

**Stakeholders' perspectives on sustainable cruise tourism
in the Arctic.**

A case study of cruise tourism in Greenland.

Simona-Denisa Vintilă

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Supervisor: Lill Rastad Bjørst

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to analyze the term “ sustainable cruise tourism” from a stakeholder perspective, in order to comprehend how cruise tourism sustainability is perceived by stakeholders within the cruise industry, in a Greenlandic context. The topic is explored through the lens of stakeholder theory, supplemented by the three pillars encompassed by sustainable development concept. In terms of data collection methods, the researcher employs qualitative interviews, questionnaire and document analysis approaches.

The findings indicate that stakeholders’ perspectives on the term “ sustainable cruise tourism” are modeled by three factors: their position in the cruise tourism chain, their interest in the cruise industry chain, and respectively, the development stage of the tourist destination.

Even though different initiatives in order to make tourism more sustainable in Greenland were identified, the majority of stakeholders inclined towards prioritizing the economic dimension encompassed by the sustainable development concept to the detriment of the environmental and socio- cultural dimensions. The conclusion of this study aligns with the views identified in the literature.

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List of abbreviations

EU	European Union
DMOs	Destination Marketing Organizations
DMC	Destination Management Company
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization

Chapter 1. Introduction

Despite its harsh climate, the Arctic has become a targeted tourist destination for many tourists interested to experience the destination before being too late (Taylor et al., 2020). As the climate change reduces the sea ice extent, cruise shipping in the Arctic has increased considerably in the recent years (Dawson et al., 2018; Shijin et al., 2020).

One of the Arctic destination is Greenland- the world's largest island, located between the North Atlantic Ocean and Arctic Ocean, a part of many cruise ships itineraries in the North Atlantic. Although cruise tourism is not the main activity that characterizes Greenland, the trend is slightly upward every year, an important role in this equation playing, among other things, weather conditions. In 2019, for instance, there were a total of 46,633 cruise tourists visiting Greenland aboard, which is translated into a 2% increase as compared to the cruiser passengers from 2018 (Statistics Greenland, 2019). According to the same source, most visits come from cruise ships with a capacity of up to 250 people (69 cruises bringing around 7,500 passengers in total), but there are also some ships with a capacity of more than 1200 people, which bring tourists (13 cruise bringing more than 22,000 passengers in total) eager to experience this Arctic land. Although at first glance they seem insignificant, these figures still indicate that tourists, although in small numbers compared to other destinations such as the Caribbean or the Mediterranean, are willing to visit this destination, despite its remoteness, unfriendly climate, difficult accessibility and (perhaps most importantly to mention) expensive to visit. However, this segment of activity contributes to the Greenlandic economy, assuring a supplementary income (Ren, et al., 2020).

Cruise tourism industry is a popular topic among scholars, mostly because its implications. Despite the fact that cruises are a real oasis of relaxation for tourists, researchers often associate cruise industry with a segment of activity having negative impacts the environment (Taylor et al., 2020) due to the carbon emissions and significant quantities of waste that it produces. Furthermore, the scholars claim that cruise industry does not bring significant economic benefits to local people and additionally, affects their cultural integrity (Cerveny et al., 2020; Nikčević, 2019).

Given that cruise tourism industry is a generator of immense quantities of carbon (The Maritime Executive, 2019), in a polar tourist destination such as Greenland , already affected by climate change (Bjørst, 2019), the topic of cruise tourism is important to be discussed, as increasing trends in cruise calls at Greenlandic ports means increasing quantities of carbon emissions and consequently, an accelerating factor for climate change. In this context, it is crucial to understand how cruise tourism sustainability is perceived in a changing Arctic ambience.

Although scholars address the topic of sustainable cruise tourism in many ways, little attention is paid to Greenlandic cruise tourism, particularly from a stakeholder angle. However, a recent comparative study among to specific cases (Qaqortoq and Ísafjörður) conducted by James et al. (2020) revealed that the perspectives of stakeholders in relation to sustainable cruise tourism are shaped by the development stage of the destination.

Given that literature is not abundant in regards to Greenland as cruise a whole tourist destination, the researcher considered that this paper has a particular importance for the research community.

The aim of this study is to analyze the term “ sustainable cruise tourism” from a stakeholder perspective, in order to comprehend how cruise tourism sustainability is perceived by stakeholders within the cruise industry, in a Greenlandic context.

Research questions

In order to explore the topic, the author of the study will try to answer the main research question “ How do cruise tourism stakeholders perceive the term sustainable cruise tourism in Greenland? “. In order to answer this research question, the following four sub-questions will be employed.

- How do the stakeholders involved in the Greenlandic cruise tourism industry understand the term “*sustainable cruise tourism*”?
- What practices do the stakeholders implement in order to forward the sustainability of cruise tourism sector in Greenland?

- How is the collaboration among the stakeholders involved in Greenlandic cruise tourism?
- What sustainable practices do the stakeholders plan to implement in the future, in order to make cruise tourism more sustainable in Greenland?

This project can be defined as being a study that encompasses knowledge gained by the researcher from three different areas: the European Studies programme, the Arctic specialization and the Tourism programme for three different reasons: it is focusing on cruise tourism- which is a part of Tourism programme, it concerns Greenland, an Arctic destination- which is a part of Arctic specialization programme and finally, it is tied to the European Studies Programme as Greenland and the European Union still have a collaboration relation and further more, the European Union is a player in the Arctic. Thus, it's Arctic policy has implications for tourism area when taking into account climate change problematic and the proactive role of the European Union in this regard.

Background on Greenland

Part of the Kingdom of Denmark, Greenland approved in 2009 the Self-Government Act in a referendum, which allows for taking responsibilities in various areas, excepting foreign, defense and security policies, which remain under Danish control.

The fishing industry is a main contributor to the Greenlandic economy. Yet, not sufficient to guarantee an independent country in the future. Therefore, Greenland tries to find ways to explore its natural resources, as well as to develop tourism industry, for the purpose of having a stable economy that can led to an independent state.

Greenland still has ties to the European Union (the EU), despite the fact that it is not longer a member since 1985. In order to better understand its relation to the EU, some insight on the role of the European Union in the Arctic, as well as the role of the EU in relation to Greenland will be further depicted.

The role of EU in the Arctic

The European Union (EU) is a player in the Arctic (Paul, 2021). Although seen as an “external actor with regard to the Arctic Ocean” (Dolata, 2020: 8), the EU is a part of the Arctic through

Finland and Sweden, both countries being member states of the union. Although Denmark is a member of the European Union, its Arctic status is given by Greenland and Faroe Islands (Dolata, 2020), which are not a part of the EU, but it is mentionable that Greenland is a member of OCT- Overseas Countries and Territories, which implies thus connection with the EU. In regards to Norway and Iceland, despite their status as non-EU countries, these states have connections with the EU through their EEA membership (European Economic Area), as well as through Schengen cooperation (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, 2021). The Arctic policy forwarded by the European Union is challenged by the diversity of issues that arise in various areas and need to be addressed- issues that either fall into national jurisdictions of the members or into the EU competence or even into a shared competence, which gives the Arctic policy a “dual nature” character Dolata, 2020).

In big lines, the EU policy from 2016 in regards to the Arctic area concerns three main focal points: international cooperation, climate change and sustainable development (European Commission, 2016). Giving that the Arctic recently gained geopolitical and geoeconomical importance, the EU considered that it is critically important to update its policy in terms of security dimension (Paul, 2021), hence in July 2020 was launched a public consultation with the purpose of updating its Arctic policy. The consultations ended in November 2020 and involved a variety of Arctic stakeholders, who emphasized the importance of the EU in the Arctic area.

The new update will further emphasize the previous three focal points, namely international cooperation, sustainable development and climate change; furthermore, the document will encompass aspects on security- a term that should be understood in a broader sense, integrating aspects on “ human, economic, environmental, climatic, planetary, energy, military and state security” (Dolata, 2020:43).

In regards to maritime transport in the Arctic, the EU is playing a role as well, in terms of providing regulations or using its satellite programmes with the aim of participating to maritime infrastructure building process.

The EU and Greenland

Greenland was part of the European Union (then European Economic Community) from 1973 until 1985 when, after gaining autonomy in 1979, took the decision to leave the Union and to become an OCT member, the rationale behind this step being to regain control over its fisheries (Gad, 2014).

Since the Treaty of European Union -TEU- and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union-TFEU- are not applicable in Greenland case, the legal framework for the EU-Greenland relations is given by three documents: the Overseas Association Decision with the OCTs, the Decision of Association together with the Joint Declaration on relations between the EU and Greenland and the Fisheries Agreements (Campins Eritja, 2017).

Closer collaboration with the EU was the objective of a decision, namely the Decision of the Council 2014/137/EU for the 2014–2020 period, which involve a twofold purpose : to help Greenland in regards to sustainable development issues as well as in concern to improve the capability of the Greenlandic authorities to draw up and enforce national legislation (Campins Eritja, 2017).

As the above mentioned author underlines, the document emphasizes that the major domains touched by this provisions are the following: education and training, tourism and culture, natural resources, climate, mobility of the workforce, social protection systems, food safety, and research and innovation in areas such as energy, climate change, disaster resilience or the sustainable use of living resources. According to the European Commission website, the financial aid Greenland received in regards to this project was €217.8 million (www.ec.europa.eu).

In regards to fisheries aspects, the EU and Greenland agreed on a new partnership in the beginning of this year (8 January 2021), for the next four years. The agreement can also be extended for a period of two years, as the European Commission mentioned. The document will offer the legal framework for the European vessels to continue their fishing activities in the Greenlandic waters, as well as persist in the advancement of fishing industry in the island. The partnership will bring Greenland an income of € 16 500 000 each year, a consistent part of it (almost € 3 million) going to the fisheries development' s promotion, as it is mentioned

on the website of the European Commission (www.ec.europa.eu). As a supplemental profit, Greenland will also receive remuneration coming from the EU ship-owners who must pay license fees in order to benefit from fishing opportunities (Ibid). As a final note, the European Commission estimates that the whole protocol will bring not less than €99 000 000 to the Greenland's budget for the stipulated period.

In regards to black carbon emissions- an issue of high concern in the Arctic- it must be mentioned that EU has launched an initiative called “ the EU-funded action on black carbon in the Arctic “ (from 2018-2020), in order to make steps toward addressing this issue. The action was designed to make improvements in the sphere of knowledge on black carbon emissions, to share these knowledge and rise awareness in this sense, to develop technical recommendations and analysis on different prospects, as well as to strengthen the cooperation at international level on black carbon (www.eua-bca.amap.no). To do this, the focus was centered around three main sources for black carbon emissions: gas flaring, domestic heating and maritime shipping. The project's overall goal was thus to underpin the Arctic Council' s effort in this area and to contribute “ *to the climate and clean air policies and health benefits of Arctic and non-Arctic nations through measures to reduce black carbon emissions*” (ibid.) . On the long term, the action seeks to path a common way for other countries and Arctic stakeholders towards a greener future.

The latest initiative in order to address climate change is the European Green Deal, which sets out ambitions in order to eliminate greenhouse gases by 2050; supplying clean energy, mobilizing the industry for a circular economy, intensifying the movement to smart mobility are only some of the focal points stipulated in the agenda.

All these actions have a great importance not only for the European countries, but also for the Arctic as a whole. As shipping in the Arctic is one factor that accelerate the global warming and climate change, the cruise tourism sector being included too, it is understandably that any effort to address this challenge is beneficial for the environment and people residing in the Arctic area.

To conclude, the EU is not only a partner in relation to Greenland, but also a player in the Arctic area through its members states, the EEA and OCT, where it's status is that of being a lawmaker. The EU is a consumer of products from the Arctic (fish, oil, gas), but at the same

time a contributor to the global warming and climate change, which have an impact on the Arctic (and the whole world). Consequently, the EU is leading the global fight against climate change, through its initiatives, but most importantly to mention is that the EU is doing efforts in order to contribute to a safe, prosperous and peaceful Arctic (Michael Mann- the EU Ambassador at Large for the Arctic, video speech, 2021).

The following section encompasses a literature review on sustainable cruise tourism and stakeholders, with the view of giving the reader a deeper depiction of the concept as studied by scholars in their works.

Literature review

Sustainable cruise tourism and stakeholders

The concept of sustainability was discussed and defined in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission, in their report “ Our Common Future”, when referring to the term as being a way of “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). This is one of the most intensely used definitions, being cited in the vast literature, due to the fact that it provides a complete description of the term. Sustainability is about using the present resources and satisfy the current needs in a responsible manner and with respect to the future generation.

