

Staycation in Djursland

How a tourism trend reinvigorated a forgotten paradise

Master's Thesis in Tourism



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Abstract

The thesis sets out to explore the phenomenon of Staycation and its' relationship to the studied area of Djurslands increasing revenue and visitor numbers, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Djursland is a region that has seen radical improvement within the tourism sector, during a period of time where the global Covid-19 pandemic forced international travel to a halt, severely limiting the amount of international travelers arriving at the destination. Based on qualitative research, including interviews, non-participant observations, as well as statistical data, the paper examines interconnected relationships between the studied phenomenon and the studied region, through the lens of the perceptions of the stakeholders and the context of the pandemic. Additionally, the paper seeks to explain the reason for the tourists choice of destination and uncover the potential Djursland has to realize to ensure growth in the future.

The research takes a point of departure from the constructivist paradigm and inductive approach to uncover meaning from the viewpoints on the core subjects of the case. Furthermore, the research relies on qualitative data, including semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations and thematic analysis of the interviews. The theoretical framework is based on the work of Manthiou et al (2022) regarding the concept of Slow Tourism and Pichierri et al's (2023) work on the conceptualization of Staycation.

Key findings from this paper include the alignment of perception between the different stakeholders, as while not directly admitting to the impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on the tourism providers visitor numbers, they indicated that it had significantly increased interest in the region. Additionally, tourism's impact through the perceptions of the locals and policy makers noted that it could be a factor for general social and economic growth in the region. Further supported through an examination of the background of the region, combined with the statistical analysis and the context of the pandemic to establish causality. The paper arrives at the conclusion that the phenomenon of staycation is the primary cause, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, as the trend reemerged during the pandemic, which is then put into perspective through an analysis of the Slow Tourism product that Djursland presents, to establish the reason for the Staycation intention of the consumers and establish

the causality between the reemergence, the increasing revenue and visitor numbers of Djursland, during Covid-19.

As a result the project contributes toward a framework for how to determine causality between a phenomenon and a general trend seen in a given subject destination. Additionally, the paper contributes to the tourism studies of a currently understudied areas of tourism, regarding the destination of Djursland and the phenomenon of Staycation. Future studies could benefit from the framework of research presented in this paper.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Problem Area

A destination that still remains mostly unstudied, especially regarding English and tourism-focused academic publications, is the area of Djursland in Denmark. It is an area located on the “nose” of Jutland and is mostly known for its abundant and beautiful nature and Djurs Sommerland, the largest theme park in the Nordic countries. It is an area that contains a lot of cultural heritage and is the home to a prideful set of people, wanting their home to get the spotlight they feel it deserves, as it has not always been the most fortunate region to live in, as they experienced an economic crisis in 2018, along with many privately owned shops closing due to small revenue streams. (NorddjursLIV, 2021). Additionally, up to every fourth person, specifically 27,5% of inhabitants, are on government benefits in the region, meaning it is also a relatively poor region in comparison to many others. (Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd, 2013). However, at the end of January 2020, it would seem like the misery of the people of Djursland was about to be compounded even further, when a global pandemic struck, shutting down most parts of everyday life, schools, shops, and many other public institutions fell victim and were forced to shut their doors temporarily. (World Health Organization, 2020).

The tourism industry was naturally also affected by this, since most international travel was forced to halt over long periods of time, meaning limited amounts of international travelers could travel the world, heavily impacting the economies of various cities, municipalities, and countries relying on tourism as their primary source of revenue generation. For example, Thailand saw a -77,6% decrease in the amount of money spent by tourists in 2020, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development estimated that the global economy had lost over 4 trillion dollars' worth of GDP in the span between 2020 and 2021. (Bangkok Post, 2020; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2021). However, Norddjurs Municipality, located in Djursland, remarkably did not suffer the consequences of the global pandemic, even though practically no international travelers could visit the region anymore; the number of visitors and overnight stays only continued to grow throughout the pandemic-ridden years. (VisitAarhus, 2025). And they additionally saw an increase in revenue

in the tourism sector from 1,34 billion Danish crowns in 2019, to having now reached 2,36 billion in 2024. (Norddjurs Kommune, 2025). A hypothesis for the reason for this remarkable increase in both visitor numbers and revenue generation could potentially be found in the emerging trends of Staycation and Slow Travel, as this phenomenon and concept saw increased attention from both media and the general public after the emergence of the global pandemic, as a solution to the international travel restrictions. (Sharma, 2009).

Staycation is a trend that has slowly been gathering popularity as a response to financial difficulties and rising concerns regarding the environmental impacts of traveling abroad. (Goncalves, 2020). As it encourages the traveler to have their vacation in close proximity to their home, without the need for traveling abroad, and instead consuming local culture and supporting local businesses (Germann Molz, 2009). The phenomenon reemerged as a solution to restrictions on global travel and is still gathering popularity amongst people looking for cheap methods of vacation. Slow Tourism is also a tourism concept that has seen increasing popularity, due to the philosophy of slowing down and appreciating the present and near (Manthiou et al., 2022). It is not a concept that has seen a reemergence due to the pandemic, but it is instead tightly connected to the phenomenon of staycations, as both essentially encourage the philosophy of slowing down the consumption of tourism products.

In regard to this paper, the author would like to explore the connection between the remarkable increase in tourism revenue and the number of visitors experienced in Djursland, throughout and on the back of the global Covid-19 pandemic, with the reemergence of Staycation as a phenomenon and the philosophy of Slow Tourism underlining it.

1.2. Research Question

The rapid financial growth within the tourism industry in Djursland, paired with the visible presence of droves of tourists, raises questions regarding how that growth has manifested in an area that has previously struggled with economic difficulties, shops and businesses closing, locals seeking to move away from Djursland, as well as a feeling amongst the locals that it is an area that has never been looked fondly upon politically or socially. Furthermore, these developments occurred during a period of time when everyone experienced difficulties,

both financially and socially, due to a global pandemic, with lockdowns and restrictions being placed on citizens. This leads to the main research question in continuation of the description of the problem area, which is as follows:

“In spite of the Covid-19 pandemic, how has the emergence of trends such as staycation and slow tourism helped cause economic and social growth in the area of Djursland?”

Three sub-questions will be put forward to help further contextualize and answer the main research question.

- What reasons lie behind the growth Djursland has experienced?
- What are the perceptions and experiences of the different tourism actors, i.e., the locals, the businesses, and the policymakers?
- How can Djursland capitalize and ensure further growth in the future?

2. Methodology

2.1. Philosophy of Science – Constructivism

According to Brotherton (2015, p. 65), schools of thought, also known as paradigms, are a “[...] philosophical stance, or ontology, epistemology and methodology, that should be used to develop knowledge.” He further argues (ibid.) that different approaches towards research can be taken depending on the researchers’ own biases, as well as the purpose and goals the research aims to achieve. Meaning there are various approaches to take, each with its own path to achieve an understanding of reality, wherein each answer may differ from other paradigms.

For the purpose of this project, the constructivist paradigm has been deemed as the most suitable, because the paper seeks to explore mostly subjective opinion in the form of personal opinions, as well as infer meaning from data sets and circumstantial happenstances that are relevant and relative to the case. This, in turn, means that the reality

reached through the utilization of the constructivist paradigm cannot and should not be considered as an objectively existing reality.

The project was conducted with an inductive approach, due to the data collection process starting at a very early stage with non-participant observations, as well as a wide range of data collection, which was subsequently analyzed and lastly inserted into pre-existing theory. Additionally, the body of research in this specific area of tourism was scarce, especially regarding the area of Djursland and the term of staycation, meaning no well-known theories on this subject were readily available. The paper aimed to first study the destination in question in terms of its rapid development regarding domestic tourists, and the reasons that lie behind this development, to then compare the experience of the locals, policy makers, and industry professionals within the tourism sector, and further explore strategies implemented. The knowledge constructed was then placed within the theoretical framework apparent in the analysis.

2.1.1. Ontology

The ontology of Constructivism believes that no objective reality can be reached; however, a reality can be subjectively constructed through individuals' cognitive processes. (Schwandt, 1994). Despite the area of Djursland objectively existing, along with its inhabitants, culture, attractions, and other physical objective realities, the studied phenomenon of the trend of staycation and its impact on the area is entirely subjective. Furthermore, the experiences and perceptions of the different tourism stakeholders, such as the businesses, policy makers, and the locals, vary greatly due to their position in connection to tourism, meaning their dynamics are varied and can change between each individual, meaning it is entirely subjective, as every single individual may have different perceptions and experiences regarding tourism compared to another. Additionally, it is not entirely possible to conclude definitively why domestic tourists decide to visit the studied destination in question, as each individual tourist's experience may differ in connection with the marketing strategies put in place and how the destination portrays itself. Therefore, the paper follows the constructivist

ontology, recognizing that an objective reality cannot be reached and only constructed through subjective measures.

2.1.2. Epistemology

The epistemology of Constructivism, according to Brotherton (2015) he argues that constructivist researchers should study their focus phenomena in real-life situations, and with real-life cases, rather than in sterile lab environments. He further argues (ibid.) that the researchers should immerse themselves in their studied phenomena as much as possible to fully understand their nature. In the context of this paper, the aim was to gain as much information as possible regarding the studied destination as possible, along with various data sources specializing in the area, coming from both professionals in the tourism industry and the policy makers within the destination. Furthermore, studying the varying perspectives from the different tourism stakeholders, as well as a non-participant observation, allows for direct contact with the studied area in question, in the hope of creating as accurate a depiction of the case as possible.

2.1.3. Methodology

In the methodology of Constructivism, the constructivist prefers qualitative data collection methods over quantitative methods. The reason for this is due to the fact that a constructivist focus is on collecting qualitative data sets exploring people themselves, their emotions, reflections, perceptions, and experiences, instead of quantitative figures. Meaning they prefer in-depth encounters over superficial large data samples (Brotherton, 2015). In the context of this paper, the data collection methods utilized included a non-participant observation made in June through July of 2025 in the form of observing the tourists and locals, as well as asking some semi-structured questions about their experience and perceptions of the area and the impact of tourism. Additionally, three semi-structured interviews were conducted with tourism industry stakeholders and a policymaker. When possible, the interviews were conducted in person, which was the case for the three locals interviewed, Majbritt, Jonas K,

and Kasper W. Due to short notice and time constraints, making it impossible to meet in person, the interviews with Henrik B. Nielsen, Karsten Bjerrum Nielsen, and Kasper Bjerregaard were all conducted via video. Teams to create a setting as close to an in-person meeting as possible.

2.2. Data Collection

The following chapter will explain the data collection and the chronology of the process before and during the project writing process. Furthermore, the different methods of data collection will also be explained. The purpose of this is to present the chosen data collection methods and explain their usage and purpose for answering the project's main research question, and argue potential shortcomings the paper may encounter.

2.2.1. The process and chronology

The data collection process started before the definition of the initial idea and research question of the project. During June and throughout July of 2025, the author of this paper went to the seaside town of Grenaa on Djursland, which is the primary subject of this paper. As a part of the trip, observations and notes were made during their visit to the area. The observations made by the author were the primary reason for the definition of the research question, which focuses on how tourism has helped develop the area of Djursland and the reasons that lie behind that development.

In addition to the observations, interviews with locals were conducted to establish their perception of the development Djursland has undergone, as well as how they believe tourism has helped achieve this goal. The locals were also asked how the cityscape has changed from the past to the present, as well as if they have any concerns regarding the increasing number of tourists traveling to their home. These interviews were conducted to establish the local community's perception, experience, and interest, and to explore potential problems or opportunities presented to the local community by the increased attention from travelers to the area.

Following the initial data collection process, a series of interviews were conducted with people tightly connected to the tourism industry in Djursland. These interviews were specifically conducted to acquire the perceptions, experiences, and interests of tourism providers, such as attractions and accommodation providers, as well as the policy makers within the two different municipalities of Djursland. Secondary data was acquired simultaneously with the interviews and throughout the paper writing process, to establish the tourists' experience of Djursland and their perspective on what kind of tourism experience Djursland has to offer. The different layers of datasets seek to explore the experiences and perceptions of several different tourism actors, to holistically represent the viewpoints of each actor.

2.2.2. Non-participant observation

Non-participant observation is according to Brotherton (2015) a method of research that involves the researcher observing the studied subject to assess behavior or operational effectiveness, which can be done either overtly or covertly, depending on the aim of the research. The research environment can be either enclosed or open, i.e., a lab environment or field experimentation in a naturalistic setting (ibid.). Both methods contain a potential problem of contamination due to the presence of an outsider observing, potentially influencing, or distorting normal behavioral patterns. Brotherton (ibid.) also raises an ethical question regarding covert non-participant observation, as the subject may not know they are being observed with the intention of studying them, presenting a dilemma regarding disclosing the study subject about the study in fear of ruining the entire process. Flowerdew and Martin (2013) list three main issues that could influence the observation study: the studied community, the role of the researcher in the process, and constructing information from the observations. It is, however, an effective method in finding patterns and connections among the subjects studied. (Brotherton, 2015).

For the purpose of this paper, a non-participant observation took place during a visit to Djursland during June and July of 2025. The observations were done independently by the author, and with the intention of being covert in nature, so as not to contaminate the

behavioral patterns of the locals and tourists. Additionally, the observations were conducted before the preparation of the main research question and were mainly conducted to observe movement and behavioral patterns of tourists in the area, as well as the author observing the destination as a tourist and what it has to offer in terms of general infrastructure, such as attractions, activities, and transport. The results of the observation process were compiled into a series of field research notes (Appendix H), and after the conclusion of the trip, they were analyzed through a thematic analysis. The reason for the choice of the non-participant observation was to allow the author to immerse themselves in the studied phenomenon, enhancing the quality of the data collected for the purpose of the paper.

2.2.3. Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are according to Brotherton (2015) the most desirable method to collect in-depth data, especially regarding the chosen paradigm of Constructivism, where qualitative data is preferred over quantitative data. Interviews are also able to take many forms and can be implemented in various ways, such as face-to-face or via video. Digital platforms and even e-mail correspondence. Semi-structured interviews seek to establish a comfortable setting for both interviewer and interviewee by having a clear structure of questions, but allowing both to divert and explore new topics of interest if the need or possibility arises. (ibid.). Brotherton (ibid.) also argues that an inconsistent interview setting may have varying results, as the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee dictates the outcome, due to the nature of the relationship dictating the flow of conversation, making replicability and data comparison inconsistent.

