COLLABORATION GAPS IN REGARDS TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AMONGST TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS ON THE FAROE ISLANDS

And 'how' and 'why' they seem to persist

Abstract

Collaboration within tourism development is widely known to be considered socially sustainable, but historically, collaboration amongst stakeholders within tourism on the Faroe Islands has been challenging to achieve. This thesis examines how collaboration is practiced between public and private tourism stakeholders in regards to tourism development on the Faroe Islands, and why tourism collaborations within tourism development are challenging to achieve on the Faroe Islands. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected in the form of a survey and semi-structured interviews to identify collaboration gaps. With the help from social practice theory by Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), the analysis observed three collaboration gaps. These were between meaning and 'frequency, duration and sequence'; spatial gaps; and gaps between material and competences. The gaps arguably need to be filled to encourage successful collaborations in the future.

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Introduction

In the past ten years, the Faroe Islands have experienced an exponential growth of tourism activity, which has led to a demand for structural adjustment regarding tourism development. Six regional tourism organisations have previously been awarded yearly grants from 2001 until 2018. The financial grants were first intended as an economic supplement for municipalities to establish information centres and management of them. The federal government believed that these would function as the driving force in regards to tourism development and collaboration within tourism on the Faroe Islands. It was, therefore, an attempt to encourage the industry and municipalities to get involved in the management of local tourism, simultaneously as it was supposed to secure regional collaboration within tourism, across municipality borders. The grants were typically, without considerations, forwarded to the eight information centres on the Faroe Islands as management subsidies, and there was a high level of discontentedness from municipalities, the private sector etc. of the output that was generated from this system.

A change was made in the tourism structure on the Faroe Islands in 2018 as a result of a tourism report of a unified plan, handed the Faroese ministry of foreign affairs and industry and trade in 2017. After Helgasson and Balle (2017) evaluated this system, they concluded that task and responsibilities were unclear, no region was organised in the same manner, the information centres and regional tourism organisations had differing roles and responsibilities, and the purpose of the system was indistinct. It was therefore deemed as an unreasonable organisation of financial support because there was no inspection, discussions or requirements of the recipients of the grants. It was decided in 2017 to cancel these grants and instead develop a national tourism development department. The department administers grants which municipalities, information's centres and private tourism stakeholders can apply for funding of tourism development projects, where they will match the applicant's contribution to the projects (Helgason & Balle, 2017). The municipalities were given the right to decide to which degree they wished to organise tourism in their area, and which prioritisation it should be given.

In 2019, Visit Faroe Islands' new development team published a 2025 vision plan. Within this plan, they have committed to developing a new tourism structure with a clear task and responsibility distribution in the industry. The restructuring is because they believe that, with better coordination and new regional collaboration, comes a better framework for a more coordinated tourist industry.

Although regions are presented as destinations by Visit Faroe Islands, they aren't politically coordinated or governed as such, which makes national tourism management difficult. It is limited to which degree the local governments in the regions are collaborating regarding tourism management in the Faroe Islands; therefore, it is questionable if it is appropriate to market them as integrated destinations. So far, they have not succeeded to coordinate all regions and develop collaboration amongst stakeholders regarding tourism management. The recent restructuring of the tourism sector has pushed some local governments to engage more with tourism management. While some local governments within regions are collectively managing tourism, many work independently. It is common for local governments to collaborate within, e.g. education, elderly- and childcare; therefore, it could indicate that there is a foundation for them to collaborate within regional tourism development.

Tourism literature has repeatedly stated that to build socially sustainable tourism; tourism collaboration is required to ensure benefits for host communities from tourism development (Stoddart et al. 2019; Alonso & Nyanjom, 2017; Tucker, Gibson, & Vodden, 2011; Casanueva, Gallego, & García-Sáanchez, 2016; Cusick, 2009; Hazra, Fletcher, & Wilkes, 2017; Lindstrom & Larson, 2016; Manaf, Purbasari, Danayanti, Aprilia, & Astutu, 2018; Mei, Lerfald, & Brata, 2017; Van Den Bergh, 2014). But according to Stoddart et al. (2020), most literature focusing on collaboration and network-building presume that such networks or collaborations already exist, exploring 'how' these operate, instead of 'why' they occur. Drawing from social practice theory by Shove et al. (2012) and Stoddart and colleagues (2020) managed to provide insight into practices of network-building and collaboration, as it helped them identify collaboration gaps, understand why these gaps persist and illuminate strategies for addressing them (Stoddart et al. 2019). Another overlooked aspect within tourism literature is smaller destinations in the North, such as the Faroe Islands, that don't have many well-functioning tourism organisations that facilitate local tourism development. This thesis will examine tourism development on the Faroe Islands, using social practice theory; to question how collaboration is practised amongst public and private tourism stakeholders, and why there seems to be difficulty in achieving tourism collaboration. The findings can highlight collaboration gaps, that later can be strategically addressed to work towards social sustainability of tourism

Problem formulation

How is collaboration practised between public and private tourism stakeholders in regards to tourism development, and why are tourism collaborations within tourism development challenging to achieve on the Faroe Islands?

Figure 1 Map of municipalities around the Faroe Islands

Background context: The challenges of local tourism development

When it comes to governance, The Faroe Islands is composed by a federal government with two levels; the federal, run by the Faroese parliament, and local governments, in the form of 29 municipalities illustrated in figure 1. Therefore, there is no official administrative state/territory/regional level that is common elsewhere. Although the Faroe Islands are a nation within the Kingdom of Denmark, the Faroe Islands are self-governing with extensive autonomous powers and responsibilities.

As depicted in figure 2, The Faroese ministry of foreign affairs, trade and industry has the superior responsibility of tourism and its collection of laws. The State is the owner of the public company 'Visit Faroe Islands' (the national DMO), that is supposed to function as the federal governments' extended arm, carrying out national tourism policy. The national DMOs aim is to increase the turnover in Faroese

Figure 2 Tourism management on the Faroe Islands

tourism, and they are working towards collecting, coordinating and selling the Faroe Islands as a destination. The recently established development department administers funding that industry and municipalities can apply for tourism development projects, where they'll match the contribution. According to the tourism report of a unified plan that was handed to the ministry of foreign affairs and industry and trade in 2017, the governments' role in tourism is to provide the necessary framework for a well-functioning industry, simultaneously as regards are taken that the growth within the industry is sustainable. The government's role is, in other words general, and it is not their role to coordinate tourism locally. However, it's the government's responsibility to collaborate with regions and Tourist Information Centres (TIC's). Overall, the government is interested in tourism becoming as well-coordinated as possible, all over the country, this way the industry can function in a sustainable foundation and be a contribution for the whole community, also in the future (Helgason & Balle, 2017). The government provides central funding but delegates the organisation of local tourism development to the municipalities.

Local tourism management

Local tourism management is allocated to the municipalities, who administer the extent of management. There are 29 municipalities on the Faroe Islands, with a total of 52.110 inhabitants (1. January 2020) spread over 18 islands, this means that there is an average of 1796 citizens per municipality. If we compare the Faroe Islands to Greenland, where there are five municipalities, with a total of 56.081 inhabitants (1. January 2020), The Faroe Islands are highly fragmented. It is important to note that the municipalities' roles and responsibilities within tourism are not firmly set, and therefore far from all have chosen to manage or develop tourism activities in their area. There are no official local DMOs, and the municipalities manage and promote tourism to various degrees, where some have established TIC's, taking care of tasks such as coordinating tourist requests and managing summerhouses. However, many of the centres also have the responsibility of cultural and business activities which often weighs more. The municipalities who are not connected to a TIC forward their tourism requests to councillors of business, well-being or highways. The various councillors responsible for tourism requests reflects the fact that tourism touches upon multiple departments of councils and that it might be challenging to categorise. On the other hand, some municipalities only have one or two employees in total, where one is the mayor, who has

many other essential responsibilities to administer. There is, therefore, an inequality in the available resources and extent to which municipalities are able to prioritize tourism development.

Tourist Information Centres

There are ten information centres on the Faroe Islands. Different systems manage these; six are public-funded by single municipalities, by the respective municipality they represent. Three are public-funded by multiple municipalities within regions, and one is public-private funded. Municipalities usually pay for services such as coordinating cultural events, arranging hiking tours, tourist information etc. to the Tourist information centres. A total of eleven municipalities are not connected to any TIC. These are Eystur, Sunda, Sjóvar, Eiðis, Vestmanna, Kvívíks, Hvalbiar, Hovs, Fámjins, Porkeris and Sumbiar municipalities.

Public funded (single municipality)	Public funded (municipalities within regions)	Public-private funded
Visit Eysturoy (Fuglafjørður)	**Visit Norðoy**	**Visit Nes**
Visit Runavík	**Visit Sandoy**	
Visit Tórshavn	**Visit Vágar**	
Visit Nólsoy		
Visit Suðuroy (Tvøroyri)		
Visit Suðuroy (Vágur)		

Table 1 Funding circumstances of TIC's on the Faroe Islands.

Those municipalities not connected to any of the information centres don't have a tourism 'department', but delegate tourism to either councillors within the highways department, mayors, department of well-being, cultural department etc. The tourism development department at VFI doesn't' regard the TIC's as DMOs. They aren't considered as such because they are not solely managing local tourism management or marketing, but also other cultural activities and information distribution. Arguably there isn't a specific public tourism administrative system.

The Faroese tourism structure has reflected a neoliberal approach to tourism that has been common in many western developed economies, where marketing and promotional activities are receiving significant grants at a national level when compared to the development aspects. It

resembles the ideas that market-based instruments seek to grow demand while arguably using fewer resources more effectively (Pforr, 2007). Academic circles often criticise this approach for excluding problems of public interest, social justice, equity, transparency and accountability of planning and policy practice in many cases (Dredge & Jenkins, 2011). But the establishment of the development team at Visit Faroe Islands, and the development of a vision plan to restructure tourism towards more coordination and collaboration, might be a sign of political modernisation. If this is the case, and the tourism sector is working towards collaborative approaches, Dredge and Jenkins (2011: 6) argue that this might give "way to an emerging emphasis on understanding and managing the social world in which government interventions -direct or indirect- take place". But this kind of restructuring also requires new forms of socio-political organisations, as it is pointed out by researchers, that these need to focus on the increasing requirements for access to and engagement in planning and policymaking (Dredge & Jenkins 2011; Gibson-Graham 2006; Giddens 1998). Dredge and Jenkins (2011: 6-7) argue that these kinds of shifts in other destinations have encouraged the development of 'new spaces' where tourism planning and policy development takes place.

> The term 'new spaces' is used in a metaphoric sense to denote a range of non-traditional, and sometimes not very explicit, spaces in which discussion takes place, information is exchanged and decisions are made. These new spaces exist between public and private sectors; between levels of government; and in government corporations and statutory corporations created by government but held at arms length from public scrutiny.
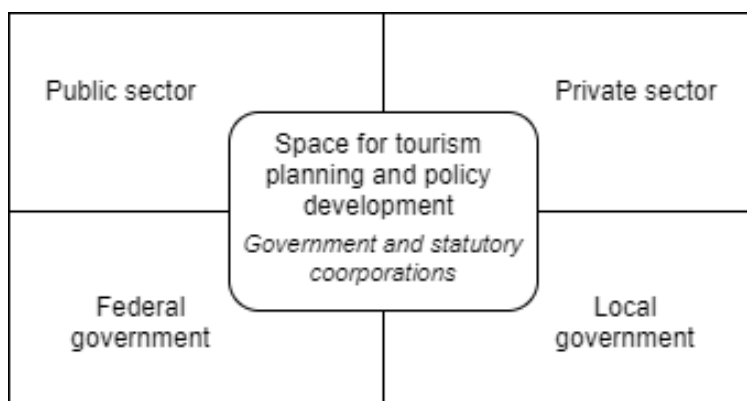
Figure 3 'New Spaces' described by Dredge & Jenkins (2011) where tourism planning and policy developments takes place.

Contrary to, e.g. Denmark, that recently launched a new reforming of the public tourism administrative system, which could reflect centralisation within tourism, expecting that around 80

DMOs are reduced to about 15-25 by the end of 2020 (OECD, 2020). The vision plan by Visit Faroe Islands might indicate a decentralization of tourism, and that there is room for these 'new spaces' to form in the future of tourism governance, and they believe it should be within regional boundaries. These spaces may illustrate where regional tourism collaboration could take place.

This thesis will examine this space where tourism planning and development takes place. I will explore how different public and private stakeholders collaborate, and identify collaboration gaps that could indicate why collaboration has been difficult to achieve within tourism development on The Faroe Islands. While the circumstances within tourism of each municipality are unique, critical general lessons can still be learnt by assessing the collaboration gaps within tourism development in one region, which this thesis will examine. Before we investigate the theoretical framework, it is essential to understand the different concepts connected to regional tourism collaboration.

Literature review

The theoretical framework in the thesis to assess tourism collaboration within tourism development draws conceptual ideas from literature about destination tourism planning (e.g. Adu-Ampong, 2017; Beaumont & Dredge, 2010; Davidson and Maitland, 1997; Dredge et al. 2011; Hall, 2008; Jeffries, 2001), local collaboration (e.g. Gray, 1989; Jamal & Getz, 1999: Jamal & Stronza, 2009: Graci, 2013; Bramwell & Sharmann, 1999) and social practice theory (Shove et al., 2012, Reckwitz, 2002; Nicolini, 2016; Stoddart et al., 2020; Giddens, 1984; James & Halkier, 2019; Schatzki, 1996). The review advocates for the continuing importance of interconnected government corporation in, and public sector support for, tourism development (Dredge & Jenkins, 2003; Hall, 2008; Zahra, 2010). This is a result of a wide range of research within the field of collaborative efforts, Coles et al. (2014: 248), explain "one manifestation of this has been the considerable debate on a multiplicity of arrangements including partnerships, collaborations and networks by which to strengthen and grow the ties between the public sector and other (in many cases private sector) tourism actors'. To address if (regional) collaboration is estimated to be a valid perspective for tourism development on the Faroe Islands, besides Visit Faroe Islands mentioning it in their vision plan, the following section will address the fundamental ideas behind destinations, tourism planning and development.

Destination development

Within the tourism industry, 'new' destinations are always becoming popular, rising above the surface, taking other destinations' place within tourisms' top lists of destinations to visit. There is a constant competition amongst destinations, and even the smallest and most remote destinations have a chance in the contest of becoming the next popular tourism site. The circumstances indicate that amongst these competitors are nations, where tourism industry often is undertaken in an unplanned or centralised practice, which may result in a negative impact of tourism (Hall, 2008; Adu-Ampong, 2017). The literature reflects an increase of focus on planning approaches, to maximise the benefits of tourism at tourism destinations (Adu-Ampong, 2017). According to Adu-ampong (2017), Hall (1998) and Jeffries (2001), benefits of tourism depends on the crucial role of the state to act as an encourager of participation in the strategic planning process.

Spatial scale

The term destination is often connected to the spatial scale of, i.e. a resort or tourist attraction, but it can also apply to a range of governance. Hall (2008: 192) argues that

> from a public planning perspective it should also be noted that perceptual regions or destination zones may run over different government boundaries, making land use, planning and even tourism promotion extremely difficult as it raises the potential for conflicts between different government jurisdictions.

The distinctiveness indicates that it is common for regions and other destinations zones to experience difficulty in tourism development because government borders don't always define them. Tourism isn't necessarily marketed, developed, planned etc. in regards to government jurisdictions, but other factors can determine destinations. Davidson and Maitland (1997) have defined destinations more broadly as "a single district, town or city, or a clearly defined and contained rural, coastal or mountain area' (1997: 4) sharing some characteristics conveyed by Hall (2008: 192) as:

- *A complex and multidimensional tourism product based on a variety of resources, products, services and forms of ownership;*
- *Other economic and social activities, which may be complementary to or in conflict with the various aspects of tourism;*
- *A host community*

- *Public authorities and/or an elected council with responsibility for planning and management;*
- *An active private sector*

This broad definition would also cover the regional destination zone. It will be used for this thesis when a region is used as an example to examine collaboration in regards to tourism development, on the Faroe Islands. The reason for this is that this thesis is also examining collaboration between organisations within regions, considering that Visit Faroe Islands has a goal to reach improved collaboration amongst them, which historically has been hard to achieve. When researching tourism planning and development processes, the scale of the destination has an impact on the debate, because it determines those who could be relevant to participate and have an active role in the planning and development process. A popular approach to destinations is the regional/zones; this is often used in tourism planning, and the method to define destinations is criticised by the fact that tourists don't choose destinations based on administrative zones. But by displaying several local government areas as a connected destination, makes, i.e. planning better manageable (Dredge et al. 2011). Although regions are popular approaches to destinations, other use of beforementioned characteristics may also scope destinations and their limits.

Stakeholders

Haugland et al. (2011: 298) argue that "Tourism destinations can be considered as complex networks that involve a large number of co-producing actors delivering a variety of products, and services". The destination as a unit is, according to Haugland et al. (2011) both affecting the destinations' and individual actors' competitiveness. Instead of local government areas developing and managing tourism separately, by collaborating with other government areas, might increase their overall competitive advantage, by having a more extensive range of tourism products, services to offer and joint resources to manage tourism. This approach reflects an argument promoting local management of tourism through regional collaborative initiatives, instead of municipals managing and developing separately.

