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## **Harnessing the Power of the Arctic**

Connecting tourists to nature through dog sledging activities

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Cover Photo: Dog sledging trip, Finnmark, 2013.  
Photo by: Emma Cowell

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## Foreword

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## Abstract

This qualitative study explores the complex pockets of co-created interaction and throwntogetherness that produce meanings and value through an ethnographic sensory investigation of dog sledging tourism in Finnmark. I draw on a multirelational and multisensorial perspective on dog sledging, which means a holistic and socially constructed way of understanding Human-Animal Bonding (HAB) (DeMello, 2012). HAB enabled me to move beyond ethology when studying how culture, learning, emotions, communication, and cognition shaped interactions between tourist-mushers and dogs in arctic landscapes.

The analysis unpacks the richness of the tourist-mushers interactions with sledge dogs by showing how physical senses and the arctic landscape bring about emotions and behavioural changes. The three main themes revolved around how the tourist-musher, through dog sledging, disconnected from everyday life and were reconnected *with* arctic landscapes. Theme one bonding, co-creation and interaction, consisting of the sub-themes bonding, co-creation and interactions, revealed pockets of meaning and value. Theme two, rhythm, through the sub-themes of time and flow, exposed the interconnectedness of reflection. Theme three, discovery mechanisms, with the sub-themes of physical senses, emotion, and learning, identified emotions of trust and empathy as learning tools that led to memory-making and mindfulness.

I conclude that dog sledging tourism is a unique symbolic practice where nothing comes closer to experiencing nature's power. My study's symmetrical agency of humans and non-humans revealed new embodied ways of knowing. This knowledge strengthened and supported an embodied tourist experience approach (Everingham et al., 2021). Through my sensory ethnography of human and non-human encounters travelling together in nature, I address a research gap going beyond the advancement of Finnmarks' regional tourism in Norway to a global understanding of what Arctic is.

### Keywords

Dog sledging, Embodiment, Ethnography, Arctic landscape, Human-animal bonding, Relational materialism

## Prologue

I want to provide you, the reader, with important background and context as to what you might experience and interpret with your physical senses if you are new to the activity of dog sledging. Nothing comes close to experiencing nature's power than dog sledging. It is unique. In England, I raced on two and three-wheeled rigs that provided the exhilaration of connecting to nature with speed. When I moved to the Arctic, that connection to nature came in the art form of slowness. I hope my autoethnography gives you the same insight and inspiration into experiencing the wonderful and fulfilling world of sledge dogs that led me to this research.

At the start chute of “The world’s northernmost and Europe’s longest sledge dog race Finnmarksløpet” (Finnmarksløpet, 2013), a loudspeaker announces, ‘bib number 122, Emma Cowell from England (that’s me, I remind myself), as I creep my team towards the start line with the longest ever one-minute time interval to wait before it is my turn. There are hundreds of people excitedly waving and shouting encouragement right from the parking lot and down the start shoot as far as the eye can see. Loud music is pumping through the speakers, and the compere is supplying information about each musher, but it’s all in the background as I am concentrating on not falling off the sledge and itching to get my dogs past this assault on their physical senses and out into the calm still nature that’s calling us. I distract myself just for a moment as I’ve been told it’s like a wedding day or a birth, it can be over so quickly, and just to get to the start line is an achievement in itself – so enjoy! I smile at the compere and give a little wave to the crowd. I look ahead to the small children’s arms reaching far out either side of the tunnel of people in the hope this adventurous and brave musher extends their hand to high-five them as they go past, so that’s what I did. A connection from the small child still within me, full of inquisitive wonder, to another. Then there was a huge sigh from the whole team as we headed out solo into the silence that we sought after and knew so well from training, but this was to be a challenge of mind, body and soul in unknown territory.

Once out of town on the Alta river, heading towards the base of the mountain, I realise my thoughts left me ignoring my dogs, was I wearing the correct amount and type of clothes? what’s my speed? Is there someone coming behind me? Where are the signs to show the way? Did I pack too much? Am I going to be able to push this heavy sledge up the mountainside? Is my brake mat in the right position to use instantly if needed? How long since I left the start? And then families and friends socialising along the riverbanks with BBQs and picnics started



shouting my name and cheering enthusiastically as I passed. It took me a few kilometres to realise they knew who I was through using the modern technology in their hands but how wonderful. These complete strangers were celebrating either because I guessed Norwegians love all winter sports or because I represented an adventurer about to take my team into the wonderful world they experience regularly, lying just ahead. As I was pondering their motivation and admiring their support, I spotted an unusual sign 'coffee and waffles in 200m'; now that IS a cruel joke, I thought, but then another sign 100m on and as I turned the corner, there was a colourful crowd of people with music, cooking waffles and making coffee for the teams as they passed. Well, I never, I was amazed, just what I needed in my shocked state of mind, more sugar, and as I took it gladly, I realised the hand outstretched to me was a lady I knew! My team and I were really being celebrated by everyone, one big community celebrating a lifestyle in Alta, Finnmark. I slowly edged my way up the side of the mountain, weighed down with guilt at my lack of fitness in preparation (the waffle didn't help) and letting the team down, but they were particularly enthusiastic to make up for me and hauled me to the top where we were met with hundreds of snowmobiles. My thoughts quickly turned to horror and immediately switched into focusing on the dogs for the first time to protect them from the noise and volumes of people; partying, skiing, driving snowmobiles and children from very small ages running at us, arms outstretched and all around us as we passed through (at times too narrow areas between us) before moving onto more of a wilderness area.

Is this what being out in nature is for other people? To me, it was frightening, as my dogs and I had never seen nature used in such a way, coming from England. Emotions turned to a calm state relatively quickly, up and over a hill to witness the stunning multi-coloured sky over a vast flat landscape as the sun began to set, wishing I had a camera to capture the moment but convinced myself it was so beautiful that once I had made the hand shape of a rectangle to frame it, followed by a click of the tongue, it was etched in my memory forever. Nice.

What's next? The dogs are moving happily, but I realise everyone must have overtaken us, and we are all alone with a wind hitching up and bad weather ahead – our first real test out together on the race, on Finnmark's plateau, for the first time. The last 10 kilometres of wind and snow directly into our eyes were beginning to not feel like fun, but boy did we speed up when we turned a corner to be welcomed by the warm lights and hubbub of the first checkpoint of Jotka.

# 1 Introduction

Chapter one provides an insight into why this topic inspires and motivates me as a researcher and what my contribution can make to dog sledge tourism. My research questions are presented within the framework of dog sledge tourism in Finnmark, Northern Norway. The questions delve further into the tourism aspects of dog sledging. An outline of the subsequent chapters can be found at the end.

Since 2011 I have lived and worked with sledge dogs and tourism in and around Alta, Norway. In addition to this, I have been a student at the The Arctic University of Tromsø (UiT), focusing on dog sledging as part of an arctic tourist experience. I have witnessed the encounters between humans (tourist-mushers) and non-humans (sledge dogs) as a tour guide, race judge assistant and musher for years, and been fascinated with how the dogs' presence moves the tourist-musher emotions. The dogs offer the tourist-musher a unique insight into arctic life and nature that a pet dog owner can not (Kuhl, 2011, p. 32). The dogs, in a way, translate arctic nature into something that becomes more accessible and understandable for the tourist-mushers as they interact as co-creators of the experience (Granås, 2018, p. 49). My thesis is an inspiration to explore, and provide insights into these encounters, how they come about, how the tourist-musher talks about them, and what knowledge these events offer regarding a brighter future for tourism in the Arctic. Uncovering rich insights of relationship building between tourist-musher and dog and thus emerging values of importance between sledge dogs and tourist-mushers are led by the dogs' standpoint as sentient that has academic importance to be applied to other animals, the tourist-mushers can encounter in the arctic landscape.

One repeated narrative tourist-mushers shared with me during their visit to Northern Norway was their original motive to participate in a dog sledge activity as a dream come true. Tourist-mushers often felt surprised and excited about how the dog sledge experience influenced their emotions and expressed a further motivation to revisit, perhaps to another area of Finnmark, at a different time of the year, to meet the northern Sami Indigenous peoples, take another form of transport such as skiing, or dog sledge again. The tourist-mushers express a need to return, which puzzles me if their original motivation was a bucket-list tick. In this thesis, the discovery of what makes mushers want to revisit could be the dogs, the landscape, or the emotions they experience in these wilderness encounters.

Finnmarksvidda, directly translated to 'Finnmarks' plateau', can be found in the inner part of the county, it is one of Norway's largest mountain plateaus, home to cloudberry (a highly recognised symbol of the county). Mostly made up of undulating marshland, mountain peaks and narrow fjords, the weather can dramatically change instantly. The area is described as a relatively pristine natural area "luxuriant with flowers and plants and includes extensive birch woods, bogs and glacially formed lakes, 'offering challenges for those who seek the great outdoors" (Visit Norway, 2014). The coldest temperature recorded on the plateau was -51.4 degrees Celsius (Nord Norge Weather, 2019). The plateau is abundant with wildlife, an important reindeer grazing area and home to many thousands of Norway's Indigenous Sami peoples (Visit Norway, 2014). With 24 hours of light in the summer and the sun not rising for an extended period during winter months, taking into consideration all these unique elements of Finnmark makes for an easy conclusion to draw that the quality and balance of life can be a good one if you can adapt to the flow that nature takes (Granås, 2018, p52; Jóhannesson & Lund, 2013, p.185). Edensor (2013) leans on MacFarlane's (2007) experience of the wild mountain darkness, where we become more landscape-aware:

At night new orders of connection assert themselves: sonic, olfactory, tactile. The sensorium is transformed. Associations swarm out of the darkness. You become even more aware of the landscape as a medley of effects, a mingling of geology, memory, movement, life. The landforms remain, but they exist as presences: inferred, less substantial, more powerful. (MacFarlane, 2007, p. 75)

I could not have agreed more with MacFarlane (2007), as in my personal experience of a sledge dogs' role in my life that connects me with nature. Every day, my own Siberian Husky dogs (I have a modest-sized kennel), continue to teach me new things about myself and the world I live in, whether we go out into the mountain wilderness or not. They excite me, amaze me, perplex me and they inspire me covering a multitude of emotions. Many years of learning to communicate with my dogs has enriched my life, they provide a unique gift of opening my physical senses. If I can afford myself to listen and not just with my ears. Whilst spending time out in nature, I trust in following their senses and they in turn learn when to follow mine. We are a team, dependent upon the connection and communication that flows between us. This is the essence of our relationship, that keeps both them and me moving for hundreds of kilometres if we so desired.

Sensorily experiencing another way of seeing the arctic is relevant to my thesis, that form a gap in knowledge where little research is published to include the interaction between dogs and tourist-mushers. The need for further research on how the human and non-human travel together in the landscape is echoed by Granås (2015). Hines (2003 as cited in Kuhl, 2011:23) upholds that human-animal relations as a field of study are in its infancy and working relationships with animals are marginalised. Granås (2015) affirms that the value extracted in dog teams and mushers travelling together in natural landscapes should really be understood and practised (Granås, 2015, p.302). The foundations of human-animal bonding with sledge dogs provide a starting point for how tourist-mushers can disconnect from their hectic urban modern life, connect to the arctic landscape, and connect to themselves in a new way. My thesis illuminates bonding practices by utilising the physical senses, which are embodied (Ingold, 1993, p.163), and emotively driven (Heimtun, 2016, p. 228; Jóhannesson & Lund, 2017). Kuhl (2011) also highlights that a dog's senses "usually pertained to emotion" (Kuhl, 2011, p. 30) and can create cues picked up by tourist-mushers. One example is that interaction with a companion animal promotes calming effects (Kuhl, 2011, p.23). Going outside of the beaten track, feeling the snow, hearing the sounds, when the body is exposed to the cold and darkness of the Arctic, a tourist-mushers embodiment of their physical senses opens an element of vulnerability not just in the temporary context of an external arctic landscape, but also internally in creating memories that can have a profound and long-lasting effect (Heimtun, 2016, p. 230).

To delimit this study, I have chosen to include the various activity product options available to tourists (passive or interactive) rather than a comparison study of dog sledge companies, as I feel that for the purpose of this initial study, the location is not an important factor I wish to include. I will also not be covering the stages before and after the post-sledging activity, including the influence of the tour guide on the trip, as they can have a very different emphasis. An in-depth review of history, attitudes and values in dog sledging is a thesis, and I do not want to make an analysis of subjective standpoints, omitting reference to this in detail, although it is needed to be mentioned as background information that I hope will make the research more valid. I feel the importance of researching the core product activity will reveal the richest information, which can be interpreted more widely. My motivation for this study comes from utilising the research process in contribution to; dog sledge tourism development and sledge dog welfare as relevant stakeholders, the Northern Norway Tourism Board capitalisation on new knowledge, and providing an overall positive perspective of travelling and dog sledging in the Arctic Norway.