For the purpose of this paper, semi-structured interviews were chosen to collect qualitative data from industry professionals and locals of the destination in question, Djursland. Additionally, it was chosen to allow interview participants to express themselves freely and to diverge to other topics if relevant. A total of six interviews were conducted, three of which were conducted via Teams due to time constraints, the interviews in question were with Henrik B. Nielsen (Appendix A), Karsten Bjerrum Nielsen (Appendix B), and Kasper Bjerregaard (Appendix C); however, the structure and feeling of the interviews were the same

as a face-to-face encounter. The three remaining interviews were conducted with locals from the destination in question and are regarding the interviews with Majbritt, N (Appendix D), Jonas, K (Appendix E), and Kasper, W (Appendix F). All interviews with the locals were conducted in a face-to-face setting in the town where they reside, as an extension to the non-participant observation that was also conducted simultaneously. Thereafter, the interviews were segmented into three groupings: the locals, the tourism providers, and the policy makers, where they were additionally coded and analyzed through a thematic analysis within their respective groups, as well as translated into English from Danish.

2.2.4. Secondary data

Secondary data is according to Flowerdew and Martin (2013) datasets that have been previously collected by researchers and made publicly available for the use of others. The data is usually considered generally reliable, as it is often peer-reviewed and tested. Additionally, these datasets are easy to collect the data, as the data has already been compiled. It also provides important context for the researcher. (ibid.). However, in some contexts, these types of data can prove less flexible than primary data, as they potentially could have been collected in a specific context, different from the new context it is being applied. (ibid.).

For the purpose of this paper, the secondary datasets have been collected to underline the connection between the Covid-19 pandemic, the Staycation trend, and the growth of Djursland as a domestic tourist destination, in the form of quantitative data regarding the number of overnight stays in the region. The author of this paper has not been able to compile this data on their own, due to the sheer scope of the task it would be. Additionally, secondary data has been collected to understand the strategic development planning and execution, as well as future measures and strategies of the local DMO of Djursland, VisitAarhus, due to an inability to establish a correspondence between the author and the DMO.

2.3. Study Limitations

In the context of the paper, it is important to establish the limitations that the paper may encounter due to different issues and unforeseen problems encountered during the writing process. Firstly, attempts were made to contact the main tourism DMO, VisitAarhus, to establish their position in terms of the development of the tourism industry within Djursland. However, the author was unsuccessful in establishing correspondence with them, therefore leaving a gap in knowledge in terms of their strategic approach to destination development, instead having to rely on published articles and statistics directly from their website. Secondly, it could have proven beneficial for the author to be a participating observer, instead of being a passive observer, to better understand the tourism experience and better analyze the contents of the experiences, however it was not economically viable, due to the prices of some of these experience proved to be quite high, especially with the context of the recent price inflations. Additionally, there is currently not a lot of pre-existing literature regarding tourism in Djursland, as well as about Djursland itself, meaning that reliance had to be placed on articles with secondary data available to fill the gaps of knowledge, having to infer meaning from limited data to reach a conclusion in certain areas of the subject studied.

3. Literature review & theoretical framework

In the following chapter, the pre-existing literature regarding the subjects studied of Staycation and Slow Tourism will be reviewed to acquire and present critical and holistic knowledge about the central concepts presented in the paper. Furthermore, a theoretical framework will be presented as an extension to the literature review, which will act as the structure for the analysis to be conducted within, to connect vital concepts with the data sets collected, and present them in the most effective way.

3.1. The phenomenon of Staycation

When examining the phenomenon of staycation, it is important to decode the meaning of the phenomenon, as there is a limited amount of published academic papers examining this trend, with many of these publications arriving at different conclusions to define it. Additionally, it is important to recognize where the term itself originates from, as well as recognize other studies conducted within the scope of staycation.

The phenomenon of Staycation, according to Germann Molz (2009), is the practice of vacationing at home and can be tracked back to the global financial crisis summer of 2008 that started in the United States, when gas prices started dramatically increasing, meaning less money were available to spend on vacation abroad, ruining many American citizens international traveling plans (*ibid.*). The emergence of the phenomenon, as Sharma (2009) explains, meant that the American citizens had to confront the idea that their mobility and relationship to domestic space were intertwined with greater geopolitical forces, as the preconceived notion among the citizens was that it was “un-American” not to travel, and at direct confrontation with the idea of freedom to travel. The name of the phenomenon itself is composed of the words “stay” and “vacation” to make the word “Staycation” and is a phenomenon that has yet to be clearly defined, as it is not an academic term, but rather a result of a complex cultural phenomenon (*ibid.*). However, many scholars have made an attempt to try and define the phenomenon, but there is no consensus on one specific definition. In many cases, pre-existing definitions are derived from industry resources, rather than academic, and perpetuated through bloggers, newspapers, and lifestyle commentators opining on the idea of a holiday home (James, et al. 2017; Germann Molz, 2009). One of the earliest definitions conceived by Germann Molz (2009) argues that it is the idea of staying at home during a vacation, not traveling domestically, but instead enjoying time within the confines of one’s home. Sharma (2009) echoes this and adds that it is a cultural phenomenon that targeted middle-class American homes, and that the home had to undergo a series of changes, such as time management strategies and adoption of new objects for consumption. Meaning that the home was transformed into a vacation environment. By these definitions, it would indicate Staycation is comprised of a vacation within the confines of the individual’s own home and is therefore not concerned with exploring local and domestic areas. By

exploring further perceptions of the definition of Staycation, it becomes evident that there are two schools of thought regarding the phenomenon, where one argues for vacation within the confines of the home and the other for the exploration of the local area. In contrast to the first definition of Staycation, Draper (2017) argues that the definition of staycation is either the act of taking a vacation within one's origin, or within driving distance of where the individual resides, such as day trip tourism. In addition to the question regarding travel distance, Yesawich (2010) defines staycation as a trip with an overnight stay within 80 miles of the individual's home, which equates to approximately 80 kilometers. For the purpose of this paper, a staycation will be defined by the definition conceived by Draper (2017), by taking a vacation within one's origin, with the added interpretation of the origin being within the borders of the traveler's country of origin. Additionally, the definition of distance and time horizon provided by Yesawich (2010) will be applied; however, since the subject area, Djursland, is located in a far smaller nation than the United States, as well as the context of the case being different in the form of Covid-19, the travel distance will therefore be increased to cover the entirety of Denmark. Meaning all Danish domestic travelers, with at least one overnight stay, will be considered as "staycationers" when traveling to the subject of the paper, Djursland.

The narrative of staycation was heavily pushed by American media during the 2008 financial crisis, with some of the biggest news outlets and other media advocating for staycation as an alternative to regular travel. Good Morning America were the first to advocate for it in early 2008, with ABC, NBC, FOX, CBS, and CNN following with tips on staycation, with CNN highlighting the phenomenon by making it a lead story or "1st issue" in their Weekend Report on 12th of June 2008. Additionally, broadcasts were aired featuring lifestyle experts perpetuating positive rhetoric regarding staycation, by highlighting the virtues of spending money in local communities, as well as a moral duty towards the nation. (Sharma, 2009). This push to advocate for staycation as a trend and solution was also seen in Denmark during the Covid-19 pandemic, where many news outlets and big media made articles and invited experts on live broadcasting to explain the positives of staycation, as well as give tips to how to make it as different and interesting as possible, to make it discernable from regular day-to-day life (Lind & Karmark, 2021). Germann Molz (2009) further elaborates on the notion of

favorable rhetoric by stating that articles were portrayed with a purpose of duty to the “staycationer”, encouraging them to rejuvenate local economies by spending money at local businesses as an alternative to spending it abroad. Additionally, Germann Molz (ibid., p. 282) states that “[...] if done correctly, that is by continuing to spend and consume locally, the staycation could become an expression of regional pride and even national patriotism”. Insinuating that staycation could potentially lead to a more favorable view on local travel and a stronger sense of belonging and connection with the area. Even though the portrayal of the phenomenon of staycation was positive in its rhetoric, there were still skeptics among the general populous, as there was some negative feedback. According to a study conducted by Germann Molz (ibid.), who analyzed the media coverage of staycations in 2008, reported several failed staycations where people perceived it as not being a real vacation, arguing that for it to be a vacation, it should be more disconnected from the confines of the individual’s home. Germann Molz (2009) further argues that the trend was constructed by the media, and questions how many actually participated in the trend. Yesawich (2009) contradicts this with data collected from their study, Portrait of American Travelers, which uncovers that roughly one out of four leisure travelers actively chose staycation as an alternative to traveling abroad.

Most, if not all, pre-existing studies conducted with staycation as a subject have focused on the traveler in some shape or form, either regarding their travel or lifestyle habits or perceived happiness with circumstances, as well as other segmented traveler studies. Meaning there is no available study, to the knowledge of the author, about the trend of staycations’ influence on a given area, presenting a clear gap in the literature that the contents of this paper could potentially fill. However, a study presented by Pichierri et al. (2022), which examined Italian citizens’ risk aversion during the Covid-19 pandemic and how it positively impacted their attachment towards their local community, could be of use to this paper to explain the net gain in Danish domestic visitors to Djursland gained between the year of 2017 to 2024. This is due to the contents and the context surrounding the study, being Covid-19’s impact on the acceleration of the trend of staycation and the positive perception towards the travelers’ local community it created.

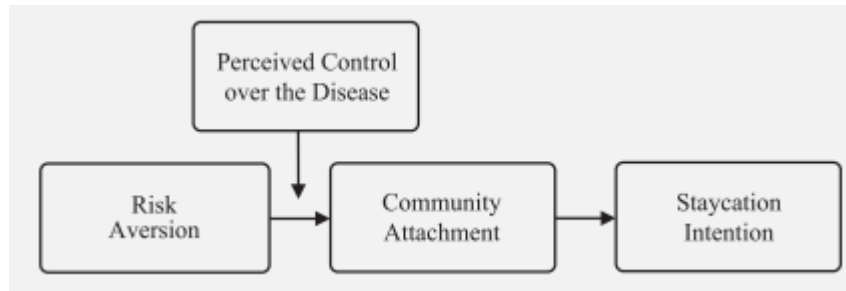


Figure 1: The conceptual model of research (Pichierri et al. 2022, p. 512)

Pichierri et al. (2022) present the framework of their study as seen in *Figure 1* – The conceptual model of research, which explains the process of the traveler towards a staycation intent during the pandemic. The model seeks to explain that the risk aversion elicited by the pandemic may increase the sense of attachment toward the individuals’ local community, that relationship may be altered by the amount of Perceived Control over the Disease that the individual experiences – as people with a high sense of control may feel they can avoid situational uncertainty and the related risks, the last step indicates the Community Attachment increases the individuals’ intention to take a staycation, rather than a vacation, as emotional attachment often informs tourist decision making (ibid.).

3.2. The concept of Slow Tourism

The concept of Staycation is very tightly connected to the concept of Slow Tourism (Germann Molz, 2009). Which is why it is an important concept to explore and define in extension of the Staycation concept. Despite Slow Tourism being a newer concept, there have already been a number of academic publications and published articles trying to define and study the concept. However, scholars have yet to reach a consensus on what constitutes Slow Tourism. It is therefore important to define the meaning in relation to the context of this paper, as well as recognize where the term Slow Tourism originates from and what pre-existing studies have been conducted in the scope of Slow Tourism.

The concept of Slow Tourism originates, according to Zielinska-Szczepkowska (2020), from the ”father” of the slow movement, Carlo Petrini, an Italian food critic who opposed the McDonaldization of life and fast food in 1996, who created the Slow Food Movement

Association that in the future became known as Slow Food International. In addition to issues surrounding food, the Slow Food movement also encourages slowing down as a condition for improving the quality of life. (ibid.). The idea of slowing down consumption manifested itself in Paolo Saturnini, the former mayor of Greve in Chianti (Tuscany, Italy), as the slow idea, and initiated the CittaSlow Movement in 1999, which is an urban social movement model of small-town management. The CittaSlow movement currently consists of 305 towns from 33 countries around the world, with the acceptance criteria of the movement being open to towns with a population of no more than 50.000, as the creators emphasise that these towns offer the best opportunity for an easy and pleasant life. (CittaSlow, 2025; Zielinska-Szczepkowska, 2020). It is widely accepted among scholars that the concept of Slow Tourism takes a point of departure from the slow movement popularized by the Slow Food International and CittaSlow movement throughout the 1990s. The core idea of the slow movement focuses on slowing down the consumption of the user, shifting the focus from quantity to quality in the experience, and has, over the years, spread from its origins to many other areas, all containing the same core idea of slowing down (Preston & Pasanen, 2024; Zielinska-Szczepkowska, 2020). Furthermore, the concept of Slow Tourism has emerged as a counterpoint to Mass Tourism and Overtourism, instead emphasizing active engagement with local communities and businesses and with a slower tempo to minimize environmental impacts. (Manthiou et al. 2022). Many scholars agree that Slow Tourism was initially characterized by Nicky Gardner, an editor of Hidden Europe Magazine and author of “A manifesto for slow travel” in 2009, where he characterizes it by the intensity of activities at the destination and the conscious decision of the tourist, where the journey of the tourism experience becomes a moment of relaxation and not a pre-determined goal to achieve, as a slow traveler does not consider time a scarce commodity, but an abundant one. (Zielinska-Szczepkowska, 2020; Med Pearls, 2020).

To be able to discuss the different definitions attributed to Slow Tourism, it is important to distinguish Slow Tourism from slow travel, as it is often used synonymously but carries different meanings. You could argue that Slow Tourism is the umbrella term, wherein slow travel is a part of that umbrella, as slow travel refers to the actual act of traveling to the destination in a manner that is more sustainable, i.e., driving, biking, or walking, compared to

other methods of travel like flying, also meaning the distance of travel is automatically lowered. (Serdane, et al 2020; Zielinska-Szczepkowska, 2020). Serdane et al (2020) present an attempt at defining what the concept entails.

“Slow Tourism is an approach to tourism underpinned by a slow mindset which enhances the core experiential aspect of the phenomenon within ethical boundaries. The environmental and economic aspects appear to be marginal and may fluctuate in intensity according to individuals’ perception” (p. 1).

