

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE CRUISE TOURISM INDUSTRY: CHANGING TOURIST BEHAVIOUR IN THE PORTS OF GREENLAND

Project aim: to develop and implement strategies to encourage cruise tourists in Greenland to behave in more sustainable ways.

The strategies will be concrete changes that will be put in place on cruise ships and in cruise destinations in Greenland. They will have been tested and proven to influence tourist behaviour towards the kind of behaviour that has been identified to be desirable and sustainable by stakeholders. I will develop the strategies by applying theories of behavioural science (the study of how people make decisions) to tourism. Behavioural scientists have found that people's decisions can be guided using small alterations to decision-making environments that make the desired outcome the easiest one. A simple example of this is placing fruit in a café at eye level (rather than unhealthy snacks), so customers are more likely to notice it and buy it.

Research so far

The first 8 months have been very much about familiarising myself with the literature, the field and building skills that I will need for the project. The first piece of research I have done is to investigate what sustainable tourism means to different stakeholders. In summer 2020, I travelled to Nuuk and Sisimiut and interviewed stakeholders about their perceptions of sustainable tourism and what it means in a Greenlandic context. I also sent out a survey to get the opinions of stakeholders in other parts of Greenland. I have turned this data into a paper entitled *What do we talk about when we talk about sustainability? Conceptualising sustainable tourism in post-pandemic Greenland*. The paper is currently under review by an academic journal, so I can't share it with you yet, but when it is published I will send it out. What I can share with you is a conceptual map I made from my data, which you can see on page 3 of this report. The image maps sustainable tourism in a Greenlandic context, based on the things that my respondents mentioned. As you will see, there are a huge amount of elements associated with sustainable tourism in Greenland, and a lot of them are very open to interpretation. They could of course have been connected in different ways than I have connected them, but the map at least goes to demonstrate how complex and subjective sustainable tourism is in Greenland.

Courses & Conferences

As part of the academic requirements of my PhD, I am required to take a certain amount of courses throughout the project. I can choose the courses which best fit my needs. So far I have taken:

- Social Science Research Approaches (methods course) | June 2020 | CBS
- Behavioural & Experimental Economics | August 2020 | University of Copenhagen
- Advances in Tourism Management | September 2020 | Mid Sweden University
- Research Ethics & Integrity (mandatory) | October 2020 | CBS
- Industrial PhD Course – Module 1 (mandatory) | October 2020 | CBS
- Various library courses about literature, data management, software | CBS

I have nearly fulfilled all of the course requirements, so from now on I will have more time for research. I am also required to attend and present at at least 1 conference per year. I will present at the [Consumer Behaviour in Tourism Symposium](#) on 16th December (online). Anyone can sign up to attend although there is a registration fee.

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*Primary industrial partner
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*Other industrial partners
AECO (Association of Arctic
Expedition Cruise Operators)*

Destination Arctic Circle

Project start: 1st April 2020

Project end: 31st March 2023

Knowledge Dissemination in the Industry

As an industrial PhD, disseminating my research in the industry is very important. So far, I have engaged in the following dissemination activities:

- Presented my research proposal at the VG/AECO Cruise Workshop | May 2020
- Wrote an [article](#) for VG's B2B newsletter | June 2020
- Presented my research proposal to VG colleagues in CPH | June 2020
- Presented my research proposal to VG colleagues in Nuuk | July 2020
- Meetings and interviews with tourism stakeholders in Nuuk & Sisimiut | July 2020
- Presented my project progress to the whole of VG | September 2020
- Presented my project progress at the AECO Townhall Meeting | October 2020

Funded by:

Innovation Fund Denmark



I am always open to new opportunities for industrial knowledge dissemination. Please get in touch if you have an event you would like me to speak at.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has been catastrophic for Greenland's tourism industry and unfortunately cannot be ignored. The cruise sector has been particularly affected with no ships having been able to make it to Greenland for the 2020 season. As I was planning on observing cruise tourist behaviour first-hand this year, the crisis has negatively affected my research in that it has made this impossible. However, if ships return next year, I should still be able to carry out the rest of the project as planned. The positive side of the COVID-19 crisis is that it has made my project even more relevant, as it has now become more important than ever for Greenland to develop a tourism industry that is sustainable and resilient.

Next steps

The next step is to use the understanding gained through researching and writing my first paper to identify the sustainable tourist behaviours that I want to try and promote. My main task in spring 2021, therefore, will be researching and designing some behavioural experiments in collaboration with relevant academics and industry stakeholders. In summer 2021, I plan to conduct some experiments in Sisimiut. Autumn 2021 will be mainly spent analysing and writing up my results. I plan to conduct another round of behavioural experiments (hopefully onboard cruise ships) in summer 2022.

Further reading

I have selected some relevant further reading for those who are interested in diving deeper into the topics I have mentioned. The two articles (attached to my email) are academic articles which I find particularly relevant to the industry.

Get in touch:

If you'd like to hear more about the project, get involved, or invite me to talk, please write to me:

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Photo by Aningaaq Pele Rosing Carlsen – Visit Greenland