Although destinations often are promoted as products or commodities, Hall (2008) emphasizes on the importance of realizing that these are not only places for tourism consumption, but "they are also places which people live, work and play and to which they may have a strong sense of attachment and ownership" (2008: 192). According to Hall (2008: 192) within tourism planning, it

is, therefore, important to pay attention to the people that have a 'sense of place', "which is a term used to refer to the subjective, personal and emotional attachments and relationships people have to a place". Because tourism might alter the locals' 'sense of place', it may cause, i.e. resentment towards tourists and tourism and therefore have a negative effect on the industry. Consequently, it is necessary to treat destinations in regards to 'sense of place', taking the complex set of relationships and networks that they are, into consideration when developing tourism at destinations (Hall, 2008). Arguably, local stakeholders in the destinations need to be considered in the development processes, but perhaps also in the definition of destinations, if it is expected for destinations to collaborate within tourism development. Precisely how the destinations should be identified and characterised could perhaps be essential to discuss at a local level, if it expected for them to collaborate in tourism development.

Tourism organisational forms at destinations are highly diverse and depend on multiple national and regional factors, which are adjusted to fit, e.g. the destinations governance and policy systems. Still, it could be argued that tourism development needs not exclusively to be present at the national level, but also the local level at the destinations where local stakeholders' perspective is taken into consideration. Jamal and Stronza (2009: 170) recommend researchers to consider the management of tourism destinations as *complex planning domains* and define them as often compromising multiple stakeholders: "who may hold diverse views on development and varying degrees of influence over decision making – no individual stakeholder can fully control planning. Conflicting public/private sector interests and activities can impact economic, ecological and socio-cultural wellbeing". This system is both complex and dynamic, which quickly causes management difficulties, and the incorporation of different sectors in tourism interests increases the complexity. Jamal and Stronza (2009: 170) therefore recommend "Collaboration and continuous, integrated planning, modelled as an interactive system.", but there are challenges towards achieving that in regards to tourism development, which is discussed in the following section.

Tourism planning

In the past 30 years, there has been an appeal within the development processes of destinations, which many researchers give globalisation credit for encouraging (Hall, 2008; Beaumont & Dredge, 2010). Kotler et al. (1993) argue that this is because places are at 'war' and competing against other places/regions in the world, for their economic survival. The competitive factors ultimately affect

the processes of tourism planning and has to be taken into consideration during tourism development.

Local level

There is a tendency of a reduction of the state's role, and a shift from administration to managerialism and adoption of cooperative alliances and partnerships, among other things (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010). In Australia, e.g. this has meant that local governments have experienced an increase of range of roles and responsibilities accompanied by tightening of fiscal conditions. Dredge et al. (2011: 113) argue that this has promoted local governments to being more "strategic and efficient in the way that they address tourism planning and management pressures". The tightening of financial conditions and increase of roles and responsibilities at a local level has also been the case for the Faroe Islands. In 2009 actions were made at the municipal level, to secure further development across the country, and to ensure that development was reinforced at a local level, rather than top-down (Kommunala umskipanarnevndin, 2009). Dredge et al. (2011) state that although tourism planning is essential to reach local needs, there are challenges in achieving local collaborative tourism development. The restructuring at the local level indicates that there is a basis for conflict amongst the municipalities, although collaboration could benefit them strategically. The increased competition between destinations and municipalities can instigate more significant difficulties in achieving local collaborative tourism development efforts.

Diversity

Hall (2008: 195) argues that strategic tourism planning processes is equivalent to "public tourism planning that is attempting to develop sustainable forms of tourism development, and that is the notion of seeking to meet a public interest through equitable programmes and policies.". Tourism is a complex sectoral industry, with many diverse stakeholders containing different interests, roles and responsibilities, with additional shared objectives and is, therefore, a complicated and dynamic system where it is challenging to implement change (Graci, 2013; Hall, 2008; Adu-Ampong, 2017).

According to Adu-Ampong (2017: 297), it results in a "shared awareness about the need for collaboration and coordination in tourism planning and development process.". Collaboration and coordination are seen as vital components for tourism to be an incentive for positive development outcomes, where stakeholders share information and decisions related to the tourism planning process (Adu-Ampong, 2017). However, Graci (2013: 29) argues that the diversity can become a

great hindrance of implementing collaboration "Specifically, in tourism, each group will differ in terms of their interests at a local, regional or national scale as well as their influence over decision-making". There are therefore precautions to be made when destinations have a common problem which would be beneficial to solve together; their diversity might obstruct their chances of a successful collaboration. To cope with this in a turbulent tourism environment within, e.g. rapidly developing tourism destinations, Jamal and Stronza (2009) argue that organisations need to change. The change needs to be from intraorganizational focus goals to interorganisational goals and goal paths that maximize the interest of all parties in the domain.

When Adu-Ampong (2017) investigated institutional collaboration in tourism planning and development in the central region of Ghana, he found that the main issues within these methods of collaboration are deriving from unplanned and/centralised manner in many developing countries. Adu-Ampong (2017) describes tourism as a problem domain wherein inter- or multiorganizational collaboration for effective planning is required; this is forced by the fact that the sector's issues go beyond the management capacity of a single stakeholder. However, a precondition for a healthy environment for developing collaboration are high levels of coordination between public agencies (Adu-Ampong, 2017).

Collaboration and coordination at a local level

As mentioned, it is standard on the Faroe Islands for regions to collaborate within, e.g. elderly care, child care and school system etc. Therefore, it seems reasonable for regions to collaborate in a tourism context as well. The following section will concern the concept of collaboration, and benefits and disadvantages collaboration within tourism development/planning at a local level. These ideas will guide the thesis to the problem areas, and support the analysis with research data regarding the subject. The views will assist us in understanding some of the framework that the results of the thesis will reveal.

The concept of collaboration

Gray (1989: 5) defined collaboration as "a process through which parties who see solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible", but later evolved the concept with colleague Wood indicating that "collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide

on issues related to that domain". Jamal and Getz (1995) present the concept as holding a more detailed description than when used in everyday use, with complex interpretations. By adapting Wood and Gray's (1991) definition, Jamal and Getz (1995:198) define collaboration for destination planning as depending

> on encompassing the following key stakeholder groups: local government plus other public organizations having a direct bearing on resource allocation; tourism industry associations and sectors such as chamber of commerce, convention and visitors bureau, and regional tourist authority; resident organizations, social agencies, and special interest groups.

Consequently, the term collaboration in regards to tourism planning and development intends to bring together multiple stakeholders to create consensus in tourism policy-making and implementation. Everyday use of the concept collaboration is commonly associated as describing general joint efforts of organisations and known as a synonym for the term cooperation. In this thesis and tourism research in general, the concept of collaboration is ascribed a more detailed description. I will use the definition by Jamal and Stronza (2009: 1) as providing a "flexible and dynamic process that evolves over time, enabling multiple stakeholders to jointly address problems or issues".

As claimed by Jamal and Stronza (2009) scale, structure and scope of collaborations can be highly diverse as stakeholders construct these. They extend over planning *scales* and organisational levels where they may be at a local, regional, national or international level where organisations' collaborative initiatives are based on spatial domains. The collaborations may vary from "loosely structured networks to formally structured partnerships or coalitions" (Jamal & Stronza, 2009: 176). And the scope of them can extend from a range of challenges and cases regarding tourism development, such as developing hiking paths, increasing the accommodation possibilities, creating necessary facilities for tourists such as toilets etc. These are essential details of collaborative initiatives to consider when examining collaborations.

Destination collaboration

As some of the leading scholars within collaboration theory, Jamal and Getz noted in their early work (1995: 186) "The lack of coordination and cohesion within the highly fragmented tourism

industry is a well-known problem to destination planners and managers.". Hall (2008) claims that it is specifically perceptual regions and/or destination zones that may find planning and even tourism promotion difficult as they may run over different government boundaries, and therefore various government jurisdictions. He further elaborates that "while cities and places are in increasing competition with each other, they are correspondingly more linked and entwined with each other's fates than ever before" (2008: 194). The reason for the increased competition is according to Kotler et al. (1993: 346) enforced by globalisation that encourages a borderless economy, and also because of the before mentioned 'place wars' where "places become the new actors on the world scene".

In addition to the competition across destinations, also the competition within destinations affects the collaboration opportunities. A factor that might increase the appeal of collaboration is its connections to sustainability. Graci (2013: 27) points out that "collaboration is considered to be essential in moving the tourism industry toward sustainability". The connection between collaboration and sustainability might be a significant motivation for destinations to implement collaboration into their tourism management, as many tourism policies include working towards sustainability as a goal. The UNWTO has even included partnership in their 17 sustainable development goals, which are goals that many tourism organisations claim to work towards reaching.

At the policy level in central Ghana, Adu-Ampong identified crucial areas that ought to be acted upon, that constrain collaboration in tourism planning and development. The first step should be a definite clarification of the roles and responsibilities of tourism stakeholders, for them to be aware of what is expected of them and others. Also, requiring a formalised forum for relevant tourism stakeholders for regular interaction. Lastly, Adu-Ampong (2017: 310) states that "efforts need to be made towards open communication in order to properly coordinate the development and implementation of tourism policies.". These are materials that make a collaboration practice more accessible for tourism stakeholders.

Jamal and Getz (1995: 188) point out that "In a turbulent field, competing organizations, all acting independently in many diverse directions, produce unanticipated and dissonant consequences in the overall environment which they share". By acting independently, regions might create a vast disadvantage regarding tourism because the dissonant consequences affect their destination's image negatively, by showcasing a fragmented destination lacking coherence. When destinations

attempt to build consensus about tourism policies, Bramwell and Sharman (1999: 392-393), argue that there are many potential benefits when stakeholders in a destination collaborate:

- o *Avoid cost of resolving adversarial conflicts among stakeholders in the long term.*
- o *More politically legitimate, giving stakeholders greater influence in decision-making which affects their lives.*
- o *Improves coordination of policies and promotes consideration of economic, environmental and social impacts.*
- o *"Adds value" by building on the store of knowledge, insights, and capabilities of stakeholders in the destination.*
- o *Promotes "Shared ownership" of the resulting policies, and thereby channel energies into joint implementation or "co-production".*

However, the development of such locally based tourism collaborations might give rise to complex challenges regarding resource allocations, policy ideas and the unequal share of power amongst stakeholders (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999). Dredge et al. (2011) argue that the interests of local people are best reflected in an effective collaboration between local governments that provide a level of decision-making, that also strengthens local organisational capacity. However, the issues of tourism management are mainly one of balance between economic costs that come as a result of having small and fragmented local government management of tourism with the desired level to manage tourism functions and responsibilities (Dredge et al., 2011).

Dredge et al. (2011: 106) recommend a model where "local governments retain their autonomy and spatial boundaries are respected, but certain functions, such as tourism, that would benefit from a more coherent management framework, can be delivered jointly". The joining of functions can raise the financial scope while maintaining the government boundaries. Although there might be many benefits of tourism collaboration, it is essential for local governments to support their territorial governance, and to be aware of the challenges often generated when stakeholders collaborate within the tourism context. A lot of the tourism literature revolves around community stakeholders. However, this thesis concerns with public and private sector stakeholders, it is found useful as a debate surrounding the broader benefits and disadvantage of tourism collaboration, that either motivates or discourages the appeal of collaborative activities.

Collaboration within tourism destination planning

The literature review has demonstrated that tourism collaboration and destination planning may contribute to plenty of reasons for conflicts, benefits, solutions, challenges etc. According to the research, using regions in destination development is common in many countries for various purposes, where the local governments collaborate within tourism policy. But there are other methods to define destinations and tourism governance areas by looking at shared characteristics. Determining and constructing the scale of the destinations is vital if there is an ambition to develop tourism because it identifies relevant stakeholders that could participate and have an active role in the planning and development process. Instead of having fragmented tourism governance areas, it is advised to display and combine local government areas that have shared characteristics as destinations and develop them as such. This is argued to provide a competitive advantage by being able to supply a broader range of tourism products, services, and joint resources to manage tourism.

When developing tourism, it is essential to consider local stakeholders' interests and to be careful of treating destinations as commodities; this could also be the case within defining a destination for example, as well as developing tourism policy. Something to be aware of is that private tourism stakeholders might be competitors in the tourism market, and potentially impede efforts to integrate destinations. As well as local governments within destinations might have conflicting interests because of an increase of roles and responsibilities and tightening of fiscal conditions.

We have learned that destinations frequently have common tourism problems, which are more effectively combated collectively; by extension, another significant motivation to implement collaborative efforts within destinations is its conjunction to sustainability. This thesis shares Jamal and Stronza's (2009:) ideas of collaboration within tourism planning which declares a "flexible and dynamic process that evolves over time, enabling multiple stakeholders to jointly address problems or issues". What the literature tells us is that because of governance boundaries, regional tourism collaboration is hard to achieve, although it is achievable.

The idea that collaboration is essential for sustainable tourism development is becoming endorsed by tourism literature. If regions aspire to achieve sustainable tourism, it is, according to Graci (2011) necessary for them to encourage collaboration in their area. Regions have a lot of common interests when it comes to tourism, and they can share and combat a problem domain without inflicting on

their authority. By not collaborating, they might risk harsh consequences, which could negatively affect their tourism development. Mainly regional collaboration in terms of tourism planning and development consist of destinations with multiple stakeholders, pooling resources to combat a problem domain that neither can solve individually (Adu-Ampong, 2017).

Collaboration gaps

The literature provides a detailed description and analysis of different kinds of collaborative arrangements within tourism and the benefits and disadvantages of public-private collaborative destination development and tourism planning. However, the research doesn't fully explain why some collaborations persist in failing, which in turn could provide tangible tools to work with to achieve collaboration and fill out collaboration gaps. Stoddart et al. (2020) pointed this out in their study of *collaboration gaps and regional tourism networks in rural coastal communities.* Drawing from Shove et al.'s (2012) version of social practice theory and a mixed method approach with surveys and focus groups, they studied the collaboration gaps within four regions in Newfoundland. Stoddart et al. (2020: 637-638) identified three collaboration gaps in particular, which were *between meaning and practice*, *the vertical dimension.* Which refers to how these networks link regional tourism operators to each other, as well as to provincial, national, and international organizations and groups. And *the horizontal dimension*. Which refers to the reach of collaboration networks across different sectors. They found that the social practice theory approach was:

> especially productive for moving beyond documenting the existence of collaboration gaps to explain why their existence and persistence is intimately bound up with issues related to competences and materials. As practice theory highlights, even if social practices are valued in terms of social meaning, without the requisite competencies or access to materials, these practices will not take hold or persist over time.

It was established that it was particularly human resources and the availability to financial resources that were the limiting factor, however, the tourism stakeholders valued the meaning of collaboration. The result suggests that the government and other tourism development agencies could save resources from convincing the stakeholders of the importance of collaboration, and instead use them for developing "the necessary competences and tools for accessing resources for network-building." (Stoddart et al., 2020). Inspired by Stoddart et al. (2020) this thesis will use social

practice theory of Shove and colleagues (2012) to attempt to explain the reasons behind why it is challenging to achieve tourism collaboration in the Faroe Islands and present how tourism stakeholders collaborate.

Social practice theory

Collaboration can be interpreted as a nexus of social practices, where several actors work together towards a common goal. The understanding of how such collaborative practices appear to persist and disappear, and the factors required for them to thrive can be acquired through utilizing social practice theory.

The concepts of theories of practice were initially formed by sociologists and philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Bourdieu, Heidegger etc. in the 1960s and 1970s. These initial ideas contemplated on how the structure of human behaviour was a result of practices, these ideas evolved to considering that individual meanings and norms were not only passively within a person but also practices themselves (Shove et al., 2012). The theory of practice slowly gained traction within social sciences through the 1990s and early 2000s, and especially the works of philosopher Theodore Schatzki and cultural sociologist Andreas Reckwitz are recognized within academic circles. Schatzki (1996: 89) claimed that a practice is "a temporally and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings" and Reckwitz (2002: 249) developed this further by stating that practices are a "routinized type of behaviour" that exist as a 'block' or "a pattern which can be filled out by a multitude of single and often unique actions" (2002: 58). Shove et al. (2012: 4), use skateboarding as a practical illustration to explain this stating that "skateboarding exists as a recognizable conjunction of *elements*, consequently figuring as an *entity* which can be spoken about and more importantly drawn upon as a set of resources when doing skateboarding". It is from these ideas that Shove et al., carry their interpretation of social practice theory, and aim to develop it further to better account for the change.

Practices as entities

There are different ways of viewing practices, either practice-as-performances which involves the active integration of elements (materials, meanings, competences) and practices-as-entities, that will be studied in this thesis, which is constituted through such combinations (Shove et al., 2012). Nicolini (2016: 101) describes studying practices as entities where "The basic unit of analysis is not

a single scene of action or a specific situation or instance of the accomplishment of a practice, but rather a chain, sequence or combination of performances *plus* their relationships – what keeps them connected in time and space", which is the method this thesis will adopt.

The "block" identified by Reckwitz (2002) is what social practices arguably are made up, according to Shove and colleagues this block consists of elements that they claim to be essential for a social practice to form and persist which are:

- *materials* – including things, technologies, tangible physical entities, and the stuff of which objects are made;

- *competences* – which encompasses skill, know-how and technique; and

- *meanings* – in which we include symbolic meanings, ideas and aspirations.