## 1.1 The research question

This section introduces the journey of developing the layers of my research questions that were revised multiple times in the process. My master thesis aims to unpack elements relating to a partly common embodied experience that has to do with interactions and connections afforded by dogs to nature (Granås, 2015; Kuhl, 2011; Lindberg & Eide, 2016; Torheim, 2012). From Indigenous culture to polar expeditions, it has been widely accepted throughout history that dogs know how to travel in the Arctic and Antarctic landscape. How tourist-mushers use their physical senses to form relationships with the dogs to move together with them could provide an understanding of connectivity socially and physically to nature and motivation to return. Granås (2018, p. 49 cites Lefebvre, 1991) for an ontology of space as being relational and socially produced. Kuhl's (2011) research captures the musher's ontological and epistemological understanding of their sledge dogs "as sentient, social beings with individual personalities and the ability for relationships involving respect, two-way communication, trust and partnership" (Kuhl, 2011, p. 35). According to Everingham et al. (2021), relational materiality builds on embodiment and the senses as a perspective. The authors explain that ontological viewpoints become a dance of interactions, power relations and subjective understandings in a tourism context.

This thesis explores dog sledging as a connection to nature. For many overseas travellers, participating in a journey with sledge dogs can become an emotional experience; they often lack the words to describe their experience, but it can affect behaviour and thoughts (Granås, 2015; Kuhl, 2011; Lindberg & Eide, 2016; Torheim, 2012). I intertwine ethnography and autoethnographic stories of my career as a musher and tour guide to build an understanding of others' knowledge and experience empathetically. Drawing similarities and parallels could create memories and knowledge that are not always accessible (Pink, 2012, p. 65).

Exploring the interaction of the mushers with the dogs could help provide an understanding of the relationship and change in the relationship to the human and non-human. Emotions and behaviour are explored, and values are attributed to a deeper perspective that could encourage return visits.

The following research question is used:

- *What can we learn about the tourist-mushers connection to the arctic landscape through dog sledging?*

Representing and underlining the dogs' standpoint on what they have to offer tourism development offers a unique perspective to existing research. Moses and Knutsen (2012) relate empathy to being an epistemological device (p. 199). Kuhl (2011) also illustrates a positive result of sledge-dog interaction relating to increasing empathy. Kuhl acknowledges that empathy can be directed long after the interaction occurs towards the sledge dogs and other humans. In turn, raised empathy has the potential to increase animal welfare in sledge-dog tourism and foster more positive relationships for the musher towards other mushers in the activity, as well as family, friends, and co-workers and beyond (Kuhl, 2011, p. 35).

To dig deeper into the main research question, I also ask:

- *How are physical senses used by the dogs and tourist-musher in interactions with each other and the arctic landscape?*
- *What emotions and behavioural changes by tourist-musher and sledge dog are brought into motion by the interactions?*

Unpacking the physical senses from both the dog's and tourist-musher perspectives can identify interaction points during dog sledging activity. These pockets of interaction can break down the human/non-human divisions resulting in an increased understanding of what it is to be human, non-human, what the arctic landscape is. Discovering what emotions are generated can tell us how they contribute to behavioural changes in a new understanding of the world around us and to building future human relationships that affect wider society.

## **1.2 Dog sledging tourism**

According to Priskin (2001), in terms of creating employment and domestic and international visitor numbers, nature-based tourism is seen as important due to the growth in world population with open spaces in decline, such as northern Norway. Criticism of definitions by scholars makes it hard to categorise what makes a nature-based experience. The United Nations World Travel Organisation's (WTO, 2013) definition of tourism states "the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes" (WTO, November 2013). Tangland et al. (2013) suggest a definition of tourism based on this, where outdoor activities performed outside the context of one's daily life are included. They go on to group activities into two types; commercial and non-commercial. The categorisation can become blurred due to these outdoor recreation and tourism groups sharing the same resources: accommodation, sanitary

facilities, guides (Tangland & Aas, 2011), equipment, transport, and mountain access points. In terms of usefulness to arctic tourism, Tangland (2011) describes, “both non-commercial activities and nature-based tourism activity products can contribute to the value creation in rural areas” (Tangland, 2011, p.8).

Tourism activities in the arctic winter of Finnmark, Northern Norway, can be limited to just a few months a year (January to March) and sometimes under weather conditions such as 24 hours of darkness and extreme minus temperatures. This provides insight into the arctic background that frames dog sledging as among one of Norway's emerging winter tourism products (UiT, 2013). Yet, this tourism category is in its statistical infancy compared to other more established markets such as northern light hunting and ice hotel visits (North Adventure, 2014). In western Finnmark, during the winter season of 2013/14, it was reported that the order of popular tourist activity was as follows; 1. Northern light hunting, 2. Ice hotel visit, 3. Dog sledging (North Adventure, 2014). This reveals that dog sledging is the first activity that relies upon interaction with another living entity, standing high at number three in popularity. In terms of growing media attention thrusting a spotlight on Arctic Norway, this does not take into consideration the historical context that Polar Explorers Robert Scott (UK) and Roald Amundsen (Norway), for example, contributed, alongside the more modern national television presence that presenters Johanna Lumley (UK) and Lars Monsen (Norway) have contributed to the sledge dog phenomenon.

In agreement with Granås, Priskin (2001) argues that nature-based tourists cannot be classified into a single group because of their activities; they overlap with other tourism visitor profiles, such as cruise ship tourists that take multiple products in a single day, such as snowmobiling, dog sledging, ice hotel and northern light hunting.

Weber (2001) discusses the challenge of being in nature and the use of natural resources to achieve and get a thrill, whereas Beedie & Hudson (2003, p. 630 cite Ewert & Hollenhorst, 1994) describe the experience as an aspect of Adventure Tourism; utilising “history, skill level, locus of control, involvement, naturalness, social orientation, equipment, and levels and type of risk” (Beedie & Hudson, 2003, p. 630).

### **1.3 Master thesis structure**

Chapter two reviews the literature on dog sledging and Human-animal bonding (HAB) and the main theoretical framework chosen to build my selected topic of dog sledging. I unpack the concepts of the relational materialism, embodiment, the senses and arctic landscape.

Chapter three outlines my methodology, presents my research position, and reasons further into my chosen methods, keeping in mind the research question. Ethnography and autoethnography are detailed, and the chapter conclude with ethical considerations noting my process reflections and challenges faced during the research process.

Chapter four offers data analysis with a deeper description of dog sledging. Three themes; bonding, co-creation and interaction; rhythm and discovery mechanisms, discuss my findings in to answer my research questions. The results represent the embodied experience of tourist-mushers travelling in the arctic landscape.

The conclusion chapter wraps up the thesis and answers to the research questions, then lays out ideas for further considerations of research.



## **2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The first part of this chapter reviews what has been identified thus far in dog sledging research, noting overlaps and gaps in knowledge issues. My review analyses and casts a critical eye on my predecessors' literature focused on areas of dog sledging and Human-Animal Bonding (HAB)(Granås, 2015; Haraway, 2003, 2008; Kuhl, 2011; Lindberg & Eide, 2016). The literature review also establishes my credibility in the contribution of knowledge (O'Leary, 2014, 75), highlighting evidence of the research gap I attend to address pertaining to the use of sensory experiences from the dog's perspective.

### **2.1 Dog sledging**

Existing dog sledge tourism literature, although smaller in terms of other more established tourism fields of study, has grown in recent years. Statistical data on sledge dog tourism is limited, unreliable and uncentralised, therefore revealing a gap in the research (The Northern Norway Tourist Board – personal communication). Relevant academic discourse spans sports events (Prebensen 2008, 2010, 2012) and tourism (Jæger & Viken 2014). In these two categories, themes include business and stakeholders, community involvement and impact (Becker, 2014), volunteering (Jæger & Viken, 2014), bonding (Kuhl, 2011), sports science (Weydahl & Calogiuri, 2014; Calogiuri, Weydahl & Roveda, 2011), animal ethics (Fennell, 2022) and hospitality (Torheim, 2012).

Prebensen (2008, p. 100) maps essential features of dog sledging as a multisensory consumption practice, noting how emotion contributes to learning experiences that, in a dog sledging context, require getting to know the dogs and getting physically fit. Prebensens' (2008, p. 106) research identifies how and why investors participate in the Finnmarksløpet dog sledge race relating to economic and non-economic drivers. The non-economic drivers reveal motivations in marketing the destination and supporting new knowledge creation for university students (p. 106). The economic drivers conclude that the race provides a stakeholder networking arena for potential future business (p. 107). Prebensen (2010, p. 41), continues with stakeholder networking and marketing theories, through the analysis of value co-creation. It includes living life now and acknowledging elements of emotion and cognitive value. She recognises tangible and intangible capital, and these values also support the concept of the new experience economy, one that goes beyond the economic benefits. In a further paper by Prebensen (2012) she introduced the widely known authors Vargo and Lush (2004, 2006) for their concept of

cooperation in value creation called service-dominant '(S-D) logic'. She goes on to apply Holts' (1995) model that breaks down consumption practices through action, in the case of Prebensens' article; of the sporting dog sledge event Finnmarksløpet and its stakeholders, spectators, media and sponsors (p. 185). All three of Prebensen's (2008, 2010, 2012) articles are situated in a constructivist approach using qualitative data techniques (2012, p. 191). However, the latter research relates to the social aspects of dog sledging activities and how the stakeholder network increases the professionalism of the event and thus lifts it to an international level of competition and cooperation (2012, p. 195) from the benefits of supporting just a local or national sporting event. Tangible and intangible capital and co-creation in sledge dog products appear underrepresented concerning my research question of connecting to arctic nature.

On the other hand, the emotion described by Prebensen (2008) as a learning tool is represented by Heimtun (2016, p. 226) as contextually and relationally situated and, through interaction, produces meaning and powerful effects by the landscapes the activity is set within. Heimtun (2016) explores the effects and emotions of Northern light hunting in Arctic Norway. This paper is insightful and relevant to this study as the activity is in shared climatic conditions and the context of dog sledging. Heimtun (2016, p. 237) unpacks the term emotional labour to the tourist experience and expectations of the human guides' role in Northern light hunting. Landscape plays a part in the activity, but the guide's role also incorporates bonding in addition to the atmospheric co-creation of the experience. I propose to refer to the sledge dog as the guide instead of the human, as my research questions suggest the outcomes can be replicated. Heimtun (2016) states that "the guides minimise the tourists' sensitivity towards the negative impacts of long, endless drives, cold weather, darkness and moving around in unfamiliar arctic landscapes" (Ingold 2005 as cited in Heimtun, 2016:237).

Weydahl et al. (2011) and Weydahl and Caligiuri's (2014) quantitative research explore the sports science aspect of dog sledge activity in Finnmark, citing sledge dog racing as a strenuous activity (Weydahl & Caligiuri, 2014, p. 82). They measured the human circadian rhythm effects on rest and activity levels of dog sledging in the Finnmarksløpet race in 2011 and hydration levels among female musher competitors in 2014. The analysis indicated a behavioural change in the tourist-mushers as they travelled with the dogs in the arctic landscape under extreme conditions. The authors' research highlights the physical and psychological demands a musher is placed upon when travelling with a dog sledge team in the arctic landscape, providing relevant background to answer my research questions.

Jæger and Olsen (2005), explore volunteer tourism using Finnmarksløpet as a case study where people try to escape from everyday life to work towards the success of a common goal (p. 108) using Franklin's (2003) concept of slow time (Jæger & Olsen, 2005, p. 113). The notion of time is used as a dichotomy to motivate revisits from traditional visual practices into more embodied experiences (Jæger & Olsen, 2005, p. 109). Jæger and Viken (2014, p. 133) further the symbiotic relationship between sporting events and tourism with Finnmarksløpet race founding dog-based tourism, co-creating local destination branding (p. 4) and the development of the region (p. 22). Jæger and Viken's (2014) work aligns with Prebensens' (2010, 2012), where sledge dogs contribute value to people and regional business development, seen as a main stakeholder through media exposure overseas from the Finnmarksløpet race. I see an interesting correlation to my data in understanding motivational drivers and how mushers/owners from tourism products situate themselves in the landscape between hobby and business, then project their perspective to the tourist-mushers with talks around the campfire.

The nature-based phenomenon of dog sledge tourism can be widely categorised as partly environmentally synonymous, for example, with terms such as sustainable tourism, green, rural, alternative, adventure, and responsible tourism. Prebensen's (2010) research aligns with Granås (2015, 2018) in that a greater understanding of the sledge dog phenomenon requires reflection on a global level of tourism (Granås, 2018, p. 54). Yet, with a focus on local knowledge, especially in the Arctic climate, that can be so changeable, unpredictable, and perceived as delicate. Granås (2018) notes that the dog sledging activity concerning colonial enactments in tourism development destinizing Finnmark is praised uncritically locally (p. 55). Granås (2018) based her research ethnographically and analyses place performance, terming spatial-relational processes between mushers and dogs as throwntogetherness (p. 50). Through negotiating political and ecological practices, meanings and value are co-created in dog sledging activities, initially motivated by the history of polar explorers, national branding, narratives of adventure and the physical Arctic elements (p. 55). Granås (2018) includes the dog's standpoint, like Kuhl (2011), touching on ethical responsibilities as part of the non-human component (p. 55).

