in order to get an idea and form an opinion about the researched topic and what the two sites focus on and offer, so as we would be able to collect relevant data. However, for Visit Greenland's website designer and senior consultant within e-marketing, and the editor of Visit Iceland's website, this strategy would not be applied due to the fact that we consider them directly implied and familiar with the subject matter.

According to Kvale (1996) within the interview process, knowledge is created through the exchange of views between the researcher and the interviewee. This assertion strengthens the constructivist approach of this study, which was earlier discussed within the Methodology Chapter 2 by using authors such as Guba (1990) and Giddens (nd) which empathized the above mentioned concept.

Before we conducted the interviews, we considered and clearly decided for three key aspects, which are of help in order to achieve the needed result through the usage of interviews (Kvale, 1996), namely:

What? – We investigated the subject matter in order to get a pre-understanding of it.

Why? – We established a clear and focused aim of the interview (what we desire to find out by conducting the interviews).

How? – We consulted diverse academic materials referring to interviewing methods, from which we decided on the most appropriate to use for this study.

With the above in mind, we moved forward to the chosen **method of data collection** as seen below:

Our method of data collection was through the use of interviews. The questions prepared for our interviewees are linked to the purpose of this study: to see what strategic communication choices - Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland- have made, how do they make use of these choices, and what are Danish consumers' perceptions about the effects these tools might have on their decisions to travel to Greenland/Iceland and the benefits the tools have on the website per se.

However, as seen above, individuals having diverse or no background knowledge about the researched topic which will be interviewed. As a consequence, the interview questions will be slightly different for the website designer, senior consultant, website's editor and Danish consumers, so as we will be able to gather the needed data in the most appropriate way. The diverse interview guides is provided within Appendix 1.

The types of questions used for conducting the interviews are falling within Kvale's (1996) categorization of interview questions, which can be seen below:

a.   Introducing questions
b.   Follow-up questions
c.   Probing questions
d.   Specifying questions
e.   Direct questions
f.   Indirect questions
g.   Structuring questions
h.   Silence
i.   Interpreting questions

Having said the above, it can be argued that it is not appropriate to use the quantitative method of research, but the qualitative method, as we are looking into individuals' perceptions and interpretations which are difficult to place within numbers and statistics. This assertion sustains our philosophy of science stance, saying that each individual is different having different understandings which cannot be generalized, in terms of other contexts, as the constructions differ (Guba, 1990). Going further with this statement, according to Krauss (2005) *"qualitative research is based on a relativistic, constructivist ontology that posits that there is no objective reality"* (Krauss, 2005), which represents another reason for choosing this specific research strategy for finding out the answers to our research questions.

For collecting our data we have chosen **the semi-structured interviews.** One of the main reasons for choosing this type of interviews is that we can go into more depth with questioning our interviewees, which allows us to hopefully collect more adequate information for our analysis (Kvale, 1996).

The interview guide within a semi-structured interview approach consists of *"an outline of topics to be covered, with suggested questions"* (Kvale, 1996). In other words, the semi-structured interview allows the researchers to change the discussion theme and follow themes of interest or stories told by the interviewee, in order to get to the needed answers. This way, new themes/points of view can be looked into, which the researcher might not have thought about prior to the interviewee mentioning that specific aspect (Kvale, 1996; Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). On the contrast, when using structured interviews, the researchers cannot deviate from the interview guide, having to follow the guide and pose every question in order to get the needed answers for the researched subject (Bryman, 2004). However, during the semi-structured interview, the researcher has to steer and guide the conversation so as the main focus will not be lost on the way (Kvale, 1996).

Moreover, Kvale (1996) regards the interview as *"a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest"* (Kvale, 1996). The interviewers are responsible with the creation of a pleasant atmosphere within a short time (before the interview starts) in order to make the interviewees feel comfortable and relaxed when the interview will start. By creating such an atmosphere, the interviewees would be more open and willing to answer all the posed questions, providing even more details within their answers due to the comfort feeling (Kvale, 1996). On the contrast, if the structured interviews would have been used, it is possible that our interviewees would have gotten a feeling of being interrogated, where frustration could have emerged (Lindlof

and Taylor, 2002). Even though, by using the structured interviews, the researchers would have felt more comfortable and more in control of the situation, the outcome of the interview might not have had the desired result due to the previously mentioned.

Due to the limited resources, the interviews conducted with the website developers were through Skype. This meant that while we could not see our interviewees face to face and notice their body language, the atmosphere created was more relaxed for both parties, as they could participate from the comfort of a familiar environment (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). Regardless of this fact, it can be argued that the integrity of the data collected was kept intact, and that it did not suffer due to the Skype interview (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). In addition, prior to the interview, the website developers were provided with our interview guide, so that they would be better prepared to answer our questions (Kvale, 1996). Skype interviews were also conducted with two of the Danish consumers, and we did not notice much of a difference compared when conducting face to face interviews.

Each interview was conducted by the two researchers where one took the lead role, while the other provided supporting questions. Each interview was tape recorded and then we transcribed within an Excel sheet only the most relevant statements. All interviews were conducted in English with seven Danish consumers, two representatives of Visit Greenland's website, and one representative of Visit Iceland's website, all of who spoke fluent English. The Interviewee Analysis Chapter 5 includes the interpreted interviews and its analysis, which can be found later on in this study.

The gathered data will contribute to our study with empirical knowledge. Having as basis our philosophy of science stance it makes our data and more implicitly our conclusion subjective, due to our interpretations. Since this study is written on the basis of our personal understandings, we will try to be as aware as possible in this regard, so as our subjective position would not influence the research in a negative way. Furthermore, we are aware of the fact that while interpreting and analyzing our interviewees' responses, we might not have completely and truly understood an individual's constructions the same way that individual understands his/her own constructions.

Despite the above, the seven stages of an interview investigation (Kvale, 1996) have been incorporated within our interviews, in order to minimize the level of misunderstandings that might occur. The aspects we used within our interviews in order to minimize misunderstandings are related to *thematizing,* where in the beginning of the interview, we tried to give a comprehensive

introduction about our topic and purpose of our study (Kvale, 1996). Also, each interviewee was asked for permission to be tape recorded and to use the tape recordings for the analysis only within the parameters of our study. The most relevant statements within each tape recording were transcribed creating a verbatim text which allowed us to make better use of the transcripts (Kvale, 1996). Based on the transcripts, websites' analysis, research questions and theory we will try to reach a conclusion within the Analysis Chapters 4 and 5. However, the reader has to keep in mind the fact that the conclusions drawn within this study are valid only within the parameters of this study, as the generated conclusive constructions are strictly based on the interpretations of the chosen interviewees' constructions.

2.4. Research Subjects

In order to have a base for our empirical research and to get an in-depth look into the researched issues, ten semi-structured individual interviews were conducted, as can be seen below:

- 1 interview with Franz Berliner- the web designer of Visit Greenland's website
- 1 interview with Ella Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing at Visit Greenland
- 1 interview with Sveinn Björnsson- Editor of Visit Iceland's new website
- 5 interviews with Danish individuals, based on Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website
- 2 interviews with Danish individuals, based on Visit Greenland's and the new Visit Iceland website
- 5 follow up interviews with Danish individuals (the same individuals who participated in our interviews based on Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website), based on Visit Iceland's new website

The reasons why we have chosen these specific subjects for our data collection can be found below.

Why the designer of Visit Greenland's website?

Initially we wanted to conduct interviews with the designers of both websites, but we received a response only from Visit Greenland's web designer. However, Sveinn Björnsson recommended himself as being Visit Iceland's website editor, which could be considered to be closely related to a website's designer.

The designers of the website were chosen due to the fact that we believe that the designers could give this study a clear insight strictly from the point of view of a website developer. This would add another dimension to the study, where the concept of the website and the used visuals, themes and other elements, could be better understood, as well as the reasons for choosing those specific visuals and themes, and not others. After having conducted the interviews with Visit Greenland's website designer and Visit Iceland's website editor, it can be confirmed that a new perspective in terms of the usage of certain communication tools (such as visuals and text) was gained and enabled us to better understand the reasons behind the preference for certain tools over others. As such, why the usage of visuals is more beneficial for both the website and consumers can be seen within the Analysis Chapter's 4 and 5.

Why the web developers of both Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland?

In regards to this decision, we can argue that we wanted to find out what are the web developer's opinions and reasoning regarding the whole concept used for branding Greenland/Iceland within their websites, and if they have chosen specific strategic communication tools or not, in order to better target their potential customers and convey the desired message. Also, we were interested to know if they are aware of certain marketing tools and what are their opinions in regards to this aspect.

Why Danish individuals?

We decided to choose *Danes* as our interviewee group due to the following reasons:

- Accessibility, since the researchers are living and studying in Denmark, Danes seemed more appropriate to interview due to resources constraints in terms of time and money. As a consequence of this decision, we invested more time in the actual interviews.
- Official statistics of Visit Greenland show that Danes are the second largest group who travel to Greenland, having Denmark topping the list within the 'Nights Spent at Hotels by Guest's Country of Origin' category, numbering in 2012 53,496 Numbers of nights spent' (David, 2013). Furthermore, Nordic countries which include Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland constitute Iceland's key geographic source market (PKF, Accountants and Business Advisers, 2013).

Why the websites of Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland?

The reason why we chose Visit Greenland's website is due to the fact the website per se appealed us very much when we first regarded the website during an exam which introduced us to the website. During our work with the website, we learned that the website won various awards including '2013 Outside travel awards' and 'The annual webby people's voice award' (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012) and that it was highly regarded among consumers and visitors to the site. We are curious as to what makes it so highly regarded and what makes it so special, seeing that even ourselves got caught into Visit Greenland's way of promoting Greenland and our desire to travel to Greenland increased after having reviewed the website. In other words, we wanted to find out what are the tools used by Visit Greenland to convey their message and appeal consumers, using as a means of communication their website.

Visit Iceland's website was chosen so as we will have a comparison tool which will allow us to better observe and contrast the presence or the lack of diverse strategic communication tools which websites are applying in their attempt to appeal consumers to travel to the promoted destinations. This way, we will see how consumers react to certain tools used by two websites, which have the same goal (to attract consumers to travel to Greenland/Iceland) and similar offerings, due to the countries likeness.

2.5. Method of Analysis

After having conducted and recorded the ten interviews, we decided not to transcribe each one of them, as it is time consuming and we wanted to focus more on the actual analysis. Instead, in order to better organize and visualize the gathered data, we decided to create an Excel spread sheet where we added all the information we considered to be most relevant for the interviewee's analysis. This approach allowed us to find appropriate remarks and quotes our interviewees made with ease.

The Excel spread sheet contains 15 columns with questions we asked during the interview, and 7 rows with the answers given by our interviewees, one row for each interviewee.

The above mentioned approach is what Kvale (1996) defines as '*categorization*' 'meaning that the interview is coded into categories and thus can reduce a large text into a few tables and figures' (Kvale, 1996).

A visual representation of the matrix can be found within Appendix 2. The complete matrix was added on the attached CD within this project.

2.6. Sources

Theoretical and empirical data are going to be used within this study in order to answer our research questions.

According to Saunders (et.al, 2007), the empirical level is given an in-depth perspective by the usage of *primary data*. The gathered data through the usage of interviews represent our primary data, which gave us and the study first-hand information regarding Danish consumers' perceptions about the effects that different strategic communication tools might have or have not upon their decision to visit Greenland/Iceland.

The conceptual level (the theory written by academics), is approached by the usage of secondary sources found in academic books and literature, articles, online journals (Saunders et.al, 2007) having as a focus the topic discussed within this project (Internet, social media, travel feedback websites, trustworthiness).

Secondary data represented the foundation on which we based our pre-understandings about the subject matter, which as stated earlier was of help in our process of understanding.

For this study, secondary data was used primarily to research the various tools that go into the strategic communication choices organizations make.

With the above in mind, it can be stated that we will be approaching the theme of this study and data analysis by essentially applying the theories (academic material found) within the context of this study in order to reach a conclusion. In other words, both the study and the conclusion of the study will be influenced by the work of the academics that we decided to focus on, as will be seen later on within the Theory Chapter 3.

In addition to this, according to Gilbert (1998), it can be argued that research within a specific field can be employed by another researcher in a similar field, even though the two researches do not share common features/themes (Gilbert, 1998). We are mindful that the above goes against our philosophy of science as we are not aware of the academics' constructions. However, we have to compromise as we need some background knowledge and a point of departure for our research.

Several theories were researched, but for the purpose of this study, we have chosen the following theories, which we consider as being the most appropriate for answering our research questions:

- ✓ Experiential Marketing
- ✓ The Communication Triangle
- ✓ Brand Identity
- ✓ Narratives and Storytelling
- ✓ Rhetoric
- ✓ Semiotics
- ✓ Photographs as Representations

The previously mentioned theories will be elaborated in the Theory Chapter 3. Furthermore, in order to avoid repeating ourselves, we made a conscious decision to incorporate our literature review within the upcoming theory chapter.

2.7. Limitations

A limitation of this study could be considered to be the time given for its writing, as by having more time, the researchers would have gathered more data in order to see if a path would have begun to emerge in the given answers. Also differences and similarities between the given answers could have been better observed if more subjects would have been interviewed in the sense that we would have had more perspectives and more details about the researched topic. Also, different theories than the ones selected for this study's analysis could have been regarded in order to see what would be the result of applying other theories and how would those theories influence the conclusion, or just to add another perspective over the studied topic. In addition, a deeper comparison between diverse groups could have been included to see how other groups (nationalities, age groups) react and perceive this topic.

This study is based only on Danish consumers' perceptions and interpretations of the effects different communication tools have on their decision to visit Greenland/Iceland. This aspect limits the study in terms of nationality, since Danish culture is unique as every other culture, were Danish citizens' constructions are rooted and belong specifically within the Danish culture. Different cultures could perceive the same object differently, due to the above mentioned issues and this aspect could have a significant influence upon the conclusion of the study.

However, when doing our research and looking at the available information regarding our topic, we noticed that the issue of strategic communication choices, namely the different tools used by websites to advertise destinations, in this case Greenland and Iceland, has not been regarded by

academics. Moreover, consumers perceptions, especially within a Danish context, regarding the effects that the diverse communication tools used within websites have on their decision making process to visit Greenland have not been touched on either.

Another limitation could be the social desirability response that might appear since the interviewees and specifically the interviewees' answers could have been slightly influenced by their desire to help us with our research (Lavrakas, 2008). This help desire could have influenced the interviewees objectivity in the sense that they could have tried to provide us with the answers that they thought it would best fit to our study then with the responses they actually thought of.

The decision to omit focus groups can be regarded as a limitation. However, we believe that focus groups are useful in specific situations, but in the context of our project we require a more individual perspective as we are dealing with people's personal decision making processes and perceptions. We believe that by using focus groups, individuals' opinions would be influenced by others participating in the discussion and would therefore lead to responses which are not what the individuals truly think.

The interviewees were not aware of the theories used within this study, as we did not present the theories to them, since our goal was to find out how the diverse strategic communication tools are influencing their decision making process to travel to Greenland/Iceland. Presenting our interviewees with theories could create confusion and influence or even change their answers. By doing so, we would have risk to collect faulty data, which would have influenced our analysis and conclusion.

Chapter 3 Theory

Within this chapter the concepts listed below will be discussed, as they are considered to be relevant and will be used to guide the analysis within our study:

- Experiential Marketing
- The Communication Triangle
- Brand Identity
- Narratives and Storytelling
- Rhetoric
- Semiotics

- Photographs as Representations

3.1. Experiential Marketing

According to Hudson et al. (2009) many destinations sell themselves by revolving around the same concept, namely the destinations' icons which have as a main focus the physical characteristics of that destination (for instance nature or sea, sun, and sand) (Hudson et al., 2009). In addition, the messages conveyed to the audience are generic, meaning that the idea of escape and discovery is at its core (Hudson et al., 2009). However, in order to differentiate on the market place, some destinations have changed the focus, meaning that rather than making use of the physical attributes a destination has, the experiences a destination could provide to consumers were instead regarded. As a consequence, it could be argued that consumers' emotions became the target, as the conveyed messages of the offered experiences have the aim and also a direct influence on potential consumers' emotions (Hudson et al., 2009). The term used to describe the new marketing approach is called *"experiential marketing"*. This is in contrast to the traditional marketing method which refers to the initial approach marketers applied, that of high focus on a destination's physical attributes (Hudson et al., 2009).

Williams (2006, in Hudson et al., 2009) argues that *"experiential marketing views consumers as emotional beings, focused on achieving pleasurable experiences"* (Williams, 2006 in Hudson et al., 2009). On the contrast, traditional marketing regards consumers as being *"rational decision-makers focused on the functional features and benefits of products"* (Williams, 2006 in Hudson et al., 2009). Traditional marketing sees consumers as if they were interested in the assets a destination possesses, disregarding the intangible unique experiences a certain destination could offer.

It has also been said by Schmitt (1999, in Hudoson et al., 2009) that experiential marketing creates a bridge between consumers and the brand (Schmitt, 1999, in Hudson et al., 2009). Despite this, Petkus (2004, in Hudson et al., 2009) adds that *"experiential marketing does not just mean having an experiential offering. The experience must also be deliberately marketed in an experiential way"* (Petkus, 2004 in Hudson et al., 2009). It is not only about having a product that stimulates consumers' emotions, but also to make sure that the product itself is marketed in an emotionally influential way. The way a specific offered product, implicitly experience, is marketed would be the actual push factor to choose a destination. The previous mentioned is exactly what this study attempts to find out, namely how the websites Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland make use of diverse communication tools in order to appeal towards consumers, and to inspire action so that

they decide to visit these destinations. In addition, the study attempts to find out how Danish consumers regard these websites, and more precisely, how they regard the means by which the websites advertise the destinations.

Having an experiential marketing approach means that marketers have to think more about consumer's needs, wants and desires. To marketers it is important that the promoted experiences tackle and appeal consumers' *"senses, touching their hearts and stimulating their minds"* (Widdis, 2001 in Hudson et al., 2009; Hudson et al., 2009). In other words, it could be argued that two changes emerged, namely the marketer's focus, which is now oriented towards *"touching emotions and get into the consumer psyche"* (Hudson et. al., 2009) and consumers, who became more emotionally driven beings, who are interested in consuming a total experience (Leighton, 2007 in Hudson et. al., 2009), rather than thinking strictly at the benefits a certain destination might offer, which as seen above denotes a more rational type of reasoning (Hudson et. al., 2009).

3.2. The Communication Triangle

Before going into the communications and visual theories and models which will be the basis of our analysis, we bring up the concept of storytelling. This is due to the fact that the theories and models which we will discuss further down are meant to help us decipher how the websites present and convey a chosen 'message'. This 'message' which can alternatively be called the narrative or story is according to Dahlen et al. (2010) now a prerequisite to having a successful brand (Dahlen, Lange, & Smith, 2010), with Jensen and Jepsen (2006) going even further by declaring that*: "the brand with the best story wins"* (Jensen & Jepsen, 2006). In order to be clear the main difference between a narrative and storytelling is that narrative generally relates to the actual story being told (the message), whilst story-telling is related to the act of telling the story (the means and media used to convey the narrative). The relationship between the narrative, the storyteller and the listener can be represented by the following 'Communication Triangle' model:

Communication Triangle

**The Listener
(audience)**
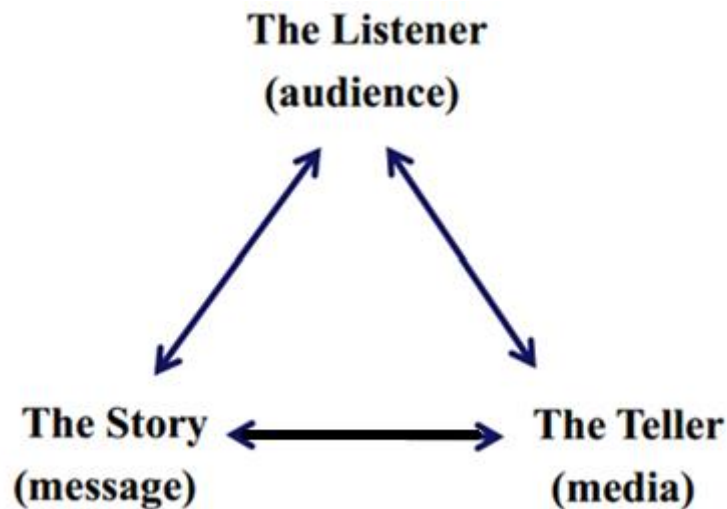
**The Story
(message)** ⟷ **The Teller
(media)**

Figure 1: Communication Triangle (Adapted from Spath & Foerg, 2006 in Maurer, 2008)

The Communication Triangle model helps us understand that the three cornerstones are interactive and have the capability of influencing each other. With our aim being to ultimately observe, analyze and compare the tools (media) used by the two websites to convey their chosen message to the consumer, the importance of this model to the paper lies in the fact that it reminds us of the importance of not only the tools used (media), but also the importance of both the message being told and the consumers. This means that in order to get a better understanding of the tools used within the site we also need to understand the story being told and the consumers.

3.2.1 Brand Identity

For the sake of consistency, we will use the term 'narrative' when referring to the story and message as they denote to the same thing.

An important part to understanding the narrative is to first understand the brand identity. Brand Identity comprises the ways that a destination or tourism provider aims to identify or position itself or its products. *"An effective brand identity establishes the destination's character and value proposition, conveys the character in a distinctive way, and delivers emotional power beyond a mental image"* (Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993, p. 22). Identity is the source of the desired image, and control of it would appear to rest quite firmly with the destination stakeholders. As Olins (1995)

states, *"everything that the branded entity does should be an affirmation of its identity"* (Olins, 1995).

Brand identity relates to how brand owners want the destination to be perceived, encapsulating the features and beneficial attributes, as well as the symbolic, experiential, social, and emotional values of the place which are imbued in the brand (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). According to Williams et al. (2004), *"destination brands are designed to create a unique and appealing identity conveying values that are consciously or intuitively linked to that destination's sense of place"* (Williams, Gill, & Chura, 2008, p. 7) Yet, according to Gnoth (2007), this interrelationship, and the role of values in linking destination brand identity and sense of place, tends to be overlooked in tourism marketing texts (Gnoth, 2007).

In addition, *"brand Identity has to be coherent, integrated, adaptable, durable and therefore dynamic in the face of rapidly changing competitive and customer environmental factors"* (Dahlen, Lange, & Smith, 2010). The following model represents a visual attempt at representing the components of brand identity.
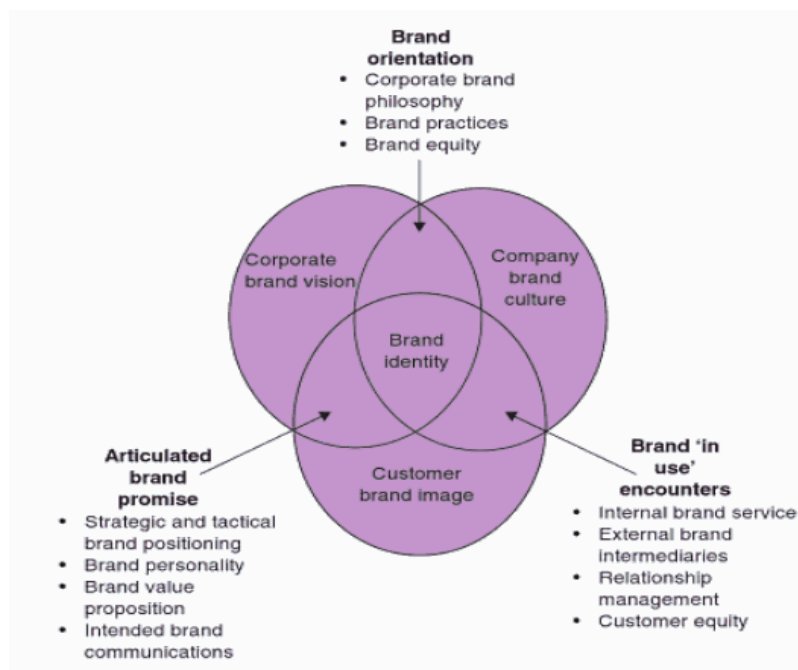
The components of brand identity

Figure 2: The Components of Brand Identity (after de Chernatony and McDonald, 2003 in Dahlen et al. 2010)

As can be seen from the figure above the features of brand identity include three primary components (Dahlen, Lange, & Smith, 2010):

- *"Corporate brand vision is the conception of the brand in its targeted market with a customer profile which is consistent with organizational goals and operating framework.*
- *Company brand culture is the level to which an organization is market oriented and promotes the primacy of brand communications.*
- *Customer brand image is the result of experience of brand use and qualitative feedback from others exposed to the brand and marketing communications."* (Dahlen, Lange, & Smith, 2010)

What we get from the above is that the Brand Identity is comprised of various factors each influencing the resulting brand identity. Furthermore, not only is the brand identity something that is created from within the company but is also influenced by consumers of that brands product and the interaction that happens between the brand and the consumers.

How the brand vision is interpreted by the user is referred to as the *"brand promise"*, the promise that marketers make to the consumer. This is the articulation of what the brand is and is a result of strategic and tactical decisions carried out by marketers (Dahlen, Lange, & Smith, 2010).

The brand identity will ultimately influence and dictate the strategy behind the narrative being told within the marketing campaign. This leads us to the next point of interest, the narrative.

3.3. Communications

3.3.1. Narratives and Storytelling

Denning (2006) states that the use of a narrative helps make information tangible. Also it helps to create and evoke memories within the target audience (Denning, 2006). McLellan (2006) goes further by saying that a narrative is a way of *"framing information so that it is understandable, meaningful, and memorable"* (McLellan, 2006). In essence, narrative can be said to be that *"added abstract value that a customer is more than happy to pay a premium for, when focusing on the external perspective. Internally it is a means to ensure that a company's values and goals are shared among employees"* (Hermansson & Na, 2008).

A narrative's aim, in the end, is to help achieve what Smith (2007) names *"Individual Brand Congruity"* (Smith, 2007), which Dahlen et al. (2010) summarize, occurs when *"the essence and core value of the brand resonate with the memories and emotional connections of the audience"* (Dahlen, Lange, & Smith, 2010). The idea being that the brand narrative encourages the consumer to engage with the story of the brand thus making the consumer emotionally involved. Narrative driven marketing communications triggers memory by personalizing company products and services; consumers feel that these products and services are integral to the expression of their individuality, their lifestyle, their notion of self (Dahlen, Lange, & Smith, 2010).

Sherry (2005 in Dahlen, Lange, & Smith, 2010) in describes the main function of marketing communications as being *"the creation and perpetuation of deep meaning through narrative. Brand narratives are about the story arc that is negotiated for the brand and the life experience of the consumer"* (Dahlen, Lange, & Smith, 2010). Fog et al. (2004)'s model to some extent depicts Sherry's notion as can be seen below:

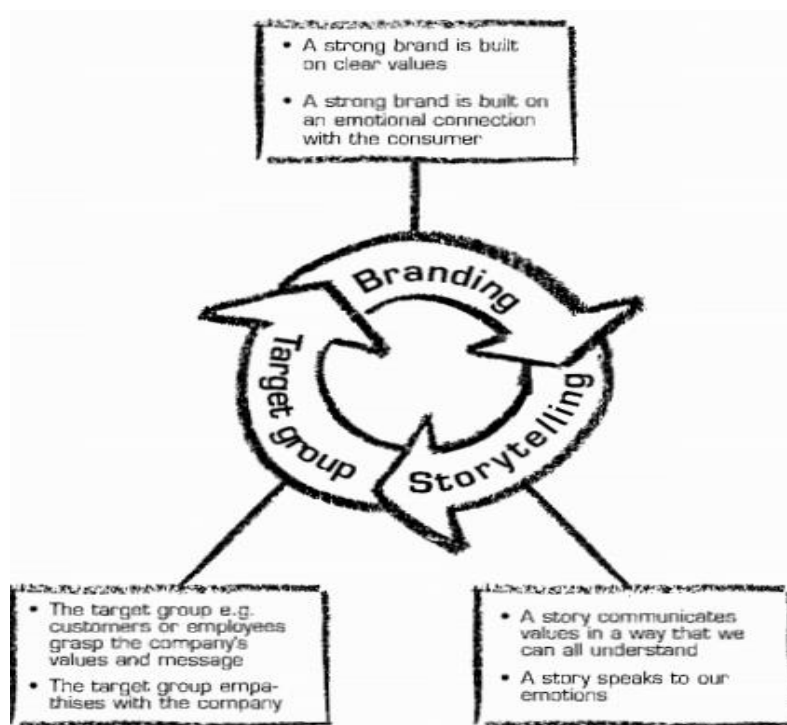**Branding is the Goal – Storytelling is the Means**

Figure 3: Branding is the Goal- Storytelling is the Means (Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboylu, 2004)

The model details that for a brand to be effective it needs to have a strong narrative to communicate the brand's values, thus creating an emotional bond between the brand and the target group. In this case the idea is that the branding which can also be related to the brand identity influences the narrative which in turn affects the target groups which go on to impact the branding, essentially creating a continuous communication process. As can be seen from the model above, Branding deals with the company's values and emotional connection with consumers. Storytelling deals with how the company decides to communicate its values, and how the company 'speaks' to consumers' emotions. The Target Group deals with the idea that the company needs to get the customers to embrace the company's values and message.

In addition to the model presented above, Fog et al. (2004, p.43) mentioned four key elements of storytelling which includes: Message, Conflict, Characters and Plot. In connection with these four elements Fog et al. (2004) mentions that:

- When it comes to **message**, it is important to keep in mind that, storytelling as a tool is not just about telling narratives for the sake of it. Rather, it is about using narratives to communicate messages that reflect positively on the brand. There has to be a reason for the narrative and the narrative has to benefit the brand (Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboylu, 2004).

- In terms of **conflict**, conflict can be used to varying degrees to create interest and to keep the narrative exciting. Conflict within the narrative is used to keep the consumer interested with the main appeal being the question of how the conflict will be resolved. In storytelling, conflict is not negative. It is a *"fundamental premise on which the narrator can communicate his perception of right and wrong"* (Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboylu, 2004).

- According to Fog et al. (2004), in order to get personally involved with a narrative, readers or listeners need to be able to identify with the **characters**. This is especially true when the readers can recognize a little of themselves in the characters. If the narrative manages to get the consumer to become attached to the characters of the narrative by getting them personally and emotionally involved, then there is a greater chance that the consumer will carry on these sentiments onto the product or service being offered (Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboylu, 2004).

- That leaves **Plot**. The plot of the narrative is about the 'flow' and the events present, as these are important for the audience's experience. The sequence of events must have a precise

structure in order to keep things simple and to maintain audiences' interest. The plot looks at structure of the narrative being told (Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboylu, 2004).

The four key elements of storytelling combine to determine whether a narrative is effective or not. Companies will balance the four key elements in their narratives differently to better suite their needs.

An important point to make is the fact that the interpretation of the meaning behind a 'sign' or text depends on the individual's conceptual system. An individual's experience can be very subjective as ultimately everything the website presents is interpreted individually by that person. This means that consideration needs to be paid to the use of communications and visual texts *"not only to socially construct identity and inspire one to social action, but also to activate schema"* (Kaplan-Weinger & Hallett, 2010).

3.3.2. Rhetoric

One way by which the narrative is being told is by the rhetoric the website uses. In other words the way by which the text and narrative is formulated within the website. Rhetoric is *"the art of discourse, an art that aims to improve the capability of writers or speakers that attempt to inform, persuade, or motivate particular audiences in specific situations"* (Corbett, 1990). As these websites are marketing strategies in of themselves, looking at the rhetoric within the site is only natural, as it will help us understand how the websites attempt to inform, persuade and motivate consumers to participate and consume the products and services being offered.

The goal of argumentative writing is to persuade the audience that your ideas are valid, or more valid than someone else's. The Greek philosopher Aristotle divided the means of persuasion appeals, into three categories: Ethos, Pathos and Logos.

- **Ethos** (Greek for 'character') refers to the trustworthiness or credibility of the writer or speaker. Normally an ethos-driven document relies on the reputation of the author as it exists independently from the message - his or her expertise in the field, his or her previous record or integrity (Ramage & Bean, 1998, pp. 81-82). Ethos is based on the character, credibility, or reliability of the writer (Weida & Stolley, 2013). Kinneavy (1996) notices that in Aristotle, Ethos focuses on the author, the attractiveness of the character and the authority

the author inspires (Kinneavy, 1996). It is how well the presenter convinces the audience that he or she is qualified to present on the particular subject. It is up to the audience to determine whether the presenter is of high or low ethos.

- **Pathos** (Greek for 'suffering' or 'experience') is often associated with emotional or imaginative appeal. Pathos-based documents want the audience to identify/sympathize with the writer's point of view -to feel what the writer feels. Values, beliefs, and understandings of the writer are implicit in the story and conveyed imaginatively to the reader (Ramage & Bean, 1998, pp. 81-82). Pathos, or emotional appeal, appeals to an audience's needs, values, and emotional sensibilities (Weida & Stolley, 2013).

- **Logos** (Greek for 'word') refers to the internal consistency of the message - the clarity of the claim, the logic of its reasons, and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence (Ramage & Bean, 1998, pp. 81-82). Logos involves references to the world ("reality") shared by the author and audience (Kinneavy, 1996). It is normally used to describe facts and figures that support the speaker's claims.

