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Tourism development: sustainable *how*, *why* and for *whom*?

*-An analysis of tourism development in Greenland and how sustainability  
is articulated with reference to national identity*



*Photo Credits: Visit Greenland 2*

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## Abstract

Historically the Arctic and its peoples have been the subject of interest to the rest of the world, and representations of the Arctic and its peoples were for long dictated by others than the peoples living there. In light of climate change the Arctic and in particular Greenland has once again become the focus of interest by the international community. Especially as the disappearing Ice Sheet is expected to uncover the many resource riches in the Greenlandic underground hidden beneath the vast icecap. In response to this, tourists are now also rushing to see the icy landscape before it is gone forever. However, an increasing awareness by tourists of the effects travelling to these areas have on the environment, “sustainability” has become a key term within the tourism industry.

This notion of sustainable tourism has now reached the Greenlandic tourism landscape, which is the basis for this thesis. By analyzing three Greenlandic tourism policies within the theoretical framework of Nation Branding theory (Anholt 2007) and the Foucault inspired “what is the problem represented to be”, *WPR* (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016) approach, this thesis seeks to investigate what the problem of tourism development in Greenland is represented to be and how sustainability is articulated in the tourism landscape as the solution to the “problem”.

Nation Branding theory was implemented to place the image Greenland seeks to promote within the frame of competitiveness, along with *WPR* which working from the belief, that what is represented as “problems” in policies are not the “real” problems, highlights and questions what the “Real” problems then are. Furthermore, inspired by Gad and Strandsbjerg (2019) the thesis has throughout its analysis followed their approach in asking the question “what is to be sustained and for whom”, to explain why and for whom the represented problems are represented as such.

Three problem representations were identified in the policies as the “problems” for tourism development in Greenland; the “problem” of having focused on the wrong segment in the past, the “problem of inadequate conditions for tourism, such as infrastructure, and the “problem” of not being visible enough. It also was found that what is to be sustained are the following aspects; the image of an indigenous nation, the Greenlandic tourism industry (and thus its economy), and finally the overall national project of independence by the Greenlandic government. As such it was concluded that sustainability is in the Greenlandic tourism landscape expressed as part of branding a national identity. It thus becomes a goal to promote and be perceived as a sustainable indigenous nation for strategic purposes, while environmental sustainability is not the goal in itself. Hence for

Greenland, Nation Branding and tourism becomes an integral part of its Nation building process both internally and externally and as a means to take back power and impact the future of Greenland.

This thesis makes it its aim to highlight the contradictions between arguing for sustainability while acting non-sustainably and it raises the serious question; can any of the aspects that are perceived as that to be sustained *really* be sustainable, when there are so many contradictions between what is argued *to be* sustainable and what really *is* sustainable?

In order to become competitive on the global marketplace and avoid the backlash a conflicting Nation Brand can have, the Greenlandic tourism landscape must take responsibility and invest in sustainability – both on a local and global level, rather than displace responsibility to the individual tourist and others, or push handling it to the future, as this thesis argues is the case now.

## List of Abbreviations

Kalaallit Airports – KAIR

Visit Greenland – VG

Qeqqata Kommunia – QEK

Sermersooq Kommunia – SEK

Qaasuisutsup Kommunia - QAK

United Nations World Tourism Organisation – UNWTO

Sustainable Development Goals – SDG's

World Comssion on Environment and Development – WCED

Traditional Ecological Knowledge – TEK

Indigenous Environmental Knowledge – IEK

Adventure Travel Trade Association – ATTA

Environmental Impact Assessment – EIA

Destination Arctic Circle – DAC

Arctic Council – AC

Inuit Circumpolar Council - ICC

World Wildlife Fund - WWF

## Table of Content

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Acknowledgements</b> .....   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Abstract</b> .....   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>1.0.Presentation</b> .....   | <b>8</b>  |
| 1.1.Research Question(s) .....  | 10        |
| 1.2.Setting the scene .....   | 10        |
| 1.2.1.Perceptions of the Arctic and its peoples .....                     | 10        |
| 1.2.2.The emergence of an industry .....                                  | 11        |
| 1.3.Thesis objectives and structure .....                                 | 15        |
| <b>2.0.A look into past research</b> .....                                | <b>17</b> |
| 2.1.Tourism and its outcomes .....  | 17        |
| 2.2. Sustainability – a contested concept .....                           | 19        |
| <b>3.0. Method</b> .....  | <b>22</b> |
| 3.1. A Social Constructivist Stance .....                                 | 22        |
| 3.2.Qualitative methods and inductive reasoning .....                     | 23        |
| 3.3.Analyzing documents .....   | 23        |
| 3.5.Data Collection .....   | 24        |
| 3.5.1.Selection and presentation of policies .....                        | 24        |
| 3.5.2.Data processing and coding.....                                     | 25        |
| 3.6. Pursuing quality – reliability, validity and method limitations..... | 25        |
| 3.7.Ethical reflections .....   | 26        |
| <b>4.0.Theoretical framework</b> .....                                    | <b>27</b> |
| 4.1. WPR policy analysis.....   | 27        |
| 4.1.1.Objectives and limitations .....                                    | 30        |
| 4.2. The Nation as a brand .....  | 31        |
| 4.2.1.Objectives.....   | 33        |
| 4.2.2. Criticisms and limitations.....                                    | 34        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>5.0. Analysis .....</b>   | <b>35</b> |
| 5.1. Identifying problem representations (step 1) .....  | 35        |
| 5.1.1. From the “wrong” to “right” segment .....   | 35        |
| 5.1.2. Inadequate conditions .....   | 38        |
| 5.1.3. Lacking visibility and seasonally determined tourism .....  | 40        |
| 5.2. Preconceptions of problem representations and underlying rationalities (step 2) .....   | 43        |
| 5.2.1. Branding an indigenous national identity .....  | 44        |
| 5.2.2. The “need” and “right” to development .....   | 48        |
| 5.2.3. In with the “old”, “out with the “new” – or is it the other way around? .....   | 51        |
| 5.3. The development of problem representations (step 3) .....   | 53        |
| 5.3.1. Changing perspective – from North-South to Pan-Arctic .....   | 53        |
| 5.4. Excluded problem representations (step 4) .....   | 57        |
| 5.4.1. Unsaid problems in the Greenlandic tourism landscape .....  | 57        |
| 5.5. Problem representation impacts and implications (step 5) .....  | 59        |
| 5.5.1. Discursive implications .....   | 59        |
| 5.5.2. Subjectification implications .....   | 60        |
| 5.5.3. Lived implications .....  | 61        |
| 5.6. Interrupting problem representations (step six) .....   | 62        |
| <b>6.0. Conclusion .....</b>   | <b>63</b> |
| <b>7.0. Bibliography .....</b>   | <b>65</b> |
| 7.1. Policies .....  | 77        |
| <b>8.0. Appendices .....</b>   | <b>78</b> |
| 8.1. Appendix 1: “Turismstrategi 2019-2022” QEQ (2019) .....   | 78        |
| 8.2. Appendix 2: ” På vej mod mere Turisme – fælles indsats for vækst, innovation og ansvarlig turisme. 2020-2023” VG (2020) ..... | 78        |
| 8.3. Appendix 3: ” Kommuneplan 2014-26”, Qaasuitsup Kommunia (Ilulissat) (2014). .....   | 78        |
| 8.4. Appendix 4: Overview of Codes .....   | 78        |

## 1.0.Presentation

Greenland has in recent years gained increased focus internationally. Exploitation of the country's natural resources has attracted stakeholders from different parts of the world and Greenland's geographical position has gained further geopolitical importance (Hall & Saarinen 2010, p. 448). This became particularly apparent when President Trump in the fall 2019 stated that he wanted to buy Greenland from Denmark (Pengenelly 2019).

However, it has also gained increased global attention due to climate change and the melting of the polar icecaps (Maher 2017, p. 218), to which Greenland in particular has become a symbol (Bjørst 2012).

This has increased in interest from tourists, whom have been fleeing to Greenland to see the ice before it has disappeared for good (Lemelin et. al. 2010, p. 477).

Tourism has for long in research and by governments been recognized as a way to "develop" a country economically and "improve" the status quo (Jóhannesson 2015, p. 181). Therefore tourism has been considered by Greenlandic politicians as a positive outcome of an otherwise critical situation as a way to develop the Greenlandic economy (Bianco 2019, p. 37) and a prerequisite for Greenland eventually to achieve independence from the Danish Government from which it is still largely reliant upon for monetary support (Hall & Saarinen 2010, p. 458).

To promote mining and other extractive resources the Greenlandic Government, *Naalakkersuisut*, decided in March 2016 to inquire the Danish Government to exempt Greenland from the Paris Agreement, which Denmark signed in 2016 (Climate Greenland, n.d.). This Agreement aims for a reduction of global emissions of fossil fuels and to keep global temperatures below 2 degrees Celsius. With the exemption Greenland is not obliged to keep these goal (ibid) and can exploit the underground as a way to develop its economy (Vidal 2016).

Since 2017 which the UN announced as the year of "Sustainable Tourism for Development" (Maher 2017, p. 218) an increasing focus within the tourism landscape has been on sustainability (ibid). This idea of sustainable tourism has now reached the Greenlandic tourism industry as part of the overall discussions in Greenland regarding tourism development (Bianco 2019, p. 37).

In order to develop its tourism industry further, to achieve a self-supporting economy, Greenland needs to develop its infrastructure and traffic system (ibid, p. 38). Namely by building International Airports (ibid).



The issue with tourism as argued by scholars, is that if sustainability is understood with regard to the natural environment (and not in terms of economy) then tourism is in its essence not sustainable due to Co2 emissions from transportation of tourists by cruise ships or airplanes (Gren & Huijbens 2016).

This apparent contradiction therefore becomes an issue for Greenlandic tourism, since for tourists the wish to visit Greenland relies heavily on the search for “the pristine” and “untouched” nature (Tommasini 2011, pp. 47-48) along with the soon to be gone icecaps (Lemelin et.al. 2010, p. 77). Therefore the way Greenland is portrayed and imagined is of significance intimately connected to the tourism industry as the main way to appeal to a particular audience or possible visitor as, “places with a high imageability, i.e. evoking strong images in observers, take precedence in the tourist’s selection of attractions” (Tommasini 2011, p. 42).

As stated by Sejersen, peoples living in the changing Arctic will have to change not only their way of living, but also rethink how they understand themselves and their identities, i.e. as Arctic Peoples and re-imagining their futures (Sejersen 2015, p.1). Peoples of the Arctic must therefore also open up for rethinking and renegotiating the way the world outside perceives them.

This is where this thesis has its offset, as it argues that this dilemma is closely related to a Greenlandic self-understanding as an indigenous people, with a tight relation to nature and environment and therefore consequentially a responsible use of this. Hence sustainability and development in Greenland is not seen as mutually exclusive.

Sustainability as expressed with regard to the tourism landscape is thus part of branding a national identity and articulated as such in policies. This thesis argues that it becomes a goal to be perceived as a sustainable indigenous nation for strategic purposes, while environmental sustainability is not a goal in itself. For Greenland, Nation branding and tourism becomes a part of its nation building process and a way to impact the future with the increased global focus of the Arctic (Sejersen 2015, p. 3) in mind.

## 1.1. Research Question(s)

With the described context in mind, this thesis will examine and answer the following research question:

*What is the problem of tourism development in Greenland represented to be? And how is the concept of sustainability articulated in the tourism landscape as the solution to the “problem”?*

## 1.2. Setting the scene

The following section will give the contextual background as starting point by addressing what has drawn people to the Arctic and by accounting for tourism in the Arctic and Greenland historically.

### 1.2.1. Perceptions of the Arctic and its peoples

Expeditions and travels to the Arctic<sup>1</sup> has a long-standing tradition in the region (Lemelin et.al. 2010, p. 478). However, the type of tourism as we know today did not evolve in Greenland until 1952 (Hegelund 2009 p.16). Scientists were for long fascinated with the Arctic region as a place to be conquered by those visiting it, based on its unfriendly climate to human survival (Cassel & Paskevich, 2018, p.67).

The Arctic almost takes on “mythical” and “mysterious” qualities of legends from Greek and Latin geography, in which the Arctic was regarded as a gateway to “other” worlds (Tommasini 2011, p. 42; 44).

This image as a place where only the strongest survive has resulted in explorers’ interest and fascination with the region (Roberts and van der Watt 2015, p. 58).

Disregarding the Norse who settled in Greenland from the end of year 1000 to the 1400’s (Gulløv et.al. 2004, p. 228; 278), the majority of travel in the Arctic have been by European explorers in the 18th and 19th century seeking to achieve “firsts” – discovering new territories (Roberts and van der Watt, 2015, p. 59) and identifying new passages for travel (Tommasini 2011, p. 45). At this point the Eurocentric world perspective emerged, in which the South dictated how to represent the peoples of the North to the world (ibid).

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the “Arctic” does not consist of one (culturally, socially and economically) homogenous region. Rather it is a region, which despite similarities is also characterized by a multitude of cultures, peoples and governmental structures (Müller 2015, p. 155).

The peoples of the North, previously called “Eskimos”, categorized as “primitive” were portrayed like the landscape, as “wild”, “authentic” and “unspoiled” by civilization, living in the outskirts of the world (Thisted 2002, p. 327), as opposed to the “cultured” peoples of the Western world (Thisted 2002, p. 327) In the case of Greenland understood as Denmark and the identity of Greenlanders thus developed in opposition to what was perceived as “Danish” (Gad 2017 p. 106).

Although these representations of the Arctic (and its peoples) are the product of the colonial era they still exist today as integral to the notion of the Arctic as wild, uncivilized, and dangerous nature (Cassel & Paskevich, 2018, p. 68).

This fascination with the unknown land of the Arctic still draws tourists to the Arctic, but as” a new Arctic” is emerging so are perceptions of the Arctic (Evengård et.al. 2015 p. 1) which now is portrayed in media and social science research as a place of vulnerability due to climate change (Kristoffersen et. al. 2016, p. 95) placing Arctic peoples in the same categories as drowning polar bears (Roberts and van der Watt, 2015 p. 67; Bjørst 2012, p. 100) emphasizing vulnerability of Arctic peoples.

The ”new” Arctic is represented as on one hand a place which draws people in from all over the world due to the vulnerability of its climate (Lemelin et.al, 2010, p. 487), but also as a place where Indigenous peoples are shaping how they are perceived internationally (Thisted 2015, p. 24). This increased attention on the Arctic has also resulted in different fora through which Arctic peoples can be heard and impact policy such as the Arctic Council (Martello 2004, p. 112), or through the use of social media (Rodgers and Scobie 2015, p. 79). The shift has meant that they actively participate in shaping (or attempting to shape) the articulations of today and the future representations of the Arctic and its peoples (Thisted 2015, p.23).

The image of Greenland as a wild, unknown country with great nature still appeals to many tourists (ibid, p.31) and with climate change putting a rush on things, the main attraction is the nature of Greenland and the possibilities of adventures (ibid, p. 32).