Grober (2015) considers sustainability a holistic concept, as it encompasses “ the overall whole”. In his article called “ The discovery of sustainability. The genealogy of a term”, he points out that ecology, economy as well as social justice are three components that depict the understanding of sustainability and most importantly, these components are extremely linked

to each other, such that “ *new patterns of production and consumption become apparent, patterns which are compatible with the bearing capacity of the ecosystems, and which will drastically reduce our ecological footprint*”. Moreover, he highlights that through the “ eyes” of sustainability, people see the economy in a different manner, channeled on a lower- resource use as well as on social welfare. Additionally, he looks at this term as being something that is not achievable at some point, but rather is a guidance for a voyage into a futurity that is unknown, admitting that “ *sustainability is a quest*”.

While many scholars define sustainability as a notion integrating a three-pillar format-economic, environmental and socio-cultural- (Purvis et al., 2019; Boyer et al. 2016), Ekardt (2015) views sustainability as a political issue, affirming that “ *the demand for permanent and globally maintainable modes of life and economics*” is a complete definition in this sense . Following a similar line, Gad et al. (2019) depict sustainability as *political term*, as it has the power to model narratives in regards to forthcoming improvements, while Genç (2016) argues that sustainability is an *ethical stance*.

While criticizing the Burtland’s definition of sustainability as being incomplete, as it only encircles two pillars (social and environmental dimensions), and similarly “ the three- legged stole” model as being an approach that has turned in a prevalent metaphor, as it insinuates an independence and not an interdependence among the three dimensions, Spangerberg (2015) firmly underlines that sustainability must include a four dimensional component: the institutional pillar- an element that is often neglected. He also claims that sustainability is not only about needs, but also about limits.

It is clear thus to admit that sustainability is interpreted and defined as a complex concept that pay attention not only to the environment, but also to the economy and social and cultural aspects. Scholars have also different positions vis-à-vis what sustainable really means and, most importantly, what needs to be sustained when thinking about sustainability (Gad et al., 2019). Ideally, it should be about balancing the three different dimensions of sustainability as a concept, but this may be far for reaching in a real context.

Discussed in a tourism context, sustainability seems to be even more challenging to be defined, if ever considered to be a sector that may be sustainable (Johnson, 2020) given the high level of pollution that results from this activity. Moreover, in an Arctic context, this is even more

difficult to be accomplished, as Chen & Chen (2016) concluded in a study regarding tourism services in the Arctic: “*Sustainability, a complex agenda encompassing economic social and environmental benefits, may be considered as the most daunting task to achieve.*”

Cruise tourism is a growing sector, globally speaking (Lohmann & London, 2014), which is significant for the fact that it brings economic benefits, creates job opportunities and most notably- allow tourists to visit places that could not be accessed through other alternatives, offering them memorable experiences. On the other hand, cruise tourism puts a lot of pressure on the environment (Dimitrovski et al., 2021, Lück et al., 2021), as it is a contributor to water pollution, air pollution and other equivalent issues.

The idea of sustainable cruise tourism is a targeted topic in the literature, as many discussions in relation to this concept often arise. The three-pillar model seems to be a common way in order to debate on this subject (Dimitrovski et al., 2021; Cerveny et al., 2020, Santos et al., 2019). In this view, scholars analyze in their studies the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects generated by this segment of tourism as interdependent dimensions that (in an idealistic circumstance) should be equally balanced.

When studying the topic of sustainable cruise tourism in marine world heritage sites, Cerveny et al. (2020), document that cruise tourism is an activity that produces income at destination and provides job opportunities, but consequently there are trade-offs to be reflected on. The authors further give some examples in this sense, emphasizing that cruise vessels have the capacity to transport a large number of tourists at once, and thus are able to expose a large audience to spectacular habitats and landscapes. Concurrently, the cruise ships put a lot of pressure on the given landscape, as factors such as black carbon emissions, wastewater release and noise pollution negatively impact the environment and marine wildlife. Their findings show that the switch to new technologies able to properly treat the wastewater before discharge, as well as the shift to more environmentally friendly fuel, such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) or even to electric vessels are not only a desire, but also a necessity. Additionally, noise restrictions and safe distances would make a difference in marine wildlife welfare, if strictly imposed through regulations. In regards to economic aspects, the aforementioned authors highlight that cruise ships generate revenues, but these should bring a contribution to local economies too, as often they lack financial resources that are necessary to build infrastructure or facilities. Moreover, the financial gain should be spread out more uniformly into the local

communities, thus negotiations with cruise lines in order to develop sustainable strategies in this sense need to be done. In terms of socio-cultural side, the authors of the same paper suggests that local interpreters are a key-factor in order to “connect” the visitors with the destination’s cultural background and local community, while issues such as crowding (and the outcomes of this inconvenience) as well as a weakened tourist experience are on the list of drawbacks and must to be taken into account.

Similar points of view are shared by the majority of scholars when dealing with topics around cruise tourism and sustainability. In the same line with Cervený et al. (2020), Nikčević (2019) argues that cruise tourism industry is a contributor to the local community from an economic perspective, through the revenues coming from port fees and charges collection, local employment creation and spending generated by cruise passengers (local souvenirs, handicrafts, entrance tickets at cultural objectives and so forth), but at the same time is a contributor to environmental devastation. She points to the fact that cruise ships are a serious concern for the air quality, as their emissions contain harmful compounds that causes threats not only to the environment and marine wildlife, but also to the people residing in that area. Another point that she mentions relates to carrying capacity of the destination, emphasizing that mega ships are hardly managed at port, proper infrastructure being needed in this regard. Also the large number of visitors (some cruises may transport up to 6000 people at once) at the same time puts pressure on the normal life of the locals: overcrowding, traffic congestion, pace disturbance of the traditional way of living and other similarities.

With regards to the Arctic area, the situation is even more delicate, given the fragile nature and harsh climate of the region (Shijin et al., 2020). In their investigation regarding the polar tourism, Shijin et al. (2020) draw attention on climate change as a phenomenon that enables tourism to prosper in the Arctic and Antarctic; this point of view is shared by many scholars when discussing about the climate change or polar tourism, such as Nuttal (2020), Dawson et al. (2018), Chen & Chen (2016) being some of them.

Shijin et al., (2020) argue that tourism has multiple negative impacts the environment, which consequently lead to the amplification of climate change occurrence. Furthermore, they consider that tourism and climate change are in an interrelated position. When referring to cruise tourism in cold waters, the same authors evaluate that cruise tourism activities are seriously at risk due to floating ices and icebergs, making the entering in ports very challenging. Similarly, the movement of icebergs, the ice shelves that crash or the glacier terminal ice that calves make

the ship unstable, as enormous waves are produced, putting the safety of passengers at high risk. According to the authors, these phenomena happen in the Arctic (Alaska and Greenland being emphasized as examples) causing serious damages on cruise ships. By taking this into consideration, the sustainability of cruise tourism is a matter of safety that needs to be considered. Going further into environmental issues, they point that cruise tourism is a cause for hunting disturbance, breeding site disturbance, and other similar examples relating to Arctic fauna and flora as well.

Equally to Cerveny et al. (2020) and Nikčević (2019), Shijin et al. (2020) assert that cruise passengers have an impact on communities in various ways: through the high demand of resources (such as water, energy), the pressure on the routes (which are already fragile), through crowding which produces chaos, affecting indigenous lifestyle. The authors mention that expedition cruises in Canadian Arctic led to negative consequences, particularly the sale of marine mammals parts in the form of souvenirs. Following the same pattern as the aforementioned authors, they point out the fact that locals receive too little from this activity, in the sense of social benefits. Therefore, in their view, making cruise tourism more sustainable, means making new improvements, such as stricter regulations aiming to protect the fragile environment, infrastructure and facilities creation, better economic dispersion into the local community and collaboration with the residents in order to add more value in tourists' experiences.

In regards to polar tourism, discussions around expedition cruise as a potential contributor to the sustainability of cruise tourism are brought to light by Taylor et al. (2020). Expedition cruise - which are different from conventional ships in terms of size - usually transporting up to 200 passengers, in contrast to conventional ships that have capacity for 3000 or even more people - adventurous itineraries - as they don't require infrastructure as the big ships do, allowing for access in remote places and small communities, tourist profile - typically people interested in the nature and history of the place to be visited and more environmentally-friendly operation practices that are required to respect due to their operations in vulnerable places, such as fuel consumption, quality of the fuel, waste reduction and wastewater treatment (www.cntraveler.com, 2020) are recently a popular segment of cruising in the Arctic and Antarctic, as Taylor et al. (2020) state. In their article "Arctic expedition cruise tourism and citizen science: a vision for the future of polar tourism" they argue that citizen science aboard expedition cruise vessels could be a twofold remedy: contributing "to

a sustainable Arctic observing system, and alter the passive tourist gaze” (Taylor et al., 2020:104).

Remaining in the area of cruise ships, it must be mentioned that there is a need for vessels to be more sustainable, especially when considering their impact on the environment (Genç, 2016). Correspondingly, Carmosino et al. (2021) suggest that cruise ships need to be upgraded, introducing thus the term “ smart ships” in the vocabulary adjacent to cruising sector. While pointing to new technologies aiming to design a vessel that is more friendly with the environment (the use of LNG fuel, for instance), the authors also that sustainable development of cruise industry is not only relating to vessels’ design itself, but to the whole process linked to this sector:

“The sustainable development of the cruise sector cannot only concern the ships themselves, but must include everything connected to them, from production to circulation. For this reason, sustainable design must also include the terminals and port spaces dedicated to cruise ships. We must, therefore, also speak of “green ports”, focusing on the value of energy consumption, the production of discharge, and the collection of waste while the cruise ship is stationary in port. “ (Carmosino et al., 2020:51)

The literature is also focused on cruise passengers and their financial contributions to host destination . For instance, Casado-Díaz et al. (2021) have argued in their study conducted in Valencia (Spain) that cruise tourists spend little money at the destination, while Sorrentino et al. (2019) showed that typically, when exploring the destination in organized tours, cruise tourists spend more money than those who experience the destination on their own.

Relative to stakeholders and sustainability of tourism in the Arctic, Chen & Chen (2016) note that the role of the government is absolutely essential in this equation. Since the Arctic area deals with issues such as seasonality, the government should find ways to support the business within the industry, especially to the smaller one, which are the most vulnerable in the rest of the year, when tourists are not there. According to the authors (Chen & Chen, 2016), the support should be not only in the form of financial aid, but also in the form of expertise, new techniques that help businesses to make themselves known to tourists. Therefore, together with the other stakeholders within the industry should collaborate, bring the issues to the table and find

feasible solutions. Additionally, the same source indicate that the role of the government should be proactive and directed towards environmental protection, thus discussing potential scenarios with host communities with the scope of better understanding global warming effects on these destinations, afterward imposing stricter regulations to prevent the consequences generated by climate change must be the urgent need to consider when discussing not only cruise tourism sustainability, but tourism sustainability as a whole.

However, it is important to mention that cruise lines have the power to choose their itineraries as they wish and in accordance with the permission that they receive from host communities (Dawson et al., 2017). Therefore, when stricter regulations are in place, cruise lines simply avoid that destination, in case that they cannot meet the requirements; the same happens when cruise organizers are not able get in contact with destination, for the purpose of establishing cultural events and shows for their passengers. Consequently, the cruise ships will not stop at destination, and thus no economic or cultural benefit will be brought into the community (ibid.). Concerning regulations and the smaller vessels, the aforementioned authors bring into attention that is not unusual for private small ships to break the law, simulating their non-commercial status, in order to enter in protected areas.

The idea of collaboration among stakeholders for making cruise tourism sustainable is also shared by Lohmann & London (2014). In their study called “Power in the context of cruise destination stakeholders’ interrelationship”, the focus is on the infrastructure factor as a key player in cruise tourism industry. According to this analysis, the cruise lines employ power through the decision of calling or not into a port, and consequently, through the commercial link with the host destination, two examples being emphasized in this regard: berthing and supply chain security. However, there are negotiations with the given port, in order to obtain concessions on the long-running, but it may be possible for cruise lines to get full or partial ownership on cruise facilities. The authors highlight the fact that a cruise line that can command in both directions (berthing and supply) is a partner that ensures the port a long-term stability, a confidence, thus this aspect will weigh when planning infrastructure improvements. In regards to community, the article underlines that cruise destination’stakeholders (the government, local businesses and inhabitants) exercise power as well, for instance by challenging the improvement of cruise terminals or in regards to incentives aspects. As a final note, the study draws attention on the fact that collaboration among stakeholders is essential when developing long-term businesses ; nevertheless, before engaging in doing improvements

such as cruises infrastructure and facilities, it is important to evaluate the potential of the destination, the stage of its development and also the approaching manner of the destination as a cruise destination- it was the cruise line interest to put the destination on its list or it was the destination's offert.