This definition offers a general outline of what Slow Tourism contains and specifies that it is an approach towards tourism. In an isolated sense, it is a good general descriptor and can be applied to either the tourism consumer or the tourism provider; however, it does not provide specifics regarding what Slow Tourism contains. Nicky Gardner, as per Manthiou et al. (2022), provides his original definition of Slow Tourism from 2009.

“Slow travel is about making conscious choices. It is about deceleration rather than speed. [...] Slow travel re-engineers time, transforming it into a commodity of abundance rather than scarcity. And slow travel also reshapes our relationship with places, encouraging and allowing us to engage more intimately with communities through which we travel.” (p. 3)

In contrast to the first definition explored, this one is more centered towards the individual exclusively and their journey to the destination, and the establishment of a relationship and connection to the destination. A third definition has also been provided by Moira, et al (2017) where they argue that Slow Tourism is an umbrella term encompassing different kinds of tourism, as a slow tourist can also be defined as another kind of tourist, i.e. the tourist visits local cultural and religious monuments, meaning they are also a cultural tourist, or taste local delicacies and being informed of their historic background, at that point also being a gastronomic tourist. Additionally, they state that Slow Tourists often travel in small groups and utilize more environmentally friendly modes of transportation. (p. 5-6). This definition encompasses the complexities surrounding Slow Tourism by acknowledging the many different aspects that can help define the concept. The truth between all these definitions lies somewhere in the middle, as Slow Tourism is created by the circumstances and complexities, as well as the individual, the businesses, and the policy makers. Manthiou et al.

(2022) address this in a study they conducted specifically to reduce the misinterpretation and conceptual ambiguity of Slow Tourism, where they analyzed multiple videos to comprehend travel broadcasters' perceptions, as well as textual mining of pre-existing research. On the basis of these findings, combined with previous literature, they concluded that:

“We define slow tourism as a vacation during which tourists take a longer time and have a flexible plan to experience tourism offers while living in harmony with nature, local communities, their people, and their culture at the highest level of engagement”. (p. 7).

Additionally, they further developed a set of key principles for classifying Slow Tourism, which is divided into “the Slow Tourism Framework” containing six pillars along a continuum as seen in *Figure 2*. (ibid.).



Figure 2: The Slow Tourism Framework (Manthiou et al., 2022, p. 8)

What the model aims to represent is whether a tourism entity is a part of the slow tourism trend spread across perceived velocity in the categories, flexibility, onsite local interactions, consumption of localness, destination experience, value perceptions, and living in the moment. As they (ibid.) describe, the framework allows the development of solutions for tourism managers and businesses to benchmark their existing practices according to the six pillars. For it to be considered true Slow Tourism, all pillars must be present, making it easier to address what changes need to be made within the desired perception stage, for the product to be considered as a part of the Slow Tourism trend. Tourism products, marketing efforts, policy making, and tourism perceptions all apply to the framework, making it an all-encompassing tool. Effective implementation of tourism marketing efforts or providers could

potentially result in a closer attachment to the slow tourism offer, as they can utilize the framework to specify how tourists perceive the destination before arriving and influence the consumers' decision to travel and stay longer. For the purpose of this paper, the definition provided by Manthiou, et al. (2022) will be applied to the contents of the paper, as well as the the Slow Tourism Framework will also be utilized to analyze the tourism experience of the destination in question, Djursland, to acquire a deeper understanding of how the Slow Tourism product in combination with the trend of Staycation have helped increase visitor numbers across the previous eight years of data collection, especially regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. Lastly, another study that may be worth highlighting has been conducted by Klarin et al. (2023), examining the many aspects of Slow Tourism through a review of pre-existing literature and research, and through deconstructing the complexities and dynamics of Slow Tourism designed an integrative conceptualization of Slow Tourism and travel, see *figure 3*.

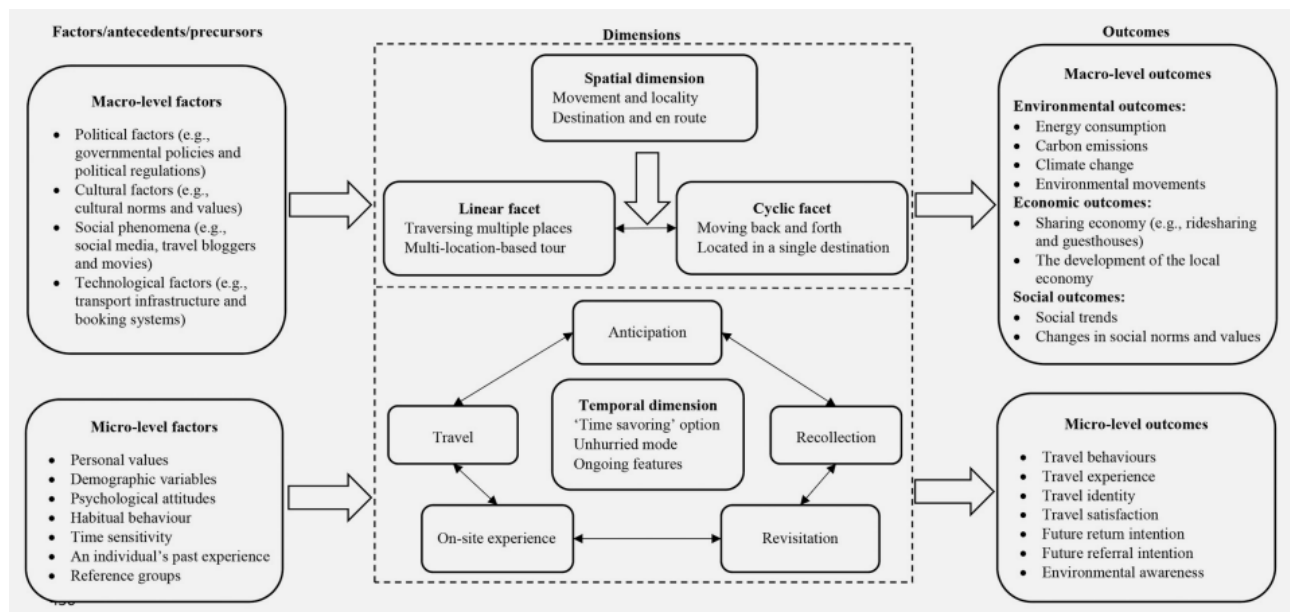


Figure 3: An integrative conceptualization of Slow Tourism and travel (Klarin et al., 2023, p. 8)

The model seeks to explain all the complexities of Slow Tourism in one singular model, where it explains that there is a wide range of micro- and macro-level factors that impact tourists' motivations for traveling, their choices, and practices of modes of transportation. The same thing is echoed with the outcomes of Slow Tourism, showing that there can be a wide range of outcomes with consequences at both micro- and macro-levels. (ibid.). There are two dimensions to the conceptualization of Slow Tourism: the Spatial and Temporal dimensions.

Within the Spatial dimension, it seeks to explain the linkage between locations, i.e., en route and destination, focusing on movement and locality, wherein movement can be regarded as a linear facet, traveling through multiple places across cities or regions. Movement may also be cyclical in nature, where the traveler has a “base” they will always return to after traveling each day. (ibid.). Furthermore, there is the Temporal dimension, which classifies different travel stages and will vary depending on the individuals’ slow travel expectations, and helps identify ongoing features of Slow Tourism and travel. Slow Tourism and travel can be perceived as “time savoring” options in contrast to fast or mass tourism, where the perception is time saving. (ibid.).

3.3. Theoretical Framework Summary

In this chapter, the theoretical elements utilized throughout the analysis will be summarized in order to establish a link between the theory and the subject and its application towards answering the main research question.

Firstly, since the phenomenon of staycation is an integral part of the research of this paper, it is imperative that the phenomenon is explored. Despite there being limited pre-existing literature on the subject, the literature highlights how the phenomenon emerged and, most importantly, how it is defined. Additionally, the subchapter explores the reason for the phenomenon's emerging popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic, which, in the context of the case study of this paper, is highly relevant, as connections will be established between the phenomenon and the studied region. The second subchapter of the literature review deals with the concept of Slow Tourism, as it is tightly connected to the concept of Staycation. Within this subchapter, the definition is explored, as well as the many underlying sub-concepts within the umbrella of the slow movement. The theory chosen will help analyze products and marketing efforts in relation to the case subject.

In regards to the implementation of the theory in the analysis section, the first subchapter of the analysis, “context of the case,” seeks to establish the connection between the trend of Staycation and the increasing number of Danish domestic travelers seen in the studied

subject of Djursland. This is done through statistical datasets, as well as meaning inferred from chosen articles published during the Covid-19 pandemic or retrospectives on the time period of the pandemic, as well as through the context of the pandemic itself. The second subchapter of the analysis “stakeholder perception”, seeks to explore the perceptions and experiences of the different tourism stakeholders of the region in regards to the impact of tourism, how it has developed over time, as well as issues and opportunities connected to it. Furthermore, the development strategies of the tourism providers and policy makers will be examined and put into the context of the phenomenon of Staycation and the concept of Slow Tourism. Lastly, the third subchapter, “the tourism experience,” examines the tourism experience and the reason why Danish domestic travelers chose Djursland as their destination during the Covid-19 pandemic, and how the destination has maintained the number of overnight stays. The reason will be established through an examination of the tourism product, which will be supported by the observational data recorded. Furthermore, the marketing efforts and tourism product will be analyzed through the lens of Staycation and Slow Tourism, by applying *figure 1: The conceptual model of research* (Pichierri, et al., 2022) and *figure 2: the Slow Tourism Framework* (Manthiou, et al., 2022), to further underline the reason for Djursland being the chosen staycation destination. Additionally, seek to examine if the tourism products and marketing efforts from the tourism providers conform to the umbrella of Slow Tourism and explore potential improvements to continue tourism growth in the studied subject, Djursland.

This theoretical framework will be able to answer the main research question presented.

“In spite of the Covid-19 pandemic, how has the emergence of trends such as Staycation and Slow Tourism helped cause economic and social growth in the area of Djursland?”

Through meticulous analysis of the various layers and aspects of the destination, through the context of the phenomenon of Staycation and concept of Slow Tourism, a recommendation for a framework for future development will be presented in the discussion, to ensure future sustainable development for the region of Djursland.

4. Analysis

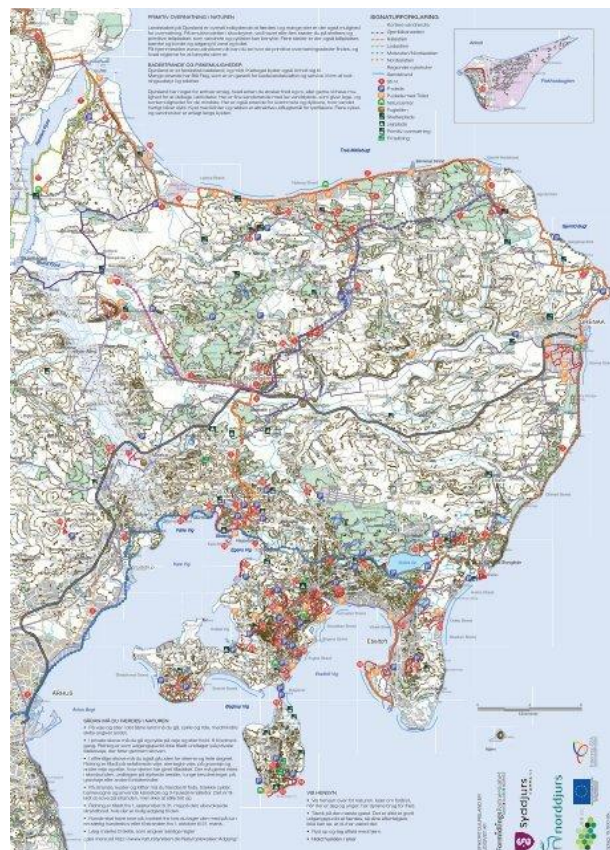
4.1. Context of the case

In the coming chapter, the context of the case will be examined to establish the background of the subject studied in question, Djursland, as well as the circumstances as to how they have experienced growth, both in an economic sense and in terms of visitor numbers. This will be done through the statistical secondary data collected, as well as articles and reports gathered throughout the paper writing process.

4.1.1. Djursland – A background

The subject of this paper is an area in Denmark called Djursland, which is a peninsula by the Kattegat Sea on the eastern coast of Jutland with approximately 81 thousand inhabitants. Djursland is known for its limestone cliffs, as well as its beautiful nature, beaches, many forests, and plains. It has a coastline that stretches for 250 kilometers with some of the best beaches in Denmark, starting on the north coast at Fjellerup, going through Bønnerup, and down to the biggest city and commercial hub, Grenaa, and down to the southern coast, where you find a lot of big irregular inlets, such as Kalø Bay, Knebel Bay, Begtrup Bay, Fuglsø Bay, and Ebeltoft Bay, with Ebeltoft being the second biggest town and commercial hub of Djursland. In the northern parts of Djursland, the landscape tends to be flatter than the southern part, with extensive areas of forests and bogs, and it is the least populated area. Contrarily, in the southern parts of Djursland, the landscape tends to be more irregular with more hilly terrain and a national park: Mols Bjerge, containing Agri Bavnehøj, the tallest point of Djursland, where many various plants and animal species call home. In the center of Djursland, surrounding Ryomgård, Rønde, and Kolind, the terrain is filled with natural valleys, agricultural fields, and many small villages scattered around the natural landscape, making the whole area of Djursland incredibly diverse in terms of terrain, nature, and wildlife. Even though Djursland is a relatively small area, it is divided administratively into two distinct municipalities, each with a different set of administrations and mayors, dividing resources and different development strategies to better and more effectively improve both the northern

and southern coasts, with the Municipality of Norddjurs' headquarters being located in Grenaa and the Municipality of Syddjurs' headquarters being located in Ebeltøft. (Danmarks Nationalleksikon, 2015).



Picture 1: Map of Djursland.