Below we can see a few conceptual examples of how each of the three forms of rhetoric attempt to appeal towards people via the use of language. We can also see the effect and response which the three forms of rhetoric are meant to have on consumers.

To Appeal to Logic (logos)	To Develp Ethos	To Appeal to Emotion (pathos)
Theoretical, abstract language Denotative meanings/reasons Literal and historical analogies Definitions Factual data and statistics Quotations Citations from experts and authorities Informed opinions	Language appropriate to audience and subject Restrained, sincere, fair minded presentation Appropriate level of vocabulary Correct grammar	Vivid, concrete language Emotionally loaded language Connotative meanings Emotional examples Vivid descriptions Narratives of emotional events Emotional tone Figurative language
	Effect	
Evokes a cognitive, rationale response	Demonstrates author's reliability, competence, and respect for the audience's ideas and values through reliable and appropriate use of support and general accuracy	Evokes an emotional response

(Roberts, n.d.)

As mentioned previously, the above three forms of rhetoric are considered to be modes of persuasion inherent within texts. It could be argued that this applies to texts found in websites. For this reason we will be looking into the various texts available within the two websites and discussing which of the three rhetorical forms mentioned by Aristotle best describes them. An additional point to make before proceeding is that that texts cannot always be labeled as one form of rhetoric or another, in many cases a text will be a mixture of the three forms. It is normal for example to read texts written by a prominent figure (making it ethos based) that have various facts and figures to help them support their message. In these cases the text would be considered to contain both ethos and logos rhetoric.

Having looked at the rhetorical aspects of the website we will also look into the visual aspect of the website.

3.4. Visuals

Within this paper, 'Visuals' encompasses concepts which are directly linked to imagery.

3.4.1. Semiotics

Semiotics is *"the science that studies signs and their effects, how meanings are created and how reality is represented"* (Chandler, 2007 in Pinto da Silva Santos, et al. 2011).

In an attempt to influence potential tourists' decision making with regards to visiting specific destinations, destination marketers flood potential tourists with mediated representations of that destination. This has lead scholars to explore the complexity of images and rhetoric of advertising over the last two decades (Askegaard, 1999 in Pennington et al., 2010). Nonetheless, as Hunter reminds us, the *"power of representations has not been fully recognized because there has not been enough energy spent on the investigation of this mechanism, one that comprises the material components of every discourse in tourism"* (Hunter, 2008, p. 356 in Pennington et al., 2010). This means that *"there is still little agreement on a basic theoretical framework for the analysis of destination representations"* (Pennington et al., 2010), despite the crucial role representations play in marketing tourist destinations.

According to Noth (in Hunter, 2013) *"semiotics can be understood as both a theory and method for interpreting representations"* (Noth, 1990 in Hunter, 2013). Semiotics *"attempts to identify the content and meaning of denotative and connotative sign elements in photographs* (van Leeuwen,

2003; Rose, 2003 in Hunter, 2013) *and interprets them in terms of their iconic, indexical or symbolic significance"* (Peirce, 1991 in Hunter, 2013).

Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) go further and add that in visual semiotics modality and colors should be taken into account as well, since modality refers to the genuine representation of reality. When applying high modality, a natural coloration of reality is achieved, whereas when low modality is used a false coloration can be observed (Kress & van Leeuwen (1996). In addition, colour saturation, colour differentiation, depth, illumination, and brightness are some features of modality used in visual semiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen (1996). With this in mind, we will see how colours and modality influence Danish consumers when reviewing the two chosen websites for this research, and also how the websites made use of this aspect in their attempt to attract tourists. As such, within this study we applied semiotics both to the two chosen websites per se, and the provided photographs and videos within the sites. With this approach, we identified certain signs which became apparent to us when reviewing the two chosen websites. We interpreted the signs projected by the websites and the actual photographs and videos used, in terms of Peirce's division into icon, index and symbol. The meanings these signs attempt to transmit to the audience were discussed as well, when we analyzed in detail the identified signs and possible representations created within the websites.-move up

Within this study, Pennington et al.'s adapted version of Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic model was used. The adaptation meant that the model could be used in the context of representations of tourist destination, which mirrors our study's needs (Pennington et al., 2010). In addition, *"C. S. Peirce's representation triad is applied to destination representations by conceptualizing destinations, related activities, or entities as objects; photographs or textual descriptions as signs; and potential tourists' comprehension of the sign as interpretants"* (Pennington et al., 2010). To increase the relevance of the model within our study, we looked at the key elements of Peirce's triadic model of representation and discussed the relationship between its components, while keeping in mind the tourist destination. Finally, we apply the model through our own interpretations of the two chosen websites –Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland. This should provide our interpretative insight into how meaning is conveyed within each representation.

The identified elements from Peirce's model can be found within the Analysis Chapter 4.

When looking at the representations within the chosen websites, focus will be put on the attractions and photographs. We have chosen these two types of representations, due to the fact that they were the most predominant within the two chosen websites. Also, the idea presented by academics that *"the importance of photography to tourism and destination marketing"* (Jenkins, 2003; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Markwick, 2001; Molina & Esteban, 2006; Prentice, 2004; Scarles, 2004; Singh & Formica, 2007; Wyckoff & Dilsaver, 1997 in Pennington et al., 2010) added another strength to our decision.

3.4.2. A Semiotic Model of Representation

This section briefly describes three central elements of Peirce's model of representation.

- Firstly, the semiotic process (Figure 4.1) consists of an object, a sign, and an interpretant. All three elements must be present for a representation to occur. The triad suggests that there is an indivisible relationship between the sign and object as well as between the sign and interpretant (Pennington et al., 2010). This means that an analysis of representation must not ignore those relationships and should begin with an analysis of the sign–object relationship (Pennington et al., 2010).
- Secondly, Peirce's division of the sign–object relationship into icon, index, and symbol is regarded (Pennington et al., 2010).
- Thirdly, the model introduces the concept of 'collateral experience' into the interpretation of representations process (Peirce, 1931–1958c, 8.314 in Pennington et al., 2010). Peirce defines collateral experience as the *"previous acquaintance with what the sign denotes"* which is a *"prerequisite for getting any idea signified by the sign"* (Peirce, 1931–1958c, 8.179 in Pennington et al., 2010). Collateral experience, within this study, is the background knowledge and experiences, which individuals have in relation to the object (the destination). In other words, in this study's case, the researchers and potential Danish consumer's prior knowledge in terms of the represented object- Greenland/Iceland, will be considered as being the collateral experience needed, in order to properly identify and associate an identified sign with its belonging object.

Together, objects, signs, interpretants, and collateral experience provide a framework for analyzing destination representations (Pennington et al., 2010).
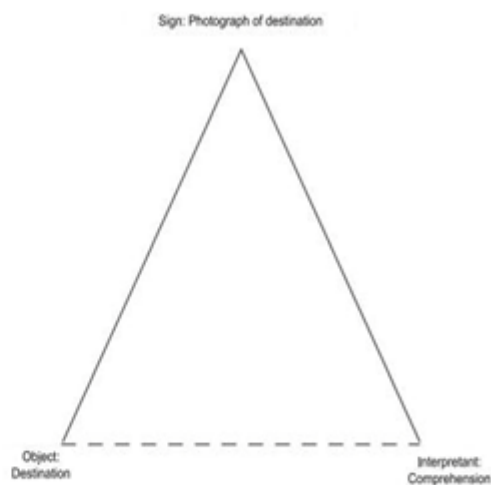
Figure 4.1 The semiotic process

Figure 4.2 The semiotic process applied to a destination representation

Figure 4: The semiotic process (Pennington et al., 2010)

The first element of the triad being discussed is the **object**. In Peirce's model, the object can be either real or imagined. According to Pennington et al. (2010) an object could be represented by the destination per se or a specific aspect pertaining to that destination (Figure 4.2) (Pennington et al., 2010). As such, in the context of this study, the object is represented by Greenland and Iceland per se, as well as Greenland's and Iceland's attractions and photographs, which as previously seen can be argued to represent a specific aspect of Greenland/Iceland. It should, however, be noted that the sign only represents particular aspects of the object, and not the object in some conceived totality (Pennington et al., 2010). This being said, Peirce makes a clear distinction between the object itself (e.g. Greenland) and the object within the sign (Greenland as being represented by e.g. a photograph of the country) (Peirce, 1998, 2.498 in Pennington et al., 2010). In other words, the sign is just one of a number of ways by which the object can be represented.

- The second element being discussed is the **sign**, which Peirce defines as *"A sign ... is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity"* (Peirce, 1931–1958b, 2.228 in Pennington et al., 2010). In destination representations, signs can be put forward by the graphic or textual material used to depict a certain destination (Pennington et al., 2010). Examples from within our context include: the nature, icebergs, animals such as birds and whales, dining and festivals. What the above tells us is that websites such as Visit Greenland's and Visit Iceland's sites, which contain numerous

photographs of services and activities, are a collection of signs meant to convey messages to potential consumers (Pennington et al., 2010).

- Having discussed the object and the sign, the final element is that of the **interpretant**. Peirce describes interpretants with *"that which [the sign] conveys, its meaning; and the idea to which it gives rise"* (Peirce, 1931–1958a, 1.339 in Pennington et al., 2010). In other words, the interpretant is the person to which the sign is being convey to, in addition to that person's perception and comprehension of the sign. The interpretant's perceptions and comprehension will vary, depending on their collateral experience and how they interpret the sign's relationship to the object (Pennington et al., 2010). In our study, the interpretants include us as researchers in addition to our interviewees, who are potential consumers.

3.4.3. The Sign–Object Relationship

As W. J. T. Mitchell reminds us, *"(a) crucial consideration that enters into any analysis of representation is the relationship between the representation material and that which it represents"* (1995, p. 14 in Pennington et al., 2010). According to Peirce's semiotic model of representation, *"interpretation is based on a distinct relation of sign to object"* (Short, 2004, p. 225 in Pennington et al., 2010). In the representation process, the way the sign is related to the object and the relationship between the two, has an influence on how interpretants interpret the sign. The sign–object relationship *"makes meaning and interpretation possible"* (Johansen, 1993, p. 32 in Pennington et al., 2010). In other words, the sign–object relationship influences the way the sign is interpreted.

As mentioned previously, Peirce's semiotic model uses Peirce's divisions which include: icon, index, and symbol to determine what type of relationship the sign-object have.

- The sign is an icon and the sign-object relationship is iconic, *"when the relationship is based on the sign's resemblance to or qualities it shares with the object"* (Pennington et al., 2010).
- The sign is an index and the sign-object relationship is indexical, *"when the relationship is based on the sign's existential connection to the object"* (Pennington et al., 2010).
- The sign is a symbol and the sign-object relationship is symbolic, *"when the relationship is based on social or cultural conventions"* (Pennington et al., 2010).

In the semiotic process, the sign and object should be based primarily on one of either the iconic, indexical or symbolic relationships (Pennington et al., 2010).

Iconic representations

To destination marketers, creating iconic representations of their destination is in their interests. This is because the essential quality of an icon is that it is recognizable and this induces a sense of familiarity with regards to the object (the destination) (Gale, Golledge, Halperin, & Couclelis, 1990 in Pennington et al., 2010). This induced familiarity with the object within tourists, can exert a positive influence on attitudes toward the destinations (Kerstetter & Cho, 2004 in Pennington et al., 2010), which may influence whether or not the destination becomes part of the tourists' *"initial opportunity set"* when considering destinations to visit (Gartner, 1993, p. 192 in Pennington et al., 2010).

Nonetheless, despite the notion that the *"familiarity plays an important role in destination image formation"* (Baloglu, 2001; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008, p. 549 in Pennington et al., 2010), Prentice argues that the *"potential analytical importance of familiarity has been somewhat overlooked in tourism"* (Prentice, 2004, p. 924 in Pennington et al., 2010).

According to Pennington et al. (2010), the familiarity feeling given by the icons can on the one hand be appealing, as in the case of the highly used icons Grand Canyon in Arizona, and the Eiffel Tower in Paris, giving these two mentioned icons *"global, brand logo-like recognizability"* (Pennington et al., 2010). On the other hand, icons can become generic, impacting the representations due to the lack of appeal and individuality caused by the high emphasis. In addition, Barry Pitegoff, VISIT FLORIDA Vice President of Research, defines *"generica"* as "*the homogenization of the landscape due to commercialism"* (Hiller, 2005, p. 22 in Pennington et al., 2010). Moreover, seeing that representations have influential power upon consumers' prior expectations, it can be argued that icons, through their nature, prepare tourists in understanding how other cultures are in an international travel (Prentice & Andersen, 2007 in Pennington et al., 2010).

Indexical representations

Indexical representations in the form of photographs act as a promise to tourists, that the depicted signs within the photos can actually be found at the destination (Pennington et al., 2010). For example, within our study a picture of an Iceberg or a specific breed of bird or whale would serve as an affirmation that if the tourist was to travel to that destination, that they would likely see those

specific signs. In addition, *"the indexical aspect of representations suggests limits to the widespread idea that destinations are "constructed" through their representations"* (Pennington et al., 2010). For some forms of tourism such as cultural and heritage tourism, *"the index functions to confirm the existence of a given aspect of a locale's culture or heritage, which the tourist will then be able to experience when visiting the destination"* (Pennington et al., 2010).

Although indexicality is meant to show interpreters what they may see when visiting the country, an index does not determine how the object will be interpreted (Pennington et al., 2010). Nonetheless, the use of indexical representations gives the potential tourist an idea of the existing qualities of the destination.

Symbolic representations

Social and cultural conventions are at the basis of interpreting symbolic representation. Due to this aspect, symbolic representations are associated with cultural and heritage tourism (Pennington et al., 2010). In symbolic representations, the symbolic meaning is assumed to be implied by the representation: *"Portrayal of natural scenery may imply experiencing nature; portrayal of landmarks and historic sites may indicate heritage appreciation. On the other hand, inclusion of people in advertisements may suggest social interaction. The potential symbolic interpretation and the evaluation of that interpretation are plural"* (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997, p. 541 in Pennington et al., 2010).

It needs to be mentioned that the full symbolic meaning is not expressed completely by the content of the image as it involves social convention. This means that the image needs to be supported by contextual information for the symbolic meaning to be completed (Pennington et al., 2010). As symbolic meaning is conceptual and therefore not necessarily tangible, it becomes a task for destination marketers to create and convey a desired message, which cannot be directly photographed (Pennington et al., 2010). Due to this, for symbolic meaning to be identified, the target audience needs to *"have a common understanding of symbolic content, such as smiles associated with happiness and family activities associated with having a quality experience"*(Pennington et al., 2010). The above shows that for symbolic meaning to be interpreted, both the creators of the representation and the interpreters of the sign itself need to have cross-cultural knowledge. This is because: *"symbols are based on shared social or cultural conventions, they represent cultural categories and social norms, ideals, and values"* (Pennington et al., 2010).

Hybridity

Marketers attempt to determine the desired meanings the members of the target audience want to interpret within the signs and to make it the most probable by choosing representations that either highlight the iconic, the indexical, or the symbolic aspect of the sign–object relationship or express some advantageous combination of those aspects (Pennington et al., 2010). It has to be kept in consideration, however, that a sign is rarely ever strictly just an icon, index or symbol. Signs should be thought of *"as having iconic, indexical, or symbolic aspects"* sign (Wells, 1967, p. 104 in Pennington et al., 2010), rather than being categorized as only one of the three. It is up to the interpreter and their own collateral experience to determine, to what degree and combination the elements of iconicity, indexicality and symbolic are represented by the sign (Wells, 1967, p. 104 in Pennington et al., 2010). How the interpreters decide to perceive the relationship between the sign and the object, based on the three elements discussed above, will determine what meanings they get out of the representations (Pennington et al., 2010).

Even though criticism has been expressed towards the concept of hybridity as it *"challenges the integrity and value of Peirce's categories"* (Leja, 2008, p. 310 in Pennington et al., 2010), we argue that hybridity introduces a level of flexibility in Peirce's categories without necessarily compromising their value. Furthermore, it takes into consideration the fact that each individual may interpret a sign differently and that because of the complexity behind the various sign-object relationships, a sign may represent more than just being strictly an icon, index or symbol to an individual (Pennington et al., 2010).

3.4.4. Photographs as representations

'The centrality of visual representations to tourism in general and destination marketing in particular is well documented" (Hunter, 2008; Jacobsen, 2007; Jenkins, 2003; Markwick, 2001; Naoi, Airey, Iijima, & Niininen, 2006; Scarles, 2004; Singh & Formica, 2007; Urry, 2001 in Pennington et al., 2010). As such, photographs are considered to be essential in marketer's attempt to create representations of destinations within their websites (Pennington et al., 2010).

Research has documented that *"advertisers have increasingly depended on the ability of audiences to be able to interpret visual imagery without textual aids"* (Scott & Vargas, 2007 in Pennington et al., 2010), and with advertisers giving consumers more freedom to perceive for themselves the

meaning of advertisements (Philipp, 1993 in Pennington et al., 2010), the significance of visual images without text is likely to increase (Pennington et al., 2010).

Within the field of destination marketing, photographs play a major role. As a form of representation, photographs are associated with *"the social construction of public culture"* (Billig, 2006 in Hunter, 2013) and *"tourist choices"* (Silver, 1993 in Hunter, 2013).

"Photographs are representations that act like empirical objects and true descriptions" (Brown, 1995; Hendry, 2005; Wolcott, 1995 in Hunter, 2013). They are true because they carry with them elements of reality of the sights and experiences of a destination. In addition, *"as true descriptions, photographs are important to commercial exchange in tourism"* (Aramberri, 2001; Crick, 1985 in Hunter, 2013), as they influence travel decisions (Holloway & Robinson, 1995 in Hunter, 2013). However, as the meanings of photographs are based on social conventions (Hollinshead, 2000 in Hunter, 2013) in addition to the fact that they are accompanied by certain connotations and unstated intentions (Edwards, 1996 in Hunter, 2013), means that they can be deceptive.

"Photographic representations are complex sign systems that replace the singular or iconic denotation of place with layers or bundles of connotative meanings" (Day, Skidmore, & Koller, 2002; Debord, 1995 in Hunter, 2013). The meanings inherent within photographs and the way they are interpreted can be wide-ranging, due to the variety and diversity of their forms, contexts, effects and their generative nature (Stewart, 2005 in Hunter, 2013).

3.4.5. Criticisms of Semiotic Analysis

✓ According to theorists, in order to understand the meaning within a text or photograph, the interpreter needs to take on an *"appropriate ideological identity"* (Chandler, 1994). By this it is meant that the reader needs to adopt a 'subject-position' in relation to the text or photograph, in order to make sense of the signs and messages being conveyed. *"For instance, to understand an advertisement we would have to adopt the identity of a consumer who desired the advertised product"* (Chandler, 1994). Some theorists argue that this position already exists within the structure and codes of the text. *'Narratives or images always imply or construct a position or positions from which they are to be read or viewed'* (Johnson, 1996, 101 in Chandler, 1994).

Within Visit Greenland's website, consumers were aided in the sense that they were given clues in terms of how they should perceive the narrative, for example 'Be a Pioneer'. This allowed us as researchers and interpreters to more easily adopt the identity of one of Visit Greenland's consumers. Visit Iceland's new and old websites, does not give us many clues as to the narrative, which makes it more difficult for us to adopt the identity of one of Visit Iceland's targeted consumers.

✓ There has been relatively little agreement as to the scope and methodology of semiotics among semioticians other than simply 'the study of signs'. Semiotics is still a *"loosely defined critical practice rather than a unified, fully-fledged analytical method or theory"* (Chandler, 1994). Chandler goes on to say that *"At worst, what passes for 'semiotic analysis' is little more than a pretentious form of literary criticism applied beyond the bounds of literature and based merely on subjective interpretation and grand assertions"* (Chandler, 1994). This has led semiotics to having a tarnished reputation as being *"the last refuge for academic charlatans"* (Chandler, 1994).

Despite the above, if we consider our constructivist stance, it can be argued that our subjective opinion, while being relevant only within our context, is still useful. While not everything we mention within this study can be used elsewhere, we argue that there are a few ideas which can be of help to certain organizations.

✓ *"Semiotics is often criticized as 'imperialistic', since some semioticians appear to regard it as concerned with, and applicable to, anything and everything, trespassing on almost every academic discipline"* (Chandler, 1994).

✓ Semioticians have not always made clear, the limitations of their techniques. In some cases, semiotics has been uncritically presented as a general-purpose tool (Chandler, 1994).

In regards to this, it can be stated that we tried to argue our decisions in terms of the usage of semiotics within this study. In addition, we thought that the use of semiotics was an adequate tool for answering our problem formulation

✓ William Leiss and his colleagues argue that a major disadvantage of semiotics is that *"it is heavily dependent upon the skill of the individual analyst"*. Less skilful practitioners *"can*

do little more than state the obvious in a complex and often pretentious manner" (Leiss et al. 1990: 214 in Chandler, 1994).

As researchers, we consider ourselves novices in the semiotic subject. However, we attempt to understand and apply this tool on the subject matter in the most appropriate way based on what we have learned during this study. Also, we attempted to go into as much depth as possible in order to get into the core meanings behind the websites being analyzed.

- ✓ There has been criticism with the fact that some semioticians analyze, decode and interpret messages in any mediums, without the input from the target audience for whom the message was intended (Solomon, 1988).

We support our interpretations with our interviewees' perceptions in addition to those of the chosen websites' developers.

3.4.6. Strengths of Semiotic Analysis

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress argue that unlike many academic disciplines, *"semiotics offers the promise of a systematic, comprehensive and coherent study of communications phenomena as a whole, not just instances of it"* (Hodge & Kress 1988, 1 in Chandler, 1994). Within this study, semiotics provides us with a conceptual framework which can be used to help analyze the visuals used within the two chosen websites (Chandler, 1994).

David Mick suggests, for instance, that *"no discipline concerns itself with representation as strictly as semiotics does"* (Mick 1988, 20; in Chandler, 1994). *"Semiotics foregrounds and problematizes the process of representation"* (Chandler, 1994).

"Searching for what is 'hidden' beneath the 'obvious' can lead to fruitful insights. Semiotics is also well adapted to exploring connotative meanings. Social semiotics alerts us to how the same text may generate different meanings for different readers" (Chandler, 1994).

"Signs do not just 'convey' meanings, but constitute a medium in which meanings are constructed. Semiotics is useful as it helps realize that meaning is not attained passively but rather arises only in the active process of interpretation" (Chandler, 1994).

The above shows and strengths behind semiotics, which we consider to be appropriate when taking the purpose of our study into consideration.

The following is an attempt at visualizing the various theories discussed within this chapter and their relationship with one another.
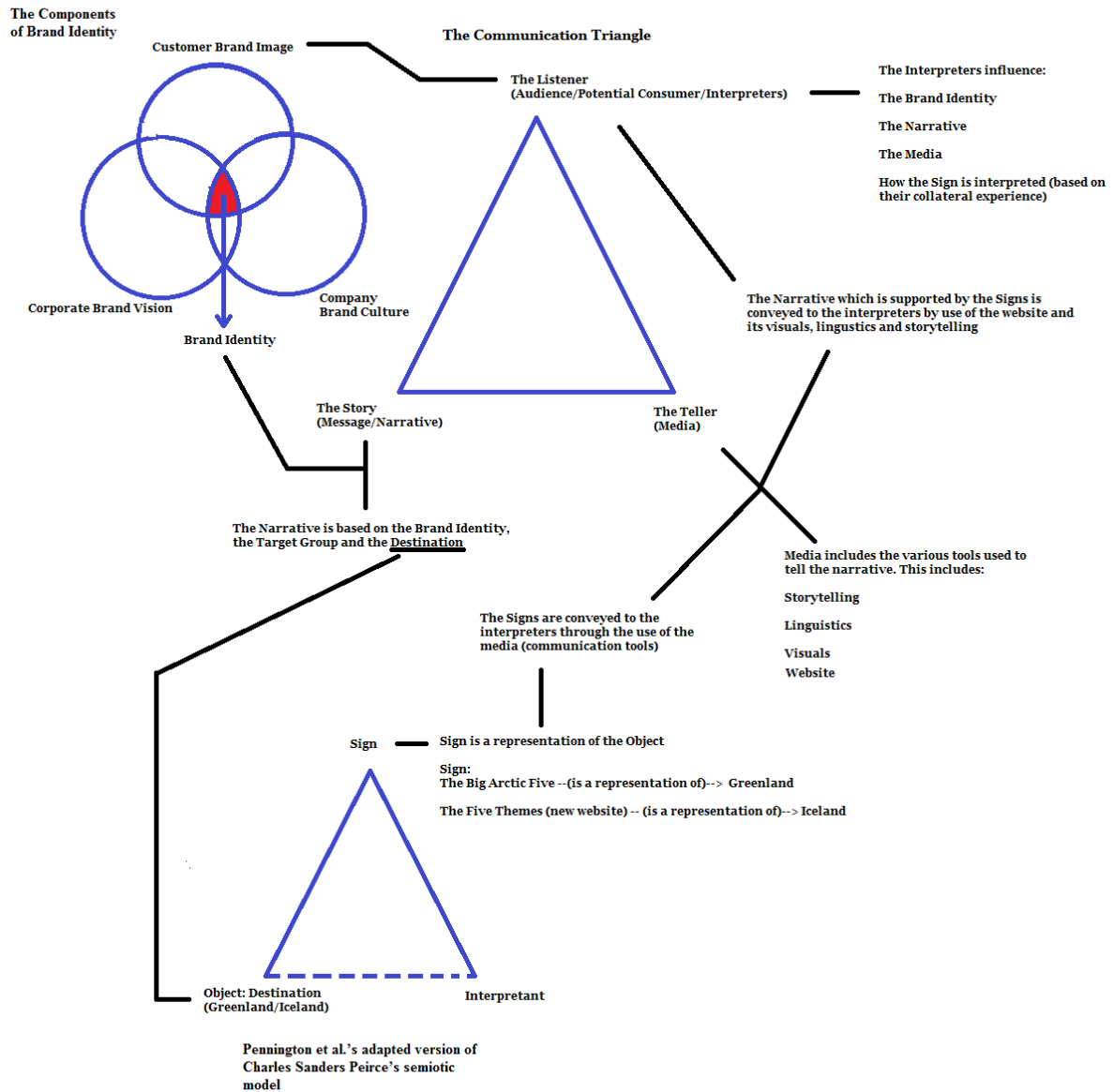

Figure 5.

Chapter 4   Analysis

This chapter has as a main focus the analysis of the communication tools used within two websites, namely Visit Greenland's official tourism site, and Visit Iceland's official tourism information site. One important thing to note before continuing is the fact that when looking at the various concepts discussed with regards to the websites, the way everything is interpreted, is subjective.

This chapter starts by looking at the communication triangle model and discusses the three cornerstones of the model in conjunction with the websites. Visit Greenland's website will be discussed first, followed by Visit Iceland's website. The three cornerstones include: Audience, Message and Media.

4.1. Visit Greenland's Website

Audience

When it comes to considering the audience, the first thing to clarify is that when referring to 'audience' within this paper, it implies the potential consumers in general who may be influenced by the websites. Furthermore we wish to state that the words 'Audience' and 'Interpreters' are used interchangeably as the interpreters make up part of the audience and are considered to be the potential consumers.

Visit Greenland has conducted market research which resulted in the creation of the Visit Greenland 'Visitor Baseline Study' which had the purpose of describing the *"tourists' behaviors and motives for travelling"* (Visit Greenland, Tourists in Greenland- Visitor Baseline Study, 2012). This study has led to Visit Greenland identifying 11 primary segments based on two central characteristics, Interest Focus and Engagement Level. According to the survey *"The Interest Focus characteristic identifies the segments' primary interests. The various interests are Culture, Culture & Nature, Nature, or Personal Challenge"* (Visit Greenland, Tourists in Greenland- Visitor Baseline Study, 2012). The Engagement Level on the other hand looks into *"the extent to which the segments wish to immerse themselves in the destination. This is based on their physical activity level as well as on their human interaction level. The various engagement levels are observation, interaction, and total immersion"* (Visit Greenland, Tourists in Greenland- Visitor Baseline Study, 2012).

Already with this information, an initial impression can be gotten of who the visitors and what the visitors' interests are. Below, a chart with the 11 segments that Visit Greenland is targeting can be seen. An interesting point to notice is that the 11 target groups can be narrowed down to the type of

attraction they wish to see. These two are by and large Nature and Culture. Furthermore without going too deep into the 11 segments it can be noticed that Visit Greenland believes that the 11 segments are very emotionally driven. Visit Greenland uses statements such as *'primary purpose'*, *'motivated by strong desire', 'deep respect and feels a connection with', 'has a passion', 'romanticizes the world'* to describe the various segments, all of which are arguably emotionally driven (Visit Greenland, Tourists in Greenland- Visitor Baseline Study, 2012).
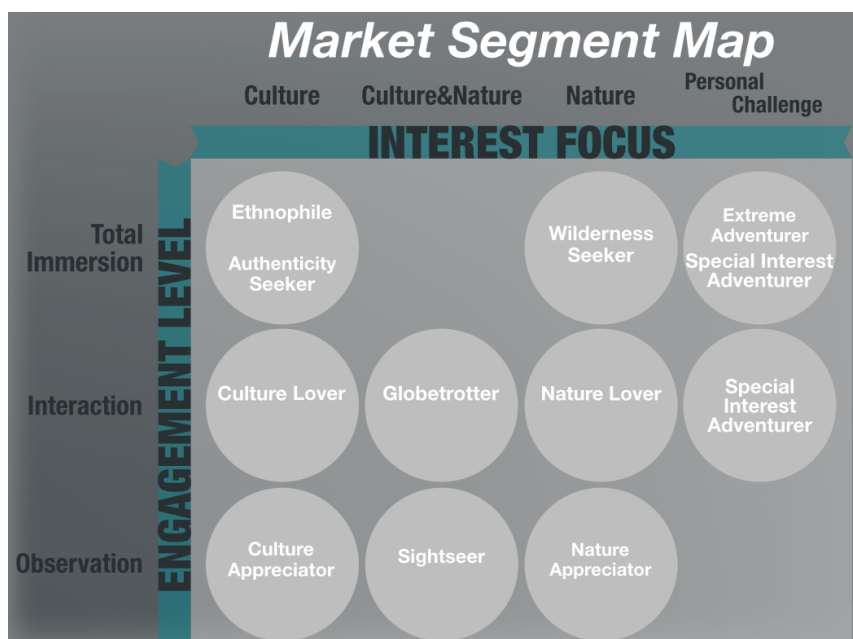

Figure 6: Market Segment Map (Visit Greenland, Tourists in Greenland- Visitor Baseline Study, 2012)

Visit Greenland also seems to regard the concept of adventure as being key to the 11 segments as statements such as *'he seeks to discover', 'is on a continual quest', 'is an explorer', 'delves into history'* show us that Visit Greenland see their visitors as being adventurous (Visit Greenland, Tourists in Greenland- Visitor Baseline Study, 2012).

By conducting this research Visit Greenland argues that it is better positioned to market their product to these various segments. Furthermore, Greenland states that

"It is easier for the Greenland tourism industry to develop strong and effective sales material, i.e. that uses the right wording, pictures, and layout, if they know the dreams and expectations that lay behind the customers' choice of Greenland. What motivates them to travel? What do they want to

experience? Last but not least, how do they want to experience it?" (Visit Greenland, Tourists in Greenland- Visitor Baseline Study, 2012).

This means that Visit Greenland are placing emphasis on creating marketing material which align with the needs and wants of the customers they wish to target. The above quote also helps us realize that there is emphasis on creating experiential forms of marketing as the quote stresses the need to know the customer's *"dreams and expectations"*. The word *"dream"* is interesting as it projects a focus on the emotional aspects of consumer's decision making, alternatively a more traditional marketing approach would have used less emotionally charged words focusing more on the physical features of the destination.

Overall the impression given is that Visit Greenland targets emotionally driven adventurers who are interested in nature and culture. Franz Berliner, one of the Visit Greenland's website designers states that *"the website had to speak more to the heart than to the mind and make people really want to go there"* (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014). This is of course a simplistic view of the information provided by Visit Greenland, however, it does serve the purpose in helping us understand the Narrative and the Brand Identity as according to theory both are influenced by the customers.

Message

When looking at the 'Message' cornerstone, the concepts of Brand Identity and Narrative are discussed as these were determined to be essential to the 'message' within the Theory Chapter 3.

Brand Identity

When looking at the Brand Identity the first thing which would be of interest is Visit Greenland's vision and values.