Bertella's (2016) case-study research advances secondary data in a phenomenological way of unpacking the concept of experiencescape through the Norwegian outdoor life concept called *friluftsliv* (p. 1). Bertella (2016, p. 22 cites Clarke & Schmidt, 1995) defines experiencescape as a context where tourists gain an understanding of their experience by way of social and environmental interactions that incite reactions of emotion and cognitive meaning. Bertella

(2016, p. 2) touches upon the ethical aspects of the sledge dog and co-creation that Fennell (2022) builds heavily on. Granås (2018) work reflects Bertella's (2016, p. 1) in illuminating the social and environmental experiences of the tourist that incite emotional and cognitive reactions. Bertella (2016, p. 3) presents a conceptual model between friluftsliv and animal interactions relating to three linking aspects: animal perception, human-animal interaction and the guide's participation. Findings reveal dog sledging to be a comfortable and tame experiencescape in making the activity more welcoming and accessible than the musher might have thought. It does not omit the guide's role in facilitation and influence (p. 3).

## **2.2 Human-Animal Bonding (HAB)**

To understand Human-animal bonding (HAB), a background of its development and how it situates in today's research arena is required. Human-Animal Interactions (HAI) is a wide research field summarised by Hosey and Melfi (2014) as originating from agricultural welfare and companion animal studies in the 1980s. Companion animal studies or Animal-assisted interventions (AAI) with pet interaction benefits was a field I related to when writing my thesis proposal under the since-developed terms Human-Animal Bonding (HAB) and Human-Animal Relationships (HAR). DeMello (2012) refers to Human-Animal Studies (HAS) as the social aspects of the natural science of animal studies. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary studies of the relationships and interactions between humans and animals (p. 4-5) offer insight into society and culture (p. 11). Empirical evidence of Human-animal relationships stretches back to the Stone Age and specifically relates to dog interaction in Alta, Finnmark (Helskog, 2014, p. 86-7). Holistic animal relationships have also been acknowledged by Indigenous peoples as other ways of seeing in relation to a sustainable livelihood (Jiashan, 2015, p. 8), and Siberian Husky dogs developed from the Chukchi peoples of Eastern Siberia thought to increase mobility during winter months (Waalder & Skjesol, 2019, p. 19) then in 1908 used in Alaskan sledge dog racing (Brown et al., 2015, p. 488). Post-European colonisation, Arctic peoples have favoured the Alaskan Husky, Alaskan Malamute and Siberian Husky, yet the direct relationship to Indigenous peoples remains in question.

DeMello (2012, pp. 4-10) underlines HAB as an inter- and multidisciplinary field, socially created and another way of seeing. It helps us understand the richness of the relationship between human and animals encompassing learning, emotion, culture, cognition, and communication. Since the Stone Age, animals have been documented in almost every aspect of human life, underpinning ideology and materialism; literature, art, poetry, food, clothing, shoes,

medicine, entertainment, and religion (DeMello, 2012, p. 4). Interactions today punctuate institutions of law, education, politics, and religion where human identity is constructed (p. 5). DeMello (2012) explores the meanings created by human's social construction of animals that cannot be separated from culture (p. 10-11). She notes that the terms bond and relationship become interchangeable depending on research areas that do not make for a cohesive field, require more research and contribute to methodological and theoretical complexities. Methodological challenges include a difference of language between human and non-humans, in addition to selecting methods to gain insight from the dog's perspective. These issues presented challenges in conducting my research.

DeMello (2012, p. 20, cites Shapiro, 2008) who addresses one methodological challenge of knowing from the dog's perspective using kinesthetic empathy. Similarly, to Haraway (2003, 2008) and Kuhl (2011), Shapiro (2008) encourages getting to know your sledge dog, so tourist-mushers can attempt to see the world and build a relationship to the musher through the dog's eyes. This approach reduces the risk of applying layers of human characteristics (DeMello, 2012, p. 20). The theoretical foundations I selected for my research relate sledge dogs as "social lubricants, enabling social interaction with other humans" (DeMello, 2012, p. 23; Lindberg, Hansen and Eide, 2014, p. 501) and attachment through bonding practices such as cues, body movement and sound that produces emotional benefits (DeMello, 2012, pp. 23-4). Therefore, I chose to narrow my theory down by omitting a focus on animal ethics that have more recently grown in academia and focussed on Human-Animal Bonding (HAB). I think this serves a more suitable purpose for contributing to sledge-dog tourism going forward. The overall message in the chaos that represents HAI/AAI/HAR/HAS and HAB research fields, is that they are all important in understanding the benefits (or not) for the sledge dogs and the tourist-mushers.

Benefits to humans and dogs include raised levels of friendship, loyalty, dependency, learning and social ability (DeMello, 2012, pp. 228-242). Emotionally and health-wise, the power of HAB goes deeper for humans than non-humans, where the jury is out on the concrete benefits to dogs (pp. 207-200). Relationships are created from the perspective of the dog as well as the human in this thesis, and although there is an increase in acknowledgement towards HAB outcomes providing benefits on social and physiological levels, for example, by two interacting subject beings (Kuhl, 2011, pp. 24-26), there is not yet so much utilising non-companion dogs where an attachment has yet to be built. Fennell (2022, p. 8) looks to increase the relationship symmetry more in favour of the sledge dog that gets commonly relegated to a commodity, to

hear their voices that already impact the tourism experience and to be seen as stakeholders in its development of operational value.

Miklosi (2016, p. 226) posits the ethological attachment concept as a commitment behavioural mechanism to survival for both humans and dogs. Five elements apply to function in practical terms by the subject 1) specific custodian recognition, 2) regular contact maintained whilst exploring surroundings, 3) looks for a reunion after being separated, 4) seeks proximity when feeling fearful, and 5) displays greeting behaviours at points of uniting. Miklosi (2016) notes that in contemporary human attachment theory discourse, mutuality conditions social proficiency (p. 226). Miklosi's (2016, p. 233) research underlines the importance of interaction mechanisms contributing to developing future sledge dog products and attempts to answer my main research question on what we can learn about the connection to the arctic landscape. Another mechanism is the creation of the chemical oxytocin during exercise, and interactions with each other promote positive emotions in both humans and dogs, even by looking into each other's eyes. DeMello (2012, p. 371) posits that to respond to a situation behaviourally, dogs track their caretaker's gaze to interpret their facial expressions in relation to what is being looked at. This point nicely follows the theory of animal self, that dogs. Research has documented through metacognition and theory of the mind that animals have a self-concept, and dogs, specifically, the intelligence to productively communicate, articulate emotion and relate to humans, i.e., empathy (p. 372). A dog's sense of self is shared with the human's ability to adapt behaviourally in a continuous loop with one another. My research sub-question three looks at emotions and behavioural changes brought into motion by interactions of sledge dogs and tourist-mushers. What the data reveals in this research can be used to raise the quality of interaction and relationships between human and non-humans in dog sledge tourism regardless of length of products on offer with benefits to both parties.

Animal behaviour studies is a biologically based scientific field called ethology that began in the mid-nineteenth century (DeMello, 2012, p. 349). My research, including the dog's perspective in understanding how they communicate and interact with humans, has historical socio-cultural links from a materiality base underpinned by ideology (p. 4). The types of interdisciplinary research, Human-Animal Studies (HAS) and Human-Animal Bonding (HAB), move beyond ethology (p. 4) and includes understanding culture, learning, emotions, communication, and cognition (p. 5). It is a holistic and socially constructed way of seeing (p. 10) where DeMello (2012, p. 24) exemplifies the benefits to humans through human-animal

bonding. Haraway (2008) employs the concept of “becoming with” (Haraway, 2008, p. 4) as “humans and animals use voice, body and symbols to communicate with each other and deepen their bond” (DeMello, 2012, p. 24). DeMello further lays out the behavioural aspect of psychology associating attitudes of compassion and empathy with dogs as a companion species (DeMello, 2012, p. 24; Kuhl, 2011, p. 35).

Haraway's (2003, 2008) acknowledgement of the HAS research approach between complex history, culture, and nature (not just on a biological basis), develops from cyborg to companion species as natureculture. Haraway (2003, 2008), talks about power relations touching on ethics and politics in human-animal bonding that are technologically interrelated. Fennell's (2022) arguments of how value in dogs is perceived as a commodity strengthen Haraway's (2008) perspective of sledge dog value existing in the context of capitalism. She positions sledge dog value as existing somewhere between sporting and working activity (p.56), entangled in a constant state of flux (p. 88) and external to the affection economy (p. 38). Yet Haraway (2008) simultaneously rejects a correlation between slavery, wage labour, non-living property, and dependency ward (p. 67) and cites, “Respect and trust, not love, are the critical demands of a good working relationship between these dogs and humans” (Haraway, 2003, p. 39). Kuhl (2011), Granås (2018) and Haraway (2008) concur that humans create and coordinate (Haraway, 2008, p. 344) with working dogs in subject-changing ways (p. 57), emphasising the dogs' sentient being and the ability to choose to participate in and “remake the world” (Granås, 2018, p. 49). Returning to my research questions, understanding these world-making interactions helps us understand how tourist-mushers connect to and make sense of arctic landscape.

From the perspective of dog behaviour literature, DeMello (2012) and Miklosi (2016) provide extensive narratives on society and animals with their vertical social hierarchies. Society justifies interactions with animals to reinforce the human position and rank on the benefits they provide (DeMello, 2012, p. 51). Dogs as working tools or pets (DeMello, 2012, p. 51) were documented as one of the first domesticated animals 15,000 years ago from hunter-gathers (DeMello, 2012, p. 150; Miklosi, 2016, p. 73). Socioeconomic status is also long associated with pets DeMello (2012, p. 150) points out and that human dependency on domestic animals is irreversible (p. 154). The many integrated working roles of dogs since the 1970s in agriculture, assistance, military, law enforcement, detection, and search and rescue led to an increase in their value and thus rights (DeMello, 2012, p. 406; Miklosi, 2016, p. 74). This was

in parallel to the civil rights movements of the same time period (DeMello, 2012, p. 406-7). Today, activist organisations such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), are increasing their visibility with anti-sponsor campaigns and award-winning documentary-making against sledge dog tourism in the United States and Canada (O'Connor, 2017). Based on my field notes and interviews, animal ethics does not go unremarked concerning sledge dog activity, but the expected benefits outweigh the doubts raised. DeMello states the benefits of the animal-human bond that go deeper than realised (DeMello, 2012, p. 207). There are scientifically proven benefits of healing powers such as in health (exercise encouragement, lowered cholesterol and blood pressure and improvement mentally) and emotion (reduction of loneliness and fear of crime, increased connectedness, and self-esteem) (pp. 207-208). Miklosi (2016, p. 73) notes the benefits to animals are under-researched in concurrence with DeMello (2012, p. 209). The benefits are also acknowledged by the tourist-mushers who remark on their view of the topic from my data.

Prebensen (2010) states that “the High North destination gives people, dogs and objects an opportunity to interact and be innovative in terms of sustainable development for people and for businesses (Prebensen, 2010, pp. 44-45). Her quote sums up a very valid point related to motivations to further stakeholder research, but she could reach further using the dog's non-human perspective as Fennell does (2022, p. 7). He fills a gap in Prebensen's (2010, 2012), Jæger and Olsen's (2005) stakeholder perspectives and builds on Haraway's (2003) and DeMello's (2012) observations with an additional lens of symmetrical agency as sledge dogs play a “vital role in the firm's success, not unlike suppliers and customers” (Fennell, 2022, p. 7) in advancing responsible and sustainable tourism (p. 7). Although my research does not focus on the animal ethics aspect, what Fennell's (2022, p. 2) sledge dog research highlighted was in a stakeholder capacity, the dogs are “regarded as a highly valuable tool” that “express their agency to others through their movement and behaviours” (Fennell, 2022, p. 2). Haraway (2008) also stated the value and agency of dogs. Fennell's (2022, p. 7) work reinforces a gap in research that my thesis aims to address, where the sledge dogs' voice needs to be heard. The embodied relationship Fennell (2022) posits is of a new animal-informed consent framework based on The Five Domains model of animal welfare by DeMello et al. (2012). Interactions form movement with other humans on the tour, animals, and the guide; materials such as the equipment; and the natural landscape as a co-created process (DeMello, 2012, p. 3). Fennell (2022) recognises that signals from the sledge dogs (emotionally, behaviourally and from their



physical state and preferences) (p. 7) can be interpreted by mushers in raising communication (p. 7) and meaningfulness (Bertella, 2016, p. 25).