Djursland, however, has always struggled with various issues and challenges throughout its history, leaving a feeling of hopelessness within the residents and a risk of the region being perceived as less attractive to either visit or live in. Djursland struggles with the general trend of increasing urbanization, specifically regarding centralization of employment opportunities, school- and educational opportunities and leisure activities, resulting in residents of the region moving to bigger cities with higher quality offers and living standards. (Kommunernes Landsforening, 2014). The result of this leaves Djursland with an increasingly aging and unemployed population, as those who seek opportunities elsewhere are typically found among the younger generations moving to the bigger cities. From 2012 to 2022 an increase in the number of residents aged 65 or older in Djursland was witnessed, going from 19,3% to 24,9%, as well as unemployment rates for both Municipalities within Djursland, Norddjurs

and Syddjurs respectively reaching 27,5% and 26,4% of the population being on government benefits. (Lokale Aktions Grupper Djursland, 2023; Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd, 2013). This has had the additional effect of straining the economy of the local businesses, which is further compounded by the way the bigger cities in Djursland are built and planned, causing the businesses to be spread over a larger area, due to the narrow nature of city planning, leaving larger areas of the city functionless and empty. (Social- og Boligministeriet, 2016). Which culminated in 2018 with an economic crisis, which was declared within the Municipality of Norddjurs, as they had to cut costs and save 460 million Danish crowns across the next four year from 2019 to 2022. It meant that welfare was cut significantly, resulting in termination of employment among many of the residents. Taxes also rose by 26,7%, which combined with the increase in unemployment, brought with it a cost-of-living crisis. According to an analysis conducted by The National Association of Municipalities, the reason for the economic crisis could be attributed to an insufficient sense of responsibility in the labor market area. And that politicians simply reacted too late to the worsening economic state. (NorddjursLIV, 2021).

4.1.2. The pandemic effect – A statistical overview

In the context of the case of Djursland, it is important to explore some of the underlying numbers behind the area of Djursland in both an economic sense, as well as the amount of tourist traffic the area has seen, as these statistics function as a foundations to the creation of this paper, and to notice tendencies and possible connections between these statistics and trends. VisitAarhus started collecting data regarding commercial overnight stays back at the start of 2017, wherein Norddjurs Municipality and Syddjurs Municipality had 758,795 thousand and 1,065,715 million commercial overnight stays respectively, equating to 1,824,510 million overnight stays combined for the whole area of Djursland (VisitAarhus, 2025). For future reference, the numbers in this paper will be rounded off for easier digestible numbers when comparing the amount of commercial overnight stays from year to year.

The interesting thing to note is that in the years between the start of the data collection in 2017 and 2019, the amount of overnight stays throughout the whole period only grew by

around 0,4% in Syddjurs Municipality, meanwhile in Norddjurs Municipality they saw a growth of 10,18%, collectively gaining around 1,91 million visitors, which is approximately a 4,37% increase in visitor numbers in the period from 2017 to 2019. (ibid.). However, on the 30th of January 2020, the World Health Organization declared Covid-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and was now a high risk assessment on a global level, meaning every government around the world had to assess their own situation and put countermeasures in place to keep the virus at bay, and on the 11th of March 2020 it was officially declared a pandemic. (World Health Organization, 2020). Many countries started putting these actions into practice, with differing strategies and urgency depending on the nation. In the context of Denmark, the country's government only started its actions in December of 2020, declaring a lockdown as malls and restaurants started shutting down and shortly after schools and all shops outside regular retail and pharmacies also fell victim to the lockdowns, which also had an effect on the tourism industry, as attractions and accommodation providers were also forced to shut their doors. (Statens Serum Institut, 2022). Ordinarily, this would, in most cases, mean that tourism activity would either halt or be significantly reduced; however, the number of visitors would only continue to grow in the case of Djursland.

International travel had been significantly reduced and, in some cases, up to -70% fewer tourists visited Djursland from countries such as Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, who are typically the largest allotment of international travelers coming to Djursland. In contrast to Danish domestic travelers, which increased by 41,03% in Syddjurs Municipality from 621 thousand visitors to 876 thousand and 23,06% in Norddjurs Municipality from 551 thousand visitors to 678 thousand, overall increasing the collective visitor numbers of Djursland by 8,1% from 2019 to 2020 up to 2,06 million visitors, which was very unusual for the start of a global pandemic. (VisitAarhus, 2025).

The trend would continue into 2021 as the collective amount of commercial overnight stays grew to 2,26 million, a further increase of 8,84% from the year prior, at the height of the pandemic. The Danish domestic travelers additionally grew by 17,88% in Norddjurs Municipality from 678 thousand visitors to 799 thousand and 15,01% in Syddjurs Municipality from 876 thousand visitors to 1,01 million compared to the year prior. This meant that now

85% of all overnight stays in the year 2021 in Djursland were occupied by Danish domestic travelers. (ibid.).

Going into 2022, the numbers begin to show relative stagnation from the previous year's growth curve, most likely due to lockdowns being lifted and people slowly being permitted to travel internationally again. This is seen by the decline in total visitor numbers in Syddjurs Municipality where they saw a decrease by -4,7% from 1,27 million visitors to 1,21 million, however the inverse was experienced in Norddjurs Municipality, where they saw an increase of visitors by 4,04% from 990 thousand visitors to 1,03 million, which meant a -0,87 difference in collective visitor numbers in Djursland who saw 2,24 million visitors in 2022. This drop could be attributed to the decrease in Danish domestic travelers in 2022, as Syddjurs experienced a drop from 1,01 million Danish visitors to 734 thousand, a decrease of -27,11%, as well as Norddjurs Municipality, which experienced a drop from 799 thousand Danish visitors to 675 thousand, which is a decrease of -15,51%. Meaning many of the Danish domestic travelers were replaced by foreign travelers, due to restrictions being lifted on international travel, as mentioned earlier. (ibid.).

Further comparison between 2022's visitor numbers and 2024's visitor numbers, being the most recent full statistical year, indicates further stagnation in visitor numbers, as Norddjurs Municipality saw a drop of -6,79% in their visitor numbers from 1,03 million visitors to 960 thousand visitors, whereas Syddjurs Municipality only saw a drop by -0,32%, from 1,21 million to 1,20 million from the previous two years. This decrease can be largely attributed to the smaller numbers of Danish domestic travelers, as Norddjurs Municipality lost -8,78% of their Danish travelers and Syddjurs Municipality lost -3,27% of their Danish travelers. (ibid.). This change, however, is expected, since COVID-19 is no longer perceived as a global threat, with all restrictions on global travel lifted and lockdowns being a thing of the past. Many Danish citizens had been longing for international travel and to explore foreign nations and cultures, making many seek adventures abroad once again. However, the lasting impact of the pandemic can't be underestimated, especially regarding Danish domestic travelers.

Comparing the amount of Danish travelers in Djursland from 2017, when VisitAarhus started collecting data on commercial overnight stays, to the most recent full statistical year of 2024,

it shows an increase of 21,82% in Danish domestic travelers in Norddjurs Municipality from 505 thousand to 616 thousand visitors, meanwhile in Syddjurs the number increased with 19,96% from 592 thousand to 710 thousand visitors. Which means Djursland combined went from 1,09 million Danish visitors to 1,32 million Danish visitors, a percentage increase of 18,85%, with most of that development happening during the pandemic. (ibid.). Therefore, it could be argued that the COVID-19 pandemic has indirectly caused an acceleration of the desire within domestic citizens to explore within their own borders, partially due to necessity. However, even though the pandemic ended and global travel started being normalized again, the statistics indicate that domestic travel is seen as more favorable than before, possibly due to staycation as a trend being popularized throughout the pandemic by various news and media outlets, as a solution to the feeling of being isolated within one's own borders.

The increase in visitor numbers and overnight stays, naturally meant that the municipality of Norddjurs witnessed a record-breaking year in terms of both overnight stays by tourists and revenue generated by said tourists on the back of the pandemic. Where according to statistics gathered by VisitDenmark, it was calculated that the tourism sector generated around 2,36 billion Danish crowns, never had tourists been spending as much money in the municipality of Norddjurs since VisitDenmark started making forecasts on spending habits. Between 2019, just before the Covid-19 pandemic, to the record-breaking year of 2024, the revenue has risen from 1,34 billion Danish crowns to 2,36 billion, an increase of 1,02 billion Danish crowns. Despite the pandemic, there was an economic upward trajectory in the years with lockdowns and people being urged to stay indoors because of the restrictions imposed. This was due to more lax restrictions rules in the area, since Djursland is less densely populated and more covered by nature than most other destinations in Denmark, making it an attractive destination for people looking for a short getaway. (Norddjurs Kommune, 2025). In addition to the massive amounts of revenue that the Municipality of Norddjurs generated through the tourism sector, they also initiated other cost cutting measures as previously mentioned, due to the economic crisis in 2018. These cost cutting measures, combined with the revenue from the tourism industry were represented in the budgets presented by the Municipality in 2021, as previously neglected sectors such as maintenance went from 3 million Danish crowns to 12 million Danish crowns. Previous cost cutting measures were also

rolled back, meaning more money to the sector for the elderly, as well as the schools. An effective combination of the tourism revenue and cost cutting measures, also meant that the Municipality of Norddjurs achieved their economic targets a year in advance, as the objective was to have an economic buffer of at least 175 million Danish crowns by 2022, however they reached 404 million Danish crowns by the year 2021, over double the objective amount. (TV2 Østjylland, 2021).

4.2. Stakeholder perception and experiences

This chapter of the analysis will focus on exploring the perceptions and experiences of the tourism stakeholders within Djursland, with a point of departure from the interviews conducted throughout the paper writing process. In regard to the tourism providers and policy makers, the focus will be on their experience of the Covid-19 pandemic and the influence it had on them, as well as what development strategies they put in place both during the pandemic and after it. Regarding the locals, the focus will be put on their experience of tourism in the region and what issues or opportunities being a tourist destination brings.

4.2.1. Interviews with tourism providers

To acquire a deeper understanding of how tourism providers perceive tourism in the region of Djursland, the impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on the industry, as well as the strategic development planning of the providers, two interviews with CEO of Djurs Sommerland, Henrik B. Nielsen (Appendix A) and CEO of the Kattegatcenter, Karsten Bjerrum Nielsen (Appendix B) were conducted, to compare and analyze through thematic analysis to look over common talking points and contrasting viewpoints.

At the beginning of the interviews, both interviewees were asked how many guests they welcome every year and how many are Danish and foreign to which Henrik B. Nielsen (Appendix A) told that they get approximately 850 thousand guests a season, whereas Karsten Bjerrum Nielsen (Appendix B) could present numbers of around 155 thousand guests. In

terms of the domestic and foreign guest distribution both provided similar percentages, where Karsten (Appendix B) explained that 80% of their guests are Danish, whereas Henrik (Appendix A) explained that only 4-5% were foreign and further explained that before the pandemic the foreign guests equaled to approximately 8-10%. Indicating that Covid-19 could potentially have had an impact in terms of guest distribution.

Furthermore, both interviewees were asked about how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted them, where Henrik (Appendix A) explains that they were forcibly closed for the majority of 2021 and saw their visitor numbers plummet by 40%, and relied on governmental help packages to economically stay afloat. However, he noted that the interest to go and experience attractions were increasing among the public, as many attractions and accommodation providers experienced record high visitor numbers when restrictions were lifted in 2022. Karsten (Appendix B) also explained that they were forcibly closed for two extended periods, and they had to rely on six different compensation arrangements to survive. He noted however that, they drew benefit from the Covid-19 pandemic as a whole, due to the region of Djursland being perceived as an open region that is Covid-19-free, with lots of nature and the opportunity to not be in close proximity to others, as the Kattegatcenter maintained the same number of visitors every day after they reopened, reaching their maximum capacity. Karsten (Appendix B) expressed gratitude for the summer package, as he attributed the success of the reopening to the package, as he felt it put them in a fundamentally healthy financial position and to attract more visitors, despite the pandemic. Henrik (Appendix A) however, expresses annoyance at the summer package initiative, as tourists were allowed to only visit certain state-owned attractions, which meant that they as a privately-owned attraction were not allowed visitors, and added that it unintentionally created distorted and unfair competition. Though he agreed with the notion that the restrictions the pandemic brought helped domestic tourism thrive and do well. The interviewees were also asked if they noticed any increase in Danish tourists during and after the pandemic had ended, where Henrik (Appendix A) argued that their visitor numbers has been growing through several years, and added that they have seen more Danish guests. However, he could not say if it was a direct result of Covid-19, as he would rather attribute that growth to Djurs Sommerlands' own development, though he further argues that it may

have accelerated the desire for Staycation and it potentially showed the Danes how diverse of an experience Denmark could provide. Karsten (Appendix B) echoes this statement, by noting that he thinks it made people discover Djursland, where in the past it would maybe not have been considered as a tourist destination for domestic travelers. However, he could not provide an answer, as the visitor numbers fluctuated a lot due to restrictions and lockdowns.

Lastly, both interviewees were asked about what development strategies and measures they wanted to implement. Henrik (Appendix A) explained that they work with various tourism actors to develop tourism in the region, notably he mentions VisitAarhus as the primary driver for marketing, though he feels like they could do more to cater to the Danish market, as their primary focus is on the foreign market. He further explains they experienced how effective communication towards a Danish market could be in connection with the pandemic, as the Danish market was greatly profitable in the tourism industry, expressing a desire to keep expanding on the Danish market. Additionally, he notes that Djurs Sommerland have plans regarding future investments and organizational restructuring in connection to the launch of their own holiday resort, where guests can rent an apartment for 1-2 days and have their “base” at Djurs Sommerland. Henrik (Appendix A) also comments that he hopes it can influence the rest of Djursland, by attracting even more guests and becoming a must-see destination. Karsten (Appendix B) starts off by expressing that they must come to terms with their location, as the Kattegatcenter is not within walking distance from the city center and that Djursland is a “driving destination”, implying issues regarding public transport. He then explains that they have collaborations with the Municipality of Norddjurs, where they receive financial assistance to be able to give discounts on annual passes to residents of the municipality, as well as collaborations with local accommodation providers to provide their guests with discounts. Additionally, he comments that they need to continue developing their own product, as they still see benefits from the penguin enclosure and the new school service premises opened three years ago. However, Karsten (Appendix B) argues that there are projects taking precedent to opening new exhibitions, as they are currently in the process of a transformation project concerning renovations of existing exhibitions. He also adds that they have certain obligations, as they are a state-owned zoological facility they have to provide an

educational foundation and be the voice of nature and marine conservation, which takes precedence over all else.