They argue that "practices emerge, persist, shift and disappear when *connections* between elements of these three types are made, sustained or broken." (Shove et al., 2012: 14-15). By taking an 'elemental' approach to social practice theory, the human actor is de-centralised; therefore, the focus is on the practices rather than individual, which is very important to bear in mind. However, practitioners are especially those needed to reproduce the practices and integrate the elements of which practices are made. Shove et al. (2012: 40) argue that "configurations that work (i.e. practices) do so because material elements and those of meaning and competence are linked together, and transformed, *through* the process of doing.". If we look at tourism collaboration in regards to tourism development, there may be many practices that are connected to it. But for the practices to be successful and persistent, they should be linked to positive meanings, obtain the necessary material and have the competences to pursue the practices. But ultimately the practices aren't possible without someone practising them.

Figure 4 Social practice theory by Shove et al. (2012)

Carriers

Not all practices are equal, and practices-as-entities change according to the amounts of carriers acquired. Their ability to attract carriers depends on the circulation of relevant elements, their position in regards to other practices and on the attributes of the social networks that they circulate and constitute (Shove et al., 2012). It is claimed that:

"relations between elements may vary as patterns of participation change", and that "it can be useful to think of elements *as if* they had relatively autonomous trajectories amenable to analysis, interrogation and comparison. At the same time, it is clear that elements are nothing unless integrated in practice, and that if practices are to persist, they need to recruit people willing and able to keep them alive" (Shove et al., 2012: 62).

Social practice theory of Shove et al. (2012) argues that practices cannot become static because they depend on faithful reproductions of practice to be stable, it is in the moment of *doing* that the practice is formed and/or changed. It is when the alleged elements of a practice are interacting that they might reconstruct it in the following practice, or the lack thereof that deconstructs practices. The theory shows how these elements endure and travel, which "provides a means of understanding how practices are sustained between moments and sites of enactment." (Shove et al., 2012: 15). The lives of the elements depend on the recruitment of carriers that can connect the elements to form a practice, and therefore it is crucial to examine potential carriers of tourism collaboration and those with the capability to promote such progress.

Practice bundles

As mentioned earlier, collaboration in regards to tourism development is arguably connected to multiple practices. This is what Shove et al. (2012: 84) refer to as being part of what they call *bundles* of practices. These are "loose-knit patterns based on co-location and coexistence" which retreats from the more sticky and integrated arrangements of *complexes* that have "co-dependent forms of sequence and synchronization". The developing figure of connections between practices has consequences for the respective practices of which bundles and complexes are constructed, for the elements which form those practices and for joint temporal rhythms.

If we look at developing bundles of tourism collaboration, other elements such as financial support, ability to hire, train, pay workers, the rhythm of practices could be vital for the future of the practices. The temporal rhythm is an essential dimension because practices vary and change, but are also highly path dependent. The efficient and effective sequencing of multiple practices, that condition each other in different ways is what determines the progression of the practices. Shove and co-workers' focus within social practice theory is often on shifting pro-environmental behaviour. They argue in their literature (Shove & Walker, 2014; Shove et al., 2012, 2015), that "without the requisite skills or access to materials, new pro-environmental social meanings will not

become 'sticky' and 'congeal' into 'bundles' of complimentary social practices that persist over time." (Stoddart et al., 2020: 628). This thesis aims to analyse the individual practices associated with the current circumstances of tourism collaboration, and the factors that could translate or withdraw tourism collaboration to bundles of social practices.

Emergence, persistence and disappearance of practices

Although there is a growth of tourism literature drawing from these theories, it has gained traction within sustainable tourism research as a barrier breaker from individualising consumer choice approaches to the subject (Verbeek & Mommaas, 2008; Luzecka, 2016). Furthermore, recent literature has used Shove et al.'s (2012) version in other tourism policy areas such as destination development (James et al., 2019) and beforementioned tourism collaboration (Stoddart et al., 2020). James et al. (2019: 110) concluded, without claiming that it is a general feature of destination development, that social practice theory could "identify both the gradual coming together of the practice bundle and its possible future unravelling", and they believe that "practice based analysis opens up new perspectives on the dynamics of destination development". In addition to this, Stoddart et al. (2020: 641-642) confirmed that "engaging with social practice theory provides insight into practices of network-building because it helps us identify collaboration gaps, understand why these gaps persist, and illuminate strategies for addressing them.". This tells us that social practice theory can potentially unfold problem areas within practices that reveals it's progress, which then provides insight into how one can impact the practice to move in a desired direction.

Initially Shove et al.'s (2012) motivation for the development of their social practice theory is that they claim that methods of practice can impact public policy, considering they could potentially be used to change behaviour, which resides in the development of practices. But an essential element to be able to do so is understanding their emergence, persistence and disappearance which existing theories were not able to facilitate. It is helpful to draw on social practice theory when analysing the dynamics of collaboration practices on the Faroe Islands, because it may show us an indication of why collaboration efforts are difficult to achieve if we learn to understand how they emerge and persist. Shove et al. (2012: 4) are tackling questions to develop and articulate "methods of understanding social order, stability and change in terms that are required and informed by theories of practice". If Visit Faroe Islands aspires to organise a more coordinated tourist industry with better

coordination and new regional collaboration, they can influence the future development of such, by understanding the dynamics of the collaboration practices.

Practices of collaboration in regards to tourism development

This thesis will, therefore, attempt to analyse collaboration bundles, or the lack thereof, on the Faroe Islands. By analysing collaboration as entities, the author views collaboration as a combination of different practices, including the links holding them together, *bundles* that in the end constitute the practices of collaboration. The ties holding them together are the three elements *materials, competences* and *meanings*, which need to be present for tourism collaboration to be successful, and most importantly, *carriers* to link them together. This thesis will, therefore, investigate if bundles of practices of collaboration in regards to tourism development are present, and the elements these are constructed from. We will explore to what extent the elements of meaning, material, competences, as well as carriers for tourism collaboration, are present.

Practices such as monthly meetings or collected marketing could be seen as part of the tourism collaboration bundle, and these are constructed of the elements. Taking monthly meetings as an example; if public tourism organisations within a region decided to meet every month to discuss tourism challenges in the region to apply for national funds to combat those challenges collaboratively. Those linked to the practices could find it meaningful to participate in monthly meetings because they believed that collectively they could transform their region to a more attractive destination. They could be able to do so because each municipality had a tourism representative, that had competences to evaluate and assess tourism challenges in their municipality and/or region. They would also need necessary materials such as a place to meet regularly, perhaps rules and regulations for the interest group and potentially a monthly payment from the municipality to pay for the activities. But to combine the already existing elements such as values, tourism representatives and financial capital, the practice of monthly meetings needs carriers to perform those practices. E.g. if one municipality refuses to pay for the interest group, the whole practice might collapse. This could be an example of a tourism collaboration practice, that this thesis will discover.

Methodology

The following analysis is based on an explorative study of the Faroe Islands with methodological reflections from methodology research and social practice research. The thesis will apply a critical realism approach to the problem by using a mixed method using a survey and semi-structured interviews (Morgan, 2007; Jonas et al., 2017; Truong et al., 2019). While this thesis was written, the corona pandemic was going on, which naturally created methodological complications, that needed to be addressed. Originally it was estimated that a general survey, supplemented with a focus group, including different stakeholders, responding to survey data and discussing the findings, would create nuanced data. But the recommendations from the Faroese Parliament prevented this. Although it could be feasible to have online focus groups, it would be challenging to manage who is speaking, and technical difficulties are problematic with a larger number of participants. I, therefore, chose to do a survey supplemented by semi-structured interviews, where survey results also were discussed. The methodological reflections will be reviewed and presented in the following section.

Mixed-methods approach

Within methodological reflections on practice-oriented theories, there have been several discussions about the alleged 'golden standard' method for analysing social practice theories. This has traditionally been argued to be the observational methods, and these have in the past been seen as more valid than, e.g. quantitative methods (Halkier, 2017: Littig & Leitner, 2017). This is argued because many scholars derive from the notion that the "subjects strictly speaking, do not know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know" (Bourdieu, 1972 [1977]: 79). But Littig and Leitner (2017) argue that the use of methods depends on the objective of the research, and they state that "Practice oriented research involves not only the study of the practices in the respective research object but also a reflection on the practices". They used a quantitative survey to generate time related data, and qualitative interviews then supported the interpretation of that data. The different methods were also explicitly used to answer different kinds of questions and followed the principle of appropriateness to the object of the study. They use the argument of Denzin (2012: p. 82)

> Objective reality can never be captured. We only know a thing through representations.
> (…) The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials,

> perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood as a strategy that adds
> rigor, breadth complexity, richness, and depth to an inquiry

Also, sociologist Halkier (2017) argues against the traditional golden standard of practice theoretical approach and is concerned of the "gold standard thinking" within practice research by it being simplifying, and Halkier encourages these thoughts to retire. Halkier (2017: 202) suggests a mix of methods, at least, to aim at "getting to know the more tacit, embodied and material elements as well as the more explicit, discursive and conversational ones". In regards to practice theoretical inspired empirical studies, her objections are mainly against the predominance of interview methods in data production, and the lack of interpretation of embodied and tacit dimensions of everyday practices (Halkier, 2017). Halkier (2017) has experiences with collecting empirical data containing these dimensions in the context of everyday food practising where she has *observed while interviewing*, had *kitchen tours*, *auto photography*, *social network focus groups* etc. As the research question of this thesis focuses on bundles of collaborative practices, a social network focus group would be beneficial for this research. An adjustment had to be made, and therefore instead I displayed relevant answers from the open-ended questions in the survey to the interview participants, to create a discussion of the topics, and through this acquired more nuanced data. The abovementioned research tells us that recent methodological practice literature encourages mixed methods, by combining quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve a richer and deeper understanding of the objective, which will, therefore, be used in this thesis.

Approaches

According to Truong et al. (2019), the increase of scholarly attention to the methodological aspects of tourism research reflects an increase of maturity and sophistication within the tourism field. Research by Riley and Love (2000), who analysed qualitative versus quantitative articles within tourism journals, states that positivistic approaches were the predominant orientation of scholars up until 1996. Many disciplines, including tourism have heavily criticised the positivistic approach. Franklin and Crang (2001: 5) advocate instead for an interpretive approach to tourism studies. They argue that because of positivism, tourism research had become "stale, tired, repetitive and lifeless" lacking "the tools necessary to analyse and theorise the complex cultural and social processes that have unfolded". According to them, interpretivism provides new dimensions to the tourism knowledge framework through discursive, reflective and reflexive approaches to the problems.

Recent research has also challenged the interpretive approach. Observations of the methods increased the academic attention on the combination of the two methods, which led to the mixed-method approach. Truong et al. (2019) have analysed journals using mixed-method approaches from 1998 until 2019 and found that it has become more prevalent in many disciplines. Truong and colleagues' research found that the arguments in favour of mixed methods approaches can be compiled down to five purposes which are *Triangulation*, *Complementarity*, *Development*, *Initiation* and *Expansion* (Truong et al., 2019). The goal for using the mixed method for this thesis is three folded. First, it is developmental because I will partially use the survey data to design the semi-structured interviews. Also, it is for complementarity purposes, as the face to face interviews will supplement the survey. Ultimately the goal of a mixed method approach is also in regards to expansion as it captures a more holistic illustration of the situation.

Paradigms

Some consider this approach as a third research paradigm or a methodological movement. It is often combined with the pragmatic approach, which instead of focusing on the methods, attaches significance on the research question. According to Morgan (2007), it is believed that focusing on *abductive*, *intersubjective* and *transferable* aspects of a research question captures the duality, which is when researchers have to work back and forth between various frames of reference. It is an integrated methodology, and the strength of a pragmatic approach is its "emphasis on the connection between epistemological concerns about the nature of the knowledge that we produce and technical concerns about the methods that we use to generate that knowledge" (Morgan, 2007:73). With an intersubjective approach, e.g., it is possible to assert "both that there is a single 'real world' and that all individuals have their own unique interpretations of that world" (Morgan, 2007: 72). It is acknowledged that there is a 'real' objective answer to the research question. Still, the individuals' subjective perspective of the problem is also valid since their interpretations of the problem are 'real' to them.

Morgan (2007) challenges the traditional paradigms such as realism and constructivism and argues that these are narrow approaches with anomalies, e.g. "During the actual design, collection, and analysis of data, however, it is impossible to operate in either an exclusively theory- or data-driven fashion" (Morgan, 2007: 70-71). He identifies the traditional paradigms as being static, and not

allowing an "emphasis on the actual interactions that humans use to negotiate these issues" (Morgan, 2007: 67).

In contrast, Maxwell and Mittapalli (2010: 3) argue against the complete avoidance of paradigmatic assumptions such as the influence of ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions. Although they agree that "research practices are not determined by, or dependent on, philosophical paradigms" and that "A research strategy or method is not necessarily linked to a single philosophical stance, and any approach may be informed by one or more of a number of paradigms". They also claim that the assumptions function as a researchers' lens for viewing the world, revealing and generating insights which would otherwise be challenging to discover. They, therefore, believe the avoidance of such philosophical assumptions is counterproductive. Instead, they encourage the use of critical realism and claim it to be compatible as a philosophy to the mixed method. Maxwell and Mittapalli (2010: 15) argue that a valuable perspective from critical realism is that although multiple realities are rejected:

> in the sense of independent and incommensurable *worlds* in which different individuals or societies live, it is quite compatible with the idea that there are different valid *perspectives* on the world. However, it holds that these perspectives, as held by the people we study as well as ourselves, are *part of* the world that we want to understand, and that our understanding of these perspectives can be more or less correct.

This will be the sort of realism that I will adopt, and that will define the point of departure of this thesis. Both social practice theory and empirical data from participants will be used when doing the observation of the research question, to generate a conclusion. This research will aim at finding specific results about the research question, e.g. mapping the range of collaborative practices and types on the Faroe Islands, the rhythm of collaborative practices etc. but also gain knowledge that can be transferred to other circumstances. It is believed that there might be a reality. However, the survey participants' and the interviewee's perceptions and interpretations of that reality is just as valid information. Ultimatly, their perceptions and interpretations is the reality which the collaborative practices are based on. The ontology, therefore, is realism, and the epistemological assumption is interpretivism.

Online survey

With the critical realism approach, it was found helpful to use a quantitative method in the form of a survey to achieve a general idea of the subject and 'statistical' data. The survey was also integrated with qualitative questions. The results were later used in the semi-structured interviews to create discussion regarding collaboration challenges and benefits. A survey was also convenient to acquire an impression of collaborative bundles, and determine interest areas for the qualitative data collection. But the use of open questions also generated qualitative data to some degree.

The survey focused on how collaboration is practised between public and private tourism stakeholders on the Faroe Islands through a quantitative analysis focusing on collaboration practices between them. The reason for focusing on these collaboration practices is because it is the public sector that typically has the power of policymaking, and is supposed to act as a coordinator of tourism collaboration practices. Visit Faroe Islands has been focusing on this in their work towards a more coordinated tourism sector, and new regional collaborative efforts. The goal was to examine links between particular collaborative practice bundles between the stakeholders to gain a broad perspective of the *carriers* of collaborative efforts along with the *elements* present.

Survey design

For the first stage of this study, it generally focuses on all regions on the Faroe Islands with an online survey. After that a zoomed in perspective focuses on a specific region on the Faroe Islands providing more detailed data. The fact that the Faroe Islands are estimated to be a compact destination could be beneficial as a case study because the number of stakeholders is smaller. Therefore, the stakeholders are more accessible and a higher sampling percentage obtainable.

For the survey design, a design was chosen to portrait the tourism industries' practices in tourism development and collaboration. With social practice theory by Shove et al. (2012) in mind, the objectives for the survey was to

1. Identify public and private tourism stakeholders
2. Identify their participation/contribution to tourism development
3. Determine the extent of collaboration practices amongst them.

Survey questions focused on the beforementioned objectives of the study (see survey results in Appendix 1). The survey was first tested on three stakeholders in the tourism industry on the Faroe

Islands, where feedback, reflection and suggestions for elaborations of questions were performed. The testing participants included a tourist guide, a marketing manager and an employee of a tourist information centre. The last participant found the questions to be clear and meaningful, and it was decided to launch the survey from the 23rd of March until the first scheduled interview on the 1st of April.

The first set of questions examined the participants' organisation and location, and they self-categorised their organisation. After that their levels of participation in tourism development/planning and challenges that their organisation has faced within tourism development. Lastly, the third section of questions regarded collaboration and how they collaborated with different stakeholders. The questions asked were, e.g. "How active is the organisation you represent in tourism development, development and/or initiator?", "How often do individuals/organisations/groups work together for tourism development where your organisation is located?", "Mention one or more examples of challenges, that the organisation that you represent has had regarding tourism development?", "If your organisation is private, how often do you collaborate with public organisations or if your organisation Is public, how often do you collaborate with private organisations?". Answer categories were structured using Likert-type scales ranging from Never/unnecessary/impossible, sometimes/somewhat important/difficult, often/important/easy, always/very important/very easy, and I'm not sure. The survey also included open questions for participants to reflect and introduce new ideas and topics to the subject that are unique to their organisation.