In relation to Greenlandic cruise tourism sustainability, there are not many studies in the recent literature that deals with this topic from a stakeholder perspective, not even as a general subject. However, James et al. (2020) approach this topic in a comparative study on Icelandic cruise tourism and Greenlandic cruise tourism, concluding that “ *destination development stage and the relative importance of land- based tourism frame the ways in which stakeholders perceive the sustainability of cruise tourism*”. Furthermore, their study highlights that stakeholders's perceptions on cruise tourism sustainability are essential in the policy making process, impacting the way cruise tourism is regulated.

The views on cruise tourism sustainability discussed in this section are helpful not only for the reader to contour an overall image on this topic, but also for the exploration of the subject in the analysis part of this paper.

The next chapter deals with the chosen theoretical approach for this study, which constitutes a lens through which the researcher will look at the research topic- stakeholders' s perspectives on Greenlandic cruise tourism sustainability.

Chapter 2. Theory

This chapter seeks to present the theoretical basis employed in this study that will help the investigation process of the research topic, which is “ stakeholders’ perspectives on sustainability of cruise tourism in Greenland”. Therefore, the researcher decided to analyze this subject through the lens of *stakeholder theory* and completed by the *sustainable development concept* (integrating the three pillars of sustainability -economic, environmental and socio-cultural).

Some definitions need to be provided before taking the reader into further discussions on the theoretical approach and its details.

Defining concepts

The term *stakeholder* refers to a person that has a stake, an interest in relation to a given activity (McGrath & Whitty, 2017). Consequently, in tourism industry (in this case study being concerned the cruise tourism segment), the stakeholders are the players having an interest in (cruise) tourism activity (Minnaert, 2020; Roxas et al., 2020; Silvar, 2018).

A clear categorization in regard to stakeholders involved in cruise tourism and their role is presented by London & Lohmann (2014), the main actors in cruise tourism being divided into four categories: cruise industry, gatekeeper stakeholders, port side stakeholders, shore side stakeholders. In order to have a better image on cruise tourism stakeholders, a table will be provided below (figure 1).

Figure 1. *Stakeholders in tourism industry*

Category	Actors	Role
Cruise industry	<i>Shareholders Executive/management Company of ships Cruise tourists Overarching cruise industry associations</i>	<i>Owning, operating and managing the cruise lines, trading affairs and vessels</i>

Gatekeepers stakeholders	<i>Port owners, operators and management</i>	<i>Establishing whether possibly for vessel, travelers and crew to visit the place</i>
Port side stakeholders	<i>Cruise terminal proprietors and operators Port officials Ship service suppliers</i>	<i>Engaged with the ship and cruise tourists in the port and cruise terminal zone</i>
Shore side stakeholders	<i>Government Local authorities Developers/investors Host tour operators and handlers Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) Tour and attraction proprietors and operators Local transport suppliers Local businesses and business organizations Emergency, health and security providers Local inhabitants and NGOs Facilitators (such as the press, academic community, consultancy and lobby organizations)</i>	<i>Engaged with cruise tourists and crew when onshore</i>

*Source: *London & Lohmann, 2014:28*

The term *sustainable development* is defined as being a process of advancement that implies in a simultaneous way the pursuance of environmental quality, economic flourishing, human development, social fairness, freedom, human values and cultural variety (Rabie, 2016). Thus, it is focused on the three scales proposed by sustainability concept: the environment, the economy and the society (including cultural aspects).

Portraying the theoretical foundation

1. Sustainable development

With respect to *sustainable development* concept, Mensah (2021) argues that this term has gained much attention and controversy among scholars, as finding a proper definition in this sense seems to be a challenging task. However, the author points to the fact that sustainable development is a progressive trend taking place within the framework of three pillars of sustainability: the economic, environmental and social dimensions and seeks to find a balance among these three pillars. Explaining further, Mensah (2021) admits that today’s challenges around the world, notably climate change, water insufficiency, hunger, poverty, inequality or insecurity are focal points to be addressed when conceptualizing what sustainable development is about. In addition, it is mentioned that sustainable development is about finding solutions that respond not only to the current needs, but also to the generations to come’s needs.

Back in 2012, at a conference in Rio de Janeiro aiming to find universal objectives in order to address environmental, social and economic urgencies happening worldwide, the United Nations (the UN) established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a replacement for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were laid down in 2000, as an attempt to end poverty. The SDGs came thus as a further step in order to “ finish” what they “ started” (the UN website www.un.org), as that in 2015 all the member countries have adopted the 17 goals as a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ibid.). The same source admits that despite the efforts that have been made in many areas, there is still much to be done for meeting the SDGs by 2030. Moreover, it is also mentioned the fact that the whole process is unfolding at a slower tempo and smaller scale than it is required. For the purpose of providing the reader with an overall understanding of SDGs, figure 2 will be utilized in this sense.

Figure 2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) forwarded by The United Nations (the UN)



*Source: United Nations official website

When approaching the topic of sustainable development, Rabie (2016) emphasizes the importance of balancing the pillars such in a way that allows people to meet their current needs, while maintaining the same responsible pattern for the allowing the future generations to do the same. Besides, he claims that big companies should not take advantage of this concept for protecting their own stake, impeding poor states to advance and boost their economies.

Moving the focus of the discussion towards tourism industry, sustainable tourism means

"Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities"

(United Nations World Tourism Organization website, www.unwto.org)

This definition emphasizes that all the stakeholders within tourism industry and their needs should be taking into consideration when developing tourism in a sustainable manner, through the lens of the three pillars: the economic, social and environmental dimensions. As UNWTO website highlights, the guidelines and management practices for tourism' sustainable development concern all the segments of tourism and all categories of tourist destinations. In addition, finding a *suitable* balance among the three pillars *must* be established for achieving tourism' sustainability on the long-run.

According to the same source, in relation to economic pillar, tourism sector needs to make use of natural resources in a sustainable manner, having an proactive role in the preservation of environmental heritage and ecosystems. In terms of socio-cultural aspects, tourism industry should respect host destination' authenticity, cultural and traditional patrimony; in addition, tourism industry should be a contributor to inter-cultural comprehension and toleration. In respect to visitors, they should be able to receive a *valuable* experience, as they are the "demand" in tourism business. Lastly, in concern to economic dimension, tourism industry should bring financial benefits to *all the stakeholders* involved in tourism sector; furthermore, the benefits (including employment security, earning opportunities, social services, contributions to poverty reduction) should be *equitably* distributed into host communities.

There are three major sustainable development goals applicable in tourism industry : Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production) and 14 (life below water) (UNWTO, 2017). As tourism is an interdependent activity, having thus a cross cutting nature, it has the potency to bring a contribution in a direct or indirect manner in the achievement process of all 17 SDGs (ibid.). Figure 3 highlights the three SDGs goals applicable in tourism industry.

Figure 3. Tourism SDGs



*Source: World Tourism Organization official website, 2017

According to UNWTO report from 2017, the three SDGs will contribute to a more sustainable tourism as follows:

- Goal 8, target 8.9 by creating jobs and promoting local cultural heritage and products through the implementation of sustainable practices in this area
- Goal 12, target 12.b by developing and implementing tools that allows for sustainable development impact's monitoring for sustainable tourism
- Goal 14, target 14.7 by increasing the economic gains to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) from the sustainable usage of maritime resources, encompassing also through managing fisheries, aquaculture and tourism in a sustainable manner.

However, Soratana et al. (2021: 2) criticizes this view, highlighting that tourism is developing in a faster tempo and thus it comes in conflict with other SDGs: Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy), Goal 13 (Climate action), Goal 14 (Life below water), and Goal 15 (Life on land). The authors admit that balancing the three pillars of sustainability in a tourism context is not always a simple task to achieve, as limitations emerge when transforming concepts and ideas into practical implementations (Soratana et al., 2021). As an example for emphasizing this statement, when a destination decide to implement practices that regard the environment and its preservation, the imposed limitations will have consequences on the economic dimension (*ibid.*).

As mentioned before, Rabie (2016) stresses the idea of economic prosperity in regards to developing societies, in sustainable development's equation as a whole approach. By contrast, when conceptualizing this view in a tourism-based context, Silvar (2016) notes that tourism development should not be comprehended as a target in itself, solely concentrated on the economic benefits, but rather as a way of bringing prosperity into local community and the environmental milieu as well, as the society and implicitly the industry depend on the environment. In addition, the author advocates that the environment "has no direct stakeholder" and for this reason, it should be prioritized, as no environment means no society.

"Environmental preservation is the key goal of sustainability: without it, society cannot exist, thus neither industry." (Silvar, 2016:2)

Remarks around the discussion of what exactly means sustainable development of tourism industry are also highlighted by the same author (2016). For the purpose of making clarifications in this sense, the author provides a set of antonyms that applies when developing tourism industry, drawing on Roland Berger Strategy Consultants from 2008. To facilitate the understanding upon these antonyms, Silvar (2016:3) presents them in a table. Figure 4 depicts the table below, as it is relevant for the analysis of this paper.

Figure 4. Differences among sustainable and unsustainable development

Sustainable development	Unsustainable development
<i>Gradual development</i>	<i>Fast development</i>
<i>Monitored development</i>	<i>Unmonitored development</i>
<i>Long run vision</i>	<i>Short run earnings</i>
<i>Quality- oriented progress</i>	<i>Quantity- oriented progress</i>
<i>Local control/collaboration</i>	<i>Control without local involvement</i>
<i>Envisioned development</i>	<i>Unscheduled development</i>
<i>Well-designed concepts</i>	<i>Modest initiatives</i>
<i>Local labour market</i>	<i>Foreign manpower</i>
<i>Authentic architecture</i>	<i>Misrepresenting architecture</i>

*Source: Silvar, 2016:3

2. *Stakeholder theory*

As the vast literature shows, making tourism more sustainable it is neither an easy duty to accomplish, nor involves isolated efforts from the stakeholders (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017). Stakeholders thus, cannot act in solitude in order to contribute to the development of tourism in a sustainable manner; furthermore, there is no perfect recipe that “ fits” in all the circumstances which tourism industry implies (Pejaska Risteska, 2019). Therefore, their role in developing sustainable tourism is impetuous necessary, as involvement and cooperation are strategic concepts in shaping the future of this industry (Ibid.).

Tourism industry is a complex and interdependent sector of activity and implies different actors from various other domains of activity (Minnaert, 2020). When developing tourism policies, it is essential to ensure that all the stakeholders are able to participate, to make their interest known and to “ have a say” regardless it’s power (ibid.). For that to be reached, it is crucial to identify who are the stakeholders in a given context, what stake and need they have and also what should be done such in a way that allows all the actors to have meet their needs. In this regard, *stakeholder theory* seems to be a useful tool to employ.

The term “stakeholder” and consequently “ stakeholder theory” emerged in 1984, when Robert Edward Freeman approached this subject in his paper “ Strategic Management: a stakeholder approach”. The author brought to light the fact that a business should be able to know which groupings are affected by its outcomes and respectively, which groupings are influencing business’s outcomes, instead of focusing on meeting the needs of shareholders (business owners) with priority. Stakeholder theory thus envisions who are the players in a given business, what are their stake, needs and goals and respectively, how they will act in order to meet their demands, their objectives, as Getz & Timur (2005) state. They propose a four-step technique framework when discussing the topic of sustainable development of tourism industry and its management, which will be presented in the next table (figure 5).

Figure 5. *Four-step approach in sustainable development of tourism*

Step	Objective description
1	<i>Mapping all the actors affected by sustainable development of tourism</i>
2	<i>Outlining their position, interest and requisites</i>
3	<i>Recognizing how adequately their needs are satisfied</i>
4	<i>Aligning tourism development strategies in order to respond to actors' needs</i>

*Source: Getz & Timur, 2005.

Based on this four-stage procedure, stakeholder theory make possible the involvement of all the players implicated in the sustainable development of tourism, regardless their influence and capital (Getz & Timur, 2005). As mentioned before, tourism industry is interconnected with several other industries, in order to function. That will automatically make room for various categories of third parties to take part in the process. The aforementioned authors draw attention on the fact that stakeholders often possess different views on the manner that should be employed with the purpose of meeting their interests and needs, thus divisive situations may arise; furthermore, the same source argue that, when making part from a specific group and having a common interest, the players presumably tend to agree with some initiatives while rejecting the others. This discordant positions some groups of stakeholders may have, will implicitly affect the whole process of sustainable development in the field of tourism, leading often to unsustainable outputs (Getz & Timur, 2005). Therefore, for the purpose of accomplishing the goal of sustainability in tourism, collaboration should be a relation that brings together all the relevant actors, “ *both inside and outside the government*” (Pejoska Risteska, 2019). Kruja & Hasaj (2010) share similar views on stakeholders involvement importance when developing tourism in a sustainable vision. The authors feature that the implication of multiple interested parties in this process gives possibilities to discuss an array of matters and interests and expectations, so multiple solutions are likely to be found. Moreover, the authors consider that stakeholder theory is a way of attenuating the tensions among stakeholders through discussions and collaboration, especially because tourism industry is often perceived as a sector where decision making process follows a top-down approach, thus the community’s needs are left outside (Soratana et al., 2021); similarly, competing interest and views of the experts are not a truly reflection of public’s needs (Beierle & Konisky,

2000 in Kruja & Hasaj, 2010). When citing Donaldson & Preston (1995), Kruja & Hasaj (2010) reveal that stakeholder theory is about involving all the actors when planning strategies, regardless their contribution's dimensionality (as some of them may not be equally engaged); further more, it is a requirement to recognize and understand their needs, even though they have a limited participation. Otherwise, the results will be nothing than a failure (Clarkson, 1995 cited in Kruja & Hasaj). In simple words thus, in a business context, that could be interpreted as being a picture of unhappy employees that are affected by conflicting and unsuitable working conditions, so the company is more likely to function in a deficient manner and finally collapse. The key words in this equation are stakeholders involvement, recognition of their needs and value creation, rather than prioritization of some stakeholders' interests (de Freitas Langrafe et al., 2020).