"Our Vision

- *We create responsible growth with our partners through focus, shared knowledge and idea development*

Our Values

- *Responsibility, Openness, Commitment, Creativity and Collaboration.*

Our Strategic goals

- *To create and develop a unique Greenlandic image based on our country's strengths, values, culture and regional diversity.*
- *To facilitate and support regional networks of knowledge sharing and idea development*
- *To use our knowledge and expertise to guide decision makers in making the best possible legislative framework for tourism development*
- *To focus and prioritize to ensure optimal use of our resources"*

(Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012)

From the above it can be seen that Visit Greenland's strategic goal with regards to identity is to create and develop a unique Greenlandic image. According to Franz Berliner:

"They (Visit Greenland) wanted to rebrand Greenland as a new adventure destination- so the whole point was to build a new website that conveyed the idea that you are a pioneer if you went to Greenland, that you are an adventure traveler and that going to Greenland is as much a travel subject to talk about with your travel friends as if you were going to Vietnam or some of those other exotic places" (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

To do this, it is mentioned that focus will but put on the *"country's strengths, values, culture and regional diversity"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012). Furthermore, when looking at the values and vision it can be argued that emphasis is put on being responsible and open. If consideration is put into the idea that 'open' also means 'inviting', in addition to the fact that focus is put on the country's strengths, then the website's overall brand becomes more understandable. The website's brand is represented with the headline *"Powerful"*, which could be argued to be linked to the previously mentioned *"country's strengths"*, and *'Pioneering'*, which could be reasoned to be related to the concept of 'openness and inviting' in the sense that the Visit Greenland is responsibly open to inviting people to explore their country (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012). This is made even clearer with the addition of the 'Welcoming' concept. The brand -'The Pioneering Nation-Powerful and Pioneering' is portrayed by Visit Greenland in the following image:

Figure 7: Powerful & Pioneering (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012; Visit Greenland, Pioneering Nation- Greenland's National Brand, 2012)

The above representation not only provides us with a view into what Visit Greenland's Brand Identity is like but also gives us clues as to the Narrative that will be used to convey their message to consumers. Visit Greenland states that:

"The core story of Greenland's brand – The Pioneering Nation – is about the relationship between nature and people. The key concepts in the nation brand are 'Powerful & Pioneering' – nature's might and man's pioneering spirit and the relationship between the two" (Visit Greenland, Pioneering Nation- Greenland's National Brand, 2012).

A point of interest from this quote is the comment of *"nature's might and man's pioneering spirit and the relationship between the two"*. This is down to the idea that Visit Greenland indicates to some extent that *"Powerful"* deals with Greenland's nature while the concept of *"Pioneering"* could represent both the country's own citizens, as they mention the concept of *"Pioneering Nation"*, but also the consumers and visitors of the country as the websites tag line *"Be a Pioneer"* gives visitors that title. It can be contended that the wording of *"man's pioneering spirit"* is quite neutral in the sense that it does not limit this characteristic to specific people such as Greenlanders and instead presents the idea of pioneering spirit as a characteristic belonging to 'man'. This falls in

line with what was previously mentioned, the idea that Visit Greenland targets emotionally driven adventurers, as pioneers are adventurers themselves.

From the visual representation seen above, it can be seen that the concepts of *"Powerful & Pioneering"* are supported by five pillars, all of which are meant to give an impression of the characteristics inherent within Greenland. Furthermore, it is arguable that an attempt to appeal towards emotions, with the text used to describe the five pillars, is made. For example, to describe *"Powerful"*, the words *"Magnificent, Raw, Unpredictable* and *Untamable"* are used. Not only do these words influence people's emotions, as our interviewees have mentioned that words such as *"magnificent"* have a greater emotional effect on them compared to words like *"beautiful"*, but these words also give the brand and the destination itself almost animal or even human like qualities. This continues on with the other pillars for example using the words *"Virgin, Pure* and *Alluring"* to describe the *"Untouched"* pillar and *"Active, Hearty, Quick to Laugh, Smiling* and *Warm"* to describe the *"Welcoming pillar"*. *"Warm"* in this case is interesting as it represents a more humane concept of Warmth especially considering that Greenland as a destination is known for its cold weather. However, we are keen to emphasize the fact that these are our interpretations of the provided material and that others may perceive the material in their own unique ways.

Moving on, Visit Greenland states that: *"Greenland needs a strong national brand—a brand that can generate national pride internally and that can attract international tourists, investors and workers, raising its visibility in the whole range of different sectors on the global stage"* (Visit Greenland, Branding Toolkit Vol 1- The Pioneering Nation, 2012).

This gives the impression that Visit Greenland has taken into consideration the importance of the brand communicating values that are both relevant in the external market and also the destination itself. Furthermore, it can be reasoned that the brand identity Visit Greenland has created for themselves, falls in line with how Visit Greenland perceives their visitors to be. The consumers are emotionally driven pioneering adventurers seeking to explore Greenland's culture and nature and the brand revolves around branding the destination based on the strength of the nature and the potential to explore the country. It can be argued that the brand, to some extent presents itself as an emotional character by using the pillars to give, itself and the things it has to offer, human traits. This in turn makes the brand more appealing to those emotionally driven consumers.

4.1.1 Communications in Visit Greenland's website

The Big Artic Five

With an idea of the concepts involved within the brand identity at hand, the next step is to consider how those concepts come together to create a narrative. Looking at the website it is almost as if the site itself is made up of two parts. The more informative part, which contains more neutral and factual statements, for example the senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, Ella Groedem mentions: *"The website it's (has) a more straight forward description of let's say the towns and what its name and when was it founded and stuff like that"* (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014)*,* and the more emotionally driven narrative. The narrative is embodied by what the site coins *"The Big Arctic Five"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012)*.* These are five key attractions which the site focuses on and include: Dog Sledding, Northern Lights, Ice & Snow, Pioneering People and Whales (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012).

Regardless of this split, it is apparent that *"The Big Arctic Five"* plays a major role within the site as a whole and is used in conjunction with the informative areas of the site rather than it being just another advertisement. Ella Groedem states in relation to *"The Big Arctic Five"* campaign that: *"We have our pioneering nation brand, we have our two main brand values pioneering and powerful and we also had our segmentation, our target groups settled and figured out, but we needed something to combine those"* (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014). It can be seen from the quote that the campaign was meant to be the bridge joining the target group and the brand identity.

The site goes into a lot of effort to ensure that *"The Big Artic Five"* attractions are visually appealing by including interesting visuals, in the form of videos and pictures but also what seems to be local music in a dialect which is assumed to be from Greenland which adds euphoric emotion to the offer. It also seems that *"The Big Arctic Five"* narrative is where the most emotionally charged text is found, compared to the more neutral text of the informative section of the website. Examples of these will be presented below in the 'Rhetoric- Appealing to Emotion' sub-chapter. The introductory video to *"The Big Arctic Five"* includes quotes from tourists who give very favorable statements regarding their experiences with these core attractions. The videos end up showing people smiling and laughing while interacting directly with nature. In some scenes the user is shown tourists consuming ice which almost gives the user the urge to want to do the same. As a point of interest, out of the numerous videos and pictures looked into whilst writing this paper, none had any

sign of gloomy and cold weather, despite this being, by the website's own testimony, common in Greenland.

"The Big Arctic Five" attempts to appeal to the emotional sensibilities of consumers by presenting activities which are considered by Visit Greenland to be representative of their brand *"Powerful-nature's might"* and *"Pioneering spirit"* in emotionally charged ways, by use of language, visual and audio media. When asked if *"The Big Arctic Five"* was a way to tell a narrative to consumers, Ella Groedem mentioned: *"That was part of the idea, I mean we still have our pioneering and powerful brand values so this was just a way to express it, I mean we could tell the story in another way as well if you wanted to target extreme adventurers we would choose different photo material that is more appealing to this type of people, so yes it is a way to tell the main story of Greenland"* (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014). From this quote, the impression given was that *"The Big Arctic Five"* campaign was a narrative meant to attract a select group of people.

Media

Having considered the 'Audience' and 'Message', the last communication cornerstone is that of 'Media'. 'Media' looks into how the message is told; it is the means by which the narrative is told. As discussed within the Theory Chapter 3, the concept of storytelling has four aspects to it which include: Message, Conflict, Characters and Plot. In addition to this another means is by the use of Rhetoric. Having already discussed the message, the paper will continue with the aspect of Conflict.

The Conflict

The Conflict within the website revolves around the brand's tagline *"Be a Pioneer"*. This is due to the idea that it deals with consumer's desires to explore and go on an adventure, as was shown to be a main characteristic when discussing Visit Greenland's audience/consumers. Furthermore Visit Greenland attempts to instill the idea of 'conflict' between the 'power' of Greenland's nature and the adventurous people wanting to explore it, as can be seen from their statement:

"The core story of Greenland's brand – The Pioneering Nation – is about the relationship between nature and people. The key concepts in the nation brand are 'Powerful & Pioneering' – nature's might and man's pioneering spirit and the relationship between the two" (Visit Greenland, Pioneering Nation- Greenland's National Brand, 2012).

In this case the 'conflict' could be said to be the *"relationship"*. Activities, such as *"The Big Arctic Five"*, then serve to act as the 'bridge' bringing together the explorers and nature. To get to this point however, the website needed to inspire the sense of the *"pioneering spirit"* within consumers.

Be a Pioneer

Seeing as the website uses the concept of pioneering throughout the website it presents the idea that the website attempts to position users as 'pioneers', which Visit Greenland defines as *"A person who takes the lead, breaks new ground and paves a way for others to follow"* (Visit Greenland, Branding Toolkit Vol 1- The Pioneering Nation, 2012).

This attempt at making the user feel like a pioneer is done partly by its visible brand which directly states *"Be a Pioneer"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012) in addition to using action orientated words like 'explore' and 'dive' when navigating through the site, for example *"Explore the Big Arctic Five"* and *"Dive into a world of possibilities…"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012).

In the website, it could be argued that the navigator plays the part of the *"pioneering"* protagonist in a narrative, exploring the various attractions of Greenland and being free to do almost what they want, this can be exemplified by the website's statements of *"Nobody owns land in Greenland, we pitch our tents wherever we like and you can do the same"* and *"Few people have been to Greenland compared to our neighbors to the east and the west. Come! Be a Pioneer!"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012). This can be understood as consumer immersion and can be seen as experiential marketing with elements of traditional marketing, as the website attempts to touch on the user's values and feelings, whilst at the same time there is still focus on the concrete product.

Despite the fact that there is evidence that both experiential and traditional marketing elements are visible within the website, it can be argued that the site leans more towards working the emotional side rather than the functional side of what they have to offer. Again this is made clear by the brand giving the site user the attributes of an explorer and pioneer, in addition to the fact that there are various examples where vivid texts and language are found. These vivid texts and language, which will be discussed in more depth further within this chapter, could be reasoned to be pathos based, which is inherently related to the emotional aspect of persuasion. This adds additional evidence to the argument for the website being more in the form of experiential marketing.

The website also constantly makes mention that seeing pictures and reading about a destination or attraction is nice but to truly get a proper and full experience, there is no substitute for an actual visit. In other words the site attempts to inspire travelers to create their own adventures and to experience living as a pioneer where *"nature and weather are king"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012).

It is apparent when looking through the website that the site itself takes a lot of inspiration from its history in terms of pioneers discovering and exploring Greenland. Within the site, the comment of *"Greenland has attracted pioneers for more than 4500 years"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012) followed shortly by the comment of *"Few people have been to Greenland compared to our neighbours to the east and the west. Come! Be a Pioneer!"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012)*,* allows it to be reasoned that the continuous use of these concepts within the website show that the site itself is inspired by the country's pioneering history and also that Visit Greenland is proud of their country's history in relation to the concept of pioneers.

Before going on to the Character aspect of storytelling, the rhetoric used throughout the site will be discussed, as it will help provide clues as to who the characters within the story are.

Rhetoric- Appealing to emotion

When looking at the website it could be argued that the vast majority of the textual representations are written using Pathos based formulation. While this does not mean that ethos and logos are not visible within the site it can be reasoned that Pathos is the more prevalent form found within the site, this is especially true within *"The Big Arctic Five"* section. A lot of the information available within the website attempts to touch on visitor's emotions and their needs and values. Some interesting examples include:

"Travelling with dogs is a sensual experience that penetrates travelers – and remains there. The movement, sound and sight are forever embedded in the body" (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012)*.*

In this case the user encounters pathos based text which could be interpreted as having a sexual nature. This is due to words such as *"sensual", "penetrates"* and *"embedded in the body"* provoking arguably suggestive imagery in an effort to invoke an emotional response from users when thinking about dog sledding.

Another example is the following: "*The mountains of ice are just as wonderful as they are strange. The work of giving birth to the ice sheet creaks and roars in the silence. The ice flows like autonomous mountains as high as castles with kilometer deep cellars below the water surface. This amazing floating island kingdom sparkles of white, blue and turquoise*" (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012).

The above is an interesting example as the text itself is again predominantly pathos based. With the text using words such as *"birth"* and *"roars"* it gives the impression that the text is almost being given life, thus giving the text an emotional appeal. In addition to the text being 'alive', the words used also give the text the feeling of magical kingdoms with ideas of castles and floating islands. However there is also one small element of logos, with the use of factual information in the form of *"kilometer deep"* ice. The use of logos could be said to have the effect of adding some credibility to the text as if comments are supported by facts and figures, consumers may be more prone to believing what is being written.

Interestingly the limited information presented within the site which was related to climate change issues, tended to be formulated using logos rhetoric. For example the statement below shows factual based information which represents logos rhetoric:

"Both scientists and non-specialists are focusing their attention on the 2.85 million km3 (100.600.000.000 million of cubic feet) ice sheet, which in the long term is in danger of melting as a result of continued increases in temperature. If this happens, the world's oceans will rise by 6-7 metres (20-23 feet)" (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012).

This did not mean that everything related to the vanishing ecosystem was in the logos form as can be seen from the following example which is written using pathos rhetoric *"Our ice is melting- yet it is still here- monumental and giant"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012). By presenting the issues of climate change in this way it could be argued that Visit Greenland keep true to their values and vision in the sense that they show some passion with regards to their wanting to be responsible with their natural resources. The overall lack of pathos based climate change text could, however, represent Visit Greenland's decision to not focus on the negative issues affecting their country. Logos rhetoric can also be found in the more informative areas within the site which include factual information of the various towns and regions of Greenland. However, the amount of logos based rhetoric found within the website is quite limited.

An interesting point to note with regards to Ethos based formulations is the fact that, while it is not as prevalent as pathos rhetoric, the opening introductory video to *"The Big Arctic Five"* starts off with ethos based comments. The introductory video is also the only time ethos based formulations, coming from what is assumed to be tourists, appear.

What makes these quotes ethos based is the fact that they are quotes taken from individuals the site navigator has never met and thus the issue of trustworthiness and reliability come into play. Examples of the quotes include: *"Dog sledding is the feeling of ultimate freedom"* (Lene Frøslev, 05/12/2011 in Visit Greenland). In this case, a quote with a mixture of ethos and pathos formulation is seen, as the quote itself appeals to the reader's emotional side by making reference to the feeling of *"ultimate freedom"*. In this case the word *"ultimate"* grants the already emotion filled concept of 'freedom' even more grandeur.

Another example, in which more ethos based formulations can be seen, is the following: *"I discovered hospitality that I have never experienced anywhere else in the world"* (Henning Borchert-Jørgensen, 04/12/2011 in Visit Greenland). In this case the quote's reliability lies firmly with how much the site navigator trusts the person saying it. This is due to the quote itself dealing primarily with Henning Borchert-Jørgensen's own opinion as hospitality is not something that can easily be shown in short length visuals and audio media.

The following quote further attempts to entice the website user by explaining that even with the photos and information you can find within the Internet, the real experience is so much better: *"You've seen the photos and read what others write on the Internet... but to be here and see the icebergs floating on the sea is just indescribable"* (Björn and Silva Springorum, 26/06/2012 in Visit Greenland).

In these cases the appeal site users get from the quotes is based on the credibility and reliability of the authors. How much of the information within the above quotes is accepted and trusted by site users is determined by whether or not those site users believe they can trust and rely on the quote givers. Normally this is hard to pull off as the question of how site users can trust and rely on people they have never met comes to mind. However, it is reasoned that in these cases, the fact that the quotes are backed up by appropriate audio and visual cues help reduce doubts and increases the quotes overall level of trustworthiness.

Despite being ethos based, there is a heavy influence of pathos rhetoric within the quotes above, as the quotes attempt to appeal towards the emotions of the reader by trying to describe the author's feelings. This can be exemplified with the statements *"feeling of ultimate freedom", "I have never experienced anywhere else in the world", "to be here… is just indescribable"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012).

The *"We"*

In addition to using high quantity of pathos based rhetoric, the website also presents itself in a very national values based way. It can be seen in a few places throughout the website the use of statements starting with the word *"We"* such as: *"We pitch our tents…", "We help each other", "We travel on water, ice and by air", "We hunt here"* (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012). In this case, it can be reasoned that the emotional sensibilities and values of Greenland are being displayed. The use of the word *"we"* also helps with the effect of bringing the website to life as it gives the impression that the website refers to itself as a Greenlandic citizen. It further gives the reader a notion that the country is unified and that collectively Greenlandic citizens agree on the message being expressed by the website. In addition, it can be argued that *"we"* statements provide the website's visitors with a brief indication into what the country's culture is like. With Visit Greenland looking to promote both nature and culture, it could be said that nature is far simpler to present and show, especially in the form of photographs. Culture on the other hand is more difficult as it is less tangible. The use of statements with *"we"* in them is a creative way of giving site viewers an idea of what sort of social culture Greenland has.

The Characters

Within Visit Greenland's website the main characters which become apparent include:

- **Greenland's nature**, which can be seen from the various examples above, is given almost human like traits
- **Greenlanders**, which also includes the website itself as the use of the word "we" gives the site the same traits as the Greenlandic citizens. In this case, a prominent example of a trait given is that of being a 'pioneer'
- **The website users** who are also given the title of pioneers

It can be argued that the use of Greenlandic citizens is also Visit Greenland's way of representing Greenland's society and culture. As we have already discussed the web users as pioneers and the

way Visit Greenland almost brings its nature to life by using words normally associated with living animals, we will not discuss it here any further. We will discuss the Greenlandic citizens in more depth further within this chapter as the way they are represented apart from using the word *"we"* is through the usage of visual representations. It is worth mentioning, however, that because the nature is one of the main attractions drawing individuals to Greenland, Visit Greenland's effort to make it one of the characters of the narrative is beneficial towards the site. This is due to the reasoning that doing so, makes one of the prominent characters within the narrative charismatic which helps maintain potential visitors' interest.

The Plot

The plot, which involves the flow of the overall narrative, could be said to be driven by *"The Big Arctic Five"* campaign. The campaign serves as the emotional source for the relationship between the users and the virtual representation of Greenland's nature. By making the campaign emotionally charged it makes it more appealing towards consumers as it directly influences their feelings and this leads to the website becoming more memorable.

To make the flow of the narrative fluent, the website does not immediately introduce the users to all the emotionally charged material. Instead what is done is that consumers are greeted by stimulating visuals and a few headlines, this way they are not flooded with too much information. Interestingly the headlines seem to have a commanding tone with the use of statements such as: *"Going on a dogsled tour **is a must** in wintertime", "**experience** the magnificent whales", "**you have to come and see it for yourself"** (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012). While some consumers may feel put off by being told what to do, others may appreciate the attempt made as it is comparable to having a friend excitedly tell you to visit something. Making the website appear as a friend adds some degree of familiarity to the website which in turn makes it more appealing and memorable to consumers. In addition, it is also hinting at the possibility that if you do not come you will be missing out on something truly unique. Being advised what to do in this manner, which is arguably done in a non-hostile manner, could also be the final push needed to persuade potential consumers into action.

Consumers are also greeted with the tagline *"Be a pioneer",* and words such as *"explore"* and *"dive"* to help set the narrative. From here, users get the option to explore the site with one of the major options being *"The Big Artic Five".* This is where a greater inflow of emotion filled information and media is given, as users are welcomed with videos, music and written information, all of which are presented in a way that can have a positive influence on the users feelings. This

could be said to be the climax of the narrative, with the first video introducing the possibility of dog sledding which on the narrative level presents the user with a form of transport which can take them to the other adventures introduced by *"The Big Arctic Five"*. Once users have finished watching the videos and listening to the music they will go back to the main part of the site where the emotional level is lowered to allow consumers to explore the site even more, without emotionally drowning consumers.

In summary, Visit Greenland's website seems to revolve around a narrative carried by *"The Big Artic Five"* campaign. The campaign and the website as a whole, attempt to inspire action within potential consumers to explore both the country's nature and cultural attractions. To do this, Visit Greenland attempted to appeal towards consumers' emotions by the usage of emotional laden rhetoric, the inclusion of attractive visuals and an immersive narrative, in which the consumer participates as a pioneering character.

It can be argued that the narrative attempts to create a relationship based on the struggle between the two pioneering characters, which include the website user and the Greenlanders, against the power of nature. This has the effect of keeping the website users interested as the struggle and relationship being built within the narrative leads to consumers getting emotionally attached and invested. As such, the website becomes memorable, in addition to making the website users wanting to experience the narrative in real life as opposed to just within the website.

4.2. Visit Iceland's websites

Before going into the analysis of Visit Iceland's website, it is important to mention that during the course of writing this paper, the Visit Iceland website went through some major, yet interesting changes. With this in mind, both versions of Visit Iceland's website and how they relate to the theory will be discussed. In the process of discussing both sites, any major changes will be noted and comparisons will be made in relation to Visit Greenland's website.

Audience

When it comes to considering the 'Audience' for Visit Iceland, there is little to no information made available within the site that indicates who Visit Iceland wants to target. Despite this *"it is a well-established fact that most tourists coming to Iceland are 'nature tourists', interested in 'gazing at, playing in and enjoying nature'''* (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010, p. 29). In this sense there is a similarity to that of Visit Greenland's target group, consumers interested in nature and culture. With this in

mind, there is no evidence to suggest that there has been a change in the target audience within the two versions of Visit Iceland's website.

Message

In order to get an understanding of the message being presented, a look into the brand identity and the narrative of Visit Iceland is necessary. When it came to the old website there was no information given with regards to the company's mission or vision which makes it difficult to determine what sort of brand identity Visit Iceland wanted to present. In contrast, the new website, while still lacking, has more information with regards to their aims and goals. From their statement:

"Visit Iceland the official promotional agency for tourism in Iceland. It is a part of Promote Iceland, a public-private partnership established to improve the competitiveness of Icelandic companies in foreign markets and to stimulate economic growth through increased export" (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014).

It is noted that Visit Iceland differs from Visit Greenland in the sense that it is part of a company (Promote Iceland) whose overall goal is to *"improve the competitiveness of Iceland and to stimulate growth"* (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014), whereas Visit Greenland is not part of another company, which allows them to put more focus on tourism. This does not mean that Promote Iceland does not focus on tourism, however, it can be argued that it could imply that tourism does not receive as much focus as they are also involved with other activities, as can be seen from their statement: *"Promote Iceland also assists Icelandic companies seeking to grow internationally through competence building programs as well as international events, such as trade fairs, press trips, and trade delegations. This is done in close cooperation with Icelandic embassies and consulates abroad, as well as bilateral chambers of commerce"* (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014). With this in mind, Promote Iceland's involvement with tourism is represented by their goal:

Goal

"The goals of Promote Iceland are promoting Iceland as a tourism destination, assisting in the promotion of Icelandic culture abroad, and introducing Iceland as an attractive option for foreign direct investment" (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014). Again here, it can be seen that while there is some focus on promoting Iceland as a tourism destination, Promote Iceland also

mentions the need to attract foreign direct investment. This leads us to understand that for Promote Iceland, tourism is only one part of a larger plan. The goal with regards to tourism is also somewhat simplistic as it only mentions the need to promote the destination whereas Visit Greenland gives more information for example the fact that they will be using Greenland's strength and nature.

Aim

According to Promote Iceland: *"The department of Tourism and Creative Industries aims to attract tourists to the country with co-ordinated promotion and marketing efforts for the Icelandic tourism industry and promotes Icelandic culture abroad. Among other projects, the department is in charge of the marketing campaign Inspired by Iceland, which seeks to increase the number of tourists in the off-season. The department also works on other marketing projects, relating to various fields, such as food, creative industries and health.*

The department works on various aspects of promotion, such as websites and social media, foreign public relations, media visits, travel exhibitions and various events abroad. The department maintains three websites; Iceland.is, Visiticeland.com and Inspiredbyiceland.com. Additionally, it collaborates on several other tourism related websites and is active on social media platforms through Cruise Iceland and Iceland Naturally. It publishes promotional material, such as pamphlets and the Issues & Images magazine, and answers inquiries from interested tourists" (Promote Iceland, 2011).

It can be reasoned that the above is indicative that Visit Iceland is only one part of Promote Iceland's tourism plan as Promote Iceland's department of tourism and creative industries are also responsible for various other websites and projects. This raises the question, however, of why Promote Iceland decided to manage three websites rather than combine them to create one all-encompassing website. Despite this, the three websites are interesting as it seems that while they each attempt to attract tourists to Iceland they do so in different ways. Visit Iceland's old site focuses on the more informative form of presenting information and Inspired by Iceland uses a more emotionally appealing and visual method. The new Visit Iceland website, however, attempts to create an all-encompassing website as it seems to contain a lot of the information found within Visit Iceland's old site and presents it using more visuals which seem to be inspired by Inspired by Iceland's website. This notion is supported by Sveinn Björnsson, the editor of Visit Iceland's website, who says:

"It can be a little complex or disorientating for visitors to have two official looking websites promoting Iceland as a tourist destination and it's a bit difficult for us as well. We have this website and we have this website, so we just want to create one, like one adapted for us and that's really the main goal rather than the actual content, even if we have a lot of content out there" (Björnsson - Editor of Visit Iceland's New Website, 2014).

The above shows that Visit Iceland has realized that having multiple websites can be confusing for both themselves and their potential consumers. Because of this they have started combining the websites they manage. Having said this, the focus within this paper is on Visit Iceland's old and new site and so we will not go into depth with the Inspired by Iceland website.

4.2.1. Communications in Visit Iceland's websites

The Old Visit Iceland Website
Unlike Visit Greenland, apart from the limited information given with regards to Visit Iceland's goals and aims, no information can be found directly within Visit Iceland's website with regards to how and why their website is set up the way it is. The closest we can get to an impression on the strategy is by looking at the brochures made available within the site. From the brochures (appendix 3) it can immediately be seen that Visit Iceland attempts to promote themselves in a similar manner as Visit Greenland, in the sense that they use the idea of a destination that can provide 'adventure'. However, for Visit Iceland's old website, the concept of 'adventure' is a lot less visible within the site itself.

On initial view, Visit Iceland's website has a more basic layout when compared to Visit Greenland, which uses a more unique page layout in addition to having the emotionally filled *"The Big Arctic Five"* campaign, as can be seen from screenshots of both websites' homepages in Appendix 4. From appendix 4, it can also be seen that Visit Iceland's website has more links to other official websites whereas Visit Greenland seems to have more content available within their website. Visit Iceland in essence seems to work as a gateway site which people can use to find the links to other sites which contain the information they are looking for. It can also be noticed that unlike Visit Greenland, which has a focus on *"The Big Artic Five"* despite also offering other activities and services, Visit Iceland do not seem to have a specific focus. Instead it seems as if Visit Iceland have taken a less focused marketing approach, with nature and the various natural resources being the main appeal and pull. Seemingly there is less emphasis within Visit Iceland's website on creating a

narrative appeal, rather they use a more simplistic approach: 'we have this, come visit', which is less attractive.

The New Visit Iceland's Website

The reasons for the development of the New Visit Iceland webpage, according to Sveinn Björnsson, was: *"the old website was very dated, technically as well as the content, a lot of the content was not very accurate anymore, technically it was a disaster to work with…and finally we wanted to create an adaptable website so its viewable on all platforms…, so that was the main goal for the redesign in addition we wanted to create a lot more content, the website that we had, there was not a lot of content on it, the informative value of the website was not really good so that was the basic thing that we were going after I think"* (Björnsson - Editor of Visit Iceland's New Website, 2014). Sveinn Björnsson does however mention that we need to keep in mind that the new Visit Iceland website is still a very new website, that it is being worked on and that more content is in the process of being added to the website.

The new Visit Iceland webpage seems to have taken a similar route to that taken by Visit Greenland in the sense that it adds visuals and more emotionally charged text to the informative and 'boring' style web-design the old Visit Iceland had. The visuals are visibly larger in the new website and the first headline a user is greeted with is: *"Iceland. It's not a destination. It's an adventure"* (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014), which is more engaging compared to the old website's headline of *"Welcome to Iceland"* (Promote Iceland (The old Visit Iceland site), 2011). (Appendix 5)

The new website's headline in addition to the picture presented helps set the stage of creating a feel of adventure. This is then followed by additional headlines inviting the user to visit the various attractions such as *"Come and experience the Aurora Borealis"* (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014), which again adds to the 'Welcome to Iceland' message by attempting to convince users into action with the word *"come"*. These headlines are supported by the addition of one of Inspired by Iceland's videos.

The video is quite similar to Visit Greenland's *"The Big Arctic Five"* videos in the sense that they show the beauty of the country while adding music to it. These videos have, according to our interviewees, played a major role in making the websites memorable and influencing their feelings.

While the Inspired by Iceland video is the only video within the new Visit Iceland website, there is a big increase in the number of pictures when compared to the old website.

An interesting addition to the new website is also a section called *"Themes"*. This is due to the fact that it resembles, to some extent, Visit Greenland's *"The Big Arctic Five"*. Find your Iceland presents itself by stating that: *"There are many ways to enjoy Iceland. Come and be inspired by the culture, the nature, the creativity and adventerous spirit. Find the Iceland that you want to meet"* (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014). Because of this, it can be reasoned that there is a narrative within the new website and that it encourages people to decide for themselves what type of 'adventure' they want to go on.

Regardless, the fact that it is not presented in any unique way, when compared to the rest of the website, makes it arguable that while there is a semblance of narrative, it is not core to the website itself or alternatively is still being worked on. This brings up an interesting point of discussion, as what is better, to have a website portraying one narrative or to allow the user to pick a narrative among a few possibilities? From our perspective, having one story like Visit Greenland appears having, seems to be the most effective way of presenting oneself. It allows full focus into making the narrative work for the site rather than having to worry about working multiple narratives into the site. It also lowers the risk of confusion within readers/consumers as it limits the amount of choices they have to make in a situation where they are already offered many other choices. Furthermore, it helps prevent the site from having a brand identity 'crisis'. As mentioned previously, the narrative should be conveying a message based on the site's brand identity. Having multiple narratives could lead to confusion as to what message the brand identity wishes to present, which in turn opens up questions as to what the brand identity of Visit Iceland is.

What can be deduced from the above is that it is difficult to see a narrative within the old Visit Iceland website. On the other hand the changes carried out within the new Visit Iceland website give the user a more visible narrative despite not going as far as Visit Greenland's narrative. This more visible narrative could be stated simply as 'you, the visitor, going on an adventure.' In terms of not going as far we mean to say that when comparing the new Visit Iceland and the Visit Greenland site, Visit Iceland attempts to tell individuals to go on an adventure in Iceland. Visit Greenland does the same, but they take it one step further by trying to make the act of browsing the website an experience itself in addition to using a greater amount of pathos rhetoric.

Media

The way Visit Iceland has approached their marketing, is to some extent comparable to that of Visit Greenland. By comparable it is argued, that the target group, with regards to being nature and culture lovers, are virtually the same and also the fact that what both sites primarily promote is their country's nature.

Rhetoric

In terms of communications and rhetoric there does seem to be less emphasis placed on the Pathos form with more usage of the Logos form of writing within the old Visit Iceland site. Despite this, there are a few limited examples within the informative texts which attempt to appeal to consumers' feelings by using words which invoke emotions. One such example being:

"Much of Iceland is still taking shape before your very eyes – raw, dramatic landscapes born from volcanic eruptions and carved out by glaciers. Other parts have hardly changed since the first Viking settlers saw them more than 1,100 years ago. You'll experience wilderness and wildlife, energy and total calm, within easy reach wherever you stay, even on day trips. You can interact with Iceland's world of natural wonders in endless ways" (Promote Iceland (The old Visit Iceland site), 2011).

In this example words such as *"Raw, dramatic, energy, total calm"* can be seen being used. While these are not as emotionally charged when compared to some of Visit Greenland's text, they still have the potential to influence a user's feelings. Nevertheless this style of writing is rather rare within the old Visit Iceland site, and a more common example of the communications difference between the old Visit Iceland, new Visit Iceland and Visit Greenland's sites can be seen with the following examples where we see Visit Greenland using more wordplay and pathos based text compared to the more logos type text used in Visit Iceland's sites.

Northern Lights

Old Visit Iceland Website

"Northern lights - Aurora Borealis

Auroras are associated with the solar wind, a flow of ions continuously flowing outward from the sun. The Earth´s magnetic field traps these particles, many of which travel toward the poles where they are accelerated toward Earth" (Promote Iceland (The old Visit Iceland site), 2011).

Here, almost full use of logos based formulations can be seen, as the text specifically attempts to explain what the aurora borealis is, in a scientific and logical form. While in this case there is a lack of actual figures, the logos rhetoric is made up by the various facts being stated.

New Visit Iceland Website

"Northern Lights in Iceland- The Heavenly Light Show

The extreme dark of the Icelandic winter has a few perks. Between September and April, Iceland is treated to a magnificent natural display: the phenomenon of aurora borealis, named after the Roman goddess of dawn, Aurora, and the Greek name for the north wind, Boreas. This is what we commonly call the Northern Lights" (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014).

If a comparison of the new Visit Iceland and the old Visit Iceland website's statements is made, we see less of the logos form and the addition of some pathos rhetoric which can be seen through the use of words such as *"magnificent natural display"*. This does not mean that the logos form is excluded as factual information such as: *"named after the Roman goddess of dawn, Aurora, and the Greek name for the north wind, Boreas."* is still present within the text.