Survey sample

The eligibility criteria for the respondents was that the respondents should either be a public or private tourism stakeholder. They should work within incoming tourism, e.g. not travel agencies targeting Faroese people for international trips such as cruise, charter etc. because they don't participate in tourism development locally. Lastly, they have some kind of active interest concerning tourism development activities, e.g. A waiter or housekeeper at a hotel wouldn't be eligible, because they are not directly involved in tourism development. The sampling frame included stakeholders ranging in roles in the tourism sector, including accommodation, public tourism organisations, tourist information centres, tourist agencies, art- or cultural organisations, food

services, municipalities, landowners, tourist guides, tourism advisors, various tour operators, tourism funds, transport services, airport managers and entrepreneurs.

To achieve an as high response rate as possible for the survey, I studied the size of the survey sample thoroughly. In 2019 it was estimated that there are around 715 FTEs within the incoming tourism industry on the Faroe Islands. Still, it is difficult to define precisely how many of these are directly involved or have an active interest in tourism development. It was estimated that one from each tourism-related organisation and tourism operator is sufficient to represent the sampling frame. I wanted to sample as many stakeholders a possible, and the sampling frame was created using three strategies. First, a web search for tourism operators and organisations was conducted. Second, a revision of an outline of Faroese tourism operators and tourism-related organisations made by the Faroese Tourist Board in 2016, was undertaken. Third, a circulation between community partners and colleagues assisted with feedback of suggestions to add to the sample frame. The final sampling frame is 194 tourism operators and tourism-related organisations. However, this did not include smaller independent freelancers who work as suppliers through tour operators because they are challenging to distinguish.

The smaller independent freelancers in the tourism business offering guided tours and home dining, are challenging to detect because they work through tour operators or other online tourism platforms. A platform was found useful to sort some of these out, and include as many representatives as possible. There is a private Facebook group created by Visit Faroe Islands for people working within the Faroese tourism industry. The description of the group is:

> This group is for everyone that works in and for development of tourism in the Faroe Islands. This closed Fb-group's purpose is to create a platform where we all can communicate freely, share ideas and thoughts, and stimulate the development of collaboration amongst us and in that way also develop tourism together.

There are 405 members, which is a substantial amount, and the group description suits the characteristics of the eligibility criteria. There is an overlap between the Facebook group and the organisations found manually. By circulating the survey within this group, was an efficient way to focus the questionnaire on only those stakeholders with the most accurate information, and also distributing it to the independent tourism stakeholders. The sampling frame is tourism operators

and tourism-related organisations. However, the Facebook group also includes some staff members who are not directly involved in tourism development, the members of this group with form the base of the sample frame. But this also means that there is somewhat of an uncertainty of the overall sample frame.

By sending an e-mail to each tourism operator and tourism related organisations, and distributing it to the Facebook group, I managed to receive 74 responses. Out of the estimated sample frame of 405 8,3% completed the survey, 9,6% partially completed the survey, which means that 18% of the sample frame participated in the survey to some degree. The respondents' organisations are dispersed all over the country, but not surprisingly, 50% of them were operating within the capitol area, and 21% are engaged in tourism nationally. The data collected from the survey is very descriptive and is therefore not for hypothesis testing, but as inspiration to interview discussions, and creating statistical data on collaborative practices on the Faroe Islands.

Semi-structured interviews

After the collection of the survey data, semi-structured interviews were conducted in a particular region, where a more complex and context-bound treatment of the research question was performed. The research question is based on the ideas that Visit Faroe Islands suggests that there should be regional collaborations within the tourism sector. Still, previous challenges towards coordination of such collaborations indicates, that there are collaboration gaps between the local tourism sector. Tourism collaboration can only occur if there are *carriers* of the practice. The practice of collaboration as an entity can be seen as an accumulation of practices, also known as a bundle. The empirical analysis will primarily focus on the bundle of practices and the carriers associated with the practices of collaboration; these could be practices of communication, meetings, coordination etc. which should be connected to the different *elements.* The subjects that were discussed in the interviews were inspired by the literature review, social practice theory, and the survey data collected before the interviews. The semi-structured interviews contributed to a more complete story related to my research focus, as opposed to the survey that yielded a more general context.

Interview design

An examination of a particular region 'Norðoy' analyses especially the regional tourism collaboration. The reason for choosing this specific region is partially because of its diversity. With six islands, it has the highest number of islands connected to a region which makes it an interesting region for tourists to visit. By neither having the lowest or highest number of municipalities in the region, it has an average amount of municipalities connected to it, making it easier to compare with other regions. This will be discussed further in the limitation section.

The interview design was structured into segments inspired by Galetta (2013: 24) "moving from open-ended questions toward more theoretically driven questions as the interview progresses". These are the benefits of the semi-structured interview because the researcher can concentrate on lived experiences while also focusing on theoretically guided concepts. I also used the survey data as an instrument in the interviews for participants to reflect on collaborative practices and discuss from their perspective, to achieve a more nuanced angle on the subject.

Interview sample

Seven Interviews were done with both public and private tourism operators and tourism related organisations who will be introduced later in the following section. These included representatives of municipalities within the region (The TIC), non-profit organisations as well as private tourism stakeholders. These participants had also received the questionnaire. The criteria for the participants was generally the same as for the survey; it had to be a tourism operator or tourism related organisation who had also received the survey. The participants had to have some kind of administrative role in the organisation because they need to have an interest in the organisations' and tourism development. Unlike the survey sample, the interview participants had to be based within the region of 'Norðoyggjar'. I didn't decide beforehand how many participants to interview. Though, I used the method formulated by Galletta (2013: 33) and recruited participants until I felt that the interview data no longer was producing new thematic patterns and sufficient data was deemed to be collected. In other words, to the saturation point.

Ethical considerations

Because of the pandemic, the first interview conducted was through skype, which was on the 1st of April. Skype is a free communication service widely known in Nordic countries, including the Faroe Islands, and it was a novel interview method to collect some of the qualitative data. By using web

cameras, the interaction was comparable to the regular interviews, showing social and nonverbal cues. Ethical issues are similar to face-to-face interviews. The participant gave formal consent and was aware of the audio recording of the conversation. A few days later, the government announced further opening of society, since no one had been infected for two weeks, and cases from the last month had all been infected outside country borders. This meant that I was able to conduct the following interviews face-to-face. The interviewees were informed of the purpose of the study, and that the recording, would be deleted after finalisation of the thesis. The participants agreed to be public, although their names won't be mentioned in the thesis, instead the name of their occupation and their role within tourism.

These interviews were conducted at the interviewee's location, either in their home or at their working place. The data was stored in a private laptop offline and wasn't shared with others in the process. The interviews were transcribed and thematically coded into themes that directly addressed the research question.

There were some ethical considerations that I had to be mindful and reflexive of in the process of the interviews. Reflecting on my past involvement in the tourism industry on the Faroe Islands, I am, to some degree, an insider. I believe it to be an advantage, because I am knowledgeable of the research context, and can relate to many of the interviewees, but I also had to be mindful of researcher bias. By examining a region which I am not highly familiar with, and have limited connections to, meant that the participants potentially would go into more detail, because they wouldn't expect me to be knowledgeable of the circumstances in their area.

Interview participants

Manager of Tourist Information Centre Visit Norðoy

> The TIC is a self-governing institution, with a board and a manager. The current manager of the local TIC since October 2019 (8 months) has a Bachelors degree in Design. According to the manager, the TIC hasn't operated optimally for the past years, because of multiple manager replacements. Therefore a lot of her work goes towards organising the organisation. Visit Noröy has been reorganised in 2020, and is now funded by all municipalities in the region that pay a subscription fee per citizen. The TIC can provide a service for the municipalities, in the form of organising local events, although the individual

municipality requesting the service has to pay expenses. According to the manager, the TIC has to promote and inform about available tourism offers and activities in the area. Another offer they have for tourism actors in the area is to function as a form of tourist agent, that sells their products for a commission fee, both regarding summerhouse rentals and selling tours.

Chairman of Visit Norðoy, manager of Jarðir (Landowners tourism development association), manager of the old sail house association in Klaksvík and farmer and landowner in Fugloy offering tourism experiences

It is common on the Faroe Islands to have many different positions within a working field, which is the case for this interviewee who represents several organisations and tourism operations and has been active within the tourism industry for many years. The participant has been the chairman at Visit Norðoy since May 2019. He is managing director of the landowner's and farmers organisation Jarðir. Jarðir was established in 2019, to primarily represent landowners and farmers on the Faroe Islands in regards to tourism development. Furthermore, he manages the old sail house in Klaksvík, which functions as an art gallery that receives several tourists each year, both in groups and individual. Lastly, he is also a farmer on Fugloy, managing the 'Uppistovugarður' farm, that functions both as a sheep farm and tourism attraction, where he offers guided tours, and other experiences.

Farmer, blacksmith, landowner and tourist guide in Kallsoy

The farmer owns the outfield containing one of the biggest tourist attractions on the Faroe Islands; Kallurin. For around the past ten years, he has combined his work as a farmer, smith and landowner with tourist activities. He has provided guided tours in the outfield and the smithy, as well as coordinating other tourism projects on the island.

Chairman of Visit Kallsoy (tourism interest group for the island Kallsoy)

Visit Kallsoy is a limited liability company. The chairman has relations to the island and was a part of the arrangement of the statue of the "selkie" in the village of Mikladalur, which has become a popular tourist attraction. The company's mission statement is to establish better circumstances for actors on the island to carry out tourism activities and assist those who need guidance.

Farmer, landowner and tourist guide in Viðareiði

> Owns the outfield to one of the highest promontories in the world; *Enniberg* cliff on the island of Viðoy. He keeps sheep and dairy cattle and supplements his income by providing guided tours to *Enniberg,* which he has offered for around 20 years. He has ambitions to develop the tourism business further.

Farmers, landowners and café owners in Svínoy

> This married couple has for the past three years managed a café and occasionally home dining and guided tours during the summer months in the remote island of Svínoy as the only tourism related offer on the island. The remainder of the year the family lives in the city of Klaksvík while studying and working in the capitol.

Owner of Extreme Faroe Islands

> The organisation has since 2016 offered adventure tours such as climbing, rappelling, hiking and RIB tours, especially in the Norðoyggjar area. The owner lives abroad and therefore, only works with tourism related business in the summer months.

Limitations

A significant limitation to this thesis is the current corona pandemic which not only obscures methodological prospects, but the empirical data is also affected by the current time of adversity for most tourism stakeholders. The current circumstances of uncertainty mean that we don't know how the corona pandemic will alter the tourism industry in the future, and what the level of usefulness of the results of this study will be. However, unpredictability is part of the industry, and one could argue that collaborative efforts towards tourism development are most critical in the time of crisis. Another potential limitation is the relatively small survey sample size; however, these are partially supported by the semi-structured interviews. Although the case area is small, and perhaps not relevant and applicable for more common characteristic destinations studied within tourism research, it is estimated as being valuable to more unique destinations such as small-scale-, cold water- and island destinations. There is less research conducted in these types of destinations, that often face different challenges than other more conventional destinations, and this study will, therefore, contribute to this research.

Norðoy will be a snapshot of the circumstances regarding tourism development collaborations and regional collaborations in the Faroe Islands, and function as a conception of the current situation. The population of the region was on 1st January 2020 6.206 inhabitants, which is the closest to the average number of inhabitants of the regions (Hagstova.fo, 2020). This means that their available potential human resources are around average compared to other areas, which is important to facilitate tourism initiatives. The number of municipalities in the regions range from two to seven. Therefore there is around an average number of municipalities connected to the region of Norðoy. The six municipalities are Klaksvík, Húsa, Kunoy, Hvannasund, Viðareiði and Fugloy. This has a significance, because it is expected for the municipalities to collaborate within tourism development, and the number of municipalities that need to collaborate may affect the outcome of the prosperity. There is a popular tourist attraction 'Kallurin' connected to the region, and therefore tourism development is relevant for the region since around 20.000-30.000 tourists visit Kallsoy yearly (Ssl.fo, 2019). The number of tourists form the basis for tourism development in the region, and could potentially trickle to the other locations in the region. Because of these factors, it was estimated to be the most capable region to represent the problem formulation of this thesis. Although it is important to have in mind that it will not describe the tourism collaboration circumstances in the country entirely, it will be considered as an illustration of some of the current conditions and challenges that can be addressed and reflected upon.

Characteristics of the survey sample

The survey targeted the Faroese tourism industry, which resulted in 15 responses from public stakeholders and 57 from private stakeholders. I received most responses from tourist guides, who counted 16 of the responses, while the least represented were municipalities with a single response. There were also other organisations not included in the choices; these were *event management (1), transportation (2), relief fund (1), tour operators (6), museum (1), airport (1), bike service (1) and entrepreneurs (1).*
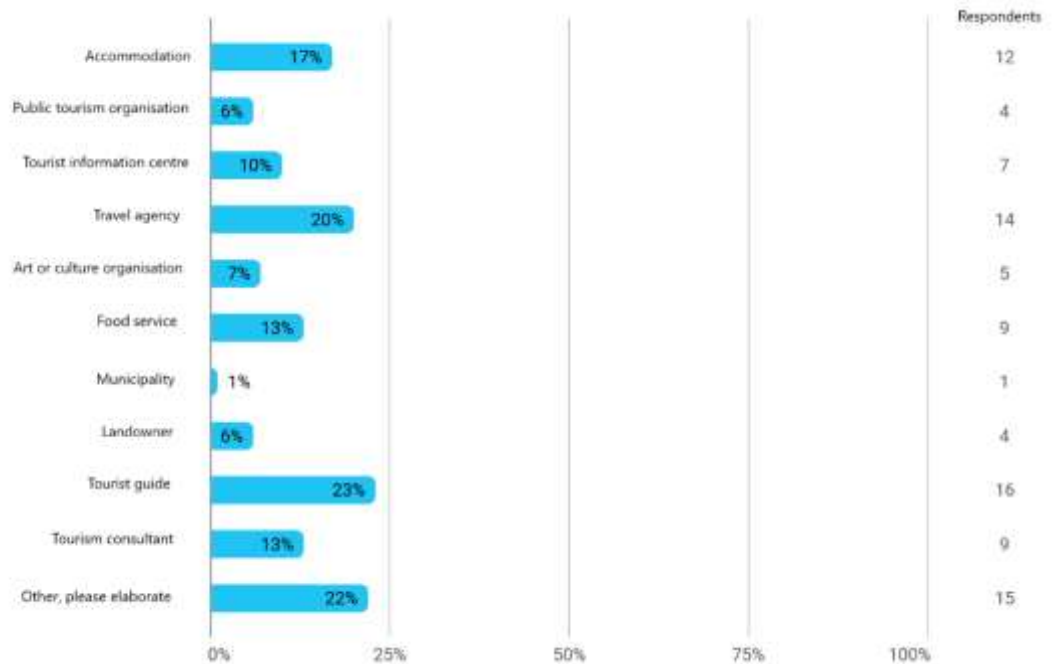
Figure 5 How would you preferably classify the organisation you work for?

The locations of the organisations were mainly in the capital area, including 33 of the responses, although all regions were represented in the survey, the second most represented was nationally located organisations with 13 respondents. Through an open-ended question, they described how they would classify the destination that they work within, and the results were very diversified. To show different methods to organise destinations, I used examples from Iceland (Suður Ísland, Reykjanes, Eystur Ísland, Vestfirðir, Reykjavík, Vestur Ísland and Norður Ísland) and Greenland (The National Park, North Greenland, Destination Arctic Circle, East Greenland, Capital Region, South Greenland) to explain it. Although many of them used the traditional regions, a lot of respondents believed that the Faroe Islands are too small for regions, and should be considered as one single destination. In contrast, seven respondents divided some of the traditional regions and added more. Another popular approach was using cardinal direction combined with central/capitol area such as south, east, north, west and central Faroe Islands. Lastly, nine respondents used other geographically defined approaches such as outlying islands and fiords.
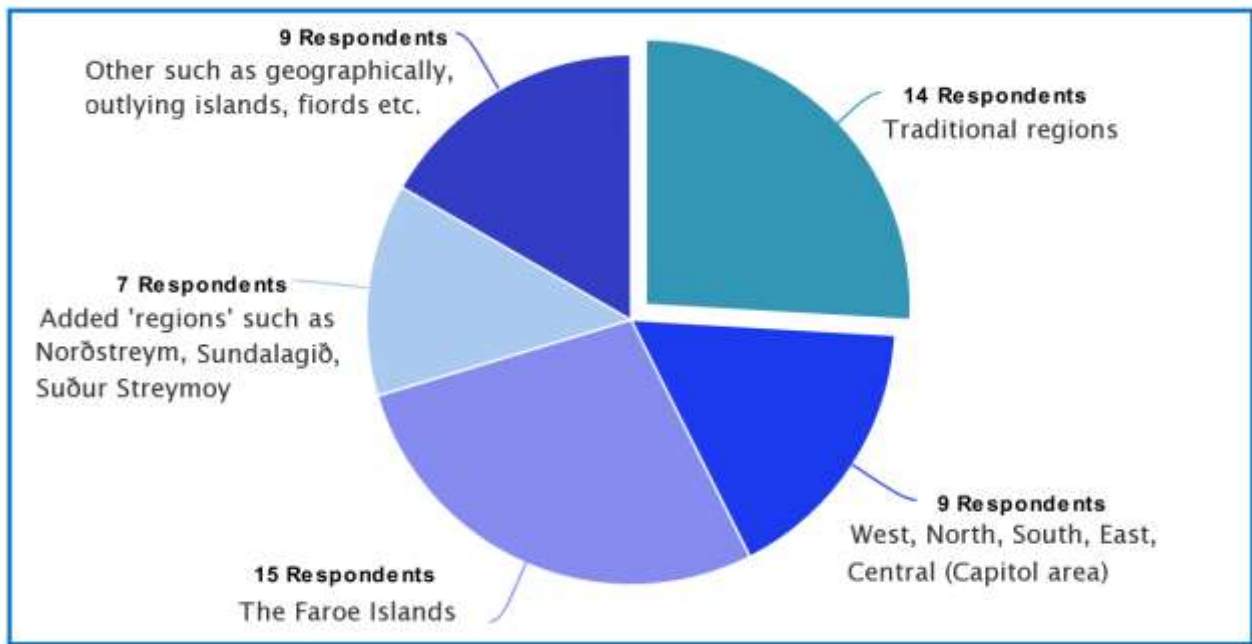
Figure 6 On the Faroe Islands, it is different how people classify destinations, e.g. Eysturoy, Norðoyggjar, capitol area etc. How would you classify the destinations that the organisation you represent is located within on the Faroe Islands?