Lindberg and Eide (2016), offer additional perspectives on consumer research instead of the mainstream research concept of experiencescapes. Situated in the extraordinary landscape of the Svalbard archipelago off the coast of Northern Norway, the authors identify four main challenges related to expectations during sledge dog, horse riding and adventure trips. Challenges were identified as; learning barriers, connection issues with other participants, abilities to cope with tension and unrealistic expectations. Lindberg and Eide (2016) underline the importance of co-creation and embodiment yet warn of a priori knowledge of romanticised ideas of a place or activity that might not meet expectations. Fennell (2022) echoes the authors Lindberg and Eide (2016) and Haraway (2003) that commodifying dog sledging suggests the normalising of the practice and is thus obtainable by consumers. Kuhl (2011) emphasises the rich and valuable inter-species relationship dog sledging can hold (p. 34) and in my opinion is a golden opportunity to capitalise on. Without enough skills or learning ability, this can cause power and cultural struggles for the mushers. Lindberg & Eide also posit culture clashes between Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian participants, with the latter not having the same level of identity and skill required for the practice to be more successful. This tension can lead to withdrawal to a gazing level from embodiment, limiting socio-cultural meaning and co-creation opportunities (Lindberg & Eide, 2016, p. 25).

To underline the literature discussed on HAB this section leans more into related theoretical aspects. Building on Jæger and Olsen's (2005) notions of time and Kuhl's' (2011) communication and learning components, Lindberg et al. (2014) concur that meaning is constructed with influential interactions related to time, contexts and bodies requiring a multi-relational pathway (p. 495). The pathway of Dynamic Experience and Meaning (DEM) connects the activity of the dog sledging, the emotions created, and cognitive interactions for the musher, as situated, multi-relational and dynamic (Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 496), relating to sledge dogs as social lubricants (p. 501). When discussing the relevance of co-creation in dog sledging in the same vein as Prebensen (2010, 2012), Kuhl (2011) and Lindberg and Eide (2016), Lindberg et al. (2014) go beyond Pine & Gilmore's (1999) experience economy by stating "meaning and value creation may take place outside the control of tourism providers" (Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 504). This approach supports my research questions about how tourist-mushers interact with the sledge dogs to be aware of themselves and learn about the world

around them (p. 500). In relation to the theme of time, positive memories and meaning-making from dog sledging experiences can also incite tourist-mushers to make life changes once back home (Chase, 2005).

Kuhl (2011), unpacks what can be learnt from the experience and storytelling of mushers working in sledge dog tourism in order to disrupt anthropocentrism (p. 22). She acknowledges that the field of human-animal relations is wide, generally covering disciplines of natural science, as well as social science. She mainly reveals that research is divided into service dogs and companion animals and, secondly, dogs' social learning, cognition, and behaviour (p. 23), with gaps remaining (p. 24), which she tries to fill with research on sledge dog activity. Research on sledge dog-human relationships is under-represented (Kuhl, 2011, p. 36) but can unearth the significance of how humans relate to each other and to other animals (p. 36). Kuhl's (2011) methodology is qualitative, although not ethnographic due to resource constraints, but what is interesting is the storytelling by mushers that was used, and the visual data collected from the mushers of their experiences for representing and evaluating communication through education (p. 25). Six themes emerged from her study: knowing the dogs, respect, two-way communication, trust, partnership and learning (p. 25-33). She concludes that there is depth and richness to multiple elements of quality in a musher-sledge dog interaction (p. 35) and that “dogs are sentient beings worthy of respect and consideration” (Kuhl, 2011, p. 35).

### **2.3 Theoretical framework**

The second part of this chapter presents the main elements of the theoretical underpinning of this study regarding dog sledging. How models or findings are positioned can mislead, miscommunicate, and misrepresent due to the diverse use of the term theory in tourism, as concluded by Smith and Hoffer (2010). An outline of the chosen research methods and approaches to form a conclusion of my research follows the theoretical underpinnings of my research. Whilst reading through the literature on dog sledging, I was inspired by what connections are constructed, how mushers and dogs relate to each other and in the context of the arctic landscape. I found the sledge dog activity widely categorised under many guises of tourism; mass tourism (Heimtun, 2016), volunteering (Jæger & Olsen, 2005), or hospitality (Torheim, 2012). In this theoretical chapter, I develop a focus on nature-based tourism, exploring the concepts of arctic landscape (Benediktsson & Lund, 2016; Edensor, 2016; Granås, 2015, 2018; Ingold, 1993), embodiment (Benali & Ren, 2019; Everingham et al., 2021;

Lindberg et al., 2014; Urry, 2002), and relational materialism (Everingham et al., 2021; Granås, 2015, 2018; Law, 2004, 2017).

### **2.3.1 Relational materialism**

Adrian Franklin (2007, p. 132) expresses a relational materialist turn, launching new theoretical approaches in Science and Technology Studies (STS) and Actor-Network Theory (ANT) in promoting tourism ontology differences to reveal new aspects. STS are messy, scientific knowledge and technologies socially based, “shaped by it, and simultaneously shaping it” (Law, 2004, p. 12). Materiality of atmosphere is concept focused on by Anderson (2009, p.78) that can not be omitted from the embodiment narrative due to its affects of pressure or tension. Although vague for humans to express, they can be total or in a state of flux, both object and subject owned and reach beyond embodiment (p. 789). Benali and Ren (2019) define a complex, relationally constructed experience through ANT that attributes agency to all actors involved of and in “ordered, performed and produced” (Benali & Ren, 2019, p. 240) touristic processes. And where non-humans are illuminated as messy objects, playing their part in building the relationships and subjectivities as material stories (p. 240). Franklin (2007) champions a move away from interdisciplinary to uncover the wider global impacts of tourism, where the spatial, cultural, technical heterogeneity/hybridity and materialistic, vary and interpret widely (p. 135). Everingham et al. (2021, p.75) as part of the materialistic turn, describes relational materialism methodologies and ontologies as key to building on the concept of embodiment, focussing on the non-human. Alongside Everingham et al. (2021), Benali and Ren (2019), emphasise the need to give more balance to all elements, bodies and influences that contribute to tourism experiences, moving away from subject-object fixed perspectives. In sledge dog research, materialities such as the sledge itself reveal a different engagement of both the tourist-mushers bodies and the dog's bodies, in a practical sense as opposed to just cognitively driven (Everingham et al., p. 74). The body is an active, expressive and sensual force positioned in parallel of subject and object. The sledge represents a multisensory input device of sight, sound and smell, not just touch as an object to hold onto and be dragged along by. The tourist-mushers have to use the tool by sensing its movement against the forces of gravity with their own body, negotiate the terrain by listening to the sound of the ice brake making contact with the ground to adjust speed and smelling the materials that are the sledge containing histories of building techniques in the lashings that also make creaking sounds if not maintained with oil. Not to mention the smells coming from multiple uses of the sledge on trips where dogs and dog food are stored within the handsewn sledge bag attached.

In this thesis, a reflection by Granås summarises the importance and creation of the meaning of everyday life against the interaction of spatial-relational processes of dog sledge tourism in Finnmark and the value it creates. Granås (2018) terms this intersection of human and non-human processes throwtogetherness (Granås, 2018, p. 50) based on Doreen Masseys' (1994) place theory. The relational materialism Granås (2015) expresses frames my research question by exploring the non-human landscapes and physical bodies as sentient, providing sensory cues in the spatial relational processes" (Granås, 2015, p. 305).

As laid out briefly in the previous section arctic landscape, Granås (2018) points to natureculture as a term representing human and non-human, materially based relational processes of space. In multiple forms of ecological embodiment, spatial-relational processes interlink inside and outside of dog sledging activity to build the elements of tourism in Finnmark, Norway that has wider implications in the world (p. 50) that Franklin (2007) also called for. Granås's (2018) unpacking of dog sledging practices that destinize Finnmark, push to the surface negotiations of "environmental entanglements" and "throwtogetherness" of "touristic and political implications" (p. 55) that contribute meaningful relationships in those that participate in the everyday construction of sledge dog tourism in Finnmark in addition to the place that tourist-mushers seek a taste of.

A powerful interconnection of possibilities, people, and places, constantly constructed through technologies as Haraway (2003, 2008) also talks about, can be applied to the mobility of dog sledging (pp. 336-337). The multirelational and multisensoriality of culturally created visual and material aspects is emphasised by both Pink (2012, p. 122) and Lindberg et al. (2014). Material objects such as the clothes mushers wear, the harnesses they place on the dogs, the hand-woven lines that connect the sledges driven, from the human body to the dogs' body are all sensory material objects in their own right. Yet they incorporate their own narratives and memory aspects related to embodiment, they represent something of value, co-creating arctic landscape by dog and musher. Relational materialism further supports my main research question of what can be learnt about connection to the arctic landscape through dog sledging.

### **2.3.2 Embodiment**

Everingham et al. (2021, p. 71), in the embodied turn in tourism research, studies what tourists do and how the body focuses on process and agency not just in static spaces such as gazing. Theories have hinged on specific sensory inputs such as sensescape and soundscapes that are

not taken in literal terms. Everingham et al. (2021) assert a bodies significance as “an active, expressive and sensual force, a body-subject with the ability to configure the tourist experience; a body that is simultaneously situated and situational, object and subject” (Everingham et al., 2021, p. 74). Ingold’s (1993) definition of embodiment dismisses “divisions of inner (mind and matter) and outer (meaning and substance)” (Ingold, 1993, p. 154), where embodiment is not a signature of a form but a fusion of movement that creates a form (Ingold, 1993, p. 157 cites Ingold 1990:215).

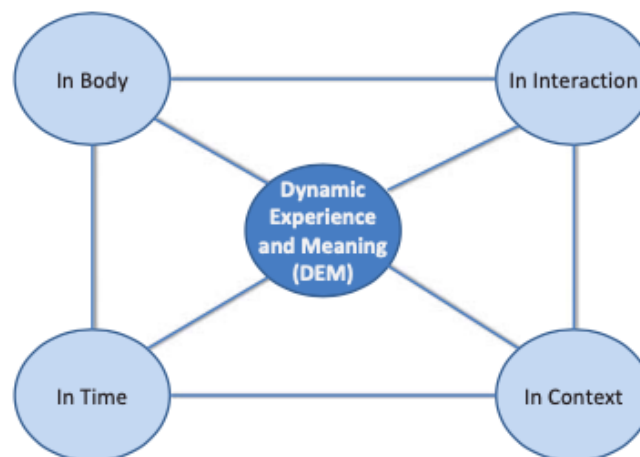
Urry (2002, p. 152) describes sensescape as, human bodies in motion interacting with other humans and non-humans on a physical multi-sensory level to create embodied meaning and ideologies. Tourism as corporeal travel, is to perform sense and to be sensed inside and out of the body, conveying language and intricate conversations socially and culturally. The mobility of sensescape involves harnessing technologies as a facilitation mechanism. The mechanism seeks to explore the agency between the sense and the sensed of materiality, spaces, and people with a sixth kinaesthetic sense. I argue an example of a mobility mechanism unpacked in this thesis, a difference in language between sledge dogs and tourist-mushers. The sledge dog has a body, and the tourist-musher has a body, individually and together; dog sledging affords the tourist-mushers access to the Arctic nature outside of ordinary daily life through non-verbal communication and other heightening other senses than sight. Research connecting the arctic landscape in new embodied ways strengthens and supports what makes for a tourist experience (Everingham et al., 2021). I selected the culture of dog sledging for my research as it has unique symbolic practices that define it; no other method of travel in the Arctic can substitute, for example, the necessity and dependency of a high level of dog care and interaction with animals in sometimes extreme Arctic climate conditions. The tourist-musher does not perform these practices for the benefit of anyone else (including me as the researcher) except for a successful trip with the dogs.

The concept of meaning is created by interpreting the senses, the tangible and intangible elements (i.e., tacit knowledge) embedded in Western discourse. How and when is meaning constructed, and are there multiple meanings (by the dog, the musher, the guide and so on)? Thoughts on emotionality furthered my research question, Benali and Ren (2019, p. 251) describe how non-human actors (lice) play a role in creating and changing human emotions that involve trust, anxiety and self-awareness. In the case of lice, “the materiality of care entangles with and negotiates issues of comfort zones and mental and bodily immersion in the

construction of volunteer tourism experiences” (Benali & Ren, 2019, p. 253). In the case of dog sledging, the same principles can apply to replace lice with dogs as non-human actors. Emotion is one concept explored by these multiple meanings created by multiple sensory elements.

Fennell (2022, pp. 7-8) also argues from the dog’s perspective that they, too, have a voice, can express emotion, and have agency. Does the emotionality of sledging and communicating two-way with the dogs change behaviour, for example, create ambition with a desire to repeat the experience? Based on my observations and experience, gaining knowledge and experience through a dog sledging activity allows mushers to grow in confidence, thus reducing the emotional fear they may have started with if it was a new experience. Maybe the little things do not matter anymore, and anxiety and internal conflict are reduced with the mindfulness of mushing based on interactions with the dogs, which reveals what it is to be alive, appreciative, and fulfilled. This brings me to the ‘doing’ that creates an experience. I can’t answer all these questions in the scope of this research but exploring the characteristic elements of dog sledging embodiment can reveal value gems.

Lindberg et al. (2014, p. 500) argue that a higher level of satisfaction and value is created during a sledge dog trip where co-creation and social interaction occur. These authors delve into how the embodiment of the arctic landscape can provide a longer-lasting impact on the tourist-mushers returning home, where positive memories are created. Lindberg et al. (2014) offer a multi-relational, dynamic and situated approach to understanding touristic consumer experiences via “intertwined components related to interaction, body, time, and context” (Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 488) named Dynamic Experience and Meaning (DEM) (p. 496). Figure 1 unpacks the four components of DEM.