Visit Greenland Website

"Nature's Wonders – Words can't describe the Aurora Borealis. You have to come and see it yourself.

Standing there, with your feet planted securely in the Greenlandic snow, gazing upwards at the fascinating blanket of verdigris green stretching across the night sky, you will feel small and humble. Suddenly the concepts of infinity and timelessness seem to make sense" (Visit Greenland-The Website, 2012).

In Visit Greenland's example, a move to the more pathos based form and the exclusion of logos, can be seen. The statement provided by Visit Greenland has the effect of appealing towards users emotions by giving them an indication of what they would experience.

An interesting point to note is also the fact that when explaining the Aurora Borealis, both of visit Iceland's websites focus solely on the northern lights themselves. Nowhere in the text provided

above can the word *"you"* or the inclusion of the user be seen. Visit Greenland on the other hand focuses on the user and their feelings. A similar pattern is made visible below.

Whale Watching

Old Visit Iceland Website

"Whale Watching in Iceland- Iceland is among the 10 best destinations worldwide for whale watching

The cool clear North Atlantic encircling Iceland is teeming with whales of various sizes and species. Already thousands of tourists have enjoyed whale watching from various sites around the country. The whale watching ports are all around the coastline" (Promote Iceland (The old Visit Iceland site), 2011).

In this example of whale watching, web users can see the old visit Iceland site using logos rhetoric, as it attempts to be factual by stating that it is among the 10 best destinations in the world. In this case, however, in contrast to the previous 'northern lights' old Visit Iceland example, there is an element of ethos rhetoric. This is down to the idea that it is mentioned that *"thousands of tourists have enjoyed whale watching"*. In this case the user has to question not only the sites reliability but also (if they consider the site to be reliable) whether the thousands of visitors and their perceived 'enjoyment' are reliable. Ultimately if ethos based rhetoric is about the reliability of the author, then it could be argued that there is an element of ethos rhetoric in every textual material provided. However, in this case the form of persuasion used, is to convince the user that others have enjoyed the activity and, as such, brings up the question of reliability. This leads us to rule out the pathos and logos rhetoric form, giving us the inclination that the statement leans more towards being ethos based rhetoric.

New Visit Iceland Website

"Whale Watching in Iceland- Chase Whales in the North Atlantic

Iceland is the perfect location for whale watching. The cold waters off the coast play host to a diverse marine life. During the summer months in particular, the shores become a veritable feeding ground for multiple species of large marine mammals, giving visitors a chance to observe these

magnificent creatures in their natural habitat" (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014).

The new visit Iceland website statement with regards to whale watching is not much different from the old website. However, there is a small attempt at providing some pathos based rhetoric by the inclusion of the word *"magnificent"*.

Visit Greenland Website

"Breaching Beauties- Experience the magnificent whales

Many different species of whale can be seen along Greenland's coasts. And you are left in no doubt when there is a whale in the vicinity, as when it comes up to the surface to breathe, it blasts its breath through the water and air at a speed of several hundred kilometres per hour; a quite astounding sight!" (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012).

Visit Greenland's website again brings the user into the statement with the word *"you"*. While to some extent it provides similar information as the old and new Visit Iceland website in the sense that all three sites bring up the fact that different species can be seen, Visit Greenland adds to it by giving the user an idea of what they may experience. This attempt at providing vivid descriptions to the reader is another indication that the website is using narrative and pathos rhetoric to send a message in an attempt to persuade the website users to visit Greenland. Furthermore it also reflects the website's attempt at invoking emotions within the users of the site, as the usage of '*you are left in no doubt'* gives the site user a pointer of what they are meant to be feeling.

The above examples should help provide the reader an indication of the differences between the websites. The old Visit Iceland tends to use more logos rhetoric while Visit Greenland uses more pathos rhetoric. The new Visit Iceland has shifted from its roots and now incorporates both logos and pathos based rhetoric, yet not to the same extent as Visit Greenland.

Conflict

As there is a lack of narrative within the old Visit Iceland website there does not seem to be any real conflict to keep site users interested. However, in the new Visit Iceland, the attempt at letting people decide what type of Iceland they want to visit could be considered to be the conflict. In the new Visit Iceland visitors to the site get to choose from five different 'types' of Iceland which

include: Creative Iceland, Mysterious Iceland, Pure Iceland, Cultural Iceland and Adventurous Iceland (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014). While it could be said that all five deal with either some aspect of Iceland's nature or some aspect of Iceland's culture, it does allow people to decide for themselves what type of narrative and in the process 'conflict' they want to set for themselves.

Character

When discussing the characters within the old Visit Iceland site, it is hard to find any. The old Visit Iceland site was more about Iceland the destination and the things it has to offer and less about the individual consumer and their story. Most of the headlines describe the various attractions using a logos rhetoric, such as: *"There are more than 170 Geothermal Pools in Iceland-Iceland is known for its natural hot springs and spa culture, which is widely celebrated across the country. One of the nations' favorite pastimes is chilling out in the various hot pots dotted across the island's townships"* (Promote Iceland (The old Visit Iceland site), 2011). By taking this approach and also neglecting the use of narrative, it makes it difficult for the site to create any characters that users can sympathize with.

The new Visit Iceland on the other hand takes a similar approach to that of Visit Greenland, by introducing the consumer as a character within the narrative. As we mentioned within the 'Visit Iceland Conflict' sub-chapter, the user as a character gets to decide on what type of journey they want to take, whether it is an adventure, a mystery or cultural. The headline of *"Find Your Adventure in Iceland- Iceland is full of exciting adventures waiting for you at every turn. Find your adventure here"* (Promote Iceland (The new Visit Iceland site), 2014) helps support this view. Having said this, it seems that this is the only character present within the narrative.

Plot

The lack of a narrative within the old Visit Iceland website means that there is no real need for there to be a flow to carry the story. Despite this it could be said that the overall layout of the website follows a simple user-friendly design which allows users to find the information they want at ease (Appendix 4).

One interesting comment however, which might have a negative effect on the overall flow of the new Visit Iceland website, comes from one of our interviewees. Our interviewee stated:

"In the front page there is only 3 lines so it's not enough for me to get what I want to know but when I go to the second page then there was too much. So I felt it's great for those who are really interested in all the details but maybe it would be good with a shorter part for those who are actually just trying to read quickly through it because I think they risk that people just decide not to read it when it's so long" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

Effectively the statement mentions that the flow of the new Visit Iceland could be interrupted because of the way the text is presented. By this, it can be argued, that the interviewee means that the introductory text to the various articles is too short. If users want more information they have to go into the *"read more"* links. However when doing so they are met with large amounts of text which some may not be willing to read, due to the length of the text. This has the effect of interrupting the flow within the site. Furthermore another interviewee, after being asked why they prefer being presented with less text, mentions that *"...because what I like is that they make people think by themselves, so they sort of treat people like you don't need a lot of words, you just need to see if this is something for you"* (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website), he goes further to explain that by not revealing all the information right away that the new Visit Iceland website kept in line with their slogan of *"discover the secrets"*, interviewee 2 states: *"I don't know if it's a conscious effort or if they (Visit Iceland) have really thought about it but it's like this 'discover the secrets,' so secrets, you don't reveal the secrets because then it's not a secret anymore so it's like open up a little thing, cast a little light on it but everything else remains unknown so it's for you to explore by yourself, discover the secrets"* (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website). What the above shows us is that when it comes to quantity of text, it is important to have a balance, too much may deter users from reading and may have a negative effect on the overall flow of the website.

Moving on, it was noticed that while looking at the three websites, there was a tendency for Pathos rhetoric to be important to the narrative as it helped users sympathize with the message and it help drive the overall narrative through the website. This is to a large degree down to the fact that the pathos rhetoric, through the use of emotionally charged and vivid descriptions, helped the user get an idea of what they may experience when travelling to the country. As a whole Visit Greenland seems to be the site that uses this concept to their advantage and we get the impression through the changes we see within the old and new Visit Iceland website that Visit Iceland is heading towards the same concept.

In summary, it can be argued that out of the three websites looked into, Visit Greenland's website is the site which is closest to achieving what (Smith, 2007) called Individual Brand Congruity. By Individual Brand Congruity, it is reasoned that Visit Greenland is currently in a position where their brand resonates well with their consumers' emotions and this makes the website more memorable to those consumers. In terms of Visit Iceland, it could be said that the changes carried out from the old website to the new site show that Visit Iceland are on their way to positioning themselves in a situation where their brand is beginning to resonate with their consumers emotions, however, there is still more that can be done.

When looking at the narrative, it can be argued that there is no major narrative being told within the old Visit Iceland website. There is no clear conflict or character to help convey the narrative. On the other hand the new Visit Iceland webpage introduces a conflict in the form of personal dilemma. By this it is reasoned that the dilemma is created when the website user is given the choice of what type of Iceland they wish to experience. Because of this the character is naturally the website user themselves. All in all, there is a semblance of a narrative within the new Visit Iceland website; however, Visit Greenland's narrative is arguably superior and more complex.

4.3. Visuals

With the Communications sub-chapters (4.1.1. and 4.2.1.) in mind, it can be further argued that the way Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland attempt to create and depict their narrative within their websites can be closely linked to Peirce's semiotic triangle, as the representation formed by the three variables within his model, namely sign-object-interpretant, projects a certain narrative to the audience.

In addition, it can be said that Visit Greenland uses the semiotic process as a tool to better emphasize and highlight the visual semiotics through the modalities and colors used (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). It is noticeable within the website that Visit Greenland strongly focuses on the visuals when attempting to convey the desired message to its audience. For example, the used images seem to have captured Greenland as it is, which would bring the consumers closer to what they individually expect to encounter within Greenland, when regarding the provided photographs. This assertion is strengthened by Visit Greenland, which is stating the following in regards to their branding objectives (2012):

"To have created a new brand universe on greenland.com, with a focus on behaviour/interest and visual effects; To have contributed to a more visually interesting marketing of Greenland by making films and photos available free to all interested parties and promoting them" (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012).

In regards to Visit Iceland's old website, it can be said that even though they do not make use of the visuals to transmit the intended message to the audience, they still use photographs in order to depict Iceland's resources and activities, which would give a certain insight and create a certain impression of Iceland. It could be argued that they slightly hint to a narrative, which has as focus nature and its unique landscapes. In addition to this, *"it is a well-established fact that most tourists coming to Iceland are 'nature tourists', interested in 'gazing at, playing in and enjoying nature'"* (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010, p. 29), which might represent a reason behind the approach chosen by Visit Iceland.

4.3.1. Semiotics

With the definition of semiotics in mind, we will now focus on the analysis of the two chosen websites for this study, namely Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland. With this analysis we attempted to identify and interpret the signs incorporated within the two websites, which create meanings and certain representations of Greenland/Iceland in consumers' minds. Eventually, the effects that these signs, and the representations they create, have upon Danish consumers' decision making processes in terms of traveling to Greenland/Iceland, were looked at within the second part of the analysis chapter. Within the Interviewee Analysis Chapter 5, Danish consumers' perceptions were analyzed in relation to the generated impressions of the two websites mentioned above.

Even though representations have an essential contribution in the process of marketing tourist destinations and influential power on decision making (Pennington et al., 2010), according to Pennington et al. (2010) *"there is still little agreement on a basic theoretical framework for the analysis of destination representations"* (Pennington et al., 2010).

Despite the above, Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic model was chosen as a main tool of analyzing representations within the two chosen websites. Each element of Pierce's model is individually interpreted and analyzed, as well as the different relationships between these elements. Yet, it has to be mentioned that the analysis of the identified representations within the two chosen websites, is

strictly based on our interpretation, as well as the possible reflected meaning of these representations. Hence, this initial analysis of the websites' representations is compared and contrasted afterwards with the opinions of our seven interviewees in terms of the generated perceptions of the communication tools used within the websites. Three interviews with the websites' developers, we have previously introduced, were also used in order to see if our interpretation of the websites coincided with what they wanted to project with the websites and the used tools.

C.S. Peirce's model was conceptualized within this analysis as follows:

Semiotic Model of Representation Number 1

Object: the destination per se: Greenland/Iceland
Sign: core attractions within Greenland/Iceland
Interpretant: potential Danish consumer's comprehension of the sign

Semiotic Model of Representation Number 2

Object: the destination per se: Greenland/Iceland
Sign: the websites per se- the used photographs/videos of Greenland/Iceland
Interpretant: potential Danish consumer's comprehension of the sign

The reason why we identified the above mentioned elements is due to the fact that we are interested to see how Greenland/Iceland, as the promoted *object* within the website, is represented. We identified the signs used to describe and create a certain representation of Greenland/Iceland. As such, the signs chosen above were the ones which stand out the most and which were repeated and represented throughout the whole website. As for the chosen interpretants, first the researchers interpreted, from a theoretical point of view, the discussed model and its elements. Then Danish consumers were interviewed in order to find out if their perceptions coincide with our interpretation of what the signs are.

4.2.2. A Semiotic Model of Representation

With the above in mind, we will move forward and start applying the identified elements within Peirce's model, and see throughout the analysis how representation is created and how these elements interact.

A. Visit Greenland's website

Semiotic Model of Representation Number 1

Basing on Peirce's model, it can be argued that within Visit Greenland's website one representation could be formed by the following identified and interpreted elements: the *object* being *Greenland*, the *sign*, which is represented by Greenland's core attractions, namely "*The Big Arctic Five" (dog sledding, northern lights, ice & snow, pioneering people, whales)*, and the *interpretant* formed by the audience, which within this study is composed of potential *Danish consumers*.

Peirce's semiotic model of representation applied on the above identified elements can be found below.
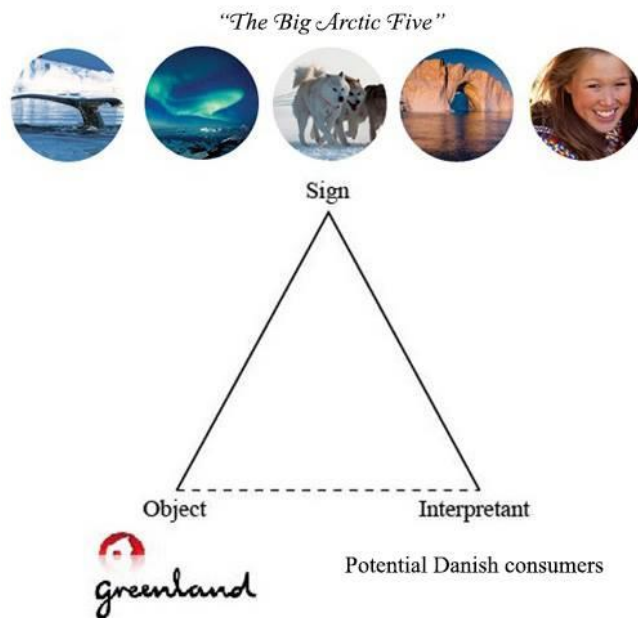
Figure 8 Peirce's semiotic model of representation applied on Visit Greenland's website

(Adopted from Pennington et al., 2010)

Having identified the three core elements within the model, it will be further discussed how representations occur and the ways in which these representations transmit certain meanings, in this case to potential Danish consumers, through the usage of diverse tools, such as visuals.

In order for a representation to occur, two central aspects need to be considered. First, the three elements of the model have to be identified and placed within the model. Second, when looking at Peirce's triangle, it can be noticed a clear indivisible relationship between sign and object, as well

as between sign and interpretant, which should be considered in order for a representation to occur (Pennington & Thomsen, 2010). In other words, these two relationships are fundamental for the occurrence of a representation, as well as the three elements, otherwise a representation would not be able to occur.

In addition to this, **the sign–object relationship** was considered in order to unlock the process of interpretation and meaning making (Johansen, 1993, p. 32, in Pennington et al., 2010). In the present case, Greenland (the object) is directly and closely related with *"The Big Artic Five"* (the sign of interpretation). Consequently, this relationship has a direct influence on the interpretants, namely ourselves and Danish consumer's, due to the collateral experience involved in this relationship, as will be seen further on within this discussion.

As researchers, our collateral experience with regards to Greenland and Iceland, as well as specific attractions they possess, was limited, prior to having started our thesis, despite having previously worked with Visit Greenland's website. However, this changed during the course of writing this thesis, as our background knowledge, both in terms of Iceland and Greenland began to grow, as we collected data and conducted research for the purpose of this study. With this in mind, it could be argued that the way we interpreted the sign-object relation changed during the analysis process, due to the gained knowledge. When we say interpretation, we refer only to our interpretation in terms of Peirce's division of the sign–object relationship into icon, index, and symbol, specifically when we analyzed the provided photographs within the websites, where this concept was applied.

When regarding Visit Greenland's website, it can be argued that the sign-object relationship is clearly envisaged throughout the whole website, which makes consumers unconsciously aware of this relation, which consequently might have an impact. From this impact, both consumers and the website would benefit, as the website would have achieved its goal- to emphasize a clear and coherent link between certain signs and the advertised object (Greenland), and also to have conveyed the desired narrative. As for the Danish consumers, they would be able to recognize in the future possible deeper meanings born from this highlighted relation. This means that they can interpret more meanings from the signs, which are not inherently obvious. An example of this can be seen with the photographs of Greenlandic citizens, which from an initial observation could be interpreted simply as locals wearing traditional clothing, whereas a deeper interpretation could be seen as locals welcoming consumers to share and experience their culture. In addition, depending

on each Danish consumer's relationship to the perceived sign and the object, the sign would be eventually determined to belong to the object- Greenland.

Moreover, Peirce divided the sign-object relationship into **icon, index** and **symbol** (Pennington et al., 2010)**.** Having looked at the website, it was observed that the sign– *"The Big Arctic Five"*- was referred to by using certain images, which only give hints to the object- Greenland. As a consequence, it can be stated that the sign (incorporated in the photographs) in this case is mainly an index. It can be further argued that since the chosen images do not present an iconic type of attraction, which would be easier to recognize or associate to the object in discussion, consumers would not be able to know which object is described by the chosen images, as arctic destinations are similar, but they slightly differ at the same time. The attractions *'northern lights'* and *'wales'* can be easily confused with the attractions Iceland offers for instance, due to identical offered products, even though the experiences might differ from Greenland to Iceland (Appendix 6 b & 6 c). Even in terms of the attraction *'ice & snow'* a confusion can arise as there are other destinations providing experiences which imply *'ice & snow'* and the images provided do not make consumers associate this sign to the object- Greenland. In terms of the attraction *'dog sledding'* it is possible to be regarded as being an icon, an index and a symbol, depending on each individual's collateral experience of this activity and the specific dogs (Appendix 6 e).

However, one of the five attractions, namely *'the pioneering people'* could be easier to recognize due to the traditional worn costumes and possibly also the individuals facial features, which are typical Greenlandic. Yet, this would only happen if the audience -Danish consumers- would have prior knowledge about Greenland and would be able to recognize the previously mentioned signs from the provided images and would directly link it to the object- Greenland (Appendix 6a). As a consequence, it can be argued that *'the pioneering people'* can be regarded as being both an icon and a symbol (depending on the interpretant) since the object's traditions and culture is depicted through one of the nation's symbols- national costumes. This symbolism is implied by the provided photographs, which can be argued that it shows a faithful representation of the cultural and traditional aspect consumers will experience once arrived in Greenland.

Looking from another perspective, it can be said that by using iconic images, Visit Greenland would make consumers aware of a certain icon within Greenland, which in the future would be remembered, recognized and a direct link to the object- Greenland would be successfully made. In this sense, it is possible that Visit Greenland, with its focus on the iconic *'pioneering people'*,

attempts to show and convey to consumers the message that Greenlanders are unified in their pride over their pioneering background and it is a way to differentiate themselves from other destinations offering similar experiences and attractions. The previously mentioned idea suggests that icons are important for a destination, being even able to cause a familiarity feeling with a certain destination (Pennington et al., 2010). This familiarity feeling could be given especially by the *'pioneering people'* attraction, due to the suggestive and expressive photographs provided within the site.

Relating Prentice & Andersen's (2007 in Pennington et al., 2010) idea, that icons help the audience get an idea of the destination and experiences prior to their travel, with the above statement regarding the national costumes, it can be said that Visit Greenland makes use of this approach within their website. This happens when referring to their culture/traditions, which helps consumers create a certain prior image and knowledge about what to expect once they arrive in Greenland. Moreover, the mixture of old/ new and modern/traditional is shown within the pictures, which again express and prepare consumers for a faithful experience once arrived at the destination. Consumers, through the use of photographs depicting Greenlanders using modern day technology such smart phones, are made aware of the fact that Greenland has kept up in terms of technology. Despite Greenland's modernity, it can be seen that Greenlandic traditions are to a certain extent are kept. One example of the traditional aspect is shown in terms of Greenlanders wearing traditional clothing. Regardless, the photographs which are not related to culture and traditions show Greenlanders wearing modern clothes.

With the above in mind, in terms of the signs identified within the *"The Big Artic Five"*, it can be added that Visit Greenland's approach to covey a certain meaning through the used photographs (namely the above discussed signs identified within the photographs) is reflected by Ella Groedem-Senior consultant within e-marketing at Visit Greenland, who states:

"We tried to show a bit of both (nature and culture), but still making it like ... it's always a balance between the main values we want to present and (...)
People are interested in the nature like iconic photos, but it's important for us to tell the story about the pioneering people... it's a combination (of iconic and symbolic)... we know we have to have both. It's based on our segmentation.
Of course many want to see the nature, but there are also (those) who want to see the culture so we want to show them that... we want to meet their expectations" (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014).

The above quote shows that Visit Greenland's focus is precise; targeting directly the 11 identified segments by offering each segment what they are interested in and would like to see once they arrive in Greenland. In doing so, they are using as a means of expression and conveying the desired representation, specific photographs which would appeal each of these segments. She even goes further and makes clear that:

"The photos were chosen so as they will attract specific targets" (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014).

These quotes strengthen the above discussion in terms of what the signs are meant to express, and the way the chosen photographs reflect these signs to create the desired meaning.

Nevertheless, it is possible that Visit Greenland did not want to opt for the approach of using excessive iconic representations, as they did not want to risk becoming generic, which could have an undesirable impact on the audience and destination due to the commonality aspect (Pennington et al., 2010). With this in mind, it can be argued that Peirce's model of representation is subjective, depending from individual to individual the way the sign is perceived. This being said, what is appealing for one person, might be considered banal, common or boring for another person. In the end, each sign might represent something else for each person due to the collateral experience inherent in the interpretation process.

Furthermore, it can be added that Visit Greenland's approach to the use of indexical representations could be appropriate, as this way the object would keep its mystery and at the same time the promise of experiencing what the indexical representations show within the website would be accomplished once the consumer would visit the object- Greenland (Pennington et al., 2010). In the context of the sign- *"The Big Arctic Five"*, Visit Greenland by creating an indexical representation, not including the *'pioneering people'* attraction as discussed earlier, succeeded in tackling consumers' curiosity and appealing them to want to discover more about these five attractions, as could be seen within our data collection. More details about how Visit Greenland quench consumer's curiosity can be found further on within this analysis when the photographs are discussed in more depth.

It could be further argued that once the sign-*"The Big Artic Five"*- would be known by the interpretant through the gained collateral experience, the sign could then be regarded as being

iconic. This is due to its direct resemblance with the object- Greenland, and its enhanced recognizability aspect.

In addition, Pennington et al.'s (2010) indexicality limits the idea that *'destinations are 'constructed' through their representations'* (Pennington et.al, 2010) which we completely agree with, as it is not possible to create a representation only by providing index signs. It could be further argued that it is even possible to confuse the object when index signs are used, due to the fact that one might not clearly identify the right object without having any collateral experience and even so, confusion can occur due to the identical or very similar features of a certain sign. For instance, one of the signs within *"The Big Artic Five",* namely *'the northern lights'* or *'whales'*, could be easily confused with the northern lights/whales from other destinations, and not directly correlate it with the proper object, in this case Greenland.

Moreover, one aspect regarding Peirce's triad which could be considered as being a critique of his model can be brought into this discussion. It can be seen that different signs can have iconic, indexical and symbolic aspects incorporated within it, at the same time, which makes that specific sign–object relationship hybrid (Pennington et.al, 2010; Wells, 1967, p. 104 in Pennington et.al, 2010). We agree with this aspect. Furthermore, as individuals are different having all diverse backgrounds and collateral experiences, means that each person may see the same object differently, due to the sign which is reflecting to each individual a different representation. In addition to this, Leja (2008 in Pennington et al., 2010) suggested that hybridity *"challenges the integrity and value of Peirce's categories"* (Leja, 2008, p. 310 in Pennington et al., 2010), which we disagree with, due to the previously mentioned statement, seeing that collateral experience plays a major role in the way individuals perceive signs and the projected representations.

Regarding the **sign-interpretant relation** we would argue that it is dependent on the interpretant's collateral experience with the discussed object as can be seen below.

In order to reach a more complete understanding of the relationships between the three core elements of the model, the relationship between **interpretant-object** was regarded as well. The interrupted line between object-interpretant refers to what Peirce termed **collateral experience** in the interpretation of representations (Peirce 1931−1958c, 8.314 in Pennington et al., 2010). The previous refers to the fact that in order for the audience to recognize an object by looking at certain signs, a prior knowledge about that object is needed; otherwise a recognition or association to the

object cannot be achieved (Peirce 1931–1958c, 8.314 in Pennington et al., 2010). For instance, in Visit Greenland's case, when Danish consumers look at the proposed images depicting the five arctic attractions of Greenland, a correlation to Greenland might or might not be made as each individual has different knowledge about Greenland. However, after looking at the website, it is certain that in the future our interviewees would associate the object-Greenland to the diverse encountered signs. This is due to the strong emphasis put on the sign *"The Big Artic Five"* through the photographs and videos used, which actually represent the two signs discussed within this analysis. In other words, we are looking at a sign within a sign, namely we look at the sign *"The Big Artic Five"* which is incorporated within the sign *'the website per se- the photographs and videos used'*.

Even so, it can be argued that Visit Greenland attempts to focus on the creation of memories in the audience's mind with the use of visuals, which might be of help when having to recall Greenland and having to identify diverse signs in the future.

The above can be strengthened by the following statement, which clearly shows that a visual impact on consumers when reviewing Visit Greenland's website was wanted:

"We are really much focused on the visual presentation of Greenland (one of the strategy), because Greenland has so much to offer and the best way to do it is not to write about it but to show how it is. We think that our (inaudible) is pretty strong in creating this visual attractive universe" (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014).

Eventually, with the above in mind, it can be argued that it is possible that the high focus on the sign- *"The Big Artic Five"*, within Visit Greenland's website, is a strategy to change tourists' perceptions and ideas about Greenland. The idea being to show that Greenland has diverse and unique products to offer, and it is not only an ice destination, facing certain issues due to the climate change within the past years (Visit Greenland- The Website, 2012). Also, it might be said that Visit Greenland even distracts tourist's attention from the ice melting issue, due to all the focus put on the five core attractions and the usage of realistic photographs to show and convey the narrative they want tourists to perceive from their website.

The above is highlighted by Ella Groedem (Senior consultant within e-marketing at Visit Greenland) who states:

"A more clear focus was needed for Greenland, so we set up a campaign and came up with the concept – the big artic five- (...) we needed a clear and concise focus for Greenland, whereas before it was more disperse like 'oh Greenland has this and that and you could see this or that'.

We needed a single word or a single phrase to describe it, so we came up with 'the big artic five', which are the most popular attractions in Greenland.

(...) So it was to have a more sharp profile of Greenland" (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014).

The above quote shows the reasons for choosing *"The Big Arctic Five"*, but also the fact that since the five attractions are the main focus and they wanted consumers to see and remember them, then it could be argued that indeed *"The Big Arctic Five"* is a sign within Visit Greenland's website- the main sign.

This idea is put forward by Visit Greenland's website designer Franz Berliner, who states:

"What we wanted to do (...) there are a lot of things you can do in Greenland, and if you don't really pinpoint to some of them, then it's all kind of blurry. For example, if you go to Paris, you have to see the Eiffel tower (...) so that hasn't really been communicated before about Greenland... it was just... you go there and see whatever you want and everything is equal. But the idea of the campaign ('the big arctic five') was to promote some specific things you could experience... just to have sort of a hook to have people getting interested in Greenland. They might go and see a lot of other stuff, but it's just more powerful to have a few things that they know they want to see. (...) it is easier to remember it like that and associate it with Greenland in the future" (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

This quote shows that indirectly Visit Greenland and the website designers were applying or at least considering Peirce's semiotic model of representation, due to the fact that they created and focused on a clear sign *("The Big Arctic Five")*, which could be visualized and remembered by the audience once viewing Visit Greenland's website. As a consequence, in the future a direct association to the object- Greenland would be achieved. This statement is further highlighted within the interviews we conducted with Danish consumers, as will be seen later on within the Interviewee Analysis Chapter 5.

Furthermore, it would be more advantageous and powerful to have a specific focus on a certain sign namely *"The Big Artic Five"*, which would act as a definite representation in consumers' minds.

This quote also shows that there is a clear and pre-established centered focus on this sign, which indeed succeeds in being a hook grabbing consumer's attention and interest towards these five attractions as our interviews show.

Moreover, it could be said that the statement *"a few things that they know they want to see"* (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014) namely the usage of the word *"know"* in conjunction with *"want to"*, suggests that Visit Greenland and the web designers attempt to induce within the audience the feeling of wanting to go and see those specific five arctic attractions.

Going even further with the above quote, it can be said that the sign *"The Big Arctic Five"* is in itself an icon. This is due to the fact that the focus put on it acts like, what Franz Berliner as well as Ella Groedem, call a 'hook' meant to be noticed, remembered and recognized as pertaining to Greenland, such as:
"If you go to Paris, you have to see the Eiffel tower (...) so that hasn't really been communicated before about Greenland" (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

It could be further stated that we have identified the representation Visit Greenland attempted to show to the audience, which underlines the fact that Visit Greenland succeeded to convey the desired narrative to its audience.

Semiotic Model of Representation Number 2

In this case, the *object* will remain the same- *Greenland*, as well as the *interpretant,* formed by the audience, which within this study is composed of potential *Danish consumers*. The element that was replaced is the *sign,* which is now represented by *the actual web page of Visit Greenland*, namely *photographs and videos of Greenland.* It was decided to replace the sign and see how the representation would change in this case, due to the fact that Greenland has a high emphasis and focus on visuals, especially photographs and videos, throughout the whole website.
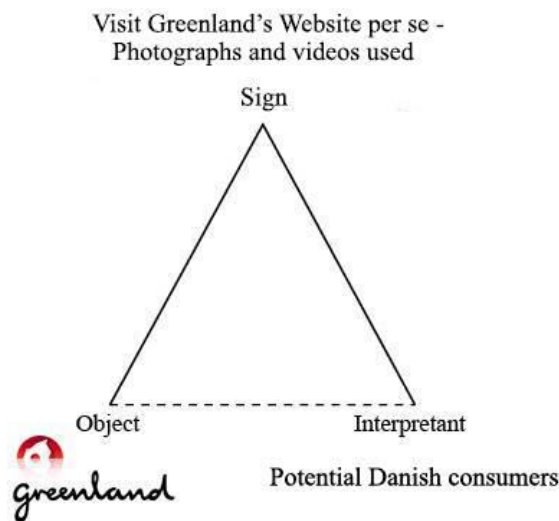
Figure 9: Peirce's semiotic model of representation applied on Visit Greenland's website

(Adopted from Pennington et al., 2010).

Applying Peirce's model to the context of this study, it can be said that when reviewing the website and looking specifically at the used photographs and videos throughout the whole website and within all the categories present on the site, Visit Greenland inclined to create an indexical representation of the object. By this we mean that, even though the majority of the photographs and videos have more indexical aspects, it seems that there are several icons, in terms of certain animals (dogs and musk ox), specific experiences (dog sledding) or traditions (Pioneering culture) which can only be found in Greenland (Appendix 6 a & 6 e). However, it has to be mentioned that, as discussed earlier, the collateral experience of the audience is essential when regarding the signs. As a consequence, it can be argued that if the necessary knowledge regarding certain animals, specific experiences or traditions is not held, then this might affect the way individuals perceive the representations in terms of Peirce's divisions (icon, index and symbol).

In addition, according to Pennington et.al (2010) websites or destination portals such as Visit Greenland can be considered *"collections of signs of those destinations"* (Pennington et.al, 2010). We agree with Pennington et al.'s (2010) statement, as this idea is encountered within Visit Greenland's website, being noticeable that the audience can find within their website diverse signs which have as a main focus the object- Greenland as such. However, it has to be kept in mind that the interpretants' perceptions of certain signs encountered within the website, differs due to *"the*

sign's perceived relationship to the object, the person's collateral experience and the context of interpretation" (Pennington e.al, 2010) as could be seen in the earlier discussion. Hence, the dominant sign present within the whole website refers to the theme of *"The Big Arctic Five"* as previously discussed. This idea was put forward by most of our interviewees, who noticed this sign when reviewing the website.

Moreover, the visual semiotics stressed through the modalities and colours used (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) within the website can be clearly seen to have a high quality and clarity, which gives the audience a feeling of being there and experiencing what is shown in the image. This further highlights the idea expressed in literature that photographs are important for tourism and destination marketing (Jenkins, 2003; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Markwick, 2001; Molina & Esteban, 2006; Prentice, 2004; Scarles, 2004; Singh & Formica, 2007; Wyckoff & Dilsaver, 1997 in Pennington et al., 2010). The statement that photographs are important is put forward by both the website's developers and our interviewees.