Collaboration bundles in regards to tourism development
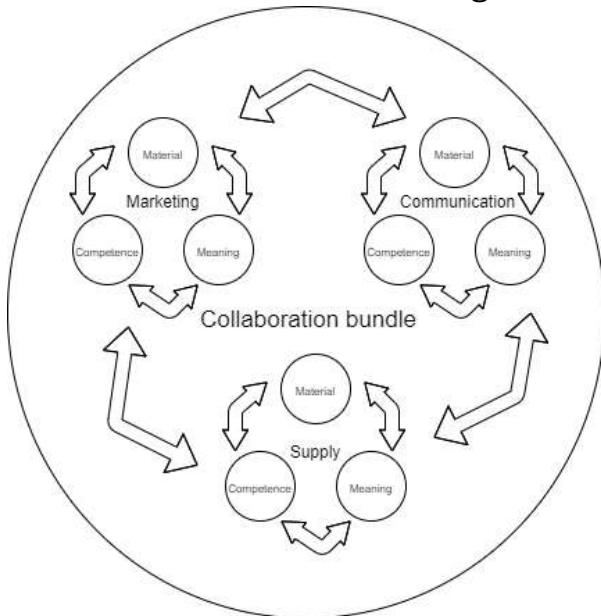
Figure 7 Example of a collaboration bundle.

According to Shove et al. (2012), the key elements to congeal new social practices are; meaning, material and competences together with a sufficient number of carriers of the practice. These are the dynamic aspects that construct novelty and persistence of the social practice and are, therefore, the foundation of collaborative *bundles* which are made up by multiple practices (Shove et al., 2012). Collaboration is created by linking two or more practices together.

By investigating how tourism collaboration regarding tourism development on the Faroe Islands is practised, I can determine if there are gaps within these elements. This information will potentially reveal tangible areas for the industry to work on if they wish to improve the collaborative efforts

towards tourism development on the Faroe Islands. The following analysis will investigate the extent of the presence of the three key elements in the practices, as well as carriers, frequency and rhythm of tourism collaboration bundles, which will be followed by a discussion of the gaps in regards to collaboration within tourism development. Collaboration regarding tourism development is a bundle of practices which also relates to destination development explained by James and Halkier (2019: 102) as "a bundle of practices that include promoting and creating experiences as well as coordinating stakeholders and generating knowledge.".

An example of a collaborative bundle in regards to tourism development can be examined in Norðoy. The farmer in Kallsoy practices guiding. He has competences in the form of spare time in the summer months as the sheep take care of themselves during the summer. He has material in that he owns the land which contains a popular tourist attraction *Kallurin*. He also has competencies such as knowledge of how to get to the attraction, and he can speak English. He enjoys guiding people and would like to have another source of income to support his farming; therefore, he associates guiding as support. But the farmer isn't skilled in marketing, so travel agencies help him get customers. The travel agencies need to have products to sell; therefore, marketing for the farmer is meaningful for them to gain profit. They have marketing skills and materials in the form of computers and telephones through which they can contact the farmer. These practices constitute of what Schatzki (2017) identified as a *bundle* of practices that are related to one another characterised by "common actions, common organisational elements, or common material entities; chains of action; common motivating events" (Schatzki, 2017: 134).

The analysis will begin by exploring how both the survey participants and interviewees' views are about the meaning of collaboration followed by an evaluation of the time element of the practices, and lastly a study of the competences and material. The analysis of these elements and factors will be the foundation of an assessment of the collaboration gaps. The focus will primarily be on collaborative bundles between public and private stakeholders, and therefore occasionally a comparison will be made between their responses, and their responses will be divided. The reason for separating the two in some cases is that public and private stakeholders might have different objectives for collaborative bundles, because of their various roles in society, which the division also detects.

The analysis aims at answering the following research question: How is collaboration practised between public and private tourism stakeholders in regards to tourism development and why are tourism collaborations within tourism development challenging to achieve on the Faroe Islands?

Meanings of collaboration

The meanings of practice extend, erode, and merge over time as a result of processes of association; typically, the meanings of practices change slowly over time and are relative and subjective. Practices are often used to signal an individual's position, and "By participating in some practices but not others, individuals locate themselves within society and in so doing simultaneously reproduce specific schemes and structures of meaning and order" (Shove et al., 2012: 54). Thus, the meaning of a practice is challenging to control and change deliberately. They may change and move quickly, as explained by Shove et al., (2012: 61), they "move, mutate and take each other's place but are never preserved intact". The element of meaning is, therefore, one of the most delicate factors to practices because "associations can be made, broken and appropriated really quickly" (Shove et al., 2012: 61). E.g. A single bad or good experience with collaboration could potentially quickly change the meaning of collaboration for some stakeholders to which they would associate the practices. In the following section, we will present how collaboration was perceived in regards to tourism development, and what value was associated with the practices.
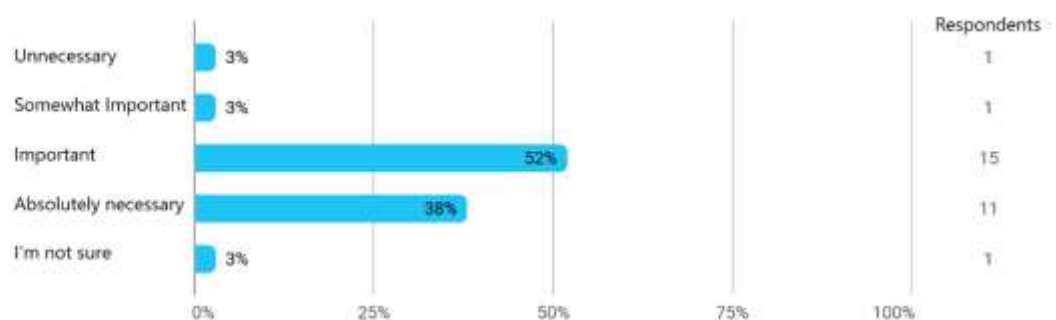
Figure 8 Private stakeholders: How important is collaboration between stakeholders in tourism to experience progress in tourism development?

Generally, the survey participants interpreted collaboration in regards to tourism development as important. All of the public stakeholders interpreted collaboration as absolutely necessary to have progress in regards to tourism development, while the private stakeholders' responses varied. However, 26 out of 29 regarded it as either 'important' or 'absolutely necessary'. Though most participants embrace the meaning of collaboration, there was only one private stakeholder that

didn't consider it as a valuable practice. The survey participants associated the meaning of collaboration with synergy, 'win-win' situations and efficiency. It is interesting to explore what the collaborative bundles consist of and how the participants define collaboration.

Interviewees articulated ambitions to collaborate in regards to tourism development. The interviews demonstrated that these participants also regarded tourism collaboration as crucial because typically, positive meanings are invested in collaboration. These meanings will be presented in this section.

The interest group *Visit Kallsoy* expressed collaboration as "the only way forward on Kallsoy, that is collaboration, and that is especially a vision for Visit Kallsoy", generally the stakeholders on Kallsoy appear to collaborate effectively in regards to tourism development. The farmer on Kallsoy mentioned that collaboration contributed to a lot more and that a lot of time was saved, and he believes that if someone chooses to avoid collaboration, it will affect them negatively in the long run. The stakeholders on Kallsoy have positive experiences associated with the meaning of collaboration, which is why they regard it highly. Collaboration practices between the local people on Kallsoy, Visit Kallsoy and other organisations has resulted in success of acquiring a citizen line at the harbour, increased visitor numbers, installation of a tourist attraction (statue), updated bus timetable and they have additional plans for future tourism development projects on the island.

On the island of Viðoy, the farmer would appreciate a lot more collaboration which he claims to be absent. For him, collaboration is associated with development. The lack of collaboration in the village is therefore associated with the lack of tourism development. He also associates security with collaboration, both in regards to tourist's safety and his own. He is cautious in regards to tourism activities and development because he lacks the safety from collaboration.

For the chairman of Visit Kallsoy, who also is a farmer in Fugloy and manager of the association for landowners on the Faroe Islands, collaboration is associated with loyalty, and strength. In the perspective of the landowner's association, he believes that together they are more eligible to communicate with authorities. Furthermore, he associates collaboration with stability and alleviation "plus it can generate more volume, customers, draught so you can generate more money to make more investments, collaboration is, therefore, alfa omega on all areas". According to the observations, collaboration is associated with many positive situations and have gained the

meanings of synergy, win-win situations, efficiency, security, development, loyalty, strength, stability and alleviation.

Essence of collaboration

To examine the specific practices connected to the collaboration bundles, I asked participants of the survey an open-ended question about, what collaborations with other organisations are essentially about. The responses were then grouped thematically into eight themes; *marketing, sales, coordination, sharing of resources, product development, supply, lobbying* and *service improvement*, according to the received responses. These themes are a simplifying process to group the 35 answers that reflect the meaning of collaboration practices for the survey respondents. E.g. for the *lobbying* theme, responses such as "They (collaborations) concern about sending joint complaints to VFI and politicians regarding the unbearable conditions we work under." And "In our case, the main aim is to serve stakeholders – and to work towards improving conditions for them to carry out tourism. We, therefore, collaborate with different actors to reach the relevant objectives – and cohere with several actors to combat these challenges.", were grouped. Under the *product development* theme, responses such as "To get a more 'complete picture'. Together with others, the whole product is stronger.", and "Fishing and home dining. We offer tourists with fishing trips, and someone else takes over afterwards and offers an at home dining experience, where the fish that tourists have caught themselves is prepared", were grouped together.
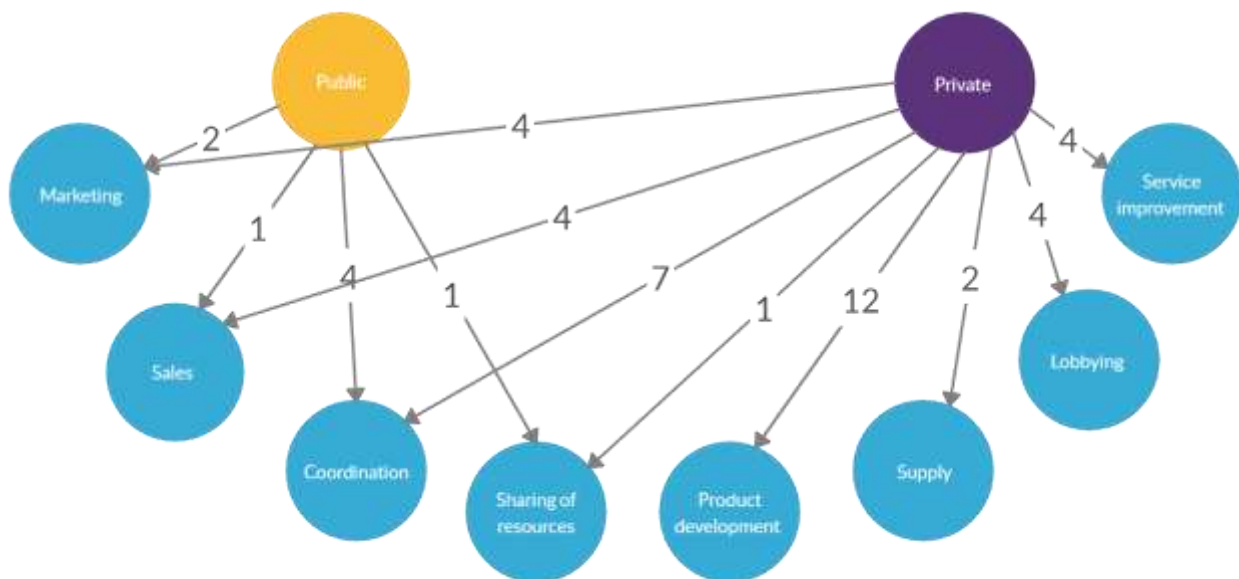

Figure 9 "If the organisation collaborates with others, what do these collaborations essentially concern about?" Private and public responses compared

The responses mapped onto the diagram in figure 9, are divided by public and private organisations' answers to the question. Although there was a low response rate from the public stakeholders, there is a tendency for public stakeholders' collaborative practices to regard marketing, sales, coordination and sharing of resources. An example of the responses from public stakeholders are to "Better the knowledge foundation in the working field". In general most responses focused on coordination such as "Another example is that the area doesn't have a 'trade/shop association', but the Tourist Information Centre has taken the responsibility to market shopping events and supply with marketing material etc. for a small price". If we look at these tendencies, the aim for public stakeholders seems to be to assist the community and enhance stakeholders' conditions to carry out tourism activities, which is also the case for the interviews.

The meaning of collaboration for many public stakeholders is that it provides insight, coordination and structure to the area. They are essentially attempting to link the practices together, creating collaboration bundles. Thus, when private stakeholders participate in collaborative bundles with public stakeholders, they fulfil these aims, and both public and private stakeholders can, therefore, reach their goals, although they are different goals. The private sector has a broader range of interests concerning collaboration, and the public sectors' interests are to accommodate the components that the private sectors need to be able to develop tourism. If we look at figure 9, the survey responses from the private stakeholders regarding the meanings of collaboration are mostly focused on profit, and improvement of products and services.

On the island of Svínoy, the farmer couple have an interest in collaborating with other stakeholders; they associate the meaning of collaboration practices with the sense of safety. They believe it would provide them with a more significant safety knowing that someone skilful was marketing their area. Despite that, they are also comfortable with how their business works momently without collaboration because it is manageable, despite not being very profitable. The reason for this is that they also have their daily jobs to take care of. Although they have ambitions to develop tourism further on Svínoy, they are taking gradual steps towards that direction, and with only limited collaboration, because it demands resources to collaborate. The couple doesn't quite understand the meaning of the TIC "Sometimes I wonder what the actual purpose of the TIC is, couldn't they be better at telling us about their purpose? Is it to increase visitor numbers or development?". But they would like to collaborate in regards to marketing the island, E.g. the couple doesn't believe it is their

own job alone to market the island although it sometimes seems like it for them, they think it should be done in collaboration with either the municipality, TIC's, VFI. However, the couple hasn't experienced any support from these organisations. Albeit, they also highlight that they have made minimal effort themselves to initiate collaboration. They find collaboration as meaningful, but other missing elements refrain them from participating in collaborative practices.

The results from the interviews indicate that there is some sort of collaboration in the region and that stakeholders associate collaboration in regards to safety, loyalty, development, stability and profitability. It is mostly full-time tourism stakeholders that carry out collaboration, while seasonal stakeholders find collaboration in regards to tourism development as a challenge. Most tourism stakeholders on the Faroe Islands only work seasonally with tourism, and the interviewees commented that this is because it is too risky to commit to tourism fully. Most of them aspire to work full-time in the tourism industry, but at the moment, they need to supplement their income.