Stakeholder theory is widely employed in different business areas (Parmar et al., 2010). Studies regarding tourism and its sustainable development, make use of this theory, due to its relevance when discussing about stakeholders and their collaboration. Saito & Ruhanen (2017) found it (stakeholder theory) suitable in a study regarding power type in stakeholders collaboration, revealing that identifying stakeholders and understanding their stake and power is a major factor when planning strategies to develop a tourist destination in a sustainable manner. Stakeholder theory is an adequate instrument to employ when trying to analyze how properly the players collaborate for achieving sustainable goals in tourism industry. As such, Wondirad et al. (2020) evidenced in theory study on sustainable ecotourism in developing countries how the lack of collaboration among stakeholders affects the development of ecotourism. This two examples highlights the concept of *collaboration* as being at the core of sustainable development process. But collaboration is hard to reach when stakeholders groups have different liaisons among them, as it happens in the case of competitors (Getz & Timur, 2005). When collaboration cannot succeed for various reasons (no link, limited resources such as funds or knowledges,) facilitators come into play, creating linkages among the players that are not able for cooperation by themselves, making possible for all the actors to take part in sustainable development programming (ibid.).

Maybe the most important aspect of stakeholder theory is its last stage, presented in figure 5 (aligning tourism development strategies in order to respond to actors' needs). At this stage, policies that will be further implemented, should be harmonized such in a way that reflects the common acquiescence of the involved players, and most importantly, community's needs

(which are often neglected, as Soratana et al., 2021 underlined). This is the stage when all the discussions and plans are transferred into real-life context, therefore policy modifications and adjustments should be consciously done in this phase, in order to secure that all the needs (that are congruent with the idea of sustainable development of tourism) are meet and all the stakeholders “feel” that their voices were heard. A policy that encompasses sustainable solutions for all the issues displayed by the stakeholders involved in tourism development is considered to be a successful stratagem (Wondirad et al., 2020).

By contemplating all the aspects related to both stakeholder theory and sustainable development concept, the author of this paper consider that these instruments create a pertinent and exhaustive theoretical foundation for this study, deciding thus to employ them in order to explore the topic mentioned in the introduction chapter. The utility of stakeholder theory emerged form the fact that it allows the researcher to map all the stakeholders within cruise tourism area activating in Greenland, to understand their interests, needs and expectancy in regard to cruise tourism sector and consequently how their needs are meet. In addition, stakeholder theory will enable the researcher to explore aspects on stakeholders’ collaboration towards a more sustainable development of cruise tourism sector. Lastly, the concept of sustainable development and its encompassing pillars (economic, environmental and socio-cultural) will help the researcher to investigate how these dimensions are balanced in Greenlandic cruise tourism development, what sustainable practices are implemented or are planned to be implemented; correspondingly, sustainable development concept will facilitate the researcher to gain a deeper understanding on stakeholders’ perspective on sustainable cruise tourism in Greenland, which is essentially the aim of this project.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter deals with aspects on research approach, research design and data collection method employed by the researcher of this paper, in order to explore the topic of sustainable cruise tourism in Greenland from a stakeholder perspective. It will be divided into several sections, for the purpose of facilitating the reader to identify the aspects that are required in a research paper, and to understand the motivations underlying these choices.

Qualitative research

When deciding to study a specific topic, particularly within the social science domain, one could focus on choosing either a *quantitative* or a *qualitative* approach (Mehrad & Tahriri, 2019). While the former approach is usually linked to quantifiable “hard” data, such as mathematical, numerical and statistical data, often collected through surveys or questionnaires, the latter is linked to meaningful, “soft” data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) usually in a form of words or pictures, instead of numbers (Mohajan, 2018; Merriam, 2020) gathered when doing interviews, focus groups or other similar methods of data collection, aiming to capture the feelings, experiences or meanings people have in relation to a specific issue.

Qualitative research is a topic intensively discussed in the literature, as many scholars have different views on what qualitative research exactly means and moreover, how could be carried out. However, Ritchie et al. (2013) admit that aspects such as ontological (the nature of reality) and epistemological position (ways of learning about the world), study’s aim, the involved participants and even those who fund the study are crucial when employing a qualitative approach. Unlike quantitative research, which generally focuses on experimenting, predicting trends or testing a certain theory, qualitative research is about intensively studying a certain phenomenon in all its complexity, in order to understand it deeply, find solutions and even generate new theories (Mohajan, 2018; Mehrad & Tahriri, 2019). As Silverman (2017) states, qualitative studies are mostly about people’s experiences whilst quantitative studies are frequently about people’s behavior in a given context, which in simple terms means people’s feelings and perceptions about a specific situation they lived through is at a core of qualitative research, contrary to quantitative typology which focuses on how people react to a situation. A

final remark which characterizes qualitative research is that tends to answer “how” and “what” types of research questions rather than “how many” (Yin, 1994; Ritchie et al., 2013).

In this paper, the author decides to employ a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative one, for the following reasons. Firstly, the aim of this study is to find out how stakeholders within tourism industry in Greenland, particularly in cruise tourism sector, perceive the concept of “sustainable cruise tourism” and which experiences they have in this regard. In other words, their perspective on sustainable cruise tourism is at the core of investigation of this paper, the researcher aiming to deeply understand their thoughts when it comes to sustainability of this sector, or, to cite again Silverman (2017:3), “to understand what’s in inside people’s heads”, “to understand how they see situations”. Additionally, the researcher is interested in gathering data on how cruise tourism stakeholders in Greenland experience sustainability and what further implementations (sustainable practices in cruise tourism) they want to make. In this sense, the study is qualitative, as it seeks to capture fruitful information, deeper thoughts and valuable knowledge on sustainable cruise tourism from a stakeholder angle.

Keeping in mind this detail, the researcher of this paper emphasizes that this study will be conducted from a *constructivist* perspective, which is oftentimes employed when carrying out qualitative research studies with focus on complex phenomena happening in a contemporary context, particularly discussed within people’s experiences and thoughts framework (Adom et al., 2016). The constructivist philosophical paradigm acknowledges that the reality is constructed through people’s experiences (Sejzi & bin Aris, 2012; Adom et al., 2016), which means that people understand the world and will get knowledge about reality, based on their background, on the events they went through. Therefore, it is arguable that constructivist researchers view the reality as being subjective (Bahari, 2010), as people’s perceptions and experiences are varied, non homogeneous in their nature.

In terms of research design, this paper draws on case study approach, which will be discussed in the next section, afterward insights on method of data collection (qualitative interview, open-ended questionnaire, document analysis) will be provided to the reader, in order to get an overall picture of this study and how it will be conducted.

Research design- case study

As already mentioned, this research will use the case study approach as a form of research design. This particular tool is usually employed when the goal of “understanding complex social phenomena” is targeted by the investigator of the study (Yin, 2014:4), as it provides the opportunity to focus on a single unit, be it an individual/ group/geographical region and so forth (Zainal, 2007) in order to analyze in a intensive manner the topic or whatever objective the study is focusing on.

In order to advance a definition of the term “case study”, Baxter and Jack (2008:544) state that this tool represents “*an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources.*” Following a similar line, Zainal (2007:1-2) considers that a case study is a tool aiming to investigate phenomenons that happen in the real-life context and their implications, by doing a “*detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions*”. Considering these definition, one could conclude that a case study is a tool employed by researchers when dealing (in their studies) with situations that need to be intensively explored in order to get an in-depth understanding of them and possibly find solutions for them. Moreover, the analysis will be done considering a specific (sometimes a single) unit, such as a specific category of people/ group/ place, rather than a larger variety of targets.

Although case studies are frequently approached by researchers in their work, questions concerning the limitations involved by this research tool often arise in the literature. The most common criticism when doing case studies relates to “generalization aspects “ (Yin, 2014), in the sense that the findings of the research based on a case study are not generalizable (not applicable in order context). However, he points to the fact that indeed, case studies are not generalizable to “populations or universes”, but rather to “theoretical propositions”. Additionally, the same author (2014:5) emphasizes that case studies are also criticized for the fact that they give the researcher the “ tendency” to have a “ biased interpretation of data”.

Returning to this research paper, the author decides to conduct the study by utilizing the case study approach for several reasons. First and foremost, the focus of the study is to capture the perspectives of stakeholders on *sustainable cruise tourism*, which could be regarded as a

complex contemporary phenomenon happening in reality and need to be intensely investigated by the researcher. Furthermore, *the stakeholders* within this industry represents an outlined targeted group in this research, which is considered to be a “single unite” of exploration. In addition, given the fact that this paper is looking at a specific phenomena (sustainable cruise tourism) within a delimited geographical place, namely Greenland, could be another reason to admit that case study approach is a proper research design for this paper.

The next section will discuss which method of data collection will be utilized in this research paper, the author briefly depicting the selected tools , afterward providing a clear justification for making this decision.

Methods of data collection

This study employs both primary and secondary data, collected through three different methods, as it follows: qualitative interview and open-ended questionnaire for primary data collection and document analysis method for secondary data collection.

Primary data. 1. *Qualitative interview as a method of data collection*

The use of interview as a method of gathering data with the aim of conducting a qualitative research is a popular practice among many researchers (Turner, 2010). This extensive use of interview can be explained by the fact that it allows the researcher to collect information about the experiences lived by the participants, valuable and relevant details and viewpoints on certain topics (Rowley, 2012). Interview usually generates data that provides the interviewer with additional information, which he/she did not initially seek to obtain in terms of the questions addressed to the interviewee.

The following lines will firstly provide some insights on categories of interviews, afterward depicting the choice (in the sense of interview type and its importance for this study) made by the author of this paper.

There are different categories of interviews identifiable in the literature. However, frequently they are grouped into structured interviews, unstructured interview, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews (Alsaawi, 2014).

Brief description of the four categories of interviews

Structured interviews represent a “controlled way” of gathering data from the participants, as the interviewer establishes and note the questions to be answered beforehand, in the same time interaction with the interviewer and interviewees being limited, in the sense that there will be not that much interruption among them in order obtain a more detailed answer when necessary, there will be not that much “flexibility”(Alsaawi, 2014; Gall, Gall and Borg, 2003 cited in Turner, 2010). According to Dörnyei (2007) cited in Alsaawi (2014) this type of interview is

usually employed in the context when the interviewer knows precisely what kind of data he/she try to obtain.

Unstructured interviews are characterized by lack of structure, as pre-established questions are not employed, the whole process being based on flexibility (Turner, 2010; Alsaawi, 2014). In other words, this kind of interview is more like a conversation, where the interviewer only ask a question, afterward the respondent answer to the extent that he/she wants, as Bryman (2008) cited in Alsaawi (2014) emphasizes. Although some researchers employ this tool when trying to collect data, there are also many researchers that regard this type of interviews with critique, stating that unstructured interviews are “unstable” or “unreliable” due to discrepancy in the interview questions (Creswell,2007 cited in Turner, 2010), additionally they generate a lot of data which sometimes are not relevant for the research (Alsaawi, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews are a common choice among researchers, as this approach allows them to collect in-depth and fruitful informations on a specific topic, due to the “mixed” feature of this tool (Turner, 2010; Alsaawi, 2014). Semi-structured interview involves both pre-written questions and flexibility, in the sense that it allows also for clarification and deeper responses, as the interviewer “*gives the interviewee the chance to elaborate and explain particular issues through the use of open-ended questions*” (Alsaawi, 2014). Given that open-ended questions will be asked, it is recommended to pilot these beforehand, in order to avoid any impediment in obtaining rich and relevant answers from respondents (Gill et al., 2008; Turner, 2010; Alsaawi, 2014).