### 1.2.2. The emergence of an industry

Tourism in Greenland was not managed and regulated from Greenland until the 1990’s (Milfeldt, 2015, p. 2), although different types of travel long before can be viewed as ”quasi-tourism” (Weaver & Lawton 2017, p. 56), as these types of travel were mainly by officials of the Danish

State, primarily employed for trade and mission, explorers (cf. Section above) and craftsmen sent to Greenland to build housing for the officials (Sørensen 1983, p. 119).

Until 1953 Greenland was officially a colony under the Danish state and part of the Danish Kingdom<sup>2</sup> (DIIS 2007, p. 89). Only those with permission from Denmark were allowed to travel freely (Tommasini 2011, p. 26).

During the colonial period, Denmark had monopoly of Greenland. Ships were sent on a regular basis from Copenhagen to Greenland from 1774 by the Royal Danish Trade (KH) to ensure transport across the Atlantic and the internal distribution of the brought goods and personnel (Schultz-Lorentzen 1998, p. 91).

From the beginning of the 1900's the monopoly was condemned from different sides (Lidegaard 1991, p.135), but not until the law from April 1st of 1925 that closed off Greenland to the outside world was lifted in 1953 after pressure from the United Nations (DIIS 2007, p. 89) the official status of Greenland changed (Sørensen 1983, p. 119) to an integrated part of the Danish Realm (ibid).

In the following period lots of development took place; Infrastructure, building, improved housing, the educational levels and centralization of the Greenlandic population, all with the aim of improvement based on Danish criteria (ibid).

The first tourist airplanes came in 1952 when Icelanders (with permission from the Danish government) started to fly curious Icelanders to Greenland for one-day trips to Kulusuk in East Greenland (Hegelund 2009, p. 16).

This interest grew over the years with more travelling the route, and when Narsarsuaq Airport, built by the Americans during World War 2, was deserted, travel from Narsarsuaq to Iceland took off, organized by the Icelandic travel business, Icelandair (ibid. p. 18).

In 1960 Grønlandsfly A/S (Greenland Airplanes A/S), was founded to develop a commercial air traffic system based on Greenlandic and Danish interests (Ancker & DIAS 1999, p. 67).

Hence from 1960 travel by ships was no longer the only option for travel to Greenland from Denmark and in 1962 Grønlandsfly A/S also started domestic flights in Greenland, which up until then had relied upon KGH (the Royal Danish Trade Company) (ibid).

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<sup>2</sup> Greenland was colonized by Denmark in 1721 by minister Hans Egede, who came to Greenland to seek out the Norse as abandoned Christians (Loukacheva 2007, p. 18). As the Norse had disappeared, Egede started the christening the Greenlanders, and colonization developed. (ibid). Prior to 1721 the people were living nomadic lives, dependent on where game would go (Bianco 2019, p. 30).

In connection with these a need to transport passengers to airfields in Narsarsuaq and Kangerlussuaq developed and a small range of cutters and motorboats were instated for passenger- and postal services (Schultz-Lorentzen 1988, p. 85). The passenger transport along the Greenlandic west coast also developed during this time and from 1964 regular passenger boats were built and instated for the gradually growing local coastal traffic (ibid).

The international Cruise tourism in Greenland, did not take off until the 1990's (la Cour Vahl in Tommasini 2011 p. 34). At the time the ships were a solution to the challenges of limited accommodation and places for dining, and the ships allowed to cater to a larger number of tourists (Christensen in Tommasini 2011, p. 29). Simultaneously the Greenlandic Home rule bet on the tourism in the 1980's as a potential source of income to remedy the unemployment that emerged due to a crisis in the fishing industry and international resistance towards sealskin (ibid).

From 1994 the number of tourists in Greenland increased generally, only the number of cruise tourist not until 2003 (la Cour Vahl in Tommasini 2011 p. 34).

In 1975 it was decided on the political level" that the Greenlandic political authorities needed to adopt a national tourism policy" (Tommasini 2011, p. 28).

With this Greenlandic Tourism industry started, and in the 1970's and 1980's initiatives from the *Landsråd* (National Council) and the Danish Ministry were taken to educate the population within the service discipline for the steadily growing industry (Milfeldt 2015, p. 2), although with a small impact on the Greenlandic national economy (Tommasini 2011, p. 27).

From Home Rule in 1979 and until the 1990's Greenland took on more and more responsibility of the progress for tourism to become its own industry (Ibid).

In 1990 exploration of natural resources and tourism as the main income for the national economy was politically decided along with the already existing but declining fishing-industry (Milfeldt 2015, p. 2). These became the "three pillars" to carry the Greenlandic economy. (Tommasini 2011, p. 29). With the decision to make tourism its own priority, the Greenlandic Parliament, the *Landsting* came out with the first policy for tourism, "the Tourism Development Plan" (ibid), for the period of 1991-2005 (ibid). The hope was that eventually Greenland would have a high enough income from tourism to do without the yearly money from the Danish State (ibid).

The policy assessed the constraints and benefits of a possible Greenlandic tourism industry and while benefits were plentiful with pull factors as nature, culture and people (Tommasini 2011, p. 29) so were the constraints as the need for significantly improved infrastructure under the precondition of large funding, lack of hotels and hostels, a short tourist season and the ever changing weather. Finally, it was considered a constraint that the citizens of Greenland did not know much about tourism and its impacts (ibid).

The policy argued that Greenland should be focused on “control, guidance and limitations, if tourism is not to create problems” (Master Plan 1.3.4. in Tommasini 2011, p. 30).

As the initial policy didn’t provide concrete steps for action, a document published in 1996 by the government identified the issues in the initial policy. This called for a new tourism policy (Tommasini 2011, p. 31) which was published the same year to cover the period 1996-2005. This provided specific steps to take for the industry to develop, all of which should within the present infrastructure “without new investments directly in the industry” (ibid).

In 2009 Greenland gained official status as a country with Self-rule government and the Greenlandic people was to be seen as its own people with Greenlandic as the official language (Bianco 2019, p.31). Greenland was now able to have a larger say in the development of the national economy and of its business sector, including the sector for exploration of natural resources (ibid) as a step to achieve greater autonomy.

Since 1980 Greenland has yearly received funding from the Danish state, through the “Block Grant (Bloktilskud)<sup>3</sup> which in 2018 amounted to 3,6 mia. Danish Kroner<sup>4</sup> making up about 55% of Greenland’s national income (Bianco 2019, p. 29).

Adding to this, Greenland receives yearly grants from the European Union to the educational sector, which with the Block Grant makes up 60% of Greenland’s overall income. If Greenland is to be independent from Denmark, other types of income will have to be elevated in order to account for the block grant (ibid). The Greenlandic Government had in 2009 set up a line of commissions to assess the possibilities of development in Greenland with the goal of economic independence (Bianco 2019, p. 36). One such committee was the Transport Committee which published a report on the benefits and consequences – economic and societal – of the existent structure of traffic and transport in Greenland (ibid).

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<sup>3</sup>The amount of money which Greenland started to receive with the Blockgrant, corresponded to the expenses the Danish state covered, prior to the introduction of the Blockgrant and Homerule (Bianco 2019, p. 31)

<sup>4</sup> The specific number is regulated for inflation (ibid, p. 29).

Amongst its many conclusions, the report stated an interdependent relationship between the development of the business sector and the infrastructure related to traffic, and it pointed towards the need to “expand and diversify the Greenlandic business structure (...) with one of the keystones of this being an optimal landing strip structure” (Bianco 2019, p. 36, own translation of quote from Danish to English).

The Greenlandic Government thus established the company Kalaallit Airports A/S in 2016, a state-owned holding company to build and run two international airports<sup>5</sup> in the capital Nuuk and in Ilulissat in the North. Finally, a domestic airport in Qaqortoq South Greenland for smaller airplanes from Iceland (Bianco 2019, p. 37). These airports are to replace the two airports World War 2 in Narsarsuaq and Kangerlussuaq (ibid, p. 36).

The Danish state and the Greenlandic government signed a deal in 2018 about Danish financial support in the airport project (Bianco 2019, p. 37) which would place 700 mio. Danish kroner in the project, thus owning 33,3 % of the airports (Wille 2019), with the rest funded partly through a loan to the Greenlandic Government, and by Greenland’s own economy (Bianco 2019, p. 37).

The development of the International Airports are considered crucial for further development of the tourism industry to avoid connecting flights through Denmark, as this results in expensive tickets to and from Greenland (Bianco 2019, p. 38). This is seen to impact the number of tourists travelling to Greenland which the new airports seek to resolve (ibid).

Kalaallit Airports are currently in the midst of blasting in Nuuk where the airport is to be built (Kalaallit Airports Holding A/S 2020) to further bring together the 16 towns of Greenland and its 60 settlements. The airports are expected to give the Greenlandic economy an overall boost as improved infrastructure will fly tourists directly to Greenland (Naalakkersuisut 2016b, p. 7) - a continuous hope is that this will contribute to independence from Denmark through a self-supporting economy (Bianco 2019, p. 38).

### 1.3. Thesis objectives and structure

As will be presented to in section 2.1 on existing literature within the field of tourism and sustainability, an exorbitant amount of research on tourism in the Arctic exists. Much of this relates

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<sup>5</sup> Until today all travel between Greenland and the rest of the world, is connected through Denmark except the summer period, where there are connecting flights from Greenland through Iceland and other destinations around the world (Bianco 2019, p. 38).

to the impacts of climate change on the Arctic and implications for the tourism industry (Lemelin 2010; Maher 2016; Weaver & Lawton 2017).

Furthermore, research on tourism “imagery” in the Arctic has often focused on those at the receiving end (Keskitalo et.al. 2019, p. 5) from the point of view of the tourist and his/her/their experiences, rather than investigating the messenger’s side and the creations of these, the underlying intentions of why and how these “imageries” are sought to be managed (ibid). It is this knowledge gap this thesis seeks to address, through an analysis of three tourism policies by Greenlandic tourism actors.

Following Gad & Strandsbjerg (2019) the concept of sustainability is in this thesis considered an inherently political concept, which brought under scrutiny, begs the questions of what is to be sustained, how this is expressed and lastly why (Gad & Strandsbjerg 2019, p. 12).

Here the concept is linked to tourism development by following Gad & Strandsbjerg in asking the questions above, throughout the analysis (ibid, p. 12).

This focus is relevant within a study of Development and International Relations for many reasons: Firstly, Greenland has for a long time explicitly stated its wish to gain a self-supporting economy to become independent from its former colonial power, Denmark (Gad 2017) as Denmark still controls foreign policy-, security- and judiciary matters<sup>6</sup> (Statsministeriet n.d.).

Based on this it becomes a question of how Greenland “maneuvers” (Gad 2017, p.104) and strategically impacts the way it is perceived on an international stage, where Denmark largely acts on behalf of Greenland, despite its official status as self-governing (Statsministeriet n.d.).

The focus on foreign investments into Greenlandic infrastructure for geopolitical purposes<sup>7</sup>, could have been brought up. However, as the Greenlandic wish for independence is so implicitly stated in many aspects that deal with development I found it relevant to investigate how and why this is expressed in tourism policies, as development is here seen from a Greenlandic perspective, both nationally and as communicated to foreigners.

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<sup>6</sup> Although Greenland has officially “taken” over the exploration and mining of raw materials, in the case of e.g. Kuannersuit, (Kvanefjeld in Narsaq) which is also classified as a security-, defense-, and foreign policy matter, due to the global interest in Rare Earth Minerals and Uranium, Denmark still exercises its power over aspects related to Kuannersuit (Naalakkersuisut 2016a p. 1; 3).

<sup>7</sup> Such as the bidding-war between China and Denmark to invest in the Greenlandic International airports that are to be built (Breum 2018) or the most recent “aid package” from the US investing in tourism development (Sorensen 2020).



Based on a critical approach to policy analysis (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016), and the assumption that policies paint the ideal image, Greenlandic tourism policies (implicitly), points towards where Greenland envisions itself in the future just like foreign policies, which Greenland does not have. The primary focus here is development. An international relations perspective on how Greenland seeks to impact/manage how it is perceived internationally, independently from Denmark, reclaiming national identity in the nation building process, is tied tourism as this is how the outside world is met. The main objective is thus to highlight how tourism development, and sustainability are intertwined with these discourses and the ways the concept of sustainability is applied for political purposes within the context of the tourism landscape as expressed in tourism policies. While other research has focused on how Greenlandic politicians aim at projecting a “modern” perception of Greenland (Thisted 2013, p. 207) this thesis argues for the way Greenland is now focusing on an Indigenous perception, drawing on existing discourses, and an emerging Pan-Arctic Identity (Huppert & Chuffart 2017, p. 1). The thesis is composed of a total of six sections such as former research, method for the thesis, theoretical framework, analysis, and finally concluding remarks.

## 2.0.A look into past research

The following two sections will provide an introduction to existing research on tourism and sustainability and look into definitions, which characterize the two aspects. Due to the limited timeframe for this thesis, a fully comprehensive literature review will not be provided. Nonetheless an introduction to former research on tourism (in general and in the Arctic) and sustainability, provides the frame to which this thesis places itself in.

### 2.1.Tourism and its outcomes

Tourism is officially defined as “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes” by UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The word “tourist” is widely used, but as pointed out by Hall & Saarinen, the UNWTO does not use the term but refers to “visitors” for travelers (Hall & Saarinen 2010, p.452), however if the travel “includes an overnight stay” then the person is considered a “tourist” (United Nations 2008, p. 10).

In order to be labelled “international visitor” (or tourist), the person in question will have had to “travel to a country other than that in which he/she has his/her usual residence for at least one night but not more than one year, and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited” (UNWTO in Hall & Saarinen 2010, p. 452), hence tourism has to have aspects of leisure and acting out “individual freedom” (Higgins-Desbiolles 2006, p. 1197).

The experiences of different cultures associated with travel and tourism, has been recognized as a means to promote global peace and understandings of other ways of living (Higgins-Desbiolles 2003) while also recognizing the possible power of tourism in aiding indigenous peoples and visitors in reconciling with past history, as it works to educate tourists, and for indigenous peoples it is a means to find joy in sharing their culture by being engaged in the tourism processes (Higgins-Desbiolles 2003; Keskitalo et.al 2019).

With regard to the environment, some scholars have argued for tourism as a factor in environmental conservation of strategies, as tourism can conserve the natural surroundings which attracts tourists (Higgins-Desbiolles 2006), hence tourism has been categorized as a “social force” due to its many positive outcomes. (ibid)

The performative aspect of tourism has been covered by scholars in the tourism studies, some arguing that tourists take on a performative “role” when travelling as a way to act out identities expressed at home, but also to the ways identities within tourism groups are performed based on collective norms of the group (Edensor 2001).

Tourism has also been widely criticized as an industry that is caught up in the endless need for growth, due to neoliberal ideologies having entered the tourism industry and policy (Higgins-Desbiolles 2006, p. 1195; Hall & Zapata 2014 ) as an increasing “Gold rush-mentality” (Jóhannesson 2015, p. 186) within the tourism landscape.

Due to the nature of tourism as one of “commercialization” (Hall & Zapata 2014, p. 7), a large portion of tourism research have argued for the negative impacts of such a mentality.