As mentioned earlier, the relationship between the sign-object is mainly indexical, which could suggest that Visit Greenland attempted to incorporate specific indexes within the majority of their photos and videos, so as the audience would get a clear impression and taste of what they can expect to see. In terms of the iconic visuals, consumers would be able to become aware of the signs that the object (Greenland) resembles and further develop a certain collateral experience. On the basis of the interviews conducted with Visit Greenland's website designers in addition to the information provided within the website and our interviewees' observations, it can be reasoned that Visit Greenland's main focus is on people and nature representations. In the attempt to make people and nature, Greenlandic icons, both are incorporated in as many visuals as possible.

It can be further added that what we consider to be clear symbols within the website are the ones which are referring to Greenland's culture and tradition, which base on the nation's features. As discussed earlier, it can be said that this sign is mainly a symbol, despite also having iconic features. Also, the nature and some of the experiences (such as dog-sledding) can be interpreted as being both symbols and icons, depending on the interpretant's collateral experience.

According to Pennington et.al (2010) *"the meaning of a symbol is based on social or cultural conventions"* (Pennington et.al, 2010), which means that the interpretation of a symbol is subjective, due to the social and cultural norms on the basis on which a sign is interpreted. It is

however believed that Visit Greenland chose photographs and videos intended to create a representation, which is meant to be interpreted similarly by potential consumers, despite their differences. In other words, since our interviewees are Danish, it is likely that they will interpret the seen photographs and videos similarly, due to the shared social and cultural conventions. Further on, MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997, p. 541 in Pennington et al., 2010) state that *"the potential symbolic interpretation and the evaluation of that interpretation are plural"* (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997, p. 541 in Pennington et.al, 2010) due to social conventions implied in the interpretation.

MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997, p. 541 in Pennington et.al, 2010) go further and state that the symbolic meaning is portrayed by the representation. As such in regards to this, it was noticed that the photographs mainly incorporated different Greenlandic individuals and natural resources, which imply certain experiences and further show the audience a narrative of the object- Greenland. In addition, Pennington et.al (2010) state, that *"the inclusion of people in advertisements may suggest social interaction"* (Pennington et.al, 2010). This statement can be linked to the idea that through the participation of the Greenlandic citizens within Visit Greenland's website, it seems that they accepted the photographs and the advertising approach, which shows that they are comfortable and proud with what is being showed and happening. Because of this, they are more likely to be willing to participate in social interactions with tourists.

Yet, in this case, for a complete meaning to be achieved, the symbolic representation needs to be accompanied by contextual information, which is what Visit Greenland did whenever the symbolic photograph or video needed more precise textual support. On the contrast, purely descriptive photographs, (such as smiling Greenlandic citizens, children playing or tourists enjoying a kayak tour) (Appendix 6 a & 6 f) which clearly 'tell' the audience what they refer to only by looking at the image, were kept without contextual information.

In addition, Ella Groedem - Senior consultant within e-marketing at Visit Greenland, clearly states that:

"We try to let pictures and videos speak for themselves" (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014).

She even goes further and notes that:

"Text is influenced by the photo itself" (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014).

These quotes suggest that visuals are important in conveying the narrative to the audience and they are taken advantage of in order to achieve the goal of conveying the desired narrative. Visuals also have the effect of creating appeal towards consumers, seeing that visuals have the power to influence consumers, as our data collection revealed. As our interviewees stated, by using videos and photographs, consumers get closer to what Greenland has to offer and also get an impression of what they may experience when travelling to Greenland.

All the images and videos used have as a scope the enhancement of a genuine representation, in the sense that given all the visual help, consumers can imagine and project traveling to Greenland more easily than if these tools would be amiss. As our interviewees stated, the videos and photographs act like teasers which enhance our interviewee's appetite and desire to travel to Greenland. Visit Greenland's website designer Franz Berliner highlights this idea by saying that:

"It's more like a feeling we want to give them, that they just want to go there. We did a lot of user testing and all the testers sort of shows that people will start thinking about how it would be to be in Greenland when they see the pictures and the videos. So it is not like to present a specific image in their mind, but it's more of a feeling we want them to have" (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

This quote suggests that the used photographs and videos have a decisive role in grabbing consumer's attention and awaken their interest to travel to Greenland, due to the fact that the chosen photographs and videos aim directly at targeting consumer's emotional side.

 Franz Berliner goes further and states:

"There are a lot of really nice pictures (...) and there is a lot of inspiration from all the pictures and we also had to build the site around the pictures. We wanted to have the pictures being sort of the focus of the website (...) yes, a lot of visuals.
(...) you could have done the site in a lot of different ways (...) but the primary focus is making people want to go to Greenland by seeing great pictures and great adventure stuff" (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

This quote further underlines the idea discussed within the analysis of Model of representation number 2, where the sign is represented by the website, namely the photographs and videos used. Visit Greenland attempts to create a representation by the usage of diverse specifically chosen appealing photographs and videos, which in itself are signs meant to be noticed, recognized and associated to Greenland in the future.

The newly acquired knowledge will further allow consumers to unlock the meanings within the projected signs, and allow interpretation of the exposed signs as pertaining to the object, namely Greenland. Here the idea of time which changes consumers' perceptions due the gained collateral experience can be mentioned. As such, in the initial phase, when consumers regard the website, the perceived signs could be interpreted differently, compared to when they have more background knowledge of the object being perceived.

Yet, it is clearly observed from the above quote that the main desire is to attract consumers, through the usage of the two discussed signs and resulting representations within this analysis – *"The Big Artic Five"* and the website per se, which encompasses the used *photographs and videos*. The clear and strong focus on these two signs is present throughout the whole website and it is put forward by the chosen interviewees as will be seen further on in the Interviewee Analysis Chapter 5. It could be further added that the photographs and videos are in itself a tool for creating the representation of the sign–*"The Big Artic Five"*. In other words, the tools used to convey the narrative within Visit Greenland's site are composed of the two discussed representations, where representation number 2 serves as an inherent tool for conveying representation number 1.

Diverse photographs which we referred to when analyzing this aspect within the website, can be found within Appendix 6.

Having Visit Greenland's website analysis in mind, it can be argued that Pierce's semiotic model of representation has been used within Visit Greenland's website, where we reasoned two clear representations emerged, namely *"The Big Artic Five"* and the *photographs and videos used*. The photographs and videos used helped convey and enhance the desired narrative to the audience by appealing towards consumers' emotions, thus, influencing their perceptions and desire to travel to Greenland, as will be seen later on in the Interviewee Analysis Chapter 5.

B. Visit Iceland's <u>old</u> website

When reviewing Visit Iceland's old website, it was observed that the focus is spread among various attractions and activities, without having a core focus on a few main attractions. By applying this approach, it would have been easier to have a clear and coherent focus on certain attractions, which would have created an identifiable sign, which represents Iceland. As a consequence, the audience would have been able to identify, remember and recognize in the future the signs, which the website used in order to convey meaning and send a certain representation of the object to the audience.

With the above in mind, it could be argued that Visit Iceland's focus is dispersed in multiple directions, which gives a feeling of losing track in following the diverse attractions and activities when reviewing the website. In addition, the website looks simple, having at hand the most commonly used/ needed types of tabs in the upper side of the website, which could be argued is not enough when attempting to appeal consumer's interest and enhance their desire to visit Iceland (Appendix 4). Moreover, the disregard of not using more diverse pictures of the same attractions and activities, and inclusion of videos depicting it, could suggest that they do not seem to put much emphasis on the visual representation aspect within their website. This is despite seeing that *"today, photographs play crucial roles on the websites of convention and visitor bureaus in representing destinations"* (Pennington et.al, 2010).

The above can be linked to what Sveinn Björnsson- Editor of Visit Iceland's new website, stated in regards to the old website. He states that the website was not truly expressing what it should have expressed, and also did not conveyed and projected the desired narrative to the audience:

"The old website wasn't really good to work with and it didn't really have the material we wanted. (...) it was causing us a lot of problems, especially technically" (Björnsson - Editor of Visit Iceland's New Website, 2014).

Since there is not a core focus on a particular attraction/activity or a group of attractions, but the focus is rather varied, we have only identified and interpreted within Visit Iceland's old website one emerging sign.

This being said, we will now apply Peirce's semiotic triangle of representation as follows.

Semiotic triangle of representation

Having looked at Visit Iceland's old website, the interpreted *sign* consists of the *website per se*, namely the *photographs* used to convey meaning and create a certain representation about the *object- Iceland* to the audience. The *audience* being formed of potential Danish consumers.

Figure 10: Peirce's semiotic model of representation applied on Visit Iceland's old website

(Adopted from Pennington et.al, 2010)

After reviewing the website, it can be argued that the signs identified within the website are mainly photographs of different attractions and activities from Iceland. With Peirce's model in mind, it can be further noted that **the sign-object relationship** is indexical, as the provided photographs do no reveal to the audience the fact that the represented object is Iceland. The used photographs might give a slight reference to the object, but the audience should have a minimum collateral experience with the object-Iceland, in order to be able to make the correct association between the signs and represented object. On the contrary, the audience would not be able to identify or interpret in any way the object as such. In addition, it could be argued that the sign- *photographs*, has iconic features, which for the right audience, who have a certain collateral experience with the object-Iceland, would allow the audience to directly associate the sign to its object.

Moreover, the iconic features of the sign could be said to be the ones displaying Iceland's natural resources (such as the Harpa Concert and Conference Centre, Icelandic horse, hills, and birds) (Appendix 7). Yet, as discussed above, if the audience has a certain collateral experience, they might correlate the previous mentioned signs to the actual object- Iceland. In addition, it could be argued that since several photographs presenting the same attraction/activity are not provided, it is

possible that the meaning Visit Iceland attempts to transmit with the created representation, might not be achieved. By this we refer to the fact that more visual representations are needed in order to show the audience what Visit Iceland truly means when referring to unique nature and landscapes. For instance, the Icelandic horse is not emphasized as it should, meaning that consumers cannot clearly relate the horse being a special Icelandic breed. By doing so, the audience would be able to better understand what Visit Iceland attempted to express by visualizing and imagining how it would be to travel to Iceland, having as inspiration diverse photographs as well as videos.

Having looked at the photographs, it was observed that the iconic signs have symbolic features, namely in regards to the Harpa Concert and Conference Centre, as a cultural symbol, and the hills, birds, and Icelandic horse, as a symbol of nature. Since the symbolic aspect is implied by the projected representation, the audience would interpret that projection differently based on each and every individual's social or cultural conventions (Pennington et.al, 2010). Within Visit Iceland's old website, it was noticed that the main focus is on the nature and heritage aspect of Iceland. As a consequence, it can be argued that Visit Iceland is trying to imply through the proposed representations the experiencing of Iceland's nature and heritage. By doing so, they attempt to draw the audience's attention to the nature, so as the nature would be the sign representing Iceland in consumers' minds. In addition to this, as according to MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997, p. 541 in Pennington et al., 2010) the *"inclusion of people in advertisements may suggest social interaction"* (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997, p. 541 in Pennington et al., 2010), which has not been remarked throughout the website. It could be said that the omission of the Icelanders within the photographs could suggest the idea that the Icelanders were not part of the process in the creation of the old website. Also, consumers may get the impression that when visiting Iceland, there may be a lack of social interaction.

Moreover, due to the social convention inherent in the interpretation of a photograph, when symbolic photographs are used, in order for the right and complete meaning to be conveyed to the audience, the image as such should be accompanied by contextual information (Pennington et al., 2010). This is what Visit Iceland did for each of the used photographs within the website (Appendix 7). Yet, when the projected meaning was clear and no textual aid was required, such as in the case of bird watching attraction, the photograph was left to convey the desired meaning.

As seen above, the relation between the **sign-interpretant** is dependent on the collateral experience of the interpretant, namely the relation between the interpretant-object, which has a direct impact on

the way the representation is created. As previously discussed, we agree with Pennington et al.'s (2010) statement that the relationship between sign-object is hybrid, due to the fact that a sign can have iconic, indexical, or symbolic aspects, based on the interpretant's collateral experience. As seen above, we identified and interpreted the sign-*photographs,* as being an index having iconic and symbolic features.

Visit Iceland's <u>new</u> website

Due to the fact that Visit Iceland's website changed in the middle of our research, we have decided to add the analysis of the new website and see how the website changed compared to the old one.

Having looked at the new website, it was observed that it mainly kept the idea of the old website, where the nature and diverse activities are the core focus of Visit Iceland. The discovery and adventure idea accompanied by the 'secrets' and 'inspiredbyiceland' concept are envisaged within the new website, which could be argued give another perspective upon Iceland.

In regards to the above, we would like to add Sveinn Björnsson's (Editor of Visit Iceland's new website) statements which will reveal the new website's aim:

"Visit Iceland's website is just an introductory website to Iceland, not really the sales one" (Björnsson - Editor of Visit Iceland's New Website, 2014).

This statement shows that the new website is meant to inspire action within consumers to travel to Iceland. The means for achieving this goal and the approach has changed, as will be seen further on within this analysis.

In terms of the 'secrets' and 'inspiredbyiceland' concepts, the actual purpose of these campaigns can be seen bellow:

"The main concept for this year's campaign is 'Iceland's secrets', but also the old campaign, which will be prolonged, 'inspiredbyiceland'" (Björnsson - Editor of Visit Iceland's New Website, 2014).

Sveinn Björnsson even goes further and states that:

"The concept behind 'Iceland's secrets' campaign is that we asked people to share their secrets such as family recipes, something that is authentic Icelandic, with the foreign visitors.

(...) The Icelandic people reacted very good to the 'secrets' campaign. (...) There is a fairly (large) amount of secrets which have been shared" (Björnsson - Editor of Visit Iceland's New Website, 2014).

The above quotes suggest the idea that a specific focus exists, meant to be noticed and interpreted by consumers within Visit Iceland's new website, namely 'Iceland's secrets' and 'inspiredbyiceland' concepts. In other words, these two campaigns can be regarded as being an aspect of the narrative, which is desired to be sent to the audience. In the same time, these two concepts could be argued to be seen as two signs, which depict and directly link to the object-Iceland, and implicitly will be further remembered by consumers after having reviewed the website. Moreover, it is seen in the above quote that the Icelandic citizens are part of the 'secrets' campaign, which shows that this concept has been accepted and has the citizen's support. Despite this, Icelanders are not obviously present within the website and used photographs.

Moreover, it is clearly noticeable that Visit Iceland included more photographs within the new website and a more concrete focus on thematizing Iceland in consumers' minds is envisaged by the themes: *Cultural Iceland, Mysterious Iceland, Adventurous Iceland, Pure Iceland,* and *Creative Iceland.* By this we mean that within the new website, it is clearer that Iceland is a diverse land, which has a different array of unique experiences and activities to offer to the audience, which seem to be giving consumers the opportunity to choose which of these themes they want to experience. This idea is emphasized especially by the photographs and video used, and also by the change in approach, namely Visit Iceland's attempt to touch consumers' emotions and interact with them through diverse tools such as visuals, rhetoric and storytelling.

The idea that visuals are of use in appealing consumers and expressing a certain representation, is put forward by Sveinn Björnsson (Editor of Visit Iceland's new website), as seen below:

"The visuals were more important within the overall feel of the website... Iceland is a very virtual (visual) country so to speak, and we have a lot of great photos, and photos is one of the main things that will sell people the idea of Iceland... we wanted to use visuals more" (Björnsson - Editor of Visit Iceland's New Website, 2014).

This quote shows that the importance of visuals was acknowledged and introduced with a much more concrete focus within the new website. In other words, visuals are a tool, both for appealing

consumers to travel to Iceland, and for expressing exactly what Visit Iceland attempts to convey and show consumers in terms of Iceland's possessions and experiences.

Peirce's semiotic model of representation

We will go further and apply Peirce's semiotic model of representation and discuss in more depth the new added photographs, in order to see and show how Visit Iceland's new website changed compared to the old website. Also, the representations that the new website projects to consumers will be looked at, in order to see how this aspect changed compared to the projected representation analyzed within the old website.

Within the old website, there was not a clear and coherent focus on the provided experiences/activities and a certain sign could not really be identified, rather a collection of signs which did not have a concrete and uniform aim were present. Within the new website, the different themes meant to show different facets of Iceland, can be regarded as being a package consisting of five attractions/activities. By having this package, consumers would be more aware of the five existing and shown attractions/activities. This would make it easier for them to remember and recognize Iceland through the packaged attractions and activities in the future. Yet, it has to be mentioned that like within the old website, Visit Iceland still has a dispersed focus, due to the fact that the experiences/activities promoted are diverse and pertain to different categories.

In addition, it has to be mentioned that the five themes encompassing diverse attractions/activities can only be seen once consumers scroll down to the middle of the front page. Because of this it is slightly difficult to clearly notice the themes, since the immediate information which appears on the front page is rather different to the actual separation and thematization of the five attractions/activities (A screenshot will be provided within Appendix 4). By this we mean to say that the five themes containing diverse attractions/activities within Iceland should have been presented from the beginning, if this was to be Visit Iceland's main focus. By having the five themes in the beginning of the website, consumers would notice and be aware that Iceland is focusing on five themes, which are worth seeing when traveling to Iceland. However, it is possible that Visit Iceland 's main focus is 'Iceland's secrets' and 'inspiredbyiceland', seeing that these are the two campaigns being prominently promoted at this point, as Sveinn Björnsson (Editor of Visit Iceland's new website) stated earlier. Several of our interviewees have noticed these two campaigns and considered them as being the main focus within Visit Iceland's new website.

It has to be mentioned that we interpret these five themes composed of diverse attractions and activities, as being a tool used by Visit Iceland in their attempt to attract consumers to travel to Iceland. In addition, it serves as a way for consumers to gain certain knowledge about Iceland and for Visit Iceland to create a certain representation in consumers' minds. However, after having noticed the five themes, it can be said that these themes can be found and observed throughout the whole website, showing that Visit Iceland attempted to create a certain representation of Iceland in consumers' minds by focusing on these five attractions/activities, as seen below.

With Peirce's model in mind, we would say that for the new website, the *object* is *Iceland*, the *sign* is *the five themes*, namely *Cultural Iceland, Mysterious Iceland, Adventurous Iceland, Pure Iceland,* and *Creative Iceland*, and the *audience*, which within this study is composed of potential *Danish consumers*.

Figure 11: Peirce's semiotic model of representation applied on Visit Iceland's new website

(Adopted from Pennington et.al, 2010)

The reason why we chose the five themes as being a sign is related to the idea that they can be argued to be the website's narratives. In addition, it can be argued that the five themes are discreetly inherent within the whole site. As such, this can be considered to be a prominent sign within the website.

It has to mention that the interpretation of the five themes is based on the provided photographs within the site, and on what the signs, inherent in the photographs pertaining to each theme, reflect

to us. Later on, the perceptions of our interviewees will be looked at in order to see how they perceive the website and the signs within the site.

Going further it can be stated that the interpreted **sign-object relationship** in this case is mainly indexical having however more iconic features compared to the old website. In terms of the symbolic aspect, it could be argued that apart from the symbolic themes of nature and culture, there is no clear evidence to suggest other symbolic themes. This is comparable to the old Visit Iceland website. As Pennington et.al (2010; Wells, 1967, p. 104 in Pennington et.al, 2010) state, the sign-object relationship is hybrid, as interpretants can regard a sign *"as having iconic, indexical, or symbolic aspects"* (Wells, 1967, p. 104 in Pennington et al., 2010) based on the collateral experience of each interpretant.

When looking at the *Cultural Iceland*, *Mysterious Iceland, Adventurous Iceland* and *Pure Iceland*, it can be said that the signs from the used pictures are indexes, due to the abstract and broad features of the signs which are mostly composed of nature, such as the sea and several big rocks in the sea (in Mysterious Iceland), or a certain dish, colorful paintings and a man who is looking like Santa Claus (in Cultural Iceland), some spectacular mountains (in Pure Iceland), high hills and snowy mountains (in Adventurous Iceland). Yet, in regards to the sign from the pictures showing the high spectacular hills (in Adventurous Iceland), it could be argued that if the interpretant has a certain collateral experience about the discussed object- Iceland, an association could be reached to this sign, as these hills could be recognized due to the unique imagery of the hills. In the case the interpretant has a certain prior knowledge about this specific sign, the sign-object relation could be considered iconic, due to its direct link to the object- Iceland. These images can be seen in Appendix 8 c, 8 d, 8 a, 8 e)

Eventually in regard to Creative Iceland, it can be said that the two pictures used to describe this theme (Appendix 8 b) are iconic, due to the fact that they show a building- the Harpa Concert and Conference Centre building, which could be regarded as a symbol of Iceland's culture, and also Iceland's flag painted on a child's face. These two signs create a direct link to the object- Iceland, however for this to occur the interpretant has to have prior knowledge about Iceland. On the contrary, if the interpretant does not possess any prior knowledge about Iceland and cannot recognize these specific signs, then the signs are regarded as being indexes by those interpretants.

In terms of the indexical feature of the signs, it can be said that it is apparent within the majority of the photographs, due to the fact that it implies certain characteristics of the depicted attraction/activity consumers will find once arrived at the destination.

With the above in mind, it can be argued that the indexicality aspect is predominant within Visit Iceland's website. This can be considered as being a strategic choice as it acts as a teaser, which does not reveal from the beginning all of Iceland's attractions/activities, but rather gives consumers the opportunity to do so once arriving at the destination. As according to Pennington (et al., 2010) by doing so, 'generica' can be avoided by creating a mystery around the unrevealed experiences Iceland offers. Yet, as seen above, the indexes contain iconic features, which for interpretants who possess a certain prior knowledge about the object-Iceland might have a different impact. Consumers who do not have any prior knowledge, would benefit from gaining knowledge of Iceland, as this would allow them to associate the seen iconic signs within the website with the proper object-Iceland.

Even though by using indexical signs a sense of mystery is kept and by using iconicity, 'generica' might emerge, both approaches have a benefit upon the object, as interpretants would be more aware of certain aspects of the object (icon) and would be curious to discover and see more of what the object has to offer (index). This means that icons will give to the interpretants the recognizability and familiarity features in terms of the object, while the indexes would increase the interest due to the small hints provided within the visualized photographs (Pennington et al., 2010). It could be further argued that indexes show features of the object-Iceland, and act like a promise that the features regarded in the pictures would be there once consumers arrive at the destination (Pennington et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the relationship between **sign-interpretant** is driven by what Peirce termed collateral experience of the interpretant, namely the object-interpretant relationship, which allows the interpretant to recognize and associate the signs with the proper object-Iceland, as discussed above.

We will further argue that, even though the context of interpreting the projected representations of the two chosen websites consisted of looking at the websites and knowing what the represented object was, we still regarded the sign and the relationships between the three elements of Peirce's model as if we did not know the object. Moreover, by applying Peirce's model and identifying and interpreting the projected representations (to us), we attempted to see how the two websites are

trying to communicate a narrative to the audience and what are the means used to transmit the desired narrative. Also, the way the audience perceived the conveyed narrative, will be seen further on in the Interviewee Analysis Chapter 5, in order to see how our interviewees regard the two websites, the signs and the representations within the sites.

In terms of the visuals used meant to emphasize the sign and create a representation, it can be concluded that:

- Visit Greenland's site has a double focus within the website. The first focus being the creation and conveyance of a clear and coherent representation of Greenland by using *"The Big Artic Five"* as a sign. The second focus being the genuine *photographs* and *videos* proposed to highlight and enhance the sign, which have the effect of increasing the awareness and recognizability of *"The Big Artic Five"*, and as a result the object-Greenland. As a consequence, consumers would be in a better situation to identify the object-Greenland in the future, when presented with the visuals within Visit Greenland's website. It is apparent that both focuses are interactive with each other and so the success of each focus relies on the success of the other focus. In other words, without the photographs, *"The Big Artic Five"* would not be as appealing. Without *"The Big Artic Five"*, photographs would lose a lot of their inherent meaning.

- Visit Iceland's old website had a dispersed focus, which could be regarded as being too simplistic, especially in the online environment, seeing that *"rapid growth in international tourism and increasingly sophisticated media information systems have brought about a surge in the circulation of online visual images"* (Hunter, 2013).
  However, the main focus is on the natural resources, which seems to be the representation Visit Iceland attempts to show to the audience, through the usage of its limited photographs.

- In terms of Visit Iceland's new website, while it seems that there still is a dispersed focus, the inclusion of the five themes begin to give the impression that Visit Iceland is attempting to create a more focused package. This new rising focus area, composed of the five themes *Cultural Iceland*, *Mysterious Iceland, Adventurous Iceland* and *Pure Iceland,* allows the picture's iconic aspect to have more impact on the consumers. With more focus put onto these five themes, it is possible that each of these themes will eventually become an icon. As of now however, the photographs arguably present more indexical features of Iceland.

Having analyzed the two websites, it was noticed that both of them seem to express a hybrid type of relation between the sign-object discussed. Despite this, it can be argued that Visit Greenland's website, when looking at the sign *"The Big Artic Five"* campaign, represents a more iconic form of representation as a whole. Through interviews with the website's developers, it was made apparent that the goal was to make the *"The Big Artic Five"* campaign an icon for people to remember. When looking at the Visit Iceland's old website, due to the barren layout of the website and lack of visuals, the impression given was that there was no clear focus within the website. The limited images did not manage to convey much meaning and so it is argued that they contain predominantly indexical qualities. As for Visit Iceland's new website, it can be said that it still keeps its indexical nature, however iconic aspects begin to emerge due to the newly added visuals.

Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that this might have happened due to the fact that we interpreted the signs within the two chosen websites on the basis of our understanding and collateral experience, which could be different if other individuals regard Visit Greenland's and Visit Iceland's old and new websites, as the collateral experience differs from person to person.

Moving on, visual representations achieved through the usage of photographs, especially within websites, are crucial to destination representations. As a consequence, the photographs used within the chosen websites, will be discussed below.

Photographs as representations within Visit Greenland's website

Due to the diverse meanings photographs suggest to the audience and also the complexity of the incorporated signs, photographs can be regarded as being a system of signs (Day, Skidmore, & Koller, 2002; Debord, 1995 in Hunter, 2013). This shows that photographs are important, due to the connotations implied and the multitude of meanings they convey.

According to Billig (2006 in Hunter, 2013), in tourism, photographs are a form of representation which have the power to influence tourists' choices (Silver, 1993 in Hunter, 2013). In other words, it could be said that in the consumer's case, when they regard certain photographs, those photographs might awaken a certain feeling in which they would find or would like to find themselves in. This feeling is directly linked to that certain image and the experience described in it. Furthermore, it could then have an effect and change consumers' choices in terms of travelling to a certain destination, meaning that they could choose one destination over the other, or even decide

travelling to a certain destination due to the regarded images, as will be seen later on within the Interviewee Analysis Chapter 5.

According to our interviewees, photos are important and the way websites, in the present case, make use of photographs is essential in the attempt to attract consumers to travel to a certain destination. As our analysis revealed, photos have the power to influence consumers, seeing that the lack of photos, as seen within Visit Iceland's old website, make consumers disregard the website, and as a result the destination. In comparison, the high usage of both photos and videos within Visit Greenland's website has the effect of enhancing consumers' desire to travel to Greenland, and to remember both the site and destination.

The previously mentioned idea is exactly what Visit Greenland attempted to do with the usage of photos within their website, as according to Visit Greenland's web designer Franz Berliner:

"It's more like a feeling we want to give them, that they just want to go there. We did a lot of user testing and all the testers sort of shows that people will start thinking about how it would be to be in Greenland when they see the pictures and the videos. So it is not like to present a specific image in their mind, but it's more of a feeling we want them to have" (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

In addition, in the context of this study, when Danish consumers regarded Visit Greenland's website, they were immediately attracted by the photographs provided within the website, and instantly had a thought of wanting to travel to Greenland. Consumers begin imagining themselves being in Greenland, due to the visualized photos and videos. In other words, the photographs would be the push factor that would stimulate consumers to visit Greenland.

This idea is further emphasized by Ella Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing at Visit Greenland, who notes:

"We wanted a visual website to be really appealing so they (the website designers) came up with the idea of a background video but we choose and made the videos and pictures" (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014).

The above quote clearly shows that having a visual appealing website was the strategy applied by Visit Greenland in their attempt to attract consumers, by using and having a high emphasis on diverse photographs and videos. This way, Visit Greenland achieved its goal, seeing that all our

interviewees were very much appealed by Greenland and Visit Greenland's website as such. Also, the visuals within the website enhanced their desire to travel to Greenland more.

The above can be linked to the earlier mentioned concept of narrative, as it can be said that throughout the website, Visit Greenland might have tried to *"brand a destination experience rather than the actual physical attributes of that destination"* (Hudson et.al, 2009), which according to Schmitt (1999 in Hudson et.al, 2009), *"further creates a link between that certain brand and the consumer"* (Schmitt, 1999 in Hudson et.al, 2009). Visit Greenland's approach is encountered throughout the whole website, and it can be clearly noticed when looking at the photographs capturing Greenland's culture and traditions and even its nature. This is presented by the diverse experiences consumers could enjoy once arriving at the destination. Visit Greenland's website designer Franz Berliner goes even further and notes that:

"There are a lot of photos from Greenland that are just icebergs, whales (...) but Visit Greenland wanted to have more people in the suits, there is more culture in there, instead of just having nature experiences.. It is sort of meeting between nature and pioneering people in Greenland" (Berliner-Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

This quote emphasizes that by adding Greenlandic citizens in the photographs a deeper bond could be established between the audience and Greenland as such. It also has the effect of introducing elements of the country's culture to consumers, as such it could be regarded a symbolic representation.

In addition, this quote hints to the idea of Peirce's division of the sign-object relation discussed earlier, where the icebergs and whales can be considered as being indexes, which are mostly used to depict Greenland. Another view comes into the discussion, namely the inclusion of icons within photos, such as Greenlanders and their national costumes, which would create a memorable representation of Greenland, due to the unique features of the culture and traditions, which can be clearly observed within the Visit Greenland's website.

It could be further argued that the narrative, which Visit Greenland attempts to convey to the audience, is created within their website mainly through the usage of visuals, but also the Communications. This idea is strengthen by Visit Greenland's website designer Franz Berliner's assertion, as seen below:

"The strategy was to use more pictures, have an experience (...) having the pictures take of more space on the site and not have all the information sort of cramped... The website had to sort of speak more to the heart than to the mind and make people really want to go there" (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

This quote clearly suggests the idea that visuals have a core importance within the website in the attempt to convey the desired narrative and implicitly consumer's attraction to travel to Greenland. In addition, the concept of experiential marketing can be observed within this quote, which again is addressed by the high use of visuals, which have the role to appeal towards consumers' emotions when reviewing the provided photographs, rather than showing the physical resources Greenland possesses without any other emphasis on sensing any possible experiences Greenland might offer.

Furthermore, it can be argued that photographs are considered to be faithful, due to the fact that they *"are representations that act like empirical objects and true descriptions"* (Brown, 1995; Hendry, 2005; Wolcott, 1995 in Hunter, 2013). Yet, photographs are also deceptive due to their reliance on individuals' social conventions (Hollinshead, 2000 in Hunter, 2013). We agree with the previously mentioned, as the audience would expect to experience the representations that they created in their minds through the visualization of the photographs provided on the site. Once arrived at the destination they assume that their expectations would be met and what they visualized within the seen photographs or videos from home will be encountered at the destination exactly as it was presented. As such, in terms of meeting the locals or whale watching, it might be possible not to be able to encounter the same experience highlighted in the photos. This is due to the possible unavailability of the citizens at that certain time and at that specific place, but also due to the way consumers filtered the shown visuals because of their social conventions. For instance, even though the photographs picture Greenlanders wearing their national costumes, it is possible that they do not really wear these costumes regularly.

On the other hand, there are pictures comprising of Greenlandic adults and children wearing usual clothes, which shows that Visit Greenland attempted to express the other side of the locals, who are modern, using smart phones and Internet, and even riding scooters. In fact, the representation meant to be conveyed, through the photos that have as a focus the locals, is of a mixture between traditional and modern (Appendix 6 a).

In regards to the above, Ella Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing at Visit Greenland states:

"We want to be honest and tell consumers the truth and show things exactly as they are. (...)
It's a mixture between traditional and modern" (Groedem- Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland, 2014).

Photographs as representations within Visit Iceland's <u>old </u>website

In Visit Iceland's case, the lack of photographs within the old site might have a negative influence upon consumers, as there are only 12 pictures which depict the diverse attractions/activities tourists could experience. This idea indeed became apparent among our interviewees, who considered the site as being boring and uninteresting, making them disregard it and the destination as such. The lack of videos, in connection to the photographs, might be another minus point in this regard, as a better visual representation of the promoted attractions/activities would be appreciated by the audience and it might even have an effect on their perceptions and decisions in terms of visiting Iceland.

As seen earlier, visuals have a solid impact on consumers since *"photographs influence travel decisions"* (Holloway & Robinson, 1995 in Hunter, 2013). The previously mentioned lines were brought into the discussion by most of our interviewees, who stated that the lack of visuals is noticeable and by not having photos which describe Iceland, they simply cannot make an idea of how Iceland is and how its attractions/activities look like. They need photos in order to be able to imagine and project themselves being in Iceland by visualizing diverse pictures.