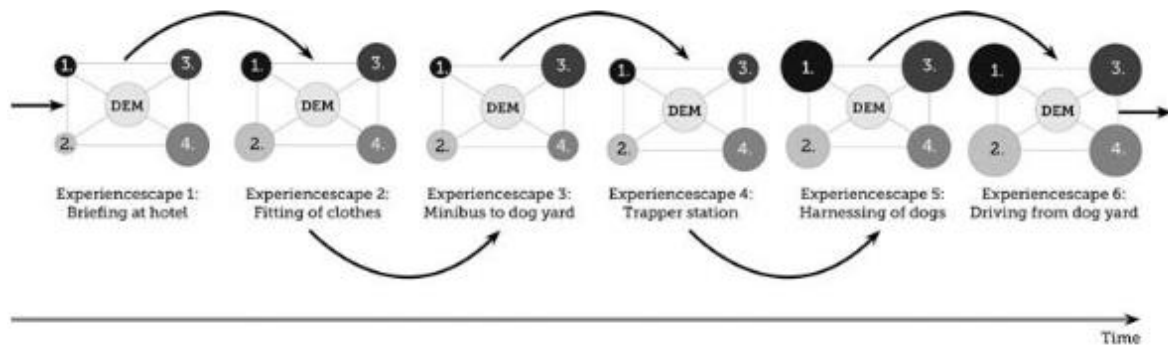


**Figure 1.** DEM model. Situated, multirelational, and dynamic experiences and meaning.  
(Lindberg, et al., 2014, p. 496).

Mushers in a tourist sledge dog activity relate to time under the category of future-oriented consumer (Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 497) due to a preference for seeking enriching holidays that they personally organise. Lindberg et al. (2014) note that the time component has two aspects. The first aspect of time is sense-making, which influences a continual cycle of meaning before, throughout, and after post-activity. The second aspect of the time component presents an opportunity for valuable meaning creation if tourist-mushers can switch to nature's time, or as I would term it, being mindful. Tension it can be noted, can also arise when transposing between time zones (p. 497).

The context component poses three elements. Firstly, natural versus human-made settings can also influence a musher's physical context, which is partly constructed and mostly tacit. Second, previous knowledge of the region through media exposure or polar explorer history must be considered in a cultural lens. Third, sharing and communicating socially in an activity like dog sledging can add or subtract from the musher's experience, whether directly or not (Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 498).

The interaction component probes four externally or internally oriented types, the self, others, animals, and objects. A musher's sense-making comes in the form of interaction with the dogs when paying attention to their sentiments and affections, raising awareness of their ambitions and requirements, and reflecting on their experiences with the dogs that can influence their future (Lindberg et al., 2014, p.500). Social dynamics within a tour group are considered to influence a tourist-mushers experience whether they had previously met or not. Although there is less verbal two-way communication with sledge dogs than the other humans, the interaction is embodied and deep and can create emotive ties or a type of "social lubricant" (Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 501). Lastly, creating meaning and a level of positive experience also comes in the form of using objects dependent on practical know-how. As with most tourist-mushers I observed in my field notes, becoming with the equipment (such as the sledge) is a challenge that can alter the mushers' identity, focus and activity and thus valued meaning (Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 501). Figure 2 illustrates dog sledging experiencescapes, highlighting relationships with more prominent components at a given point on the tour.



**Figure 2.** The dynamic experience of dog sledding at Svalbard. (Lindberg, et al., 2014, p. 502)

Jóhannsson & Lund (2017) dive into Northern light hunting as a key driver of winter tourism upholding the Arctic North as mysterious and magical, through embodiment and relation building (p.183). Although these authors note the product is difficult to sell to tourists, from my observations as a tour guide, the tourist-mushers regularly inform me that dog sledding is a win-win for them as if they do not get to witness the beautiful Aurora Borealis then they at least experienced a unique method of travel to explore the arctic landscape.

### 2.3.2.1 The senses

Humans distil and refine sensory input based on intrinsic information and experiences that have been socially constructed into frames of reference (O’Leary, 2014). As it is impossible to know the world at once, O’Leary (2014) captures the importance of using our senses to situate ourselves, “our understandings are narrowed by what we can manage to take in through our senses” (O’Leary, 2014, p. 232). Miklosi (2016) highlights that although research into dog perceptions is still limited, there is a partial sensory overlap between dogs and humans in hearing and vision that could provide a deeper understanding of human-animal relationships. The explosion in terminology ending in the word ‘scape’ has perplexed my understanding of the senses whilst reading for this research. Urry (2002, p. 146) refers to smellscapes and tastescapes in addition to soundscapes where multi-senses are engaged and co-dependant, creating environments spanning space and time. Taste and smells are senses under-supported in my data and referenced primarily to mealtimes with stories of the tourist-mushers trip shared socially in the group or to practicalities of feeding the dogs. Pink (2012) identifies impressions of sense that lead to physical and emotional reactions, a new way of knowing (p. 17) and remembering (p. 73). Although the importance of her statement underlines all the sense of sight,



sound, touch, taste and smell, the latter two senses were not supported in data and are thus not emphasised in the theoretical chapter.

Hearing was supported in my data, and so I focus the theory more on soundscapes. Background information on human versus dogs hearing ability can be used to understand the advantages dogs have over humans in interpreting sound and constructing meaning in different way. Dogs can move their ears towards a sound, interpret at lower frequencies, and also pick up on the ultrasonic spectrum according to Miklosi (2016, p. 186 cites Heffner, 1983) in his book 'dog behaviour, evolution and cognition'. Truax (1996, p. 58) exemplifies a difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is based on a traditional knowledge understanding using signals and energy transfer concepts and normally sits in the background of the environment. Listening is an exchange of information based on a degree of higher cognitive processing, constructed in multiple ways. An example of hearing versus listening in dog sledging activity from my field notes is, that no matter what direction the wind is blowing, the sledge dogs can rotate their ears to hear voice commands given by the tourist-musher (multi-levelled hearing) and also alert the tourist-musher to an issue that require the tourist-mushers attention (i.e., injury with the team, alert to reindeer, moose or other human activity). The dogs' body language cues or signals of sounds they hear could be a change in tail, head, or ear position, becoming vocal or changing speed. These represent understood signals and transferring energy within the activity on their own but, when interpreted, embodied and communicated by either party, through a conscious cognitive construction of meaning, inciting a change of behaviour. If sledge dogs are employed as the best working breed for their ability to communicate with visual and verbal signals, and cooperate socially (Hare & Woods, 2013, p. 115-116), the question is whether the tourist-musher can consciously listen rather than just hear, which is further argued in the analysis.

Truax (1996, p. 52) defines soundscape as a climate for acoustics, where meaning is constructed by the sound itself and contextually related. Therefore, the tourist-mushers and the sledge dogs interpret the landscape of sound to communicate meaning to themselves and one another. Fesenko and Garcia-Rosell (2019, p. 90) acknowledge the co-creation of sound to memorable experiences, as a development in tourism using dog sledging as a case. Visit Finland was emphasised in their sound tourism research via a project 'Sound of Lapland' (p. 88, <https://www.lapland.fi/visit/sound-of-lapland>). The authors question what comprises the sledge dog soundscape using Schafer's (1982) original introduction of three elements of soundscape 1) keynotes (place characteristic heard consciously) such as wind, barking and braking of the

sledge, 2) soundmarks (unique distinguishing features) such as barking, and 3) signals (foreground sounds also consciously heard) such as man-made everyday life modernity sounds of aeroplanes flying overhead or camera shutters taking selfies punctuating an experience (Fesenko & Garcia-Rosell, 2019, pp. 89-90). This theoretical framework on sound is useful in answering my research question on what we can learn about arctic landscape connection through dog sledging.

In contrast to Fesenko and Garcia-Rosell's (2019) description of soundscape through three elements, Ingold (2011) lays out an alternative four-step argument for opposing the continued use of the term *scape* in trendy ways in his book 'Being alive, essays on movement, knowledge, and description'. Firstly, he draws attention to *scape* not attributable to any given sensory form that secondly, causes a separation in lines of enquiry to the materiality of sound, when a distinction of sound can be defined; thirdly, by our immersion of experience which is not cognitively or materially related (p. 137). Lastly, Ingold (2001, p. 138) cites from his own book 'Perception of the Environment' that "hearing is a medium of our perception" (Ingold, 2000:265), where attention should not be solely directed to worldly surfaces. Bodies and materiality are intertwined, and so Ingold posits we should pay more attention to the intangible elements embodied, such as rain, sunshine and wind bodies that exist within as termed *ensounded* (p. 139). Ingold's (2011) point on *scape* not being immersible cognitively or materially contrasts my own dog sledging experience and that of Benali and Ren's (2019) concept of materiality of care.

Moving onto the sense of sight, Miklosi (2016) states that visually, dogs appear to be more restricted than humans in vision, yet olfaction in dogs seems to be more sensitive, and they have a wider hearing range on an ultrasonic level (p. 186). Sensory inputs are important to how we learn to connect with the arctic landscape through dog sledging, as the mushers rely on the dogs to some degree to travel together.

Urry (2002) outlines the need for the use of theoretical tools to be able to discuss the visual. The Arctic is no doubt visual. Originally guidebooks were created through artists' visual impressions, and later as technology advanced, the use of cameras provided a record of the visual for this purpose. From the perspective of the gazer, Urry (2002) lays out the concept of gazing that connects tourists with places, spaces, events, and activities, providing a sense of competence and structuring the tourism experience. Through embodiment and mobilising the gaze through space and time, contemporary tourism involves the interaction of bodies, others,

and objects and how we relate to the world on a multi-sensuous level (p. 336). The power felt of being physically close to the arctic nature on a dog sledge provides emotion by incorporating technological mobility and embodiment of kinaesthetic levels promoting meaning (p. 152). Many people participate in dog sledging due to their love of nature, the dogs, and the arctic environment or for competition and then set up related businesses (Granås, 2018; Jæger & Viken, 2014; Kuhl, 2011). Musers understand that a sense of knowing and performing at the top of their game is cocreating the activity, which is also important for tourists and what they seek in addition to traditional polar explorer footsteps (Granås, 2018).

A sixth sense relates to the human body in movement, or a kinaesthetic sense, that informs the body Urry (2002, p. 152; Pink, 2012, p. 123). I certainly gained a taste of this sixth sense during my Finnmarksløpet race, a new worldly perspective and of what it meant to be a musher, situated in the arctic landscape, and connected to the dogs were powerful. Haraway (2008), in her book 'When Species Meet', questions the sense of touch that transforms into worldly understanding (p. 35). Of whom belongs where (p. 41) and with what have intertwined histories with dogs. She outlines that learning is motivated by curiosity that results in caring (p. 36), when tourist-musers touch the sledge dogs. Yet tourist-musers require the ability to listen, respond and respect during meaningful pockets of interaction as "we are in an entangled knot of [companion] species coshaping one another in layers or reciprocating complexity all the way down" (Haraway, 2008, p. 42). Then the tourist-musers can learn something about the dogs, the arctic landscape and themselves.

### **2.3.3 Arctic landscape**

The meaning of Finnmark as an arctic landscape is a partly negotiated place of identities, values and materialities (Granås, 2015, p.302) for mushers, that changes through different practices of human-animal bonding interactions with sledge dogs (Granås, 2018, p. 49-50). Haraway's concept of natureculture (2003) has a meaning where the two terms are entangled in historical relationships that provide new ways of thinking (p. 12). Granås (2018) operationalises Haraway's natureculture as part of a spatial-relational process of Doreen Masseys place theory development of throwntogetherness (p. 50).

Ingold (1993) defines landscape not as an abstract, unrelated to a piece of geographical land that we can directly relate to with our eyes or layer cultural meanings onto. It is also not nature or space but that we gather meanings from it. Landscape is a living process under constant

development (p. 162), “it is with us, not against us” (p. 154), or as Haraway (2003, 2008) states, becoming with and organism-environment relations cannot be separated according to Ingold (1993, p. 164). Edensor describes landscape as:

Alive with energies eternally fluid, its rocks, vegetation and climate continually undergoing change as elements from near and far, and from different times, are entangled and folded together in a continual making. (Edensor, 2016, p. 234)

The totality of organism-environment interactions makes up life, where activities represent constructed moments (p. 164) or put a simpler way, pockets of moments. Edensor’s view is humans travel with non-humans as a continually constructed landscape of lived space or co-created with rhythmic movement. Edensor (2016, p. 236) goes on to cite Anderson (2009) who posits the intangible concept of atmosphere where emotions are formed; people and place are sensed, and collectively affected “before and alongside the formation of subjectivity, across human and non-human materialities, and in-between subject/object distinctions” (Anderson, 2009, p.78).