Focus group interviews are interviews employed when adopting a focus-group approach, often consisting in a group of six to twelve participants (Dörnyei, 2007 cited in Alsaawi, 2014), in order to collect rich and qualitative data from the respondents, especially when the focus is on sensitive topics (Carey, 1994 cited in Alsaawi, 2014). In fact, the participants can debate on a specific topic and argue with each other, which is in the benefit of the interviewer, as he/she can collect fruitful data from their discussions. Despite its popularity among researchers, some scholars (Dörnyei, 2007 and Robson, 2011, both cited in Alsaawi, 2014) would argue that this approach has it’s difficulties , in the sense that it involves a lot of work, especially when it come to transcription aspects (difficult to transcribe when overlapping happens), respectively assuring confidentiality by the researcher is difficult to be achieved.

These are, on brief, the main categories of interviews utilized by researchers in their studies. For this paper, the author approach the semi-structured interview (open-ended questions), as she consider that this type of interview is helpful for this paper, providing valuable data form the participants (selected stakeholders will be the interviewees). Writing down beforehand some open-ended questions seems to be fruitful for this interview as a method of data collection, as the researcher have thus the opportunity to touch different points of interest which are linked to the research's topic (namely sustainable cruise tourism). In this regard, the author will have a clear image on what will be asked and make sure that will cover all the key points of the topic, as the aim of the interview is to get as much relevant data about the phenomenon of sustainability in cruise tourism industry, as well as to achieve the aim of this study (Gill et al., 2008). Concurrently, the researcher will give the participants the chance to present their point of view and to go back and forth to them when feeling the need to make certain clarifications, explanations and so on.

For this considerations, the researcher conducts the interviews with respect to flexibility aspects, as well as confidentiality side, starting with more easy questions and then gradually moving to more "sensitive" questions, as this technique is essential in order to build up trust and make the interviewee to "open-up", generating rich information (Gill et al., 2008), which are crucial for this study.

Interview recruitment

The recruitment of participants in this study is based on the categorization made by London & Lohmann (2014), (depicted in the previous chapter) in terms of stakeholders' identification in cruise tourism sector (cruise industry, gatekeeper stakeholders, port side stakeholders, shore side stakeholders). This approach has been an important facilitator for the researcher to identify stakeholders in cruise tourism industry in Greenland.

The interviews were conducted in the period February-March 2021, depending on each participant's availability. It must be mentioned that the process of getting in contact with most of them was facilitated by Elizabeth Cooper, whose help was crucial in this regard. She was not only willing to participate as a interviewee, but also to suggest some other stakeholders potentially interested in discussing about the topic. When following this strategy, which in research is called "snowball sampling" technique, it is more likely to get in contact with other

persons that want to take part in the study, compared to the situation when the researcher contacts the participants on his/her own, without any recommendation (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). In this way, they tend to trust more in the interviewer, since the person who nominated him/her has already participated.

This aspect was experienced in this study as well, in the sense that the researcher tried to get in contact with different actors within the cruise tourism field, playing a role in the Greenlandic cruise tourism. After undertaking the identification of stakeholders step, the researcher used the Internet (Google) in order to find their email address. Next step was to write them an email, where it was presented the fact that the author of this paper is a master student at Aalborg University in Denmark, and currently in the process of writing her master's thesis, focusing on cruise tourism sustainability in Greenland. As she need to collect data about this topic, they were ask to participate in a interview, if possible. When contacted without recommendation from another participant, the "yes" answers were considerably fewer than in the cases when previous recommendations were made. However, it happened that even nominated by another stakeholder, some of them refused to participate, stressing the fact that they are either busy or lack knowledge on the topic or, in some cases, not even replied back.

The next step was to establish a convenient date for conducting the interview. As a mention, some interviewee postponed the meeting, which made made the data collection process even slower than anticipated. Despite this, it must be highly emphasized that all 12 interviews that were conducted, were absolutely valuable experiences and extremely useful for the researcher, in the sense that a wide variety of essential knowledge related to the topic of this study were gained. It must be clearly underlined that, form a personal perspective, the interviews were memorable, amazing experiences, in that the researcher had the special opportunity to talk to various experts in the field of cruise tourism - people who, with great enthusiasm and desire to help, spent precious time and energy to share their stories, knowledge gained after many years of experience, thoughts and ideas about cruise tourism in Greenland. For the researcher, this wonderful opportunity of meeting such amazing people will forever remain a great privilege.

Conducting the interviews

As aforementioned, the researcher conducted a number of 12 qualitative interviews, with people residing in different places around the world: Greenland, Canada, Norway and Austria. These were conducted online via different platforms such as Skype, Zoom, Messenger, Whatapp and in 2 cases over the phone . This approach was the appropriate once, since it was not possible to do face-to-face interviews as ideally, due to various reasons, among which can be mentioned the following: the long distance between the interviewer's residing place, which is Denmark, and the interviewees's location; travel restrictions due to the current pandemic generated by SARS- CoV-2 known as "the new coronavirus" (World Health Organization website, October 2020); time limitations. Even if not benefiting from a face-to-face discussion, the interviews conducted online (video calls) were still a fruitful alternative, resembling to a great extent to the "traditional" qualitative interview (Salmons, 2012), and -with certainty- the only one available at the moment of writing this paper.

Depending on each participant input, the interviews length varies from 26 minutes (excluding the introductory conversation commenced before the audio recording actually started) to more than 1 hour. It is important to specify also that once the informants' s agreement to participate in the interview was obtained and a specific date was established for the online meeting, they were informed about their rights for taking part to this research , data protection, confidentiality and other similar aspects. Additionally, they were asked to fill-in, sign, and send back to the researcher (via email) an informed consent form for participating in the interview- document that was obtained *before* the date of the interview itself.

Excepting one single case, when a full anonymity was requested, all the interviews were audio recorded by using a phone. Then the researcher partially transcribed each interview, choosing the most relevant informations , which will be fundamental in the analysis part of this paper.

It was already mentioned that the interviews were conducted by using the "open-ended questions" approach. In this regard, the researcher prepared a set of 25 questions divided into four themes , according to the research questions structure (*the understanding of the term sustainable cruise tourism, collaboration among stakeholders, current sustainable practices and future sustainable practices*). In all the cases, the discussion started with a brief introduction about the researcher' s personal background (age, nationality, civil status,

education), followed by a short presentation of the interviewee background, afterward the flow slowly shifting to the topic.

As a last thing to be mentioned in regards to interviews is that the questions were asked according to each participant's profile and role, some of them remaining not answered as well as some new one were discussed, according to the flow of every conversation.

Primary data. 2. *Open-ended questionnaire method*

Given that one participant claimed the impossibility of being interviewed for different reasons, but still wanted to take part in this study, the researcher sent him via email a questionnaire containing open-ended questions so that the respondent's opinion on this topic could be captured as well.

In this case, the same data protection and confidentiality rules were taken into account. Basically, the interview guide was adapted in regards to the set of questions that fit the role and profile of the person being questioned. Similarly to the qualitative interview approach, a small introductory text about the researcher was written down before the body of questions beginning, so that the respondent has an idea about the person behind the study. Moreover, it was mentioned that some questions may be skipped if considered sensitive to be answered.

It is acknowledged that answering open-ended questions requires more effort from the respondents (time consuming, willingness to offer a proper and elaborated answer) than in the case when closed-ended questions are employed (Züll, 2016; Etikan & Bala, 2017). However, even though insufficient data may be collected when doing open-ended questionnaires, it is important to mention that every input is a gain of knowledge and every piece of information is valuable for the analysis part of this paper.

Secondary data. *Document analysis method*

The primary data collected for this research are valuable and essential for understanding and exploring the topic of sustainable cruise tourism in Greenland. Yet, not sufficient for a deep analysis; reflecting on this aspect, the researcher consider that is paramount to supplement the data with existing information that are pertinent to the topic.

For this purpose, secondary data stemming from sources such as written documents, legislation, reports, newspaper articles, information available on various websites (stakeholders' websites) were collected. Also, some interviewees highly recommended to look at their policies and strategies available on their websites, for a more detailed picture of their approach towards cruise tourism sustainability.

This method plays thus a significant role in this paper, as it is *supplementary* to the aforementioned techniques, respectively qualitative interview and questionnaire. Collecting data from different sources and using multiple methods is a common practice among scholars, as this procedure, known as the *triangulation method* seeks to “ add rigor to a study” (Cardno, 2018:626).

Data analysis

The data collected by the researcher, both primary and secondary, together with the theoretical framework, will be the basis of the analysis chapter.

Given that the interviews were partially transcribed (with additional notes) they are much easy to be analyzed and interpreted. Thus, the researcher decided to use a thematic analysis of the data, following the procedure of coding the data, then identifying the patterns among them

(similarities/ differences) in order to generate themes that will be further deeply analyzed. This is an appropriate method to use, especially when the interviews have been designed as semi-structured interviews (Cartwright, 2020). Additionally, when anonymity requested, the researcher only took notes. These follows the same pattern of investigation. Similar technique of analysis applies to the data collected through questionnaire and document analysis methods.

Quality assessment

Trustworthiness

Studies following a qualitative-based approach must clearly emphasize aspects on trustworthiness, in order to show the reader that the research's findings are reliable and valid (Cypress, 2017). Unlike quantitative studies, that grant reliability and validity through quantifiable data, qualitative papers often employ methodological instruments that do not allow for measurements, thus ascertaining that the results are credible is a necessary element to be included - an aspect often neglected by some researchers, which led to criticism from readers' side, pointing to the fact that the analysis and findings are biased (Gunawan, 2015).

Assuring trustworthiness is a process that embodies four dimensions: *credibility* (the findings are true and accurate), *transferability* (the results are suitable in similar contexts) *confirmability* (the results are based on the information collected from participants' contributions and not from biased inducement of the researcher) and *dependability* (the study will have the same outcome, if replicated by another researcher) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

However, Sandelowski (1993, cited in Gunawan, 2015) claims that *dependability* component affects the *credibility* dimension, for the reasons that reality is “ constructed” and “ multiple” within qualitative paradigm, thus there will be impossible to admit that an expert researcher could identify the same codes and themes as the initial researcher, given the same collection of data.

As a final point to mention, Gunawan (2015) consider that the suitable way to secure trustworthiness in qualitative research is “ *to do member checking, triangulation, detailed transcription, systematic plan and coding.*”

Transparency

Defined by Moravcsik (2019: 2) as being “*the obligation to make data, analysis, methods, and interpretive choices underlying their claims visible in a way that allows others to evaluate them*”, transparency in research is an ethical matter (Tuvalu-Mashiach, 2017).

“ *In my view, however, what social scientists should value most highly is not transparency, but the integrity of research, understood as research that reflects an honest and systematic search for truths about society, the economy, or politics.*” (Hall, 2016:32)

Hall (2016: 34) claims that replication (which is the process the researcher should implement by providing enough information such in a way that allows the reader to examine them , to understand and evaluate how the data analysis led to the given conclusions) in qualitative studies is not a genuine method to ensure transparency, as examining some transcripts or documents doesn't necessarily attest or contradict the results of the study; furthermore, the author states that this will implies another research work. Going further, Hall (2016) reveals that providing a variety of documents and transcripts is not indispensable for securing transparency, but rather it is an overvalued practice.

The same author concluded that scholars should approach a *systematic research* methodology, mention in detail the process of data collection, properly cite the sources employed in the research, and feature the foundation for their causal inference.

This study is conducted with respect to trustworthiness and transparency requirements by providing detailed and proper citation of the sources employed in this paper, accurate quotations of the interviewee, as well as doing systematic coding of data based on the interviews' transcripts (transcripts will be attached to this paper).

Limitations

There are also some limitations of this study, which will be explained in the following lines.

Firstly, *the findings of this research are not generalizable*, as the aim of this paper is to investigate sustainable cruise tourism phenomena in a single case, which is the Greenlandic cruise tourism.

Secondly, *this research will involve a limited number of stakeholders*, and therefore this aspect should be seen as a limitation of this paper, as some other stakeholders will not be included in this analysis, thus some points and aspects will be unexplored.

As a final remark, it would be ideally to cover this topic and its facets as much as possible, but given *the availability of resources* (such as data, time allocated for this research and paper length), delimitations have to be considered.

Chapter 4. Analysis

This chapter deal with the analysis of the data collected by using three different approaches, which are the qualitative interview, the open-ended questionnaire and the document analysis method. These are presented in liaison with the main opinions and concepts presented in the literature review section, through the lens of stakeholder theory supplemented by the three pillars of sustainable development concept, as previously depicted in chapter 2.