4.2.2. Perceptions of the policy makers

To acquire a deeper understanding of how the policy makers perceive tourism in the region of Djursland, and the strategic development planning of the Municipalities, an interview was conducted with Mayor of the Municipality of Norddjurs, Kasper Bjerregaard (Appendix C). The interview has been analyzed through thematic analysis, to recognize reappearing talking- and focus points.

To establish the importance of tourism for the region of Djursland and the Municipality of Norddjurs, mayor Kasper Bjerregaard (Appendix C) was asked about its importance, to where he argued that it is extremely important, as Djursland had approximately 2 million overnight stays, where half of them were situated in Norddjurs. He also adds that the tourists spent around 2,3 billion Danish crowns within the Municipality, underlining the economic importance of the industry.

Kasper (Appendix C) was then asked if they have certain strategies and collaborations to strengthen tourism in the Municipality. Where he describes that they are working on developing two holiday resort in Fjellerup and Bønnerup respectively, to meet the increasing demand for accommodation, where he additionally comments that they are trying to establish a campaign to have owners of summerhouses in the local area rent them out to tourists when they are not in use. In connection with that he also elaborates that they have been granted dispensation to develop the coastline of Fjellerup to make it more attractive to visitors. Kasper (Appendix C) also talks about a collaboration with Syddjurs to develop tourism in Djursland, as he explains it *“Visitors from abroad doesn’t know the difference between Norddjurs and Syddjurs, and in that regard it is way more beneficial to us if we cooperate”*, establishing the need for cooperation to develop the collective tourism product of Djursland. He also underlines the importance of financially supporting the tourism providers and events residing in the region, by sponsoring various events and financially aiding local providers in need of renovation.

Additionally, when asked if they could do more to develop tourism Kasper (Appendix C) elaborates that the reasons for the developmental strategies are because they recognize the tourism industry's importance for the area, and further elaborates that it will receive increased focus in terms of commercial growth, as well as in the climate committee. He mentions that they are aware of the pressure tourists bring to Fjellerup and Bønnerup, but the Municipality still has not reached its' capacity ceiling and notes the importance of tourists in regards to the survival of the local businesses. Kasper (Appendix C) elaborates on the development of the local businesses by stating *"We also cooperate with with the local commercial life of Grenaa towards making a more attractive city center, and make further development plans. We're also in a development association with the Kattegatcenter and the South Harbor regarding realizing the potential on the South Harbor"*, expressing a desire to make the city more cohesive and attractive.

When asked about the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, Kasper (Appendix C) highlighted the positive impacts it brought the region, by mentioning that it brought an increased number of visitors that has been maintained since. He then underlined the tourism potential of Djursland, as he stated *"We have the blue in terms of a huge 117-kilometre-long coastline and we have the green in terms of all our forests, fields and beautiful nature, meaning we have a lot of outdoor potential, which is a great asset to have. And in my experience our visitors come here for the beaches and the nature"*, he underlines however that they have to be careful not to ruin that potential, and that is the reason behind the art trails that have been erected in Rampen Lake and the Plantation in Grenaa respectively, to try utilize this potential and spread the visitors throughout nature for them to explore. Additionally he attributes the success of Djursland during the pandemic to the nature it provides by stating *"I think that is why people came to Djursland during the pandemic, because it is perceived as being very open, there is a lot of nature, the majority of the municipality is covered by it, so maybe being able to be outdoors without worry helped us a lot"*.

Lastly, when asked about how tourism can help develop the area Kasper (Appendix C) argues that the more money tourists spend within the Municipality, the more jobs, grocery stores and boutiques can survive. He further underlines that the two holiday resorts will create even more employment opportunities, specifically regarding the tourism industry, but also adds

that there are talks about opening a new grocery store in Fjellerup, indicating the need for more shopping opportunities and is an expression of the increasing number of residents and visitors. Kasper (Appendix C) concludes by indicating more visitors has an impact of the attractiveness of the area, by stating *“With more visitors brightening up the area, it would be more attractive to move to our municipality”*.

4.2.3. Interviews with locals

To acquire a deeper understanding of how locals perceive tourism in the region of Djursland, three interviews with locals Majbritt, N (Appendix D), Jonas, K (Appendix E) and Kasper, W (Appendix F) were conducted, to compare and analyze their answers through thematic analysis to look over common talking points and contrasting viewpoints.

Throughout the interviews it became evident that tourism is very important for the economy, as well as socially, as every interviewee mentioned a positive impact on the economy or social life in some way, especially regarding local businesses. The interviewees were asked what advantages tourism brings to the area, to where the first interviewee Majbritt N (Appendix D) explained *“It means some of our shops and boutiques can survive, and it brings more life to the city”* a sentiment shared by the second Jonas K (Appendix E) and third interviewee Kasper W (Appendix F) as they both also highlight the importance of tourism for the local businesses, as well as tourists bringing the city to life as Kasper W (Appendix F) explains *“A blooming economy you could say, and many other locals are happy that tourism brings more life to the city”*.

Another sentiment that is shared among the interviewees is the amount of tourists visiting, as both Majbritt N (Appendix D) and Kasper W (Appendix F) have experienced and additionally highlighting the activities and offers as a reason for their arrival *“There are more and more tourists coming in my experience, but I think that has more to do with private stakeholders creating life throughout the city in terms of music and activities”*, also underlining the importance of private stakeholders to create activities and events for the tourists and other locals to engage with.

Regarding the question of the importance of the tourism industry, almost all interviewees unanimously agree that it has a big impact on the region, where the first interviewee Majbritt N (Appendix D) also highlights an issue regarding the region *“I think it has great importance, since we’re not the biggest municipality and there are a lot of people on government benefits and elderly. So the fact that we get a lot of tourists means a lot for the municipality’s economy”* An issue that Kasper W recognizes *“I think it means a lot. It is mostly families with children and elderly people living here”*, echoing the statistics surrounding the rising elderly population mentioned earlier in the paper.

When asked about the possible disadvantages that tourism brings, all the interviewees unanimously agree that there are no significant disadvantages to having a lot of tourism, as they all recognize the benefits outweigh the negatives. However, they do all mention the increasing amount of people, not as an issue, but more as a byproduct as Majbritt N (Appendix D) argues *“We are a poor municipality and we are a touristic city, so I think it’s our primary source of income. The only negative I can think of is the increased amounts of people, but it’s not that bad”* She further comments that the city is very divided between city center and harbor, highlighting the issue that both Karsten (Appendix B) and Kasper (Appendix C) raised previously. Additionally, all interviewees note that traversing the cities can be challenging as Kasper W (Appendix F) states *“For those of us who live in the city it’s difficult to get around to stuff. If you travel by car or scooter, it can be very difficult to go anywhere”* Majbritt N (Appendix D) adds to this notion *“For some other residents it can be annoying traversing the city and it can be challenging to find a parking space”*.

A point was raised by Majbritt N (Appendix D) regarding transportation in the region, where she questions the effectiveness of public transport and the amount of involvement from the Municipality itself, as she argues *“I think the municipality could do some more, I think that would help a lot [...] there’s flower arrangements up in the city center, but it’s kept by private actors, the municipality doesn’t do stuff like that [...] Transport is also an issue, we don’t have enough city busses, it’s hard to get around the area”* again adding to the point made by Karsten (Appendix B) in terms of Djursland being a “driving destination”.

Majbritt N (Appendix D) and Kasper W (Appendix F) lastly, also agreed on the fact that more activities, opportunities and a colorful cityscape increases the chances of more people moving to the area, as Majbritt N (Appendix D) describes *“There is a possibility for these things to benefit us residents as well. Other than that, the businesses and campsites benefit from tourists and the residents of the area benefit indirectly from it as well”* as she is highlighting the symbiotic relationship between tourist, tourism provider and the locals, due to the providers improving their products because of the tourists and indirectly creating new products for locals to consume as well.

4.3. The Tourism experience

The following part of the analysis will focus on the tourism product Djursland has to offer, as well as addressing issues and opportunities raised by stakeholders. The analysis will be divided into two parts, with the first part exploring what tourism products make Djursland an attractive destination for staycationers, specifically through the lens of the phenomenon of Staycation and Slow Tourism. The second part will take a point of departure from the issues and opportunities raised by the experiences of the locals, tourism providers and policy makers, and explore these with the support of the non-participant observation (Appendix G).

4.3.1. A reason to go

In terms of the tourist experience, Djursland is a place with many different and varied attractions and experiences throughout all seasons of the year. Some of the most notable attractions include Djurs Sommerland, which is the biggest theme park within the Nordic countries, and Ree Park Safari, which is a zoological facility and animal preservation center, with a strong focus on species preservation, as well as Skandinavisk Dyrepark, a traditional zoo. Furthermore, there are a lot of different museums focusing on different aspects of Danish culture, such as Gammel Estrup, a manor with a collection from the noble family that previously lived there. There is also the Frigate of Jutland, an old frigate docked in the harbor of Ebeltoft, showing collections of how being stationed on a warship was back when it was

seaworthy, and numerous other historical museums with collections portraying local history and heritage from around Djursland. (VisitAarhus, 2025).

However, one of the most noted reasons for visiting Djursland during the pandemic, was the nature and sense of freedom it provided, as previously stated by Henrik (Appendix A), Karsten (Appendix D) and Kasper (Appendix C) as they all experienced this demand from the tourists. With some of the most well-known of these nature products being Nationalpark Mols Mountains, Kalø Ruin, or some of the best beaches in the country. (VisitAarhus, 2025). The thing that makes Djursland unique from other Danish destinations is the fact that, the region has a diverse set of tourism products, as you can either be enjoying city life and the culture connected to it, or exploring nature instead according to the preferences of the individual tourist. Additionally, the population density is low, meaning that it is a region that feels open and untouched and antithesis to the fast pace of the bigger destinations, and instead encourage slowing down and enjoying the culture and nature of the region at a moderate pace. A sentiment confirmed by the observations (Appendix G) made in connection with the preparation of this paper, as even though the observations noted a surprising amount of tourists, the mood was still calm. Some issues presented themselves however, as noted in the observation (Appendix G) the possibilities for public transport, especially going outside the main cities of Djursland, were less than adequate, an issue which was also raised by Majbritt N (Appendix D) and the CEO of the Kattegatcenter, Karsten (Appendix B) as he commented that Djursland was a driving destination. A notion also raised by Majbritt N (Appendix D) was that a lot of private actors were the ones behind activities and events in the city, which again was confirmed by the observation (Appendix G), as it was seemingly a collection of local actors and local bands that had established a mini festival to add more life to the cityscape.

Slow Tourism, as a movement or concept, fits into the description of the product Djursland presents, specifically in regards to the outdoor activities and slow pace of the cities. By applying the Slow Tourism Framework (Manthiou et al, 2022, p. 8) see *figure 2*, to the existing tourism products, most of them would fit into the definition of Slow Tourism, as they are all score high on most of the metrics presented in the framework. Djursland as a region encourages high flexibility, provides rich onsite local interactions, attachment to the area, a

strong destination experience, high value perceptions and a strong sense of living in the moment. The general exception being Djurs Sommerland, as they are a commercialized mass tourism attraction, however, they still play an important part in attracting people to the destination and giving the visitors a chance at discovering what Djursland offers. To establish a Staycation intention, combining the context of the pandemic, with the product of Djursland and applying the conceptual model of research (Pichierri et al. 2022, p. 512) see *figure 1*, you can determine journey the potential visitor takes from being risk averse to the intention. As it is well documented that the risks of Covid-19 were great, to the point of it being declared a global pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020), the perceived control over the disease was low, combined with the Slow Tourism product of Djursland providing consumption of local products and local interactions, creating a community attachment between the visitor and region and lastly establishing the Staycation intention. As mayor of the Municipality of Norddjurs, Kasper (Appendix C) also noted, Djursland has immense potential for outdoor tourism *“We have the blue in terms of a huge 117-kilometre-long coastline and we have the green in terms of all our forests, fields and beautiful nature, meaning we have a lot of outdoor potential”*. Which is the potential Djursland needs to nurture, as the attractions are what attract the tourists, but it is the nature and cultural attachment that make them stay. Ensuring growth in a destination like Djursland is to keep developing on the Staycation trend and the philosophy of Slow Tourism, to also prevent sustainability issues regarding overtourism and by marketing more efficiently toward Danish market, as well as minimizing other risk factors.

5. Discussion

5.1. Key findings

It can be said the key findings from this paper include the alignment of perception between the different stakeholders. It was especially interesting to note that, while not directly admitting to the impact the Covid-19 pandemic had on the tourism providers visitor numbers, both indicated that it had significantly increased interest in the region and the desire to visit due to perception people had regarding Djursland and the product the region presents. It was additionally interesting to note the alignment of perception that the locals had in terms of tourism's impact on their municipality's economy, noting that it could be a factor for growth in the region. From the literature and analysis, it was possible to identify various phenomena and concepts aiding in the regions economic and social growth. Achieved through an examination of the background of the region, combined with the statistical analysis and the context of the pandemic to reach those findings. Key elements are the answers used in connection with the phenomenon of Staycation and Slow Tourism philosophy and what impact it has had on the destination, as well as the perceived impact in relation to the stakeholders. The phenomenon of staycation is the primary cause, as the trend reemerged during the beginning of the pandemic, which is then put into perspective through an analysis of the Slow Tourism product that Djursland presents, to establish the reason for the Staycation intention of the consumers.

In comparison to pre-existing studies, this paper aims to present a different viewpoint in terms of Staycation and Slow Tourism, as most pre-existing studies predominantly examine consumer habits and psychological studies, as generally consumer-based studies. However, this paper seeks to explore the impact of the phenomenon of Staycation in a rural region like Djursland, within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the predominantly Slow Tourism focused products the region possesses.

The question regarding ensuring future growth in the context of Djursland is about further investment into product development and marketing measures, specifically nurturing the Slow Tourism product to prevent sustainability issues regarding overtourism and minimize other risk factors, as well as simultaneously realizing the potential for outdoor nature and

cultural experiences within the city. Some of the issues raised during the conversations with the stakeholders, indicated a need for an improvement in marketing efforts towards Danish domestic travelers, as well as more even distribution of activities, events and attractions throughout the cities and towns of Djursland, as well as more effective transportation networks.