The photographs provided on the website, seem genuine and seem to represent a faithful description of Iceland (Brown, 1995; Hendry, 2005; Wolcott, 1995 in Hunter, 2013), which would be encountered by tourists once they arrive at the destination. In addition, the photographs presented within Visit Iceland's old website can be regarded as a different set of signs by the audience, which makes them have multiple meanings and explicitly diverse representations to different individuals.

However, it can be argued that as according to (Hollinshead, 2000 in Hunter, 2013) *"photographs are also deceptive because like other representations, their messages are based on social conventions"* (Hollinshead, 2000 in Hunter, 2013). This statement can be linked to the idea that Danish consumers once arrived in Iceland might not be satisfied by what they see/experience,

which would in turn give a feeling of disappointment, as based on the provided and seen pictures before the departure, they have created a certain image of the object- Iceland. Even though there is a lack of photographs provided within the old website, it can be argued that the photos are qualitative in terms of the used modalities and colours. This was also noticed by our interviewees. The high modality, which is reflected by the clarity and colours of the photos, expresses a genuine representation of what is being shown.

It is evident that in Visit Iceland's old website's case, the lack of pictures and videos is noticed by our interviewees and it has a detrimental effect. This has a negative impact on the website, as it did not generate appeal within consumers, to either view the site or to enhance their desire to travel to Iceland.

Photographs as representations within Visit Iceland's <u>new</u> website

The first aspect we noticed within the new website was that Visit Iceland included more photographs. It can be argued that this was done in order to better convey the desired narrative regarding the created representations. This can be compared to the old website where only 12 pictures were used, which was repeating throughout the whole website, creating a feeling of boredom as well as lack of interest and appeal. As discussed earlier, the visual's significance was recognized, as well as the benefit the usage of visuals had upon the website per se and the consumers, seeing that now photographs are a tool used within the new website:

"If we see a good photo we will use that as a tool to make it (the website) more appealing" (Björnsson - Editor of Visit Iceland's New Website, 2014).

Regarding the used photographs, it has to be mentioned that it is noticeable, especially in the case of the *Mysterious Iceland* and *Pure Iceland* themes, that some of the used images give a feeling of having been digitally modified. It could be added that the used modalities and colors (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) are significant contributors in the creation of a representation due to the genuine projection of the object and the coloration used. These modified photos give the impression that the photos have low modality, as they contain unnatural coloration. This can be compared to other high modality photos, which do not possess modified color saturation, differentiation and illumination, giving the feeling of being natural (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

This may give the impression that it is possible that once arrived in Iceland, the experience would be different compared to the provided pictures, which means that the pictures are arguably unfaithful in their representation of Iceland. The modified photos add an extra element of deceptiveness to the concepts brought forth by Hollinshead (2000 in Hunter, 2013), when saying that photographs might be deceptive, due to the fact that their interpretation relies on consumers' social conventions (Hollinshead, 2000 in Hunter, 2013). (Appendix 8 d & 8 e). Despite this element of deception and unfaithfulness, the result are not always negative as can be seen from interviewee's 5 assertion, who stated that even though the photos are modified and may deceit her, she is actually attracted by this modification and it gives the photo a more interesting touch, which appeals to her even more.

Even though the social conventions have an essential role in the way consumers interpret photographs, the way that a representation is projected through the usage of images is significant too. In other words, the image's consistency, the used modalities and colors (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) help create a representation, which will further influence tourist choices (Silver, 1993 in Hunter, 2013) and their perceptions of what is shown too. In addition, since the interpretants in this case are potential Danish consumers, the social conventions inherent in the Danish culture may influence the way Danes perceive photographs and the meanings the photographs are trying to convey within Visit Iceland's new website. Even though we agree with the idea that photographs could be deceptive, we also believe that photographs show a somewhat genuine representation of the object- Iceland (Brown, 1995; Hendry, 2005; Wolcott, 1995 in Hunter, 2013), as well as of the signs- the five themes, namely *Cultural Iceland, Mysterious Iceland, Adventurous Iceland, Pure Iceland*, and *Creative Iceland.* In other words, consumers would most likely meet their expectations based on the seen pictures once they arrive in Iceland.

Yet, one aspect which we noticed when reviewing the photographs, within all the presented five themes which encompass diverse activities/attractions within Iceland, was that when looking at the section 'Culture' within the website, the focus was put on four activities/attractions, which include festivals, museums, dinning and shopping. When we saw the tab 'Culture' we expected to be introduced to the Icelandic culture, and not only the above four mentioned activities/attractions. While these four attractions/activities do represent certain elements of the country's culture, we expected to find more information with regards to Iceland's traditions and customs. What we want to underline with the previous statements is that we expected to see and get to know the Icelanders,

as well as their culture. It could be argued that we are biased when defining the term culture, as we tend to understand it as the more traditional side of culture. Visit Iceland on the other hand, has presented their culture in terms of their modern culture.

Furthermore, not even when mentioning one of the five themes, which as seen above, could be argued to represent one of Visit Iceland's main focuses throughout the whole website, namely *Cultural Iceland*, the highlighted aspects are linked to food, Santa Claus, Iceland's national flag and a specific building in Iceland (Appendix 8 c).

In addition to the cultural idea, it can be stated that when looking at the photographs, an emphasis on Iceland as being a modern country was noticed. Again, the traditional aspect of Iceland seems to be disregarded and cannot be found within the website or the provided photographs. This idea is strengthen by the used photographs showing diverse new buildings, shopping centers, dinning places as seen in Appendix 9. The previous mentioned could be linked to Edwards (1996 in Hunter, 2013) idea saying that *"photographs are accompanied by certain unstated intentions, or connotations"* (Edwards, 1996 in Hunter, 2013), which could hint to the idea that Visit Iceland's interest is to show to consumers that Iceland is a modern country rather than a traditional one.

With the above in mind, it could be argued that the sent message in terms of Culture might be interpreted in different ways, as the impression we get is that traditions might not be kept and a willingness to evolve and become modern is desired. However, it is also possible that the representation Visit Iceland wants to transmit to consumers is that Iceland is a modern site, which is worth seeing due to this modernity aspect.

In addition to photographs, it seems that:

"The main goal was the quality of the photos (...) we didn't really regard the iconic, indexical or symbolic aspect of what the pictures represent" (Björnsson - Editor of Visit Iceland's New Website, 2014).

With this assertion in mind, it can be stated that since quality is a core asset in terms of photos, it is evident that modality and colours (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) have been used as a strategic tool in the attempt to appeal consumers. It was apparent that Visit Iceland used high modality among most of the provided photos. This means that a faithful representation of the depicted attractions/activities was mainly obtained. Regardless, the website included a few photos with low

modality, which can be clearly noticed are modified and might not truly be a faithful representation of that certain attractions, as we discussed earlier (Appendix 8 d & 8 e).

It could be further said that Visit Iceland's focus was on what the pictures contain and show to the audience, rather than selecting specific photos encompassing iconic, symbolic or indexical representations, due to the fact that:

"We prefer photos that have people in it or has an activity in it rather than just landscape.
It's a way to show that it's more than just landscape, it's something that you can be part of, do something... show that this is the place for you to come and do something with it in, rather than just to look at it.
Usually, we get more response to a photo if there are people in it" (Björnsson - Editor of Visit Iceland's New Website, 2014).

This quote hints to the idea that by having photos depicting individuals experiencing certain activities or visiting an attraction, the activities/attractions are better received by consumers and it says more, rather than having purely descriptive photos of landscape and nature, which strictly show certain hills, mountains, etc. This idea could be considered as being a tool, which Visit Iceland applies within its website knowing that this approach will appeal consumers more. In addition, it is also possible that by showing the tourists in the process of experiencing Iceland's attractions/activities, other consumers could identify themselves with the ones in the pictures. Also, they could even get an impression of who the tourists travelling to Iceland are (the target group).

However, with the above assertions in mind, it can be argued that we identified certain photographs as being iconic, symbolic and indexical, each of which can have different features, as discussed earlier. Even though the identified photographs possess the previously mentioned aspects, it is evident that most of them (as can be seen in the diverse Appendixes we refer to) encompass tourists experiencing the diverse attractions/activities Iceland provides. This can further suggest the idea that Visit Iceland attempts to show consumers that the tourists visiting Iceland had a pleasant time there and the pictures reflect that joy and fulfillment. In other words, this approach of using pictures which contain diverse tourists experiencing Iceland, can be regarded as being an assertive feedback from the behalf of other tourists who already visited the destination. At the same time, by including tourists within photos, it allows potential tourists to project themselves experiencing the same attractions/activities, which gives the added impression that it is more than just sightseeing. As

Sveinn Björnsson notes, this approach gives more input and it seems to be productive and appeals towards consumers more.

Since photographic representations reflect diverse signs, which have different meanings for consumers (Day, Skidmore, & Koller, 2002; Debord, 1995 in Hunter, 2013), it could be argued that photographs are subjective and open to interpretation. As was seen above, photographs are interpreted by consumers once they have filtered them through consumers' social conventions (Hollinshead, 2000 in Hunter, 2013). This idea can be further linked to Peirce's semiotic model of representation, which in terms of the three chosen websites' representations can be considered to be hybrid, due to the diverse connotations the signs have for each individual, based on their collateral experience (Pennington et al., 2010).

It can be asserted that photographs indeed act as are representations and marketers need to decide which signs (within the photos) they are going to focus on in order to convey a certain meaning and explicitly a representation of the promoted destination.

In terms of Peirce's semiotic model of representation, we would conclude with what Pennington (et. al., 2010) have stated as seen below:

"Since a sign can never represent an object in its totality, destination marketers must decide which aspects of the object any given sign is meant to represent and what role the various sign–object relationships should play because these will shape the perception of the object in the generation of an interpretant" (Pennington et al., 2010).

We agree with the above, as sign's interpretation is subjective and is strictly based on each individual's prior knowledge about the discussed object. At the same time, it is equally significant to consider what the marketers want to convey to the audience, and how they want the audience to perceive an object. It seems that in Visit Iceland' case, the chosen sign-object relation is mainly indexical, with iconic features.

Chapter 5 Interviewee Analysis

After having analyzed the two chosen websites for this research, namely Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland (old and new website), we will now go deeper and analyze what our interviewees (*Danish consumers*) have said in regards to these two websites and also the impact these websites have on them, as potential consumers. The influence of the websites per se on consumers' decision making

process to travel to Greenland/Iceland will be looked at in order to see why and how websites, implicitly the strategic communication tools applied within these websites, can impact consumers and also, the possible benefits the application of certain tools might have on the website per se.

We have interviewed seven Danish consumers in total. Due to the fact that Visit Iceland's website changed in the middle of our research, we decided to collect a follow up interview with the interviewees who were already interviewed prior to the website's change, in order to get their perspective on the new website and see if there is any change in the way the interviewees regard the new website compared to the old one. The interviewees who provided us a follow up interview are interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

The following analysis will have as basis the theory and the first part of the analysis, namely the analysis of the two chosen websites. We will not go through the theory again, but we will identify within the theory and the first part of the analysis, similar concepts that were brought into the discussion during the interview, in order to see how the interviewees regard and react to the discussed concepts, as will be seen below. Moreover, we will look at how the interviewees are affected by certain strategic communication tools applied within the two websites, meant to appeal consumers to travel to Greenland/Iceland. Also, in order to strengthen both parts of this analysis, we conducted three interviews with the web developers of the two chosen websites- Visit Greenland and Visit Iceland.

5.1. Narratives and Storytelling

As one of the tools discussed within the analysis were the concepts of narrative and storytelling, this will be the starting point of our interviewee analysis. Before proceeding, it is worth mentioning that the interviewees' comments were related more towards the actual act of telling a narrative rather than the narrative itself. When interviewing to our respondents we found that when it came to the concept of storytelling, our interviewees were split in terms of whether or not they saw a narrative being told within the selected websites. Despite this, most of our interviewees stated that they considered storytelling to be an important concept within websites as it helped them maintain interest within the site. For example interviewee 3 mentioned:

"yea I think story telling is important because I think to capture, to make it more, I don't want to say suspense, but I think it's important to have storytelling because I could easily go to any website

to Wikipedia and look at Greenland to look at facts but it's more personal when you can see that they are trying to make it into a story and trying to make you intrigued and get your attention" (Interviewee 3- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

According to interviewee 3 having a website telling a narrative rather than just giving out facts, makes the website more intriguing and attention grabbing. This supports McLellan (2006)'s comments that narratives are a way of *"framing information so that it is understandable, meaningful, and memorable"* (McLellan, 2006). Interviewee 7 states a similar notion:

"if there are three websites that say exactly the same thing then they would have to have something really unique about them to (attract the interviewee)…it could be the way they present the information and it could be the language they use" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

What can be deduced from the quotes above is that the presentation of the website is important in keeping the users interested. To interviewee 7, the extra effort put into making the information appealing and attractive is noticed and has the result of creating a preference for that site over others.

On that note, when considering the responses from our interviewees, none of the websites were unanimously said to have an inherent narrative within them. Visit Greenland, and the New Visit Iceland websites did better according to our interviewees while the old Visit Iceland was never really mentioned at all, when the concept of storytelling and narratives was being discussed.

A few examples of our interviewee's statements with regards to noticing elements of storytelling include: *"…yea again Greenland's website tries to tell a story … I come back to the Arctic Five it's like the red thread that goes through the entire website and that, I think, is the story it tells"* (Interviewee 2- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website). Here it is mentioned that Visit Greenland's website has a narrative within it being told by *"The Big Arctic Five"* campaign.

Interviewee 3 goes on to provide a comparison, where she states: *"I mean the way that Greenland (presented itself), I mean it was more like storytelling, it was a story that they were telling… In Iceland (old Visit Iceland) it was more precise, it was facts they were using words, but in Greenland they were really trying to tell the story"* (Interviewee 3- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website). From an analytical perspective, the statement provided alludes to the

concepts of logos and pathos. This can be seen in the sense that Visit Greenland's website, which, as we can see from the first quote within this chapter interviewee 3 preferred due to its more *'personal'* feel. In contrast, this differed from the more logos filled old Visit Iceland website.

Interviewee 5 states: *"inspiration and uniqueness is easier to connect with and it's easier to get inspired with, so the message, the overall message of uniqueness is definitely coming out in this one (new Visit Iceland), while in the old one it was more hidden"* (Interviewee 5- Visit Iceland's new website). This notion, which implies that the new Visit Iceland website is an improvement over the old one due to its changes and its newfound ability to convey the narrative, was also mentioned by all of our interviewees.

Despite the above, a few of our interviewees quite simply just stated *"Hmm no I can't say that I did"* (Interviewee 4- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website) and *"not really"* (Interviewee 5- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website) when asked whether they saw a story in any of the sites. One of the reasons for this is arguable due to the fact that to the interviewees the word 'story' could be interpreted in a different way to how this study defines it. By this it is reasoned that our interviewees interpreted the word 'story' in a manner which relates to the act of reading a book. This is in many ways different from what is being done within the websites. It became apparent that for some interviewees, after explaining some of the concepts behind the definition of 'story' this paper used, they would agree that the concepts themselves were there, however they were still reluctant to call it a story as it did not fit their definition of a story. This can be seen from the following statement:

"...when you mention it and I read through the text here in the beginning in the home page then I can see ok, I can see your point, but it's not something I consciously thought of…"No I didn't really notice a story, at least not in the same way" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

Regardless, this did not prevent the interviewees from noticing the emotional laden presentations that the websites where using. The appeal to emotion would also play a major role in determining which website enticed the interviewees the most.

What we deduce from the statements above is that our interviewees said that storytelling is important and that it has the effect of making the website more memorable and interesting. However not all our interviewees experienced storytelling within the sites and those who did,

mentioned that it was mostly the Visit Greenland and the new Visit Iceland websites that showed elements of storytelling.

5.2. Experiential Marketing- Appeal to Emotion

It was observed from the interviews, that the interviewees' emotions were influenced in one way or another when it came to Visit Greenland's website and to a lesser degree the new Visit Iceland website. For example when it was asked if interviewee 2's emotions were influenced by the new Visit Iceland website, he said *"Absolutely"* (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website) and when asked if the same could be said with regards to visit Greenland they said:

"Absolutely because they (Visit Greenland) talked about the five pillars (Big Arctic Five) and I see the (New) Iceland website is more or less trying to do the same thing because you open up the page and you can see that there are four or five things that will go through to wake up your appetite and its built the same way, to awaken your appetite to make you want to learn more" (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website).

While this sentiment was expressed by other interviewees there were a few, such as interviewee 4 who stated *"It (the old Visit Iceland's site) probably just caters more to the specific kind of way I want to travel than the Greenland site"* (Interviewee 4- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

It is worth mentioning however, that for interviewee 4, he had previously wanted to go to Iceland and he had an idea of the activities he wanted to experience. This meant that even before the interview, he had an inner desire to visit Iceland which meant that he was more excited to see the Visit Iceland website regardless of whether it was the old or new site. Despite this, there were other interviewees who expressed their desire to visit Iceland more than Greenland, who mentioned that the Visit Greenland website had a bigger overall effect on them.

From the interviewees' statements, we noticed that their emotions were primarily influenced by the visuals, which include both the videos and pictures in addition to the musical representations within the videos rather than the text. From interviewee 7 we observe that:

"The video makes you feel more like you are experiencing it than the writing and it's also more memorable, you can relax, you don't have to think that much. For me because I have so many things in my head, if I'm reading I don't necessarily catch every word, I kind of drift off and (think

to myself) 'oh what did I read again, ah ill just continue reading' so I don't catch on, on everything, but when you watch the videos its right in front of you so it's hard to miss" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

This falls in line with what Franz Berliner mentions in regards to how the website was meant to function:

"We could have done the website in a lot of different ways, we could have optimized for search engines and you could have a lot of text and stuff like that but the primary focus was making people want to go to Greenland by seeing great pictures and great adventure stuff" (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

From our interviewees, it became clear, that the fact that Visit Greenland uses visuals as their primary form of presentation, led to the site having the tendency of being more memorable than the old visit Iceland webpage. Visuals played such a major role in influencing our interviewees, that they even state that too much text has a negative impact on the website's appeal. Interviewee 5, for example, mentioned:

"Iceland's site (Old Visit Iceland) is really boring...it's just out of date and it's just text and text and text and (the) same five pictures going on in each page. I like Greenland's site more...they have less text and more pictures" (Interviewee 5- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

According to Franz Berliner: *"We (The website designers and Visit Greenland) conducted a lot of user tests, The tests show that people will start thinking about how it will be in Greenland when they see the pictures and videos so it's not to present a specific image in their mind it's more of a feeling we want them to have"* (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

This gives us the direct impression that Visit Greenland knew the effect that visuals had on consumers and the importance of the consumer emotions. Ultimately this had a major influence on the overall design of Visit Greenland's website.

This notion, about the importance of visuals and appeal towards emotion is, as we discussed earlier within the Analysis Chapter 4, part of Visit Greenland's narrative. This is supported by Franz Berliner's statements of:

"We wanted to send a signal about it being an adventure destination. and that sort of built into the design for example the font is a font we made up and it's called pioneer brush... so font is also conveying the meaning." and *"every page in the website should tell the story of this pioneering and adventure destination, it's in the text and what's around the text, the pictures chosen for different things that they are communicating the same thing"* (Berliner- Visit Greenland's Website Designer, 2014).

What becomes clear from our interviews is that adding emotion to the way the website and the language is presented has a positive effect on the site users. However, there was emphasis that the videos and pictorial forms of representation had the greatest overall effect on the users compared to the text and language. By interviewing the web designers, we are told that this was also their goal.

It could be said that the fact that Visit Iceland's old site was less well received by the majority of our interviewees, could be down to the lack of videos and diverse pictures which help touch the site user's emotions. Even interviewee 4, who had previously stated that he liked the old Visit Iceland website more than the Visit Greenland due to it catering to his needs, mentioned that the new Visit Iceland website was an improvement. Interviewee 4 stated: *"it (new Visit Iceland site) just feels a bit, like the pages feel kind of bigger, more open, a bit more catchy"* (Interviewee 4- Visit Iceland's new website).

5.3. Rhetoric

While the visual aspects of the website had the most influence on our interviewees, the written text also played a role in attracting the users. As a point of interest, most of the comments made with regards to the text and rhetoric were made after the interviewees were directly asked. One of the reasons to this includes the idea that the visual aspects of the website had a much greater overall effect on the interviewees, which undermined the textual material. Another view on the matter could be that while not completely obvious, the textual aspects of the site and the way they were written had an unconscious effect on the visitors using the site. This view is supported to some extent by our follow up interviews which focused on the changes to the Visit Iceland website. Despite all the changes undertaken by Visit Iceland, with the addition of a video, music and inclusion of a greater number of pictures, the interviewees still seemed to prefer Visit Greenland's website, which can be argued, makes better use of the language and rhetoric.

By using pathos based rhetoric to influence emotions within the Visit Greenland website and not using it within the old Visit Iceland, interviewee 5 stated:

"In Greenland they have a way of telling me something to experience something extraordinary on Greenland's page, where on Iceland (old visit Iceland) I have to read a lot before I get that feeling...they(Visit Greenland) have that small sentences,... you see the one where 'maybe the ice is melting but it's still here' and that's just 'oh yea that's nice, nice sentence' it's like a slogan and it works on me" (Interviewee 5- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

From the statement we get the impression that Visit Greenland has done a better job at conveying meaning and emotion through their pathos based text compared to Visit Iceland, where the interviewee states she needs to read a lot before she gets the same 'feeling'. Interviewee 7, who only saw the new Visit Iceland site and the Visit Greenland website, also stated a similar notion saying:

"first thing, they (Visit Greenland) use a lot of strong words, like magnificent, unique, compared to the visit Iceland, I felt these words were a lot more strong... it's because they are not words you would use for a normal situation... when I read this I could feel that 'oh wow this could be a great experience for me' because they are telling me it's so magnificent, they are definitely playing on the feelings there" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

The changes for the Visit Iceland website, in terms of language, were considered by our interviewees to be positive. Interviewee 2 states:

"the message is probably more or less the same, but now they open up your mind, your appetite by manipulating certain wordings so it becomes interesting, so the essence of what they are talking about is probably more or less the same but now it becomes much more interesting...you don't feel like you are being sold something" (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website).

Interviewee 2 goes on to give examples: *"With purity, adventure, discover the secrets, mysterious it's like it makes it interesting... it triggered some mechanism inside my brain where I thought ah this could be interesting"* (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website). This sentiment is also expressed by interviewee 5 who mentions*: "inspiration and uniqueness is easier to connect with and it's easier to get inspired with, so the message, the overall message of uniqueness is definitely*

coming out in this one (New Visit Iceland), while in the old one (old Visit Iceland) it was more hidden" (Interviewee 5- Visit Iceland's new website).

In this case the comment leads us to believe that the message which visit Iceland sends is expressed more clearly within their new website and that this has a positive impact on the interviewee as it helps maintain their interest in the site.

Despite the positive feedback with regards to the changes, the interviewees still preferred the Visit Greenland webpage, interviewee 7 states:

"Here (Visit Greenland) they use a lot of positive strong words, just like this one (points at the slogan used to represent Icebergs), monumental, giant, instead of saying we have icebergs and stuff like that. Because it's (new Visit Iceland) more down to earth, I mean they still say beautiful, they have positive words but they are not strong positive words compared to this (Visit Greenland), I mean magnificent compared to beautiful, at least in my head when I read it out loud I put a different tone on it, and also I just noticed now that I'm reading through those again I feel like the Greenland one is really saying that you have to come, 'you must see this', 'you have to do this', and on the one hand it can be like "you shouldn't tell me what to do" but on the other hand it seems, more kind of, for me, more appealing, it's like they say I have to do this, so it must be a great experience, in the other one it's like, it's more 'you can do this' it's not so much, like it's just find your adventure here, they are not really saying you have to do this" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

This quote, apart from showing the preference towards Visit Greenland's website, also brings up the idea that Visit Greenland tries to encourage people to visit the country more than Visit Iceland's website does. Interviewee 7 mentions that Visit Greenland uses statements such as 'you must see this' and 'you have to do this' which have a more influential effect on her.

An additional example of the effect the specific use of words and language had on our interviewees include:

"...like 'feel the wind through your hair', that type of writing I think would give me a better idea of how I think I'd like it, rather than just saying you go from this mountain to that mountain with six dogs. Both kind of tell you the same information in the end but one puts you into the situation and

makes you kind of experience it without you actually being there" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

In this example interviewee 7 points out an example from the Visit Greenland webpage where she states that the way Visit Greenland have presented their text helps her 'experience' the activity more than if the text was just written in a more informative or logos style.

From the examples we get an impression that the language does play a role to some extent on our interviewees. The extent varies from person to person but the one thing they all have in common is that they all mention the fact that the visuals played a greater overall role in influencing them. This brings us to the Visuals.

Visuals

5.4. Peirce's semiotic model of representation

In regards to representations, it can be said that the interviewees did not consciously notice a certain representation the two chosen websites attempted to show to its audience when reviewing the websites. By this we mean to say that we did not ask them directly if a representation occurred when viewing the sites. In regards to this, it could be argued that even though through websites a certain representation is created and conveyed to the audience, the actual perceived representation is based on each and every interviewee's perception, as it is filtered through their own constructions, understandings, needs, and wants.

In addition to representations, it could be said however that it is possible that the interviewees were not aware of the fact that a certain representation occurred in their minds when looking at the websites. This is because they did not regard the websites with the idea of searching or thinking about a possible representation which might occur. They strictly regarded the websites as potential consumers, who may or may not be influenced by the two chosen websites in their decision making process in terms of travelling to Greenland/Iceland.

Yet, Peirce notes that in order for a representation to occur, the three elements of his model -the sign-the object-the interpretant- have to be present, otherwise a representation cannot occur (Pennington et al., 2010). With this assertion in mind, it can be said that the interpretant element (our interviewees) was present, as well as the object- Greenland/Iceland. Despite the sign being unconsciously seen by the interviewees, it was still there, allowing for representations to occur.

It could be argued that after having reviewed the websites, a representation occurred unconsciously and the created representation is based on the object clearly seen in the websites, namely Greenland and Iceland, and a certain sign noticed by each interviewee within the websites. Each of the identified signs will allow our interviewees in the future to directly link that specific sign with the proper object- Greenland/Iceland. It can be further added that the sign-object relation is essential, as it is a significant factor which influences how the representation is interpreted by each individual. It can be said that each interviewee after reviewing the websites gained a certain collateral experience, which implicitly created a representation in their minds in terms of the visualized object through the individually interpreted signs. Yet, depending on the regarded sign and the collateral experience, the created representation will differ in terms of the type of the sign-object relationship, varying from iconic-indexical and symbolic. Peirce's division into icon, index and symbol was not directly posed during the interviews. As was explained within the Limitations sub-chapter (2.7.), introducing our interviewees to theories could influence their responses.

As could be seen in the Analysis Chapter 4, on the basis of our theory, Peirce's semiotic model of representation was applied within each of the two chosen websites. As such, the representations which we observed when reviewing these websites were identified and detailed. For Visit Greenland we identified two signs, which help create a representation, namely *"The Big Artic Five"* and the website per se, namely the used *photographs* and *videos*. For Visit Iceland's old website we identified the *photographs* as being the sign, while for the new website we identified the five themes (namely *Cultural Iceland, Mysterious Iceland, Adventurous Iceland, Pure Iceland,* and *Creative Iceland*), as being the sign, which help create a representation.

Despite the above, when directly asked if our interviewees identify a certain sign or they noticed a specific focus when looking at the websites, as well as if they would further associate that sign with Greenland/Iceland, interviewee 5 said that:

"Maybe and maybe not... If I will see a <u>volcano,</u> I will definitely think about Iceland or if I see an <u>Icelandic horse</u>... But if we talk about <u>icebergs and glaciers</u> I think about New Zealand… but if you say <u>polar bear,</u> I'm definitely thinking about Greenland. But if I see the <u>Greenlandic people</u> or the <u>national outfit</u> they wear, I'd definitely think about Greenland, as well as if I'd see <u>"The Big Artic Five"</u>... I'd think about the website" (Interviewee 5- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

The above statement clearly shows that interviewee 5 has certain signs in her mind (e.g. volcano, polar bear, icebergs, etc.) which have a certain meaning for her. This is further shown by her associating the sign- icebergs to New Zealand. Even though Greenland has icebergs too, the object which appears in her mind is New Zealand. This association might happen due to the collateral experience she has in regards to New Zealand, which determines her to make this specific association. However, it is seen that her collateral experience in terms of Greenland, allows her to associate the signs *"the Greenlandic people or the national outfit they wear"* (Interviewee 5), and *"The Big Artic Five"* with the object- Greenland, in addition to the website, seeing as this is the means by which she came to know about *"The Big Artic Five"*. It can be added that the above quote, clearly shows that individuals interpret signs based on their collateral experience, which makes them associate those specific signs with a specific object. Also, it is apparent that after having viewed Visit Greenland's website and observed specific signs within the site, a certain collateral experience was gained, which will allow her in the future to remember and associate the identified signs with the object- Greenland.

Moreover, when directly asked about the *"The Big Artic Five"* campaign, all the interviewees said that they noticed this campaign and that Visit Greenland has a strong emphasis on *"The Big Artic Five"* which is noticeable throughout the whole website. As discussed above, the concept *"The Big Artic Five"* could be considered as being a sign within Visit Greenland' website, which will remain in our interviewees minds. In the future, when the interviewees see *"The Big Artic Five"*, they will associate it with its object- Greenland. The interviewees even mentioned that they will remember *"The Big Artic Five"* after having viewed the website, as seen above within interviewee's 5 statements and also the following quote:

"I like "The Big Artic Five" as it summarizes five attractions in Greenland and it sits in my mind like... I very quickly get a view of the Nordic lights, dog sledding, whales... So these big artic five… I have that in my mind" (Interviewee 2- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

This statement clearly suggests that the *"The Big Artic Five"* is noticeable and memorable, which in the context of this study is referred to as being 'a sign'. As discussed earlier, even though the interviewees are not aware of the theoretical notions in terms of Peirce's model, what counts is the fact that when reviewing the website, they have identified certain aspects (signs) within the website. This shows that Visit Greenland created certain representations, which conveyed certain meanings through those identified and noticed aspects (signs). Our interpretation of *"The Big Artic Five"*

representation is that of stressing that these five attractions are the core ones and that they are worth seeing.

The previously mentioned is strengthened by the following quote, which expresses the same idea as the other interviewees did above, adding however a comparative perspective in regards to Visit Iceland's new website. The comparison made suggests that Visit Iceland does not have such a narrowed focus when compared to Visit Greenland's *"The Big Artic Five"*. This might be a reason for the way interviewee 7 perceived Visit Iceland's website, namely its attractions/activities:

"I remember more Visit Greenland's site... Oh there are the big arctic five! (...) they feel that this is big and it made like that... It used their own emotion to sell themselves... Compared to the other one who only say... Oh we have this and that" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

The following assertion goes further and shows the clear focus which Visit Greenland dispersed throughout their whole website, which was noticed by interviewee 7, putting forward that by having a clear and focused approach, consumers can better notice and remember the offered experiences:

"They (Visit Greenland) are showing the relevant things... I believe that they are trying to define the five big things - the big artic five. I think that generally when you are traveling to somewhere, it's difficult to find out what to do... you can read a lot of different articles, but here it's like they kind of make like that option easy for you: they tell you-these are the big five... and the way I see it... who knows better than them? If they are saying that these are the five main things to see then I believe them" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

Even though all of the interviewees noticed as a main focus of Visit Greenland's website *"The Big Artic Five"*, interviewee 6 states:

"Culture and traditions the main focus... The big arctic five was definitely noticeable. You think that is something I really want to see" (Interviewee 6- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

From the above statement, it is seen that even though interviewee 6 noticed *"The Big Artic Five"*, culture and traditions are regarded as being the main focus of the website. This shows that individuals are different and may interpret the same website and the meaning conveyed in their own way on the basis of their desires, wants, interests, or understandings.

Interviewee 2 strengthens the idea that *"The Big Artic Five"* is the core of the site and even goes further and asserts the following:

"Visit Greenland was more specific because of "The Big Artic Five".
I think Visit Greenland set down and thought about what is it we can offer and that would be interesting for consumers coming to Greenland the thing they put is not 20, but 5 (...) 5! So you get that these are the five and they are stocked in your mind" (Interviewee 2- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

The above highlights the idea that *"The Big Artic Five"* could be regarded as a core sign and that for interviewee 2 this sign is clearly noticeable within the site and will be further remembered, recognized and associated with the object- Greenland. It could be added that the interviewees gain a certain collateral experience in regards to the object- Greenland, after having reviewed the website. As discussed within the Analysis Chapter 4, it can be argued that *"The Big Artic Five"* acts as an icon within the website. As seen in this analysis, having a core focus is beneficial both for the website and consumers, seeing that consumers can better relate to this sign and the website succeeded to transmit the desired meaning, namely that there are five main attraction within Greenland. This in turn would make consumers remember both the destination- Greenland, as well as the website per se. With this in mind, it can be argued that having a precise focus is a strategic communication tool used by Visit Greenland within their website.