The data have been analyzed following the thematic analysis method, the researcher identifying four main themes, which were also structured such in a way that permits the researcher to answer the research questions mentioned in the introductory part of this paper . As such, the main four themes are:

1. *the understanding of the term sustainable cruise tourism*
2. *collaboration among stakeholders*
3. *current sustainable practices*
4. *future sustainable practices*

Each theme has multiple sub-themes, as resulting from the collected data after the thematic analysis step was completed. They will be presented in this chapter in the same order imposed by research questions sequence.

But before jumping into the deeper analysis of this first theme, the researcher have to mention that cruise industry in Greenland is, according to the data collected, at a developing stage, and it is taking place mostly on the southern and western sides of the island , as the eastern side is hard to be explored (the Arctic conditions- ice, weather does not allow exploration to the same extent). However, some big expeditions ships can sometimes access the eastern side.

1. The understanding of the term sustainable cruise tourism

When asked to depict their understanding on the term “ sustainable cruise tourism”, the experts shared their opinions not only about this particular concept, but also about sustainability as a general framework. To some of them, sustainability is perceived as relating to the environmental dimension, the idea of minimizing the risks and impacts on the nature, while still benefiting from it being emphasized. In this regard, one stakeholder affirmed:

“ When you ask about sustainability is also a question of what you mean by sustainability, because man has always impacted nature. And...the more people, the more impacts. What is sustainable and what is not sustainable? (...) [If considered that] Everything has to be just like it was, then no man’s activity is sustainable. Or is sustainability something where you can develop and maybe reduce the amount of [impacts on] nature, but still have the rest of the nature working, as it always has? “

(Henrik Skydsbjerg, manager at Tupilak Travel, interviewee)

Focusing on the cruise tourism sustainability as a concept to describe, another interviewee tried to portrait it as a matter of safety, first and foremost, arguing that the Arctic is a challenging milieu that firstly requires adequate equipment and endowments corresponding to the arctic climate conditions, especially when it comes to the big cruise ships. He points to the fact that in case of accident, it will be impossible to intervene due to the lack of materials:

“ In Greenland we have a huge risk with cruise ships; because they are not Arctic built; the smaller ones [cruise ships], the ones that go to Antarctica and polar regions [are equipped with icebreakers] ; but the other cruise ships, the big ones and most of the cruise ships here [Greenland] are not [equipped] which is a huge safety problem, because if they have a problem out (...), which is only a matter of time, (...) we can’t rescue them; we don’t have enough equipment or material to rescue them.”

(Erik Palo, owner and captain at Arctic Boat Charter, interviewee)

The interviews showed that there are similarities among many of the stakeholders in concern to the sustainability defined as a complex phenomenon which seeks to create a balance among

three different pillars : the environmental, economic and socio- cultural. In this regard, Elizabeth Cooper, industrial PhD fellow from Copenhagen Business School, depicted the term as a “ (...) a really, really complex phenomenon and I think that are so many other factors tided up in it like social issues, environmental issues, cultural issues, historical issues, economic issues... (...) it's a paradox.” They have also agreed upon the fact that sustainability as a holistic concept cannot be always perfectly balanced. Similarly, in cruise tourism industry it will be ideal to find an equilibrium that covers all three dimensions at the same time, but the reality shows that this is quite impossible, so the key is to optimize the profits while attenuating the detrimental effects. Sarah Woodall, the tourism destination manager from Visit South Greenland, provides a characterization in this sense, stating that:

“ For me, sustainability is always a balance between three different factors: the environment, the local community-the people and then the local economy. So, you always have to balance. And, of course you'll never gonna have a project or an industry that's always perfect on all three of these accounts, then you have to try to maximize the benefits as much as possible.”

(Sarah Woodall, interviewee)

In a similar manner, Alana Bradley- Swan, director of product at Adventure Canada, considers that sustainability, as a concept , follows the three pillars structure when analyzed: “ (...)you're looking at the impact it has on the environment, and the people and then, the economy (...) “, in common with Karin Strand, the vice- president of expeditions in Hurtigruten, who understand it as being “a compromise between us, actually being here (...) and the balance with nature, and the balance in our social economy”. However, Andrea Machacek, destination consultant (North Atlantic and Greenland) at Quark Expeditions draws attention to the fact that people misuse the word sustainability, in the sense that they put the focus exclusively on the environmental dimension. She points that particularly in cruise industry, the focus should be directed to the other two dimensions as well, which are the local economy and the socio-cultural side, on the long term. Her emphasis is that sustainability of cruise tourism should be considered as a “ way to make tourism beneficial to both sides, on a long term basis, not just kind of quickly grabbing and maximizing your opportunities, but just a sort of going forward on a steady pace to make it as mutually beneficial as possible.”

The following sections will analyze the term “ sustainable cruise tourism” through the lens of sustainable development pillars aforementioned, as it is approached by the stakeholders who took part to this study.

The environmental pillar – local concerns

The environmental pillar, that is regard as an important part of sustainable development in a broader sense, given that people and the society cannot exist without it- a point of view shared by Silvar (2018) and depicted earlier in this paper, in Greenlandic cruise tourism this pillar is concerned too, at least in the view of some stakeholders. While some respondents brought in the light aspects like tourist’s impact on the nature, some other underlined the cruise ships impact on the environment.

Protected areas

In this regard, Pitsi Høegh- Greenland Sagaland company’s owner- has drawn attention on the fact that cruise tourists have a tremendous negative impact on the “hot-spring ” areas. These are natural springs containing hot water that, in general, have a temperature which allows bathing. However, not all of them are suitable for bathing. In other cases, their temperature high enough to be harmful for human bodies, bathing in those cases may leads to burns or even death, according to the World of phenomena website (www.phenomena.org). Pitsi Høegh emphasized that the major impact on this protected area is caused by expedition cruise tourists, who all disembark at the same time in order to bathing (up to 400 persons), instead of exploring the place on smaller groups of 7-10 people. Here, she explained, the area is very fragile and very small, generally an attraction for individual tourists, not for cruise tourists. When in this area, cruise tourists cannot be controlled, therefore imposing stricter regulations either by the municipality or the government should be prioritized in her view, in order to protect the area. In addition, she mentioned that the same issue arise at the ruins of a older church, in southern Greenland, where tourists act unconsciously and uncontrollably. She highlighted that stricter measures should be imposed here as well.

Marine life

Concerns regarding marine wildlife were evoked by Henrik Skydsbjerg, when referring at whales and the impact caused by cruise tourism on their health. He points to the fact that seeing

whales is a popular attraction for many cruise tourists, offering them a memorable experience. At the same time, this is nothing than a huge pressure on whales' s health. He mentioned that these mammals are not visible affected by cruise tourists presence, but scientists have found that cruise ships and tourists are affecting their health, leading to mammals' death. According to National Geographic website, whales are affected by people's noise and ships' noise. As the article available on this site highlights, all the species underwater rely on sound. When marine life is disturbed by people's activities and noise, the pressure on the mammals grows, stressing them. Consequently, this results in health issues on their organs and even premature death, according to the same source (www.nationalgeographic.com).

Air quality

Another issue with negative impact on the environment specified by Henrik Skydsbjerg is the carbon released by tour buses when operating in towns when cruise tourists arrive. Going further, he admit that the biggest source of carbon emissions is actually the cruise ship. He points out that cruise companies should be pressed to make their ships more efficient, by using fuels that are more environmentally friendly:

“ (...) we also expressing it towards the cruise companies that the major problem with them is the emissions of the [CO2]. ”

“ and also when they're in harbor (...) still with the motors running. And there is in industry...they are of course aware of that this is an issue. And I'm quite sure that everybody- us and everybody else-has to pressure them really hard to make this transition. You know, they have to change the ships and stuff like that. ”

(Henrik Skydsbjerg, interviewee)

The carbon emissions coming from cruise ships is discussed by *some* interviewees and it was acknowledged that it is a problem. As the literature review chapter revealed, this is probably the most acute problem that cruising sector generates. And attention -in regards to finding ways to solve it- has to be payed by *all* the stakeholders within the industry. Among the stakeholders the researcher has interviewed, the problem of carbon emissions, but also of waste management were highly emphasized by two cruise lines : Hurtigruten and Adventure Canada. They acknowledged that the level of pollution generated by cruise ships is very high, but there are new technologies that can successfully address the problem.

“ I think that for us in the cruise industry it means that we need to be quite pushy when it comes to technology on fuel consumption, for example, new types of fuel that have less impact on the environment, the CO2 emissions; I believe that we need to have a very conscious releasing of plastics and not spreading plastics; waste management of our ships- not dumping untreated water into the ocean. There are methods of treating our grey waters to almost being drinkable before you empty them out into the ocean. So I think technology, for ships design, is going to be very, very important in the future to do sustainability.”

(Karin Strand, Hurtigruten, interviewee)

Alana Bradley-Swan from Adventure Canada affirmed that new technologies will permit the ships to operate in a “greener” manner. Moreover, she pointed that cruise passengers are aware of waste pollution that cruise sector generate, thus they press the cruise lines to replace single-use plastics, for instance:

“CO2 emissions from fuel is the most big contributor, the rest [sources] are like a 10%. As a industry, we’re thinking about that. The new ships (hybrid) are a great new technology, the old ships should retire . The ships should be more fuel efficient. Because we get questions from our passengers on this aspects too. It’s forcing the operators to really some of the issues like single use plastics”.

(Alana Bradley-Swan, Adventure Canada, interviewee)

Alana Bradley- Swan revealed that new technologies requires not only financial efforts, but also time to be implemented.

Mads Skifte, from Visit Greenland drew the attention on one aspect: the big cruise ships are the ones that pollute the most. He affirmed that, given the fact that new studies revealed how much the big ships are polluting, he would like to see less big cruise ships in the future, in Greenland:

“Another thing is also of course the environment. There have been a lot of articles about this huge cruise ships that pollute so much. (...) We want to see fewer of them in the future. And that is why we stop coordinating this [the researcher doesn’t understand the word but assume to be about a project to attract people] in Miami.

But with the new knowledge we have on how much they pollute, I don't think we will..."

(Mads Skifte, Visit Greenland, interviewee)

This point of view was shared by other participants as well. They emphasized that big ships contribute more to the negative impact on the environment, as they are operating on heavy fuel. Unlike big ships, the expedition cruise ships seemed to be more agreeable among the majority of the interviewee stakeholders, mainly because they are using fuels that are more environmentally friendly. Given that the majority of the expedition cruises operate both in the Arctic and Antarctica, they need to be more “ greener” (using lighter fuels) if they want to operate in Antarctica, as the regulations are stricter there. Moreover, most of them are members of AECO (Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators). This association is an important player in the Arctic cruises, as it sets up guidelines “ *to ensure that expeditions in the Arctic is carried out with the utmost consideration for the vulnerable, natural environment, local cultures and cultural remains, as well as the challenging safety hazards at sea and on land*”. (AECO website, www.aeco.no). Thus, the ships being members of AECO act more responsibly in the polar regions, as the interviewees highly emphasized.

In the same line, one port authority official mentioned that big cruise ships or conventional ships, as they are called, put pressure on the environment through their emissions and the waste that they produce in considerable quantities. Moreover, it is difficult to manage them in ports, as many of them are not built to receive such big ships. In Greenland, the port of Nuuk is the only one ensuring berth facilities- which is a necessary facility for the conventional ships in order to come into port. Otherwise, they will remain off shore and will use tender boats to bring the passengers on land. The official mentioned that in the port of Nuuk there is only possible for maximum two big ships to be received at the same time. In regards to Illulissat port, the official mentioned that there is often occupied by container ships, thus impossibility for big ships to stop there. Furthermore, the port official clarified that when in port, cruise ships are still using their engines in order to ensure the availability of onboard facilities. Thus, they are polluting. Moreover, the cruise ships produce huge quantities of waste that need to be discharged in port and then managed locally, but the appropriate facilities for this procedures are still lacking in Greenland. However, the waste management service is payed by cruise operators, but the official emphasized that paying is not the solution for a sustainable cruise

tourism in the polar regions. Given that Arctic destinations are fragile areas, waste should be kept out of the Arctic, not only out from Greenland. As a last point mentioned by the same source is shore power technology which allows ships to use energy when in port to keep running their onboard facilities. The official said that shore power is provided in port of Nuuk, but only for the smaller local ships, not for cruise ships as providing this infrastructure for the bigger vessels requires financial efforts and time.

Unlike conventional ships, the expedition cruise ships do not require port facilities in order to visit a destination, they being able to anchor mostly everywhere, as the expedition companies interviewed explained.

Roads fragility, footprints and resources

Greenland has relatively few roads, given the polar context. When existent, these are fragile. Therefore, when cruise ships bring passengers up to 3200, the destinations are overwhelmed by the pressure of so many people at once. The majority of the stakeholders signaled concerns about the pressure on the roads, on the nature as a whole. Moreover, cruise tourism requires different resources (water, for instance) which are difficult to provide, as exploring by some interviewees. Managing mass tourism, especially in small communities, is challenging. Sarah Woodall depicts the situation: “*Sometimes we have 2 big ships at the same time (3000 people each) so it’s pretty much crazy*”. The absence of pathways was also mentioned by Sarah Woodall. Therefore, when cruise guests come in great numbers, they will spread everywhere in the nature, leaving footprints everywhere, affecting the vegetation.