Collaboration reasons

When survey participants reflected on the reasons for their participation in collaborative practices, the public and private stakeholders' reasons were similar. As shown in figures 10 and 11, the respondents were provided with different themes which could be reasons for them to collaborate. The purpose of this question was not necessarily to understand specifically the reasons, because the multiple choices presumably creates a bias amongst the answers. Instead, the objective is to examine similarities and differences amongst participants, and understand if there is a collective or a deviation of meaning between amongst participants.
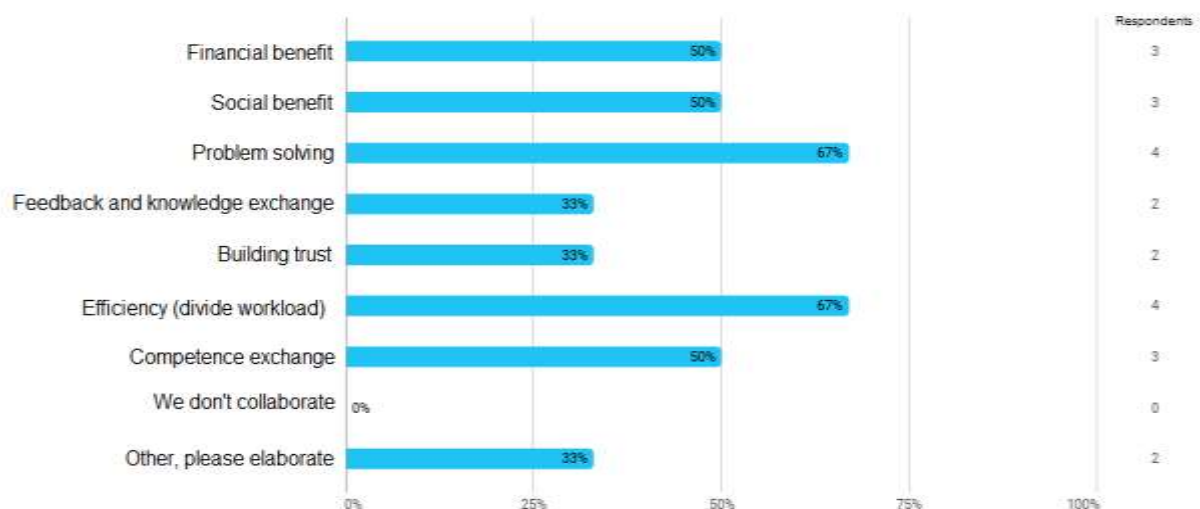

Figure 10 Public stakeholders: Why does your organisation collaborate with others?
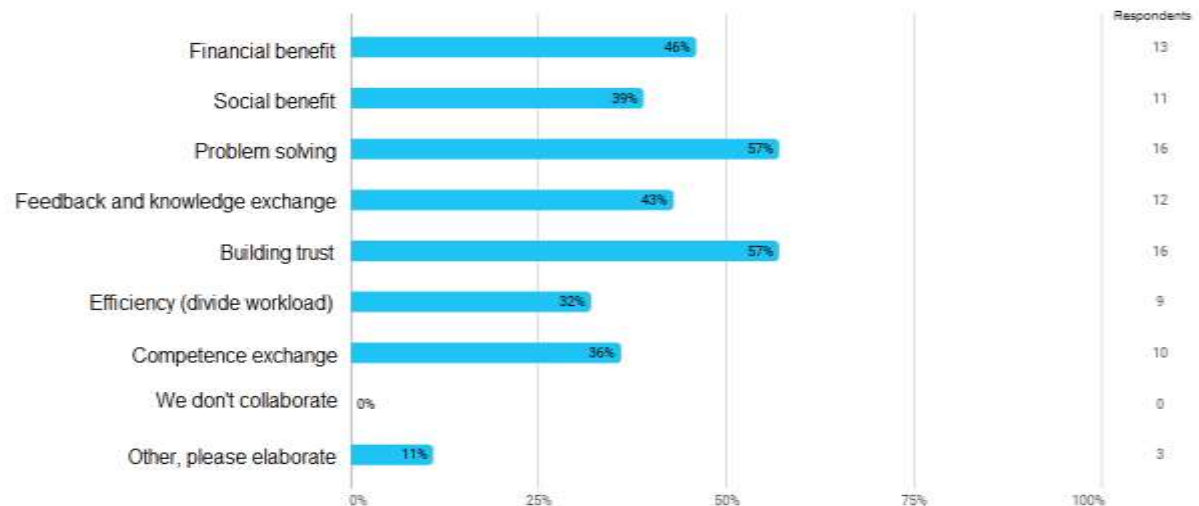
Figure 11 Private stakeholders: Why does your organisation collaborate with others?

Two factors especially deviate the two types of stakeholders. These factors were *building trust* and *efficiency (divide workload)*. The public stakeholders found *efficiency (divide workload)* to be a more significant reason for participating in collaborative bundles. Private stakeholders, however, found *building trust* to be an important factor to collaborate with others. Other factors only ranged between 4% and 19% in difference between the two. As mentioned, the sample wasn't large; thus, these are only indicators, but when we look at the qualitative data, the results are similar.

Although there is a small deviation between the participants, these observations reflect that most survey participants found collaborative practices as meaningful. There aren't any significant indications that would suggest otherwise. Both public and private stakeholders value the benefits of collaborative bundles and collaborate through different practices.

The farmer in Viðareiði expressed an eagerness to collaborate and implied that if he ran into trouble, with collaboration, he could ask for advice and discuss with someone about this, but at the moment, he feels alone. In Svínoy they would like to collaborate with others in regards to the marketing of the island, which they don't consider as their duty alone. The owner of Extreme Faroe Islands appreciated the collaboration with Visit Norðoy, where they sold boat tours for them. According to the manager of Visit Norðoy, their purpose is to market, inform, sell and direct to the different offers that are available in the region, in addition to branding it. At Extreme Faroe Islands, they have tried to collaborate with other actors in the area, to create new products together, but he says that it never becomes anything concrete because the planning is interrupted for some reason. There is a pattern in the aims of the different stakeholders, where public stakeholders and NGO's connect

meanings of assistance and coordination to collaboration, while private stakeholders connect profit and development to collaboration.

Collaboration in regards to tourism development is fundamentally about public organisations and NGO's that assist private stakeholders in reaching their goals through marketing, sales and assistance, linking the practices in the region together creating collaboration bundles. They, therefore, associate the meaning of collaboration with assistance and coordination but with an aim to increase visitor numbers and generating profit for local stakeholders. If these are achieved is another discussion. Private-private collaboration includes a broader spectrum of practices and concentrate on improving products and exchanging resources. They associate the meaning of collaboration with profit, security, loyalty and strength. The private stakeholders find collaboration meaningful and would like to participate in more collaboration practices in regards to tourism development, but most of them are not sure how to achieve this, there seem to be barriers to joining the practices. Regional collaboration amongst private stakeholders is not present in Norðoyggjar; instead, they collaborate locally in regards to islands or villages or nationally. Visit Norðoy attempts to link the practices in the region together to form bundles. Similarly, to the case in Newfoundland (Stoddart et al., 2020), there seems to be a difference in the importance assigned to collaboration in regards to tourism development, and then the engagement in collaborative practices. The stakeholders find collaboration as meaningful, but there isn't a lot of initiative to link the practices into bundles.

Time element of collaboration and carriers

As discussed briefly, the temporal rhythm is a significant dimension which reflects the practices' carriers and what perspective they might have on the practices. The rhythm of collaboration is dependent on the number of carriers and also their pattern and frequency of collaboration. As explained by James and Halkier (2019), the extent to which the carriers have a perspective of long-term or a short-term concern influences the rhythm of practice. Schatzki (2002: 226) also identifies that existing practices have consequences on the practices:

> making courses of action easier, harder, simpler, more complicated, shorter, longer, illadvised, promising of gain, disruptive, facilitating, obligatory or proscribed, acceptable

or unacceptable, more or less relevant, riskier or safer, more or less feasible, more or less likely to induce ridicule or approbation.

Thus, it can be said that surrounding the bundle of collaboration; there may be other practices that support or discourage the practices. Also, the continual practice of the bundles of collaboration determines its persistence.

Frequency

A higher level of frequency in regards to participation in collaborative bundles implies higher chances of encountering potential carriers of the practices, depending on how the collaboration takes place. This is how some practices often become more deeply attached and embedded, as it is reproduced consistently (Shove et al., 2012). As argued by Pred (1982: 16), practices "require that participating individuals expend their labour power or in some other way engage themselves in activity in a given manner, at a given time and place". Individuals devote time and attention to various practices, and they are regularly shaped by the practitioners and vice versa by the enactments. In this section, the frequency of practices connected to collaboration bundles in regards to tourism development will be discussed.

The level of participation in tourism development amongst the participants of the survey is not showing a variation of actively working *practitioners* of the collaboration bundles, i.e. those who form the practices into collaboration bundles; thus it is showcasing a smaller number of participants of collaboration regarding tourism development. 19 out of 51 respondents claimed to either *never* or *sometimes* being active in regards to tourism development, while 27 ranged from being *often* to *always* active. This tells us that several stakeholders participate in tourism development, but it is debatable if these are active practitioners of the collaboration bundle, linking social practices. When asked about how often individual/organisations/groups collaborate in regards to tourism development in their location, the responses depicted that tourism development was not as frequently performed in collaboration with others.
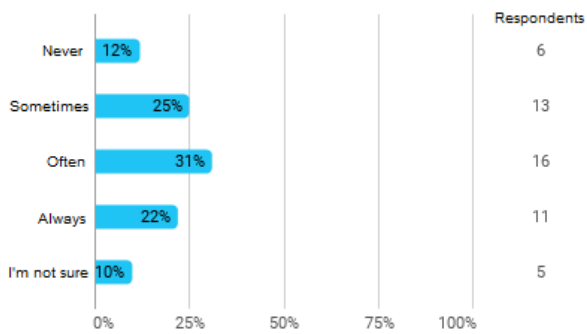
Figure 13 How involved has the organisation you represent been within tourism development?
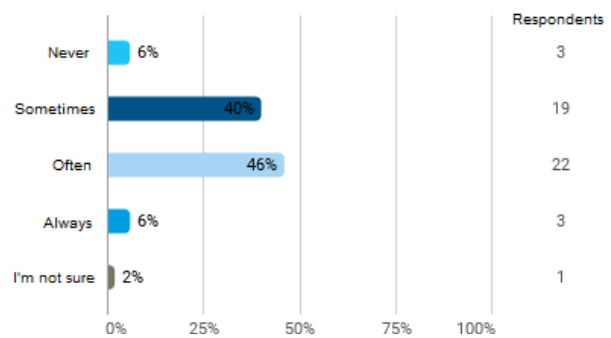
Figure 12 Around how often do individuals/organisations/groups collaborate in regards to tourism development in your location?

This was followed by a question asking "How often does the organisation you represent take the initiative for collaborations with other stakeholders in regards to tourism development?". The results were similar to the previous, only varying from one to three responses. 43% claimed to initiate collaborations *never* or *sometimes,* and only two responded that they *always* do it. These categories can be quite broad, e.g. sometimes and often, that is where the qualitative data is compelling.

If we look at the qualitative data, the farmers in Svínoy, the farmer in Viðareiði, the owner of Extreme Faroe Islands acknowledge that they don't initiate collaboration frequently with other stakeholders in regards to tourism development, although they have an interest in doing so. The couple in Svínoy explained that "No, we haven't done much about it, but I don't believe that anyone has gone through the struggle to contact us either, we have so much else to take care of, so we don't really think about it". The owner of Extreme Faroe Islands collaborates with Visit Norðoy but has in the past two years experienced a decrease of tour sales from Visit Norðoy. The two stakeholders don't even communicate yearly in regards to collaboration, and he believes that the decline in sales may be blamed on that "Maybe one has to contact them once a year and speak with them since managers are replaced so frequently". The managers appear to be critical practitioners of collaboration, and the cycle of collaboration seems to have been interrupted frequently because of the replacement of managers.

While all public stakeholders found collaboration as absolutely important for progress in tourism development, their responses regarding the frequency of participation of collaborative bundles didn't reflect high levels of activity. On a scale from *never, sometimes, every two months, monthly, once a week and I'm not sure*, more than half of the respondents

Figure 14 Public stakeholders: How often does the organisation you represent collaborate with other organisations and/or individuals in regards to tourism development?

only claimed to collaborate sometimes, with other organisations and/or individuals in regards to tourism development. One responded I'm not sure, while the last two responded either every two months or once a week.

All of the interviewees point to the fact that the limited number of stakeholders in the region creates a barrier to forming collaborative bundles. If there is a limited number of potential practitioners, the bundles are more challenging to persist and become complex, because the diffusion is restricted. But there is also an indication that stakeholders aren't even aware of each other, because several mentioned that there aren't any stakeholders in islands such as Fugloy, Svínoy and Viðoy. At the same time, this research interviewed several and therefore suggests otherwise. Thus, the frequency of collaboration is limited if the stakeholders aren't aware of who they possibly could collaborate with.

There are indications that tourism development in the region is also practised according to the funding cycles. The manager at Visit Norðoy finds it challenging to obtain funding, but the campaigns facilitated by Visit Faroe Islands such as 'Closed for Maintenance, open for voluntourism' and 'Travel in your own country' encourages tourism development as well as collaboration. But when the campaigns are accomplished, the development and collaboration seems to stop; thus, the practices are interrupted and refrained from getting complex and congealed into persistent bundles.

In Kallsoy, on the other hand, there is a regular collaboration practised between the farmer, Visit Norðoy and Visit Kallsoy, the farmer also communicates with the farmer on Viðareiði exchanging advice. Visit Norðoy claims that the fruitful collaboration practices in Kallsoy is because of the commitment that the stakeholders have made towards tourism development. The chairman of Visit Kallsoy focuses on the fact that it is their purpose as an organisation to assist the stakeholders on

the island to collaborate and earn a living from tourism. The practices haven't been interrupted by a lack of funding or replacement of managers, and they have an organisation essentially committed to the linking of practices.

The level of frequency within participation in collaboration in regards to tourism development appears to be inadequate for many of the stakeholders, and there seems to be a continuous interruption in the bundles, which prevents them from persisting and adhering. But if we look in areas such as Kallsoy, collaborative bundles do seem to persist, and tourism development on the island is progressing. If we examine the practitioners of collaborative bundles and how these operate, we can see a pattern that may also be obstructing the success of persistence.

Practitioners

In the following section, we will focus on the participants as the minds that 'carry' and 'carry out' practices in regards to tourism development and as carriers forming practices into bundles of collaboration. Shove et al. (2012: 63), claim that the "contours of any one practice – where is it reproduced, how consistently, for how long, and on what scale – depend on changing populations of more and less faithful carriers or practitioners". It is challenging to write about actual and potential carriers of collaborative bundles, but we will do so by viewing them as stable enough to analyse. Similarly, to the above section surrounding the frequency of collaborative bundles, we will "talk about social relations in which persons and practices change, re-produce, and transform each other" (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 68).

As discussed by Shove and colleagues, for specific business categories it is typical for organisations to devote to bringing 'communities of practice' into being through institutional design (Shove et al., 2012: 67). One issue though is that the carriers who become part of this 'community' and potential carriers don't necessarily have much in common with other carriers, which means that "the ties and connections through which practices develop and circulate, and by means of which they reach and capture new recruits, do not necessarily map onto organizational or institutional structures." *(Shove et al., 2019: 67).* The potential carriers of the collaborative bundles in regards to tourism development are a very diverse group of individuals and organisations, often competitors, and with conflicting interests. An essential factor in regards to practices is that it is believed that bonds between carriers are "formed through and as an outcome of previous and present experience" (Shove et al., 2012: 68). Therefore, it is important to examine the experiences, and previous

experiences that participants have towards collaborative bundles, as well as if there is a pattern to what types of carriers they tend to collaborate with.

When we examine who the participants collaborate with most frequently, there is an indication for the collaborations to be equally dispersed between public-private, public-public and private-private stakeholders. 21 out of 36 participants claimed to collaborate *sometimes* with the opposite category stakeholder, i.e. private-public, also, 18 claimed to collaborate sometimes with the same category stakeholder, i.e. private-private or public-public. When asked to name around three organisations and/or individuals that the organisation they represent communicates most frequently with when they face challenges in regards to tourism development, public organisations were mentioned 57 times, in comparison to 29 times that private organisations were mentioned. This displays that organisations and individuals tend to collaborate more frequently in relation to development with public organisations than private. This identifies that the leading organisations who are carriers of collaborative bundles linking them together in regards to tourism development are public, because they have a much more diverse collaborative network towards tourism development, compared to private organisations.

The interviews demonstrated that the public stakeholder (Visit Norðoy) had the broadest collaborative connections, especially with stakeholders within the region, but also nationally with other TIC's and VFI. They are, therefore, those who generally link the practices into collaboration bundles. Although, the private stakeholders had to various degrees communication with Visit Norðoy, and occasionally VFI and the municipality (Klaksvíkar kommuna), they were seldomly the initiators and forming bundles. Instead, the individual stakeholders were more connected to their local community on their island or village and NGO's such as the landowner's association (Jarðir) and outlying island association (útoggjafelagið). Despite being open for collaboration with other stakeholders, the chairman of Visit Kallsoy believes that there is a lack of joint interest and that collaboration with other stakeholders in the region perhaps contradicts their purpose to assist stakeholders on Kallsoy. Rather their job is to support the stakeholders on the island of Kallsoy to collaborate with others, which also includes regional stakeholders. The organisations' work on the island is possibly also the reason for the successful persistence of collaborative bundles forming on the island, which will be discussed later.

The manager of Visit Norðoy declared the fact that they take provision for the work they do for the stakeholders might be a factor that stresses the collaborative bundles to form:

> If individuals want to collaborate with us, then it isn't a good sign that we charge a fee
>
> for the work, because that may quickly create an opposite effect, because then people
>
> don't want to collaborate with us. They may see us as a competitor then.

This kind of practice could be an example that potentially could obstruct the practices of selling, marketing, communicating etc. to form into collaboration bundles.

Past unsuccessful attempts to collaborate also seem to cause stakeholders to refrain from building on collaborative bundles. This could indicate that the practices are normative, also connected to emotions and senses. An example from Svínoy is that the couple had been advised by an employee at VFI, to contact them and get guidance, consultancy and support to develop their business on the island further. Following the local news that continually disperse dissatisfaction in regards to tourism overcrowding in specific tourist areas, the couple believed that the island of Svínoy could have great potential as an additional tourist attraction to diffuse tourists, but the facilities need to be developed further. This idea brought them to the office of VFI, who showed great interest for their concept, but the couple never heard from them again afterwards and weren't informed about the development funds they can apply for. They consider this as very contradictive and they "don't want to lay down and beg for support, but one would think that it was in their interest to have more available tourism offers". The fact that they had a bad experience with attempting to initiate collaboration challenges their future as carriers of practices that may be linked into collaboration bundles, not only with VFI but also has the ability to obstruct their potential collaboration with other stakeholders.

