

Flights and Falls

**An Exploration of the Positive and Negative Effects that new Prospective
North American Tourism can have on Greenlandic Society**

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to examine how the opening of new international airports in Greenland in the coming years might affect Greenland's society and tourism development in both potentially positive and negative manners and ultimately suggest possible strategies that can potentially be employed to manage these in such a way that is benefits Greenland as much as possible. This has been sought to be achieved through the use of the theories of Tourism Typologies, Tourism Development Lifecycle, Authenticity in Tourism and the Tourist Gaze. In order to focus the scope of the thesis, prospective tourists coming from America and Canada have been chosen as the main analytical focus of the thesis due to their geographical proximity to Greenland as well as because uncovered data has suggested they are one group of tourists that are likely going to arrive in larger number than tourist groups from many other countries. This thesis employed a critical realist, mixed methods approach where quantitative surveys made by VisitGreenland and tourism partners were used in conjunction with more qualitative data in the form of quotes from locals presiding in Greenland as well as other stakeholders like tourism operators and VisitGreenland. By doing this, it was the aim to create new knowledge that was both grounded in contemporary economic data while also not neglecting social contexts about how Greenland's tourism is concurrently conducted. The analysis of the paper was divided up into different sections that all built on top of each other in complexity and ultimately took a particular focus in how tourists from America and Canada might affect Greenland's natural and physical environment as well as the cultural practices of local inhabitants. Ultimately, it was discovered that a majority of new prospective tourists were likely to be mass tourists whose priorities and expectations can potentially be much more difficult for Greenland to manage than the tourists Greenland has received in the past. While it might be admirable for Greenland to try and divert these tourists out into smaller settlements, this thesis instead suggests that these tourists will likely flock to popular destinations like the Ilulissat Icefjord in great numbers and that more drastic measures like temporarily shutting such destinations down and investing in creating new tourism attractions in accessible spots might be measures needed to make sure Greenland doesn't suffer from too many negative effects that Americans and Canadians can bring them when they travel to Greenland.

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Introduction

With three major new international airports set to open in the cities of Nuuk, Ilulissat and Qaqortoq in the next couple of years in mid the mid-2020s, the country of Greenland is expected to experience a massive increase in arriving tourist that are looking to experience the Arctic nature and culture of the world's largest island (Ren et al, 2023, p. 2). The opening of these airports have the potential to mark a large shift in accessibility for Greenlandic tourism given that the historical lack of much tourism infrastructure and accommodation in the country has previously made it comparatively expensive to travel to for tourists that might not be willing or might not be able to spend the money needed to travel there (Milano et al, 2019, p. 210). Considering this, it is interesting to note that there is likely to be an increase of American and Canadian tourists in particular due in part to their close geographical proximity to Greenland making travel times shorter and potentially cost less money. This notion is also supported by how Greenland's national tourism agency, VisitGreenland, has conducted surveys that indicate that while 88% of prospective German tourists and 40% of prospective tourists from the UK both raise price as a key factor making them hesitate to travel to Greenland (VisitGreenland & Greenland Travel, 2023, p. 40), only 34% of prospective tourists from America and Canada do the same and this number has also fallen from what it was in 2016 (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, p. 57). Additionally, among all countries surveyed, America and Canada, from now on simply referred together as North America, had the highest percent of people who said they were particularly interested in visiting Greenland in comparison to said other countries (Sonntag, 2023, p. 5-6). Taking this into account, new prospective tourists from North America in particular might be a central part in helping Greenland attain several societal gains in the future as they might appear in greater numbers than tourists from other countries and given that them spending money in the country can help it diversify and strengthen its economy as well as create new jobs for its population (VisitGreenland, 2021, p. 8). On the other hand, there is also a risk that overtourism can happen which might cause local people to suffer from there being too many tourists in their daily spaces and that can in turn negatively affect their daily lives and sense of cultural belonging to the destination which the tourists visit. In addition, the environment can also be significantly damaged from too many tourists being in a destination at the same time or too frequently (Manzin, 2020, p. 163). With the prospects of many more tourists from North America arriving soon because of the new airports, then, the new tourists have the potential to both boost Greenland's society through economic gains but can also inadvertently end up hurting it if they approach Greenlandic society in a disrespectful way or if Greenland's culture is misunderstood or pressured to accommodate or adapt to their viewpoints in order for Greenland to retain the interests and incomes that this particular source of many prospective tourists provides. In essence, from all of this, a series of questions emerge about how these tourists will likely engage with and react to different parts of Greenlandic culture and how this might end up having either or perhaps both a positive and a negative effect on Greenlandic culture and the everyday life of Greenlandic people. Interested in exploring the dimensions of these prospects, this thesis will seek to examine different spheres of Greenlandic society that North American tourists might interact with and inadvertently affect. In doing this, the goal is to try to gauge and predict which positive and negative outcomes are likely to occur

from this and what steps might be taken to help Greenland alleviate the pressures that will be put on its society and culture as a result of the new mass tourism that the new airports are projected to cause. From all of this, the central problem statement of this thesis is as follows:

The anticipated increase of mass tourism in Greenland from North Americans in particular can potentially lead to both positive and negative effects on Greenlandic society and culture, but without a clear understanding of which kind of effects are likely to occur and why, it will be difficult for Greenland to prepare the kind of tourism strategies that are likely to help it reach the most beneficial scenarios for its future and create the most amount of satisfaction possible for its people. In seeking to understand these effects and creating an overview and discussion of how they may be approached to reach the most ideal possible outcomes for Greenland and its population, then, this thesis will base its research in these following research questions:

Research question 1: What types of North American tourists are Greenland the most likely to receive and what reasons might they have for visiting Greenland?

Research question 2: What effects might prospective North American tourists have on Greenland's natural and physical environment?

Research question 3: What effects might prospective North American tourists have on Greenland's cultural practices?

Research question 4: What steps might potentially be taken to increase the positive effects and lower the negative effects that North American tourists might bring when visiting Greenland?

Central to all of these research questions is the idea that two specific aspects will be researched in depth: first, the aspect of how Greenland as a larger national entity might react to these new tourists and the effects they bring and second, how Greenlandic citizens and locals might react to these as well. Both perspectives are seen as vital to this research in order to create as in-depth a picture of the possible impacts new mass tourism can have on Greenland as possible. Considerations such as these about how the research is conducted and the reasonings for why will be covered in depth in the methodology section following this introduction. In addition, the methodology section will also describe why these three research questions in particular were chosen and will also cover the manner and structure they have been approached with later in the thesis. Following the methodology section, the theory section will describe the three chosen overlying theories for this thesis which will all aid in adding further depth to the analysis and the data examined therein, with these theories being 'tourism typologies', 'authenticity in tourism,' and finally 'the tourist gaze'. This will then be followed by the analysis section of this paper, and rather than have a separate discussion section that ponders and reflects on the data gathered in the analysis and what it signifies, this critical reflection will instead be implemented in the analysis itself while it is ongoing. Finally, after all this is done, the conclusion of this thesis will sum up the main points uncovered throughout the analysis and

reflect on how they all come together to tell different aspects of how new tourism from North America might affect Greenland in the coming future.

Methodology

Ontological and Epistemological Grounding and Data Collection Philosophies

Given that the thesis revolves around researching and making educated predictions about the uncertain futures that might become reality based on how increased mass-tourists and Greenlandic people end up interacting with each other, it might be expected that this thesis' ontological foundation would lie in that of constructionism. There may be some merit in conducting the research of this paper on a more positivistic grounding as well, trying to use the idea that reality is very quantifiable and measurable to try to come up with the single most likely scenarios of Greenlandic tourism outcomes, but the researcher of this thesis posits that would be too narrow-sighted in scope and it would be better to appeal to the constructivist lens of seeing reality as ever-changeable and open to many different view-points that all need to be considered and taken into account in order to understand reality (Bryman, 2016, 29-30). In saying this, however, this thesis does not actually take hold in a fully constructionist or relativistic theoretical foundation either, but rather a foundation that is different in certain ways. An interpretivist epistemology posits the notion that the way we understand reality is always going to be affected by our own perceptions and can never be truly, unquestionably measured with complete objectivity, stressing that several perspectives need to be incorporated and considered in order to create the most holistic picture of a topic or problem possible (Della-Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 26-27). While using this kind of epistemology might lead to a very wide data set, it might also be too relativistic and its search for having every single perspective represented might make it so that the research of this paper might get lost in tiny details that, unfortunately, might also not fully reflect the actual reality that Greenland is actually facing when it comes to new mass tourism. In order to strike a balance between wanting to use many perspectives while simultaneously seeking to have the research reflect a more measured and concrete reality, this thesis centers its ontological and epistemological basis in critical realism that lies between both objective and subjective thought processes on how the world is understood. This is because critical realism takes the ontological stance that while there is a clear reality in the world that exists, epistemologically, our knowledge of these are inevitably affected by our malleable and imperfect nature, essentially meaning that we have to acknowledge that the way we see the 'perfect world' is based on 'imperfect interpretations' of it (Della-Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 24).

Crucially, critical realism posits that there are certain patterns present in the world which might not be visible on the surface, but through rigorous research can be identified and understood. While a realist epistemology might discard these patterns because they are difficult to concretely measure, critical realist thought poses that they are vital to understand the social contexts of how knowledge is formed. Furthermore, if these patterns and mechanisms behind

them can be understood, then there is potential that new knowledge can be generated that can potentially be used to alter the status quo of the concrete, observable world in order to create better circumstances for those who live in it (Bryman, 2016, p. 24). This concept is ideal for this thesis as it ultimately seeks to gather and create new knowledge about the different effects that the hard-to-measure new mass tourism from North America might bring to Greenland's society, and then use this knowledge to create an overview over and discuss how positive effects might be achieved while negative ones are lessened so that Greenland might be led to create a better future status quo for its society.

Considering all of the above, this thesis will be conducted using various different forms of data that can help in identifying a real but nevertheless difficult to gauge future for Greenland based on its new North American tourism prospects. Fundamentally, the theoretical basis of the thesis will be grounded in purely academic material written by scholars who have extensively deliberated the theoretical and conceptual aspects of the concepts authenticity in tourism, tourism typologies and the tourism gaze. This is done to ensure that the thesis is rooted in strong academic tradition and lends the thesis credence and legitimacy when it comes to the utilization of these theories throughout the writings present. Why the chosen theories were selected and the reasons they fit this thesis so well will be described more in depth in the theory section. It should also be noted that due to concerns of how much space there might have been available in this thesis, other potential theories that could have fit the topic of this thesis as well, such as sustainability in tourism or cultural appropriation, have not been chosen as a main theories for the theory section, although they are mentioned and brought up a few times later in the analysis despite not being a main focus of the thesis.

While the works of academics will also be used when it comes to tackling the research questions of the thesis, these will also be backed up by the writings and discussions of non-academics, locals and Greenland nationally owned tourism organization VisitGreenland. This is done to make the paper more wide-reaching and inclusive in its scope than it otherwise would be without them and to include strong qualitative data about Greenland's concurrent reality through things like quotes from locals that a positivist might ignore but is viewed as crucial to a critical realist in order to understand the context of how new mass tourism will affect Greenland in the future. This wide net of secondary data, then, essentially makes it so the research aims to capture the social contexts and patterns, leading the thesis to better understand the processes Greenland is going through and likely will go through in the future in regards to its approaches to mass tourism. Simultaneously, in order to not stray too far from the reality that Greenland is likely to experience and end up mostly dealing in hypotheticals, the thesis also heavily uses official reports from VisitGreenland that have measured concrete data about how many tourists they currently receive and where they spend their vacation time and money, as well as how locals feel about the tourists coming to Greenland. Some of these reports consists of surveys answered by locals as well as others answered by prospective tourists about different topics related to Greenlandic tourism. By using data from these reports, then, the thesis seeks to avoid becoming too hypothetical and purely speculative through the rooting of its various discussions and predictions in a background of measurable, quantitative data. Essentially, with both numbers-driven quantitative data as well as more qualitative data like using quotes from academics or locals, the thesis triangulates its data and aims to reach a higher

degree of knowledge about the different already existing and possible scenarios and realities that Greenland can find itself facing in the future.

Fundamentally, the way the research of this thesis has been conducted and how it has handled the gathering of data has been based on an abductive approach. Initially, there was a central idea of exploring the impacts of mass tourism on Greenland and basing the research on early-established research questions that would lead the data-gathering process in a mostly deductive fashion. However, the subsequent discovery of new data has caused the scope of the thesis and how to approach the research questions to change in a rather inductive manner, gathering the data first and shaping the concrete aims of the research based on that. This was caused partially by how at a middle stage in the development of the thesis, several new tourism reports with interesting and detailed economic and social data about Greenlandic tourism were released by VisitGreenland and partner organizations. As a result of this happening, the focus of the thesis partially adapted to include this wealth of new and insightful data and information, thus leading from a mostly deductive initial approach to one that has inductive qualities as well. Similar proceedings happened multiple times, the deductive and inductive affecting each other repeatedly in a spiral of triangulation that finally created an abductive approach that shaped the scope of the thesis while it was being created.

Rather than use something like content analysis or coding for how this thesis conducts itself, a perhaps more original mixed methods approach has been taken that the researcher of this thesis refers to as an ‘explorative analysis’. Somewhat similar to a literature review, an explorative analytical approach involves going through many different sources and presenting central points that the creators of said sources make therein, positioning these points next to each other both to gain an overview over the state of whatever is being researched and to compare and contrast said points with each other. As an example of this, in the case of this thesis, the researcher of this thesis will be continuously referring to the aforementioned tourism reports from VisitGreenland and using the data therein to showcase different aspects of how tourism in Greenland is perceived by different actors. Going beyond the mere boundaries of a literature review, however, an explorative analysis approaches sources like these by processing them with different theoretical foundations like authenticity in tourism which then causes the data to be analyzed at a higher critical level than a simple literature review normally seeks to accomplish. In using sources like the tourism reports as well as quotes from VisitGreenland and locals of Greenland, then, the hope is both to help amplify Greenlandic voices and research as well as to analyze these at high critical level to hopefully gather new knowledge from doing so. The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data with a sort of mixed methods, explorative analysis approach is also conducted in order to try and analyze things at a high and intricate level.