Hunting season

Erik Palo Jacobsen is the only one interviewee who mentioned that hunting disturbance is a problem in Greenland. When ships comes, they will visit places where indigenous people use to hunt. When the cruise arrivals are planned, they should notice the locals with six months earlier, in order to manage their hunting activities such that do not interfere with cruise activities. But this will not happen every time, which is not agreeable for local people, as they rely on hunting. However, the same interviewee have seen an improvement on this aspect after collaborating with AECO.

Safety on the water

Erik Palo Jacobsen is again the only one participant who drew attention on safety when sailing in Arctic waters. He has technical knowledge about ships, as a captain and he strongly emphasized that safety is not prioritized in Greenland. Going too close to the icebergs without respecting the regulations is an aspect ignored by the tour operators. Moreover, he affirmed that it is only a matter of time until a catastrophe happens, as cruise ships are not all equipped with icebreakers. A potential accident will have tremendous consequences not only from the passengers side, but also for the environment.

The economic pillar- local concerns

In regards to the economic dimension, many stakeholders emphasized that cruise tourism is an important contributor to the Greenlandic economy, in different ways: through tax revenues, job creation, different activities unfolding for cruise tourists. Henrik Skydsbjerg stated that cruise tourism is a way to make Greenland an independent country, even though that implies environmental issues:

“ We have an ambition, in Greenland: then that at some point of time, in the future, to have an independent economy which can lead to an independent country. And for that to be able to happen, then we have to develop tourism, fisheries, resources exportation, also minerals and stuff like that. So if you’re thinking about developing a sustainable society in Greenland then you will have to reduce your demand upon the sustainability of the nature part of the vision, if you can understand what I mean. ”

(Henrik Skydsbjerg, Tupilak Travel, interviewee)

During the interviews, cruise companies related that they are mainly using local guides and local services in their activities, but in some cases this view was contradicted. For instance, Pitsi Høegh and Erik Palo Jacobsen mentioned that it is not unusual for cruise companies to bring their own guides or to collaborate with foreign tour operators (Spanish , Danish operators) that run business in Greenland.

Another respondent who preferred to remain anonymous emphasized that many cruise lines bring their own facilities for their guests, such as bicycles, while they should use the local facilities that Greenland can provide.

When asked to comment on the issue of little benefits going to the local people- an issue often stressed by the scholars in the vast literature, all the stakeholders agreed on this fact, excepting three of them. The detrimental views suggested that cruise industry puts money on the community and invests in local projects, that are beneficial for many residents and that will may not be implemented without their financial support. Moreover, in their opinion, cruise tourism is an important alternative when other job opportunities are not available, as one interviewee mentioned. In addition, one of the three stakeholders sharing opposite views on the economic aspects simply stated that cruise tourism industry is a business like any other business, thus it not suppose to bring benefits to the whole community.

Discussions on taxation were brought by two stakeholders who were concerned that the tax revenues are retained at national budget, while the local communities does not receive any benefit. One of them affirmed that the government has lowered the taxation method from “ per passenger” to “ per tonnage “, which made it cheaper for the big ships to Greenland. This is the main reason why more and more companies put Greenland on their itineraries; this is actually the explanation for the growth in cruise tourists numbers Greenland registered in the last years. The interviewee mentioned that retaining a part from the taxes at regional level will be beneficial for the local development.

As a last point to be presented, the issue of souvenirs was highlighted by some of the respondents. Erik Palo Jacobsen and Henrik Skydsbjerg affirmed that cruise tourists are more interested in buying cheaper souvenirs than buying local products, which is an issue mostly because this is the only way that some locals could benefit from the cruise tourism industry. Erik Palo Jacobsen amplified the discussion, saying that cruise tourists will not buy anything from the local restaurants or cafes, as they have the meals included on their ticket onboard:

“When in town, tourists wonder around in town for cheap souvenirs form China.”
“ They don’t put much money here, they have full package trips with everything included, even meals. Tourists walk around and then go back to ships to have lunch,

maybe go back to town again; so not even the restaurant or cafes or everything won't benefit from visits if the cruise ships."

(Erik Palo Jacobsen, interviewee)

However, Mads Skifte has an answer in regards to the souvenirs issue, saying that indigenous people should be creative and differentiate their products, thus the tourists will be attracted to buy them. He also mentioned that their prices are not high, as long as the tourists will understand that they are handicrafts- high quality products. Moreover , he highlighted that adventure tourists are more interested in buying local products than conventional cruise tourists. Another answer in regards to souvenirs comes from Pitsi Høegh, who underlined that local people do not produce enough handicrafts according to the demand. She concluded that local people should be prepared and manufacture local products during winter time, not in the beginning of the season, at the first ship arrival.

The socio-cultural pillar- local concerns

In regards to socio- cultural aspects, the discussions with the stakeholders revealed there main points: the local involvement, tourists behavior and cultural activities.

The stakeholders' focus on local residents and their involvement in the cruise industry was often highlighted by the majority of respondents. According to them, the connection of local people with the cruise industry needs to be strengthened, but the first step in this process is to make local people understand what cruise tourism is all about, as Mads Skifte tried to contour:

" ...if locals have the courage and willingness to get involved in cruise tourism, is not difficult. You just have to understand how this is working ; some people would like to get involved but they are shy to get involved ; some are not curious enough."

(Mads Skifte, Visit Greenland, interviewee)

The same opinion is shared by Pitsi Høegh who said that she have meetings with locals in order to make them understand how tourism works, how to benefit from this industry and also how to behave in relation with tourists. She stressed that sustainability begins with the people.

Cultural activities were also mentioned, some of them being kayaking, visit to museums, kaffemik- private visits for café, cake and stories with locals, dances, demonstrations, tastings,

guided walks. In Qaqortoq, Pitsi Høegh implemented the ‘open-town’ concept, where the whole community is involved for entertaining the tourists. Most of the activities are planned, but it happens (as she mentioned) that some cruise companies to visit the destination without any arrangement. In this case, the community is not going to benefit from the visit, which is a big inconvenient: “ *They are coming into my town without having any arrangement. I may be unpopular that day!*”

However, Mads Skifte outlined that products (activities) should be diversified from place to place, because tourists may not be interested to see the same activities in all their stops in Greenland:

“ It is also important how are your products.If it is interesting, you buy it [as tourist]. If you don’t have a product that differs from other, the tourists visiting another place with similar products will not buy it again”.

As aforementioned mentioned, tourists’ behavior was highlighted by some respondents. According to them, cruise tourists should be educated about how to behave in Arctic regions in special, because the area is different from that they are coming from. Paying more attention to the nature, being more interested about Inuit culture, being respectful to local people, communicating with them and buying their products are aspects outlined by some interviewees.

2.Collaboration among stakeholders

When asked about how they collaborate with each other within the sector, the majority of stakeholders responded that their collaboration is good, in some cases even cordial, friendly. As partners in cruise business, they depend on each other, like in any other business: the demand and the supply have to be on an equal footing in order to be successful. However, when it comes to the political side, the collaboration with the government is a very limited approached topic in interviewees’s discussions. Some of the respondents affirmed that the government showed a great support to the industry, especially from the beginning of the pandemic, and is very involved in tourism as a whole industry, admitting and acknowledging t tourism as an feasible industry, while other sustained that political class does not even discusses about tourism, as this is a domain that does not bring any vote to them. Moreover, the political class perceived tourism as an industry that is not feasible, as it only provides income during

the high season. In addition, the respondents affirmed that the collaboration with the government (as a open and transparent dialogue together with the whole segment of stakeholders) is not happening yet. In order to make tourism more sustainable, Karin Strand pointed that collaboration among stakeholders, including the government, is the key factor in this equation, with the purpose of identifying and discussing their needs and finding sustainable common-agreed solutions, as Getz and Timur (2005) suggested when depicting the stakeholder theory's basis. Karin Strand emphasized that forwarding the sustainability of cruise tourism industry is a joint responsibility among stakeholders, but in the Greenlandic tourism context this process is still not putted in place:

“I think it’s a threefold: the cruise industry itself, the local tourism board or national tourism board in Greenland, the government body, NGOs that together should set at a table and say ‘ This is what we expect from you, we should have a common ground!’. I believe that there is being too large distances between players and the providers, providers being the country Greenland. (...) they should say ‘ This is what we are, this is what you need to change, this is how we would like to see this happening’. And we’ll say ‘ Okay, this is what we need to have in order to operate. In order to be sustainable in your sense, this is what we need. So there is a dialogue back and forth.”

(Karin Strand, Hurtigruten, interviewee)

On the other hand, Mads Skifte informed that politicians are still in need to understand better tourism industry in order to improve the legal framework, as they currently perceive tourism as an unfeasible industry, prioritizing other domains, such as fisheries:

“I would say that (laugh) ...for many people in that includes politicians, the understanding of tourism- the business is maybe kind a...their knowledge is lacking. How to understand tourism? Because there is so much focus on fisheries. And tourism is something that is not sustainable economically for many. For many people, they have to have jobs, income so...understanding tourism is a long way. Every autumn we invite the politicians. So we can update some articles. So they understand tourism better and improve the legal frame.”

(Mads Skifte, Visit Greenland, interviewee)

However, the government is the one imposing regulations and their acting manner seems to be perceived by the interviewees as following a top-down approach, as the theory chapter of this study revealed.

Challenges in stakeholders' collaboration process were depicted as well, the most frequent (from the cruise companies' side) being the difficulty of establishing contacts with stakeholders in destinations. They pointed out that a strong and close collaboration is crucial in cruise tourism industry, but prior this step, communication need to be established. In this regard, Karin Strand affirmed that sometimes it will even take months until someone will respond the emails. Otherwise, she perceive Greenlandic people as being very adaptable people who proved that they can do an amazing job when they see a potential in a given direction.

As many of the respondents confirmed, Greenlandic tourism is still at an infant stage, when stating that “ there is place for everyone” in cruise tourism industry in some destinations, but in other places “ people are fighting each other “ as competitors. This affirmation was made by some interviewees, signaling that they have a good collaboration relation, at least in Nuuk and South Greenland, where cruise tourists come in great numbers.

As mentioned before, probably the most appreciated relation of collaboration among the stakeholders participating in this study is the collaboration with AECO. This international player is a key actor in the development of cruise tourism industry not only in Greenland, but in the Arctic as a whole region, due to its role: ensuring that cruising in the Arctic is carried out consciously. Setting up guidelines, helping community to get involved in creating these guidelines, offering support to local communities (through different programs) were only few aspects highlighted by stakeholders, who proudly affirmed that collaboration with AECO is essential for them.

3.Current sustainable initiatives in Greenlandic cruise tourism

In order to forward the sustainability of cruise tourism industry in Greenland, the majority of stakeholders underlined different initiatives that they have already implemented for this purpose. While some cruise operators mentioned that they have made the switch from heavy fuels to lighter fuels, removed plastics (in this regard, one interviewee said that this initiative

is a very expensive one, as the replacement with greener alternatives is costly), hiring local guides, buying local food, services or products, doing deliveries in very remote places, as well as investing in different local projects in Greenland (programs between cruise lines and an university in South Greenland aiming to secure internship opportunities and job opportunities for students that receive education in tourism field, collaboration with local sheep farmers, collaboration with an orphanage where children traveled the whole world singing onboard for the guests as well as receiving donations and others, auction and fundraising onboard for good causes), for other stakeholders mentioned initiatives such as offering the tourists a valuable experience, making steps towards benefiting at regional level from the taxes paid by cruise lines when visiting Greenland, or efforts towards implementing specific guidelines for tourists. Maybe the most important to be mentioned is the initiative specified by Mads Skifte from Visit Greenland regarding the conventional cruise ships. He said that the number of big cruise ships has been limited, which means that more expedition cruises will be attracted to come to Greenland. The interviews with the stakeholders confirmed that expedition cruises are very appreciated by all the respondents, for many reasons that respondents emphasized: expedition ships are much “greener” than conventional ships, as many of them are AECO members and follows their guidelines; adventure tourists are very interested in interacting with locals, in gaining knowledge about the destinations where they visit, often can remain much longer at the destination and thus they have the chance to try local restaurants, cafes or even to overnight- which means more benefits for the locals; additionally, they “ don’t look at every penny “ as Erik Palo Jacobsen affirmed, buying local souvenirs, regardless their prices- as they know how much effort was done by locals to manufacture the products. Mads Skifte highlighted this aspect: “ (...) *adventure tourists understand the prices much better than conventional tourists. That is why we like to see them more than others!*”

The discussions with the stakeholders also revealed their position in regards to sustainability of cruise tourism, their interest in this “game” and their strategies of achieving their goals- which are the main points of stakeholder theory framework.