6. Conclusion

The thesis aimed to explore the relation between the phenomenon of Staycation and the increasing tourism revenue and number of overnight stays in the case study of Djursland, within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. It sought to define and interpret this relation through statistical analysis and stakeholder perception on various levels, such as the tourism provider, the policy maker and the locals. Through the constructivist paradigm and by combining statistical analysis, analysis of secondary data, thematic analysis of interviews with industry professionals, as well as product analysis through the lens of Slow Tourism, the paper has illuminated the interconnected relationship between the reemergence of the phenomenon of staycation, the increasing revenue and visitor numbers Djursland experienced, and the tourism product provided.

Through the analysis it was discovered that Djursland had been subject to various unfortunate circumstances, struggling with the increasing trend of urbanization, as well as an increasingly aging and unemployed population. These issues were then further compounded by an economic crisis in 2018, leading to masses of termination of employment and other cost cutting measures. During 2019 the emergence of Covid-19 started to spread fear around the globe, culminating in it being declared a global pandemic at the beginning of 2020. Djursland experienced throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and increase in visitor numbers and overnight stays, which put into context of the reemergence of the Staycation phenomenon and interviews with local stakeholders, experiencing an increased interest in domestic traveling as a result, showing a causal relation between the phenomenon and the increasing revenue and visitor numbers. Additionally, the analysis answered the reason for

Djursland being the choice of Danish domestic travelers, as the philosophy of Slow Tourism could be applied to the majority of the tourism products, showing high local interaction, consumption and community attachment, further underlined by the experiences of the tourism providers and policy makers.

In turn answering the main research question “In spite of the Covid-19 pandemic, how has the emergence of trends such as staycation and slow tourism helped cause economic and social growth in the area of Djursland?”, as well as the three sub questions put forward in the paper, *“What reasons lie behind the growth Djursland has experienced?”*, *“What are the perceptions and experiences of the different tourism actors, i.e., the locals, the businesses, and the policymakers?”*, *“How can Djursland capitalize and ensure further growth in the future?”*

6.1. Practical Implications

As there to the authors best knowledge is no currently available study, about the trend of staycation’s influence on a given area, presents a clear gap in the literature that the contents of this paper could potentially fill, and could serve as a guideline going forward for the study of the trend of staycation’s influence on a studied area. As well as act as a framework for how to determine causality between a phenomenon and a general trend seen in a given subject destination. Additionally, the paper contributes to the tourism studies of a currently understudied areas of tourism, regarding the destination of Djursland and the phenomenon of Staycation. Future studies could benefit from the framework of research presented in this paper.

7. Reflections

The thesis started out slowly as a lot of articles, research papers and data had to be compiled, meaning that some time passed before being able to start writing. The process, however, accelerated as a satisfactory amount of research and data was gathered. Interviews were planned and conducted with policy makers, tourism providers and locals from the studied area in question. More interviews with local DMO's and other industry professionals would have been preferable and beneficial for the paper, though some fell through, due to reasons out of control of my control and thus not able to complete them. In hindsight conducting a survey could have proved more beneficial compared to the in-person interviews with locals, especially due to the limited amount of respondents I had interviewed, as people were generally not willing to be interviewed. In this case a survey could have proven more beneficial to gather more data and among a wider range of people. Regardless of this, the data gathered was satisfactory and I gained some great insight into the industry, as well as the policy making aspect of Djursland.

For future research purposes, it could prove beneficial to examine the tourist perspective, to further examine the perception toward the studied region and subject. As the study was predominantly limited in that regard to inferring meaning from secondary data. Additionally, a longer timescale could also prove beneficial for future research, revisiting the findings of the paper, to establish if the increase in revenue and visitor numbers are still on an upward trajectory. Fully confirming the studied phenomenon's effect on the region.

7.1. Reflections on the use of generative AI

Throughout the writing process of this paper, AI, such as ChatGPT was used to find and gather articles relevant to the researched area of Djursland, Norddjurs, and Syddjurs Municipality, that may have been archived or drowned out by newer publications. Additionally, the AI grammatical tool, Grammarly, has been utilized to enhance the writing style and to help discover grammatical mistakes. It is, however, important to note that no AI tools were used to

generate or produce the knowledge presented and written in this paper, as well as the conclusions based on that knowledge.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview with Henrik B. Nielsen (Djurs Sommerland)

Conversation with Henrik B. Nielsen. CEO and owner of Djurs Sommerland in Nimtofte.

Conducted on October 9th, 2025.

What is your name and occupation?

Yes occupation and title is CEO here at Djurs Sommerland and my name is Henrik B. Nielsen.

How many guests do you have every year? If you have got the numbers on that.

Yes we have and it's something we're willing to share. We have between 800 – 900 thousand guests per season. And it's a number that has been reasonably increasing across many previous years, but also with some fluctuations, we can have some seasons where the visitor numbers decrease a little and then it typically increases again throughout another period. So right now it lies around 850 thousand and hopefully on the way towards reaching 900 thousand guests this year. If we do, it will then be the best season we have ever had. So we cross our fingers for many guests visiting in the fall season.

How many guests are danish and how many are from abroad? Do you have any numbers regarding that?

We also have that, yes. And I can maybe attach that comment to our current visitor numbers, which I also find interesting and that is, the 800 – 900 thousand guests are spread across 110 – 120 opening days, so the seasons are naturally longer and this year it spans from easter to – and it is by the way the first time ever we had opened during easter, it also arrived historically late this year, but yeah, it spans from easter across to and including the fall vacation. And the reason we don't have more opening days is exclusively due to it being operationally not an economically good case to keep the doors open. Had the guests been here in droves,

demanding to get in, then we would naturally keep the doors open. But we typically are open in the periods that makes sense financially.

And if we look at distribution of nationality, we are then very domestic tourism heavy and we are also very day trip tourism heavy. On the back of the previous, and even this season we would have around 4-5% foreign guests and then you could of course guess what the amount of Danish guests would be. If we look further back it would resemble more like 8-10% foreign guests before Covid-19 and before the Norwegian crown exchange rate currency issues. So we now have fewer foreign guests than previously, especially Norwegian tourists. We are typically in Djursland very strong regarding Norwegian tourists, but there are fewer now than previously, they are partially replaced by a composition of more visitors from the Netherlands and Germany. But they are not in the same way heavy users of attractions as the Norwegians are. Therefore, we have not been able to replace them one for one, and when we look further into our composition, I also said we were heavy day trip tourism heavy, so that means a big portion of the Danish market taking their vacation in Djursland, in summerhouses and on campsites, we don't have a lot of holiday resorts, we also don't have that many hotels. But a big portion of the Danish tourists we get are people who arrive from their own home in Grenaa and around the area, who then visits us and goes home again by the end of the day.

And I would say the Germans conduct is clearly aimed more at nature, beaches, water and relaxation in the summerhouses. Guests from the Netherlands have started arriving more regularly, previously we have said that they, in a caricatured manner, that they arrive to South Jutland and up to Silkeborg and then that was it and southward of that they stayed. So they would not go up to Aarhus and Djursland, but they have clearly begun to travel up here and look more generally towards the north and the rest of Scandinavia and they have also started looking more towards both Zealand and Central Jutland and Northern Jutland. So we're starting to see more guests from the Netherlands and they do demand attraction experiences, both zoos and theme parks, so we have a decent amount more of them. But it is not enough to compensate for the missing Norwegians.

How do you ensure the guests come outside of the main seasons?

We do these so-called seasons, you could also call them events, but these seasons where we had for example our easter days in Djurs Sommerland as a newly started season and it was very successful, despite the questionable easter weather, in the days up to easter we had very good weather, so when everyone got their easter vacations, the weather of course turned questionable with rain and all that. But despite that we had a lot of guests, which shows with clarity that there is a demand for such an offer in Djurs Sommerland. And then we have our magical Halloween during the fall vacation, where we will also present another big event called Djurs Sommerland After Dark, which means when we previously closed at 18:00, we will now be open to 21:00 and make a transformation from a daytime product to an evening product, where the entire park is illuminated by string lights, lamps, video mapping and much more. So that is one of the ways we try to create interest for extra visits and also in a way explain that a theme park is not something you necessarily only visit during the summer vacations. You can have an experience similar to or different if you visit during either April or September or October for example. But here in Djurs Sommerland we don't conduct events like in some other places, like concerts and whatever it could be to try and attract guests outside of the main seasons. We think many of our colleagues are very talented at that, for example Tivoli Friheden and some of the malls, they make many of these free event experiences, so we choose to stay away from those arrangements, and instead focus on events unique to the experience of Djurs Sommerland.

Do you cooperate with other tourism actors, such as other attractions, hotels or VisitAarhus?

Yes if you look at the tourist journey when we look at the Danish, but primarily the foreign tourists, we previously cooperated with the former Destination Djursland, which was then merged into the organization VisitAarhus that handle the whole of the Aarhus region. And they are the ones we work with on a destination level to promote the region toward the foreign markets and we typically do that with VisitAarhus directly on the foreign markets, but often it is via Visit Denmark, because there are some official cooperation structures that dictates that international marketing is through Visit Denmark in cooperation with the local DMO's. So

we cooperate, in a wide sense, with VisitAarhus and Visit Denmark. And when we look at the Danish market it's also VisitAarhus we cooperate with. But they have historically focused on predominantly foreign marketing. And we have within the tourism industry requested that we also have a focus on the Danish market, so that we become better at explaining what experiences we offer within our own borders, so the focus is not only on how we explain foreigners how lovely it is to vacation in the cities and by the coast in Denmark, we need to be better at explaining the Danish market the same thing. It was something we experienced in connection to the Covid-19 pandemic, that it was greatly profitable in terms of growth on the Danish domestic tourism market. So it is something we are focused on, but there are some – let's call it “rules of the game” from the ministry of business regarding what the public funds coming into Visit Denmark and the local DMO's are supposed to be spent on. And when we speak about other attractions, we cooperate in a wide range with other attractions, both in regards to attracting Danish and foreign tourists to the region, but also internationally for example making a campaign with the DMO's from North Jutland and Central Jutland, as well as our local DMO in regards to attracting Norwegian tourists, and make them aware of our attractions and accommodation possibilities in the North and Central Jutland, we did this in 2025 and probably again in 2026. And we did that in cooperation with Visit Denmark as well.

What role do you think Djurs Sommerland fulfills in the development of tourism in Djursland?

I modestly might I add, think that we are a lighthouse of tourism in Djursland and in regards to both internal analysis and public analysis, they clearly show that attractions of a certain size and Djurs Sommerlands size has a certain importance regarding tourists choice of travel destination. Not that it's exclusively Djurs Sommerland being the reason for tourists visiting Djursland, and it could be because of Legoland that people choose to visit Billund, but there's of course some that choose Djursland because of Djurs Sommerland. We are a big piece of the puzzle when we talk about the destination of the region of Aarhus and in Djursland, to which there's no question about Djurs Sommerlands importance in that regard. And to add to that, the whole journey we have been through and the investment strategy we have here, is a

part of the story regarding the possibilities in Djursland and in Djurs Sommerland, so we understand the important role assigned to us for the development of tourism and the product of Djursland.

Do you think Djurs Sommerland could do even more to promote and develop tourism in the region?

You could say it is a part of our strategy that we will try and bring Djurs Sommerland, from being a lighthouse to being a must-see attraction. So that when you arrive at the Aarhus region or Central Jutland, we want to be an attraction where people say they want to take a day out of their schedule and drive from Silkeborg, Horsens, Ringkøbing and more to visit and experience Djurs Sommerland and then drive home again or to their vacation destination. It's clear that the longer away you get from Djursland, the less it's spoken about. We want to create an experience of Djurs Sommerland, that make people go out of their way to enjoy. It's something we've worked with communication- and product wise, and it's big investments, its unique investments, and it's unique experiences that we have to provide. It's something we want to keep working on, but simultaneously we also want to develop Djurs Sommerland into more like a must-see destination, meaning something like a short vacation destination, where we want to offer either Danish or foreign guests weekend stays, or a vacation tour, and the possibility for combining the experience of Djurs Sommerland with an overnight stay or two. It's something we've been working on and we have launched it, as we have been setting up our organization and future investments into a holiday resort, sort of like a destination here in Djurs Sommerland. And there's no question that it will help us going up a level. But it is also something that will hopefully rub off on the whole of Djursland, or at least big chunks of the region, because we don't wish that for example a Norwegian tourist chooses to stay in Djurs Sommerland, because of the unique experience and stays for a long time without exploring the rest of Djursland, that's why the offer is regarding 1-2 overnight stays and for them to go and experience Djursland.

We have also had discussion with the Mayor from Norddjurs Municipality, where you could say we follow two tracks, on one track we have initiated our own accommodation facilities, as

I explained 1-2 overnight stays, on the other track we follow the project called “the heart of Djursland”, where in between Djurs Sommerland and Lübker Golfresort geographically, there’s been bought up some land, where they work on the possibility of opening holiday resorts to establish themselves in the area. It’s clear that it would be very attractive not only for Djurs Sommerland, but also for the region as a whole, as there would typically be some tourists that would want to stay for a longer period of time and when they’ve been at the beach in Fjellerup and Bønnerup, or been to the Kattegatcenter or Djurs Sommerland, and maybe even experienced some big city tourism in Aarhus or Ebeltoft they could return to the resort. It would have a fantastic effect on tourism outside the main seasons, as it would prolong the seasons because it would be attractive for potential guests outside of the main seasons.

What other development strategies or measures do you want to implement in the future?

You could say that it’s not surprising when looking at our history, that we want to continue investing in the core products of Djurs Sommerland. And I guess the experiences you’re able to get, we obviously need to stay attractive in terms of what amusements you can try, and what experiences we’re able to give to people, and if you’re able to at the same time relax and have fun. We want to continue investing in that.

What impact did the Covid-19 pandemic have on Djurs Sommerland?