Considering how important the new and recent tourism reports from VisitGreenland and its cooperators are to this thesis, they will briefly be described and quantified below. While this thesis does not have a dedicated literature review, this section:

- The first report is titled “The population’s opinions toward tourism” (translated from the Danish title: “Befolkningens holdninger til turismen 2024”) and contains the results of a survey filled in by Greenlanders in 2024 about how they feel about Greenland’s current and future tourism prospects. In addition to presenting raw

survey numbers, the report also contains writings from VisitGreenland that indicate how VisitGreenland interprets the gathered data. In this thesis, this report is repeatedly used to showcase how locals feel about different aspects of tourism, providing the thesis with data about local perspectives that might otherwise be difficult to gather. It should perhaps be noted that most respondents to the survey live in Nuuk and around 2/3 of respondents are female which can perhaps skew some aspects of the data, but the report is seen as valuable for this thesis in spite of that.

- A report that is very critical to this thesis is titled “Positioning and potentials of Greenland on the North American holiday travel market” that was made in 2023 in collaboration with VisitGreenland and the Institute for Tourism Research in Northern Europe. This report is about an online survey that has been filled in by over 3000 North Americans that pertains to their travel habits, with the data in the report specifically describing how these North Americans see different aspects of the possibility to travel to Greenland and what they might hope to see if they go there. The data gathered from this survey has provided a true wealth of information about North American viewpoints on Greenlandic travel and the different dimensions of this data has repeatedly been used throughout the thesis to argue how North American tourists in particular might relate to different aspects of Greenlandic society such as its natural environment.
- A report that has also been occasionally used in this thesis is called “The Economic Importance of Foreign Tourism in Greenland.” This report created by Rambøll and VisistGreenland contains raw economic data over just how much tourism garners revenue in Greenland in 2023 and how tourists coming by plane and tourists coming by cruise generate money for Greenland differently. This has been used in this thesis to indicate differences between plane and cruise tourists and what prospects there might be for Greenland’s future economic tourism development.
- Lastly, two more reports have been used a few times in the thesis to compare how North American tourists are different from tourists from different regions. One of these, titled “Positioning and potentials of Greenland on its main GLOBAL markets,” was also made in collaboration between the Institute for Tourism Research in Northern Europe and VisitGreenland, but instead of focusing on North Americans specifically, this report also provides survey data for countries like France, Germany, the UK, Denmark, Norway and Sweden and how they feel about potentially going to Greenland. In a similar fashion, the last report, titled “Travel habits and preferences for previous and potential guests in Greenland,” was made in collaboration with VisitGreenland and the company Greenland Travel and is about an online survey that examines how Germans, Danes and people from the UK feel about potentially traveling to Greenland.

Before starting the analysis of the thesis in earnest, it makes to cover some of the delimitations of the paper as well as the possible biases that might affect how the thesis is written. For one, while this thesis is about Greenland and touches on points about its society

and culture, the research done in doing this is conducted by someone who is not a Greenlander themselves and has never been to Greenland. Because of this, there might be aspects of Greenlandic culture or societal norms that are overlooked due to the researcher not knowing about them in full despite attempts to research Greenlandic culture in depth. While there were attempts to reach out to potential Greenlandic interview subjects like officials from VisitGreenland to mitigate this fact, all Greenlandic tourism planners that were contacted in relation to these interviews were either too busy to participate or could not do so before this thesis was set to be submitted, and part of the reason for this was because Greenlandic tourism planners have become more busy as a result of preparing for new tourists when the new airports become operational. While several sources of data in this thesis originates from Greenland or Greenlandic writers, the researcher did not travel to Greenland and gather new data from the people there using methods like interviews. Instead, all the data gathered in this thesis has been accessed through the internet with most of it uncovered through using online data portals like Google Scholar and Jstor and other aspects discovered by going on to Greenlandic national news websites like Sermitsiaq or by going to VisitGreenland's website and accessing sources of data like mission statements and economic reports pertaining to Greenlandic tourism from there.

Critically, in stressing that no data used in this thesis was gathered in Greenland itself, it also important to note that the research presented in this thesis is done by a Dane, and there is a possibility that the researcher's knowledge of the connection between Greenland and Denmark's troubled colonial history might make it so the research is conducted with a thought process that might be different from that of a researcher who has no preexisting relation to or knowledge of Greenland's past. While this fact has been attempted to be mitigated by using several quotes from Greenlandic people in this thesis to highlight their voices, it makes sense to note that there might still be some power uneven power dynamics present in how these voices are represented given that, at the end of the day, these quotes have nevertheless ultimately been selected by a Dane. Part of the reason why North American tourists have been chosen as the focus of this thesis, despite there being good sources of data for both Danish and North American tourists, is also partially based of the desire to try and reduce Danish research bias and instead explore Greenland more independently interact with actors apart from Denmark.

How the Analysis is Structured and Why

The analysis of this paper is divided up into four main sections with each of these tackling one of the four research questions presented in the introduction to this thesis. For convenience, they are reiterated down below:

Research question 1: What types of North American tourists are Greenland the most likely to receive and what reasons might they have for visiting Greenland?

Research question 2: What effects might prospective North American tourists have on Greenland's natural and physical environment?

Research question 3: What effects might prospective North American tourists have on Greenland's cultural practices?

Research question 4: What steps might potentially be taken to increase the positive effects and lower the negative effects that North American tourists might bring when visiting Greenland?

Each research question in sequence is more complicated to explore than the last, but earlier research questions are created in such a way that they seek to add a knowledge basis that grows with each question and that helps when conducting research for the more complicated ones. With this approach, it is hoped that challenging research prospects can be analyzed despite of their complexity and create new knowledge by doing so. This setup was also created not just in order to explore how pervasive the effects of new mass tourism might become across several different sectors of Greenlandic society, but also in order to explore and help fill in potential gaps in current academic and economic knowledge about Greenland's future tourism prospects.

Research question 1 is designed to help identify what kind of North American tourist might decide to travel to Greenland, and it does this in order to create a baseline understanding of the kind of tourist that the rest of the research questions will base their explorations of prospective North American tourism off. Because of this, research question 1 is more straight-forward to explore and conduct in comparison to the others, focusing merely on providing an encapsulation of knowledge that will be beneficial to refer back to when conducting the exploration of the more multifaceted research questions that follow.

Research question 2 goes on to use the knowledge gathered from the previous research question to aid in its exploration of prospective North American tourists' potential impacts on Greenland natural and physical environment. While research question 1 might be seen as rather descriptive or simple in nature, research question 2 is more open-ended and seeks to analyze multiple different scenarios and conceptualizations of North American tourists.

Research question 3 explores how North American tourists might effect Greenland's cultural practices. The conceptualization of the term cultural practice in this thesis denotes aspects of Greenlandic culture like cultural traditions, cultural events and how Greenland's history has shaped its culture in the modern day. While tourism impacts on Greenland's nature and physical spaces have already been heavily researched and represented within the datasets uncovered in the data-gathering process of this thesis through lenses such as sustainable tourism, this research question is more difficult to explore because it has been observed that comparatively less research has evidently been conducted on how Greenlandic cultural practices might be affected by new mass tourism in a similar manner, possibly because it is harder to measure concretely. Subscribing to the epistemological approach of critical realism, however, this thesis takes root in the notion that it is crucial to not just understand what is easy to measure but also the social context and implications indicated by less clearcut data in order to gain a more holistic picture of reality and hopefully create helpful new knowledge that can be used and deliberated in the future. In the case of this thesis, this knowledge will also be crucial and immediately used when exploring the last following research question.

Research question 4 seeks to use all the knowledge that has been gathered from the previous analyses subsections to offer potential suggestions for how both positive and negative effects that stem from new North American tourists can best be managed in order to create knowledge that might help Greenland in the future. In saying all of this, however, an acknowledgement has to be made that this thesis has limitations to its potential reach, being merely an academic postgraduate thesis that is perhaps unlikely to reach the tourism planners and decision makers that might be able to use the uncovered knowledge to directly steer Greenland's society in a stable direction. Despite this, however, it is the hope of this researcher that the knowledge might at least provoke new avenues of thought about Greenlandic tourism prospects for those who read it or those who might seek out research conducted on different sections of Greenlandic society that are comparatively less represented in current research and academic circles.

It should be noted that as the research questions are continuously explored, they go from being rather simple and having data that is relatively easy to process to later be more open-ended and perhaps not having much direct data to analyze at all. As a result of this, some aspects that are explored later on in this thesis are going to be handled more hypothetically than purely being data-driven, but this is arguably unavoidable with how this thesis has been structured in the aim of creating specifically new potential knowledge and data. As such, while early sections might have sources and data for almost every paragraph, this is not really the case later on. Instead, the primarily used data in something like research question 4 is instead going to be everything that has been discovered in the prior three research questions. Simultaneously, this section of the analysis also does use some data not represented earlier in the thesis, for example in the forms of using examples from how tourism development has been planned in other countries and using these as examples for how Greenland might go about learning from them when making its own tourism planning in the future. Because of this use of new data, the researcher of this thesis argues that while research question 4 could arguably almost fit the dimensions of a Discussion section of a traditional academic paper, it is instead just positioned as the last part of the analysis section of this thesis.

Theory

Typologies and Development of Tourism

Tourism Typologies

When researching what effects that new mass tourists might have on Greenlandic society, it is vital not only to understand that more tourists are arriving, but also specifically what kind of tourists might arrive and how they might differ from the ones Greenland has had in the past. This is because without knowledge of what kind of tourists that might arrive in the future, it can be difficult to gauge what kind of impacts that tourism can have on different parts of Greenland's society. Given that this is the case, a framework like tourism typologies can potentially help in elucidating how tourists might affect Greenland in the future, and since this

is also the goal of research question 4, this thesis has chosen to use tourism typologies to create a possible understanding of said tourists.

Early sociological research on tourism and the impact it can have on communities started mostly in the 1970s and the 1980s. One of the most well-known examples of how tourists were perceived and identified came to be in 1970s when Erik H. Cohen, instead of viewing tourists as a largely homogenized entity of people, categorized tourists into different kinds of groups based on the extent to which the tourists sought out either novelty or instead familiarity (Mehmetoglu, 2004, p. 35). These different categories, or tourism typologies, were divided into four different groups which are described below (Cohen, 1979, p. 167-169):

- The Organized Mass Tourist
 - This type of tourist is one who values familiarity above all else. When they go travelling, it is practically always done through packaged tours and with a guide that directs the tourists to different places instead of the tourists themselves going out of their way to discover different aspects of the destination they travel to. Ultimately, this type almost stays within their own bubble even while traveling.
- The Individual Mass Tourist
 - Similar to the previous type of tourist, the people who belong to this category still value the familiar but are somewhat more likely to seek out novelty at the same time. Almost everything is still likely planned by a travel agency when this type goes to travel, but people belonging to this type are more likely to travel alone and be more active in deciding parts of where they want to go and what they want to experience in comparison to the Organized Mass Tourist.
- The Explorer
 - While the previous two types valued familiarity, this is the first type to value novelty higher than that. This type of tourist will most often go alone to seek a way to get out of their comfort zone and even actively try to engage with the locals of the destinations they visit and their culture, although this type of tourist will also ultimately fall back on familiar kinds of accommodation or transportation by the end of the day or if they begin to feel uncomfortable.
- The Drifter
 - Finally, this type of tourist actively goes out of their way to experience novelty above all else and wants to fully engage with the destinations they visit. A person from this type does not fall back on familiar accommodations, transportation or food but instead seeks to adapt and fully experience the way of life of the locals of the destinations they visit. Unlike the mass tourists typologies, this kind of tourist has no detailed plan about how or

where exactly they will travel but instead goes with the flow in an effort to seek out novelty.

Additionally, after describing these four typologies, Cohen also goes on to divide them up into two subcategories: the ‘institutionalized’ which is comprised of the two Mass Tourist typologies and the ‘noninstitutionalized’ which is comprised of the Explorer and the Drifter. The first category is described as being close to the traditional tourism industry and tourism organizers while the other one is only loosely tied to it (Cohen, 1972, p. 168-169).

It should be noted that this set of typologies is rather old, over 50 years even, but despite this it is far from dated. While other researchers like Valene Smith would go on to build their own set of typologies based on Cohen’s work with more categories, these were ultimately seen by sociologists and tourism research communities as less easily applicable than Cohen’s typologies as they were too narrow and context-sensitive (Mehmetoglu, 2004, p. 36). Even in the modern day, Cohen’s tourism typologies are still applied in research (Ata & Basar, 2019, p. 258) and will also be used in this thesis for their ability to frame and contextualize the different kinds of tourists that might come to Greenland with the advent of the new airports coming in 2024 and 2025. As will be covered more in depth in the analysis of this thesis, the typologies are helpful and relevant for this research topic because there is an argument that the new airports will open up for more tourism organizations and planners to create new kinds of packaged tours which might then attract more of the institutionalized tourists compared to the noninstitutionalized ones, and exploring the ramifications of this is tackled in all three research questions.

Tourism Area Lifecycle Model

In addition to tourism typologies, it also makes sense to consider tourism development in general and if it possible to identify which stage Greenland is at and where its development might head in the future. This is because if Greenland can be identified to be at a certain stage of development, then it might be able to see how other countries handled their own tourism development when they were at that stage and learn from their potential successes or failures.

One of the most famous models of tourism development is the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model created by R.W. Butler in 1980 which describes the evolution of a tourism destination in five initial stages and two final stages that split off from each other based on different circumstances. These stages are called Exploration, Involvement, Development, Consolidation, Stagnation, and finally Rejuvenation *or* Decline, and are described below (Kruczek & Szromek, 2021, p. 253-255):

- Exploration
 - o Individuals learn of a tourism destination and go there largely based on personal interests and the desire to experience something new. The number of these are minimal at first and have little to no adverse impacts on the lives of local peoples.