Ingold similarly links bodies with materiality encompassing the intangible elements with the tangible, where “the landscape as a whole must likewise be understood as the taskscape of its embodied form: a pattern of activities ‘collapsed’ into an array of features” (Ingold, 1993, p.162). Using a linear progressive lens of history and time points, Ingold discusses their opposition and pushes forward their interconnectedness on a social basis, terming dwelling tasks. The landscape is what we see and as an embodied form is taskscape (what we hear), only creatable during a dwelling task. Animate beings are aware of and act upon their surroundings, that are depended upon in multiple rhythms of life that include the inanimate “day and night; seasons; winds; tides, and so on” (Ingold, 1993, p. 163).

In relation to answering my research question what we can learn about connection to the Arctic is the pockets of co-created moments producing meaning and value. The most valuable Ingold argues is that of time. One of the main reasons tourist-mushers travel is to experience a different relationship to time. Taskscapes within dog sledging activities, therefore, can be argued that the tourist-musher loses point of reference from everyday life adhering to specific tasks, history or time and convert instead to the rhythm of Arctic climate time co-created with the animate (dogs)

and inanimate (embodying our own vibrations in the cycles of our surroundings such as weather and climate). Together they are all the landscape.

## **2.4 Chapter summary**

Exploring what is established as known, not known, agreed upon or not in academic research allows me to connect my research to relevant theory (Pattern & Newhart, 2018). The literature review has been continually altered as my thinking has evolved during my research process. Key messages came to the foreground in relation to my main research question of what we can learn about the tourist-mushers connection to the arctic landscape through dog sledging. An affirmation by multiple researchers for non-human agency to be recognised and further researched as a stakeholder in tourism research. Dog sledging reflects a global stage with local knowledge where meaning lies in holistic and socially co-created ways of seeing. Regarding my sub-research question two, by unpacking the physical senses, tourist-mushers can get to know the sledge dogs and “becoming with” the landscape through interaction. In relation to my sub-research question three, pockets of meaning and value can be driven emotively and cognitively through learning as a platform. Tangible and intangible aspects, the interrelatedness of human and non-human emotion and behaviour in research highlights that it is in constant flux with potential benefits to both. A way of analysing this interrelatedness is by building on materialities via the concept of embodiment and by using Lindberg et al., (2014) Dynamic Experience and Meaning (DEM) model of situated and multirelational experiencescape mapping.

### **3 Methodological Framework**

In this chapter, I introduce the methodology of my project on dog sledging that pertains to ethnography and autoethnography, as well as the methods that form the basis of this research project. I will discuss the mixed methods that have informed my research, consisting of interviews and observations of the tourist-mushers behaviour encountering sledge dogs on trips. In addition, I draw upon my own experiences of being an insider-outsider, a UK traveller as an outsider to the Arctic, and having established myself as an insider, musher and tour guide living in the local mushing community in northern Norway.

I chose many sources to provide a broad overview of sledge dog tourism in Finnmark, including informal conversations with key stakeholders in local government, the Northern Norway Tourism Board, sledge dog tourism and their supporting staff. I observed through my experiences as a sledge dog owner and as a tour guide working for a local destination company for English-speaking cruise ships, which included my role of active dog sledge tour guide on short trips. I also had informal conversations and made observations as a volunteer in the Finnmarksløpet race press office and as one of their trainee competition judges. Lastly, I conducted in-depth interviews with privately booked tourist-mushers and dog sledging companies themselves. Due to my number of sources, there are many cultural aspects intertwined in discourse, but research thematic angles pointed primarily towards sledge dog races (such as the Finnmarksløpet), hospitality, volunteering, or the associated sledge dog community such as veterinarian care, omitting the dogs' perspective.

#### **3.1 Research position**

The philosophy of science pertains to reality and knowledge theory (Potter, 2000, p. 22) and contains paradigms or frameworks to worldviews, traditionally of a singular nature, of mutually agreed problems and solutions (Potter, 2000, p. 71). Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that researchers are guided by paradigms, where the approaches' influences could be stated under positivism, post positivism, critical theory or constructivism. Paradigms comprise four areas; ontology, logic, epistemology, and methodology that interrelate (Potter, 2000, p. 2). Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 183) also ascribe to a paradigm that requires morals and ethics or axiology. Ontology refers to the nature of reality, whether or not it is independent of ourselves or not and how it works. Logic is a form of hypothesis concluded by an inference process (Potter, 2000, p. 238). Epistemology guides us on how to think about reality, what we can know of the world

(Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 183) or, according to Potter (2000, p. 234), the theories of what knowledge is. Methodology maps out a strategy to use our epistemology to gain more knowledge, with objectivity related to the stand taken. Within a standardised theoretical analysis also lies set methods.

In our daily lives, we carry a theoretical framework based on categorisations of situations, actions for example, to interpret our world and our position within it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107). A framework is seen as a power-related practice, where individual characteristics such as age, race and gender, or social characteristics such as cultural lenses of values, traditions, and common practices can be utilised. These practices build an information resource of the taken-for-granted or an a priori. Cultural and social understanding using categorisation and language was explored in this study. Moses and Knutsen (2012, pp.193-4) outline communication as expressed through language and the importance of using it, and its power functions within (p. 207), to situate ourselves in society and the world.

Natural science is rooted in the positivism paradigm using the cause-and-effect hypothesis, where quantitative data has been the dominant view used in research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The social aspect of our daily lives can not be omitted from scientific research, and so for this research, I highlight the shift in paradigm towards constructivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 184). The constructivist position developed when revisiting the empirical data and reading on theory. Constructivism is the construction of reality and knowledge from different forces interacting. The ontology of constructivism is generally agreed upon as relativist, on multiple realities created in context through social interaction, specific and local to the interactions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110-111). Epistemology in constructivism is also generally agreed upon as relativist, which acknowledges important nuances the different forces bring into existence the subjective transactions as the process develops (p. 111). A scale of meaning and relevance is attributed to how constructivists balance their interaction, contrary to a positivist approach of being one reality and one truth to be discovered. From a constructivist perspective, as this study uses, meaning provided epistemological tools such as evoking emotion, i.e., empathy and implies authority and myths. Moses and Knutsen (2012, p. 197) refer to the works of Immanuel Kant is an influential figure in social science development still today. Moses and Knutsen support that knowledge of the world using the most positive form can only be created via the perceptions of our physical senses (2012, p. 177).

Moses and Knutsen (2012) state that using scientific research analysing our worldly perceptions as opposed to the world itself opens multiple possibilities and experiences (p. 10). In the case of my research, I am looked at how the interaction of dogs and humans in a dog sledging activity, provides knowledge and different realities for both the tourist-musher and sledge dogs in the shared physical environment. This research was inspired by the communication difficulties I observed with dogs when taking a sledging activity. The language was not a simple barrier of words, nationality dependant or learning to speak dog as the tourism sledge dogs were taught Norwegian and English commands. As a transfer of information from body movement and vocalisation types, it was a communication mismatch when humans relied on sight as a primary sense, and dogs relied on hearing.

Communication mismatch led me to wonder, how and what meaning is made and interpreted by both the sledge dogs and the tourist-mushers as they travel within the arctic landscape? The concept of meaning is important because it is a reference point that holds value for people. Positive and negative outcomes occur through pockets of interaction like a dog sledging activity. The outcomes can condition further thought and behaviour. They have collective meaning in the present tense whereby someone can form a position and relate to an activity like dog sledging through identity or to recreate an experience of memory or feeling. It could make the tourist-musher want to return to the arctic landscape repeatedly.

### **3.2 Research design**

Methodological design is the framework of my constructivist position on answering my research questions. The framework requires forward planning and reflexivity (O’Leary, 2014, p. 108). My methodology is key to the research process as it legitimises the knowledge I aim to produce. The methodology is the whom am I speaking about, where the data collection takes place, when it is conducted, how (methods) and what questions are asked. It is important to distinguish between methodology and methods. My chosen methods are techniques I have used to collect and analyse my data. They relate to my position and theoretical toolbox (O’Leary, 2014, pp. 10-11).

When I began the Master's program, I already had the idea that I wanted to know more about how the tourist-mushers experience and enjoy the interaction of the sledge dogs when taking a trip into arctic nature. I wanted to place more value on the depth and richness of data over quantity and understand the interactions (O’Leary, 2014, p. 130) between mushers and sledge



dogs. Including an autoethnographic perspective also adds to the possibility of immersing into the people, places, cultures, and situations (O’Leary, 2014, p. 130). As Bell & Waters (2018, p. 24) explains, the motivation to understand individualistic world perceptions led me to choose the more appropriate qualitative tradition and inductive analysis for my research rather than quantitative. As stated in my literature review, I could take advantage of alternative ways of knowing what sled dogs can provide, which I feel is often omitted.

### **3.3 Ethnography and autoethnography**

Pink (2012, p. 8) acknowledges ethnography as a widely used qualitative research approach with no uniform practices. It does not aim to uncover ontological perspectives, objectivities, or truth but the researcher's experiences through a process connecting to creating and representing knowledge. Denzin and Lincoln (2000), offer an alternative definition of ethnography encompassing the concept of scientifically describing culture (p. 40), rooted in colonial contexts by anthropologists, that are broad in nature (p. 853). Qualitatively based, ethnography was chosen to immerse myself and understand the rich tapestry of making meaning; symbolic ways, values, beliefs, and practices of a mushers societal way of life (O’Leary, 2014, p. 136) Whilst trying to omit pre-defined lenses of reference by my participants and as an ethnographer, O’Leary, (2014) defines ethnography as “exploring a way of life from the point of view of its participants” (O’Leary, 2014, p. 134) or through their eyes metaphorically speaking (Bruner, 2005; Geertz, 2000).

The development of ethnography has run parallel to its aims of informed policymaking, entangled in Western politics and economies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 853). A more modern approach to applied ethnography reveals a deeper cultural meaning exchange, in resolving differences and processes (p. 861). There have been criticisms of ethnography regarding validity and reliability, timescales relevant to decision-making and being too broad (p. 862). Challenges include emotional costs, building trust and gaining access (O’Leary, 2014, p. 136). Ethnographers acknowledge numerous worldviews and build value through understanding from the researched perspective (O’Leary, 2014, pp. 136-137). Yet, an outsider-insider paradox must be managed through reflexivity, if a researcher from a very different culture can ever truly represent, interpret, theorise, and analyse another culture (p. 137). More positive aspects have also been valued, such as uncovering tacit knowledge and facilitating interdisciplinary research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 865). Methods employed by researchers are more commonly multiple in-choice and can include quantitative and qualitative approaches; participant

observation; interviews; document analysis, and surveys (O’Leary, 2014, p. 136). The latter two methods were not applied in this research.

Eakin (1988) describes the narrative as a valued meaning-making structure to “capture the deep-seated temporality of our lives” (Eakin, 1998, p. 85). I was intrigued by the reflexivity of being a musher and all that the practice entailed; the internal connection of the body and mind with that interpretation of the external world that I was travelling within. Eakin seeks a narrative physiological foundation to place the use of autobiography into a “socially-sanctioned identity practice” (Eakin, 2013, 2008 pp. 22-51) and “having something to do with society, with identity, with the body” (Eakin, 2006, p. 186), he describes the narrative as a change registering process governed by the body.

Even with previous experiences of being with dogs in different ways, and of course, I have travelled many times by sledge before, I have never been with them into the extreme conditions and wilderness of Finnmark’s plateau. Thus, I needed to confirm my experiences and signify my data findings in contribution to sledge dog activity within the tourism research field. The study of cultural groups from within is a process that attempts to avoid a priori or applying a specific worldly view (O’Leary, 2014) and “how group members make sense of their experiences” (O’Leary, 2014, p. 133). Pink (2012) emphasises the learning process by situating my experiences in the multisensory and where knowledge is embodied through the senses (p.64). Autoethnography is the most fruitful mechanism of unearthing and delineating the interrelatedness of the senses, emotion and knowledge (Hockey, 2006, p.184 as cited in Pink, 2012:64).

Autoethnography, as a definition, is difficult to pin down and be agreed upon, according to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), due to the incorporation of multiple previous similar categories with their associated methodologies, relating to researchers recording their own thoughts, feelings, actions and language (p. 739). Research and writing autobiographical genre of cultural aspects to include personal connections through multiple conscious levels sets the term apart from ethnography (p. 739).

Autoethnography was used as a heterogenous writing technique to channel my personal self-consciousness and experience of entering the Finnmarksløpet dog race, in March 2017. A snapshot of open-ended literary form, the effect and importance of transferring my life creatively into the written word. Olney (1980) describes autoethnography “as a study of the

way experience is transformed into literature” (Olney, 1980, p. 10). Criticism exists within the writing form, yet it remains a strong communication channel that I hope will help the reader connect to the message and “continue the experience into their own lives” (Olney, 1980, p. 26).

The use of autoethnography as a method in my research leaves the door wide open to criticism as a writing form, that anyone can participate in without formal requirements and regulations (Olney, 1980, p. 3). Autoethnography has a paradox that no two people can agree on its definition (p. 7). However, the irony of this method choice is exactly what describes the way I would like people to interpret the dog sledging world do not. It is about going into nature where so much is interpreted individually and is subjective. There is just as much we understand about it that we don't. It is a place where you get the feeling of freedom, and create your own journey into it, through it or with it. From my own experiences as a musher and tour guide; participating, observing, talking, travelling, eating and sightseeing with the tourists, I can draw conclusions under the ethnographic method from within (Bruner, 2005). The difference between ethnography and autoethnography is that the latter term can generate fear, doubt and emotional pain on opening up my accounts of sledge dog experiences to the dog sledge community as a vulnerability. Yet “autoethnography provides an avenue for doing something for yourself and the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 738).