The search for the “authentic” often related to indigenous peoples cultures has regarded as commercializing culture (Keskitalo et.al 2019) to end up reproducing stereotypical images of indigenous peoples through the types of “othering” (Cassel & Pashkevich 2018; Keskitalo et.al 2019, p. 3), with a tendency to overlook reproducing stereotypical gender roles (Cassel & Pashkevich 2018).

Others have argued that due to climate change, tourism based on “fossil-fuel driven consumption” should be replaced by “staycations” (Gren & Huijbens 2016, p. 190).

In line with this, some scholars have sought to rethink the relations between both human and non-human stakeholders, such as animals and the environment, by considering all as rights-holders, and in that way create new relations between peoples and their surrounding environments (Gren & Huijbens 2016; Kristoffersen et.al 2016), which calls for greater responsibility of tourists.

## 2.2. Sustainability – a contested concept

A formal definition receiving international recognition of the concept “sustainability” was given in 1987 with the publication of the report “Our Common Future” from “The World Commission on Environment and Development” (UN) popularly known as the “Brundtland Report” (Jacobs 1999, p. 21) stating “sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987).

The definition was specified to concern not only the environment, but also economy, mainly regarding those living in poverty to have their basic “needs” secured (WCED 1987), as well as social development such as securing equality, better quality of life, while also making sure these values and systems are maintained for the next generations (WCED 1987).

Since its initial definition in 1987, a multitude of studies have been conducted on the nature of the concept and it has received widespread criticism of the way it has become a so-called “contested concept” due to the many (often contrasting) definitions (Jacobs 1999; Connolly 2007).

Others have argued for sustainability as an “empty signifier” empty of meaning (Gad & Strandsbjerg 2019, p. 10) but full of “ambiguity” (Connolly 2007, p. 260; Thisted 2019, p. 178). One aspect which there seems to be consensus on, is the deeply political “nature” of the concept (Connolly 2007; Lynge 2013 p. 208), as the definition has a tendency to be re-defined and used by actors to fit their own political purposes (Fischhendler & Katz 2013; Gad & Strandsbjerg 2019).

Those which argue for sustainability as a contested concept argue that it works on two different scales, one associated with general definitions– which most of us will argue to know the essence of (Jacobs 1999, p. 25), while those that argue for the political nature will state that the way the concept is defined always depends on how it is “interpreted in practice” (Jacobs 1999, p. 25). It thus becomes not only a question of the *what* of the concept, but especially the *how* and *why*. It is

this second aspect this thesis is concerned with, of what, how and why sustainability is expressed the way it is in tourism policy in Greenland.

This thesis follows in the footsteps of Gad & Strandsbjerg (2019) as it seeks to understand what it is that is to be sustained, how and why within the scope of tourism policies in a Greenlandic context. Sustainability has been studied in an array of contexts, and as argued by Gad and Strandberg (2019) "concepts always carry with them a baggage of meaning (..) when sustainability is introduced in a new context it inevitably articulates pre-existing meaning structures" (Gad & Strandsbjerg 2019, p. 3). Since Our Common Future (WCED 1987), which linked the concept to development, it has appeared in numerous social science research with this regard.

However, an interesting aspect of the idea of "sustainable development" has been pointed out by Gad & Strandsbjerg (2019) who argue that the two concepts (sustainable and development) often seen together, are actually "oxymoronic" due to the meaning of the two individually (Gad & Strandsbjerg 2019, p. 8). In the view of Gad and Strandsbjerg "sustainability" is concerned with keeping something the same, while the other, "development", is concerned with a transformational aspect, that is progressive (ibid). As such the notion of sustainable development seems to point in two different incompatible directions.

Furthermore, scholars have noted that sustainability works on different levels, so called "scales", which brings together and arranges elements of time and place, created to achieve certain goals on a political level by specific actors (Sejersen 2019, p. 94; Bjørst 2019, p.128). These "scales" work by bringing some issues to the forefront of discussion while silencing others (Sejersen 2019; Bjørst 2019).

Due to the definition of sustainability which takes, "the needs of future generations" into account (cf. WCED, Our Common Future) the concept has been perceived as future-shaping, connecting future ways of living with the present. Sustainability shapes the way the future is visualized and acted out in the present (Sejersen 2019; Gad & Strandsbjerg 2019). Hence the concept influences the way actors relate to the perceived future as well as the one they are living in today (ibid).

In the context of development, sustainability has been considered a constraint to countries seeking to exploit natural resources, so that sustainability (mainly with regard to environmental protection) is blocking industrialization (Connolly 2007, p. 3; Sejersen 2015, p. 87-88).

Bjørst (2019), whom has conducted research on environmental protection (or rather the lack thereof) that highlights the "right-to-develop" perspective in contrast to the sustainability, as this

“right” has been claimed by Greenlandic politicians with regard to mineral exploration (Bjørst 2019). Some have argued for the right to develop, as a question of social (in)justice (Connolly 2007, p. 6), imposed by Western, developed countries, thus keeping developing countries from further developing (Magni 2017, p. 437).

In light of the assumed close relation between nature and indigenous peoples, a whole array of research has been conducted on “sustainable living” by indigenous peoples (Thisted 2019; Lynge 2013, p. 207; Magni 2017). The inclusion of Indigenous peoples in environmental protection questions has been seen to be of great importance, since, as highlighted by researchers, these peoples are often viewed as speaking on behalf of nature (Thisted 2019, p. 176; Bjørst 2012). Within the anthropological discipline, a focus has been on “Traditional Ecological Knowledge” known as TEK <sup>8</sup> (Wenzel 1999; Sejersen 2015, p. 191), as the archetype of sustainable living as Indigenous peoples have lived off their lands for centuries, along with the “ethical use of resources related subsistence living (Lynge 2013; Wenzel 1999).

This perspective has meant that the international community (and in some cases researchers) (Magni 2017) have looked to Indigenous Peoples for answers of how to live sustainably and as a way of recognition and legitimization of Indigenous peoples ways of life (Magni 2017; Sejersen 2015 ), which for long was considered inferior to so-called “western” knowledge (Smith 1999; Wenzel 1999).

This legitimization of “traditional” ways of living related to Indigenous Peoples can be considered a win for Indigenous Peoples (Lynge 2013, p. 208), and a shift in attitude towards these.

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<sup>8</sup> This type of knowledge has also been called “Indigenous ecological knowledge” and “Indigenous science” (Thisted 2019, p. 176) and “local knowledge”, Inuit Knowledge (Sejersen 2015, p. 191).

### 3.0. Method

The selected methods have been chosen on their ability to support the research question and “open up” the empirical data for analysis, and finally the method and research question has informed the selection of theory. The following section will account for the method considerations of this thesis.

#### 3.1. A Social Constructivist Stance

Theories seek to describe or explain certain ways of understanding the world or phenomena as a pair of glasses which we look through to gain a particular understanding of the object of examination (Egholm 2014, p 13).

One type of theory is that of *metatheories*, certain considerations applicable to questions about being and doing, implicit to these theories of how to approach the world, in other words - explanations about other explanations (ibid).

Philosophy of science is such a type of theory, as it asks questions about the “nature” of reality and how knowledge is gained and what is treated as valid knowledge (Egholm 2014 p. 14).

It is often categorized into two categories; *ontology* and *epistemology*; *epistemology* is concerned with how knowledge is obtained and what is considered knowledge within a tradition of science, while *ontology* can best be explained as a worldview, i.e. how we perceive “reality” (ibid). It is important to be aware of “glasses” worn by the researcher when conducting a study, as these will have an impact on the entirety of the study, as it is based on a specific understanding of the world, and thus creates a context in which this thesis should be understood (Egholm 2014, p. 13).

This thesis positions itself within the field of Social Constructivism, which argues for the ontological approach that the world is constructed by individuals through interactions. (Egholm 2014, p. 148). Actors are thus not in themselves at the center in the socially constructed world but perceived as those who “construct” the world through the way things are given meaning (Egholm 2014, p. 13).

From a Social Constructivist epistemology, the way knowledge is arrived at is seen as dynamic and relative to the context in which it is produced and a product of (Egholm 2014, p. 148).

With this in mind the researcher who works from a social constructivist philosophy of science can only ever argue that the results of a given study is constructed and never static (ibid).

Therefore, the results of this thesis should be considered products of the context (time and place) in which they are derived at and gathered.

### 3.2. Qualitative methods and inductive reasoning

Qualitative methods entail many definitions. The following section will describe how it is understood here, and why this type of study is relevant to this thesis.

Qualitative methods cover a range of ways to conduct research - from interviews, to observations, to content analysis and the study of speech acts (discourse) (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015 p. 13) which all seek to gain understandings of a particular phenomenon, by examining its "qualities", hence the name (ibid). These are often examined from the point of view of particular actors, as it is, either collectively or individually, their expressions that make up the object of examination (ibid p. 14). The aim of the qualitative method is to give reason and make sense of how this is done by the subjects in the study (ibid).

Studies that seek to "quantify" research, known as quantitative methods, work with quantifiable data, in the form of numbers which enables the researcher to present the data through figures (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015, p. 13). Quantitative methods call for deductive reasoning where data are used to confirm or deny a specific hypothesis, thus working with causality (Riis 2005 p. 29).

Qualitative types of research call for inductive reasoning, having a start off point from the data (Riis 2005, p. 29), in other words by letting the data speak for itself.

This thesis is concerned with a qualitative method of research as it seeks to investigate the articulations of sustainability in reference to tourism in Greenland and therefore is concerned with the questions of "how" and "why" which a quantitative method would not help to answer.

The aim for this thesis is to look at the results and overall conclusions within the provided context, through a clear and concise presentation of these to ensure full disclosure (Riis 2012, p. 349).

### 3.3. Analyzing documents

Most of us come across them daily in our everyday lives – documents. Either in the form of policies, newspapers, books or other types of written words, but for social science researchers these can also be the basis of analysis (Bowen 2009, p. 27).

This type of analysis is "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material" (Bowen 2009, p. 27).

Documents can act as a convenient way of collecting data, when time is limited as most data (not private sources included) is already publicly available to the researcher (Lynggaard 2015, p. 154; Bowen 2009, p. 31).

Through the incorporation of different documents as data, a researcher is able to identify any assumptions a document may contain and thus avoid any preconceived notions present in the source (ibid). The origin of the source is thus always relevant, as the original intentions behind the document influences the perceptions and “truths” which are conveyed within the document (Lynggaard 2015, p. 154).

As noted by scholars, documents are not of a “static” nature (Lynggaard 2015, p. 154), although this naturally depends on the specific type of source (Bowen 2009, p. 31).

The types of documents included in this thesis are policies as part of the empirical material to which I base my analysis and discussion. As the objective of this thesis is to understand how sustainability is articulated in the tourism industry in Greenland through language and text, the use of documents as material for analysis was appropriate.

The websites where these policies were retrieved, the way they have been processed and a presentation of the policies will be provided in Section 4.4.1.

### 3.5.Data Collection

The following section will explain the type of data this thesis operates with. It will then address for how data were collected, followed by a presentation of the policies chosen and then how the data was processed.

#### 3.5.1.Selection and presentation of policies

Three policies were chosen as empirical data based on the regions they covered and their attachment to the upcoming international airports namely; the tourism policy “På vej mod mere turisme” (2020) by Visit Greenland, the official government owned National Tourism and the municipality of Qaasuitsup Kommunia’s “Kommuneplan (2014-2026) - including Ilulissat - not have a tourism policy per se but it covers tourism and the region in detail. Hence the reason to include it.

Lastly, “Turismestrategi 2019-2022” by Qeqqata Kommunia, (also known as Destination Arctic Circle) which covers Kangerlussuaq as one of the main airports which receives tourists from



Denmark and Iceland. Some of these date back to 2014 and 2019 but are still the most recent. They are all publicly available.

As was stated earlier, when working with these types of documents assumed recipient must be taken into consideration. Based on content, the probable recipients of these are the general public, possible investors (private or public), other tourism actors/agencies/educational organizations and municipalities (in Greenland, Iceland, Denmark or across the Arctic) with an interest in these or in tourism.

Hence, the language used in policies does have to be explicit in descriptions, although implicit phrasing and concepts do occur. As a researcher and "outsider" I have however not found that possible implicit wording is more complex than can be solved.

### 3.5.2. Data processing and coding

The policies were processed through *coding*, the *analytical classification* of material, in which data is firstly looked at to identify occurring themes and where these appear and how; secondly by examining how these themes are interconnected in order to establish an overview of how the stated and the themes are linked (Riis 2005, p. 156-157). Coding bring order in an otherwise overwhelming amount of empirical data as the first step of analysis as an overview of the direction of analysis (ibid).

The codes were of the *descriptive* type, identifying who a statement is by and how it is expressed (Riis 2005, p. 158), as well as the *understanding* type of codes, seeking to understand the meaning of a passage or statement and the purpose of it (ibid).

All the data were arranged in the columns: *page no*; *passage*; *comment*; *code* allowing an overview and full transparency of the thought- and data-processing. A second round of coding to identify what was proposed as answers to "problems", which was deemed necessary. See Appendices 1,2,3 and 4 for the processed data (attached separately).

All material were only available in Danish why data was coded in Danish. Statements or passages used in the analysis are translated to English.

### 3.6. Pursuing quality – reliability, validity and method limitations

In order to ensure the quality of any research the concepts of *reliability*, *validity* and *generalizability* are often brought up. All are founded in the natural sciences perspectives and discussions regarding their relevance in social sciences has been up for debate (Riis 2012, p. 346).

*Reliability* relates to the trustworthiness of results (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015, p. 318) – if the study was to be replicated it should give the same results (ibid). Although not the overall goal of qualitative studies, it must be taken into account (Riis 2012, p. 363). Here generalizability becomes a question of being aware of one's own position, as in the case of qualitative studies, knowledge is not objective (Riis 2012, p. 353). Hence the importance to be aware of any bias. Reliability is reached by documenting the specific course of action for data collection (where and how where they gathered and by whom), and to be mindful of why certain data was deemed more relevant than others (Riis 2012, p. 354).

The *validity* of a study is about whether the conclusions and results from a study are legitimate, strong, thought out, and whether the study actually examines what it sets out to do in its initial phases (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015, p. 318).

For any conclusions to be valid, they must be “founded correctly on its premises” (ibid) giving insight into the thought process that brought the results and conclusions (Riis 2012, p. 348). To ensure validity, this thesis has sought to do so by providing arguments to the reader of the reasons for the choices made and their relevance to answer the research question and achieve its goal, so that the reader comes to the same or similar conclusions (Riis 2012, p. 363).

This thesis is not without its limits mainly in terms of data collection. Initially interviews were planned to supplement the main data (the policies) but due to the current global pandemic and “lockdown” in both Greenland and Denmark, interviews were made difficult. Although skype-interviews are useful tool (Jaghorban et.al. 2014) much of Greenlandic communication is non-verbal, hence conducting interviews over skype poses the risk of missing too much.