- Involvement
 - As larger amounts of tourists arrive, some locals of the destination start to make a living off accommodating and selling commodities to these tourists. There are expectations that new accommodations and transportation is developed to keep up with the tourists' needs.
- Development
 - Here in this stage, tourism becomes one of the main sources of economic income for a society and, critically, the number of tourists might even go on to match or even surpass the number of locals living in a given tourism destination. Furthermore, tourism planners and organizers from outside the society of the destination begin making their own package tours for tourists and might thus inadvertently create unfair competition for local businessowners or push citizens away from a destination due to the problems that too many tourists bring.
- Consolidation
 - Once this stage is reached, the tourism development for a destination is practically over and the number of tourists remain high but do not exponentially increase like they might have previously. To keep things afloat and to try and to keep capitalizing on the resources gathered from tourism, tourism organizers local to the destination try and expand the tourism season through various initiatives. However, while this is happening, inhabitants of the tourism destination become more antagonistic towards tourists intruding on their spaces and can in turn create a somewhat hostile environment for tourists that can make it difficult for tourism planners to make tourists keep wanting to come to the destination.
- Stagnation
 - Ultimately, at this stage, the destination is no longer seen as trendy or fashionable and numbers might begin to drop as tourists seek out different destinations elsewhere.
- Rejuvenation/Decline
 - Finally, after the stagnation stage has been reached, the destination usually goes into Decline where less tourists showing up results in businesses that formerly made a living of tourists need to close down. This, in turn, means that the tourists who actually do arrive find worse accommodations and are less likely to want to revisit the destination in the future, creating a spiral of fewer and fewer tourists coming to the destination. Sometimes, however, local tourism organizers can make massive new investments and essentially create new attractions to appeal to tourists and thus continue to earn a living of their money, sometimes actually leading to a Rejuvenation stage for a tourism destination.

The reason this kind of tourism development is relevant to this thesis is because of how it can potentially be applied to Greenland as a tourism destination as well as add further dimension to Cohen's four tourism typologies. Connecting the stages to the tourism typologies,

it would make sense to equate the kinds of tourists present in the Explorer stage to the noninstitutionalized types of the Explorers and Drifters, perhaps especially with Explorers due to the relative lack of tourists accommodations present in the exploration stage. Going further from that, once a few tourism accommodations are in place and the destination is more well known in the Involvement stage, tourists belonging to the Drifter typology are arguably more likely to be interested in the destination as they can explore something new while still returning to familiar accommodations at the end of the day. Once the destination enters the Development and Consolidation stages, it naturally follows that institutionalized types like the Individual Mass Tourist and the Organized Mass Tourists can also find the destination interesting because many package tours are available and businesses that thrive off tourism are likely to provide services like detailed guided tours which the institutionalized types enjoy. With all of this, the question of where Greenland is between all these stages and what prospective stages it might reach in the future is something that will be tackled in depth in the analysis and add depth and context to the findings and discussions contained within it.

Authenticity in Tourism

In order to understand a central part of what many modern tourists look for in a destination and why they might look for it in Greenland, it is important to know about the concept of authenticity in tourism. In figuring out which kind of authenticity different typologies of tourists might desire to seek out, this theory can assist in the analysis by presenting and helping in analyzing the different motivations that are important for various tourists.

The sociological study and discussion of what authenticity is in relation to tourism has had a focal starting point in studies made by Dean MacCannel in the 1970s concerning prospects of ‘staged authenticity’ (MacCannel, 1973, p. 589-590). However, while the concept has been seen as pivotal to understanding modern tourism practices and planning and has been extensively researched as a result, even half a century of thorough academic discussion later, the term has remained conceptually elusive and difficult to pin down with scholars differing on how they define, tackle and discuss the term (Gardiner et al., 2022, p. 1).

According to Moore et al. (2021, p. 5-6), the reason that authenticity became so hotly discussed in the beginning of the 1970s originated from how people in society were more and more exposed to insincere and surface-level practices aimed at essentially exploiting them and from that, the notion of finding the ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ within both objects and people became popular and seen as a social countermeasure to these practices. Conversely in the field of tourism, MacCannel and other scholars in the 1970s connected the term closely with commodification as they observed how the otherwise authentic-seeming aspects of a culture such as costumes, rituals and practices would actually also be subjected to insincere and manipulative practices by turning these into commodities that were designed to appeal to mass tourists rather than just be allowed to remain untouched and thus authentic by themselves. According to the early scholars, this would eventually cause things that were actually authentic to become inauthentic over time as a result and manipulate tourists to fall for staged authentic experiences while actually being robbed of them (Cohen, 1988, p. 372).

This idea of authenticity as the ‘real’ vs the ‘perceived’ would later go on to be further refined into three subcategories: the ‘objective’ authenticity which posits that truly authentic objects and experiences do exist and can be perceived; the ‘constructive’ authenticity that posits that tourism planners and even tourists create or promote their own versions of the authentic to suit their own needs and expectations; and finally ‘experiential’ authenticity that denotes the idea that the actual real authenticity of something is irrelevant as long as the tourist gets to experience an ‘otherness’ that makes them feel as if they are going on a journey and feel fulfilled as a result of it (Wang, 1999, 351-352). In short, there is authenticity related to real, tangible cultural aspects, authenticity related to how those aspects are viewed and thought of by others, and there is authenticity in relation to how experiencing these aspects makes tourists themselves feel. This duality of what is considered objectively authentic and how tourists themselves understand and experience what they believe is authentic is critically also still discussed and relevant in the modern day (Moore et al., 2021, p. 1-2).

The reason all of this is important for Greenlandic tourism relates that for elements like modern cultural tourism, Gardiner et al. (2022, p. 1-2) argue that tourism planners need to be acutely aware of how objective authenticity links together with constructivist and experiential authenticity in order to appeal to and create the best tourism experience possible. For instance, they argue, that while being able to go visit a historic or cultural location like a medieval castle can be appealing on its own, it can be made significantly more appealing for tourists by using staged things like actors and reconstructed props to give tourists a bigger and more cohesive picture than what the location would be able to do alone. While commodification of culture can be theorized as hurtful by some scholars as presented so far, Cohen (1988, p. 383-384) views it as actually having the potential to actually protect and highlight authentic, objective cultural objects. Going further, Cohen also argues that even having the way tourism planners effectively stage and construct authenticity by framing the objective cultural objects in different ways can inadvertently make the new constructive parts their own, new authentic part to the culture and history of these objects. From all of this, it should be stressed that something like Greenlandic culture is not static and is everchanging when they come into contact with tourists, which Gardiner also argues for in the following quote:

“Host cultures are not static or interchangeable. Cultures evolve, and a specific host culture encountered by tourists may have already been change through prior contact with tourists, adoption of new agrarian practices, internal changes of the country the host society is part of, migration resulting from war in neighboring countries, regional economic chaos, or a host of other causes unrelated to tourism development. Anthropologists often describe specific host cultures in terms of their historical traditions which may have developed in relative isolation for centuries but are now being change by global forces which redefine and shape everyone's life. ...When those norms and standards differ from those of another culture that comes into contact with it, changes and sociocultural impacts can result.” (Gartner, 1996, p. 162).

What can be gathered from all of this, then, is that authenticity is arguably malleable to some extent and that can complicate how the authenticity of different aspects of a culture are

viewed. Notions like this, as well as examining what kind of authenticity appeals to different kind of tourists, will be a central element used in the thesis to analyze different parts of how new North American tourists might affect different parts of Greenland's future either positively or negatively and how locals in Greenland might try to have aspects of their culture live up to tourists expectations of authenticity in order to make tourists feel satisfied and potentially spend more money while visiting Greenland.

The Tourist Gaze

When uncovering how new mass tourism might affect Greenlandic society, it makes sense to consider and apply the concept of the tourist gaze to enrich the depth of the research. The tourist gaze is a theoretical concept that centers itself around the idea that tourists, most often specifically Western tourists in academic tradition, hold a degree of power over the inhabitants of the destination that they visit and cause them to act in certain ways or change their behavior in part to accommodate said tourists (Maoz, 2005, p. 222). This is largely because the locals are expected to serve as hosts for the tourists in part to earn money from them, as mentioned at the end of the 'authenticity in tourism' subsection, but the trade and power dynamics stemming from this are not necessarily equal. This is because as a tourist is stepping into the space of a host community and has the option to leave at any time while the people of the host community will most often have to stay and accommodate parts of their own ways of life to appeal to all future tourists (Gartner, 1996, p. 162-163). This notion is also explored by Butler's TALC model discussed earlier given that as tourism development continues, more locals begin to be able to base a living off accommodating tourists, but having too many tourists can also lead to adverse feelings or resentment as seen in the Consolidation stage. Additionally, the concept of authenticity and aspects such as staged or constructive authenticity are also important to keep in mind when exploring the tourism gaze as locals are not unlikely to try and accommodate tourists' desires for novelty by showcasing different parts of their culture which might interest tourists, almost like a cultural commodity (Maoz, 2005, p. 224). It should also be noted that while the tourist gaze is often directed at how tourists view human inhabitants of a destination, the term can also denote the gazing of any part of a destination or culture that is seen as different or novel in comparison to what the tourist is used to, such as unfamiliar scenery or cultural practices (Lemelin, 2006, p. 518).

In the process of regarding how the tourist gaze might affect Greenlandic tourism, it is important to recognize that Greenlanders are an indigenous people group. While the term indigeneity has many dimensions to it, one of the most basic denotes that a group of people are indigenous to a locale when they have a strong connection to it. This formulation also then lends to the idea that there is a distinct difference between people who are locals to an area and prospective outsiders who are not. On the surface this idea seems simple, but is complicated by the fact that the term indigenous has come to signify many different things in different international contexts, with there often specifically being many connotations about the idea that indigenous peoples are often small groups of people who have experienced colonial influence by larger groups such as large nation states in the past (Merlan, 2009, p. 304).

In a colonial context, there is a rich amount of research that has been conducted about how indigenous people like the Greenlanders have been viewed by Western people in the past. One of the most well-known conceptualizations about how the West has viewed non-Western cultures in the past comes from Edward Said in 1978, where he codified the term *orientalism* to describe how the Occident (the West) views cultures in what was large referred to as the Orient as lesser in comparison to the West and in need of guidance, justifying a colonialist perspective on how to approach these cultures (Said, 1977, p 162). This term would later be adopted to be used in a context specific to people of the Arctic by Fienup-Riordan when she coined the now rather dated term *Eskimo Orientalism*. Herein, Fienup-Riordan describes how the West, or the Occident, portrayed people of the Arctic as primitive, simplistic and child-like in order to mirror and contrast the West which was perceived as more mature and civilized in comparison in order to convince itself of its own cultural superiority (Fienup-Riordan, 1995, p. XI-XII). In the case of Greenland, this is mirrored in part of its history by how the Danish-Norwegian missionary Hans Egede visited Greenland in 1721 and viewed Greenlanders as different from Western humans like himself as they were seen as primitive and heathen-like and in need of Western education and guidance to become better humans (Rud, 2017, p. 13). While obviously untrue and horrific-sounding to modern ears, this idea that Greenlanders have previously been viewed as inferior by outsiders and forced to adapt to their ways of doing things is an interesting aspect to consider when thinking about how Western tourists might perceive Greenlanders in the modern day and how the Western tourist gaze is in turn perceived by Greenlanders. There might be an argument that different cultures have different expectations of what constitutes a tourist gaze, and what someone from North America might conceive of as simply casually observing somebody can potentially be seen as something more demeaning by someone from Greenland. This idea that the hosts of a destination are not just passive subjects which are gazed at but also essentially gaze back at tourists and form their own opinions on them is called the 'local gaze', with the subsequent dualistic interplay between the tourist gaze and the local gaze being referred to as the 'mutual gaze' (Maoz, 2005, p. 222). These concepts, as well as the theories of tourism typologies, tourism development and authenticity will serve as the theoretical backbone to this thesis as it now moves on to use these to further enrich the findings and discussions which will now be tackled in the analysis section below.

Analysis

Research Question 1: Types of Prospective North American Tourists

As described in the methodology section, this part of the thesis will now explore the following problem statement and research questions:

The anticipated increase of mass tourism in Greenland from North Americans in particular can potentially lead to both positive and negative effects on Greenlandic society and culture, but without a clear understanding of which kind of effects are likely to occur and why, it will be difficult for Greenland to prepare the kind of tourism strategies that are likely to help it reach the most beneficial scenarios for its future and create the most amount of satisfaction possible for its people. In seeking to understand these effects and creating an overview and discussion of how they may be approached to reach the most ideal possible outcomes for Greenland and its population, then, this thesis will base its research in these following research questions:

Research question 1: What types of North American tourists are Greenland the most likely to receive and what reasons might they have for visiting Greenland?

Research question 2: What effects might prospective North American tourists have on Greenland's natural and physical environment?

Research question 3: What effects might prospective North American tourists have on Greenland's cultural practices?

In exploring research question 1, this thesis emphasizes the importance of applying and considering the theory of tourism typologies in particular. This is not just because the theory helps in both identifying and quantifying the different kinds of tourist Greenland might receive from North America, but also because in doing so, it might be possible to create more grounded predictions about what they seek out by visiting Greenland which will, in turn, assist in answering the subsequent two research questions later on.

As covered in the theory part of this paper in the section about Cohen's tourism typologies, noninstitutionalized types like the Drifter and the Explorer tend to go out of their ways to seek novelty and authenticity and generally want to engage with the people of the locations they visit as well as their culture. In essence, these people want to seek out authenticity and are thus also perhaps more likely to stay away from places where they feel authenticity might be staged in order to appeal to more common tourists. From this, an argument can be made that these specific types of tourists are comparatively less likely to crowd around tourism hotspots in Greenland that might be seen as having degrees of staged authenticity and are also more likely to engage with locals in the periphery and treat them with

higher degrees of respect and consideration when visiting. However, with the new airports making it cheaper to travel to Greenland for North American tourists and causing new tourism infrastructure and accommodations to be created in anticipation of more new tourists arriving, Greenland is perhaps likely to experience an uptick in institutionalized types of tourists like the Individual- and Organized Mass Tourist in comparison to the noninstitutionalized types. Given that the mass types of tourists often want their tours to be planned out beforehand by tourism operators, they are also more likely to flock to tourism hotspots as these kind of tourists tend to value what they see as familiar and safe and are thus more likely to hire a guide who will naturally want to show off these tourism hotspots in planned packaged tours. As such, while Greenland in the past has perhaps been mostly subjected to tourists that have sought to engage with local culture and not overcrowd different spaces, this might change with the advent of the new airports. The influx of this new type of tourist and the sheer number of them can cause trouble not just for locals who might be engaged with in a less considerate manner, but also for other types of tourists who have come before and engaged with locals in a more respectful manner, as expressed by a business owner from Ilulissat:

“I only want 1200 meters [of] runway, so we can receive flights with 85 people. These people can be handled (...) I have a luxury boat, where I host lots of tourists (...) I go with them who come with their own plane to Kangerlussuaq, come here, stay on Hotel Arctic, go out. This year we have a family from US, and they have been here many, many times. But now they will never, ever come here again. Because before they can go up to the glacier, go with the snowmobile, now they must wait maybe 2-3 hours to go there and stay with 1000 people. Absolute too many people!” (Ren et al., 2024, p. 7).