The farmer in Viðareiði has also had a bad experience with collaboration as he has attempted to initiate collaboration with the landowner's association, and Visit Norðoy in the past. Following frequent manager replacements at Visit Norðoy, his expectations of the organisation are low. Although the new manager has expressed a desire to collaborate with him, he is sceptical "It has been like that before, but it never becomes anything tangible". The manager mentioned this herself, and is aware of this situation and is working towards building up their credibility "The organisation hasn't functioned properly in the past. There has been a continual replacement of managers and

staff, and it has been turbulent, and my focus is to build it up again from the ground, to obtain the credibility again both from stakeholders and others".

According to the interviews, there is only one stakeholder linking regional practices together, thus creating regional collaboration bundles in regards to tourism development, which is Visit Norðoy. The TIC communicates with all stakeholders to an extent, but the stakeholders in Norðoyggjar don't collaborate regularly. This was also what the TIC expected "I assume that there isn't much collaboration across the islands. As mentioned, there are small stakeholders, who take care of their own, and don't look further". A reason that it is difficult to diffuse collaborative bundles in the region is that the stakeholders aren't generally in the same network, and are very diverse; therefore they are not naturally in contact with each other.

Generally, the stakeholders collaborate with stakeholders located on their island, such as locals or local interest organisations, or they collaborate with organisations such as Visit Faroe Islands, TIC's, tour operators etc. Thus, they focus their collaborative bundles in regards to their local area (island or village), other organisational structures such as VFI and NGO's while some also collaborate with other organisations such as tourism agencies located elsewhere. Bad experiences in regards to initiating collaboration, refrains some stakeholders from enacting collaboration bundles in regards to tourism development, who then engage in tourism development on their own, or with other stakeholders who they have success with collaborating with. The rhythm of collaboration is primarily affected by the location of the practitioners, background, number of potential practitioners, cycle of funding and past experiences. Therefore the bundles are normative thus affected by many outside factors. There is perhaps a lack of elements that have caused these bad experiences, which will be presented in the following section.

Material

Material is one of the three elements on which this thesis will evaluate how collaboration is practised between public and private tourism stakeholders in regards to tourism development and why tourism collaborations within tourism development are challenging to achieve on the Faroe Islands. As mentioned earlier, according to Shove et al., materials are one of the three elements of practices and may join together two or more practices into a bundle, these could be internet, infrastructure, telephone etc. Shove et al. (2012: 32) emphasise that "A key feature of our own

approach is the emphasis we place on the constitutive role of things and materials in everyday life". Therefore they state that society is reflected by the available materials, and not the other way around adding a material dimension to a traditionally social theory.

Not all material elements are as tangible as objects such as a car, but it is often the access to material that matters. To illustrate it, we can use the example of funds. They can be used to stimulate tourism development and collaboration. On the Faroe Islands, there are several funds available for both public and private projects. VFI has two separate funds for public and private projects, North Atlantic Tourism Association offers funds for tourism development, and lastly, there is the fund for outlying island development.

While particular stakeholders might find collaboration in regards to tourism development as accessible, the results imply that there are collaborative gaps which complicates the process. Stoddart et al. (2020: 639) demonstrated "As practice theory highlights, even if social practices are valued in terms of social meaning, without the requisite competencies or access to materials, these practices will not take hold or persist over time.". For collaboration and tourism development to become coordinated in the practices of tourism stakeholders, it is not enough for them to value them, but materials and competences are also essential.

As displayed in figure 15, survey participants were asked to mention one or more examples of challenges to tourism development that they experience, and responses reflected many problems related to material elements. Material conditions might restrict practices, one major factor which inhibits some collaborative bundles to form is the fact that tourism is considered a seasonal business, but for some, this is favourable. For full-time sheep farmers, it is beneficial, because tourism can support their business since for sheep farmers summer season is very low-maintenance while fall and spring are high maintenance seasons. Therefore, it is ideal for them to use tourism to supplement their income in the summer months, while also using the resources they have has farmers such as owning land to hike within, produce to sell and stories connected to the areas to tell. As for the farmers in Kallsoy and Fugloy, this is what they have done. E.g. in Kallsoy, they have the material to collaborate in the form of an interest organisation Visit Kallsoy that works to increase his competences to collaborate with other stakeholders in regards to tourism development. The farmer has the competences to collaborate because he works full time with tourism in the summer, and has time in the winter months to evaluate and develop tourism.
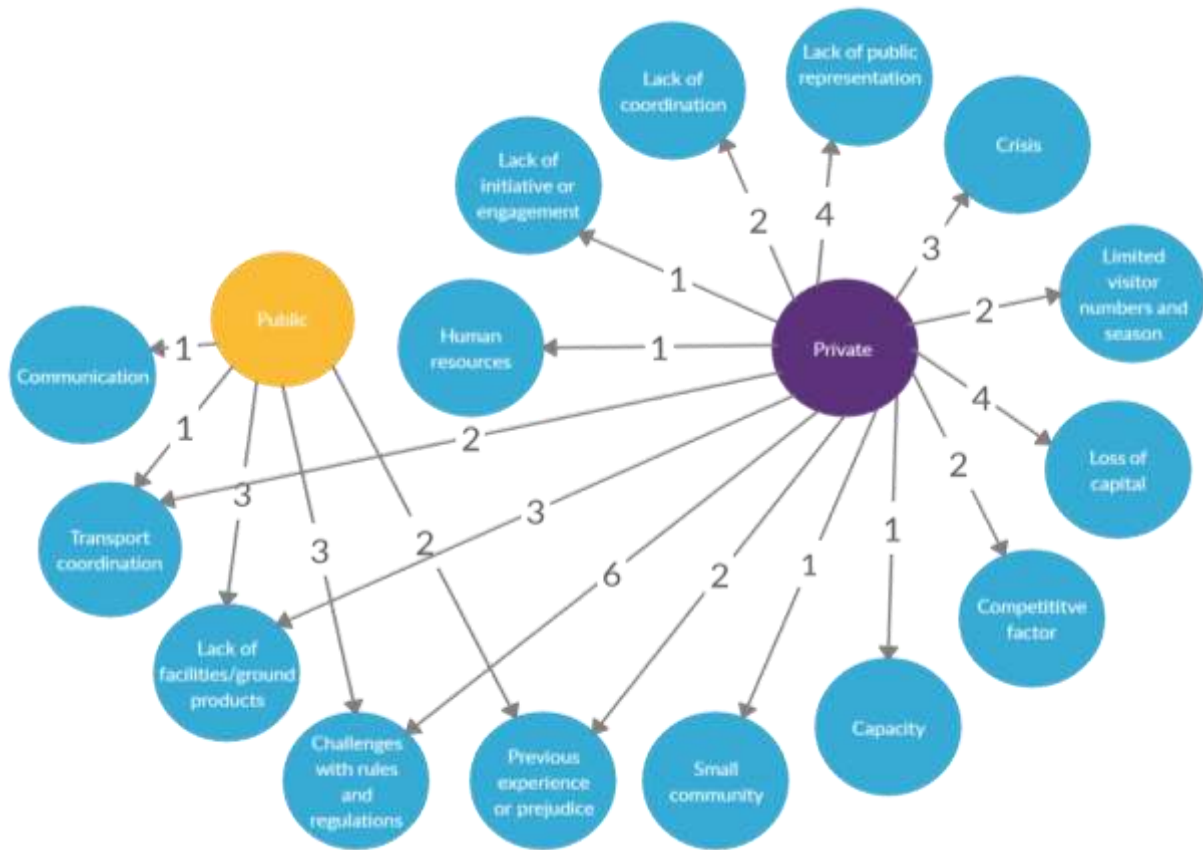
Figure 15 "Mention one or more challenges in regards to tourism development" Divided between public and private responses.

This is what separates him from the farmers in Svínoy and Viðareiðið. The farmers in Svínoy are occupied by other daily jobs for the remaining of the year, and the farmer in Viðareiði is a farmer with both cattle and sheep, where cattle needs maintenance all year round. For them to be able to become part of collaborative bundles and develop tourism in their area, they would need assistance, or take more time off to work with tourism activities. At the moment, they don't have the competences in the form of human resources to facilitate collaborative initiatives. The owner of Extreme Faroe Islands also mentioned that it was difficult to develop his business because of the low unemployment rates, and he, therefore, had to do a lot of the work himself. But they have the material to collaborate in the form of communication devices, ideas, products etc.

Financial capital

The TIC who could help the farmers to coordinate their practices finds it challenging to collaborate with individuals who don't work with tourism activities regularly. Although individuals are grateful when they call them "To get a collaboration to function properly, when individuals are only partially involved in tourism, makes it challenging, because it demands a lot from us to be able to adapt to

their schedule.". Thus, the material conditions in the form of funding inhibits both stakeholders from collaborating, because there is lack of material that can congeal the practices. The TIC finds it challenging to collaborate with stakeholders who are not 100% in the tourism business, while the stakeholders find it difficult to develop their product into that direction. The practices of marketing and product supply cannot be linked into a collaboration bundle, because the stakeholders don't have the material in the form of time and money to do so.

A significant factor in Norðoyggjar is the continual replacements of managers at Visit Norðoy. All the stakeholders mentioned this. Some modifications have been made to the organisation, that might change this tendency, and perhaps collaborative bundles might be able to form more efficiently in the future. The organisation has in the past used a lot of resources to get funding for their activities, but now they are funded by all municipalities in the region, although the appropriation isn't large, they have a more stable economy. It caused the manager to contemplate on eliminating or reducing the charging fee for stakeholders "that is also something that I am looking into now. I don't really think we should charge them, because now we have the funding from the municipalities". The practices of charging fees for tour sales might have been a practice that has obstructed some potential collaboration. Now that they have the material in the form of a more stable economy, they may be more flexible regarding the linking of practices and creating collaboration bundles. Still, according to the chairman of Visit Norðoy, this is far from enough to function sufficiently to accommodate all stakeholders.

Visit Kallsoy sells souvenirs to pay for the work that they do for their actors on Kallsoy. This gives them financial power to facilitate collaborative bundles, although the work is voluntary, they have the capacity to aid their actors "We can go out and help our actors with some financial aid to get started, and then they pay it back later (…) we don't work for profit, it is just to help the locals to get more activity on the island". On the other hand, if we look at Visit Norðoy the chairman of the organisation doesn't believe that they have the financial resources to do a satisfactory analysis work in the area, in regards to tourism development collaboration.

Communication

Several factors assist collaboration; the survey respondents mentioned communicating a lot through materials such as phones and e-mails. The farmer in Kallsoy, e.g. collaborated with other farmers who also own land containing tourist attractions, and they communicate yearly through

phone calls. This way, they can evaluate the past season, reflect and share experiences, but they have never met in person. These tools can connect practices and create bundles, although the distance may be far. Another essential tool which has helped the farmer in Kallsoy in regards to tourism development is social media. He claims that the now well-known tourist attraction *Kallurin* which is placed in his land wasn't 'discovered' by tourists until 2010-2012. And it was discovered and marketed solely by tourists, in the beginning, especially those who got off the beaten track, with no help from VFI until later when it was well-known and shared on platforms such as Instagram.

There is a lot of material available for the stakeholders which can be used to encourage collaboration bundles to form in regards to tourism development. There are funds they can apply for collectively; communication can be done through phone and e-mails and Visit Norðoy aspires to be a unifying organ that encourages collaboration in the region. These are all material elements that can be used to stimulate collaboration, but one material, in particular, is lacking, which is financial capital to promote the coordination of these collaboration bundles. Similarly, to what Stoddart et al. (2020), found in Newfoundland, the competencies are also lacking, participants focused on the human resources issues, such as uneducated stakeholders, lack of knowledge and low employment numbers inflicting on this.

Competences

Competences, the last element to be analysed in this thesis is, according to Shove et al.'s practice theory, also crucial for practices to be successful. Competences reflect the skills required to practice, which is connected to understanding and practical knowledgeability (Shove et al., 2012). As argued by Shove et al. (2012), competences travel in ways that materials do not, and they can move through abstraction, reversal and lateral migration and cross-practice creep. Taking funds as an example again; funds are a material that could be essential for the success of a social practice. But to be able to apply for these funds, there are several competencies you would need, e.g. knowledge of them and skills to use them. The knowledge can be provided by another stakeholder sharing their knowledge of the fund, but a skill can also be lost if the practice isn't performed regularly.

Human resources

Although collaboration was regarded as important, some stakeholders found it to be challenging to initiate, and carry on collaboration. On the island of Viðoy, the farmer in Viðareiði responded that

"I will say it just as it is, I would have appreciated it if there was collaborated a whole lot more, but the truth is, there is no collaboration at all.". The farmer would like to develop his area even further, and would like to be able to earn a living from tourism, but is struggling to coordinate his vision. He claims to have unsuccessfully attempted to build collaboration with organisations, such as the landowners association, Visit Norðoy and VFI, to work towards his visions. He practices guiding at a popular tourist attraction to which he owns the land, but isn't capable to market or develop his product. But he doesn't have the competences in the form of human resources to facilitate collaborations.

The chairman in Visit Norðoy who is also a farmer and guide in Fugloy has the competences to use the material that is available to initiate tourism collaboration. He has an advantage by being active in different tourism organisations and activities. He believes it's the competencies that are lacking in Norðoyggjar to attain collaboration in regards to tourism development. He comments on the lack of resources and professional competences regarding tourism development in the area, which restricts development. He claims that "It's the lack of competence, I don't know if people are walking around with these ideas, not coming forth with them, maybe they don't feel competent to carry them out. However, we haven't noticed them in the TIC, and they haven't asked for advice". According to the interviews, there are several stakeholders having ideas for tourism development, but not sure how to collaborate to fulfil them or who to turn to for assistance. The couple in Svínoy, the farmer in Viðareiði and the owner of Extreme Faroe Islands, have ideas for the future development of their tourism activities, and this is ultimately what Visit Norðoy believes to be missing in the area. There is a lack of material elements and competencies that are preventing them from forming collaborative bundles.

Lack of knowledge and skills
There are also signs that there is a lack of communication, certainly towards TIC's, a respondent of the survey revealed that:

> The Tourist Information Centre hasn't been very active within tourism development in the past. Therefore local stakeholders aren't conscious about utilising the TIC and build a collaboration with us. Therefore, a lot of our energy goes toward building these alliances from scratch

This is an ongoing problem that is seen throughout the research, and the manager at Visit Norðoy and other stakeholders as well recognised this issue. The stakeholders' statements indicated that they don't have the knowledge of what a TIC can be used for, and aren't aware of the purpose of their work. As a result, they don't have the competences to collaborate with them. As mentioned by the chairman of the organisation, he sees their purpose as to be an "informative agency with a primary objective to develop tourism offers, market offers and support tourism actors". Very few stakeholders have the knowledge of this, thus even if they might have the material in the form of an organisation to guide them in tourism development, they don't have the competences to use it. The farmer of Viðareiði expressed that although he was very much interested in collaboration in regards to tourism development, he wasn't sure who to consult "There is no starting point, it's unsecure with no source to turn to".

The couple in Svínoy weren't sure what the purpose of Visit Norðoy was, and therefore don't have the competences to collaborate effectively with them, as they don't have the competences in the form of human resources to determine this. The lack of human resources is a significant inhibitor of forming collaboration bundles in regards to tourism development.

If we analyse the stakeholders' qualifications, they aren't educated within relevant fields. However, this doesn't necessarily mean that they don't have the competences, there are indications that it inflicts on the practices not being linked. The stakeholders attempt to gain competences from various sources. The manager at Visit Norðoy acquires competences from communicating with other TIC managers and VFI. VFI also has provided with a seminar for stakeholders can gain competences for tourism development. Visit Norðoy explained that VFI hosted a workshop in the region, concerning price fixing and tourism development, which attracted many satisfied participants. The seminar was fully booked, but the manager noticed that most of the participants weren't from the Norðoy region. Thus stakeholders within the region didn't necessarily gain significant competences. Something might have prevented local tourism stakeholders in the region from participating. These observations show a tendency of lack of knowledge and skills to collaborate and participate in tourism development projects.

One participant reflected on, that people often expressed willingness to collaborate, but not ready to compromise and develop, therefore not competent to collaborate and develop tourism:

> People are habitual and often difficult the move out of their 'comfort zone' and to think new. New collaborations demand that the participants are manageable, courageous and willing to change the old and think new. It is difficult for many to move because they feel unsafe, and sometimes it is also about power battles.

This could indicate that stakeholders are not competent to change and develop tourism, but the reason behind this may be two-folded. As seen in figure 15, survey responses indicate there are several problem areas mentioned by the survey participants, that all somehow can be linked towards lack of competence to collaborate.