### 3.7. Ethical reflections

When working with representations of former colonized people, questions of representativity emerge (Smith 1999) so also in the case of Greenland, which (as was noted in section 1.2.1) has been a people represented by others. This begs the question of who then has the “power to represent”<sup>9</sup> (Thisted 2002) the Greenlandic people and if today only the Greenlandic people have this power? With regard to *bias* (cf. section on reliability), there are some benefits to having insider

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<sup>9</sup> Thisted when referring to “power” argues that “power” brings with it an understanding of the right to represent (Thisted 2002, p. 336).

knowledge of the Greenlandic culture and country, which I perceive myself having as a Greenlander. Had interviews been conducted, this would have been beneficial for contacts and finding relevant interviewees.

However this also poses the risk of being “blinded” and uncritical of my own point of views and the representations I propose and perhaps reproducing the same representations I have sought to avoid. But I can only be transparent about the research process, and self-reflective of the representations I propose.

It should be noted, that the terms “traditional” or “Indigenous” used with reference to representations of Greenland is used as a concept that points to specific cultural, historical and environmental relations.

## 4.0. Theoretical framework

This section will introduce the theoretical framework which this thesis has its basis in. It is structured as follows: Firstly, by introducing WPR as a theoretical framework (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). Secondly, Nation Branding theory associated with Simon Anholt (2007) will be described. Following each is a discussion on limitations and criticisms.

### 4.1. WPR policy analysis

The coming section will account for the “What is the Problem Represented to be?” a type of policy analysis (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016), which for the rest of this thesis will be referred to as WPR.

As the objective for my thesis is to comprehend how the problem of tourism development in the Greenlandic tourism landscape is represented in relation to sustainability it was appropriate to implement the WPR method as it also covers how identities “or subjectivities” are produced as an aspect of discourses and political logics. Based on Foucauldian theory it blurs the boundaries between approach and theory, here it seen mainly as theory but also as an approach. Based on six steps of how to conduct policy analysis, WPR structures the analysis and highlighting power-relations and political reasoning otherwise left unquestioned (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). The steps will be presented after a brief introduction to Foucault’s core concepts.

Following Michel Foucault, *power* is seen as “productive” and never an “it” held by any particular individual or group, thus challenging main understandings of “sovereign” power (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 28).

Instead the concept of *power* should be understood as a type of power present in all arenas of life, an “invisible force”, that works through discourses to shape and influence subjects (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 28). Thus, power is relational taking place and manifested through relations and actions between individuals (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 28).

*Governmentality*, (“mentality” combined with “govern”) is defined as a specific reasoning or machinery of how to guide state subjects (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 42). The way these works is by how aspects of everyday lives are unquestioned and become part of a naturalized reality (ibid). Policy is considered one way in which subjects are governed to obtain the status quo (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016 p. 6), hence policy is “understood to include both the activities of state institutions of other agencies involved in maintaining social order” (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 18).

As a type of policy analysis, WPR argues that policies possess their own “logics” and thus a means for governments or other actors to propose solutions to what “they” perceive as a particular problem (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016), WPR thus argues that what is represented is not the actual “problem” (ibid). .

The concept of *Knowledges*, is that which through consent becomes knowledge (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 35) with *becoming* as the key word as it is a question of what is recognized as knowledge (ibid).

*Discourses* are characterized as “practices that systematically for the object of which they speak; they do not identify but constitute them and in ... doing so conceal their own invention” (Foucault in Bacchi 2010, p. 48). As such instead of discourses “being of the world” discourses are what “makes” the world.

Posited on its Foucauldian perspective, WPR shares many of the premises of Foucault’s theory, the main being that all things are products of constructs, taking form through discourses and power (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 37). Hence “issues” can be perceived as components open for analysis as they create particular realities or immanent truths, which in turn are experienced as “normal”, and unquestioned (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016L, p. 37).

Thus, WPR is based on a premise of skepticism as the way it approaches policy is by questioning – both in its overall thought but also in the way the approach is performed (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 4).

Founded on Foucault's definition of power, the WPR method works to deconstructs and examine preconceived notions of a "problem" and the way it is "made up" to "unmake" and "deconstruct" while seeking to understand how and why certain articulations of phenomena are "brought into being" (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 4).

The usefulness of WPR is that it goes beyond what is presented as obvious to the reader and addresses the circumstances (historical, contextual, societal) that derive from these articulations (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016 p. 14).

Contrary to popular perceptions of governments as those who solve issues, the WPR puts forward the alternative position that they (or other policymakers) construct "the problems", hence any type of research that works with policy will always be of a political "nature" (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 13). WPR makes it its purpose to bring the practices to the foreground and rationalities behind these "constructions" (ibid, p. 14). WPR is based on a "recipe" in which the researcher reflects on six steps to proceed from which will be explained below (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 20).

*Step 1. "What is the problem represented to be in policy?"* (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016 p. 20).

This question is the "opening question" and sceptic to what is "normalized" and it looks to what is stated to resolve the issue of concern, as a guiding tool that points to what is perceived as the issue, thus the researcher "works in reverse" at this step (ibid).

*Step 2. What are the preconceived notions behind this representation of the "problem" (s)?* (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 20). The second step seeks to address how the representation was able to become "normalized" by inspecting what made the problem representation seem sensible within the policy (ibid). Then it addresses if any categorizations are taking place, and lastly it examines if anything points towards a specific "governmentality" (ibid).

*Step 3. How did this representation arise and evolve?* (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 20).

The third step reflects on the historical and societal conditions the representation is founded upon, including how power might have an impact on the way the issue is portrayed. It thus calls for a thorough investigation of circumstances that gave rise to the representation (ibid, p. 22).

*Step 4: What is excluded in this representation? What are the alternative representations?* (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 20)

The foundation for step four was made in steps two and three, but step four looks to what is not included in the way the problematization is represented (ibid, p. 22). It is followed by incorporating different perspectives which challenge the status quo of the representation (ibid). Here the researcher is encouraged to draw on other perspectives to scrutinize any of the presented problematizations (ibid).

*Step 5: What are the implications/impacts of this representation?* (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 20)

The fifth step considers impacts on “discourses”, “subjectification” and the practical, experienced and “lived” implications (ibid, p. 23). These are analyzed individually but all linked (ibid). The part of analysis that took place in steps two and four are further developed and elaborated in step five (ibid, p.22) and illustrates implications in constructing problems a certain way, through the way *discourses* inhibit thought, statements and actions (ibid).

Another is how *subjects* are presented in particular ways to the world and impacts self-identification. The last impact manifests itself in practice on the individuals in question’s day-to-day life, the so-called “lived impacts” (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 23).

*Step 6: How and where has the representation been constructed, and challenged?* (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 24).

This is the last step of the analysis, with basis in steps two and three. Step six promotes contrasting ways of representations by investigating how these are often negotiated and sought to be overcome by other representations (ibid). It is worth noting that although these questions are “how and what”, they implicitly involve a “why” as they always seek to explain, thus avoiding the pitfall of a descriptive analysis.

#### 4.1.1.Objectives and limitations

Just as with subjects, policy also “makes “objects, often in relation to categories and concepts (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 84) The understanding of concepts here is that they are” proposals about how we ought to proceed from here” (Tanesini in Bacchi 2010, p. 45). Therefore, I address policy papers as problem representations and consider (contested) concepts such as sustainability to bring ideals of the future, much like policies. Therefore, the WPR is not only relevant when analyzing policy, but also discourses in relation to concepts and how these are articulated.

As WPR works from the assumption that what is represented as problems, rarely are the “actual” problems, it allows for bringing forth why these are presented as such (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 14).

Although WPR does account for a multitude of aspects and reflections on an abstract level, one criticism and limitation of the approach, is that it presents many perspectives and “ideal” representations, without any action plan of what to do (for the researcher, government or others) following the analysis (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p.24). Nonetheless, Bacchi has argued that WPR does just that as it encourages researchers to provide “assessments of effects and promotes a view of research as political practice” (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 25).

This altogether provides the necessary elements for the analysis of how sustainability is articulated in the Greenlandic tourism landscape and how this concept relates to it by looking into what the problem of tourism development in Greenland is represented to be in policies.

#### 4.2. The Nation as a brand

Overall Nation Branding is concerned with how old perceptions (of a country and its people) seemingly are replaced by new ones (Anholt 2007).

On local levels Nation Branding seeks to affect the perceptions of and relations between the nation and its citizens towards more positive attitude (Frig & Sorsa 2018, p. 4), while on global scales, branding of nations or countries are often used as means of a country’s government to positively impact and benefit its diplomatic and political ties to other nations (ibid).

The conceptualization of Nations as brands was theorized in 1996, by Simon Anholt based on years of work within the area of branding (Otte 2013, p. 134). Inspired by marketing strategies working with branding of companies, Anholt argues that in the globalized world no longer only companies work with promoting themselves as a specific “brand”, but that the strategy also is used extensively by governments as means to increase their “competitiveness” on the global marketplace (Otte 2013, p. 134).

As such countries are perceived as actors competing with other countries for the interest of “consumers, tourists, investors, students, entrepreneurs, international sporting and cultural events,

and for the attention and respect of the International media, of other governments and the people of other countries” (Anholt 2007, p. 3).

The initial Nation Branding theory received a lot of criticism (which will be discussed in section 3.2.1), and Anholt therefore introduced the concept of “*Competitive identity*” (CI) to address critiques. This new version of the theory will be implemented in this thesis.

Anholt defines CI, as a concept to encompass aspects of” brand management, with public diplomacy<sup>10</sup> and with trade investment, tourism and export promotion. CI is a model for enhanced national competitiveness in a global world, and one that is already beginning to pay dividends for a number of countries, cities, regions, both rich and poor” (Anholt 2007, p. 5).

The globalized world is the motivation behind the concept of CI is, as it argues for existence of smaller marketplaces in different parts of the world, which encompass commodities, but also knowledge, culture and traditions, as well as overall values that are portrayed to the outside world (Anholt 2007, p. 12).

Nation Branding theory according to Anholt, argues that only nations, countries or organizations that portray a wholesome image are able to take part in the competition (Anholt 2007, p.12).

However, CI does not work the same way as commercial brands which evolve around media and outputs of this, CI is based upon the use of thoughtful resources (Anholt 2007, p. 12). Therefore, achieving a successful CI is not just a matter of monetary funds limited to countries who have the monetary means to brand their nation through media (ibid).

Nation Branding theory thus seeks to examine how and why a country tries to control and influence the ways in which it is represented to the outside world (ibid).

Conflicting brands of a country are presented by different groups often result in a conflicting image, rather than a wholesome one (Anholt 2007, p. 6). This can have negative implications as it means that either the main perception of the country can end up stagnant, thus, to avoid this a relatively unified brand should be promoted (ibid, p. 5).

Although difficult to achieve, the ultimate aim of CI of countries is for the embodiment of values in the brand, also be inscribed in their citizens to get the brand across on all aspects of society (Anholt 2007, p. 12).

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<sup>10</sup> Public Diplomacy (PD) is the way foreign officials, diplomats or governments communicate and inform the public of the specific country’s values, work on certain issues and cooperation with other governments (Anholt 2007, p. 8).



Perceptions of countries tend to be deep-rooted, positive or negative and in some instances, stereotypical portrayals of a country, which can be difficult to counter (Anholt 2007, p. 7). However, it also means that an established positive image is better to withstand any negative portrayals (ibid). However, these images should not be considered static, but more in terms of some representations as more longstanding and dominant (ibid).

Hence the way a country (and its government) is perceived and represented to the outside world is of great importance and a matter that needs to be governed (Anholt 2007, p. 7).

Differing from other type of theories working with communication - the context in which messages are received - is of great importance in Nation Branding (ibid). The image of the messenger can be more important than the message (Anholt 2007, p. 7). Hence, Nation Branding does consider aspects of power, (though not explicitly stated), as it recognizes that the context and the messenger of some speak with authority and how some images of a nation are more compelling than others depending on the *who* more so than the *what* of a representation. Hidden in branding “lies a system of beliefs and representations” (Cassel & Paschkevich 2018, p, 68).

Nation Branding theory works within the logic or reasoning of the global scene as a place for competition and emphasizes the need to represent a unified identity in all aspects of society in order to become an active participant on the market.

#### 4.2.1.Objectives

The connection between tourism development and Nation Branding might seem obvious to anyone who has ever conducted research on or worked within the field of tourism.

However in the realm of tourism development, sustainability and an analysis of articulations, Nation Building theory and the concept of “Competitive Identity” provides the foundation for analyzing and explaining why Greenland within the tourism industry, represents itself on the “global marketplace” the way it does, thus investigating which strategies in relation to problem representations are portrayed, while others are omitted or “silenced” and how these shape particular discourses. It brings the possibility of looking at how Greenland wishes to be perceived by other nations externally and seeks to overrule previous perceptions of the country.

Finally placing tourism policies, WPR and the concept of sustainability within a framework of Nation Branding enables me to consider different (possibly contradictory) images of Greenland.

As noted by Thisted (2013) Nation Branding can work as a “decolonizing strategy aimed at replacing old images and narratives with new ones” (Thisted 2013, p. 219) and enables analyzing how Greenland aims to create new perceptions through articulations.

As Greenland seeks to become an active participant on the global scene, as illustrated through the building of international airports and the goals of being the ones actively re-shaping images of Greenland rather than represented by others, Nation Branding becomes an appropriate theory to apply to this thesis.

#### 4.2.2. Criticisms and limitations

One scholars who has criticized Anholt’s theory is Mads Mordhorst (Otte 2013, p. 134), for assuming that it is possible to brand nations with a short timeframe, as according to Mordhorst Nation Branding takes a lot longer since it is a result of years and years of a specific brand promoted by stakeholders such as governments, and organizations (Otte 2013, p. 134).

According to Mordhorst there is no such thing as “branding” but rather “re-branding”, as any country will already have an existing brand to work from (ibid).

Furthermore, Mordhorst has argued that in order to speak about a nation truly possessing a brand, it requires all actors within the country to *perform* the brand [my own emphasis] in every aspect of society, including interactions between single actors (Otte 2013, p. 134).

Based on these criticisms, Anholt further developed his theory by introducing the concept “*Competitive Identity*” as it according to him accounts for the criticisms the theory has received, although Anholt does acknowledge the difficulties related to a nations’ brand being performed on all societal scales (Otte 2013, p. 134). Nonetheless he argues that it is not impossible (Anholt 2007, p. 12).

Despite the introduction of CI Mordhorst continues to bring scrutiny to Anholts theory, as he argues that the overarching issue with speaking of nation branding is that when countries are working to be marketed, many end up portraying many of the same features of identity, rather than emphasizing what makes them distinct (Otte 2013, p. 135). Other scholars working with Nation Branding have later stated that it is reasonable to think of a divide between the nation brand and the way citizens perform and understand the country. Hence within the borders of a country nation branding can be a way to address this divide of the image portrayed outside” brand image” and the internal presentation” brand identity” (Larsen in Otte 2013, p. 135).

One main limitation of the advantages of Nation Branding is that while it argues for a specific logic and perception of the world divided into marketplaces and nations as competitors, it does not account for the “real life” scale, which is where WPR is useful, as WPR does consider alternative points of views, and the way problem representations impacts “real life”.