As far as Visit Iceland's old website is concerned, our interviewees did not mention that they noticed a highly emphasized focus within the old website, but they did mention it when they looked at the new website. As in the Analysis Chapter 4, in regards to Visit Iceland's old website the photographs were identified as being a sign, it could be said that our interviewees noticed the photographs as well, but in a negative way, as will be seen below:

"The pictures make a good representation of the destination… though Iceland under does it due to the lack of pictures.
The first thing I noticed on Visit Iceland's page were the pictures, but I think it's because they are boring pictures... everyone could take a picture of a building" (Interviewee 5- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

Even though the photographs were the sign noticed by our interviewees too, they still noted that the provided photographs are qualitative, expressing a faithful representation of Iceland and its attractions/activities.

The mentioned focus within Visit Iceland's new website revolves around the concepts of 'inspiredbyiceland' and Iceland's 'secrets', as will be seen below. Also the idea of discover and adventure is noticed by interviewees 3, 6, and 7 which shows that individuals perceive and regard diverse aspects present within the website as being a sign from all the collections of signs websites contain (Pennington et al., 2010):

"I think now it's more like an adventure going on within the webpage, due to the pictures within the site...
The message that the site tries to convey is the idea of 'inspiredbyIceland'" (Interviewee 3- Visit Iceland's new website).

"It's more like discover... they open up your appetite for going into digging in more... they have like this... adventurous, mysterious Iceland (...) in a few clear sentences you can dig on and see exactly what you want rather than navigate throughout the whole website" (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website).

Interviewee 2 noticed both the idea of discovering Iceland and the themes, which take you in the discovery experience. This assertion could suggest that these aspects were identified within the website as being possible signs, which will be remembered and associated to its object- Iceland in the future.

In addition, interviewee 1 observed the following:

"They say more about culture, they have updated the activities you can do. Now there is a more focus on the activities... Now the site is more structured and concentrated on specific targets according to visitors' tastes" (Interviewee 1- Visit Iceland's new website).

The above quote is in accordance with what interviewee 2 and 4 observed as well, but also with what in the Analysis Chapter 4 was identified as being a sign within Visit Iceland's new website, namely the five themes containing diverse activities and attractions. Even though a clear mention is not made within the quote that the themes are the ones which are referred to, the fact that

interviewee 1 noticed a focus on activities could suggest that these activities will remain in her mind acting as a sign, and will allow her to make associations to the object- Iceland in the future.

Further on, interviewee 5 had a slightly different opinion from the ones presented above, adding that:

"I noticed that <u>inspiration</u> and uniqueness is easier to connect with and get inspired with this website…
The hash tag ('<u>Iceland's secrets</u>') had a huge impact on me and that slogan '<u>inspiredbyiceland</u>'... that's nice…
I noticed the <u>themes</u> but not at first... I think they should come out clear. I didn't see as the main focus the 5 themes... but <u>the secrets and 'inspiredbyiceland'</u> concepts" (Interviewee 5- Visit Iceland's new website).

From the above statement it is clearly seen that interviewee 5 regarded as a sign aspects other than the five themes, namely the concepts 'Iceland's secrets' and 'inspiredbyiceland'. This shows again that representations are subjective depending on what the interviewees notice within the website. Also, she states that if Visit Iceland's focus is on the five themes, they should place it differently in the website, so as consumers would notice it easier rather than presenting it as it is at the moment. It is possible that if the five themes describing Iceland, would have been placed more strategically, so as interviewee 5 (as well as others) would have noticed them at first glace within the front page, these themes could have been regarded as a sign, acting in the future as a recognizable representation for Iceland. Yet, the other identified signs will now act as representations of Iceland for interviewee 5.

In addition, interviewee 2 noticed within Visit Iceland's new website the following:

"As well as Visit Greenland when they talked about the 5 pillars... and I see in Visit Iceland that they are trying more or less to do the same... As you can instantly see that there are 4 or 5 things you can go through to wake up your appetite and make you want to learn more... it's built in the same way" (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website).

It can be argued that the above statement hints to the idea presented in the Analysis Chapter 4 and discussed above, where the five themes containing diverse activities and attractions are regarded as being a sign, even though the words 'the five themes' are not clearly mentioned. As a consequence

of this acknowledgement, it can be stated that for interviewee 2 these five themes might represent the sign, which will be further remembered, recognized and associated with the object- Iceland. This idea can be further linked to what interviewee 2 noted:

"After having seen the first site, I didn't consider the possibility to travel to Iceland, but now it totally made me think about a future possibility to travel there, as now I will recall the site and that there is something mysterious to be seen" (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website).

The above quote clearly shows that the change in approach within Visit Iceland's new website had an impact on interviewee 2 increasing his interest and desire to travel to Iceland.

Furthermore, in terms of the sign encompassing videos and photographs, which refers to the second possible representation within Visit Greenland's website, interviewee's 3 statements can be seen below. Within this discussion, the possible representation created through photographs within Visit Iceland's old website will be added, in order to be able to better compare and contrast the different perspectives our interviewees have.

"Videos are important as they put yourself into the experience and they are a <u>tool</u> which give you a taste of the experience. The images and videos are recognizable and they make me relaxed... I feel like I've just been to yoga" (Interviewee 3- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

The above quotes puts forward the general importance of videos and photographs, which seem to be regarded as tools in the process of attracting, in this case, interviewee 3 to a destination. Also, the photographs have their definite role in the attempt to appeal interviewee's 3 emotions, as seen in the above quote.

Interviewee 4 goes further and notes that:

"Videos are a nice touch… and many pictures are needed in these kinds of sites. So without pictures, it's not going to work.
Greenland in terms of visuals is flashy due to the bright colours which stand out a lot and it looks like ads... and it's too much.
The videos could be attractive giving a nice preview of what you can see and experience there. Iceland (old website) lacks videos and it would be nice to provide a video to see the gazers" (Interviewee 4- Visit Greenland's and Visit Iceland's old website).

In the first statement of interviewee 4, it can be seen that the visual's importance is stressed in a similar manner as interviewee 3 did in her quote. Even though visuals are essential, apparently for interviewee 4, Visit Greenland's way of making use of visuals 'is too much', as seen in the second statement. This shows that individuals perceive visuals differently and even though all the interviewees (except interviewee 4) find Visit Greenland usage of visuals very appealing and even innovative, for interviewee 4 this approach is not enticing in any way. Moreover, it is observed within the third statement of interviewee 4 that videos are significant for him seeing that videos would give a more complete perspective upon the destination.

Furthermore, notwithstanding interviewee 4, all the interviewees expressed their appreciative opinions towards the visuals used within Visit Greenland's website. The same can be said about Visit Iceland's new website, but not about the old website, were depreciative statements were made in regards to the visualized images, as can be seen below:

"Visit Iceland's website gets boring very fast as the same pictures pop up and just some text underneath... so you lose interest due to the repetitive images.
Visit Iceland's site is boring... I mean it's there, it has some pictures, you look at it but you don't really know what you should do next. It's not something like 'I really want to see this' compared to Visit Greenland's site which is so diverse" (Interviewee 2- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

The above quotes show that in the case of interviewee 2, Visit Iceland's old website did not truly succeed in conveying a representation or a certain meaning to this interviewee.

In contrast, approving statements in regards to the photographs used within Visit Greenland's and Visit Iceland's new websites can be seen below:

"Greenland and Iceland are lucky because what they show (in the provided pictures within the new website), it's what you actually see, due to the fact that they are untouched by man. I find it incredible, because I image that that is what I will to see" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

This quote can be linked to the idea that photographs are representations which are faithfully depicting a certain attraction/activity (Brown, 1995; Hendry, 2005; Wolcott, 1995 in Hunter, 2013). Yet, photos can be deceptive due to their messages being based on social conventions (Hollinshead,

2000 in Hunter, 2013). In other words, even though consumers would find several highlighted characteristics of the destination once they arrive in Greenland/Iceland, it is possible that the meaning the photo conveyed to each and every one of our interviewees to be slightly different. Despite this, seeing that our interviewees are Danish, it can be said that the understood meaning would be somewhat similar, having as basis the same Danish conventions. These conventions would influence the interpretation process and might differ if the social and cultural conventions of other countries are used.

Moreover, all the interviewees noticed the inclusion of more and diverse photographs within Visit Iceland's new website, stating that:

"The big pictures draw the attention more... because it's the background, it give a nice feeling of the nature compared to the annoying fast changing ones" (Interviewee 4- Visit Iceland's new website).

The above can be linked to the idea presented within the Analysis Chapter 4, in terms of the photographs used within Visit Iceland's new website, which are regarded as being the means by which Visit Iceland attempted to create a representation of the five themes and also to express a certain meaning through the used photographs. With the following in mind *"photographs are accompanied by certain unstated intentions, or connotations"* (Edwards, 1996 in Hunter, 2013), it is apparent within Visit Iceland new website that the meaning meant to be expressed is that of Iceland's diversity, nature and modernity.

In addition to this, interviewee 6 noted that:

"Visuals play a major role within both websites. Visit Iceland's pictures 'tell' you what you need to know about that attraction (there is no need for informational aid).
Pictures would not be enough to convey the message... it depends on what you are trying to say though... only if you want to show that oh we have this here but not if you want to transmit another message" (Interviewee 6- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

The above quote make it clear that for interviewee 6, the photographs used within Visit Iceland's new website are expressive enough to make her understand what Visit Iceland is attempting to convey. However, if a more complex meaning is meant to be perceived by the audience, then

additional information is needed in order to get a complete understanding of what is being transmitted (Pennington et al., 2010).

More details about our interviewees' opinions regarding the usage/non usage of photographs and videos can be seen bellow.

Photographs and videos

One aspect which was first noticed and continually repeated by our interviewees were the photographs seen within the two chosen websites.

The website which had the greatest impact on our interviewees was Visit Greenland, especially due to the provided photographs and videos. According to our interviewees, this tool is appealing and has the effect of influencing them and their future decision to travel to a destination. Indeed after looking at the two chosen websites interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7, were more inspired and attracted to travel to Greenland/Iceland. Interviewee 6 stated that a website would not change her decision to travel as her inner desire is the one deciding, but she still opted for Visit Greenland being the website which attracted her more.

In regards to Visit Iceland's websites, it has to be mentioned that the new website increased the interviewee's interest in traveling to Iceland, whereas the old website was considered as being boring and unappealing even in terms of navigating the site. In order to strengthen the above, a few of our interviewees' statements are provided below:

"There is a big difference between the old and new website as I think there are more pictures and that they highlighted the pictures more than before by having bigger pictures and now they have it within the whole webpage... whereas in the other one was plane and you were just passing by the pictures... the new website grabs my attention more...
Now they have a video which is good as you can see the real life and action... which has a bigger effect on me" (Interviewee 3- Visit Iceland's new website).

 "The size of the pictures plays a big role" (Interviewee 5- Visit Iceland's new website).

"The video grabs your attention" (Interviewee 1- Visit Iceland's new website).

"This new website is like night and day compared to the old one which was so boring... after having seen the new website, I'm inclining more to go and visit Iceland.

They open up your appetite" (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website).

From these quotes an improvement within Visit Iceland's new website is clearly seen. In addition, a change in the interviewees' attitudes is noticed, in the sense that they are more attracted by the notion of travelling to Iceland. The quotes also suggest that having bigger pictures, have a greater impact on tourists' perceptions and understandings. This is in contrast with Visit Iceland's old site, where the pictures were smaller in size and could not be seen in a full screen size.

Moreover, the feeling of being part of the shown experience already from home while watching the provided photographs, is expressed in the quotes below:

"*I feel that Greenland's site tries to interact with me... Because of the pictures... It makes me feel that I am going on the dog sled. It makes me be a part of it"* (Interviewee 5- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

"*Greenland has a lot of pictures and you feel that you are immediately there... They bring Greenland to you. Iceland does not do that"* (Interviewee 3- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

This idea can be linked to the statement below, which underlines the same notion- that photographs give a feeling of already being at the destination:

"*They have big pictures and you get a feeling of how it would be to get there (...) I know they have the five experiences (the big arctic five) as well, but I just like the pictures and the change of them more.. They have less text and more pictures.*
The videos are really nice and realistic... a bit photoshoped though, but looks realistic and extraordinary... something different. The pictures make a good representation of the destination... Greenland over does it and Iceland under does it due to the lack of pictures" (Interviewee 5- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

The above statements strengthen the idea that photographs and videos are essential for the interviewees in the website's attempt to attract them to travel to these destinations. The statement also mentions that the inclusion of more visuals and less text is beneficial for both the website and consumers, as this way the appealing effect is stronger. In addition, it is apparent that even though the photographs and videos might be digitally modified, it does not really affect interviewee 5, but instead enhances her interest and desire to travel more. Here the idea that *"photographs are also*

deceptive because like other representations, their messages are based on social conventions"
(Hollinshead, 2000 in Hunter, 2013) could be brought into the discussion. It is apparent that for
interviewee 5 it is important how photographs depict a destination, and even though she is aware
that the photos have a certain modification and that a feeling of disappoint might emerge once
arriving at the destination and visiting the viewed attraction/activity, she disregards this aspect by
stating that she will still find at the destination what the pictures show. The above falls in line with
the idea that photos still act like genuine descriptions of a destination's attractions/activities
(Brown, 1995; Hendry, 2005; Wolcott, 1995 in Hunter, 2013).

Even though Visit Iceland only had 12 pictures within the old website, which were continuously
being repeated throughout the whole website and it was criticized because of this, when looking at
the new website, the interviewees remarked the inclusion of more and much diverse photographs,
which are beneficial both for the website per se and consumers. Within the new approach, the
website would be able to better convey the desired representation and meaning, which will appeal
consumers more to travel to Iceland. This approach succeeding even to change consumers'
decisions making process to travel, as seen in Visit Iceland's new website case, where interviewee 2
after reviewing the new website changed his decision in terms of traveling to Iceland to an assertive
decision, stating that he will even remember Visit Iceland's new website in the future.

Adding to the above discussion, the following statements emphasize the importance of photographs
and videos, as well as their direct effect on interviewee 3 and 7:

*"They (Visit Iceland's old website) lack images on Iceland (...) Greenland has all this selection of
things you can do and they give you this option, while Iceland didn't really had anything. Iceland
doesn't have videos, while Greenland does. That's putting yourself in the experience"* (Interviewee
3- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

 *"The big artic five videos are really cool. It plays a lot on emotion… I guess it's a form of
manipulation... That's an effective way to present information. That works for me though... it's
something that makes me remember the website... they use a lot of videos... it's like they have more
videos than actual written information... and that's very different from Visit Iceland (new website)
which has a lot of text… and a lot of people wouldn't really like to read all that text... they would
rather hear it... it's easier to remember... you get another perspective on it than if you read…*

Visuals are more memorable than text and I prefer look at those instead of reading the text. The presented images are credible as they didn't show overly beautiful aspect, but more diverse" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

These quotes put forward *"the importance of photography to tourism and destination marketing"* (Jenkins, 2003; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Markwick, 2001; Molina & Esteban, 2006; Prentice, 2004; Scarles, 2004; Singh & Formica, 2007; Wyckoff & Dilsaver, 1997 in Pennington et al., 2010).

Going further, the interviewees changed their perspective in terms of the photographs and videos used within Visit Iceland's new website, which now have a positive effect on them, as seen below:

"I like the inclusion of pictures- it gives you a more clear impression of what Iceland is; they have beautiful pictures... very good technology and printings.
I like the video… the idea... it grabs your attention... it's more beneficial... the photographs are more focus and they are active… you can relate more... what you can do in the time you are there...
I like it much better than before… the video is a proof of what I read and it's easier to look at it than to read all that text" (Interviewee 1- Visit Iceland's new website).

"The video is beneficial... it takes you through on what they can offer you really quick" (Interviewee 2- Visit Iceland's new website).

However interviewee 6 stated the following, showing that in her case the situation is different, as the websites do not have any impact on her and she does not really feel more attracted to travel to a destination after looking at a website, as her desires have priority:

"They show how it looks there and what you can do there but in another manner it's not like... WOW… there isn't really something that grabs my attention.
After looking at the websites, I don't really feel more attracted by the websites then before. Maybe it's because I already wanted to go... it might be different for a person who didn't want" (Interviewee 6- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

When asked if the websites per se would attract them and make them travel to Greenland/Iceland, most the interviewees had a positive answer, adding however that Visit Greenland's website is the website which appeals to them more and which they will remember in the future. In contrast, the old Icelandic website was considered boring and none of them (apart from interviewee 4) seemed to

be have an interest in remembering it. It has to be kept in mind that interviewee 6 and 7 were interviewed on the basis of the new Visit Iceland's website and did not get a chance to browse the old website. Yet, the new Visit Iceland's website brought a new input, as the interviewees consider it as being improved, creating a change in their attitudes.

All the interviewees stated that the usage of visuals is very important in the process of appealing them and making them travel to Greenland/Iceland, where Visit Greenland has gain more recognition for the way they used the visuals. The idea that the websites, namely the photographs and videos, can influence consumers can be seen within the following statements:

"Yes, the images and text would influence me to travel to Greenland as it attracts me more" (Interviewee 5- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

"Yes- Greenland, did had a bit of a ... It actually made me want to go to Greenland.

They (Iceland) have some practical information, but I think that because Greenland had a lot of pictures; it had a lot of images (...) it gave me a picture of how Greenland is and I liked it.

Iceland wasn't as eye catchy" (Interviewee 3- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

"Yes - the information I got just after having a short look at Visit Greenland's website acted as an advertiser which made me to consider to go to Greenland in the future, whereas I was not inspired in the same way when looking at Visit Iceland. On the contrary, Visit Iceland was not as appealing at all (...) it wasn't something that I said wow I have to go ... I thought that there is too much information that is not needed for his decision to travel to the destination" (Interviewee 2- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

Furthermore, it seems that one aspect regarded by the interviewees was that of **colours and modality (**Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) of the used photographs. In regards to this, the following was mentioned:

"The blue color is boring... using more colors would be better... it's a boring blue... not a happy blue... the quality of some pictures are poor.
The pictures within Mysterious Iceland are really nice but a bit fake... it looks fake... some of them are definitely Photo shopped... some of them might only have a filter on them... like Instagram

filter.. but the fact that the pictures are altered does not influence the way I see the site...it has a positive effect actually on me... it looks nice, fancy, magical like a fantasy world... maybe if I'll go there, because of the pics I'll get disappointed, maybe I was just hoping to get a picture as nice as this one... it looks like fairytale" (Interviewee 5- Visit Iceland's new website).

This statement shows that interviewee 5 is excited about the photographs even more when they are modified, as well as regarding the videos, as we discussed previously within this part of analysis. It could be further added that she was caught in the 'fairytale' representation conveyed by the photographs and she disregards other aspects that might perturb her incitement, with the risk of possible getting disappointed once arrived in Iceland.

In addition, the mention of the fact that the colour blue is boring in the above quote, hints to the idea that colours are important for interviewee 5. A certain preference in terms of colours was expressed, seeing that she wants to see 'a happy blue' rather than a 'boring blue' which would have a stronger impact on her while regarding the photos, as well as on her perceptions of the overall regarded attraction/activity.

Moreover, in the quotes below we can see two opposite opinions in terms of the used colours, which show that individuals regard the same aspect differently. Also, the impact colours have on consumers is subjective being based on individuals' tastes and preferences. Even though it is only interviewee 4 who is not pleased with the used colours, the rest of the interviewees are highly satisfied and enjoy the photographs within Visit Greenland's website.

"Visit Greenland's site is too colourful and flashy" (Interviewee 4- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's old website).

"Visit Greenland's website- nice colours (...) it catches your eye right away (...)" (Interviewee 7- Visit Greenland's website and Visit Iceland's new website).

From these quotes it is apparent that the modality and colours (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) of photographs have an impact upon consumers, which could be argued to be a strategic tool in terms of attracting consumers by attempting to show a genuine representation of certain attractions/activities.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

Looking back at the problem statement, which attempts to find what communication tools are used within the chosen websites and how those tools affect consumers, it can be said that discussing the concepts of communication tools is complex. For this reason, this study narrowed down the communication tools used to that of communications and visuals. Ultimately it was realized that there is more to the websites and to the communications and visuals than is discussed within this study.

The complexity of communication tools stems from the notion that there are many layers and variables that go into making a specific tool work for the company. Not only does the tool have to reflect the various messages and values the company wants to convey but it also has to be able to do so in a way which consumers can relate to and accept. Furthermore, in relation to this, while the various tools and theories used may at first glance seem to be independent of each other, we came to the realization that everything was in some way interconnected with each other and making sense of it all was arduous. However, once having done so, it was remarkable to note how everything came together to form the overall website. It was also noteworthy that websites such as Visit Greenland's site, who seemed to put more consideration and planning into how they wanted to present themselves in addition to knowing whom they wanted to convey their message to, seemed to be better received by consumers. Visit Greenland realized that tourists to Greenland were more than just simply tourists. Their tourists were emotionally driven tourists. This led them to creating a website with content that conveyed messages and representations which attempted to emotionally persuade consumers to visit. This in turn was noted and accepted by consumers and left consumers feeling attracted to the site and wanting more.

Rhetoric

That being said, what we have noticed in terms of the rhetoric is that while the rhetoric was argued to play a role in influencing consumers' emotions, it was on a more subconscious level. This was due to the greater overall impact created by the visuals.

When it came to the communications of the three websites, there was a tendency for Visit Greenland's website to be preferred among the interviewees. It was reasoned that this was mostly due to the fact that the Visit Greenland website focused on presenting themselves in a manner that appealed towards the visitor's emotions rather than just being informational. The use of Pathos

rhetoric that gives vivid descriptions of the activities available in Greenland helps keep visitors interested and gives them a small 'emotional' indication of what they may experience if they were to go and visit the country. Other examples with Visit Greenland's website of Pathos based rhetoric meant to influence emotion other than by using vivid language and descriptions include, the use of sexual connotations, the use of figurative language, and the use of an emotional tone in terms of the constant reference to "we" which indicates to some extent that there is solidarity between the website and Greenlanders. All of this makes the website more memorable and increases the chances that visitors to the site return to it at a future date.

When analyzing the Visit Iceland websites, it became apparent that there was less emphasis put on presenting material and information in a pathos based rhetoric form. From our interviews it was found that the effect of not using more pathos rhetoric was that, while the information was interesting, it did not have the same effect Visit Greenland's way of presenting had. Because of this, the interviewees found themselves losing interest and getting bored. Interestingly, the changes which were carried out within the Visit Iceland site were positively received by the interviewees. It was, however, mentioned by the interviewees that it was mostly due to the changes made within the visuals. There was also mention that the way the communications were presented had changed and that it seemed to be closer to the style that Visit Greenland used within their website. The change, despite our interviewees saying that the information made available was the same, was said to be beneficial to the site and the consumers, as the way the information was presented was much more interesting and memorable.

As a whole, it was remarkable to note that while most of the interviewees had something to say with regards to the language and presentation of the information, it was usually after being asked directly. This led us to believe that the effect the communications had, was noticed on the subconscious level, with the visuals taking up most, if not all, of the interviewees' attention. With this in mind, we consider it important to keep a proper balance between the two communication tools, as it was also inferred by our interviewees that both communications and visuals, working in conjunction with each other, had the best overall effect on them.

Storytelling and Narrative

If we take the act of storytelling into consideration, it is argued that storytelling adds significant value to the website itself. Although quite a few of our interviewees mentioned that they did not

notice a story being told, their other comments made throughout the interviews indirectly implied that they did experience a story. This was likely down to the fact that their definition of storytelling and narrative is different from how we define it within this study. The value of storytelling can also be noticed by the overall interviewees' preference towards Visit Greenland's website, which arguably had more narrative and storytelling elements than Visit Iceland's old and new websites.

These storytelling elements included having a message which related to the brand identity of *"Be a Pioneer"* in addition to containing elements which can be related back to Fog et al. (2004)'s theory of storytelling. Fog et al. (2004)'s storytelling elements include the characters, which are represented by the website users and the Greenlanders as pioneering characters in addition to the nature which is given life through the language used. These characters play a role within the 'conflict' which can be related to one of Visit Greenland's core concepts within their brand narrative: the core concept being the relationship between *"man's pioneering spirit"* and *"nature's might"*. It is worth mentioning that there is synergy between the various tools used within the Visit Greenland website, both the language and visuals used strengthen and support the narrative being told by adding emotion filled material.

With the change in the Visit Iceland website from the old to the new website, an increase in the storytelling aspects within the site was noticed. It was argued that the addition of storytelling aspects was one of the reasons why the new website was seen as being improved when compared to the old site. The old Visit Iceland website had very few storytelling elements, with conflict and characters being arguably missing from the website. The changes to the website introduced a character to the narrative in the form of the website user and a conflict was also presented in the sense that the site users can choose what kind of Iceland they want to visit from the five proposed themes within the new Visit Iceland website. These were improvements, however according to the interviewees, these still did not reach the same appeal which Visit Greenland's website had.

One of the major differences with regards to storytelling is that Visit Greenland's website not only gives the impression that the act of visiting Greenland is like going on a pioneering adventure, but also makes the act of navigating the website itself an experience. Visit Iceland's new site on the other hand, focuses more on just making the act of going on a trip to Iceland sound appealing. Ultimately, both of the organizations' representatives interviewed, mentioned that working on a website was a never ending project and that both were moving into a more storytelling driven mode of communicating with consumers.

The implications for websites using pathos based rhetoric in preference over both ethos and logos based rhetoric is that the website becomes more memorable in the eyes of consumers. This is due to the idea that consumers feel as if the website is communicating to them in an emotional manner which they argue leaves a lasting impact on them. Narratives and storytelling have a similar effect. We argue that if information is presented in a manner which brings consumers into the 'story' of the product or activity, not only does it provide the consumer with an idea of what they may experience, but it also makes the website more memorable as consumers will find that they will have more context in the form of emotional cues from which to remember the website in the future.

Visuals

In terms of semiotics, it can be concluded that Peirce's semiotic model of representation was of help within this study as it showed how representations occur, namely that representations are created once three essential elements are identified, namely sign-object-interpretant. The representations which occurred within Visit Iceland and Visit Greenland's websites are meant to highlight certain aspects of Iceland and Greenland as such. Yet, *"The Big Arctic Five"* and the website per se, with the used *photographs* and *videos* are the representations created, which are meant to describe Greenland within Visit Greenland's website. As for Visit Iceland's old website, the occurred representation was the photographs, while for the new website, the five themes, as well as the photographs, were the representations created.

It can be further added that three types of representations were noticed within the two websites, due to the dependency of the sign-object relation. This relation influences the type of representation created, namely iconic, indexical, or symbolic representation. Yet, the way individuals interpret a certain perceived sign, specifically the sign-object relation, is dependent on each individual's collateral experience. As a consequence, the representation will be based and influenced on/by each individual's collateral experience, which would in turn create in their minds one of the three types of representations: iconic, indexical or symbolic. In terms of ourselves, as the researchers, we noticed that during the course of conducting this study, our own interpretations of the signs changed, as our collateral experience continued to grow during the process. Yet, as Pennington (et al., 2010) states and as we identified as well, the sign-object relation can be hybrid, meaning that an individual can regard a sign as containing all three features (iconic, indexical or symbolic) at the same time.

As such, the identified and analyzed sign-object relation within this study is hybrid, seeing that:

- Within Visit Greenland's website, the sign-object relation between the sign-*"The Big Arctic Five"* and the object- *Greenland,* is regarded as being mainly indexical, having however iconic and symbolic features. The identified iconic features are in terms of two of the five attractions- the pioneering people and dog sledding. Yet, it can be argued that the sign -*"The Big Arctic Five"* in itself is an icon, which Visit Greenland desires to be remembered and recognized by potential tourists.

  As for the symbolic features, the pioneering people and dog sledding attractions are the ones which seems to create a deeper and more symbolic bond with the object- Greenland. In regards to the second identified sign, namely the *website per se*- the *photographs* and *videos* used, seems to portray a more indexical aspect with iconic and symbolic features in terms of the above discussed attractions. As such, the icons are in terms of certain animals (dogs and musk ox), specific experiences (dog sledding) or traditions (Pioneering culture), and the symbols in terms of Greenland's culture and traditions.

- Within Visit Iceland's old website, the sign-object relation between the sign- *photographs* used and the object- *Iceland,* is regarded as being mainly indexical, having however certain iconic features in terms of the Icelandic horse, birds, hills and the Harpa Concert and Conference Centre building. The symbolic features are in regards to the nature and culture.

- Within Visit Iceland's new website, the sign-object relation between the sign- the five themes, namely *Cultural Iceland, Mysterious Iceland, Adventurous Iceland, Pure Iceland* and *Creative Iceland,* and the object- *Iceland,* is mainly regarded as being indexical. Iconic features were identified in terms of the spectacular hills (in Adventurous Iceland) and the Harpa Concert and Conference Centre building (In Creative Iceland).

Even though the three elements are crucial for the occurrence of a representation, it was interesting to observe how the chosen websites, probably without being aware of this existent theoretical concept, have incorporated the main idea of Peirce's semiotic model within the websites. By creating representations of the object, consumers will be able to gain a certain collateral experience after looking at the websites, and also to identify certain signs (within the sites). This will further allow consumers to remember, recognize and associate the identified signs with the proper object-Greenland/Iceland. A direct association to the websites will be achieved too, as the websites were

the means which put forward the destination with all its incorporated signs. As Pennington et al (2010) states, websites are a collection of signs:

"Web pages – images and text – on consumer web sites or destination portals ... can be considered collections of signs of those destinations" (Pennington et al., 2010).

In terms of the projected representations, it can be concluded that that the overall desired representation to be sent to consumers by the web developers of the two websites, coincided with what we and our interviewees observed when reviewing the websites. By this we mean to say that in terms of Visit Greenland, the representations which include *"The Big Arctic Five"* and the *photographs* and *videos* used, were noticed by our interviewees and were mentioned by the projects managers to be focal to the website. As for Visit Iceland's old website, since we did not get the opportunity to interview the project manager of that particular site, we can only put forward the interpretations of ourselves and our interviewees. With this in mind, it can be argued that having a precise focus is a strategic communication tool used by Visit Greenland within their website.

Our analysis pointed towards the photographs being the main visual representation used. When it came to Visit Iceland's new website, we noticed that the occurred representation was interpreted subjectively by each individual. For instance, we as researchers observed Visit Iceland's five themes, as being the representation within the website, while our interviewees noticed the concepts of 'Iceland's secrets' and 'inspiredbyiceland' as being the main focus of the website. Yet, we also noticed these two concepts, but did not regard them as being the central focus of the site, due to them being mainly limited to the front page.

Moreover, visuals, namely the used photographs and videos, are crucial for consumers when it comes to the tools used by websites in their attempt to appeal consumers to travel to Greenland/Iceland. As seen in Visit Iceland old website's case, the site was mainly disregarded and criticized due to the lack of visuals. This changed once the interviewees saw Visit Iceland's new website, where diverse photographs and a video were shown. Yet, comparing Visit Iceland's old and new website with Visit Greenland's website, it was clearly seen that consumers still prefer the approach in the usage of visuals Visit Greenland has. According to the interviewees, the main reason why they incline more to Visit Greenland's website is the visually pleasing photographs and videos, which directly touch their emotions and trigger their appeal, by enhancing their curiosity

and desire to travel to Greenland. As such, it can be argued that the usage of visuals within websites is a strategic communication tool.

In addition, it can be argued that it is apparent that the high focus and intense usage of visuals within Visit Greenland's website is beneficial for both the website and consumers. This way the website succeeded in conveying the desired narrative, attracting consumers to travel to Greenland and most importantly making the website memorable. In terms of the consumers, the benefits lie within the fact that they gain an experience only by navigating through the website, as well as a certain collateral experience in terms of Greenland and its experiences. At the same time, the desire to travel to Greenland was enhanced or could even emerge in some cases, if the initial desire is not as strong, due to the used visuals.

Further on, concerning Visit Iceland's old website, it was clearly seen that the lack of visuals had a negative impact on consumers, being the first aspect noticed by our interviewees, in addition to our selves. Our interviewees were disappointed that they could not see any video, but only a few photographs repeating over and over again throughout the whole website. As a consequence, Visit Iceland should consider the inclusion of visuals within the website, as it would be more beneficial for the website per se and consumers, in the attempt to make the website memorable and appeal to consumers to travel to Iceland. By using the visuals as a strategic tool, the website would be able to better convey the intended representation, and the consumers could gain a certain collateral experience, and an idea of how Iceland is and what it has to offer. Also, by using visuals, as seen above, consumers get touched easier and get a better view and understanding of the narrative attempted to be transmitted by the website.

Despite the above, Visit Iceland changed its website to a completely new one, keeping however the main idea, but having a more precise focus. As seen in the analysis, the focus was perceived differently by the interviewees, seeing that few interviewees regarded the concepts of 'Iceland's secrets' and 'inspiredbyiceland' as being the core focus, while others noticed the five themes as being the core focus of Visit Iceland. It was clearly noticeable within the Analysis Chapter 4 that the change in approach Visit Iceland had within its new website, namely the inclusion of more visuals and also a more concrete focus on what they offer, succeeded to change our interviewees' perceptions/opinions and even decisions to travel to Iceland after having seen the new website. It can be argued that the visuals brought a positive benefit both for the website per se and consumers. This is due to the fact that by making use of the newly added visual tool, the website better

emphasized their narrative, and consumers get a better insight and impression of Iceland. At the same time, the visual tool benefits the website by increasing consumers' desires to travel to Iceland to a greater extent, when compared to when the visual tool lacked.