On the other hand, if we study an area where tourism development and collaboration is persistent which is Kallsoy, the farmer uses the NGO Visit Kallsoy as an advisor: "If there is any matter of dispute that I'm not really sure how to solve, then I just go to Visit Kallsoy, then they try to solve it for me. We have planned on developing a hiking path out to *Kallurin* which Visit Kallsoy has supported us with". The NGO, therefore, can assist the farmer where his competences aren't sufficient enough. There is also a type of trust connected to the NGO, which they don't have towards, e.g. VFI. Although the farmer got offered partial funding for the hiking path from VFI, he didn't accept the financing, because he is nervous that the current conflicts regarding hiking in nature will obstruct his rights to the use of the path somehow.

There are indications that many stakeholders don't have the necessary competences in the form of human resources to engage in tourism development which can be linked into collaboration bundles. The stakeholders complained that they had many ideas for tourism development which they desired to fulfil, but they don't know how. The qualitative data tells us that the participants don't have relevant education that would provide them with skills and knowledge to facilitate tourism development, and form collaborative bundles. Although these competencies can be gained through other methods, which has been attempted with seminars, these practices are limited to those who participate in the workshops.

Collaboration gaps

If we look at the data from a practice theory perspective, there are indications that there are multiple gaps within collaboration on the Faroe Islands. These gaps hinder implementation of the valued meaning of safety, loyalty, profitability, efficiency etc. concerning collaboration to form into

bundles of practices that support tourism development as well as regional tourism development. Taking the quantitative and qualitative data into account, these are linked explicitly to gaps between meaning and 'frequency, duration and sequence', material and competences and spatial gaps, which the following sections will discuss. These gaps have been identified through the analysis of the data, but Stoddart et al. (2020: 639) claim that "the social practice theory approach is especially productive for moving beyond documenting the existence of collaboration gaps to explain why their existence and persistence is intimately bound up with issues related to competences and materials". The following section will, therefore, attempt to explain why these gaps persist and why tourism development practices might refrain from developing into complex bundles of collaboration.

Gaps between meaning and 'frequency, duration and sequence.'

As mentioned, the positively associated meanings towards collaboration, do not seem to transform into bundles of collaboration practices in regards to tourism development on the Faroe Islands. This section will analyse the temporal rhythm of practices to understand how some practices of collaboration in regards to tourism development flourish and others fade. According to Shove et al. (2012: 96), "the pace and rhythm of social life can be understood as an outcome, at any one moment, of the totality of current life paths and associated projects and practices". Therefore, the frequency, duration, sequence of practices and their paths and carriers will be discussed in parallel to the associated meanings that the participants have for the practices.

The practices connected to collaboration are not practised frequently and don't seem to have a substantial number of practitioners to link the practices together into bundles. Similarly, to what was observed by James and Halkier (2019), the practices connected to collaboration in regards to tourism development are interrupted by factors such as funding cycles. There aren't any long-term commitments towards collaboration in regards to tourism development, and the TIC has to convince the municipalities to provide an appropriation for persistent projects. It, therefore, resembles what James and Halkier (2019: 108) identified that "maintaining an overall strategic direction in destination development is clearly complicated by the need to achieve through a portfolio of parallel temporary projects". The fact that there have been several manager replacements in the past few years has also inflicted on the temporal rhythm of the practices and interrupted them.

Another observed hindrance was past experiences of collaboration that had been interrupted, i.e. when collaborations had been initiated but broken for some reason. Both the qualitative and quantitative data reflected that stakeholders refrained from certain practices because they were linked to an unpleasant experience. Although they associated positive meanings such as synergy and profitability towards collaboration, they refrain from initiating it because of unpleasant incidents. This demonstrates the complexities related to the management of tourism destinations. As displayed earlier in the *Destinations, tourism planning, stakeholders and development* section, Jamal and Stronza (2009: 170) argue that tourism management is practised through "collaboration and continuous, integrated planning, modelled as an interactive system". The interruptions of the practices may, therefore, cause controversy, as seen in Svínoy, where the couple attempted to initiate collaboration, that wasn't reciprocal.

Relatively few participants were heavily engaged in collaboration in regards to tourism development. Although materials and competences can act as links for practices, e.g., there were only a limited number of stakeholders linking the practices of tourism development into bundles of collaboration. These tend to be facilitated by managers of public organisations or NGO's but were restricted by before mentioned factors of funding. It is recognised that the practitioners are very diverse with different backgrounds, interests and from contrasting destinations. According to Jamal and Stronza (2009), these diversities can also cause friction within tourism development, as the tourism industry is a complicated and dynamic system where it is challenging to implement change. It is therefore advised that there is an inter-organisational tourism development, but this requires thorough coordination of these. Jamal and Getz (1995) argue that this should comprise of local government with assistance from "other public organisations having a direct bearing on resource allocation; tourism industry associations and sectors such as chamber of commerce, convention and visitors bureau, and regional tourist authority; resident organizations, social agencies, and special interest groups" (Jamal & Getz, 1995: 198). The collaboration *scale*, *structure* and *scope* are constructed, but there needs to be mediators of the collaboration *bundles* to link the practices together and define the scale, structure and scope of them. Also, arguably the practices need to be continuous and an integrated system for the collaboration *bundles* to form, and potentially become a congealed integrated system of practices. This resonates with the claims of Adu-Ampong (2017)

that the precondition for a healthy environment for developing collaboration are high levels of coordination between public agencies.

As Shove et al. (2012: 71) argue, "repeated performances bind practitioners and practices together in many more subtle ways". Practices become persistent and congealed for various of reasons. If we take showering as an example, the material is also linking the practice; the plumbing, the availability of soaps as well as expectations from individuals social network encourage the practice. But a critical point is that when the practice is voluntary "more is required if practices are to retain faithful cohorts of suitably committed carriers" (Shove et al., 2012). Arguably for collaboration to become a complex bundle of practices in regards to tourism development on the Faroe Islands, the frequency is crucial. This is because it spreads the practice between the small number of potential carriers and creates loyal practitioners. Practices don't need to happen all the time to become embedded, such as eating Christmas dinner, but this type of practice, as well as showering, is very stable and static practices. On the other hand, practices connected to collaboration are dynamic and flexible. Therefore one can argue that its frequency is necessary to remain relevant and be progressive.

The gap between meaning and 'frequency, duration and sequence' seems to be caused by the lack of facilitators of the practices. The absence of long-term commitments to tourism development and administration of the practices causes interruptions of the practices, preventing them from forming into collaboration bundles.

Spatial gaps

As Shove et al. (2012) put it, there are "various ways in which spatial arrangements constitute and underpin potentially important patterns of association". This section will discuss how the spatial scale of collaborative practices on the Faroe Islands are formed. The spatial scale refers to how the collaborative practices take place. It reflects how the collaboration practices are diffused and distributed. The spatial distribution is significant as it demonstrates which areas can include carriers of the practices and be an active component in forming the collaborative bundles and maintaining of them.

Nearly all stakeholders kept their collaboration practices to either their island, village or national tourist agencies and they are therefore mainly dedicated to local tourism developments in contrary to regional. It is likely inadequate for the collaboration practices to become persistent and form to

collaboration bundles since most stakeholders are limiting their collaboration patterns to their local area when it comes to tourism development. Thus, there aren't enough carriers for it to become persistent. This inflicts it from congealing to the more stable and reliable collaboration bundle of practices, that supports the activities of the stakeholders. For collaboration bundles to form, they need to be linked together, and if stakeholders are not performing that, it obstructs the collaboration pattern. These issues were also stated by most interviewees suggesting that it is a persistent characteristic for the region of 'Norðoyggjar'. Several survey responses also mentioned these issues, and only 14 out of 54 respondents used regions to describe destinations that their organisation was located within, which could indicate that they don't acknowledge the regions, which is also a link between spatial scale and meaning.

Theoretically, regional collaboration in regards to tourism development is associated with an increase in competitive advantage. Thus, the region of Norðoyggjar has become what is known as a tourism destination representing the area. Haugland et al. (2011) state that the competitiveness of an area will increase if collaboration is practised across borders because stakeholders are, to a greater extent, capable of exchanging resources. Ultimately the borders must be determined collectively and acknowledged by as many as possible. It has to be meaningful for the stakeholders to collaborate within regions, which the current conditions don't demonstrate.

In many cases, the stakeholders aren't aware of one another and are developing separately with minimal resources and carriers. Currently, it is Visit Norðoy alone that is initiating collaboration regionally, where all municipalities are contributing to the financial capital of the organisation. The region is conceivably managing tourism collectively, but at the local level, stakeholders don't seem to be collaborating effectively. This is not a unique circumstance to the area, as Jamal and Getz (1995: 186) argue that tourism planning and management across government borders is a complex system "The lack of coordination and cohesion within the highly fragmented tourism industry is a well-known problem to destination planners and managers". They declare that by stakeholders acting individually to various directions, showcases a fragmented destination which might affect the image negatively. The collaboration between the municipalities in Norðoyggjar is recently established. Therefore it is too early to estimate how it functions, but we can confirm that the previous system didn't encourage collaboration across borders in the region. However, if the stakeholders in the constructed destination collaborate more extensively, according to Bramwell

and Sharman (1999) they may experience benefits such as; avoiding costs from resolving conflicts, give stakeholders more significant influence in decision-making, adding value in the form of knowledge, insights etc. and promote shared ownership etc.

The spatial scale of collaboration is primarily constructed and can be managed and coordinated. There are indications that the collaboration patterns are mainly limited to local areas, while the regional TIC independently is coordinating the region. The organisational capacity is therefore limited, as in this circumstance, Visit Norðoy with limited material, is the only stakeholder attempting to connect the practices into bundles of collaboration.

Gaps between material and competences

Mostly the collaboration gaps can be traced to the gap between having the requisite competences or access to materials. For practices to hold and persist over time, barriers to implementing collaboration need to be addressed. There were several gaps identified between having the necessary materials available, but not the competences to utilise them or having the competences, but not the necessary materials. There is a tendency for public stakeholders and NGO's on the Faroe Islands to have the competences to form collaboration in regards to tourism development. These primarily included knowledge of tourism stakeholders, accessible funds and skills to market, sell and coordinate tourism, but were lacking the material in the form of capital to finance projects and products to sell, market and coordinate. Private stakeholders, on the other hand, were typically lacking the competences to collaborate by the fact of not having knowledge of who to collaborate with and which funds are available to finance tourism development. Also, ultimately not having the skills to apply for them and market, sell their products and lacking of human resources. But they had the material in the form of land, products, ideas etc.

As this study has demonstrated, participants seem to find collaboration as meaningful, but there are indications that it isn't as accessible to all. The survey participants were asked how challenging it is to carry out collaborative practices in the area that the organisation was located on a scale from *very easy, easy, challenging*, *impossible* and *I'm not sure.* 25 out of 36 participants found it to be easy or very easy. Still, there were seven who found it either difficult or impossible, which indicates a gap in the forming of collaboration bundles. When asked to elaborate on their answer, those who

found it difficult or impossible expressed, e.g. that their location was an obstacle, the competitive factor and also one responded that

> I feel that there is a great interest from the local stakeholders and that they are keen to cooperate when I have an idea. I just wish that they came with some ideas themselves, and think more about utilising the Tourist Information Centre as an active collaboration partner. It is mainly us that have to reach out to them.

The interviewees found this statement as relatable, the chairman of Visit Norðoy found this to be the TIC's task to coordinate, but the manager wasn't sure how much they had to offer the stakeholders in the current state. As mentioned earlier, some private stakeholders in the region weren't sure how to utilise the services of the TIC. These factors make it challenging to initiate and persist collaborative bundles as they don't have the competences to facilitate them. This is an example where Visit Norðoy has the competences to coordinate and manage tourism collaboration, but not the necessary financial capital to promote it.

Similarly, to what Dedge et al. (2011) identified in Australia, there has been a tightening of the financial conditions combined with an increase of roles and responsibilities for TIC's in the past years. The manager at Visit Norðoy recognised that the organisation had an increase in responsibilities since they also coordinate events not related to tourism. Another financial burden may come from other factors. As mentioned in the *Collaboration and coordination at a local* level section of this thesis, Dredge et al. (2011) claim that many issues of tourism management are caused by the economic costs that come as a result of having a small and fragmented management of tourism.

Interview participants identified significant barriers within collaboration in regards to tourism development, and also contradictions were identified. Visit Norðoy has the competences to facilitate, coordinate and encourage collaboration, but not the financial resources. The farmer in Viðareiði and the farmers in Svínoy have the material in the form of funds they can apply for, facilities, land, computers, phones etc. which can be used for tourism development in the island, but they don't have the competences in the form of human resources or skills to apply for funds or facilitate collaboration bundles. On the island of Kallsoy, they demonstrate a strong local collaboration network, were the farmer and other private stakeholders receive and share

competences from the local tourist organisation, who links the tourism development practices together into collaboration bundles.

A survey respondent expressed that there weren't any political or structure of society that hinders collaborations, but it is the individual's willingness to collaborate. Although this might be how that individual respondent perceives it, the perspective of the beforementioned TIC and the interviewees and survey participants indicate a willingness from the stakeholders to collaborate, but there seem to be other factors that hinder the rhythm of collaboration from being persistent. The participants of this study demonstrate that there is a lack of the elements of material and competence especially in the form of human resources (competences), knowledge (competences) and financial capital (material), which obstruct their capability to collaborate, and refrains it from forming into bundles of practices of collaboration regarding tourism development.

Conclusion

As it has been demonstrated in the analysis and discussion above, collaboration between public and private tourism stakeholders in regards to tourism development on the Faroe Islands is fragmented, intermittent and disconnected. Public stakeholders and NGO's generally have the responsibility to facilitate and coordinate tourism collaborations in regards to tourism development. The public stakeholders find collaboration as essential for tourism development, and they collaborate mainly through marketing, selling, sharing of resources and coordination. Similarly, private stakeholders also find collaboration as important for tourism development, although their practices connected to collaboration also extend to product development, improving services, lobbying and supplying etc. but they don't collaborate as frequently as public stakeholders.

By connecting 'social practice theory' to the study of collaboration on the Faroe Islands in regards to tourism development, it was identified that there are barriers to implementing collaboration as a social practice. According to Shove et al. (2012), there are three elements required to develop social practices that are to combine the social *meaning* with *competences* and the necessary *materials.* These elements need to be engaged, which requires carriers to link them together. Furthermore, collaboration can be observed as a *bundle* of practices that congeal and interact, which again needs practitioners to connect them. This analysis shows that public stakeholders are usually those linking practices together and creating a more holistic collaborative bundle. However,

there were several gaps identified which interrupts and challenges the success of the practices joining to a collaboration *bundle*.

Three collaboration gaps were identified. These were gaps between meaning and 'frequency, duration and sequence', spatial gaps and gaps between competences and material identified within the qualitative and quantitative data observed in this study. First, the participants associated various positive meanings such as synergy, safety, efficiency etc. to collaboration. They valued the idea of collaboration, but the engagement in the practices didn't reflect these statements. The practices connected to collaboration in regards to tourism development aren't long-term commitments, because they are typically temporary projects, that are interrupted. Also, there are tendencies that unpleasant experience towards initiating such practices refrain some stakeholders from initiating further collaboration. It is argued that because the practices of collaboration are highly dynamic and static, the frequency and dependability of the practices need to be high. The lack of frequency prevents the practices from congealing to more complex collaboration *bundles.*

Second, the spatial gaps consisted of practitioners limiting the spatial scale of collaboration in regards to tourism development at a local level, ultimately limiting the number of carriers, available resources etc. The TIC is the only practitioner of regional collaboration. At the same time, local stakeholders remain either at a local level collaborating with local chefs, guides, NGO's etc. in their village or island, or occasionally at a national level by collaborating with travel agencies for gaining visitors. The spatial collaboration patterns of local villages and islands limits the potential of collaboration in regards to tourism development in the region. The fragmentation of the region seems to be the main obstacle for regional collaborations to form.

Lastly, there are gaps between the elements of competence and material. The analysis showed that the participants of this study were generally lacking of either access to material (Financial capital) or competences (knowledge and human resources) to carry out persistent collaboration *bundles*. For the valued meaning of collaboration to be pursued into practices, all elements need to engage. Stakeholders might have access to the appropriate material to practice tourism development, but without the competences to use the material, they cannot be pursued. Mainly the stakeholders expressed a lack of human resources, knowledge and financial capital which prevented and/or restricted them in practising collaboration in regards to tourism development.

Although it is important to have in mind that this does not describe the tourism collaboration circumstances in the country entirely, it will be considered as an illustration of some of the current conditions and challenges that can be addressed and reflected upon. This analysis provides insight into relevant problem areas that need to be addressed if better coordination and regional collaboration is desired in the Faroese tourism industry. Collaboration is widely considered to be fundamental for social sustainability, and this material might be used for developing strategic material to initiate a more socially sustainable approach to tourism management. Similarly, to Stoddart et al. (2020) this analysis shows that it isn't enough to have valued meaning embedded towards collaboration practices for them to be practised by stakeholders. Therefore, if more collaboration is wanted within the industry, the energy shouldn't be targeted at convincing stakeholders about the benefits and importance of collaboration. This study shows that instead tools are needed to face the challenges in regards to accessing the materials (financial resources) and competences (knowledge and human resources). This could help fill out the gaps that are within collaboration in regards to tourism development, and then enabling the stakeholders to have a more united, rhythmical and connected collaboration pattern on the Faroe Islands. Using the practice theory to analyse how collaboration is practised on the Faroe Islands, has taught us why collaboration gaps emerge and given us the groundworks to fill them.

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