## 5.0. Analysis

The next section presents the analysis and discussion for this thesis following the WPR method's six steps and implementing the theories just described above in order to provide a reply to the question “What is the problem of tourism development in Greenland represented to be? And how is the concept of sustainability articulated in the tourism landscape as the solution to the “problem”? As the reader might recall, Bacchi argues that policies tend to have more than one main problem representation, sometimes of an entangled, even conflicting character (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 20). This did apply to the data for this thesis, and in order to present a concise and thorough analysis, only the most prevailing problem representations in the policies are introduced and analyzed. Please note when a “problem representation” is discussed and analyzed, this “problem” is what is argued in the policies to be the “issue”. These are not necessarily the actual problems, but rather perceived as problems within the framework of the policy. The contradictions and “actual” issues (based on the interpretations of this thesis) are then pointed out, following these problem representations in the policies.

### 5.1. Identifying problem representations (step 1)

Three main problem representations were identified in the policies based on what was proposed and articulated as solutions to tourism development in the Greenlandic tourism landscape.

#### 5.1.1. From the “wrong” to “right” segment

The first problem representation in these policies relates to sustainability and the need to become so. The main solution represented in the policies is, that “Greenland is an untouched adventure destination and that goes well with the creation of a sustainable tourism, where we connect culture, nature, local participation and create income”(Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 6) and “Adventure tourism is the fastest growing tourism type, and fits well with Visit Greenland’s strategy of responsible tourism with a focus on sustainability” (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 17).

Here the solutions to becoming more sustainable in tourism is proposed to be by focusing on the segment of adventure tourists, as this type is argued to be the tourist which comes to Greenland to experience nature and sees the value in protecting it.

As VG also states on their website with regard to segments that 84% of potential tourists to Greenland are interested in nature on different levels (Visit Greenland 1). As such the problem representation of not being sustainable in the past is represented as a consequence of focusing on the wrong segment of tourists. What is worth noting in terms of responsibility is that the question of those represented to ensure sustainability here (in terms of environmental sustainability, as it is linked to the protection and value of nature) is on the one hand the tourism actors on the other hand the individual tourist. Focusing on the right type of tourist is represented as *the* solution to sustainability in the tourism landscape according to VG and QEK.

The point of view in their policies is that if they just direct their marketing towards the right segments, then tourists in Greenland will automatically be interested in nature and seek to preserve it. The problem is therefore also that tourism actors in Greenland have attracted and aimed at the wrong type of tourist in the past, the non-environmentally aware ones.

The policy of Qaasuitsup Kommunia differs from the two others as it does not argue for a focus on adventure tourism as the solution to sustainability, but rather a focus on sustainability “about the potentials through renewable energy (...) including waste management and environmental cleanup, so that the towns’ small space can be used properly” (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 126), and “All towns and settlements have a dump – typically placed towards the coast, where garbage from business and private household are burned, deposited or sorted for reuse (...)” (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 54).

In the coming years according to the policy QAK “will focus on environmentally friendly solutions, including innovative waste disposal solutions, as a replacement for the existing ones, which in some cases are a direct danger to the health of citizens “(Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 34).

The specified solution to waste management in the policy by QAK is represented as “in connection with the establishment of new tourist huts it is relevant to move the dump to an alternative placement” (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 131) and “the future waste management must be focused on recycling/reuse and local source sorting” (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 35) and finally “the settlement’s burning and dumps including trails must be improved. If tourism is wanted

then it is necessary with a more beneficial placement of the dumps” (Qaasuistup Kommunia 2014, p. 125).

Based on the solution by QAK, the problem represented is that there has not been a focus on sustainability, here articulated through the need to solve the problem of waste by moving the placement of the dump, although also proposing that possibilities for renewable energy should be considered (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 126).

Asides from the proposal for renewable energy, the need to solve the issue of waste management is acknowledged especially due to its importance for tourism. However the responsible part for solving it is very vague, although “the Self Rule-owned Nukissiorfiit ” (Qaasupitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 54), in other words the Greenlandic Government is stated under the section on “technical plants and sustainability” (ibid) (where waste management is mentioned) as the one dealing with “the overall technical supply in Qaasuitsup Kommunia” (ibid). Hence, the problem of waste management is implicitly stated to be either the responsibility of the Government to solve or solving it is pushed into the future.

As the municipality places the Greenlandic Government with the responsibility, it was relevant to examine how the government views it: It state on its website that ”waste management is a municipal affair (...) and that ”it is very different how the municipalities deal with it”, while “the municipalities act according to the Governmental regulatory framework” but that it in the end is the responsibility of the municipalities (Naalakkersuisut, n.d.). As such the Government perceives the management of waste to be the responsibility of the individual municipality and places the municipality with a great deal of impact on the area.

When the responsibility for waste management on both a municipal and national level is displaced (although acknowledging the need to handle it), it means the proposed solutions in the policies, while seemingly providing a ”responsible solution” and therefore not to be criticized, the solutions which are provided are superficial. The main way to deal with the issue is represented to be by moving waste to another location, where it cannot be seen by tourists or bother the population. Alternatively, the issue is pushed towards the future to be dealt with - although no specific timeframe is given.

This leaves the overall responsibility to the individual tourist as the only one taking interest, rather than the Greenlandic tourism actors/industry (and the Government), whose only responsibility is represented to make sure they are visible enough to attract the “right “tourists. Furthermore in

dealing with a solution to waste or trash by moving it to a different location, the responsibility of the dumps is displaced rather than solved as Qaasuitsup Kommunia points to the Government, which is the represented argument of in their policy (Qaasupitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 54), while the Government on a closer look, states that this in their view is the responsibility of the municipalities.

It results in a short-term solution of literally “moving” the issue (the dump) to a place where it cannot be seen, rather than seeking to solve the root cause of the problem e.g. through legislation on waste management, for both the tourist and the population.

Herein Sustainability is thought of on a very local and limited level, rather than a global level.

Instead of considering how much pollution travelling to the Arctic leads even by an adventure tourist, the “solutions” only have local impact (if any) as the focus is on local and not global nature. The underlying reasoning behind this problem representation will be analyzed in step two of WPR.

#### 5.1.2. Inadequate conditions

The next problem representation in the policies is quite wide, linked to many aspects, but overall based on the argument that a lack of proper infrastructure is what is stopping Greenlandic tourism from developing and is articulated through the emphasis on and need for development.

In the policy by QEK it is stated on one of the very first pages, that “with this strategy the goal is that we together develop our new experiences and make our sights more accessible. A well-functioning infrastructure that ties our whole region together is a precondition for the success of this strategy: more tourists” (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 3).

The entire success of the tourism industry is in this represented to be based on making sights more easily accessible for tourists which will be measured on the number of tourists that arrive. Here the issue is infrastructure on a more overall level that is in need of “fixing”.

According to QEK it is considered to include a better road network and harbors as “(...)connections to these settlements are essential for the tourism in the area to grow and develop. To strengthen the overall infrastructure, it has been decided that there must be built a road between Sisimiut and Kangerlussuaq” (Qeqqaa Kommunia 2019, p.28), and that “building harbors are essential for Kangerlussuaq’s continued development and services of cruise tourists in the future” (ibid).

The other two policies are more focused on how to ensure cheaper tickets and more direct flights to Greenland, through the specific solution of improving infrastructure – because the International Airports that are being built, as “an Atlantic airport in Ilulissat will increase tourism (..) a

development of the infrastructure for airtraffic is overall an important part of the plans in order to benefit from the potentials” (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 48) and “building the new international runways and airports in Ilulissat, Nuuk and the regional runway in Qaqortoq, means a breeding ground for more tourism in Greenland” (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 3).

These solutions point towards a problem representation of inaccessibility to Greenland, in terms of limited access for travel to and within the country. Solving these issues are perceived to result in shorter travel time which will mean more tourists coming to Greenland.

The responsibility of ensuring this sufficient infrastructure is placed with the Greenlandic Government, as expressed by QAK, ” it is difficult to provide a specific estimate of capacity and speed of the expected development as it is closely related to the global economy, and the development within extraction- and tourism businesses as well as - and in particular- decisions by the Greenlandic government’s potential investments into airports and harbors (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p.45) and QEK that “in 2017/8 means to cover the design of the harbor was put aside by the Self-Rule Government” (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 29).

Adding to the responsibility of the Government (not directly stated in policies but an important point) is also the argument by the Greenlandic Government that there is “a possible price reduction on airplane tickets by changing the airport structure” (Naalakkersuisut 2016b , p. 23).

As such the represented problem of inadequate conditions for developing tourism in Greenland is a very dominant problem representations in the policies and one of the core aspects in need of being solved, and as it is represented solving this will secure the wanted development to take place in the future.

The need for development, and “growth” seems contradictory to the wish for “sustainability” that is stated in the policies, as this development of infrastructure will bring pollution according to the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) of the future airports in Nuuk (Niras Greenland A/S 1, 2018, p. 115) and Ilulissat (Niras Greenland A/S 2, p. 99). Although the EIA’s do note the advancement on fuels that emit less Co2, the EIA’s also state that building the airports and the following operations of these, will have a global impact, even if small (Niras Greenland A/S 2, 2018 p.126). They also state that there “is a risk of the building materials that are used in the construction phase, to contain environmentally dangerous substances (Niras Greenland A/S 2, 2018 p. 11).

As such, while the accessibility claim and the relation between airports and more tourists are obvious, the argument that the Greenlandic tourism industry seeks to be “sustainable”, does not go in hand with building airports that pollute while placing the responsibility on the individual tourist or elsewhere. Once again, the focus is on the local level (Greenland in focus) and not the global, as any pollution the airports might bring globally is not stated by the tourism actors, as of any concern, but rather the aim of increasing tourism. Growth within the Greenlandic tourism landscape is the main goal.

### 5.1.3. Lacking visibility and seasonally determined tourism

The last identified problem representation was that of a lack of visibility for becoming a tourist in Greenland in the policies partly attributed to the current short tourism seasons and expressed as such.

This problem representation is articulated through the following proposed solutions; “it is necessary that our experiences are developed all year round, so our guests come both during summer and winter, stay for longer and spend more money. It is ... central that our tourists find ...the quality and price of the experience align” (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 8) and “the development of new winter products is necessary and especially Dark Sky tourism, which Visit Greenland has communicated to the industry is of interest to pursue, since this phenomenon is a way of attracting guests to Arctic destinations during the winter period” (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 21).

The proposed solution of achieving a tourism season for the entirety of the year in Greenland is by developing “winter products” is one that Qaasuitsup Kommunia (QAK) agree on. They state in their policy that” (...) the possibilities of development are large and many. Climate change can contribute to a longer tourist season and makes it possible to cultivate new attractions and destinations further in the North, e.g. through extreme tourism and Dark tourism” [read Dark Sky] (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 22).

However, if looking at this problem representation within Qeqqata Kommunia (QEK) it is not perceived as a problem. With regard to” the current situation in the region” it expresses that there are many tourist attractions/products within nature, culture and adventure over a large area of land, providing a foundation for year-long tourism (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 4).

Nonetheless issues with visibility and information about Greenland as a whole and on a local level is represented as an issue in all three policies, although expressed differently:”together with Visit Greenland we need to ensure that travel agencies and journalists feel they are getting a service and



an informational level that will catch their interest and send tourists and ... journalists here to write about the region” (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 37) and” we will work towards realizing a branding campaign in the years 2021-2023. The goal is to achieve most possible visibility as a tourism destination on prioritized markets” (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 18) and “there must be created a “Reason to go” for tourists whom today still don’t have Greenland on their minds of possible travel destinations” (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 17).

Thus, visibility on an international level of the industry thus becomes a key aspect for developing a year-round tourism season in Greenland, through a wish for increasing demand, as visibility is assumed to mean more or less tourists. The “solution” is to become more visible as this will naturally attract more tourists.

The first problem representation (focusing on the wrong segment) and the problem representation of a lack of visibility are here intertwined, as VG also state in their policy that the solution to reaching the “right type of tourist” solved through more visibility, as a “known and acknowledged .. adventure tourism destination with a focus on sustainability” (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 18).

The question visibility on the international market and tourists ‘awareness of Greenland as a tourism destination also leads to the problem representation of tourists having little information of the country and what is realistic to expect. This is articulated through the goal of establishing more information centers in Greenland: ”Maniitsoq must be developed to become one of Greenland’s most obvious destinations to experience whales and whaling(...) we will work towards this by stating which whales can be experienced in the ocean and the fiords, at what times of years” (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 15), and “clarify which animals can be experienced in the ocean and the fiords, at what times of year” (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 14). QAK states that it is important for the future development of tourism to establish “an Icefiord centre, that is thought of as specifically visitor-and information center placed by Kangia, where tourists and locals can be informed about the Icecap, the glacier Sermeq Kujalleq, Climate Change (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 116).

These statements with the multiple uses of phrases such as “awareness and visibility” points towards a problem of tourists having expectations of Greenland upon arrival which might not align with reality. The wish to see specific animals at any given time of the year means that tourists arrive with specific perceptions and expectations, sometimes far or different from reality (cf. chapter 1.2.1).

To increase awareness and visibility about the environmental, historical and cultural sights and traditions around the area, both QEK and QAK state in their policies that “the UNESCO-area’s unique spots must be highlighted” (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 7) and “to develop a Visitor Centre by Ilulissat Icefjord, which has been protected and listed on UNESCO’s world heritage list – the Icefjord center-where the history storytelling about the ice, the unique nature and the former settlements can be communicated” (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 62).

In a study from 2009, on the perceptions of Greenland and the Arctic based on interviews amongst German tourists, findings showed that more than 50% of the participants perceived Greenland as related to “environmental and ice features (..) followed by wildlife” (Hübner 2009, p. 160), such as “cold; wildlife; polar bear, atmosphere: lonely” (ibid, p. 161) and that participants had limited knowledge of the culture and history in Greenland. These “naïve” (ibid, p.164) images were largely founded on images from TV, where climate change debates played a major role in how tourists envisioned Greenland before seeing the country with their own eyes (ibid).

In terms of responsibility for the development, the Greenlandic tourism actors (VG, QAK and QEK) present themselves as taking responsibility for creating more awareness and visibility as a tourism destination and to develop other “products” in order to create a year-round tourism season. VG here takes on its leading role as the one “impacting the tourists in their decision-making process, where Greenland arises as an option and where the tourist seeks information on travel experiences” (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 17).

However, the quote above and the envisioned solution in the policies of clarifying which animals are realistic to see at what times of year and where, and hence a possibly wrong” or “unrealistic” imagery of Greenland amongst tourists, the responsibility is represented to lie with mainly the tourism actors/agents. Although with the increase in available information and visibility, it might influence the images and expectations tourists have of Greenland prior to arrival.

Based on the first problem representation, that was identified in the policies - the idea of the pure, authentic country with great nature and animals - which the Greenlandic tourism actors seek to market Greenland on, seems contradictory to this problem representation. This idea of the great nature in Greenland is an aspect which both problem representations in the policies are based on. However, when marketing this aspect of experiencing animals and the nature, it should be no

surprise that the expectations which tourists have, are based on what is marketed (or will be marketed) and made visible to the tourists.