Placing my interpretation publicly, of being in Arctic nature with my dogs for the world to read, feels akin to nakedness and vulnerability. Some might say that I have little right to express such things due to my lack of social standing in the dog sledge community, writing or research worlds. As noted by Olney that it may be one of the “simplest and commonest of writing propositions” (Olney, 1980, p. 3), through this method, I can still maintain a self-consciousness and literary awareness, adding a contribution of value and appeal to this field of research. Dog sledging is a phenomenon that is not for one person to capture, keep and hold onto, thus restricting others to it as a resource. The wonderful culture of Norway and its Outdoor Recreation Act (1957), most known as freedom to roam, is a testament to that.

Ethnography can be described as a reflexive process (Pink, 2012, p. 63, Eakin, 2013) where academic knowledge is produced through closely situated, varied qualitative research practices. Pink (2012) explores the implications of classical participant observation pathways when using autoethnography, as a route to knowledge by categorising and recording behaviour by the ethnographer themselves simultaneously with the participants during an activity. Sensory autoethnography can access empathy through paralleled practices and where memories can also

be accessed as an understanding by the tourist-musher evolves during a dog sledge activity. Pink (2012), signals toward an interdisciplinary direction of context for sensory ethnography, as she links the importance of academia to applied practice “[sensory ethnography] draws out the everyday realities of people’s experience and practice and provides insights about how to make these experiences and practices more pleasurable and effective” (Pink, 2012, p. 20). Classical methods of participant observation would otherwise render potential data gathering inaccessible in a dog sledging setting due to the physical space between travelling sledges, the potential for unpredictable changes in visibility and noise levels. These aspects can also include the potential of sensory overwhelm as interviewees described in the data, making it difficult to make sense of a moment or indeed the ability to describe it during an interview. Pink, (2012) argues for sensory ethnography as an emerging field of research as opposed to using one single model. Pink (2012) proposes to incorporate the visual aspects of methods digitally and audibly, in part online or in a virtual capacity, as another layer of sensoriality and materiality on traditional contexts. Reflexivity with the senses in mind can co-create the project design to new ways of knowing, meanings, and values (p. 10).

### **3.4 Methods**

The chosen methods of gathering data for the research were qualitatively focused and are as follows. Pre-experience and post-experience qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with privately booked tourist-mushers. My interview guide was piloted beforehand with study colleagues, friends and family. Data was collected across various sledge dog activity products ranging from 3-4 hours to 10-day trips. I accompanied one family group, where I could observe first-hand as well as conducting informal interviews and participant observation during my time as a dog sledge tour guide for multiple companies. The large cruise ship groups made up a significant amount of informal data that took place during tailored 3–4-hour taster trips locally. From the formal post-experience in-depth interviews, some interviewees sent photographs and videos of the moments that meant the most to them that they wanted to share with me. Autophotography was a method used on this part of the data. Autoethnography was also used in my research process, where my personal experiences and connections through multiple conscious levels contributed to understanding the dog sledging experience. I planned for the interview process with the relative equipment required, and for background information, I read supportive promotional dog sledging marketing material.

Qualitative in-depth interviews were the main research method of gathering the data and was chosen for accessing individuals' attitudes and values (Byrne, 2012:208). An interesting point of thought in the research plan was to investigate the interviewees' general human-dog relationships. How I implemented my methods was taken to a deeper level as my involvement in the sledge dog community had already occurred over several previous years and through observation of tourist-mushers while guiding. The interview data were transcribed anonymised, coded then analysed. In the following section is an overview of methods relating to participants, interviews, and analysis processes. O'Leary (2014 p130) identifies qualitative research to acknowledge the concept of power from both the research and interviewee perspectives, recognises realities and perspectives in multiple forms, uses deductive and inductive logic and without omitting political forces. Bell and Waters (2018, p. 26) concur with O'Leary (2014) on the qualitative advantages of using a smaller data sample, insider experience and digging into emotion and belief systems. Disadvantages related to time-consuming ethical considerations of both human and non-human viewpoints and the research process became more complicated.

#### **3.4.1 Location and interviewees**

Considering the research setting is important for adding credibility (O'Leary, 2014). Therefore, I considered locations for my study in general terms and in detail where the in-depth interviews would take place. As sledge dog tourism is in its infancy, I contacted the Northern Norway Tourist Board to obtain a definitive list of registered companies. Due to Finnmark being a very large geographical area 48,631 km<sup>2</sup> (SSB, 2019, p. 44), to narrow my research, I focused on west Finnmark, on a concentrated part of Finnmarksvidda that many tourism companies share. Taking distance issues into consideration, which required me to be available on short notice for the weather dependant start and end times of tours, I situated myself in the City of Northern Lights, Alta. From the confirmed 12 dog sledge companies across Finnmark in 2013 (personal communication), a broad spectrum of trip types was selected for my research from four of the highest-profile companies in western Finnmark. The trips were a mix of short seated 3-4 hour total experience tailored for large cruise ship groups (the sledge is driven by a guide with up to three people seated on it for approximately 45 minutes), do-it-yourself without duration limitation (one person or in pairs, one in the sledge and the other driving that switched place halfway), to multi-day tours with one person that drove the sledge and took care of their own dogs. A tour of 10 days was the longest tour I collected data for the research project. An overview of participants can be found in table one.

	Tour duration	Age	Gender	Nationality	Travelling with	Data type
Interviewee A	-	24	M	British	Friends	Pre-experience interview
Company 1	All	51	F	Norwegian	Tourism company	Full in-depth interview
Interviewee C	7 days	47	M	British	Solo	Pre- and post- interviews
Interviewee D	1 day	46	M	British	Family	Observation, pre-and post- interviews
Interviewee E	1 day	43	F	British	Family	Observation, pre-and post-interviews
Interviewee F	10 days	50+	F	Australian	Solo	Pre- and post- interviews
Interviewee G	10 days	46	F	Norwegian	Friends	Pre- and post- interviews
Interviewee H	7 days	50+	F	Norwegian	Friends	Pre- and post- interviews
Interviewee I	7 days	57	F	Norwegian	Friends	Pre- and post- interviews
Company 2	All	50	F	British	Tourism company	Full in-depth interview
Interviewee K	-	23	M	British	Friends	Pre-experience interview

**Table 1.** An overview of interviewees and data type.

The selected four dog sledge tourism companies read my research proposal and ethics-approved letter, before agreeing to approach their booked guests. The companies encouraged their guests to contact me by phone or email to show their interest in participating in the study. From there, I emailed consent forms directly to the interested participants with a cover letter (Appendix 1). Five of sixteen interviewees who originally agreed to be included in my research did not consent or reply. One trip was cancelled because their flights were grounded in bad weather, so I could only obtain a recorded 20-minute pre-experience interview in two cases, one on the telephone and one face to face. I conducted pre- and post-experience in-depth interviews with seven interviewees. Five of those interviewees provided photographs of their trip afterwards, and two also provided videos they had taken, for inclusion in the data. Two dog sledge tourism companies actively responded and cooperated with my study giving in-depth interviews.

Participants from two continents were represented (Europe and Australia) and three countries (Norway, United Kingdom, and Australia). They included four men aged 23-47 years and seven women aged 43-51 years and over. Some interviewees were not specific in providing their age but were happy to be represented as over 51. Gender and age were not a focus in my findings, but general notes relating to the gender and age of tourist-mushers were made during my data

collection. Most interviewees travelled in small groups; one was an independent traveller, and one family participated. I felt it was important to reinforce the data collected from the tourist-mushers and contribute to my overall understanding and context of the sledge-dog activities researched. The guide's role in sledge dog activities must be acknowledged as it is an important one, although it is not the focus of my research. As such, interviews were also arranged with two different companies in support of gaining and corroborating data provided by the interviewees regarding their interactions and observations, particularly the level of success they held during the trip (Table 1).

My sample was small considering the short time scale involved of a few months and resources for a Master thesis. However, I wanted a wide enough representation of tourist-mushers as possible, as Fine et al. (2000) delineate, to gain an overview of the activity, reduce bias and be able to be large enough to be credible and give a voice to the participants. Sledge dog tourism in Northern Norway, where I am producing this research, is also a relatively young industry. Still, I hope the findings will be useful so tourism products may be able to extend their offering into other seasons, thus contributing to regional development in the process.

### **3.4.2 Interviews**

A sound recorder was used (by consent of the interviewees) for recording as much and as precise information as possible. The interview data was recorded using software on my laptop, with a simultaneous backup on my iPhone in real-time. This allowed me to concentrate on having my noted prompts available and focus on the interviewees without them being too conscious of the recording equipment. The recordings were deleted after transcribing. The interviews took place during the winter months of January to April 2015 in a quiet room at the location of the dog sledging kennels. My interview guide (Appendix 2) was broken down into pre-experience and post-experience sections. Short 20–30-minute pilot interviews provided base data on motivations, expectations and how the tourists identified with their forthcoming tour. Pre-activity topics included, social background, holiday motivation, activity motivation, ending on personal data. Previous general dog experience or sledge dog knowledge were captured before the trip. I designed the pre-interview to also capture the tourist-mushers immediate thoughts before taking the trip. Questions were formulated to narrow down a pre-interview format to lasting approximately 20 minutes. This time scale was chosen to capitalise on building a relationship with the interviewees, and make it efficient, so they were more likely to follow through with the longer post-interview.

The interview guide was pilot tested with draft questions to allow for possibilities of hindering the flow of the conversation to gain a rich response, narrow down the number of themes I initially tried to cover and make modifications to streamline the interview guide. The pilot testing took place with friends, family, and study colleagues, some specifically chosen with no prior knowledge of dog sledging and others that understood the product, to ensure I could try to replicate the different outcomes that could be produced. It was a slightly frustrating process to keep rewriting and conducting pilot interviews. As O’Leary (2014) points out, I did not want to have questions that were too leading, pretentious, confronting, or ambiguous, but allowed for flexibility (p. 206).

Nine semi-structured, face-to-face or phone pre-experience interviews were recorded with domestic and international guests. Two of these interviewees had their trip cancelled due to bad weather after their pre-interviews were finished, leaving seven remaining interviewees to go on to record their post-sledge experiences lasting approximately 90 minutes. Two of the seven were conducted over the telephone due to time and logistical constraints. A further two post-in-depth interviews took place with dog sledge companies. These recorded a deeper insight with topics including new knowledge, further activity and sharing. Each set of questions had probing prompts that related to helping the participant expand their answer or describe the physical senses they used. In the post-activity section, new knowledge was sought, proceeding onto further tips and recommendations for future tourist-mushers, and a chance to share any remaining thoughts.

An option to share visual references in the form of photographs and video was given, of which some of the participants supplied. My interview observation guide began with a reflexivity reminder, moving on to field note criteria, theme ideas, 11-point planner and finished with recording techniques. My field notes were broken down into the type of dog interaction, location, overall impressions, non-verbal cues, and quotes in an observation guide I created in the planning stage (Appendix 3). In terms of validity and reliability, semi-structured interviews were used to uncover more depth and richness but could also lower the value of these two aspects. Therefore, I asked the interviewees to categorise their own visual data from their trip to provide consistency between their verbal responses and the visual (Byrne, 2012, p. 62). This also provided ideas for future research.

Informal conversations were also conducted in addition to the in-depth interviews. I used field notes while working as a tour guide for English-speaking cruise ships and as a musher owning



sledge dogs participating in the touristic mushing community. My professional abilities and conduct immediately gained trust when speaking informally to tourist-mushers. My experience, interests and passion helped tourist-mushers align themselves with this common interest, pre-empting meaningful discussion on sledge dog tourism.

The interview questions were designed as open-ended, freeing the interviewees to respond relatively unrestricted (Smith, 1975, p.172). As open-ended questions usually got a more considered response than closed questions, they were likely to provide better access to interviewees' views, interpretations of events, understandings, and experiences (Byrne, 2012:209). Even though it might have made the analysis more difficult (few people ever used the same words for expressing the same idea), this approach gave the interviewees a voice to express the matters important to them and the potential to add additional perspectives to the research. The interviews started with easy introductory questions (age, occupation, when they booked the sledge dog activity) as a warm-up phase to engage the respondent and ended with a cooling-off phase to release the tension (Smith, 1975, p. 181).

### **3.4.3 Analysis procedures**

To provide a rich, detailed, transparent and qualitative research project, thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Braun and Clarke (2006, cite Attride-Stirling, 2001) to uphold the wide use of the method as a simple tool for novice researchers like myself (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 81) without an agreed definition or application by researchers (p. 79). Braun and Clarke (2006) affirm thematic analysis as flexibly independent of epistemology and theory, yet when set in a constructivist approach, unpacks "events, realities, meanings, experiences" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81) that affect societal discourses. An important aspect to note was that my thematic analysis was consistently applied across all the data collected, not just the interviews, as described below.