From this quote, it is interesting to note that Greenlandic tourism operators also might not currently have the infrastructure to manage and transport too many people at once. This problem can also be exacerbated by the fact that instead of the number of tourists being spread out relatively even throughout the year, Greenland tends to have significantly larger tourism spikes in the summer rather than the winter in part because of summer phenomena such as midnight sun. Acknowledging this as a concrete and potential issue, VisitGreenland themselves recommend that if you want to avoid mass tourism in places like Ilulissat, you might want to consider traveling to Greenland in the winter instead (VisitGreenland, 2024b). It seems, however, that this is not the first thing on the mind of tourists from North America in the future, as those of them in 2023 that said they planned to visit Greenland in the future mostly indicated they wanted to visit in this tourism hot season. This is illustrated by how 35% of them wanted to visit in the months of July, August and September while another 30% said they wanted to visit in April, May and June (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, 32). The problem that Greenlandic tourism planners face, then, is that mass tourists from North America all arriving at the same time can cause problems and stress for local Greenlanders and stakeholders as the lack of accommodation or resources can lead to bottlenecks for said tourism planners (Ren et al., 2024, p. 3). This notion has also been captured in this quote from an AirGreenland representative:

“We are very dependent on individual resources, because we are fewer people than in many (other) places. An organization can be one or two persons, but in Greenland we have one person, and if that person decides that he does not want to work with tourism anymore or even moving away getting a new job; there are no resources left. So, it is extremely vulnerable. So, you can build up, you can have very good plans and programmes for small settlements. But then at some point they are all under stress because of resources. Sometimes it is possible to replace and to find other persons that are willing to step in. And in other cases, it is just not possible.” (Ren et al., 2024, p. 3).

From everything discussed so far, a point has been substantiated that locals will be more likely to face a type of tourist that is perhaps more challenging to them than what they have faced in the past. Critically, while a Drifter or an Explorer type of tourist might undeniably enact at least some of the negative aspects of the tourist gaze covered in the theory section, it is perhaps more likely for the institutionalized types to do so. This is both because they are less likely to want to engage with locals on the same levels as noninstitutionalized types and because the sheer number that mass tourists are more likely to arrive with makes it more difficult for all of them to be able to communicate and engage with the comparatively small amount of locals that are present in the spaces that the North American mass tourism types are more likely to visit. This can, in turn, create a form of distance between North American tourists and locals in these destinations and make it more likely for negative aspects of both the tourist gaze and local gaze to occur. Conversely, Drifters or Explorers might not even be in these spots as much or for as long given that they likely want to seek out different and varied parts of the destination they have travelled to instead of gathering near the biggest tourism hotspots in their search of nonstaged authenticity.

Contextualizing the statement above and harking back to the three types of authenticity presented in the theory section, while the noninstitutionalized tourists are looking for objective authenticity, the type of authenticity that North American tourists are likely to be exposed to is in fact constructive authenticity that they are led to by tourism planners and perhaps locals that seek to accommodate the North American tourists for economic gain. It should also be noted that sometimes, foreign tourism operators in countries other than Greenland have also been observed to deliberately go out of their way to create distance between tourists and locals in ways that might actually encourage tourists to not engage with locals too closely and gaze upon them instead. This kind of dynamic has been attested, for instance, by the anthropologist Edward W. Bruner in a case where he worked as a tourist guide in Bali in the 80's. When guiding tourists, Bruner went out of his way to make tourists engage with the locals, not just letting them be spectators to traditional Balinese dances but staging meetings with the performers afterwards in their regular clothing instead of their dance costumes so that the tourists could interact and engage with them as regular people instead of just performers. With approaches like this as well as communicating that some of the dances the tourists were witness to were actually not traditional but were instead recently created specifically to appeal to tourists, Bruner came into conflict with the tourism agency that hired him who instead wanted to make these elements appear as authentic as possible to also attract tourists and make money (Bruner, 2005, p. 2-4). As Bruner himself puts it:

“To cut to the heart of the matter, Lisa's master tourist tale, one shared widely within the tourism industry, was to take tourist performances as representations of an authentic culture that were to be accepted as given and to remain essentially unexamined. The Javanese Balinese dance dramas, and all cultural performances, were to be views as replicas of life in the ethnographic present, static, timeless, without history, without agency, without context. My narrative, which I had hoped to share with the tourists, was to examine tourists attractions not for what they were assumed to represent, but for what they actually were. Basically, the conflict between Lisa and me was over which story should be told and who had the right to tell it.” (Bruner, 2005, p. 4).

In a Greenlandic context, then, it might be interesting to take into consideration that tourism operators might also have a similar interest to the Balinese tourism planners in keeping a distance between North American tourists and locals. By selling the idea that locals in Greenland might live more traditional lives connected to traditions of the past or are more connected with nature in comparison to other peoples, an illusion of constructive authenticity can be maintained that might otherwise be ruined if the tourists were instead encouraged to interact with locals as if they were regular people. While the aim of the tourism operators is perhaps not to denote locals as inferior to North Americans or Westerners as was previously done under the ideas of Eskimo Orientalism, creating a sense of distance or foreignness between the two groups nevertheless might be done to make North American tourists potentially more interested in visiting and experiencing Greenland and its culture. This notion is also reflected by how millions of North American tourists have previously decided to visit small communities like those of the Amish and the Mennonites specifically to see how their lifestyles differ from those of the tourists themselves and to buy the products these communities make to acquire what are seen as authentic souvenirs. Among these tourists, some have gone on to say that they have been disappointed by how not all the people they have seen wear traditional clothing or fit their tourist expectations of what people from these communities are supposed to be like, perhaps indicating that North American mass tourists are less likely to want to engage with the reality of who these people actually are and instead just want to see them as an ‘other’ they can compare and distinguish their own identities from (Fagence, 2001, p. 202). This is also exactly the definition of the third type of authenticity presented in the theory section, experiential authenticity, that posits that the actual authenticity of something is irrelevant as long as it makes someone feel like they are experiencing an ‘otherness’ and going on a journey as a result of that. When visiting a small indigenous people like the Greenlanders, then, there might be an interest of these tourists to not want to engage with them too closely lest they have their desire to feel an otherness shattered, and tourism operators planning to make Greenland appealing might then also want to maintain the distance between tourist and local so that the tourists feel more satisfied with the services and sense of otherness that they got to experience as a result of the services that the tourism operators have provided. In essence, then, when considering which kinds of North American tourists that might arrive in the future and what effects they can have on Greenlandic society, it is important to recognize that mass tourists coming to the new airports might have different expectations and desires for visiting

Greenland than the types of tourists who have visited in the past. VisitGreenland has also weighed in on this distinction between different types of tourists, hoping to decrease the amount of pressure on big tourist hotspots in the future by highlighting small destinations and making them appeal to people like Drifters and Explorers in order to make them less likely to crowd big tourism hotspots, as illustrated by this quote from their 2021-2024 official tourism development strategy plan:

”By a sustainable tourism industry we also mean tourism that is distributed more geographically in order to create a foundation for employment and revenue in the smaller settlements where there is a basis for tourism. Luckily there is a growing trend among adventure tourists to experience places that are not over-crowded by tourists and where one can experience authenticity and calm. By creating new products with these elements and marketing these products to the right segments (e.g. authenticity seekers and ethnophiles) one can in the long run achieve a more harmonious distribution of tourism in the country.” (VisitGreenland, 2021, p. 22)

In addition to the above, as mentioned earlier, Greenland concurrently has spikes in tourism numbers in the summer months that can cause too much pressure on business owners and local stakeholders. This can be perceived, for instance, from their tourism numbers in 2024 where the Rambøll report shows that Greenland earned 529.000.000dkk in the month of August while they only earned around 7% of that in January when they earned 40.400.000dkk in comparison (VisitGreenland et al., 2024, p. 18). In the same tourism development strategy plan from earlier, VisitGreenland has presented the following as their viewpoint on how to tackle this discrepancy and why they feel it is necessary to do so:

“Visit Greenland is working to make tourism an all year-round industry. By distributing tourism in both summer and winter as well as in the shoulder seasons planes and accommodations are filled up and experiences can be offered throughout the entire year. This creates revenue in the entire value chain from agents, travel agencies, incoming, accommodations, to tourism operators and souvenir shops, guides, museums etc. Once the demand is established, there will be a greater incentive to attract a year-round workforce and a greater incentive to train in tourism. Thus, there are a number of positive effects derived from investing in year-round tourism” (VisitGreenland, 2021, p. 21).

Through this quote and the one from before, it can be illustrated that VisitGreenland recognizes the current shortcomings of Greenland’s tourism sector and have plans to tackle these in order to create jobs and security for local Greenlanders and stakeholders, hoping to spread out the arrivals of tourists and direct them toward smaller destinations in order to not put too much strain on local Greenlanders or their businesses. However, there is a question of whether this is actually feasible with the kind of tourists that might arrive in Greenland in the coming years. In the case of American tourists who plan to travel to Greenland by plane, 52% of them plan to travel in groups (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, p. 28), and while a number of 39%

have said they feel they know a lot about the country, another 50% only have a vague idea of it and 10% say they have no idea what it is like at all and one last percent has never even heard of it (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, p. 13.) Ultimately, then, a 61% majority are not very accustomed to what Greenlandic society is like. Furthermore, of Americans and Canadians, 48% prefer that a tour operator in their own country plan their trip while a different 23% want to plan it on their own, leaving only 29% wanting to have their tour planned by a Greenlandic tour operator. In addition, of the total 52% of ones who plan to travel in groups, 32% of that number also want the trip to be organized by a tour operator in their home country in comparison to the 20% that want it to be handled by a tour operator centered in Greenland (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, p. 28). From all of this, at least when it comes to North American tourists, there are indications that Greenlandic tourism operators might not have as much control over the movements of these tourists as they might wish to have. This can, in turn, mean that Greenland is more likely to receive tourists who want to maintain a distance between themselves and locals so they can gaze upon them and their culture from a distance and experience the kind of authenticity the tourists want and expect to experience instead of trying to seek out real authenticity by seeking out non-hotspot destinations or interacting with the locals in more than a surface manner.

While there might be merit to appeal to Explorers and Drifters or even hope to turn some of the people from the mass tourism types into these, it can be argued that at least in a North American tourism context, Greenland will more or less be forced to deal with a sizable amount of mass tourists who seek out and will flock to what they find familiar and well-known and to where their foreign guides lead them, which will most likely be tourism hotspots. Simultaneously, based on the notion that 60% of the tourist who want to visit are not too familiar with Greenland, a number of these tourists are perhaps not fully cognizant of how they should approach Greenlandic society and the cultural norms of Greenlandic locals while visiting tourism hotspots like in Ilulissat, potentially causing frustration among local Greenlanders. This idea is also reflected in VisitGreenland's tourism-opinion report of 2024 where they pose that several respondents have indicated that they don't think that tourists have respect for the local environment and culture and that they wished that tourists would be more willing to support local businesses and use Greenlandic guides (VisitGreenland, 2024a, p. 4). While this next part might also be considered a generalization, this notion is also perhaps exacerbated by how people who travelled to Greenland in the past were likely richer than the ones who might now seek out Greenland due to lower prices and more accessibility with the new coming airports. This is relevant because when it costs less money to travel, there is arguably a higher likelihood that more people do not feel the need to do their research on a given destination as they can travel there more on a whim compared to if you needed to spend a sizable amount of money to do so and which would thus make you more likely to research the destination to make sure you got your money's worth. As a result of everything mentioned so far, then, there is a strong likelihood that Greenlandic locals will undoubtedly be faced with more tourists that are perhaps ignorant of how best to behave in the living spaces of their homes.

One aspect that is also worth considering about the types of tourist who arrives and how local Greenlanders react to them is the transportation method by which they travel, specifically whether they travel by plane or if they travel by cruise ship. While the number of tourists who have arrived in Greenland has increased by 46% between 2018 and 2024, the balance has

shifted from there being a rough 50/50 split of people who arrive by cruise ship or plane in 2018 to there now being 58% of people who arrive by cruise ship in 2024 (VisitGreenland et al, 2024, p. 3). While this difference might not seem like much at first glance, it is critical to note that in 2024, 60% of all gross value that foreign tourism added to Greenland's economy stemmed specifically from tourist who came by plane rather than those that came by cruise ship (VisitGreenland et al, 2024, p. 20). Furthermore, while it was calculated that an average family of three people ended up spending 57.500dkk which directly goes to Greenland if they traveled by plane, this number was only 38.350dkk or 27.150dkk for cruise ship families depending on what kind of cruise ship they went on (VisitGreenland et al, 2024, p. 20), essentially meaning that cruise ship tourists contribute less to Greenland's economy than plane tourists do. The reason for this lies largely in the fact that cruise tourists are more likely to spend money on products present on the cruise than in Greenlandic cities. One Greenlandic business owner expresses:

“Cruise passengers, they do not put that much money in the town, because they have everything on the ship. Of course, there are a few people – me included – that make good business of the cruise ships, but not so many locals. And because of that (...) well, Greenlanders are kind people (...) but when there are so many people and they are just walking around everywhere (...) it is not good, and I do not want that in Greenland. But of course, the government, they want business.”

The opinion expressed by the Greenlandic business owner above is also reflected in the 2024 tourism-opinion report made by VisitGreenland where there is something very notable about how cruise ship tourists are viewed in comparison to other types of tourists. While both cruise ship tourists and other tourists were seen as acting a little less respectful toward local Greenlanders in 2024 in comparison to 2022, there was a slight but notable increase of local Greenlanders that thought that other types of tourists were beneficial to their society regardless of this fact, but simultaneously, this opinion did not apply to cruise ship tourists who had an actual decrease in the number of people that saw them as beneficial to Greenlandic society. Admittedly, while 70% of the surveyed Greenlanders still see cruise tourists as beneficial and respectful, both the negative evolution of opinion on cruise tourists, as well as the fact that other types of tourists are more well-liked by around 10% points more of respondents of the survey, is perhaps indicative of a general frustration toward cruise tourists by local Greenlanders (VisitGreenland, 2024a, p. 3). While perhaps not an overbearing problem now in 2024, as climate change melts significant chunks of ice in Arctic waters, it is projected that the presence of cruise ships in the Arctic will increase and thus put more pressure on actors in the region such as Greenland to invest more into port infrastructure and working personnel that can receive them (Ren et al., 2024, p. 3). Given that this is the case, there is a potential scenario where Greenlanders gradually begin to sour on the presence of cruise tourism more and more in the future, and this should be kept in mind when considering how tourists might both positively and negatively impact the lives of local Greenlanders who have to live with accommodating a group of people they might not necessarily have the best of opinions of in order to boost their economy.