Hence the emphasis on the “authentic” (Visit Greenland 2020, p.8; Qaasuistup Kommunia 2014, p. 130) and “unique” (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 8; Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 3; Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 22), mainly with reference to nature, although the Greenlandic culture is also noted as such and the “impressive animals life, with muskoxen, caribou, whales and trout” (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 3) the tourism agents in Greenland set themselves up for the prospect of not fulfilling expectations and are at risk of letting the tourists down. This is founded on the mere fact that the animals, which tourists expect to see, are not always around at all times, and the tourists might not get the chance.

In terms of the pure, untouched nature, which marketed, becomes a problem when Greenland (in regard to problem representation no. two on the lack of infrastructure and development) starts to have more tourists coming in. Even if assuming the adventure tourists are environmentally conscientious, the many tourists that are expected will result in overall pollution from the international airports and the airplanes (Niras Greenland A/S 2,2018 p.126; Niras Greenland A/S 2, 2018 p. 11).

Hence, what is currently perceived as the “pure” Greenland, might not be so pure in the future with consequences for, amongst other things, the pointed out focus on the winter products as Dark sky tourism, which is dependent on a clear, unpolluted sky and small towns that do not spread too much light (D’estries 2019). The “reason to go” for tourists namely the pure nature will most likely not live up to the expectations of a clean, “sustainable” environment. Therefore, this problem representation and the other two that have been identified in the previous sections, are deeply contradictory of one another and seem to cancel each other out.

## 5.2.Preconceptions of problem representations and underlying rationalities (step 2)

The next step of the analysis and “dissection” of the “problems” that was pointed out in step one, is about looking into what constructs these problem representations as intelligible and seemingly unquestioned by exploring the preconceptions, discourses and possible binaries these are founded on (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p.21). By this examination WPR argues that indications of any political rationalities will be brought to the surface (ibid) and in light of this seek to understand what it is that is perceived to be “sustained”.

### 5.2.1. Branding an indigenous national identity

The problem representation in the policies, arguing that a lack of sustainability is due to focusing the wrong tourist in the past, is founded on a number of assumptions and binaries.

Firstly, as pointed out earlier, the idea that if the right tourist (the adventure tourist) is the type of tourist, that the Greenlandic tourism industry markets itself towards, then the policies assume this will necessarily mean tourism that is sustainable in Greenland. Thereby the responsibility is left to the individual tourist rather than the tourism actors, whose sole responsibility is represented to make sure they are visible enough that they attract the “right” tourists, while the management of waste is ping-ponged back and forth between the Government and municipality, with the result that it does not get solved in reality. The solution to the issue of trash is a “out of sight out of mind”- solution. Overall sustainability is thought of as something others should aspire to, the potential tourists, or the Greenlandic government in the eyes of QAK, and vice versa. As such it becomes the responsibility of others or only in vague terms that of the Greenlandic tourism actors.

The rationality behind these problem representations within the policies and whom the responsibility is ascribed to (or not ascribed to) points towards the rationality of Indigenous peoples as sustainable in their way of life. While that perhaps comes as no surprise, it is interesting that this rationality is expressed in two different ways – one that argues for the logic more or less directly, the other more implicit in its articulation.

The relation between Indigenous Peoples and Sustainability, particularly in relation to their way of life, i.e. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) was touched upon in the walkthrough on sustainability earlier on (See section 2.2), however it is worth to briefly note what the UN defines as “Indigenous” before progressing. The UN has never assumed an exact definition due to the many cultural, historical, geographic, and language distinctions between whom they identify as “Indigenous (Dahl 2012, p. 7)”.

Instead of a specific definition the UN argues for a series of characteristics with which they base the identification of whom is recognized as “indigenous”. Among there are having a close connection to the land, which their life to some extent is still largely based upon, also having strong cultural traditions and “who practice sustainable nature use” (Dahl 2012, p. 12). Lastly as those who have

experienced some sort of discrimination, and hence now have the right to pursue self-determination (ibid).

This definition and the discourse on Indigeneity, equates Indigenous peoples with Sustainability, meaning that Indigenous peoples just *are* sustainable in their way of life ((Thisted 2019, p. 176; Lynge 2013, p.208), due to the close knowledge and relationship between them and their surrounding environment. This is a result of the long period of time these peoples have had to survive on said environment, which has then been passed on from generation to generation (Wenzel 1999, p. 117; Magni 2017, p. 439).

It should be added, that this close relation has been argued by many anthropologists to be due to worldviews amongst Indigenous peoples, prior to colonialism and Christianity, where nature and man were not perceived as “belonging” to two different worlds, but rather “the pre-colonial Inuit perceived the animals as fundamentally human”(Thisted 2019, p. 181). Founded on their respect for nature and the use of it as a necessity, this respect for nature and the treatment of it that links sustainability and Indigeneity (Thisted 2019, p. 181).

The “indigeneity as sustainable”- discourse, is founded on many of the same perceptions of indigenous people as “closer to nature” that indigenous peoples have been categorized as historically (Thisted 2002, p. 327) although these take a different form today (this will be discussed in step three).

In the case of the policies, the idea of “indigenous equals sustainable”- rationality is implicit and left unquestioned. Based on this point of view, the Greenlandic people are in the policies represented as essentially sustainable. Thus, when proposing “solutions” in the policies (by QAK; QEK and VG) that arguably work towards sustainability, it is not those in the Greenlandic tourism landscape (nor in Greenland) who need to be sustainable, rather it those who are not Indigenous, i.e. tourists.

The discourse of “indigeneity as sustainable” is articulated in the policies by Qeqqata Kommunian and Qaasuitsup Kommunia, where emphasis is placed on history such as” The independent smaller professions such as the hunter profession, which is the original/indigenous<sup>11</sup> Greenlandic and arctic

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<sup>11</sup> Please note that the translation of ”oprindelig” (indigenous/original/initial) from Danish to English carries the same meanings, but for full transparency both words are used. The connotations however are the same – as ”oprindelige” in

profession. The hunting culture has throughout centuries had a very important role in Greenland – both economically, socially, culturally and identity-wise” (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 23,) and where the “cultural heritage tells us who we are, and where we come from, and thus the cultural heritage is important for the present as well as the past. Inuit are the original/indigenous population in the Arctic area, which through centuries have adapted to the nature they live in and of and which at the same time is one of the earths most fragile ecosystems” (Qaasuitsup kommunia 2014, p. 37).

As such QAK argue for the idea of the Greenlander’s relation to nature as part of a historical relation where knowledge of the environment has been passed down from generation to generation, which fits the definition of traditional ecological knowledge (Wenzel 1999, p. 113).

Qeqqata Kommunia also argue for this rationality in their policy as “the goal of the whale museum is to highlight and communicate knowledge and cultural history as an indigenous population and to clarify Greenland’s position as a sustainable whale hunting nation (QEK 2019, p. 15).

In this statement whaling, sustainability and indigeneity are directly linked as connected to the Greenlandic people and nation (QEK 2019, p. 37). Hence it can be said that when the policies do not recognize that the proposed solutions to waste management are “unsustainable” and instead place the responsibility of sustainability with the tourist, then it is because the Greenlandic tourism actors (such as VG, QAK and QEK) simply assume that the Greenlandic people, based on the discourse of indigenous- as -sustainable, are inherently sustainable in their behavior. Acting sustainably is thus perceived as a given for the Greenlandic people as part of an indigenous culture and identity.

Based on this rationality and assumption, it becomes “a taken for granted truth” (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p.23) that Greenlanders do not necessarily need to consider acting sustainably. Greenland and the Greenlandic tourism actors, QEK, QAK and VG do not acknowledge that what is currently taking place in Greenland (or rather not taking place) with regard to environmental protection is not sustainable.

The reasoning of Greenland as an indigenous sustainable nation is also an argument stated by Greenlandic politician, Vittus Qujaukitsoq who in 2019 stated that “it is a fact that with regard to

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Danish connotes something or someone that is thought of as “initial/first” of some kind”. Although the use of “indigenous” does account for power aspects (Dahl in Sejersen 2015, p. 192) which are not included in “original”.

nature, animal life, and the responsible use and management of our common resources, is something that lies deep in our DNA and way of thought in our society” (Qujaukitsoq 2019). Here the politician directly links sustainability as embedded into the Greenlandic people and their way of life, and according to Qujaukitsoq as an undisputable fact for an indigenous people. Worth noting here is that arguing for Greenlanders as an indigenous people and nation provides Greenland with certain rights as part of acknowledging the right to self-determination, which in Greenland is especially expressed with reference to fishing and hunting quotas (Lynge 2013, p. 208). As will be discussed in the next section, the “Indigenous peoples as sustainable”-rationality is also represented in policies (and by the Greenlandic politicians) as a legitimate argument for continuing with projects that are not environmentally sustainable (Thisted 2013, p.228).

However, the emphasis on being sustainable also provides Greenland with “a competitive” identity, according to Nation Branding theory. Recall that in order to be competitive on the global markets, nations (and governments) must, according to Anholt, “discover what the world’s perception of their country is, and to develop a strategy for managing it (...) to build a reputation that is (...) attractive, genuinely useful to their economic, political and social aims” (Anholt 2007, p. 4), and this image should align with the way the population of said nation perceives themselves (Anholt 2007 p. 10). The Greenlandic politicians have for a longer period of time now argued for Greenland as an indigenous nation, and as Thisted notes, the idea of Indigeneity played a significant role in the Greenlandic Home-rule act as well as the act on Self-Government (Thisted 2013, p. 213).

However, linking Indigeneity and sustainability in Greenland with regard to the tourism landscape, has only recently appeared in Greenland. Hence what the Greenlandic tourism landscape is doing is just as Anholt argues, counteracting the tendency of “flight shame” [direct translation from Danish, *Flyskam*] with concepts such as “staycation” that are becoming ever more popular amongst the environmentally concerned, due to emissions from transportation (Husted 2019).

Greenland gains a far greater advantage for promoting this image of the indigenous sustainable nation as its *Competitive identity* (Anholt 2007, p. 12) and therefore branding Greenland and its tourism industry as sustainable becomes a means to compete with other countries for tourists, countries which perhaps are not Indigenous.

Furthermore, branding Greenland as sustainable can be seen as an expression of the emergence of the “New” Arctic (Lemelin et.al. 2010, p. 487) in which Indigenous peoples are taking control of the way they wish to be perceived internationally (Thisted 2015, p. 24).

Asides from creating a *competitive identity* through the discourse on indigenous peoples as sustainable, it also becomes a means for Greenland to impact the way the country is perceived externally. To attract tourists (and possibly investors) the emphasis on indigeneity also seems to work towards creating an internal identity so the image as an indigenous nation align in its overall brand, just as Anholt argues is necessary to be truly be competitive (Anholt 2007, p. 12).

Finally in reference to influence and “soft power” (Frig & Sorsa 2018, p. 4) as an underlying part of Nation Branding, the underlying logics and arguments in the tourism policies with regard to sustainability can be seen as an expression of the way Greenland manages to strategically impact the way it is perceived internationally for political purposes, while managing to not overstep on matters which are still controlled by the Danish State (Statsministeriet, n.d.)

The analysis above raises the question: If it is not the environment that is to be sustained, then what is? Based on what has been analyzed so far, one aspect that is to be sustained is the image of Greenland and its people as a sustainable indigenous nation, as well as the tourism industry as this image is a means to become competitive on a tourism global market.

#### 5.2.2. The “need” and “right” to development

The problem representation in the policies, which argue for inadequate conditions for tourism is based on the assumption that once Greenland has improved its infrastructure, tourism will eventually take off and Greenland come closer to a self-supporting economy and hence independence. This assumption can be found statements in the policies regarding infrastructure and development as a crucial aspect for “success: more tourists” (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 3) and “there is in Greenland a large political focus on developing tourism through the national tourism strategy and with tourism we also wish for increased economic growth, more workplaces and a sustainable development of our society” (Visit Greenland 2020, p.3) and “the towns’ [current] infrastructure is blocking development, not just in the town itself, but for the whole region” (Qaasuitsup Kommuna 2014, p. 125).

These statements by tourism actors in Greenland link tourism and the need for developing the infrastructure as a prerequisite not only for more workspaces, but also for the country and its



economy. The lack of proper infrastructure is considered a hindrance to development as more tourists is the success criteria.

The type of sustainability articulated in the policies is in relation to development and (economic) sustainability as Visit Greenland stated in the quote above. Qaasuitsup Kommunia states that “a coherent focus on business and labor market both nationally, regionally and on a municipal level is crucial for a sustainable development of the municipalities towards a solid economic foothold” (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 22).

Here sustainability is not thought of with regard to environmental sustainability, but rather in regard to development and economy. As was argued previously, when talking sustainability or a lack of such in Greenland, the policies and Greenlandic politicians only consider local sustainability, and as something which Greenlanders as an indigenous people necessarily act on, while it according to the problem representations of the policies, others (tourists) need to be and act sustainably.

This rationality of Greenland and the tourism actors acting environmentally sustainably according to the policies, even when building (polluting) airports or not dealing with the root cause of waste management issues, argues firstly for an understanding of local sustainability, not global, and the rationality that no matter what Greenland does, it will due to an indigenous identity be environmentally sustainable.

Within the domain of development, it is not as much a question of environmental protection as sustainability that from this point of view is represented implicitly in the policies. What is to be sustainable is the national economy and the tourism industry as a way of sustained income through infrastructural development. When discussing development in Greenland “what according to Greenlandic politicians, should be sustained is Greenland’s national development project towards becoming its own state (Bjørst 2019, p.130).

This type of reasoning, which simply does not see a contradiction between pollution due to the airport project (both when building and later on) (Niras Greenland A/S 2,2018 p.126; Niras Greenland A/S 2, 2018 p. 11), the danger of “overtourism” based on the “more is better-mentality” argued to be a risk in Greenland (Iaonnides 2019) and the argument of still being sustainable, points towards a rationality, that has been identified in Greenland with respect to mining (Bjørst 2011, p.196).

In 2009, during COP15 Bjørst conducted research on perceptions of climate change amongst Greenlandic hunters, whom during the COP15 acted as “witnesses” and “victims” of climate

change (Bjørst 2011, p. 104). During the conference Bjørst noted that when confronted with the question of whether the Greenlanders were for or against mining and oil drilling in Greenland, the reply was that “they were in favour, as long as there was no local pollution” (ibid).

At COP15 the Greenlanders, did not perceive global and local pollution to be connected (ibid).

This is the same type of reasoning in the policies, as the argument for building the International Airports are not perceived as an aspect that will impact the local nature. The mentality of this is that it is possible to build the airports, and other types of development and still have “authentic” (Visit Greenland 2020, p.8; Qaasuistup Kommunia 2014, p. 130) and untouched Greenlandic nature, with a clear sky for Dark sky tourism.

According to Bjørst when the hunters started to argue for the development of Greenland through oil drilling and mining, the position from which they were speaking had strategically changed to “speaking on behalf of the Greenlandic society” (Bjørst 2011, p. 104). This shift in strategically changing position from which to speak, is also one that can be pointed out in the tourism policies. When concerned with environmental sustainability it is articulated in reference to an indigenous identity. However, when questions of economic development come up, the indigenous identity is understated, and the need to develop in order to compete on the global market, for tourists, is more directly expressed. Thus, for Greenland “the notion of cultural integrity is based on rights which are realized not through attaining ownership over territory. But realizing the right to participate as a legitimate actor in global politics” (Shadian 2010, p. 497).