We were affected in a way that we were forcibly closed in the majority of 2021. And when we then finally were allowed to open our doors it was with certain restrictions and initiatives, which from the governments side meant they tried promoting possibilities of going outside to experience certain attractions with the so-called summerpackage to the Danish residents, which misfired completely. Concretely, the initiative sought to promote zoos, aquariums, museums and much more, but the only thing you couldn’t do, was go to the theme parks, because they are privately owned, and didn’t quite fit into what the summer package tried to achieve. So you weren’t allowed to go to theme parks, it was enormously frustrating and

competition distorting, which of course was not the intention. But there's no doubt that it was a challenge, and we saw visitor numbers from before Covid-19 to during Covid-19 plummet with about 40%. And then there were some packages of help, to essentially keep the economy reasonable in our case. However, we saw there still was an enormous interest from the residents in going out and experiencing things, and when 2022 arrived and all restrictions had been lifted, it meant people had even more pent up desire to explore and experience, which is fair to say a big portion of attractions throughout Denmark enjoyed, as they saw record visitor numbers, and if not, they were then very close to. But it's clear that the pandemic presented a special situation. It was a huge challenge, because we didn't know how to navigate it. It was tough, and when the opportunity came to open up we had those unfortunate summer package initiatives, complicating things for certain parts of the industry. You could say however, that with the restrictions the domestic tourism thrived and did very well. There was not a single bed and breakfast, inn, holiday resort or summerhouse that didn't see historically high visitor numbers, so as I said, the domestic tourism was doing very well.

Did you experience an increase of Danish domestic travelers during and after the Covid-19 pandemic?

If we go back to what I started out by saying, then we have experienced growth in our visitor numbers throughout a number of years. And you could say that we have fewer foreign guests, which have been compensated with Danish guests. But I'm not sure, we don't have a direct analysis confirming or documenting it as a result of Covid-19. There's no question that people had a desire to get outside and experience things and it was made difficult to travel abroad. So naturally many took their vacation in Denmark. When the restrictions were lifted and people were able to travel abroad again, we saw people slowly traveling abroad, and some would think "now that we have had our vacation in Denmark, it's time to experience something new", and when looking at overnight stay numbers from abroad, it is possible to compensate for the domestic travelers leaving again. As we talked about, more people are visiting from the Netherlands and Germany. But yes, staycation is very relevant to talk about now, but It could also be a result of what we see happening around us. We know that it's

enormously popular to go to Spain, it is enormously popular to go to Italy, despite there being 40 degrees. But we are starting to hear more that are saying that now we have been these places, now we take our vacation at home. We are also starting to hear that foreign tourists, like Dutch and Germans, instead of going south, they're going north because the climate is getting more attractive in Scandinavia compared to the heat in southern Europe during the summer period. But now that we're so far removed from Covid-19, to say Staycation is a result of it or other circumstances I can't tell you. It could be that you could dig further down and arrive at a conclusion that documents it, but it's not something I can do. It's not something we can say from Djurs Sommerland, that that's what has happened. We would rather attribute our increase in visitor numbers on the Danish market, to the development we've seen. I would say however, that Covid-19 could have accelerated that desire to vacation at home, as it could have shown how diverse an experience we can provide here in Denmark. But not necessarily being the main vacation, but maybe an extended weekend or mini vacation you could plan somewhere in Denmark. We have something in Djursland that is very attractive, as the product is developed and refined and of high quality.

Do you know about experiences made at other attractions or tourism providers, that indicated an increase in Danish visitors?

I would say, as we talked about earlier. There was a desire to go out and experience, that was something we experienced at all attractions, there was growth on the Danish market. But we must also recognize that for some, that growth has ceased again, it's been normalized, to which there could be various reasons. And this summer package artificially helped increase some visitor numbers, that you organically, normally wouldn't have seen. And when that summer package reached its' expiration date, that was the reality for many attractions. I would also add, that in many cases if there's talk about stagnation, many attractions would be very happy about that. But I also think that for many more, they still struggle with lower visitor numbers compared to previous years, and now have the task of figuring out how to develop beyond that point.

Appendix B – Interview with Karsten Bjerrum Nielsen (Kattegatcentret)

Conversation with Karsten Bjerrum Nielsen. CEO of the Kattegatcenter in Grenaa.

Conducted on October 7th, 2025

What is your name and occupation?

My name is Karsten Bjerrum Nielsen and is the director of the Kattegatcenter in Grenaa.

How many guests do you get every year?

It's a little difficult to answer unambiguously. A lot of factors are present. For comparisons sake we had around 185 thousand visitors in 2023, and we had 155 thousand in 2024, so it fluctuates a bit.

Do you know how many of those guests are Danish and how many are foreign?

Yes, up to about 80% of our guests are Danish. Regarding foreign tourists in terms of volume the ones who we primarily see are Germans, with some Norwegians and Dutch as well. They typically arrive because they take their vacation here. The Danes you could say, as we are a tourist destination here in Djursland, that there's also many of them taking their vacation in the area. So it's probably a pretty natural distribution of domestic travelers to international tourists.

What do you do to make guests visit outside the main season?

Yes there are things we do. But we also have to come to terms with the difficult location we have, because if you go to Copenhagen Zoo or Odense Zoo or Aalborg, in some of the bigger cities, some of these places are within walking distance, so it's easier to attract people. We are a driving destination, because we are all the way out on the "nose" of Djursland and not on the way to something other than Kattegat and Sweden. Which means that it's probably an active choice you make, starting the car and driving out here, especially outside the main

season. Where we could potentially move something outside of the main season, are during weekends. The weather also plays an important role, for example this weekend on the Saturday, we had bad weather and had around a thousand guests, where we in contrast only would have 300 on a sunny day. Which could be a factor in the main season. Our most visited day we bid welcome to around 4000 guests and the least visited was 600-something. And you could say outside the main seasons we have advantageous prices on annual passes for people living in Norddjurs Municipality. It's some thing we have chosen to do, also because we get support from the Municipality in terms of municipal support. And it's something we experience that is working well, because the residents don't typically come during the main season. So, in that way we divide the visitors throughout the year and outside the main seasons. In terms of attracting people from Aarhus, we could do something, but it's a issue regarding price, and how much does it cost to do. We have Djurs Sommerland, which makes the destination of Djursland attractive because there's so many offers, experiences, theme parks, zoos, museums, nature, good beaches and so forth. There are many things to attract visitors. Djurs Sommerland are also working on creating their own accommodation offer, which could also help attract visitors outside the main seasons.

Do you cooperate with other tourism actors, such as attractions, hotels or VisitAarhus?

Yes we do, and we do so in different capacities. We have some collaborations with local accommodation providers with possibility of discount prices for their guests. And then we're members of DAZA, which stands for Danish Accredited Zoos and Aquariums, these are the big zoological facilities in Denmark, where we also work closely with them to give discounts to their guests. And we are a part of topattraktioner, which is widely assembled within tourism, it could be Tivoli Friheden, The old City, Moesgaard and the like. I'm also a part of the advisory board and VIP partner of VisitAarhus, which also presents some opportunities regarding some sparring and analysis tools, courses and such things.

What role do you think the Kattegatcenter has in the development of tourism in Djursland?

Well, we are the biggest attraction within the Municipality of Norddjurs regarding visitor numbers, so I would say we are an important actor, and we know that. We have some coordination meetings with the Mayor and communal Director, to coordinate our efforts and make sure that we're oriented about things happening respectively at each department. We also have our school service, that are very active within the school system, and our school effort manager is also the natural space coordinator for natural sciences in the Municipality, meaning that we have a lot of students in many different age categories. We also conducted a socioeconomic analysis to visualize that we're not only a cultural institution, but we also generate between 7-8 Danish crowns for every crown invested in us, and additionally shows tax base, attractions power towards tourists and many other things.

As a leading tourism actor in the Municipality of Norddjurs, do you think you could do more to promote and develop tourism in the region?

Yes of course, we need to develop our product if we want people to keep visiting us, generate interest. We are also active in different networks, like business Djursland, Profession Grenaa and VisitAarhus, these places where you can promote businesses and tourism. Which is a joint effort and is luckily also the attitude we have here in Djursland, that it is the destination, Djursland, that is the attractive force, then we're competitors when the guests arrive. But it's firstly about attracting the tourists here, and then we can see who attracts the most.

Are there specific development strategies you want to implement in the future, to attract more guests?

I think it basically is about renewal, a reason to go. We're currently in the process of renovating our tropical shark tank, which is not that much of an attractive measure, as it's not something that excites our marketing and communication department. But it's highly necessary. So we're in the middle of a larger transformation project, before thinking about making new exhibitions. Fundraising is also something we do and has to be done to reach our goals. Three years ago we opened a large indoor penguin enclosure, as well as new school

service premises. It's something that has had an effect on us, and it still creates value to this day, the project was enormous under our auspices. The cost was around 60 million, a lot of money. It's something that Djurs Sommerland are experts in, they have new, big amusements every other year, with smaller amusements in between and runs like clockwork. In comparison, we're in a completely different circumstance, as we have other obligations as a state-recognized zoological facility, meaning where not just here to entertain. Our obligations include education, mediation, nature conservation, breeding cooperation and many other things. I usually say that it of course should be fun visiting us, but there should also be an educational foundation, but it doesn't need to be dry and boring. It's our basis of existence and we try to also be the voice regarding issues in the Danish marine environment. We're currently working with nature conservation, collaborating with North Nature who tries to remove "ghost nets" and other fishing gear left behind in the ocean. It's not something that in itself attracts visitors, but it's something that's important to our existence, also working with nature conservation.

What impact did you expect the Covid-19 pandemic to have on the Kattegatcenter, and what was the reality?

First and foremost it came as a surprise, as I was watching TV and it was declared that everything had to be shut down tomorrow, so we called an emergency meeting in our management group to discuss what to do and how to handle it. Practically it meant that we had two extended periods of forced closure, where we had no guests at all. This meant that we were a part of six different compensation arrangements, and our colleagues were sent home with paid compensation and the world as we knew it was very different.

I think people perceived Djursland as being a region with a lot of space, so it seemed as a Covid-19 free place to be, people wanted to go to the summerhouses and not be in close proximity to others. It meant that it clearly had a positive impact for us when we then reopened, as we were also one of the state-recognized and state-supported cultural institutions as a part of the summer package, which was a great benefit to us and we could give 50% discount on tickets, which meant a lot for our visitor numbers. And they made a

reservation system, which meant that we maintained the same number of visitors every day, though our maximum capacity due to restrictions were only around 2100 a day, it was the biggest summer that I had witnessed. You could say these support arrangements from the municipality and government meant that we had a financial foundation during the pandemic. And then in 2022 on the back of the pandemic we opened the penguin enclosure, which had an afterburner effect on the visitor numbers.

The pandemic changed how we viewed the world In general, the guests couldn't come to us and we couldn't come to them, but our school service were creative and made online courses, which especially kids were ecstatic about. We had many thousands following our broadcasts on phones and computers, with the families sitting and watching what we had to offer. We used some of the experiences we had from the pandemic and applied it into our school service, so that we know have the tools to conduct online courses. It also meant that we had to think creatively, for example we had the worlds' largest online squid dissection with over a thousand participating students, where the schools came out and collected a kit to then distribute among the students without them having to come into contact with anyone.

Did you experience an increase in visitor numbers?

I haven't really calculated on that, as we had a period of half a year where we had zero guests. So in some periods we went from zero guests to then suddenly a lot of them, as well as a lot of restrictions on what we could do and we couldn't gather a lot of people to do special events, as well as the people being extremely careful during that period of time. The visitor numbers fluctuated a lot. But we generally made it through in a good manner and I think Covid-19 made some discover Djursland, some would maybe never consider Djursland a tourist destination. This summer, and especially the previous summer we may have experienced a bit of longing to go abroad, as some want to go to the south again.

Has the pandemic indirectly helped the tourism industry in Djursland, maybe due to trends such as Staycation?

I don't know if it's a tendency that will stay, I think it's hard to assess. We were told the world would never be the same again, but not a lot of time passed before people forgot all about it. All the precautions were quickly forgotten. I think one thing is for certain, and that is the degree of knowledge about Djursland has increased. But it could be that people have had enough and wants to go abroad again. But I think for some, Djursland is a place you can return to, it's very family friendly, and we have one of the best beaches in Denmark. So we have many things to do here, especially for families with children. But how permanent it is, I don't know, I think you have to look a couple of years further into the future to determine that.

Do you see more tourists in the city scape now, than 5-10-15 years ago?

I will be transparent and say I'm not living in Grenaa, but the general problem of Grenaa is that it's very long and stretched, and as were located on the southern Harbor were far from the city center. So people will drive out here, park and be here the amount of time they want to spend and then go home to their summerhouses, without having paid a visit to the city center. So there's a desire for the city to be more connected and cohesive, but the issue is that there are many competing factors on the southern Harbor, with Stena Line, the industry section of the northern Harbor, so it is a bit of an urban jungle. People are not encouraged to walk from the harbor up to the city center, so the city could really benefit from development in that regard to create a better connection between sections of the city. Grenaa has also experienced "city center death", that many other cities also has dealt with as a general tendency, making hard for the shops to survive.

Do you know of any experiences made at other attraction or tourism providers in context of the pandemic?

I can't say, I wouldn't want to speak on behalf of my colleagues. Of course, some experienced more difficulties than we did. It was dependent on who qualified for compensation in certain contexts. I think some may have experienced some difficulties getting into gear again after the pandemic, because they may have faded from public perception a little, that means a lot. But

if that is the direct cause, or something other is behind it, is not for me to know. Some may have folded due to the pandemic, and some may have folded even without it, under all circumstances it may have accelerated that process.

Appendix C – Interview with Kasper Bjerregaard (Mayor of the Municipality of Norddjurs)

Conversation with Kasper Bjerregaard. Mayor of the municipality of Norddjurs.

Conducted on October 2nd, 2025.

What is your name and job description?

Kasper Bjerregaard and I'm the mayor of the Municipality of Norddjurs.

How important is tourism for the Municipality of Norddjurs?

It is very important, we have around 2 million overnight stays in Djursland and just under half is in Norddjurs. Last year tourists spent around 2,3 billion in our municipality, it's a very important sector for us. And the residents seem generally happy to receive the visitors, there are some debates about toilets being vandalized, but other than that they are positive towards the tourists, and the space is there for the tourists and there an increasing pride among our residents that people would want to visit us.

What do you do politically to promote the growth of tourism in Norddjurs?