The research that has been done to explore research question 1 so far has discovered several aspects of what kind of new North American tourists might arrive in Greenland and what they are likely to want to expect. Perhaps more critical than anything else discovered, however, is the notion that specifically institutionalized, mass tourism types are likely to travel with the arrival of the new airports and these tourist types might be more difficult for Greenland to handle in comparison to the tourists they have currently been visited by so far. This idea, as well as other data, will now be utilized as a basis standpoint of knowledge from which research question 2 will be conducted below.

Research Question 2: Tourism Effects on Natural and Physical Environment

As indicated in the introduction of this paper, the analysis will now use what knowledge has been gathered from exploring research question as well as other material to provide an analysis of research question 2: What effects might prospective North American tourists have on Greenland's natural and physical environment?

While an increase in tourism can benefit a country like Greenland through the strengthening of the country's economy and the supplement of new jobs (VisitGreenland, 2021, p. 21), there are also potential drawbacks that it can bring with it to its environment. For example, one of these drawbacks stems from how tourists can potentially overcrowd a physical space, often a tourism destination hotspot, and make it less enjoyable to be around or even be livable for local inhabitants living near said hotspot. One destination that has experienced the drawbacks of how overtourism can affect the livability of an area is the city of Dubrovnik in Croatia. While the city has financially benefited significantly from the many tourists that come to visit, the large number of tourists has also created an environment that is hard for locals to live in. Dissatisfied with the number of tourists and how they behave, many local inhabitants of the city have decided to move away from their homes to find places to live that has less overbearing tourists (Responsible Travel, 2024, under sub-headline 'The trouble with overtourism'). While new mass tourism to Greenland is perhaps unlikely to result in as extreme an amount of overtourism as in Greenlandic cities as Dubrovnik has, the example is still pertinent to showcase as a potential 'worst-case' scenario for how arguably badly managed tourism planning or lacking tourism infrastructure can negatively impact the lives of locals of a given culture. On the other hand, there is also an argument that increased tourism can help build infrastructure in local environments that are not overwhelmed with tourists and provide social benefits, as illustrated by this quote from a chair in VisitGreenland, Anette Lings:

"We need to learn from the tourism development of other countries in order to guarantee that the local communities do not feel like they are shunned. Tourism jobs need to be enriching for local communities. I am for example a strong advocate for the notion that when we get better infrastructure, both micro-infrastructure as well as the larger infrastructure in regards to attract tourism, then it has to be done in such a way that it makes the location better for the locals. It can be everything from better ports, pontoon bridges, walking trails, to plane- or ship

travel between towns, but it can also be benches, public bathrooms and trashcans.” (Jyllands-Posten, 2024 – translated from Danish).

It should also be mentioned that while Greenland is not necessarily a mass tourism destination yet, there is a possibility that it can follow in the footsteps of a destination like Iceland which was originally seen as a niche tourism destination but whose mass tourism growth has led it to gain significant economic gains and become a well regarded mass tourism destination in a rapid period of around only a single decade (Milano et al., 2019, p. 210). Overtourism in Greenland is also relevant to discuss because even concurrently before the opening of the new airports that will likely bring in large amounts of new tourists, a graph present in VisitGreenland’s 2024 tourism-opinion report indicates that Greenlandic citizens feel that tourists in 2024 are acting less respectful towards them compared to previous years that VisitGreenland has done the survey (VisitGreenland, 2024a, p. 3). In their own analysis of the data gathered from the survey, while they made it clear that their data indicates that a vast majority of surveyed Greenlanders see tourism as a contributing factor to the local economy and helps increase their quality of life, VisitGreenland also describes:

“We know from the open answers [from the survey] that some people have experienced tourists who acted a little disrespectful. Another typical negative experience is when there are too many tourists in the cityscape at once. This seems like the most widespread complaint – and simultaneously the biggest worry about the future development [of tourism in Greenland].” (VisitGreenland, 2024a, p. 25 – Translated from Danish)

From all of this, it can be observed that among some local Greenlanders, there is already concurrently a general hesitancy about the pressure and consequences that overtourism can have on their towns and living spaces, and the idea that this hesitancy might rise once the airports make Greenland more accessible is worth taking into consideration. Simultaneously, the effects that new North American tourists can have on Greenland’s society can also reach beyond merely towns and affect the nature that locals inhabit in general. In addition to the abovementioned quote that brings up how surveyed Greenlanders worry about the effects that cruise tourism can have on living spaces, VisitGreenland also states that many are afraid that cruise tourism can also create disturbances for natural wildlife and negatively affect the natural environment of Greenland in general (VisitGreenland, 2024a, p. 25). On the other hand, there may also be arguments for tourists perhaps being able to preserve wildlife as well. In March of 2023, it became possible for tourists to go sightseeing for polar bears, although under the conditions that tourists do so accompanied by permit-carrying locals and that polar bears should merely be viewed from a distance and not hunted (VisitGreenland, 2024#14). While polar bears are one of Greenland’s most iconic animals, they have become a protected species with relatively low numbers due to the effects of climate change (VisitGreenland, 2024#15). The most cynical way to look at how tourism affects wildlife like the polar bear would be that the emissions of their transportation can destroy the environment for Greenland’s wildlife. However, an argument can also be made that if polar bear watching becomes a popular tourism activity, then tourism operators might spend more resources into researching where polar bears

are located and how their population is doing, perhaps leading to more research done that can help preserve the populations of polar bears in the future.

Returning to the subject of cruise tourism, it should also be noted that cruise tourism might also be risky for Greenland's environment because they might be difficult to provide help or assistance for if they get stuck. This has been seen, for instance, when the cruise ship *Ocean Explorer* got stuck in a unpopulated area 850 miles away from Nuuk with over 200 people on board on September 13, 2023, and unfavorable weather conditions made it difficult for rescue operators to reach the stranded cruise ship. Thankfully, there was no oil slippage when this happened (Roeloffs, 2023), but the prospect of cruise ships running aground and causing massive oil leaks can potentially be very dangerous for the environment. This is especially the case when considering that it might be difficult to transport the equipment needed to contain and minimize the effects of these oil spills over far distances and in rough weather. On the other hand, while cruise tourism might not be as profitable for Greenland as plane tourism is in general, an area like Southern Greenland earned 94% of its 2023 tourism monetary income from cruise tourism (VisitGreenland et al, 2024, p. 17), illustrating that as things stand now, cruise tourism can also provide economic benefits to more relatively isolated areas in Greenland. Despite this, VisitGreenland announced in 2023 that it would no longer spend any resources on promoting or marketing cruise tourism as VisitGreenland posited that many surveys indicated this kind of tourism does not contribute to sustainable development within Greenland. Simultaneously, however, VisitGreenland also acknowledged that Greenland is in spite of this becoming more and more popular as a cruise tourism destination and that Greenland has to be more prepared for locals being increasingly challenged by trying to accommodate the increasing number of ships sailing into their ports (VisitGreenland, 2022). If one was to try and put Greenland on the TALC model, then, this data suggests that they might be in the Development stage where outside tourism planners make their own packaged tours and cause unfair trouble and competition with both local tourism planners and local citizens as well. Ultimately, then, despite not wanting to promote cruise tourism, Greenland has to face the challenges that cruise tourism might bring to its environment and the effects that this can have on its future tourism development, especially with the prospect that climate change causing there to be less ice in Arctic waters perhaps making cruise tourism even more popular in the future.

When measuring how North American tourists in particular approach cruise tourism, it is worth noting that of those that were estimated to have traveled to Greenland in 2019, 16,224 tourists came with a cruise ship while only 5,737 came by plane (VisitGreenland et al., 2023, p. 8), meaning that 74% of tourists arrived by cruise ship. Additionally, in 2023, while 91% of those that have wanted to travel to Greenland expressed they preferred to fly by plane to Greenland if they were to travel, 45% also said they also wanted to experience cruise tours to Greenland (VisitGreenland et al., 2023, p. 26). From all of this, it can be shown that cruise tourism is a metric that needs to be considered when discussing how North Americans travel to Greenland and have the possibility of affecting its environment. While acknowledging this, however, it should also be noted that whether North Americans travel by cruise or by plane, aspects of travel such as emissions are likely to at least partially harm Greenland's environment no matter what. On the other hand, while the environment might be harmed, VisitGreenland

has emphasized in their 2021-2024 tourism development strategy that they seek to make Greenland into a destination that is sustainable to travel to and can accommodate the future needs of Greenland, including maintaining its environment in spite of the increased pressures that tourism might put on it. In fact, they also state that having proper sustainability considerations in their tourism approaches will help them reach their sustainable development goals for the country in the future (VisitGreenland, 2021, p. 14-15). When North American tourists travel to Greenland, then, it can be argued that despite potentially hurting the environment by traveling, they can also potentially end up helping Greenland in achieving its sustainable development goals in the future by doing so. In stating this, it's perhaps interesting to note that in the North American Holiday Market survey, only 19% of prospective tourists said that sustainability only mattered a little to them or not at all while 32% said sustainability was critical when deciding how they traveled and the rest said it was one of several factors they considered (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, p. 33). From this, a willingness to intend to travel sustainably can be seen to be rather important among North American travelers that want to go to Greenland. Whether more harm or good is done by North Americans in practice, however, will likely be up to how they chose to travel and conduct themselves while in Greenland, with different approaches and priorities leading them into producing either effects that lean more positive or lean more negative.

One hypothetical example that might exemplify how North American tourists have the ability to affect Greenland's natural and physical environment both positively or negatively subsists in how they might chose to approach Greenland's famous ghost towns. For various different reasons, most often because of depleted resources or because of social considerations, Greenland has many abandoned settlements throughout the country. On their website, VisitGreenland promotes tourism travel to these locations so that visitors can experience authentic elements of Greenland's past. Of the settlements that VisitGreenland promotes, one of particular note is Qoornoq because many of the ancestors of the people who originally lived in the settlement choose to travel there in the summer and use the buildings as summer houses (VisitGreenland, 2024c). Because, as mentioned earlier in the analysis, that most North Americans arrive in the summer months, they might then come visit Qoornoq while locals are also taking vacations there. In the worse case scenario, the North American tourists might end up enacting the tourist gaze upon the locals and make them feel uncomfortable in the locations they went to have their vacations. There is also a possibility that the tourists will not approach the settlement carefully and end up damaging buildings that might already be fragile because of their age. On the other hand, if a location like Qoornoq were to become very popular, tourism planners might invest money into making sure that the tourists can be accommodated at the destination. This might also in turn give tourism planners an interest in making sure that otherwise dilapidated houses are upkept so that tourists can continue to experience them in the future. In this way, North American tourists might actually help the settlement of Qoornoq to be more livable for locals in the future instead of destroying or harming it. While perhaps not overly likely, there might also in the best case scenario be a chance that some locals might be able to actually make a living off of guiding these tourists and make them stay in Qoornoq more permanently, perhaps helping in partially restoring a settlement and a part of Greenlandic culture that has otherwise mostly been abandoned.

Running counter to the example above is that a concurrently inhabited settlement with over 500 people has a risk of being abandoned as a result of new mass tourism from countries like America and Canada being likely to be centered in the new airports. This settlement is Kangerlussuaq, a town that currently serves as Greenland's main air travel transport hub but whose future is uncertain due to the creation of new international airports that might make its own airport mostly obsolete (Wenger, 2023). As it stands, the settlement's population is almost entirely dependent on earning money from tourists who end up visiting the airport and who travel to the nearby inland ice or the UNESCO world heritage site Aasivissuit-Nipisat in search of tourism adventures (Batelle, 2021). If fewer and fewer tourists are going to arrive, however, Kangerlussuaq might end up reaching the Decline stage of the TALC model, with fewer and fewer locals being able to make a living creating a scenario where they close down their businesses that can accommodate tourists and thus creates a spiral that makes it so newer tourists are even less likely to visit in the future and thus even more businesses shut down as a result. If Kangerlussuaq eventually gets more or less abandoned by its locals that might seek out other settlements to live in, then tourism areas like the inland ice and the UNESCO site become much less accessible. However, even though it might not be the most likely, there is a chance that the draw of these areas will make tourists like the North Americans want to travel to the destination regardless of it no longer being a necessity because of the new airports and spend enough money for the settlement to continue existing in its current state. As such, while there is an argument that North American tourists can harm the environment or Greenlandic society by flocking to popular tourism destinations in too big numbers, this might be a scenario where them doing so for Kangerlussuaq will help preserve the settlement and the convenient access to parts of Greenland's culture like the UNESCO world heritage site.

While it is interesting to consider the effects that North American tourists can have on more relatively remote parts of Greenland, the onset of more institutionalized types of tourists arriving likely means that many of the arriving tourists will seek out Greenland's most popular attractions, with one of the biggest of these being the Ilulissat Icefjord in northern Greenland. VisitGreenland markets this UNESCO world heritage site as both by promoting its beauty but also by highlighting how the dwindling amounts of ice in the Icefjord coming from the results of climate change tells a narrative and a story about the planet's environment (VisitGreenland, 2024d). Simultaneously with this, more tourism operators have experienced that there are tourists that discuss going to the Arctic exactly because they fear that it is a vulnerable destination that can have parts of its environment and wildlife like polar bears disappear at seemingly any moment, opening these tourists up to seek out what can be referred to as last chance tourism, wanting to visit the Arctic while it is still perceived to exist in its natural splendor (Dawson et al., 2011, p. 251). Adding to this, when North Americans were surveyed about what statements they felt particularly applied to Greenland as a travel destination, nearly 20% of all respondents chose that they felt Greenland was particularly interesting to visit due to the fact that it might allow the tourists to have a chance to see the Arctic before the ice melts (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, p. 14). With one of the three new international airports set to open in Ilulissat, then, there is a chance that many tourists will travel to Ilulissat so they can witness the UNESCO world heritage site that VisitGreenland promotes as a strong way to personally experience how climate change affects the environment.