Sustainability is ever more emphasized when discussing environment as part of an indigenous identity to be acknowledged as legitimate, and therefore an implicit part of any type of development in Greenland – even when pursuing projects that in all actuality are polluting (Thisted 2013, p. 228), as the case for tourism and infrastructure development in Greenland.

Sustainability is thus, to quote Bjørst in the context of development in Greenland “primarily understood as a developmental doctrine and less as an environmental doctrine” (Bjørst 2019, p. 122) and hence what it represented in policies as that which is to be sustained, is the tourism industry as a means for sustained income, and thus also the national economy.

This is in line with the definition of “Indigenous” by the former Greenlandic politician Kuupik Kleist, which in 2010 stated that “Indigenous peoples are no different than other people, except that indigenous have not had the chance to exercise their right to self-determination (Thisted 2013, p. 214).

The underlying rationality in the tourism policies can thus be seen as a rationality placing sustainability and development within a discourse that overall has more to do with politics and nation building than perhaps environmental protection, articulated through Nation Branding.

### 5.2.3. In with the “old”, “out with the “new” – or is it the other way around?

The final problem representation in the policies of creating more visibility of Greenland and “solving” the wrong image tourists have of Greenland is based on the preconception that tourists have “unrealistic” or “wrong” expectations. Hence the argument can be seen to take ownership of these perceptions and to make sure these are correct. Although, as discussed earlier the Greenlandic tourism actors are in part reproducing these perceptions through the way they market Greenland as indigenous, pure etc. The underlying rationality behind this can be perceived as an expression of the “right to represent” (Thisted 2002, p. 336) Greenland, based on its own terms.

This is articulated in the policies through the way these point towards looking back into Greenland’s and its peoples root, in order to look forward, “the cultural heritage tells us who we are and where we come from, and as such the cultural heritage is important for the present as well as for posterity. Inuit are the indigenous population of the Arctic(..)” (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 37). Here cultural roots are expressed to connect the past with the future and what is left behind to the next generations. What is to be sustained based on this quote is the cultural heritage of the Greenlandic people - represented as Inuit rather than “Greenlanders” - and therefore it can also be argued that it is the narrative of Greenlanders to be part of an overall “arctic” identity and that this is what is to be sustained.

This way of positioning oneself (Greenland) in contrast to those which are not indigenous or Arctic, is also articulated in the policy by Qeqqata Kommunia which like Qaasuitsup Kommunia highlights the importance of the Greenlandic roots expressed through the importance on informing tourists about “unique culture-and nature experiences(..) which will give insight into the Greenlandic society and Greenlandic culture”( Qeqqata Kommunia 2019,p. 15) and stories such as “the old tales about Habakuk” when on a boat in the “Evighedsfjord” (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 35).

The story of Habakuk is about one of the first times the Greenlanders stood up against its colonizing power, Denmark, at a time when this was uncommon - the suppressors represented by the missionaries and ministers (Lidegaard 1986, p. 177).

Habakuk, and his wife Maria Magdalene, baptized by the missionaries, started their congregation after Maria Magdalene, according to the tale, had visions of God and thus claimed to have a direct connection to a higher power (ibid, p. 201). The Danish missionaries were perplexed as more and more of the Greenlanders addressed Habakuk and his wife, instead of the Danish missionaries and so, in the tale of Habakuk, Denmark's power was for a brief moment "taken" and lost to the self-declared prophet, Habakuk (ibid, p. 177).

The congregation by Habakuk and Maria Magdalene ceased to exist at some point, but the story, which according to local sources and historians such as Lidegaard did take place, is perceived as an important part of the colonial history of Greenland where Greenlanders acted on their own terms, rather than the terms of its colonizers (Lidegaard 1986, p. 179).

The choice to include this story in Qeqqata Kommunia's policy is interesting as it highlights the importance of looking back to a time where Greenlanders were not afraid to resist Danish rule, while it also, like the quote by Qaasuitsup Kommunia, uses the past to give tourists awareness of present Greenlandic culture. It becomes a way to take control of how Greenlandic culture and society is perceived by tourists today taking "ownership" of the narrative and the representations. This notion of taking "ownership" of one's culture has been part of a larger (rather controversial) discussion on "cultural property" as when Indigenous peoples have claimed that former colonial powers return artefacts and the like, to their original and rightful owners (Brown 1998).

To define what qualifies as "cultural and intellectual property", the UN has stated that "native peoples have the right of control over everything encompassed by the term "cultural heritage" (Daes in Brown 1998, p. 202), in this also stated that "thoughts" are included, but only if "expressed in some stable material form" (Brown 1998, p. 202). This has further started discussions about "cultural appropriation", the term used to cover an act where someone who is not perceived to be have the right based on either culture (or ethnicity) to perform an act or wear clothing that is culturally specific (ibid, p. 203).

While the tourism policies cannot be seen to argue for "cultural appropriation" of the Greenlandic culture or identity, the statements which have been highlighted above can be perceived as expressions of a wish from former colonies to be the ones dictating how the world perceives them, and hence as a way for the "Indigenous" population to reclaim their culture and identity.

The goal of visibility and taking ownership, here works as a "decolonizing strategy aimed at replacing old images and narratives with new ones" (Thisted 2013, p. 219), and while these

narratives are perhaps not “new” per se, as they are still based on some of the narratives and perceptions of Greenland and Greenlanders “as nature”. They are new in the sense that - unlike the “old” narratives of Greenlanders as subjected to power by others - these are replaced by narratives where Greenland represents itself as the one in control with authority and power to represent itself, founded on history and its cultural roots. Hence it can be said that for Greenland” the concrete measure upon which indigenous groups seek control - not through state secession- include initiatives associated with place (including its symbolism) rather than merely, physical territory. This includes resource rights, cultural integrity and control over indigenous knowledge and ideas” (Shadian 2010, p. 493).

This means that what is represented to be sustained here, is the idea of Greenland as nation on path to control its own country and nature, and with an identity and representation on the international scene founded on Greenland’s own terms, in contrast to representations by its former colonial power, Denmark.

To summarize all three problem representations and their underlying logics, three aspects (although intertwined) are perceived as what is to be sustained, have been identified. The first is the idea of Greenland as an indigenous sustainable nation which also gives Greenland a *Competitive identity*, hence also the tourism industry; secondly the Greenlandic economy overall, expressed through a need and right to development; and lastly what the idea of Greenland as country on the path towards independence, articulated through the right to represent and shape its own narrative.

Hence sustainability in these aspects is not something that Greenland acts on locally but rather Greenland that must be sustained.

### 5.3.The development of problem representations (step 3)

While step one and two so far has looked into problem representations in the policies, and how these are articulations of specific logics, step three investigates the historical and contextual aspects (Bacchi & Carol 2016, p. 22). The following will therefore situate the identified problem representations in a historical and contextual frame, while also accounting for any power relations and practices that can be perceived to have impacted the problem representations in the policies (ibid).

#### 5.3.1 Changing perspective – from North-South to Pan-Arctic

Over the last couple of years a shift of perspective has taken place from what has been called a “North-South paradigm” based on collaboration between southern governments and the northern

area of their country (Huppert & Chuffart 2017, p. 1) to a “pan-Arctic paradigm” founded on collaboration between Arctic Countries (ibid), with roots that can be traced back to “region-building” processes of the Arctic as a “region” (Keskitalo 2007). This is important to include to understand how the problem representations in the tourism policies have emerged as part of an overall shift in perspective towards other parts of the “Arctic”.

The shift has resulted in the construction of an “Arctic identity”, founded on cultural and historical commonalities amongst Indigenous peoples in the Arctic (Huppert & Chuffart 2017, p. 1) , exemplified through the idea of a shared “imagined community” (Anderson in Keskitalo 2007, p. 188) of the Arctic Peoples. This recent pan-Arctic perspective can be considered to be gaining influence but still co-existing with the more dominant “traditional North-South paradigm” (Huppert & Chuffart 2017, p. 1).

The perception of the Arctic as a region, did - as Keskitalo notes - is the historical product of specific political actors and interests, which through language have constructed this idea of the Arctic as a region based on these political actors’ own agendas (Keskitalo 2007, p. 188). This perception is therefore a construct rather than a natural occurrence (ibid).

The construction of an “Arctic” region started during the Cold War, founded on its geographic placement between the Soviet Union and the US as being the place on earth where these great powers were the closest to one another (Keskitalo 2007, p. 156) and therefore an area of great military importance.

What was then seen as “Arctic” were not the peoples living there, but rather the area of the ocean placed in the midst of the “five littoral states: Canada, the United States (Alaska), Russia, Denmark (Greenland) and Norway” (Keskitalo 2007, p.156).

Before the region was mainly perceived of as the “peripheral” and “uninhabited” north, mainly for exploration and research purposes (ibid, p 193).

In the years following the cold war it changed due to the recognized need by the Arctic States for combined efforts, especially by the Indigenous peoples seeking further involvement in what went on in their countries (Keskitalo 2007, p. 157).

In the beginning of the 70’s Inuit gained greater influence over land and resources in their areas in Canada were resolved through land claim agreements between the governments and the Indigenous peoples of the area (Shadian 2010, p. 488). The increasing self-determination for Inuit was characterized “through political rights to territory and resource development, cultural autonomy as

well as the continuation of Inuit being citizens of Canada, the United states and Denmark (ibid, p. 489).

In Greenland the peoples vote about membership of the European Community (what is now European Union) ended with being of great significance for Greenland's push towards greater influence (Lynge 2013, pp. 203-204). Denmark voted for becoming a member, and the majority of the Greenlandic people voted against, but Greenland automatically became a member due to its status as Danish. This created the foundation for a growing claim for Home Rule by the Greenlandic part, while also a rejection of Denmark. Former Greenlandic Premier Jonathan Motzfeldt stated with reference to this decision, that at the time he understood Denmark's wish for membership in the EC, while at the same he was very much against Greenland becoming part of the EC, as it would result in a dependence on an authority even further away than Denmark – all the way to Bruxelles (Motzfeldt 2003, pp. 105-106). Motzfeldt states that "at the time we were practically still a sort of colony, ruled from Copenhagen by a Minister for Greenland, and we [Greenland] were still in the midst of formulating our wish for further self-determination" (ibid). With the rejection of Denmark, Greenland now turned to its "kinsfolk" in the North, other Inuit, which despite the distance and geographical separation was perceived to be held together by "a common culture, language and living conditions" (Lynge 1993, p. 56).

It was these similarities that brought the approximately 130.000 Inuit together as a way to "join forces in order to become self-reliant, and in order to fight for recognition as equal partners within world development" (ibid).

Greenlandic author and politician Finn Lynge has described the period in Greenland in a similar manner by stating "it was in the 70's that the people woke up, youth rebellion started to emerge and an ever larger unrest(...) the language awareness in the people gradually grew and in those years the three political parties(...) were established"(my own translation to English from Danish) (Lynge 2010, p. 202).

The political parties, which Lynge is referring to, are the first Greenlandic political parties that emerged in that period. One of these - the social democratic party Siumut (meaning forward) was also actively engaged in the establishment of the Inuit Organization, ICC (Inuit Circumpolar Council) in 1977 (Dahl 1986, p.90).

Amongst its goals, the ICC was established to work as an assembly and by standing together take action as a collective across the Arctic, in opposition to the rest of the world, but mostly in regard to the Inuit's former colonial powers (Dybbroe 1996, p. 44).

The ICC thus played a role in shaping what (despite differences) is perceived as a shared Inuit identity, developed against threats to their way of life such as the EU ban on sealskin in 1983 (Rodgers & Scobie 2015, p. 73). This had a devastating impact on the Inuit's abilities to sell the skin, as well as the global community's lasting opinion against it, most recently illustrated when the talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres' started an anti-sealing campaign through twitter in 2015 (Rodgers & Scobie 2015).

In 1996 the Arctic Council (AC) was formed, which later came to play a significant part in furthering collaboration across the Arctic (Keskitalo 2007, p. 189). AC acts as a type of forum for Indigenous Arctic Peoples to be heard, although aspects of security have been except for the AC to deal with (Keskitalo 2012, p. 157).

In recent years, the shift towards a pan-arctic identity has become more and more visible in the Arctic, where a revival of TEK and e.g. Inuit Tattoos on the hands, and especially the face, which in both Denmark and Canada are illegal (Petersen 2014) are becoming more common in Greenland, Canada and Alaska (Hughes 2015).

The origin of the Tattoos, can be traced to before colonization of Inuit in the Arctic, these brought disdain by the missionary ministers who perceived them as heathen rituals which did not align with the worldviews of Christianity (Freeman 2016). The meaning of the patterns of the tattoos were to some extent lost when they were forbidden, but recently Greenlanders have sought to find the meaning of these patterns by examining sources outside Greenland (Hughes 2015). One of the advocates for reviving the tradition of Inuit tattoos, Greenlandic Maya Sialuk Jacobsen, has however stated this is not important but rather the tradition of the tattoos and the sentiment of reclaiming and expressing a pan-arctic identity (Hughes 2015). Hence "the maintenance of cultural identity is a process related to symbolic control (Dybbroe 1996, p. 50).

Although Greenland developed its identity in stark contrast to Denmark (Gad 2017 p. 106), the ties to Denmark has played a large part in Greenlandic identity discourse, and the goal of becoming "modern" has long been pursued even if the term was associated with being "western" and "developed" (Thisted 2013, p. 217), Greenland should be considered to have succeeded the mark of becoming "modern" a long time ago (ibid). The focus today for Greenland is not only to look to the past and Greenlandic "indigenous ways", but also to "kinsfolk" in Canada and Alaska (Thisted 2013, p. 217). The use of "Indigenous" by Greenland signifies a national identity based on the shift



towards a pan-arctic perspective as “a particular position from which to enunciate an interpretation and critique of power structures and cultural paradigms” (Dahl in Sejersen 2015, p. 192).

Therefore the establishments of AC and Indigenous movements such as ICC have since the 70’s been especially active in shaping the discourses and perceptions of a shared Arctic community “where the discourse of sustainable development has in many cases become an amalgamation of indigenous rights and environmental sustainability” (Shadian 2010, p. 498).

Greenland can be seen to have joined other Arctic Indigenous peoples towards focusing on a shared Indigenous Arctic Identity, which the emergence and emphasis on TEK and Inuit Tattoos as symbols in Greenland and the rest of the Arctic. Symbols which in Greenland play a large part in imagining the future of Greenland as independent from Denmark.

#### 5.4. Excluded problem representations (step 4)

Based on the analysis provided in steps two (discourses and assumptions that make the problem representations seem reasonable) and step three (historical and contextual frame for the problem representations) step four will now analyze and discuss any excluded perspectives to provide alternative problem representations. This step examines any ”unsaid” aspects in the problem representations and further adds to problematizing what is represented as the ”problems” in the policies (Bacchi 2016, p. 22).