We try and give the tourism sector the focus it deserves and the positions of strength it has. Strategically, we have the "blue" in terms of a huge 117-kilometer-long coastline and we have the "green" in terms of all our forests, fields and beautiful nature, meaning we have a lot of outdoor potential, which is a great asset to have. And in my experience our visitors come here for the beaches and the nature. Otherwise, we try and support tourism in the area to the best of our abilities, and we have a focus area on creating more accommodation capacity, as we

have a lack of capacity for all the demand. We have gotten two holiday resorts greenlit for Fjellerup and Bønnerup, and we have a development project underway to develop the coastline of Fjellerup, to which we have gotten dispensation to do so, which is very hard to acquire.

Do you as a Municipality cooperate with VisitAarhus or other tourism actors to develop tourism?

We have regular contact with VisitAarhus through board members, and we also cooperate with the Municipality of Syddjurs, because visitors from abroad doesn't know the difference between Norddjurs and Syddjurs, and in that regard it is way more beneficial to us if we cooperate. We also support our tourism providers economically, such as the Kattegatcenter, our fossil museum, Gammel Estrup Manor and many more. In many cases the municipality owns the buildings and is in charge of maintenance, and we also cooperate on strategic planning and development. Other than that we also have a sponsorship on the Beach Party we have here every year, we also sponsor some big Golf Tournaments and its generally about sticking our noses out and being more bold in the way we present ourselves, to try and be noticed

Is there an expectation towards the tourism industry's continued growth in Norddjurs?

Of course, we want more people who comes to visit us. We are trying to start a campaigns with our summerhouse owners, and trying to see if we can get them to rent out their summerhouse to alleviate the pressure on our other accommodation providers, but the owners mostly want to use them for themselves. It's the same structure they have in Odsherred.

According to you, could there be done more to develop tourism?

Tourism will get a higher strategic place in the area of commercial growth compared to previously, as well as in the climate committee, as we recognize the importance of the industry has for our municipality. But practically speaking, we're still far away from our capacity limit, Grenaa is also big enough for it to not "die" during winter, however, Fjellerup and Bønnerup are under a bit more pressure from the tourists. And we're fully aware that the tourists are the ones holding up our shops and boutiques. We also need to make sure we have easily accessible public toilets and enough of them. It is generally about being at the forefront of these issues to avert them, especially regarding waste and the like.

In your opinion, can tourism help create more jobs, people moving to the area and opportunities for Norddjurs?

The more money tourists spend within the municipality, the more jobs and shops can survive and thrive, and the new holiday resorts definitely will create more jobs and opportunities in Fjellerup and Bønnerup. There are also plans surrounding a new grocery store in Fjellerup, which is an expression of the greater amounts of people and visitors. We also have plans surrounding more activity in the area of Bønnerup. And of course, you think that with more visitors and people brightening up the area, it would be more attractive to move to our municipality.

What measures and strategies would you want to implement, to strengthen Norddjurs' position as a tourism destination?

If we take a point of departure from the potential we possess, we have strategies in place for Bønnerup and Fjellerup, as well as a development project for the center of Djursland. We also cooperate with the local commercial life of Grenaa towards making a more attractive city center, and make further development plans. We're also in a development association with the Kattegatcenter and the South Harbor regarding realizing the potential on the South Harbor.

How was the municipality impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic?

As I said, we have a lot of potential in outdoor and Covid-19 was positive for our visitor numbers, as we got an increase of visitors throughout Covid-19 and that increase has been maintained after it. The municipality is covered by nature and forests and you have to be careful not to ruin that, so we have incorporated nature into activities and erected an art trail at Rampen lake that has 10-12 thousand visitors a year, we also have an art trail in the plantation. They are very important, because we need to erect things and have activities all around the municipality, so that there is something to do and to make people go out and explore the area. We are also experimenting with audio walks, where we have popular actors narrating and conveying the nature to the listener. And I think that is why people came to Djursland during the pandemic, because it is perceived as being very “open”, there is a lot of nature, the majority of the municipality is covered by it, so maybe being able to be outdoors without worry helped us a lot.

Appendix D – Interview with Majbritt, N. (Local of Norddjurs)

Conversation with Majbritt, N. a local resident of the Municipality of Norddjurs.

Conducted on July 10th, 2025.

How long have you lived here?

I have lived here my whole life, born and raised.

How old are you?

I am 50 years old.

What is there to do in the area, in terms of attractions, offers and experiences?

There are many leisure activities for both young and old people. Aarhus University holds lectures about random topics in the cinema for anyone wanting to join. During winter there's

normally a Christmas market and the last few years over the summer there has also been music and concerts in the city center and the harbor. We have a cultural center called “Pavillon” where there’s also lectures, concerts and many more things. We also have East Jutlands Museum and Kattegatcentret and some sort of Motormuseum and a place where they have fossils on display. There’s also Munkholm Zoo, Ree Park, Scandinavian Animal Park and Djurs Sommerland, but that’s in Syddjurs and a bit further away from Grenaa.

How big of an importance do you think tourism has on the area’s economy?

I think it has great importance, since we’re not the biggest municipalities and there are a lot of people on government benefits and elderly people. So the fact that we get a lot of tourists means a lot for the municipality’s economy. I also think it will become more popular to move here because it’s cheap, but transport to work is a little far to Randers and Aarhus.

Do you see more tourists in the area compared to the past 5-10 years?

Yes, there are more and more tourists coming in my experience, but I think that has more to do with private stakeholders creating life throughout the city in terms of music and activities, as there is way more of that than before. I think many of those who visit are repeat visitors, maybe because it’s cheaper to live out here when traveling and then just drive to the bigger cities. Maybe the Kattegatcup could potentially attract some, because the families of the kids who come to watch them play football will think the area is nice, and then visit again in the future.

If yes, then how has it changed?

For the City it has been positive, but I guess for some other residents it can be annoying traversing the City and it can be challenging to find a parking space.

How do you experience the presence of tourists in your everyday life?

You can feel that the city gets “smaller”, the streets are narrow, so there’s more space to move around when the tourists are not here. When you drive along the coastline it’s also easier to get back and forth out of the main seasons, but it’s not as if they are annoying to deal with.

What advantages do you think tourism brings to the area?

It means that some of our shops and boutiques can survive and it brings more life to the City, which makes it more appealing to arrange stuff to do and listen to throughout the area. We had a European Food Market come visit us this summer, so there is a possibility for these things to benefit us residents as well. Other than that, the businesses, campsites benefit from tourists and the residents of the area benefit indirectly from it as well.

What problems or disadvantages do you think tourism brings to the area?

I can’t think of any as such. We are a poor municipality and we are a touristic city, so I think it’s our primary source of income. The only negative I can think of is the increased amounts of people, but it’s not that bad. I guess the city is very divided, the tourists are either in the city center or at the harbor.

Do you think the City should work towards attracting more tourists?

Yes absolutely. It could mean more events and initiatives and stuff like that for the city. And in terms of maintenance I think the Municipality could do some more, I think that would help a lot. They could start with scrapping the “Wild on purpose” movement, as it looks horrible with all the unkept weeds and plants, and there’s flower arrangements up in the city center, but it is kept by private actors, the municipality doesn’t do stuff like that. So the Municipality could do more to make the City more cozy and colorful. Transport is also an issue, we don’t have enough city buses, it’s hard to get around the area, they are free during the summer though.

During winter the buses are non-existent, you have to call the company before the bus arrives, so if the city needs to have life around the year, then the locals should be able to get around easily as well.

What types of tourists do you think the area should focus on?

I think many of the activities in the city are for adults, so more could be done to arrange something for children. I think most of the ones who visit are a bit older and it could be nice with more families, but I don't think there's that many activities for children, so we could have more of that. I'm not even sure Grenaa has a proper playground for children, they could make one by the harbor that would also do more attract families.

Appendix E – Interview with Jonas, K. (Local of Norddjurs)

Conversation with Jonas, K. a local resident of the Municipality of Norddjurs.

Conducted on July 10th, 2025.

How long have you lived here?

I have lived here all my life.

How old are you?

I am 28 years old.

What is there to do in the area, in terms of attractions, offers and experiences?

There's a free museum, there's the Kattegatcenter, and there's some sort of playground for small children, that's what I know of.

How big of an importance do you think tourism has on the area's economy?

I don't think it is too influential, we don't have that much to offer tourists, but then again there are a lot of them, I know there are many tourists at the campsite.

Do you see more tourists in the area compared to the past 5-10 years?

I'm not that often in the city center and I don't think about whether the people I see are tourists, so I honestly don't notice it that much. But I think it is around the same amount.

How do you experience the presence of tourists in your everyday life?

I honestly don't know, they ask me questions once in a while I guess, other than that I don't notice them as such. But they behave well from what I've seen.

What advantages do you think tourism brings to the area?

Well, the advantage is that we can still have our campsites, and seasonal shops and boutiques. The social life gets better because of the tourists. And it could create jobs as well.

What problems or disadvantages do you think tourism brings to the area?

I can't really imagine what the disadvantage would be, maybe a lack of car parking spaces, they are limited in the first place. And I guess more people in general, but it is not that bad.

Do you think the City should work towards attracting more tourists?

It wouldn't do that much harm to have more, then maybe more exciting things will happen in the city. Personally I don't think we should have too many though.

What types of tourists do you think the area should focus on?

I think it is mostly older people who comes, not pensioners, but maybe an older demographic.

Appendix F – Interview with Kasper, W. (Local of Syddjurs)

Conversation with Kasper, W. a local resident of the Municipality of Syddjurs.

Conducted on July 17th, 2025.

How long have you lived here?

I have lived here for 27 years, 28 soon, my whole life pretty much.

How old are you?

I am 27 years old.

What is there to do in the area, in terms of attractions, offers and experiences?

Its getting expanded a bit all of the time, we have many places to eat, cafés, the Frigate of Jutland and the Glassmuseum. There's also constantly being developed new apartments, which means more people moving here. The City is always getting expanded. When the fall vacation arrives, we have something called Ebelfestival, which I think can attract many tourists, there's a lot of stalls with taste tests and other goods, local businesses also present their homemade arts and crafts.

How big of an importance do you think tourism has on the area's economy?

I think it means a lot. It is mostly families with children and elderly people living here, but whenever the vacations arrive the City gets filled with Germans, Swedish and Norwegians. And it becomes very crowded.

Do you see more tourists in the area compared to the past 5-10 years?

Yes I do, there are more and more stuff to do as well, more places to eat and places to live. I don't know about the situation with summerhouses and tourists, but there are so many tourists that it feels like you are a tourist yourself in the City you live in.

If yes, how has it changed?

Well it's a positive for the cityscape, the shops earn a lot of money from them, but living here is an ambivalent feeling, on one hand it brings life to the city, on the other hand you have trouble traveling around your own city. If you are going towards the city by car, you can risk being in a queue all the way to the outskirts of the City.

How do you experience the presence of tourists in your everyday life?

Its probably when I go back and forth from the gym or work, and also the grocery store, a lot of tourists are there as well.

What advantages do you think tourism brings to the area?

A blooming economy you could say, and many other locals are happy that tourists bring more life to the City. I also think its nice when I'm at a bar and I meet people visiting from other places.

What problems or disadvantages do you think tourism brings to the area?

It's like I mentioned previously, for those of us who lives in the City, it's difficult to get around to stuff. I you travel by car or scooter, it can be very difficult to go anywhere. But it's not as if it brings any serious problems, the families that come here are generally very calm.

Do you think the City should work towards attracting more tourists?

I think they do a good job in the first place. There's always a lot of tourists around the grocery stores, and the attraction arrange a lot of events, so I don't know what they could do to attract more.

What types of tourists do you think the area should focus on?

I think there's also a decent amount of younger people who rent summerhouses out here, as well as friend groups of adults. We have a lot of different things here, we have things to attract the younger people in terms of bars and bodegas, and we have restaurants and coffee shops for the families, and I think just walking down the main street is an experience in itself, especially for older people, it is a very old City as you know.

Appendix G – Observation Journal

Observation purpose

The purpose of the observation is to observe tourists and how they move around and interact with the region, additionally the purpose is to feel the experience myself, by walking around and interacting with different offers and activities.

Tourism movement

I have arrived at the city center to make my observations, it is almost noon, and tourists should soon appear in the city.

Something I have noticed is that a lot more visitors are here than I expected, many of them Danish, some Norwegians, Swedes, a few German and what I presume to be Dutch visitors. It is quite calm however despite the surprising number of visitors.

The main street is quite busy, as people walk almost shoulder to shoulder down the narrow main street of the city center.

There's currently music playing, some sort of mini festival of some kind, I hear there are some local bands playing – Its seemingly arranged by local actors.

People are enjoying the weather, with snacks, beer and soda. Mostly Danish tourists are interested, but there are some foreign tourists enjoying the music.

I have interviewed some local residents' to ask them regarding tourism in Djursland.

It is fair to say that the tourists mainly keep themselves to the city center and the harbor area, there's not a single tourist to spot anywhere between. It's pretty much residential area mixed with a few shops on the way to the harbor.

I have decided to go to the plantation – and there are a few people but not a lot and it's nice coming here after being in the city center for a while, it's very different.

The beach is very popular, many families with children, as well as couples enjoying the sun and water

Transport

The transport up to the city center is decent, but anywhere else and it becomes horrible.

Not enough buses go regularly and not to the outer areas of the city.

I must walk for a long time to get from the city center to the harbor, I don't think you would normally do this if you were a tourist. As it is pretty much in different ends of the city.

There are a lot of buses going to Djurs Sommerland as expected, they are the main tourist attraction of Djursland

Going out of the city the transport is also bad, many of the smaller towns only have buses once every 1-2 hours, unless the town is on the way to Aarhus.

I think predominantly that the way to traverse the region is by driving, as the public transport is not sufficient, and it could potentially pose a problem if there's a desire to spread them out a bit.

Reflection

From what I gathered during my observations, there are many more tourists than anticipated and most of them were Danish. They also mostly kept themselves to the city center and the harbor / beach, as things were happening there, music, activities, shopping opportunities and the like. Traveling by public transport is not that viable, as it is too sporadic and you're not able to go to the smaller towns, in the sense that it is limited how many times per hour the bus departures for these places.