When considering the above, however, there are perhaps considerations to be made about how perhaps ironically, emissions let out by traveling to vulnerable destinations like the Icefjord are also likely to hurt the already fragile environment, putting tourism operators into a paradoxical position where they might have to try to market a vulnerable destination for economic benefit but also risks having that destination being increasingly damaged by the many tourists they try to market the destination to (Dawson et al., 2011, p. 251). This might also have adverse effects on how North American tourist experience the perceived authenticity of a destination like the Ilulissat Icefjord. When surveyed about which kind of online content they prefer to consume when gathering information about a destination they plan to travel to, 71% of North Americans indicated that they liked to search for pictures of how a destination looks and 54% furthermore also had a tendency to search for videos showcasing natural features of a destination like glaciers (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, p. 30). Because of this, there is a chance that many North American tourists have gone out of their way to seek out content that depicts Ilulissat Icefjord before these tourists ever actually go to the destination physically themselves. It follows, then, that these kinds of tourists already have a preconceived image of what the Icefjord is supposed to look like, and they will likely base their expectations of the Icefjord's authenticity based off this preconceived image. In essence, a constructive authenticity of the Icefjord, based mostly on pictures and promotional material from tourism operators, is formed. However, when the tourists go to visit the Icefjord, then, it is interesting to note that this image might not live up to the reality of what the Icefjord is actually like because more of the ice could have melted between when they actually go to visit and when the pictures and videos of the Icefjord they based their conceptions of off were actually made. In this way, the constructive authenticity can run into a contrast with the objective authenticity of the destination as it concurrently exists.

Continuing from above once again, in the best possible case scenario for Greenland's future tourism prospects, this disconnect might make the tourist feel glad that they visited when they did because they perceive that the amount of ice present in the Icefjord is less than what online content made them believe due to climate change. This might then, in turn, make them feel like the visit did indeed tell a convincing story about climate change's effects on the planet, and the tourist might encourage their friends or peers to also come visit the Icefjord to experience this story firsthand before it is too late. The individual tourist might even want to visit the same destination multiple times over several years to experience if they can see the difference climate change makes with their own eyes over different periods of time. On the other hand, in the worst case scenario for Greenland's future tourism prospects, the tourist might feel disappointed with the Icefjord and feel like that they have been tricked by the content they have consumed online. This can in turn then advise their friends and peers not to travel to the destination as it does not live up to the hype and image that is constructed online. In saying this, it should also be noted that the North American Holiday Market survey indicates that in comparison to 2016, significantly more concurrent prospective tourists get their information about a destination from social media and review sites than simply by searching info online or using guide books (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, p. 39). In addition, in the survey that the Institute for Polar Research in Northern Europe made that analyzed global markets, it is noticeable that while North Americans were still perceived to like using search engines when seeking out info

on Greenland, they did so to a lesser extent than all the other countries surveyed and were also the actor that preferred using social media more so than any other (Sonntag, 2023, p. 23). As such, an argument can be made that negative reviews or social media buzz around the Icefjord can have increased negative ramifications for how many tourists might want to travel there in comparison to the past. This is also perhaps relevant when taking into account that, as argued earlier, more institutionalized, mass tourist types are possibly more likely to seek out or be led to popular tourism destinations like the Ilulissat Icefjord. While perhaps appearing in larger numbers and thus likely spending more money than noninstitutionalized types, leading to better economic development prospects, the institutionalized mass tourists are perhaps also more likely to subject the locals to the tourist gaze as also argued earlier in the analysis. This can, in the worst case, create a sense of distance between tourists and locals, and this can furthermore potentially make the locals feel like the tourists are not acting or approaching Greenlandic society respectfully. As things stand concurrently, VisitGreenland has stated that many of the locals they surveyed in the 2024 tourism opinion survey feel happy that tourists visit their living spaces because it brings life to their communities and the locals feel happy they can share their culture, history and sights with other people (VisitGreenland, 2024a, p. 4). However, with the aforementioned trend that locals also feel like tourists are already acting a bit less respectfully in 2024 than they did in the past, one has to consider whether this trend will not be exacerbated by more institutionalized types likely coming to Greenland with the opening of the new international airports in the coming future. As things stand, if the TALC model was used to contextualize where Greenland is at with its current tourism development, Greenland might be in the Involvement stage where tourism is becoming more economically important for locals as they can make a living off of it, but Greenland, with the new airports, could also rapidly be approaching the Development stage where there are more tensions between locals and tourists and international tourist operators often making their own plans and packaged tours without including the locals as much. This might also be reflected in the tourism opinion survey given that already now before the airports open, there are concerns among locals that tourists might not use local guides when they travel around Greenland or go to experience its sights and its culture (VisitGreenland, 2024a, p. 4). The concern between balancing the daily lives of locals and mass tourism prospect can be seen expressed in quotes such as this one from a tourism businesses owner based in Nuuk and Ilulissat that was also used earlier in research question 1 of the analysis:

“Cruise passengers, they do not put that much money in the town, because they have everything on the ship. Of course, there are a few people – me included – that make good business of the cruise ships, but not so many locals. And because of that (...) well, Greenlanders are kind people (...) but when there are so many people and they are just walking around everywhere (...) it is not good, and I do not want that in Greenland. But of course, the government, they want business.” (Ren et al., 2023, p. 7).

Additionally, when it comes to infrastructure concerns in a town like Ilulissat, another business owner had this to say:

“Well, the tourism industry in Greenland is very small. The government wants to make tourism big in Greenland, but I do not think it is ever going to happen. Perhaps in a few places. Perhaps in Nuuk, where we have the infrastructure. In Nuuk, it is no problem for a (big) ship to go alongside, and then we have the buses, we have boats, we have bikes etc. (...) I also want the business, but I do not want it at any costs. The government wants to make tourism big, so we have a big income. But it is never ever going to be as big as in Iceland for example. We do not have the infrastructure. Not in a million years. We do not even have a city bus in Ilulissat, so it is difficult.” (Ren et al., 2023, p. 7).

What these two quotes illustrate is the fear that if Greenland moves into a kind of tourism development that aligns with the Development stage of the TALC model, then increased visitors from places like potentially North America can perhaps have a decidedly negative effect on locals. From this, it is perhaps not just the tourist gaze that has to be taken into consideration in future tourism planning, but also the local gaze and how tourism can be planned in such a way that locals do not end up resenting the tourists they are encouraged to accommodate.

Ultimately, the research conducted with research question 2 has indicated many different dimensions about how North Americans can impact Greenland’s physical environment, but perhaps one of the most striking findings discovered is that prospective North American tourists are very likely to want to flock to large, popular tourism destinations more than anything else and it can be difficult to create tourism planning that seeks to divert them from these destinations. This notion is taking into active consideration as the thesis now moves on to the third research question of the analysis.

Research Question 4: Tourism effects on Cultural Practices

As indicated in the introduction of this paper, the analysis will now use what has been discussed so far as well as other data to explore research question 3: What effects might prospective North American tourists have on Greenland’s cultural practices?

In the previous sections of the analysis, the theory of the tourist gaze and the associated local and mutual gaze were used to describe how North American tourists can view and be viewed when they approach Greenland’s natural and physical environment. However, it is when the theories are applied to Greenland’s cultural practices that some of the most negative aspects of the tourism gaze can potentially be expressed. This is because that often rather than merely gazing upon sights or tourism attractions such as the Ilulissat Icefjord, the tourists are now instead exposed directly to different parts of how locals go about living their lives and are more or less expected to form their own opinions and reactions to how these traditions might be different from their own. This, in essence, can potentially create a sense of otherness

between tourists and locals, letting tourists perhaps feel a sense of experiential authenticity that some tourists might enjoy, but this can also in turn defer them from the objective authenticity of Greenlandic cultural practices. Simultaneously, locals might feel pressured to accommodate to the expectations that they think that tourists might have of their culture, perhaps leading to partial creations of constructive authenticity where they put on a show for the tourists rather than let them experience different parts of locals' daily lives in a more natural and non-constructed way.

When taking all of the above into consideration, it perhaps makes sense to apply it to a Greenlandic practice like kaffemik to show an example of how gazes can effect Greenlandic cultural practices in different ways. On their website, VisitGreenland promotes kaffemik and encourages tourists to come visit when such an event is going on, with kaffemik essentially being a traditional Greenlandic way of celebrating events like birthdays or Christian confirmations with food and coffee (VisitGreenland, 2024e). On the surface, tourists being invited to such events might be considered a good thing, especially given that VisitGreenland's 2024 tourism opinion survey indicates that locals enjoy possibilities to show of their culture and exchange cultural perspectives with tourists (VisitGreenland, 2024a, p. 4). However, when VisitGreenland promotes kaffemik, it is interesting to note that they do in the following way:

“When you as a tourist participate in kaffemik, it is more about getting insights into the Greenlandic culture than being at a party. You will get the opportunity to visit Greenlanders in their own home where you will be able to create a picture for yourself of how Greenlanders live.” (VisitGreenland, 2024e – translated from Danish)

From this quote, there is an argument to be made that VisitGreenland themselves are encouraging tourists to be less active participants in the celebration and more passive observers that stay back and watch rather than mingle with the locals. While this is perhaps a negative way to analyze this quote, it is indeed possible to argue that a distance between tourists and locals is at least partially encouraged, perhaps creating scenarios where the tourists have an easier time gazing at the locals. While novelty might be emphasized when promoting kaffemik, it is also nevertheless important to recognize that the locals at these events know they are being watched and might, intentionally or not, try to put on a bit of constructive authenticity to how they normally practice kaffemik in order to accommodate to tourist expectations and make them feel satisfied with their experience. Because of this, noninstitutionalized types of tourists like the Explorer and the Drifter might feel that events like these organized through tourism planners might be staged and thus not truly authentic, perhaps leading them to instead try to find other aspects of Greenlandic culture they can experience. This, however, can perhaps lead to there mostly being institutionalized types that are most interested in attending these events, but these types are also, as argued previously, comparatively less likely to want to engage with locals too close as they might value experiential authenticity more than the opportunity to interact with the locals directly.

Taking everything stated above into consideration, new mass tourists might end up enacting parts of the tourist gaze at locals, and while there may arguably not be enough tourists

in Greenland concurrently to cause too much trouble or annoyance for the locals when celebrating with kaffemik, this might change with the new airports opening up for more mass tourism in the coming years. For prospective North American tourists, for example, while a majority say that seeing beautiful natural sights is a higher priority than anything else, 38% of them also say they want to experience contemporary culture and lifestyles when they travel to Greenland (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, p. 24). This perhaps brings up an issue that too many North American tourists might want to observe a kaffemik celebration at the same time, becoming a disruptive presence at kaffemik celebrations because of their numbers whereas they might not have been before when there were fewer of them. Additionally, kaffemik celebrations are supposed to be reserved for specific events in the lives of locals, naturally meaning that they are not always available for tourists all the time. Thus, when there actually is a celebration, many tourists might figuratively jump at the chance to experience this aspect of Greenland contemporary culture, but this might lead to scenarios where there are too many tourists in comparison to the comparatively smaller number of kaffemik celebrations actually being held. Perhaps seeing this bottleneck, however, tourism operators like might encourage for either more locals to make their kaffemik events open for tourists or even at some point suggest making kaffemik celebrations for staged events, like saying it is someone's birthday while it is actually not. Locals might be hesitant to do this, but if they feel they benefit from it economically, they might feel pressured into conducting more kaffemik celebrations than they normally do or hold them for comparatively less important events in an effort to attract tourists that visit their communities. This kind of evolution has been seen among other indigenous groups like the Amish in America where millions of tourist might come to visit, with the researcher Michael Fagence's description of the problems of this evolution being:

“The dilemma for the "Amish experience" in Lancaster County is the extremism of the commercialism. In order to cater for and maintain the interest levels of the visiting hordes, the general community has become committed to commercial exploitation of the Amish theme. These developments include allegedly authentic Amish farm visits, horse-and-buggy rides, Imax presentation, tours of the district with stopping points at Amish businesses, “villages” of Amish businesses, and static displays in one-room schools...” (Fagence, 2001, p. 204.)

If aspects of Greenlandic kaffemik becomes exploited in a similar way to how some Amish feel the need to exploit their own cultural practices, the objective authenticity of the kaffemik celebrations would arguably slowly be more diminished as constructive authenticity wins out over it. Additionally, if opening up events like kaffemik more than they are currently is seen as being good for their economy, locals might also be open to showcase different events of their culture in similar ways to the Amish as well. While perhaps not in active consideration for Greenland right now, other locals from countries like Cambodia, for example, have opened up to cooperating with tourism operators so that tourists can come and experience events as intimate as traditional local Cambodian weddings whose participants earn money from tourists witnessing said event (LikeLocal, 2024). It can perhaps be difficult to envision Greenland during the same as Cambodia or the Amish with different events, but if locals desire to

capitalize on tourists like the North Americans or are pressured to accommodate them, there might be scenarios where different cultural events in Greenland are opened up for tourists in the future. Whether this leads to good socioeconomic prospects for locals or instead causes them to feel like they are losing their identity are difficult, or maybe even both, are hard to gauge, however.

While the example of kaffemik described above explores how new mass tourism like that from North America can potentially cause some cultural practices to arguably become less authentic over time, there is also an example where it can help preserve parts of Greenland's culture that might otherwise struggle with surviving in the modern day. This example is that of the Greenlandic sled dogs, with a chair of VisitGreenland, Anette Lings, arguing in the following quote that its exactly because tourists arrive and want to take rides with the sled dogs that the population can be maintained in modern times:

“Over the last 20 years, the population of Greenlandic sled dogs have been halved. We are actually down to 15.000-20.000 Greenlandic sled dogs. And with this follows a danger that something completely unique becomes lost. Without the sled dogs, we might never have been able to reach different places around Greenland. They are an essential part of our culture. The experience-products around the Greenlandic sled dogs er part of ensuring that the traditions and the culture surrounding the Greenlandic sled dogs do not die out.” (Jyllands-Posten, 2024 – translated from Danish)

From this, then, increased tourism can be seen in a way that highlights its ability to help preserve different parts of Greenland's culture through engaging with it rather than just gazing at it passively. North American tourists might also help in achieving this as 52% of those that say they want to travel to Greenland have indicated they want to go wildlife watching and 22% of them have raised dog sledding specifically as a holiday activity they would be interested in (Beer & Sonntag, 2023, p. 25). Here with the sled dogs, while it could be argued that what tourists experience is in fact a form of constructive authenticity, it should be noted that any degree of objective authenticity would likely cease to be or die out if it was not for the fact that the sled dogs are being kept alive in part due to the constructive authenticity that tourists seek out. In essence, then, tourism from places like North America can thus actively help save preserve aspects of Greenlandic culture that might otherwise be lost to time as technology advances make the practicality of these cultural practices mostly obsolete.