##### 5.4.1. Unsaid problems in the Greenlandic tourism landscape

The analysis and discussion provided so far has problematized the idea of sustainability within the tourism landscape in Greenland, and the use of the concept as a way of displacing responsibility with regard to mainly environmental sustainability. This section will now seek to further problematize as well as discuss what the ”real” problems of the tourism industry are, rather than what is stated to be the problems in the policies.

The many contradictions and the use of ”sustainability” and arguing for a tourism industry as ”sustainable” and ”holistic” in its approach does not agree with pursuing non-sustainable projects like the airports, the aim of more tourists and the lack of resolving issues related to waste management. It involves a limited view of sustainability as only on a local level, which then is not even solved, while on a global scale the argument is that possible emissions from Greenland are so small, that they will not impact on the World’s overall pollution (Thisted 2013, p. 216). On a political level, Greenland is focusing on other non-environmentally sustainable, large scale projects

such as the Rare Earth Minerals (REM) mine (and the possible exploration of uranium) in Narsaq (Walsh 2017), which has received criticism internationally for the many polluting steps involved in the extraction processes as well as the need to import miners, as Greenland does not have the required skills (Harvey 2012).

The overall debate in Greenland regarding environmental protection “is not considered to any great extent and seems to have been erased” (Bjørst 2016, p. 38). This statement was made with reference to the REM mine in Narsaq, but the tendency of “erasing” (Bjørst 2016, p.38) environmental protection discussions on a local level seems to be the same for tourism in Greenland.

While Greenland is still in the midst of further industrializing, this type of displacement of responsibility will most likely not hold for long – especially with regard to how Greenland is perceived internationally. The image and representation of Greenland as an Indigenous sustainable people will most likely shatter at some point, if tourists visiting Greenland put the pieces together. The “real” issue and not what is represented in the policies is hence not thinking holistically overall – both in terms of what the Greenlandic politicians pursue within the country, since neither of these are environmentally sustainable, but also that the tourism industry cannot be sustained as a profession if what Greenland markets itself on is the nature, while pursuing non-environmentally friendly projects that will impact this particular nature in question. All while arguing for an Indigenous identity of Greenlanders as sustainable due to their indigenous relation to nature. The concept of “sustainability” in the Greenlandic tourism landscape is thus used by the Greenlandic tourism actors to fit the political purpose of the Greenlandic government and re-defined not to be contradictory to (even polluting) development (Fischhendler & Katz 2013; Gad & Strandsbjerg 2019).

The World Wild Life Fund Denmark (WWF) has stated on their website that “WWF believes the use of “sustainable tourism” which is often used in the tourism industry, to be misleading” (WWF Denmark, n.d.) instead WWF Denmark has since 2008 advocated the phrase “responsible tourism” instead (Madsen, 2012), which covers “travel, nature, environment and is for the benefit of the community” (WWF Denmark, n.d.). Responsible tourism thus keeps both the tourism landscape and the tourists accountable.

While Visit Greenland does implement the concept of “responsible tourism” in their policy (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 9) it is used in reference to “sustainable tourism”, thus equating “responsible tourism” with “sustainability” represented by VG to be achieved by choosing the “right” type of

still manages tourist. Hence VG might make use of the concept of responsible tourism, but in addressing it still displace responsibility to the individual tourist.

As the concept of “responsible tourism” in other parts of the world becomes the preferred term over “sustainable” in the tourism landscape (Nature Tours, n.d.) and more are realizing the dual and contested nature of the concept in Greenland - so far perceived as the “solution” for the tourism landscape, Greenland might eventually start arguing for “responsible tourism”, which hopefully will mean that the tourism landscape will no longer be able to displace the responsibility to the individual tourist but have to take part in ensuring that the industry is in fact responsible and holistic in its approach - on all levels.

### 5.5.Problem representation impacts and implications (step 5)

This next step, based on step four, examines the produced implications of the problem representations through three aspects; discourse implications - how these problem representations inhibits any other way of thinking about the problem; Subject implications – how the problem representations construct and shape subjects and lastly; lived implications – based on the other two implications to explain how these have impacts on lived life (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 23).

#### 5.5.1. Discursive implications

The problem representations which represents a tourism development focusing on the wrong segment and places the responsibility for the future on the “right” type of tourist, makes it impossible to think of any current pollution in Greenland as a result of either its own pollution or the tourism industry’s’, especially in contrast to the representation of the close relationship between Greenlanders and nature. This frames the problem so that the “untouched” nature - the represented status quo - is the result of the way Greenlanders due to their indigeneity have treated nature well, while any pollution is the result of former tourists that the industry in their own perception wrongfully chose to focus on. Adding to this is that sustainability here specifically only is thought of on a local level, and overall global pollution (and climate change), as a result of other countries and peoples’ lack of sustainability.

The problem representation of tourism development as due to a lack of infrastructure, lack of overall development and as due to a lack of self-representation inhibits thinking of Greenland in any other way than in its own right to develop, on its own terms, by constructing a frame where

Greenland is placed as the one that knows how to act sustainably, “in contrast to actors in the form of Western societies that produce pollution” (Thisted 2013, p. 209).

Suggesting that any pollution on a global and a local scale in Greenland is the result of others, implies that Greenland should be allowed to develop based on what is represented to be sustainable practice *in Greenland by Greenland*. This means that representing the problems in the policies has the discourse implications that it inhibits thinking of any former or future pollution in Greenland as the fault of Greenland and hence any current pollution in Greenland is not the responsibility of Greenland to deal with, as they were not the ones causing it.

#### 5.5.2. Subjectification implications

Representing the problem of tourism development as the result of a lack of development and a lack of other's (former tourists) inability to act sustainably produces the subject of Greenlanders as on the one hand implicitly “victims” subjected to others lack of sustainable behavior, though on a local level as “there has been challenges with a lacking environmental consciousness” (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 25). On the hand this perspective also produces and represents Greenlanders and the Greenlandic tourism actors as the only ones who truly knows how to “adapt” based on their “magnificent nature (.) and the authenticity which our country is known for” (Visit Greenland 2020, p. 15) in their qualities as an “Indigenous population that has adapted to the nature it lives in and of” (Qaasuistup kommunia 2014, p. 37).

While the “other” in the policies is indirectly represented as those responsible for pollution - the tourists and the western world - contrasted to the “Arctic peoples”, the focus on the story of Habakuk (Qeqqata Kommunia 2019, p. 35) constructs Denmark as the “other” from which Greenland distances itself from.

In regard to time perspective the tourism policies, the Greenlandic population are represented as “victims” of colonial history in the current situation and of other's pollution, while in the view of the past, prior to colonialization, the Greenlandic population were adaptable just as they are represented to be in the future.

This focus on currently being “victims” with emphasis on adaptability in the past (prior to colonialism) and the future, strengthens the idea (and has the subjectification impacts) that in order to change the status quo, Greenland needs to develop its industries, including the tourism industry in order to break ties with its former colonial power and to “reclaim” its culture and identity.

This way of constructing an “us and them – relation” between Greenlanders and Arctic peoples on one side and the rest of the non-indigenous world on the other, adds to what has been identified as

that which is to be sustained, namely the idea of an indigenous nation, as well as the idea of the right to development on Greenland's own terms.

### 5.5.3. Lived implications

Based on the former types of implications, the lived implications highlight the way these impacts the lives of individuals in practice (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 23).

With emphasis on the need to develop and how problems of a lack of sustainability are represented to be the cause of other's pollution, one of the lived implications of these problems representations is that where pollution and the dumps are not managed, the individuals living in the areas are subjected to this, which as noted before, is both a health hazard for individuals and an eyesore for those that have to look at it (Qaasuitsup Kommunia 2014, p. 34). As a result of the subjectification implications and the discursive implications of the problem representations, living in areas where one is exposed to pollution that is directly impacting one's everyday life, and local authorities argue for this to be the responsibility of others and if the overall solution to solving this issue is represented to be development - economic and in terms of infrastructure, the wish to allow this development on all accounts becomes perceived as legitimate and necessary.

The Greenlandic people become "governable subjects" (Foucault in Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p. 23) and the idea of being an indigenous people in the right to development and self-determination is enhanced. Hence the emphasis on sustainability and Indigeneity overall perceived not as exclusive from development can, according to Frig & Sorsa (2018), be seen as a way to "boost a nation's soft power, including the improvement of international credibility, increase international political influence and stimulation of stronger international partnerships for economic or political advantages" (Frig and Sorsa 2018, p. 4), while within the boundaries of the country, nation branding "aims to influence the meaning and experiential reality of national identity as well as nationhood itself" (ibid).

The lived effects are thus that the Greenlandic people experience themselves as Indigenous as expressed through the growing focus on a pan-arctic identity, (cf. section 5.3.1) and thus in their right to develop and gain more self-determination (although this naturally is not the experience by all). Hence arguing for an indigenous sustainable nation and identity on a political level, it imbues the population with the feeling of a common national identity.

### 5.6. Interrupting problem representations (step six)

The next step examines if the identified problem representations have been “reproduced” and “defended” (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, pp. 23-24) anywhere other than in the policies to further construct this “reality” of the problems (ibid). Step six thus examines other areas that brings strength and legitimacy to problem representations (ibid). However, this step also enlightens anywhere these have been scrutinized by others (ibid).

The argument of Greenland being an Indigenous Nation has been brought up over the years and widely discussed within Greenlandic identity politics (Thisted 2013; Gad 2017).

Greenlandic politicians such as Vittus Qujaukitsoq and Kuupik Kleist (Thisted 2013, p. 214) and the perspectives in the tourism policies (along with their effects) reflect this argument.

Nonetheless scholars such as Strandsbjerg argue that Greenland no longer fits the definition by the UN as an Indigenous People (ibid). This is an important point as it adds to how Greenland (or rather how Greenlandic politicians) view the Greenlandic national identity.

The point is based on a distinction of “an ethnically defined community of Inuit” (Strandsbjerg in Thisted 2013, p. 214) and “a territorially defined society”, to which only the ethnically defined community fits the UN’s definition of Indigenous (ibid), in other words it argues that those “state-like actors who increasingly seeks to achieve a favorable position in the global political economy” (Strandsbjerg in Thisted 2013, p. 215) are not eligible to the category of Indigenous (ibid).

If one accepts the argument, then Greenland does not fit the definition of Indigenous, as it is pursuing “a favorable position in the global political economy” (ibid) through amongst other things, tourism.

Adding to this, one of the characteristics of Indigenous that the UN bases its identification of Indigenous peoples on, is that Indigenous peoples “practice sustainable forms of use” (Dahl 2012, p. 12). Given the analysis in this thesis, within the realm of tourism this is not the case, although the Greenlandic tourism industry and the Greenlandic politicians continue to argue and promote this as part of its Nation branding. Anholt argues that in order for Nation Branding to be successful, it is necessary that the promoted “Brand” and the “competitive identity” which the nation seeks to construct, be a unified image to seem trustworthy (Anholt 2007, p. 6).

If the status of being Indigenous as the image of Greenland as sustainable is heavily reliant on, is further challenged by outsiders in the future as Greenland continues to pursue independence on the

basis of economic development, then the promoted brand will no longer, in the words of Anholt, be a unified one, but rather one filled with conflicting images (Anholt 2007, p. 6).

Hence the status of indigenous as well as the conflicting image could end up doing more harm to the perception of Greenland on the international stage, than good.

## 6.0.Conclusion

This thesis has sought to answer the research question “What is the problem of tourism development in Greenland represented to be? And how is the concept of sustainability articulated in the tourism landscape as the solution to the “problem? It has sought to do so through a policy analysis of three tourism policies, all by Greenlandic tourism actors, placed within the theoretical frame of WPR and Nation Branding theory. This thesis has illustrated how tourism development in Greenland with reference to sustainability is a question of promoting and branding an Indigenous identity as part of Greenland’s aim towards independence.

Inspired by Gad and Strandsbjerg (2019) in the way to approach sustainability, it became clear that what is represented to be sustained is not the environment or protection of this, but rather the Greenlandic tourism industry as a source of income, the Greenlandic national project of independence and lastly the narrative of Greenland as an indigenous nation, which the former rely on.

This narrative of Greenland as Indigenous works on two parts: one works externally through nation branding, which promotes a National identity to the outside world. Two works on an an internal level - that is the promotion of an indigenous identity as part of Greenland’s nation building process, which through discourses on indigeneity and development shape subjects to be governed, which in turn legitimizes the Greenlandic national project of independence, while it also is means to reclaim its right to represent itself and its culture.

This last level also becomes a way for Greenland to, on a political level demonstrate activeness to the outside world, through the identification of problems which Greenland has pointed out itself. Sustainability in the Greenlandic tourism policies thus becomes a means to argue for an indigenous identity and through this displace responsibility to act environmentally sustainable on a local level, while global sustainability is excluded as an area of attention - unless it harms Greenland - and is represented to be the responsibility of others, namely the tourists or others countries that pollute. All the “real” problems which have been identified in the policies, are implied and unstated in the

policies, but through these taken-for granted truths, Greenland manages to maneuver and have a say in its own representation on the international stage.

What has been highlighted in this thesis as the “real” issues - rather than what is represented as the problems in the policies - can be summarized as follows: Firstly, the use of sustainability (with reference to the environment) that enables the displacement of responsibility to tourists (and back and forth between the municipalities and the government) means that rather than addressing the issue at hand, it is unsolved. This is paradoxical when the tourism landscape promotes themselves as sustainable to tourists.

Secondly: Even if the tourism industry is what is to be sustained (as a source of income). branding itself as sustainable and “untouched” is troublesome and cannot be sustained, when future projects will have an impact on the same nature that Greenland is promoting, projects such as the development of International Airports, possibly overtourism, and pursuing large-scale exploration projects such as mining. All while the tourism actors and the Greenlandic government argues for a “holistic” approach to tourism development in Greenland. As such Greenlandic tourism cannot be considered a sustainable source of income, as other economical projects lead to a nature that no longer can be seen as “untouched”.

Lastly the narrative and image of Greenland as an indigenous nation most likely cannot be sustained either, when acting in non-sustainable ways. While the ideal image of Greenland is attempted at keeping up with - amongst others - concealing realities, e.g. by moving the dumps, it is doubtful that this image can keep long, especially as Greenland follows the path of polluting industrial development – endangering the whole Nation building project through these conflicting images. The solution to the real problems seems obvious: the Greenlandic tourism landscape (and the Greenlandic politicians) has to take responsibility and think both in terms of *global and local* sustainability and invest in being sustainable, not just for itself for now, but also for the coming generations. Responsibility of being sustainable for the tourism actors does not just mean acting sustainably but also means being transparent – if the way Greenland wishes to become independent is through mining and other large-scale projects, then this is for Greenland to decide. However, it is questionable if the argument can persist that Greenlandic tourism is sustainable. In order to become competitive in the global market, Greenland has to decide which way to go as the status quo seems “unsustainable”.



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## 8.0. Appendices

8.1. Appendix 1: “Turismestrategi 2019-2022” QEQ (2019).

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8.4. Appendix 4: Overview of Codes