While for Visit Greenland the goal is to develop tourism in general, as it is highlighted though the affirmation of Mads Skifte “*our main goal is to develop tourism, make a place where people can work attract foreign investments; so we don’t look at the color of people, we are look at what kind of employment they can create*” cruise tourism being included, for cruise operators the goal is to keep their business running - therefore enhancing collaboration among partners

is described as being generally positive. As Andrea Machacek mentioned, cruise companies should differentiate themselves, in order to remain competitive on the cruise market. Probably this is a reason for investing in local projects in the south of Greenland. According to Karin Strand statement “ *Why are we there [in Greenland], why we want to go there, what do they have to bring to the table that fits our profile? Every cruise cruise company has a profile they would like to tell. What is the story we want to tell? We would like to tell a story of uniqueness* ” cruise companies put destinations on their itinerary list if the destinations fits in their profile- “what can the destination offer?”- being the decisional factor in this sense. This point of view confirmed the scholars’ remarks that cruise lines have the power to change their itineraries according to their interest.

In the view of Erik Palo Jacobsen, cruise industry operators are only interested about the profit. He stated: “ *The cruise ships operators. (...) [cruise tourism activity] is just for money. Nothing else.*” The he added: “ *For those driving cruise ships is profit. Profit, profit, profit, profit, profit, profit!*”

As a final note, when discussing about Greenlandic tourism in a broader sense, Asmus Jessen Rubæk mentioned that Nuuk is to become the first sustainable capital in the world. For that to happen, close collaboration between Sermersooq Business and EarthCheck (the world’s leading scientific benchmarking, certification and advisory group for travel and tourism) was done. This initiative seeks to empower local community in the process of establishing and implementing sustainable practices in tourism industry and consequently to attract tourists that share sustainability values.

4.Future sustainable initiatives in Greenlandic cruise tourism

Future plans for making tourism more sustainable in Greenland was a point touched by the researcher when conducting the interviews. Some stakeholders were concerned about port facilities that lack at this moment (shore power technology and waste management facilities). Discussions in this sense revealed that port authorities will be interested in building infrastructure for cruise ships, but cruise companies have to financially contribute in this sense. Participating with capital will guarantee a close and fruitful cooperation on the long run, as the some scholars argued and it was highlighted in the theory chapter of this paper.

However, remarks around the fact that shore power technology may not be as feasible as it seeks to be in the case of big cruise ships were emphasized by one participant. The official

mentioned that big cruise ships require significant energy resources, approximately 20 percent of the total consumption of the whole town. In this sense, shore power may not be the most sustainable solution for this category of vessels.

As an additional note in regards to shore power technology, the researcher considers that it may be worthwhile to mention the fact that she has often conversations with her husband (who has more than 13 years of experience in ship building industry) on this topic and she is familiar (to some extent) with notions regarding ships technicalities. According to his knowledge and experience in this area, he state that in general, ships require tremendous energy resources. Although he does not possess knowledge about the energy resources available in Greenlandic ports, he assumes that this technology may not fit in big ships' profile unless there are sufficient energy resources to be used in this direction. Moreover, he drew attention on the fact that in it is not unusual for some ships to choose not to use shore power facility, mostly because the price is considerably higher then the fuel ships burn. Therefore, it is important to take into account all the aspects when developing infrastructure in ports.

Remaining in the area of ship's technical aspects, a new study revealed that the “ much desired” fuel LNG is not the most viable alternative for cruise ships, as it's use is amplifiers the negative impact on climate change, therefore other alternative must to be considered :

“These results show that LNG does not deliver the emissions reductions demanded by the IMO's initial GHG strategy and that using it might actually worsen shipping's climate impacts. Given this, it is fair to question continued investments in LNG infrastructure on ships and on shore, as these could make it harder to transition to low- and zero-carbon fuels in the future. Investing instead in energy-saving technologies, wind-assisted propulsion, zero-emission fuels, batteries, and fuel cells would deliver both air quality and climate benefits.”

(International Council on Clean Transportation, 2020)

Going further into analysis, it must be mentioned that respondents pointed to the fact that Greenland -as a tourist destination- should analyze and evaluate the carrying capacity in different tourist areas, as it is the case of Illulissat (were overcrowding puts serious pressure on local communities) in order to ensure a good management of tourists. In this sense, Sarah Woodall stated that this step will be essential for the development of cruise tourism in a more

sustainable manner. She mentioned that a future initiative she will be interested to launch will imply the construction of pathways that will allow tourists to walk and be spread through the whole town, in order to avoid nature vegetation damage. Visit Greenland mentioned that a future initiative concerns “the unique selling points” project which will allow local people to differentiate their products and sell them to tourists. Moreover, collaboration with AECO will help indigenous communities to better understand the concept of tourism and how it works, so they will be able to better get involved in this activity. Cruise companies are also interested in launching sustainable initiatives in the future. For instance, Hurtigruten is working together with AECO in order to set up a system that will allow local communities to receive a part of the revenues, will be continuing operating with their hybrid ships and will try to find a way to ensure support to local communities when they are not there.

In the view of Elizabeth Cooper making cruise tourism more sustainable means , beside other aspects, making tourists act more responsible when at destination. Therefore she is focusing on tourists’ behavior in her work, hoping to make a difference in this sense and to contribute to the sustainability of cruise tourism:

“My plan is to develop some kind of behavioral interventions which will make cruise tourists behave more sustainably when in destinations in Greenland, and of course, tourists behavior is only one tiny part of sustainability. If I can make a difference to how cruise tourists behave in destinations where there are, for example spending more money on local products and sticking more to the paths,(...) interacting more with the members of the community,(...), getting more impressions about the identity of Greenlanders, or the cultural history or something like that, then that’s (...) a contribution.”

(Elizabeth Cooper, PhD fellow, interviewee)

Going back to the facility topic, the issue of toilets was underlined by Pitsi Høegh. She said that the municipality should pay attention to this aspect and provide toilets to guests, especially because cruise passengers are generally elderly people who frequently need to use toilets. At this moment, there is no initiative in this regard, but this problem needs to be solved, she added.

It has to be also mentioned that one interviewee (who decided to remain anonymous) suggested that there is a need to institutionalize the job of local guides, following the model existing in

Alaska, where local “rangers” connect the travelers with local culture in different manners, offering them a valuable and memorable experience.

As a final note, the new Arctic policy forwarded by the European Union is another initiative that seeks to make a difference in regards to climate change issue. In collaboration with the Arctic Council, the EU is trying to address this problem, especially because the Arctic is warming more than twice as fast as the rest of the world. As tourism in general is an interdependent sector of activity, decisions that are made in different policy areas (for instance in regard to the climate) will inevitably have repercussions on tourism sector. The new Arctic policy forwarded by the European Union which will be published by the end of the year (2021) aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Given that cruise ships are considerably contributors in this regard, it is obvious that cruise industry will be targeted by potential new regulations.

Chapter 6. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to analyze the term “sustainable cruise tourism” from a stakeholder perspective, in order to comprehend how cruise tourism sustainability is perceived by stakeholders within the cruise industry, in a Greenlandic context.

Based on the data analysis chapter, the researcher will try to answer the research questions of this study. Thus, the answer to the question “*How do the stakeholders involved in the Greenlandic cruise tourism industry understand the term “sustainable cruise tourism”?*” is that the stakeholders understand this term in different ways. Although the majority of them are aware that sustainable cruise tourism involves the three-pillars model (environmental, economic, socio-cultural dimensions), their tendency is to prioritize a given pillar, thus imbalances among the three pillars of sustainable development concept have been identified. As the cruise tourism development in Greenland is still at an infant stage, stakeholders consider that there is room for cruise tourism development, prioritizing the economic dimension, as detrimental to the environmental dimension. As mentioned before, even though concerns regarding the environmental impact of cruise tourism industry were identified, the majority of stakeholders seem to tacitly accept the situation as a “bad necessity” or as a “price” they have to pay for being an independent country in the future.

A summary of findings in regard to the three pillars of sustainable development will be further provided. In regards to the environmental pillar, the data showed that some stakeholders are concerned about the negative impact of cruise tourism on the natural vegetation, marine life, air quality or hunting. Issues such as pressure on the nature caused by the significant number of cruise tourists presence (especially in small communities), impact on whales welfare due to noise pollution generated by boats, air pollution caused by CO₂ emissions coming from the ships’ engines, significant quantities of waste, hunting disturbance by the presence of cruise ships in special places (hunting grounds) were highlighted by the respondents. Regarding the economic pillar, the contribution of cruise tourism to the Greenlandic economy was emphasized by stakeholders, arguing that cruise tourism creates job opportunities and represents a source of income for many people that otherwise would not have other alternative. Similarly, cruise tourism sector, in the view of some stakeholders, gives opportunities for different programs and projects to be financially supported, that otherwise would not be

implemented by Greenland alone. Moreover, it was highlighted that cruise tourism sector is a direct contributor to the potential independence of Greenland. However, issues such as little benefits for the local people, conflicting situations in regards to local guides employment (some companies are using foreign guides instead of local guides) or tourists' preference for cheaper souvenirs were founded. In terms of socio- cultural aspects, the stakeholders mentioned that locals need to better understand the concept of tourism, so they will be able to get involved in cruise tourism sector and consequently get more benefits from it. In addition, tourists' behavior was brought in the light, some stakeholders underlining that tourists need to be educated in order to act as good tourists, to interact more with the locals and to buy their products. Moreover, cultural activities offered at destination should be diversified in order to satisfy the tourists.

The answer to the next research question of the study, “*How is the collaboration among the stakeholders involved in Greenlandic cruise tourism?*” is that collaboration among stakeholders is described as being a positive relation, in some cases even cordial. However, the stakeholders mentioned that there is no dialogue between them and the government, thus the government follows the top-down approach when it comes to decision making process. Hence, collaboration needs to be strengthened among all the stakeholders in order to contribute to a more sustainable cruise tourism.

In regards to the research question “*What practices do the stakeholders implement in order to forward the sustainability of cruise tourism sector in Greenland?*”, the answer is that stakeholders approached different strategies: some of the cruise companies (members of AECO) have made the shift from heavy fuels to greener alternative (but there is room for improvement in this regard), removed single use plastics onboard. Moreover, they invested in different local projects, hire local guides, buy local food or services. Other stakeholders mentioned that offering tourists valuable experiences is a initiative to make cruise tourism more sustainable. Additionally, limiting the number of conventional cruise vessels, the number of visitors in destinations, making efforts to receive a part from the taxes at regional level or to implement guidelines for tourists were some other initiatives outlined by stakeholders.

The answer to the final research question “*What sustainable practices do the stakeholders plan to implement in the future, in order to make cruise tourism more sustainable in Greenland?*” is that stakeholders plan to develop the following strategies : evaluating the

carrying capacity in overcrowded places, building infrastructure and facilities in port, making the shift to even hybrid ships, “ unique selling points “ implementation, tourists’ behavior improvement or creating a system that allows local to benefit from landing taxes.

When taking into consideration all the data discussed in the previous chapter, the researcher answers the main research question of this study “ *How do cruise tourism stakeholders perceive the term sustainable cruise tourism in Greenland?* “ by indicating that the perceptions of the stakeholders involved in the Greenlandic cruise tourism sector on the term “ sustainable cruise tourism “ are modeled by three factors: their position in the cruise tourism chain, their interest in the cruise industry chain, and respectively, the development stage of the tourist destination. Even though different initiatives in order to make tourism more sustainable in Greenland were identified, the majority of stakeholders inclined towards prioritizing the economic dimension encompassed by the sustainable development concept to the detriment of the environmental and socio- cultural dimensions. The conclusion of this study aligns with the views identified in the literature.

As recommendations for a more sustainable cruise industry in Greenland, the researcher emphasizes the following: imposing stricter regulations in vulnerable areas (hot springs, church ruins, UNESCO heritage sites), enhancing maritime safety, evaluating the impact of conventional cruise ships (in special) on the environment (CO2 emissions, garbage, tourists’ footprints), evaluating the carrying capacity in overcrowded destinations , finding solutions in order to ensure more benefits for locals, educating tourists to behave in a responsible manner.

Chapter 6. References

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Interviewees

Alana Bradley Swan

Anders Lykke Laursen (questionnaire)

Andrea Machacek

Asmus Jessen Rubæk

Erik Palo Jacobsen

Elizabeth Cooper

Henrik Skydsbjerg

Karin Strand

Mads Skifte

Sarah Woodall

Pitsi Høegh

Port official Greenland

International association of cruise companies

Official natural resources