Another way of looking at how tourism effects Greenland's cultural practices might be that tourists are not just statically exposed to them, but might also be part in creating new cultural practices among Greenlandic locals. Referring back to Bruner's time as a tourism guide in Bali, the anthropologist said the following about the construction of new cultural practices stemming from locals trying to appeal to tourists:

“In Bali, I had arranged in advance for a private performance of a Balinese frog dance, which the tourists enjoyed. On the bus I described the history of the frog dance in Bali, explaining that although it appeared traditional, it had in fact

been devised in 1970 specifically for tourists, as was the case with many Balinese dances. The *kecak* (the monkey dance) and the current version of the famous *barong* performance had been created for foreign visitors in conjunction with Western choreographers. I had described how in the 1930s Western avant-garde intellectuals... had had a profound effect on Balinese arts, but I explained that change is inherent in all cultures and that the dances were still quintessentially "Balinese." (Bruner, 2005, p. 3).

What this quote illustrates is that locals might go about making new cultural practices in part to appeal to tourists, but simultaneously, this does not actually denote that these new cultural practices are fake or without merit either. Bruner stresses that culture is always changing in the quote and later underlines the notion that tourists attractions are only a single part of a given culture and you need to contextualize with other aspects of said culture in order to understand a wider picture of the society which produces said cultural practices (Bruner, 2005, p. 3-4). This also ties closely together with the tenants of critical realism this thesis takes roots in as critical realism stresses the importance of, simply put, trying to understand the social contexts of how something comes to be in order to produce new knowledge about said something. As such, if the presence of people like North American tourists causes locals to approach parts of their culture in different ways to accommodate the tourists, like with the kaffemik example, that does not necessarily denote that these new ways that the culture is approached by locals are inauthentic even though they might partially be staged. With culture always changing, these new ways might also be seen as authentic in their own way eventually.

An exemplification of everything stated in the paragraph above is that of Greenland's famous tupilak figures. These figures are carved to resemble a creature from Greenlandic folklore and cultural tradition called a tupilak. This creature was believed to be a kind of spirit which one could send against their enemies to get revenge, and an interesting aspect of this spirit was that the individual needed to construct a body it could inhabit out of things like bones and animal parts (VisitGreenland, 2024f). When foreign explorers came to Greenland in the 1800s, they learned about the Tupilak and the figures they were meant to inhabit, but were denied permission to actually see these figures in person by locals. Instead, small figures carved out of wood were produced which the locals gave to the explorers, and the explorers then took these figures home with them as souvenirs. Later on, new explorers and tourists came to Greenland and asked for similar figures, and while it started out slow, the carvings of small tupilak depictions in materials like wood and bone eventually became very popular and is now an iconic tourism souvenir that some locals in Greenland make a full living off of creating in the modern day (Gilberg, 2001, p. 74-75). Furthermore, tupilak carvings are featured in museum and are also a popular subject among Greenlandic artists in part because many different interpretations of what they look like can be made as a result of them historically having been made of many different animal parts, resulting in many different artists being able to portray their own unique visions of how the creature might look through these carvings (Sermitsiaq, 2018). In essence, then, this cultural practice of carving tupilak figures that had started off as simply a representation of an actually authentic cultural aspect has now taken on a life on its own and become a rather iconic part of Greenland's contemporary culture that itself

is seen as authentic. Simultaneously, this might never have come about if locals in Greenland never interacted with outsiders, and this might be indicative of the possibility that modern tourists can also perhaps be a motivating factor for locals to create art that might become new cultural touchstones in Greenland's future in hope of creating something they find interesting.

Running counter to what is written above, while tourists can potentially help create new parts of Greenlandic culture, Greenland has also previously experienced parts of their culture nearly being ruined due in part to North American influence. In the 1980s, for instance, the environmental organization Greenpeace helped proliferate a media campaign that condemned the killing of seals in the Arctic. This led to many Greenlandic people who lived off of hunting seal or making seal products to lose their livelihoods as prices on seal products plummeted after the campaign and only went back to normal over two decades later (Henning & Cadell, 2017, p. 304-305). While this development was not caused by tourists, it is perhaps interesting to note just how quickly foreign perceptions on parts of Greenland's culture can shift and leave locals without a job. This is particularly relevant to consider when taking into account that locals are encouraged to take on professions that let them accommodate tourists. In a hypothetical scenario, there might be so many tourists arriving at a destination that locals can create a restaurant in order to accommodate and earn money off the tourists. This restaurant might become popular for its cuisine, but if there is a social outcry in the West or online about shaming people for eating Greenlandic cuisine that for example contains meat of animals like seals, the restaurant could suddenly find itself with fewer customers and might eventually be forced to shut down. While perhaps an extreme or overly simplified hypothetical example, it serves to illustrate how fragile that jobs based on tourism might potentially be. Even if something like a traditional meat dish can potentially be seen to have objective authenticity for a Greenlander, they might not be able to share that part of their culture with tourists if they see the dish as something to be shunned. This difference between the tourist gaze and the local gaze can also potentially lead to tensions between tourists and locals. Interestingly, however, there are also some calls for locals like Greenlanders to be figuratively let off the hook for doing things like hunting seals because they are seen as indigenous and thus needs to be held to a different standard than non-indigenous people are pressured to adhere to. This is illustrated in the following quote from a regretful Greenpeace member:

“...the large-scale, commercial hunt is a world away from the traditional practices of Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic. In fact, Indigenous communities have shown time and again that they understand how to protect the Arctic ecosystem they call home, and their hunting practices have never been a threat to seal or whale populations. They do not hunt seal pups, and their hunt is conducted with respect for the animal. They hunt because it is a crucial way to sustain themselves and their families in the harsh Arctic environment.” (Burgwald, 2016).

The notion that an indigenous status can potentially shield locals in Greenland from being judged by the same metric as people from non-indigenous cultures might on the surface seem like a good thing. However, it can also perhaps inadvertently cause even more of a feeling of disconnect between tourists and locals if different standards are seen to be held between the

two groups. The locals might feel that tourists should respect their culture while the tourist might feel that people like Greenlandic locals should not be given what might be seen as a free pass to do things like hunt animals even though it is part of their culture. In a different country, the Faroe Islands, this same dynamic took place where the Faroese participated in their cultural pilot whale hunts while foreigners viewed the practice as being so cruel that there were movements made online like the ‘DontVisitFaroe’ movement that encouraged tourists to boycott traveling to the Faroe Islands by trying to make the prospective tourists feel shame over supporting the pilot whale hunts through the action of giving the Faroe Islands tourism revenue by visiting (Askew, 2023). If something similar happened in Greenland and locals feared that they could lose their jobs and livelihoods if they do not make tourists like the North Americans happy, there is a potential danger that locals might stop enacting traditional cultural practices that might be seen as offensive or distasteful to tourists.

While problems like loss of culture might arise from tourists taking a stance against cultural practices in Greenland they do not like, problems can actually also arise from the complete opposite happening. One cultural practice that Greenland is rather famous for is how many of its inhabitants, especially young people these days, have made elaborate cultural tattoos, or Tunniit as they are referred to in Greenlandic, on their faces and other parts of their bodies. These have many different meanings and are tied to ancient Greenlandic and Inuit customs, but a majority of people who are Inuit also critically want them to be reserved for Inuit people as a result and a non-Inuit getting one is seen as a negative thing (VisitGreenland, 2024g). While this wish should rather obviously be respected, there may be some tourists who decide to try and get Tunniit regardless of the wishes of the locals for various potential reasons. It should be noted that in America, there have been several ethnically white popstars that have committed what is referred to as ‘black-fishing’, a practice where they adopt certain aspects of traditional African-American culture like hairstyles or vernacular to try and create a unique brand for themselves and benefit from essentially exploiting African-American culture (Stevens, 2012, p. 1). While it might be somewhat hard to imagine tourists wanting to approach an indigenous culture like Greenland in a similar manner, it is actually interesting to point out that another indigenous culture, the Sámi of Northern Finland, have actually experienced non-Sámi appropriating part of their culture in search of benefitting from it. Most famously, the Miss Universe contest from Finland decided to don the traditional Sámi gátki in both 2005 and 2007 despite massive backlash from Sami communities stemming from how the gátki has high cultural and identity-validifying value and each one is sewed differently in accordance to Sámi customs (Hagelin, 2023, under the heading: ‘Finnish Superstars using fake Sámi design.’) If something like this can happen to Sámi with their traditional clothing, then, there might also be a possibility for aspects of Greenland’s cultural identity like the Tunniit to be appropriated as well. This might even happen to Greenland’s own national costumes which are normally reserved for special events (VisitGreenland, 2024h). It should also be noted that while some locals might feel like their culture is being appropriated or stolen, other locals might also see an opportunity to accommodate the wishes of tourists that want to get a national costume or a Tunniit out of a desire for economic gain and which other locals might be hesitant to accommodate, perhaps giving those that do want to accommodate them a competitive edge.

This can, in turn, perhaps lead to negative effects where the cultural significance of different parts of Greenland's culture can potentially be diminished in a trade for economic development.

Throughout this section of the analysis that has sought to investigate the ramifications of research question 3, one of the most noteworthy aspects that has been discovered is that there is a potential balancing act where locals might be able to use their culture to gain economic benefits by accommodating to North American tourist expectation but might simultaneously diminish or essentially sell out parts of the sanctity of said culture if they do this too readily. This idea, as well as everything else that has been uncovered in every section of the analysis so far, will now be used to explore the final research question of this thesis and hopefully create new insightful knowledge by doing so.

Research Question 4: Suggestions to Manage Effects Created by North Americans

In the previous three analysis sections, research was conducted through three research questions to gain an understanding of what kind of North American tourists might arrive in Greenland in the future and the subsequent positive or negative effects they might have on Greenlandic society. This last section of the analysis, then, seeks to use the uncovered knowledge to explore the last research question:

Research question 4: What steps might potentially be taken to increase the positive effects and lower the negative effects that North American tourists might bring when visiting Greenland?

One of the central aspects that needs to be taken into continuous consideration when trying to suggest possible ways to increase positive effects and lower negative ones is the conceptualization that institutionalized, mass tourist types of North Americans tourists have different expectations and desires for visiting Greenland than tourists in the past have had. While noninstitutionalized tourists seek out novelty beyond all else, these mass tourists types are more likely to flock to popular tourist attractions like the Ilulissat Icefjord and do so in large numbers. This can in turn put a strain on the capacity of the infrastructure at popular destinations and the locals who work to accommodate the mass tourists. While it might then be a strategy to try and spread tourism out to smaller settlements so that the locals there can perhaps get jobs working in the tourism sector, it should be acknowledged that it will likely be the big destinations that will face the brunt number of mass tourists and it will be the locals in these destinations that will face the most amount of tourism pressure, especially in the peak tourism season during the summer. As expressed by the local owner of a boat tour company:

“August is just crazy. Everybody is busy. All boats are busy. And we of course have good collaboration with some of the other tour operators and try to help each other. This summer has just been: “Ah, can you help us – we have 10 people who want to go sailing!”, “We need boats!”.”

VisitGreenland has previously showcased that they are aware of the problems with too many tourists arriving at the same time, stating that one of their goals with future tourism development in Greenland is to develop year-round tourism both to alleviate these pressures and to make it so more locals can take off full-year jobs in the tourism sector which can result in economic and social benefits (VisitGreenland, 2021, p 21). However, as argued in the previous analysis parts, with many mass tourists types from North America preferring to have their package tours planned out by their own domestic tourism operators and with the indication that fewer local guides are being used by these kind of tourists, it brings up a question of to what extent that VisitGreenland’s stated goal is achievable and these locals can find steady work when taking this into account. Based on what has been uncovered in this thesis, then, solutions to how to mitigate the negative effects of overtourism has to be centered on the

acknowledgement that as things stand, North American tourists arriving with the new airports will be most likely to seek out big destinations over everything else and put the infrastructure of these under massive pressure.

When looking into how pressures on popular destinations might be lessened, one source of inspiration might be the Faroe Islands' Closed for Maintenance tourism campaign. In 2019, Faroese tourism planners recognized that some of their most popular nature sights were being damaged from overtourism and set a plan into works to mitigate this damage. By making it forbidden for normal tourists to travel to the destination for a short period of time and instead only welcoming tourists who volunteered to do labor that sought to preserve different destinations, the Faroe Islands created a sustainability-oriented tourism campaign that generated over 500 news stories from all over the world (Mensch, 2023). A similar initiative might be launched with a destination like the Ilulissat Icefjord in Greenland, and the storytelling about how the Icefjord is a symbol of climate change can perhaps be used to make compelling justifications for why the destination might be temporarily shut down. While on the surface it might seem counteractive to not permit tourists who want to see the Icefjord arrive as they cannot spend their money, there is a chance that doing so will also make the destination more attractive to tourists in the future. If one of the reasons that North American tourists, for instance, travel to Greenland to have one last chance at seeing the ice in the Arctic before it melts, they might be more willing to do so in the future if they believe that their last chance can be closed down at any minute because of sustainability concerns. Simultaneously, while the Icefjord might be temporarily closed down, these kinds of tourists might try to go to other destinations in Greenland to witness the Arctic ice while they have the chance. This destination could, for instance, be Kangerlussuaq which has convenient access to the inland ice but which might eventually be closed because of diminishing tourism prospects. In this way, then, the momentary closing of big destinations could lead North American tourists to seek out smaller settlements which might need more financial support to stay afloat than towns with big tourist attractions like Ilulissat. Closing down a popular location temporarily might also help for new infrastructure to be built or prepared for when tourists later might want to come visit.