Even though text has its role within the websites, it is apparent that visuals play a greater role in attracting consumers to travel to Greenland/Iceland. In addition, visuals help convey the desired narrative, and can even change consumers' decisions to travel to assertive decisions.

As for visuals, it can be concluded that Visit Greenland regarded the high use of visuals within their website as a strategic communication tool. As seen within this study, making use of this tool is much more effective and appealing for consumers, and both parties benefit from the end result. By using visuals, as seen in Visit Greenland's case, the website and specifically Greenland, become memorable and more easily recognized in the future by consumers.

It could also be seen that the lack of visuals have a negative effect on consumers, as they cannot truly get an impression about Iceland and could not remember Visit Iceland's old website. In addition, consumers disregard the website, due to the fact that they consider it boring and in the future they would not truly recall the website as such or Iceland, seeing that they lacked interest. Yet, it was shown that once the visuals were included, within Visit Iceland's new website, consumers' perceptions changed, and in the end visuals even changed the decision to travel to Iceland in the future to an assertive decision. A new insight to the usage of visuals, which could be considered to be a strategic choice, within Visit Iceland's new website, is the idea highlighted in terms of choosing certain photographs to depict an attraction/activity. As such, the contents of the photo per se is a strategic choice used within Visit Iceland's new website, which is meant to convey a meaning to the audience. According to Sveinn Björnsson (Editor of Visit Iceland's new website), this meaning is referring to the idea that Iceland is more than just landscape, and that the inclusion of other individuals within photos reflect certain meanings to consumers. The same can be argued for Visit Greenland, as it was indirectly stated by Ella Groedem (Senior consultant within e-marketing at Visit Greenland) that the used visuals are meant to convey the core ideas within the narrative-nature and culture, to the audience.

In terms of the interviewees it can be concluded that they also regard visuals as being an essential tool, which websites should make used of in the attempt to depict a destination and create appeal within them by enhancing their interest and desire to travel to the visualized destination. The

interviewees go even further and state that the usage of big pictures is more beneficial and has a greater impact on their perceptions, as seen in the case of Visit Iceland's new site compared to the old website. As such, bigger pictures can also be considered a strategic tool, meant to better convey the desired meaning. Even more, the feeling of already experiencing the visualized attractions/activities when looking at a photo is in itself a tool meant to appeal consumers and get them emotionally attached.

All in all, the usage of visuals, namely photographs and videos, within websites, as well as the choice of specific photographs to depict an attraction/activity, the contents, the modality and colours of the photos, the usage of indexical representations and the photo's size, can be regarded as being chosen strategic communication tools by websites in their attempt to appeal towards consumers to travel to Greenland/Iceland, as well as enhancing their interest in these destinations.

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Interviews

Groedem, E. (2014, April 25). Senior consultant within e-marketing for Visit Greenland. (A. Marchis, & J. Andersen, Interviewers)

Berliner, F. (2014, April 3). Visit Greenland's Website Designer. (A. Marchis, & J. Andersen, Interviewers)

Björnsson, S. (2014, April 28). Editor of Visit Iceland's Website. (J. Andersen, Interviewer)

Appendix

Appendix 1- Interview Guides

Interview questions for Visit Greenland (Franz Berliner)

- Is it ok with you that we are recording you?
- Do you agree with the fact that we are going to use, in our study, your name/position and quotes from what you have said within this interview, in order to analyze the researched theme?
- Do you give us your approval to use texts/quotes and pictures etc. from your website within our analysis/study?
- What is your relationship with Visit Greenland?
- What was your goal with the website?
- Where there any strategies or was there anything in specific you did to help you and the website achieve the goal?
- Was there a specific message you wanted to convey to visitors of the site?
- What are the communication tools used by you to advertise Greenland and to convey the message (strictly referring to the website)?
- Is there a specific strategy/ communication tool/ approach that you are applying in order to convey the message you want to transmit to tourists/ in the attraction of tourists?
- What was the purpose of the 'Big Arctic Five' campaign?
- How did you conceive the campaign? What did you have in mind?
- Was there any specific aspect you wanted to highlight with the new campaign?
- How did you come up with the website's concept? Was it all your idea and guidelines or were you collaborating with others?
- Why do you think your website won the awards it has won?
- We are looking into the concepts of storytelling and brand narrative within our paper. Did you make use of these concepts in any way?
- Have you ever thought about these concepts and the possibility to make use of them within your website?
- Can you tell us anything about the overall design of the website?
- Did you have any specific plans in relation to the use of visuals and linguistics within your website?

- What was the reasoning behind choosing the pictures the website uses, we realize images are important and we are curious what your opinion is?
- We notice the use of a lot of visuals within the website, was this done knowingly and could you give us some reasoning for doing so?
- Where did the text/information found within the site come from and did you have any reasoning or influence with regards to the text and how it was presented in the end?
- Does the government have an influence within the site and the advertising material?
- How about the Greenlandic citizens? Are they actively involved and accordingly 'used' within campaign?
- Are there any trends you have noticed with regards to customer activity within the website?
- Would you happen to know how many companies have asked for permission to use your branding tool kit?

Interview questions for Visit Greenland (Ella Groedem)
- Is it ok with you that we are recording you?
- Do you agree with the fact that we are going to use, in our study, your name/position and quotes from what you have said within this interview, in order to analyze the researched theme?
- Do you give us your approval to use texts/quotes and pictures etc. from your website within our analysis/study?
- What is your relationship with Visit Greenland?
- What was your goal with the website?
- Where there any strategies or was there anything in specific you did to help you and the website achieve the goal?
- Was there a specific message you wanted to convey to visitors of the site?
- What are the communication tools used by you to advertise Greenland and to convey the message (strictly referring to the website)?
- Is there a specific strategy/ communication tool/ approach that you are applying in order to convey the message you want to transmit to tourists/ in the attraction of tourists?
- What was the purpose of the 'Big Arctic Five' campaign?
- How did you conceive the campaign? What did you have in mind?
- Was there any specific aspect you wanted to highlight with the new campaign?

- How did you come up with the website's concept? Was it all your idea and guidelines or were you collaborating with others?
- Why do you think your website won the awards it has won?
- We are looking into the concepts of storytelling and brand narrative within our paper. Did you make use of these concepts in any way?
- Have you ever thought about these concepts and the possibility to make use of them within your website?
- Can you tell us anything about the overall design of the website?
- Did you have any specific plans in relation to the use of visuals and linguistics within your website?
- What was the reasoning behind choosing the pictures the website uses, we realize images are important and we are curious what your opinion is?
- We notice the use of a lot of visuals within the website, was this done knowingly and could you give us some reasoning for doing so?
- Was there any reason for choosing the specific photographs u have used within the website seeing that u can opt between having iconic symbolic and indexical
- How did you come up with the text/information found within the site? What was your reasoning behind the overall language used to present the information?
- Would we be correct in assuming that the language is emotionally charged? If so, why did you decide to go this route?
- Does the government have an influence within the site and the advertising material?
- How about the Greenlandic citizens? Are they actively involved and accordingly 'used' within campaign?
- Are there any trends you have noticed with regards to customer activity within the website?
- Would you happen to know how many companies have asked for permission to use your branding tool kit?

Interview questions for Visit Iceland (Sveinn Björnsson)
- Is it ok with you that we are recording you?
- Do you agree with the fact that we are going to use, in our study, your name/position and quotes from what you have said within this interview, in order to analyze the researched theme?

- Do you give us your approval to use texts/quotes and pictures etc. from your website within our analysis/study?

- What is your relationship with Visit Iceland?

- What was your goal with the website?

- Where there any strategies or was there anything in specific you did to help you and the website achieve the goal?

- Was there a specific message you wanted to convey to visitors of the site?

- What are the communication tools used by you to advertise Iceland and to convey the message (strictly referring to the website)?

- Is there a specific strategy/ communication tool/ approach that you are applying in order to convey the message you want to transmit to tourists/ in the attraction of tourists?

- We notice that your website uses the 'Inspired by Iceland' campaign. Was it something Visit Iceland helped develop? If so what was the intention?

- Was there any specific aspect you wanted to highlight with the campaign?

- How did you come up with the website's concept? Was it all your idea and guidelines or were you collaborating with others?

- We are looking into the concepts of storytelling and brand narrative within our paper. Did you make use of these concepts in any way?

- Have you ever thought about these concepts and the possibility to make use of them within your website?

- Can you tell us anything about the overall design of the website?

- Did you have any specific plans in relation to the use of visuals and linguistics within your website?

- What was the reasoning behind choosing the pictures the website uses, we realize images are important and we are curious what your opinion is?

- We notice the use of a lot of visuals within the website, was this done knowingly and could you give us some reasoning for doing so?

- Was there any reason for choosing the specific photographs u have used within the website seeing that u can opt between having iconic symbolic and indexical

- How did you come up with the text/information found within the site? What was your reasoning behind the overall language used to present the information?

- Does the government have an influence within the site and the advertising material?
- How about the Icelandic citizens? Are they actively involved and accordingly 'used' within campaign?
- Are there any trends you have noticed with regards to customer activity within the website?

Interview with potential Danish consumers

- Is it ok with you that we are recording you?
- Do you agree with the fact that we are going to use, in our study, your name/position and quotes from what you have said within this interview, in order to analyze the researched theme?
- Nationality
- Age
- Gender
- Income?
- Have you ever travelled to Greenland/Iceland? Why, why not?
- Would you like to travel to Greenland/Iceland? Why, why not?
- How do you regard Greenland/Iceland? What is your opinion about it, as a potential tourist?
- Do you have any preconceived image about Greenland/Iceland?
- After looking at the website for one day and reviewing it from the behalf of a potential tourist, what would you say about Visit Greenland's website/ Visit Iceland's website?
- Just by having looked at the website, does the website appeal you to travel to Greenland/Iceland?
- Would you take the decision to travel to Greenland/Iceland having as basis only the website's appeal?
- What did you like and dislike when you reviewed the website?
- What appealed you most and vice versa?
- Did you feel part of the website so to say, when reviewing it? Did the website grabbed your attention and caught you in the conveyed story?
- Did you feel as if you were already in Greenland/Iceland, imagining how and what you will be doing, only when looking at the pictures and videos, texts?
- Do you think there is a story, which the website is trying to present/transmit? Or not?

- How do you regard the use of visuals? Such as photographs, videos.. is it more useful/appealing than having a poor usage of these ?

- Does a complex site (including ??) have a stronger effect upon you than a more simplistic website

- Is it important for you, as a potential tourist reviewing a website, to have a wide variety of visuals?

- What would be the reasons why you would choose to travel to Greenland/Iceland and purchase from a specific site, only by basing on the website per se (what the site shows to you)?

- Is there anything that caught your attention in a more special or deeper way?

- Do you think that the website has an influence upon your decision to travel to Greenland/Iceland?

- Is there anything you would like to be different within the site? What would you change at the website?

Appendix 2- Excel Spreadsheet (For the complete excel sheet see attached CD)

						Questions			
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Interview	Age	Gender	Nationali	Occupation	Have you ever travelled to Greenland/Iceland?	How do you regard Greenland and Iceland? What is your opinion about it? Do you have any preconceived image	What would you say about Visit Greenland's website/ Visit Iceland's website? Would you say that these websites had an influence on	Just by having looked at the website, does the website appeal you to travel Greenland/iceland?	Would you take the decision to travel to Greenland/iceland having as basis only the website's appeal?
3	22	F	Danish	Student	no-no, but would like to	untouched- where really everything is authentic, natural, where there aren't a lot of tourists.. peaceful.	yes-Greenland, did had a bit of a .. It actually made me wanna go to Greenland; they (Iceland) have some practical information, but I think that because Greenland had a lot of pictures it had a lot of images (...) it gave me a picture of how Greenland is and i liked it.; Iceland wasn't as eye catchy		
4	25	M	Danish	Student	not to greenland but iceland yes.		Greenland its manageble.. It gives you a nice preview of what's there to watch. ; iceland – its more factual and i like that... but the big image that keeps changes and some text..the idea of the picture is nice but it changes to fast.. and it kinda annoyed me as I didn't had the change to finish reading the text. ;		
5	26	F	Danish	Student	no-no, but would like to		yes-Greenland's site attracted me.	yes, the images and text would influence me to travel to greenlnad as it attracts me more.	yes, it makes me want to go there (Greenland)...and to clap the door and cuddle with them and take pictures of the whales

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K	L	M	N	O
What did you like and dislike when you reviewed the website?	Did you feel part of the website so to say, when reviewing it?	Did you feel as if you were already in Greenland/iceland, imagining how and what you will be doing, only when	Do you think there is a story, which the website is trying to present/transmit? Or not?	How do you regard the use of visuals? Such as photographs, videos.. is it more useful/appealing than having a poor usage of these ?
they lack images on Iceland; Greenland has all this selection of things you can do and they give you this option, while Iceland didn't really had anything. Iceland doesn't have videos, while Greenland does. That's putting yourself in the experience. Iceland has nice information, but...	yes, it was like a story that they were telling, but I didn't feel part of the story.. I felt more like someone was telling me a story--they told me their story. i didnt feel that i am a pioneer.. ; On Iceland it was more precise, there were more facts but Greenland really tried to tell	greenland has a lot of pictures and you feel that you are immediately there.. They bring Greenland to you. ; Iceland does not do that.	yes, they had so many personal .. They had those circles (their core values) ..they have nice information.. They made is more personal. ; by showing us an image and giving us a feeling, a taste of greenland.; Iceland chould get inspired from greenland in order to get an innovative ways to tell a story	videos are important as they put yourself into the experience and they are tool which give you a taste of the experience. The images and videos are recognizable and they make me relaxed..i feel like I've just been to yoga.
			no---- greenland caters more the traditional tourist with hotels and cruises, while Iceland focuses more on the nature and travel, camping and that stuff.	videos are a nice touch..and many pictues are needed in these kinds of sites. So without pictures, its not gonna work.; Greenland in terms of visuals is flashy due to the bright colour which stand out a lot and it looks like ads..and its too much. ; the videos could be attractive giving a nice preview of what you can see and experience there. ; iceland lacks videos and it would be nice to provide a video to see the gazers.
I like greenland's site- it's really nice and modern and alive. Iceland's site is really boring due to the fact that it's out of date and it's just text and text and seeing 5 pictures going on and on on each page. Both have a large demand of experineces (signs) Iceland lacks pictures.	I feel that Greenland's site tries to interact with me..because of the pictures.. It makes me that I am going on the dog sled..it makes me be a part of it..		not really.. They give a piece of the country but not a story.	they have big pictures and you get a feeling of how it would be to get there (...) I know they have the five experiences (the big arctic five) as well, but I just like the pictures and the change of them more.. They have less text and more pictures. The videos are really nice and realistic.. a bit photoshoped though but looks realitisstc and extraordinary..smt different. yes; greenland has ice and polar bears, while Iceland has vulcanos. ; the pictures make a good representation of the destiantion.. Greenland over does it and iceland under does it due to the lack of pictures.; the first thing i noticed on Greenland's site was the text which is written with a paint brush and then the pictures on Iceland's page but i think
I like the idea of the pioneer. They			I didn't feel like that. no	the front page has placed a lot of sticks and stuck on the

ADVENTUROUS
Iceland is the outdoor enthusiast's paradise. Come and experience the extreme adventures awaiting you around every corner and curve.

PURE
Iceland is a pure source of fresh materials from an unspoiled nature. Come and experience clean water, clean energy and a relaxing spa culture.

CREATIVE
Iceland is literally bursting with creative energy. Come and experience the fantastic music and arts of Iceland in their own natural setting.

CULTURAL
Iceland is a progressive modern society, founded on old traditions and strong individuality. Come and experience the Icelandic heritage.

MYSTERIOUS
Iceland is the photographer's paradise, rich in awe-inspiring vistas and contrasting nature. Come and experience the sublime Iceland.

ICELAND
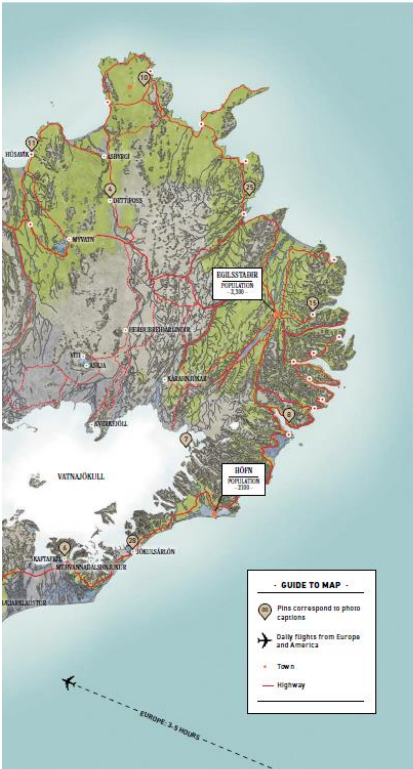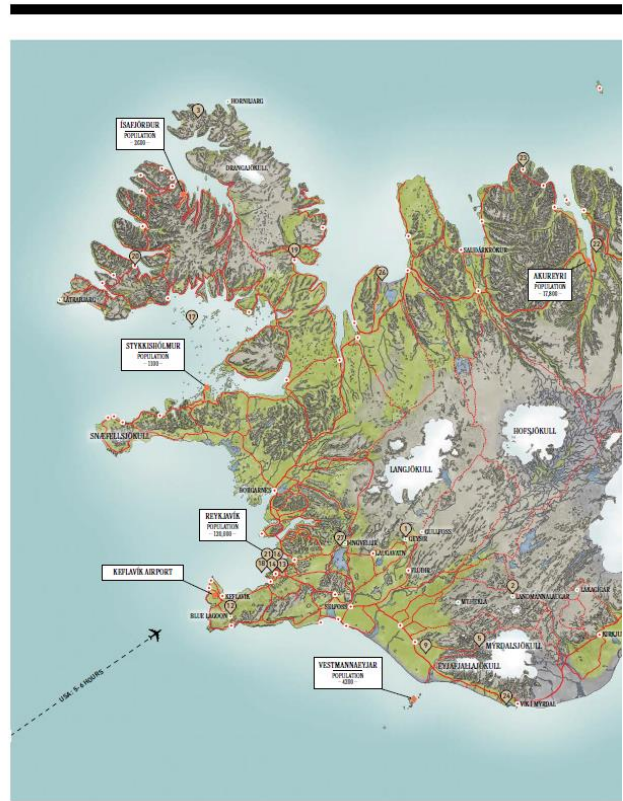
ICELAND IN BRIEF

Official name: Iceland

Flag: Blue with a red cross outlined in white. The colours are symbolic for Iceland: red is for the volcanic fires, white recalls the snow and glaciers, and blue is for the skies above.

Population: 319,000 (Jan 2012). Median age is 35.6 years.

Capital city: Reykjavík. The largest municipalities are Reykjavík* (118,000); Kópavogur* (30,000); Hafnarfjördur *(25,000); Akureyri (17,000); Reykjanesbær (14,000). *cities in the capital region.

Government: Parliamentary constitutional republic.

Language: Icelandic, a North Germanic language derived from Old Norse. English is widely spoken and understood.

Religion: Predominantly Christian.

Currency: The Icelandic króna (plural krónur) – ISK.

Time: Iceland is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) throughout the year.

Size: 103,000 sq. km (40,000 sq. miles), slightly bigger than Hungary and Portugal, and slightly smaller than Cuba.

Glaciers: Glaciers cover 11,922 sq. km (4,600 sq. miles) of the island's surface. Iceland is home to Vatnajökull National Park, the largest national park in Europe.

Highest point: Hvannadalshnjúkur peak 2,110 m

Emergency number: 112

Helpful websites
→ www.iceland.is
→ www.visiticeland.com
→ www.visitreykjavik.is
→ www.visitreykjanes.is
→ www.west.is
→ www.westfjords.is
→ www.northiceland.is
→ www.east.is
→ www.south.is
→ www.safetravel.is
→ www.en.vedur.is
→ www.road.is

© Promote Iceland 2012
Published by Promote Iceland
Printed by Ísafoldarprentsmiðja
Eco-certified printing
Design by Gunni Thorvalds
Silfra photo courtesy of Dive.is
Fashion photo courtesy of Marinó Thorlacius

- GUIDE TO MAP -
Pins correspond to photo captions
Daily flights from Europe and America
Town
Highway

ADVENTUROUS
ICELAND

Appendix 4- Screenshots of both Websites' homepage

Visit Greenland

Old Visit Iceland

New Visit Iceland

Appendix 5- Old and New Visit Iceland's Greeting Headlines

Old Visit Iceland's Headline

New Visit Iceland's Headline
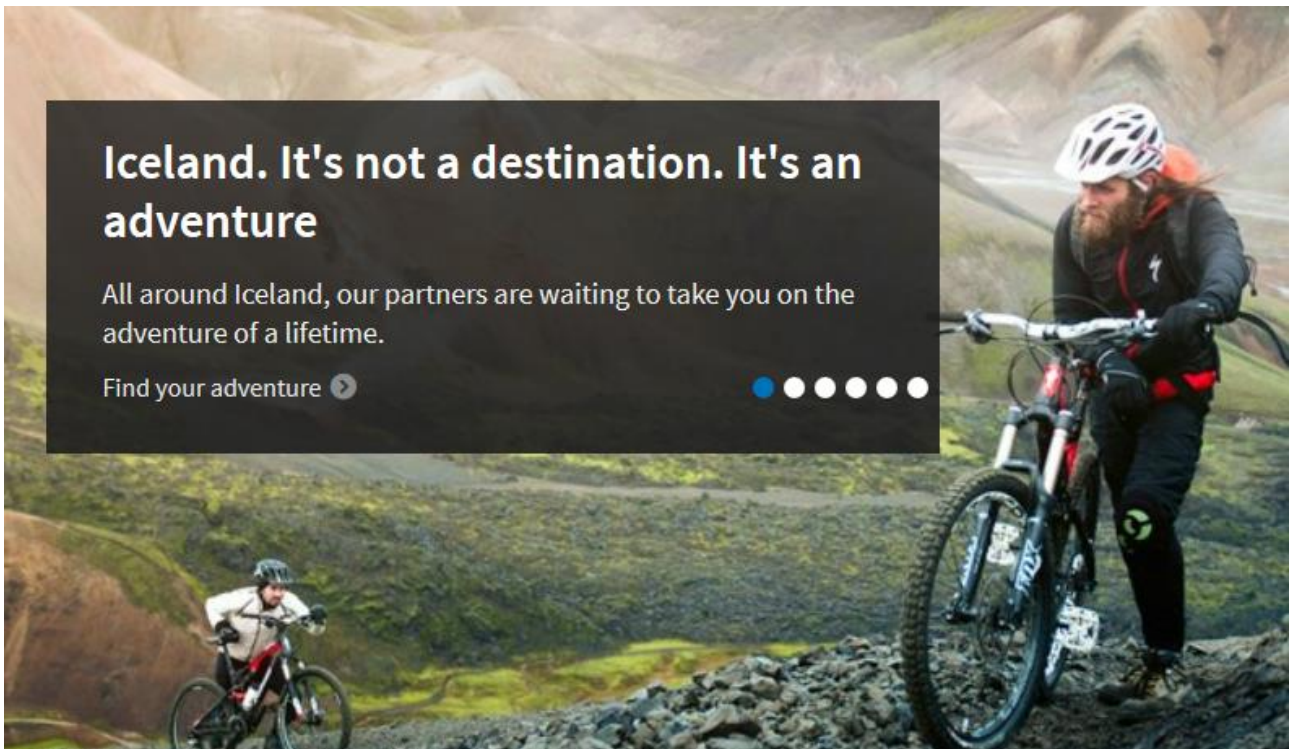
Appendix 6- Visit Greenland's website

"The Big Arctic Five"

6 a. 'The pioneering people'

6 d. 'Ice & Snow'

6 e. 'Dog sledding'

6 f. Kayaking activity in Greenland

Appendix 7- Visit Iceland's <u>old</u> website – The 12 pictures

Welcome to Iceland
Iceland is not only closer than you think, but far different than you ever imagined.

Spring
Myvatn in the north of Iceland. Spring is the time when the sun climbs ever higher, warming up the earth and all living things.

Iceland offers some spectacular diving sites
The Stryta in Eyjafjordur is tho only geothermal cone in the world you can scuba dive to. (Photo: Erlendur Bogason-strytan.is)

Landmannalaugar

The Laugavegur hiking trail (55 kilometres), is Iceland's most popular hiking trail, connecting the nature reserves Landmannalaugar and Þórsmörk. For many runners the Laugavegur Ultra Marathon is the most enjoyable race in Iceland.

Jökulsárlón is the largest glacier lagoon in Iceland

Situated in south eastern Iceland, at the head of the Breiðamerkurjökull glacier branching from the Vatnajökull, between Skaftafell National Park and Höfn, it evolved into a lagoon after the glacier started receding from the edge of the Atlantic Ocean.
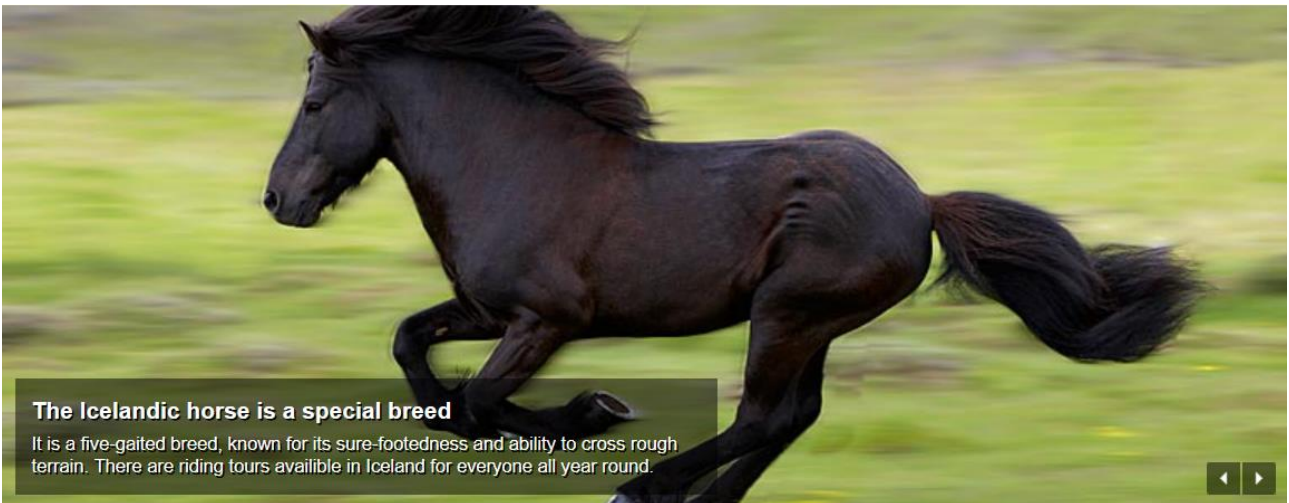

Action in Iceland

Choose between skiing, river-rafting, relaxing in thermal pools, hiking, running, riding, swimming in the sea and much more

Whale Watching in Iceland
Iceland is among the 10 best destinations worldwide for whale watching.

The Icelandic horse is a special breed
It is a five-gaited breed, known for its sure-footedness and ability to cross rough terrain. There are riding tours availible in Iceland for everyone all year round.

There are more than 170 Geothermal Pools in Iceland
Iceland is known for its natural hot springs and spa culture, which is widely celebrated across the country. One of the nations' favorite pastimes is chilling out in the various hot pots dotted across the island's townships.
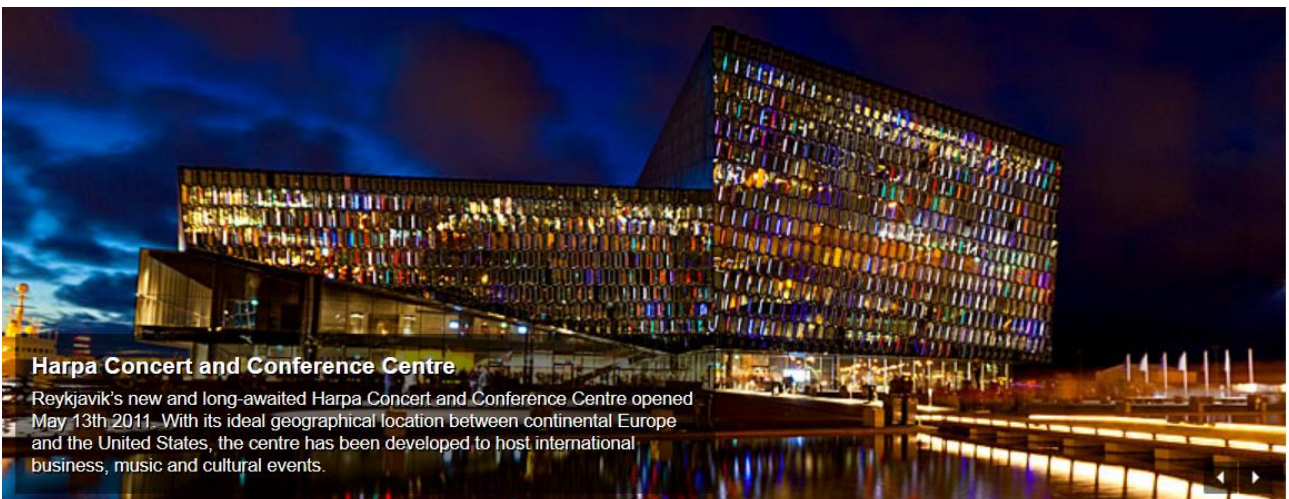
Bird watching
Barrow's Goldeneye is often seen at the famous Mývatn lake. The duck species composition is unique in the mixture of Eurasian and North American elements. Thirteen species of ducks nest near Myvatn.

Mountain biking in Iceland
There is no place on earth like Iceland when it comes to mountain biking. (Photo: Magne Kvam)

Harpa Concert and Conference Centre
Reykjavik's new and long-awaited Harpa Concert and Conference Centre opened May 13th 2011. With its ideal geographical location between continental Europe and the United States, the centre has been developed to host international business, music and cultural events.

"The five themes"

8 a. Adventurous Iceland

8 b. Creative Iceland
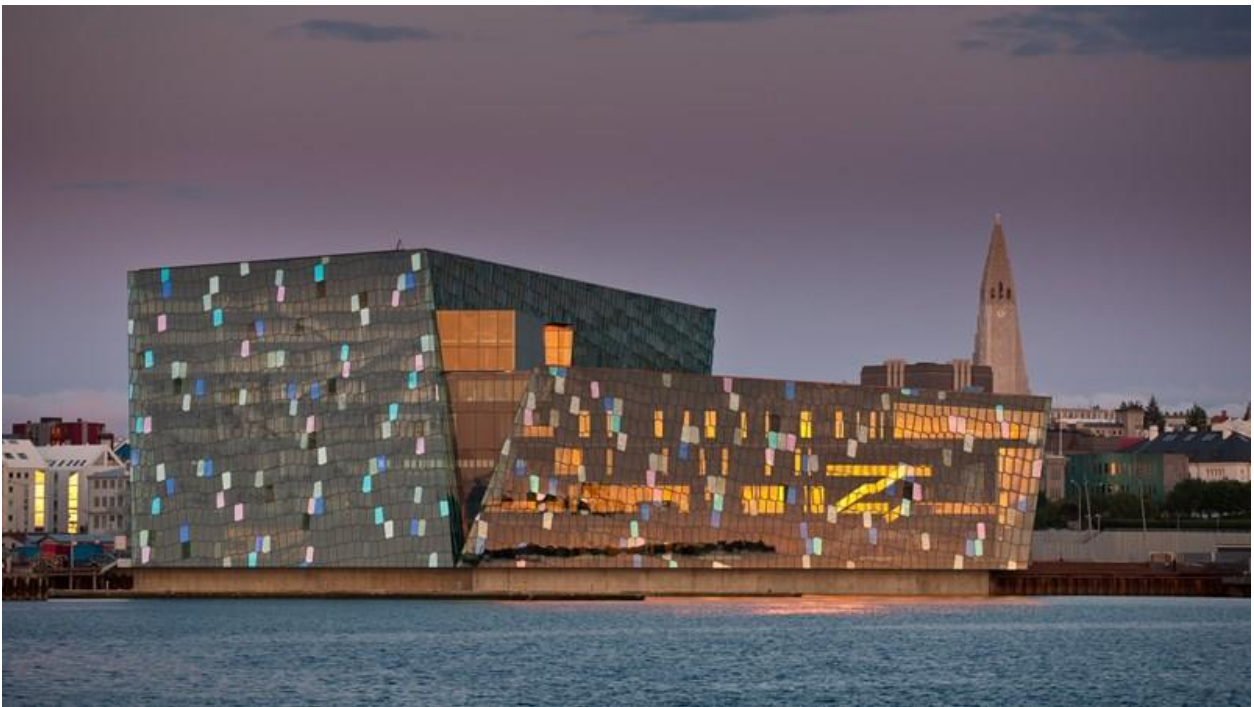
8 e. Pure Iceland

Appendix 9- New Visit Iceland's Dining, Shopping Centers and Buildings

Dining

Shopping Centers

Buildings