Another potential way to keep pressure away from big tourism destinations is perhaps to try and artificially create tourist attractions in less overwhelmed destinations. A technique like this worked for the rural town of Noto in Japan when they used Covid-relief funds to create a new statue of a giant squid in order to attract tourists. While initially ridiculed for attempting this, the statue became massively popular among tourists and has been projected to have earned the rural town of Noto over 22 times the tourism revenue that it cost to build the statue in the first place (Sasaki, 2022). Perhaps similarly, Greenland can also build statues or otherwise create attractions that might draw some of the mass tourists away from only Greenland's most popular destinations. While there may be social benefits to placing these in smaller settlements, putting these kind of attractions near big towns like Ilulissat or Nuuk might also make them more accessible and make it so foreign tourism operators are more likely to consider featuring them in their packaged tours. Essentially, then, the strategy to prevent one destination from being overcrowded is to make accessible nearby attractions that can divert some of the mass tourists from all visiting the same location at the same time. What an attraction like this could be can vary, but given that VisitGreenland tries to promote entities, creatures and mythological

figures from its culture, one candidate for a new statue might be Sassuma Arnaa that ties back to Greenland's cultural roots. After all, the story of this Greenlandic nature goddess specifically contain morals about approaching nature with kindness and consideration (VisitGreenland, 2024i), and VisitGreenland themselves have linked said story with modern values of sustainability (VisitGreenland, 2024j). Furthermore, when VisitGreenland had surveyed locals in 2024, VisitGreenland found that said locals prioritized strong sustainable tourism above all other factors when asked how they would wish for Greenland to plan its tourism strategies in the future (VisitGreenland, 2024a, p. 25). In this sense, creating a tourism attraction based around a symbol of sustainability might fall in good taste with locals, and tourists that are interested in sustainability might also be interested in seeing art that depicts Greenland's commitment to both sustainability and their culture.

Similarly to the above, it might be possible to capitalize on other parts of Greenland's cultural heritage by Greenlandic tourism planners investing in and incentivizing the creation of new souvenirs that call back to its past like with the popular tupilak carvings. A similar kind of souvenir that might be created could be jewelry or adornments inspired by traditional Greenlandic amulets that were made to ward off evil spirits. These amulets, similar to the tupilak, could also take different forms and have parts of them depict different animals that would provide the wearer with different boons (Gilberg, 2001, p. 69-70). Similar to how locals in Bali created new dances to attract tourists, these amulets could be created to serve as authentic-seeming souvenirs that tourists like North Americans might think are interesting. Additionally, once enough time has passed and if this kind of souvenir is commercially a hit, these amulets could later go on to be perceived as an authentic part of Greenlandic culture like the tupilak regardless of the fact both souvenirs were initially designed with a constructive authenticity to give to tourists. Furthermore, if these amulets or other souvenirs were to become popular, it might encourage tourists to visit the settlements which they are sold at rather than perhaps being content to merely stay on a cruise ship and not spend much money that is invested into the local economy. On the other hand, the creation of souvenirs like this should ideally only be done if the locals who produce them are comfortable with it and feel good about potentially sharing this aspect of their culture with foreigners and do conversely not feel like they are selling out parts of their culture purely to accommodate tourists for economic and social gain, although there is also a chance that some locals will be willing to do so regardless of perceived costs to cultural sanctity.

A different problem that has been revealed in the analysis is that cruise tourists are not seen as contributing to Greenland's sustainable development by VisitGreenland and that locals are also more hesitant about how cruise tourists approach their natural and physical environment compared to plane tourists. In spite of this, cruise tourism seems to only be projected to be on the rise and many North American tourists are interested in visiting Greenland upon a cruise ship. There are no immediately obvious solutions to resolve the problems that cruise ships might bring, because while it might be easy to simply say that Greenland should possibly ban cruise ships from visiting their ports, the cruise ships do also bring in tourists that can help the Greenlandic economy, even if they contribute less to it than plane tourists do. Perhaps, then, it makes sense for tourism operators like VisitGreenland to mostly just continue what they have been doing in creating workshops and dialogues with

cruise operators in order to try and make cruise tourism more sustainable and hurt the environment less like illustrated by this quote from a former director of VisitGreenland, Julia Pars:

“Visit Greenland wants a responsible development of cruise tourism, and, therefore, we arranged the workshop in cooperation with AECO, which represents many small and medium cruise operators, and which makes many demands of their members around sustainable cruise operations in the Arctic. We look forward to continuing the dialogue between all stakeholders, and the cooperation with AECO.” (VisitGreenland, 2020).

In essence, then, while cruise tourism is perhaps not easy to manage, setting demands for cruise tourism operators for how they approach Greenlandic society and its environment is probably one of the best ways forward. If more tourism attractions appear in Greenlandic settlements and the infrastructure is improved, this might also help encourage some cruise tourists to get off their boats momentarily and perhaps spend more money in Greenland’s local economy rather than spending it on products and commodities available on the cruise itself. This might also in turn make more locals feel that cruise tourism aids their society more than it currently does. If none of this works, however, there is also in the end the possibilities that tariffs or ‘environment taxes’ might be put on cruise ships if they sail into Greenlandic waters, although this might be difficult to implement and can potentially cause foreign tourism operators to forego Greenland entirely when planning out cruise travel plans.

When considering how to possibly lower the negative effects that tourists from North America might bring such as the tourist gaze, it makes sense to highlight that locals should ideally be part of decision making processes when it comes to future tourism development. If the locals are ultimately not happy with working in the tourism industry or accommodating tourists, then they might decide not to pursue or even quit their existing tourism jobs, potentially leaving tourism operation bottlenecks in small settlements that might not have the labor force needed to have a different person fill the spot of a local who has decided not to work with tourism. Additionally, if local knowledge is not included in how local tourism should be conducted, there are arguments that it will be more difficult to gather new knowledge about how tourism should best be conducted in local spaces (Ren et al., 2023, p. 5). This notion can be illustrated by this quote from a local business owner in Ilulissat that was also used earlier in the analysis:

“I only want 1200 meters [of] runway, so we can receive flights with 85 people. These people can be handled (...) I have a luxury boat, where I host lots of tourists (...) I go with them who come with their own plane to Kangerlussuaq, come here, stay on Hotel Arctic, go out. This year we have a family from US, and they have been here many, many times. But now they will never, ever come here again. Because before they can go up to the glacier, go with the snowmobile, now they must wait maybe 2-3 hours to go there and stay with 1000 people. Absolute too many people! And I try to tell the municipality: “Please, you know, if the

world's economy goes down, many will not travel to Greenland. But we still have rich people here if we have a luxury product that is better than in Iceland.” (Ren et al., 2023, p. 7)

Here, the local provides a degree of knowledge about how tourists have enjoyed visiting Greenland in the past but how this enjoyment might be spoiled if national-level tourism strategies do not work appropriately in specific local scenarios. Having access to this kind of knowledge might then help in creating better tourism prospects in the past and making locals like this business owner less unhappy about how tourism is conducted. How locals in Greenland are included in tourism planning is perhaps especially relevant to consider given that Greenlanders have had a history of being exploited by outsiders and seen as an ‘other’ which Western people have contrasted themselves to in the past. If they are not engaged in tourism planning, then, there is a sad notion that they might be lorded over and have their lives affected by people who do not value their perspectives, and whether this is from Westerners or from larger Greenlandic tourism operators perhaps makes little difference in how a local feels about whether their voice is heard when it comes to future development of tourism in Greenland. As it stands now, however, the 2024 tourism industry survey reveals positive information that while the second highest priority of those surveyed was that they felt locals should be addressed when developing tourism in the future, 76% of them also already felt that they have a medium, high or even very high degree of influence over how future tourism development is being planned (VisitGreenland, 2024a, p. 25). This is important because an argument can be made that if locals are engaged with tourism planning and know that they benefit from it economically or socially, they are perhaps less likely to see tourists in a negative light and are more willing to accommodate them. If this was not the case, the local gaze they could potentially exert over the tourists might cause tensions that can cause locals to not want to work in the tourism industry or not want to accommodate to tourists even though they can benefit local societies and Greenland as a whole through economic and social development. Simultaneously, they might also be more tolerant of being subjected to the tourist gaze if they know that doing so benefits their livelihoods and their communities.

In the end, of the potential suggestions made when tackling the last research question, the most promising that has been found might be that of mimicking the Faroe Islands’ ‘Closed for Maintenance’ campaign. By temporarily closing down a potentially overwhelmed destination like the Ilulissat Icefjord, it perhaps makes the destination more alluring for tourists who are afraid of missing out when the destination can seemingly close at any point. In saying that this is perhaps the suggestion with the most going for it, however, that does not signify that the other suggestions are without merit either. Therefore, at the culmination of this thesis, all suggestions will be presented along with all the findings of the previous research questions in a summarized form, providing one final overview of everything that has been uncovered and the new knowledge that has been created through the process of writing this thesis.

Conclusion

Before writing the concluding remarks of this thesis and what has been discovered herein, the problem statement and the research questions that were used to guide the direction of the research are reiterated below this paragraph in order to remind readers of what this thesis set out to do:

The anticipated increase of mass tourism in Greenland from North Americans in particular can potentially lead to both positive and negative effects on Greenlandic society and culture, but without a clear understanding of which kind of effects are likely to occur and why, it will be difficult for Greenland to prepare the kind of tourism strategies that are likely to help it reach the most beneficial scenarios for its future and create the most amount of satisfaction possible for its people. In seeking to understand these effects and creating an overview and discussion of how they may be approached to reach the most ideal possible outcomes for Greenland and its population, then, this thesis will base its research in these following research questions:

Research question 1: What types of North American tourists are Greenland the most likely to receive and what reasons might they have for visiting Greenland?

Research question 2: What effects might prospective North American tourists have on Greenland's natural and physical environment?

Research question 3: What effects might prospective North American tourists have on Greenland's cultural practices?

Research question 4: What steps might potentially be taken to increase the positive effects and lower the negative effects that North American tourists might bring when visiting Greenland?

The research conducted in exploring research question 1 found that that the new types of North American tourists that are likely to arrive with the opening of the new international airports are distinctly different from the ones Greenland has received in the past. Whereas the tourists from the past were more likely to want to engage with Greenlandic locals and their culture on an intimate and respectful level, the majority of the new tourists that are expected to arrive in the future are perhaps more inclined to approach Greenland in such a way that its environment and local communities are put under increased pressure. This stems from the notion that these tourists are likely to appear in greater numbers and potentially in groups, as well as the idea that these tourists might be more interested in visiting Greenland to gaze upon its environment, culture and people in a way that makes them feel like they are on a journey away from home rather than trying to connect with these on a more intimate or personal level. In essence, the new kind of tourists are likely to seek out experiential authenticity and might not even care that aspects of the authenticity they get to experience might be partially staged

by tourism planners and locals who have economic and social interests in making tourists feel as satisfied as possible even if it potentially means not showing off the true essence or authenticity of their culture.

When exploring what kind of positive or negative impacts that the abovementioned new kind of prospective North American tourists can have on Greenland's natural and physical environment, which was research question 2, a lot of the uncovered findings came to revolve specifically around mass tourism. It was found that while Greenlandic tourism planners and locals were actually happy that more tourists were arriving, there were underlying fears that mass tourism could negatively impact Greenlandic society and environment. While plane travelers were seen as tourists that predominantly brought good effects to Greenlandic as they spend a lot of money on local societies, cruise tourists were perceived to be viewed more negatively although they are still concurrently tolerated. This notion stems from them spending a lot of their money onboard their cruise ships instead of on local businesses and from fears that cruise travel will negatively impact the environment and Greenlandic wildlife. Simultaneously, it is expected that more cruise tourism will be present in the future and that many North American tourists are interested in using cruise ships when visiting Greenland, perhaps indicating that future tourism can potentially be a source of damage to Greenland's natural environment. On the other hand, however, the research done when exploring this part of the analysis also found that new North American tourists can potentially help preserve parts of Greenland's physical environment that otherwise might be in danger of decline such as a settlement like Kangerlussuaq that might need more tourists to keep its community alive. Considering all of this, it was found that North American tourists have both the potential to preserve and destroy Greenland's natural and physical environment.

In regards to how prospective North American tourists can affect Greenland's cultural practices, research question 3, it was found that the new tourists could potentially cause locals to essentially sell out different parts of their culture for economic and social gain. While mass tourism from places like North America can provide locals a lot of money by opening up cultural traditions such as kaffemik to them, they can also in the worst case scenario become a disruptive part of these traditions that go from merely observing or gazing in the background to becoming more of an actively disruptive force. At the same time, locals in Greenland might feel pressured to follow the example of the Amish of North America and arguably try to sell out as much as their culture as possible in order to secure more money that can help their local communities as a whole. Whether this encouragement to accommodate tourists is potentially more of a negative or positive effect is hard to gauge. Less hard to gauge is that North American tourists also have been found to potentially preserve cultural practices like the keeping of Greenlandic sled dogs which as a tradition could die out if they could not be used to appeal to tourists. Additionally, the meeting of people of foreign cultures has also been observed to help Greenland create new iconic and beloved cultural traditions such as Tupilak carvings. On the other hand, tourists might also for one reason or another desire to appropriate parts of Greenland's culture like Tunniit or the Greenlandic National costume despite these having great cultural and identity-oriented value for locals. In the worst case scenario, some locals might even be tempted to possibly help tourists get access to these at doing so could potentially make

these locals benefit economically from providing a service that many other locals might not be willing to put forward.

Using all the newly uncovered knowledge from the previous analysis sections as well as looking at how other countries have approached tourism development, research question 4 ultimately sought to make suggestions about how the positive effects that new North American tourists can bring could be maximized while negative effects from the same source could simultaneously be minimized. Central to these suggestions was the notion that there needed to be an acknowledgment that new prospective North American tourists were likely to flock to the biggest tourism attractions that Greenland has to offer regardless of attempts to encourage them to visit other places as well. In order to preserve the environment of these popular tourism destinations, then, it was suggested that they might temporarily be closed off from tourists so that the tourists would seek out other destinations while simultaneously feel excited about the prospect of perhaps being able to visit the popular destinations again later. Additionally, given that the new kind of tourists are perhaps unlikely to care whether an attraction is staged to be authentic or not, an argument was also made that trying to create new tourism attractions near already popular ones could cause the tourists to spread out evenly and cause less pressure to be placed on the infrastructure of the most popular already existing ones. Simultaneously, it was also suggested that locals should have a strong influence on tourism planning in order to make them invested in how tourism develops and perhaps makes them more likely to tolerate tourists in part because of that.

At the end of everything, the researcher of this thesis hopes that the findings and suggestions arrived at through its analysis might be of benefit to future researchers as well as people that might be able to use the newly gathered knowledge that the thesis has found to help steer Greenland's future tourism development in a positive direction. If future research was to be done inspired by this thesis, it could perhaps be interesting to explore how other potential prospective tourists groups, perhaps even non-Western ones, differ from the prospective North American tourists that this thesis set out to research. Additionally, other theoretical foundations could potentially be used to steer the research in different directions that might cause even more new knowledge to be created. However future research may be conducted, however, the researcher of this thesis argues that the knowledge uncovered in this thesis serves as a strong baseline overview for anybody that seeks to understand Greenland's potential future tourism challenges and how at least North American tourists might have different impacts in shaping these.

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