It took a long time and was frustrating to transcribe the interviews manually, but it was a useful tool in reminding myself of and immersing in some of the key findings of information collected, where initial themes were noted. Transcribing the interviews was also important to ensure the data quality of the transcript against the recordings to detect errors or compare nuances (Pattern & Newhart, 2018, p. 157). I worked through the transcripts to organise, reduce my data to the most relevant points, and find themes systematically. This is referred to as coding or labelling content. Working systematically using relevant theory provided transparency and validity (Bell

& Waters, 2018; Pattern & Newhart, 2018). Patterns of difference, similarity and meaning were sought after in words, sentences, paragraphs, photographs and video (Bell & Waters, 2018, p. 271). I selected a widely recognised deductive method of open coding described by Bell and Waters (2018, p. 168), to gain broad themes from my transcripts and field notes. These authors delineate deductive coding as using an existing idea, having knowledge of the field (in this case sledge dog tourism) and what I hoped my findings would uncover as relevant starting points. I assigned the data to initial codes in a code book I created based on my research question and literature review. I also noted any data that I thought stood out but did not fit the initial codes.

Two things became apparent during this overwhelming and messy process. First, that to become more efficient, next time I would invest in software to help track the volume of data. Second, a more bottom-up approach to developing my code book further was based on an inductive approach to refine results and reveal more patterns (Pattern & Newhart, 2018, p. 10). Thus, the ability to develop this method meant I systematically used a recursive process between the codes and data to help revise my research questions. Inductive coding is used in grounded theory (p. 167). I have used similar coding principles between thematic analysis and grounded theory, but the associated starting points differentiate the methods. My research is data-driven, and thus a thematic analysis was used as I draw upon Braun and Clarke's (2006, p.87) thematic analysis phases in more depth relating to the coding 1) I familiarised myself again with the data, 2) generated initial codes, 3) searched for themes, 4) reviewed the themes, 5) defined and named the themes, and 6) produced a report where the data tells the story (p. 92). The ability to develop this method meant I systematically used a recursive process between the codes and data to help revise my research questions. New categories or themes emerged in the process that revealed surprising, insightful information and behavioural theories (Pattern & Newhart, 2018, p. 167). During the coding process, I found it interesting that a literal approach to analysing keywords was not always fruitful as opposed to understanding what was inferred in the phrase although I did not want to infer meaning to the data, so I built on this issue by having in the back of my mind that different interviewees had cultural backgrounds and using English was not everyone's first language. Coding a sense of what was being said helped me develop transcreation skills.

For the second phase of the thematic analysis process after refamiliarizing myself with the data, I searched for relationships or categories between the codes (Pattern & Newhart, 2018, p. 168). What fitted or not, what repeated in the narratives. For example, a similar emotive event might have occurred for tourist-mushers in the same geographical place. I made a mental map visually

on paper to streamline the data from major themes or minor categories (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 780) that revealed sensory words or described concepts and categories relevant to my research questions. My coding book started with themes of the senses, emotions, and behaviours from my research questions. From my literature review and theoretical framework, chapter themes of throwtogetherness, polar explorers, media influence and time stood out. Sledge dog races were a miscellaneous theme that emerged. For the third and fourth phases, I copied and pasted all relevant data to themes on level one in a document and cross-referenced the full data set on a second level to review and generate a thematic map. I did not find this task easy and took longer than planned. The theme of time, for example, expanded into reflection and flow categories as the data story pointed towards a theme of rhythm. The throwtogetherness theme developed into nature and culture, making connections and sub-category relationships and interactions that divided into a co-created, interaction and bonding theme. The senses revealed nature, dog subcategories, emotions, and learning concepts. Taking emotions as a wide category on its own, these were analysed into a long list of descriptive words, positive and negative in connotation, then related to human and non-human sub-categories. Memory was a strong category that came out of learning. This left behavioural changes that gave space to sub-categories of effects on a dog sledging experience and looking to the future, which concluded my final theme of discovery mechanisms of sense, emotion and learning sub-themes.

Lastly, Pattern & Newhart (2018) refer to revealing a core idea as an interpretation of the themes and categories that can link to the theory. Attempting to detail comparisons and differences in the findings chapter, behaviours and conditions will be unpacked and add credibility to my research (p. 169). I continually evaluated and revised themes, checking back with the data to omit those without sufficient evidence, leaving distinct themes to base my findings chapter on and using empirical data as evidence to support the themes.

#### **3.4.4 Participant observation**

To see for myself, substantiate and fill in possible data gaps obtained from the interviews (Appendix 3), verbal and non-verbal cues were also important to obtain (O'Leary, 2014, p. 231). For this method, I used candid participant observation. As a researcher, I observed what the interviewees said and did during their sledge dog activity. Although my original plan was for me to be an observer on all trips, it was not possible due to distances between products and time constraints of interviewees' holidays, however, when it permitted, observations were documented in a field journal. I felt it was important to be aware of the possible invalidity due

to so-called reactivity and the possibility of people reacting to being observed, especially by the interviewees (O’Leary, 2014). Therefore, it was important to create relaxed and trust-based relations with the research participants before, during and after fieldwork. After presenting myself to the interviewees which included my experience as a sledge dog tour guide and musher myself, the responses to my observation status were expressed by the tourist-mushers as a trusted situation where they felt my presence was a natural part of the setting for their activity.

My level of participation was constantly reflected during the data collection. My field notes were then analysed parallel to the video and photographs shared by the interviewees. The researchers' role as observer presupposes limited participation in the research process, and allowed detaching from the situation being studied, and view the situation with introspective scepticism (Smith, 1975, p. 328).

### **3.4.5 Autophotography and videography**

Pink, (2009) and Rose (2012) underline audio-visual methods as powerful instruments of expression and ways of knowing that hold cultural-social information of taken-for-granted moments that can communicate meaning through the senses when engaged with the environment. Rose (2012, p. 298) adds a caveat that photography captures environmental sensory depth omitting sound and implying touch senses. Autophotography and videography were utilised to supplement the interviewees' data in my research. These audio-visual methods were chosen for this study, known for their universal language and, as Rose (2012, p. 271) notes, have the power to cause and record deep emotions as well as memories. Over 100 photographs and six videos were gathered to accompany the transcripts. Although visual research methods do not share a specific theoretical perspective (Rose, 2012, p. 299), they provided the opportunity to capture a moment that contextualised the depth and richness of the physical senses as witnessed by the tourist-mushers corporeally and sensorily. As defined by Rose (2012), the photo-documentation method assumed a material reality. The photographs and video could not speak for themselves, as I did not have the time to conduct a third interview as a photo-elicitation method for this purpose. So, I asked the interviewees to write one short sentence labelling their photograph or video, why they took it and why they shared it. This enabled me to analyse and code the visual data and the interviews with increased reliability, validity and transparency.

### **3.5 Relevance of the study**

Tourism in Finnmark is in its infancy when comparing passenger numbers in other areas of Norway, for example, the fjords (Cruise Norway, 2014). This research aims to produce new knowledge for all-year-round product development in Arctic Norway. Another goal of the research is to develop a theoretical perspective, which is important for the tourism and social science fields, to possibly identify and understand different categories of tourists. A secondary outcome will be to improve the communication of dog sledge-related tourism, as it is currently poorly perceived. This research will also contribute to knowledge, clearer communication of what a product entails and improve the quality of service for the company offerings. I feel I can attempt these aims considering my experience and insight as a tour guide and musher owning sledge dogs who has lived in the Finnmark area for ten years. I have an understanding of the cultural, historical and language aspects in this study.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues are of major importance in any social research involving people to protect their well-being and including that of the researcher (O'Leary, 2014, p. 47). Smith (1975) argues the subjects who are asked to participate in research should be protected through the practice of informed consent, which presupposes that the researcher is to ensure that the participants understand what their participation in the research will involve, and that their consent to participate is obtained without coercion. At the stage of making participant contact, it was ethically important that I introduced myself as the researcher, told them about the topic, purpose, legitimacy, and methods of the research, the protection which they may expect as interviewees, the extent of demands which are made upon them, and then I asked for their consent and willingness to participate (Smith, 1975, p. 12 & 183). Due to the nature of my research, an information letter (Appendix I), interview guide (Appendix II) and observation practices (Appendix III) were established. All interviewees received a copy of the brief information letter outlining the project by email initially and again in person at the start of the interview. The participants gave informed consent, agreeing they could discontinue their participation at any time (Smith, 1975, p. 12-13). Ethical, moral, and legal responsibilities were addressed through UiT guidance and supervisor approval and an official letter from UiT with contact information was used to register the project with the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

Protecting individual privacy is an important ethical and legal rule to follow in any research (Smith, 1975, p. 14). Therefore, a discussion was held with the participant regarding what personal information and facts they wished to keep confidential and which audio-visual reference they gave permission to be published. Any delicate information obtained during the research was treated with care and respect, especially when publishing the research results. Even though the research does not presuppose obtaining delicate information, it was necessary to ensure that the research participants were being consulted on what is considered delicate and should not be published. This also related to the legal aspects of Norway's Personal Data Act 2018. A sub-code of the legal requirements refers to the Freedom of Information Act. Both acts require storing paper and electronic data that can be accessible. UiT guidelines were followed, and my research project was stored securely physically with anonymised paper copies during the process with UiT password-protected electronic files and then destroyed after analysis.

As photography was a significant part of the project, it was important to make ensure that visual ethics were carefully considered. Consent was sought when taking photographs of people and for printing, publishing, and exhibiting the images (Ali, 2012, p. 299). The interviewees' verbal and visual data remains the intellectual property of the individual interviewees.

It is commonly argued that the power relations between the researcher and research participants is one of the major issues in social research. O'Leary (2014) states that as researchers, we are responsible for actively identifying and managing politics, ethics and related power aspects (p. 48). She also emphasises the need to limit assumptions and biases in research during power negotiations and relationships and increase credibility and integrity during knowledge production (p. 48). Therefore, it was ethically essential for me as the researcher not to create hierarchies and or control the research (Ali & Kelly, 2012, p. 63). I ensured this through a process of reflexive framework creation, including methodology when I planned my research, taking subjectivities into account, trying to capture the essence of truth, and using consistent methods and relevant and appropriate arguments (p. 50). Finally, it is crucial to remember that poor ethical practice can not only cause potential harm to those involved in the research, but also provide barriers to future attempts to conduct research in the same areas (Ali & Kelly, 2012, p. 63).

I spent a lot of time to planning the interviews and pilot test the questions and interview process as it was new to me. Yet, I still had a lot to learn during the interviews themselves. I realised that when the flow went well with an interviewee, I needed to use fewer question prompts and

had to learn to let them finish speaking. It was very hard not to get over-excited at the data I collected, as most of the interviews went very well, and I improved with the more I did. I was hoping that the recording equipment did not let me down. Initially, my questioning remained close to the script, which at times led to shorter answers from the interviewees.

I feel it is pertinent to disclose a time gap of several years between my initial research and completing the writing of my thesis. This is related to an extended illness period and not to COVID. Since the initial data was collected, I have noted a change in the type and the increased number of dog sledge tourism products in West Finnmark. Yet the sledge dog's role played in the tourist activity of dog sledging on the plateau, I feel, remains largely unchanged, as the attitudes and approaches of sledge dog tourism companies continue in creating products omitting the dogs' perspective. I have reflected on the process gap in the ability to interpret data differently when re-reading transcripts. However, I had already made notes and an observation diary alongside the data collection of direct representations of participant visual recordings that helped. The amount of data became overwhelming during the process at times, and I realised I had read too much and needed to narrow down my thinking and what I had space to include that was more relevant, and of course review more current literature and theory.

### **3.6.1 Challenges**

The methodology was chosen to produce a new perspective for dog sledge tourism, inspiring a fresh approach to business concepts and product development, and providing more value and for tourist-mushers to return to Arctic Norway. As a researcher in my project, I have carefully considered the reflexivity and timing of the empirical data, focusing on the tourist-mushers' and dogs' perspectives omitting the production side of the activity. To lower the risk of misinterpretation, the interviewees were asked specifically to label their supplementary photographic and video evidence as to what they referred to within it and why they picked that part of their story to share what it meant to them. This was part of the visual method chosen as already described. Cultural and language differences had also been considered, so my framing of investigations was important. Norwegian interviewees that participated were more than comfortable with their level of English, which I checked before accepting them as interviewees. I had the importance of emphasizing the tourist-musher's understanding of the relationship between the dogs and nature. However, tourism companies could also use the findings to influence their development. I am not as convinced the companies' view of their relationship

with dogs and nature can be used by the tourist-mushers in the same way, as the product's experience is built up over a considerably longer period than a tourist-musher can experience.

A few ethical challenges are outlined that occurred in my research design process. I did not identify any conflict of interest. Informed consent was carefully considered and executed with the interviewee's option to decide what was or was not relevant to their confidentiality and not what I decided for them. This provided respect and privacy. Interviewees were also selected from various backgrounds, nationalities, and previous experiences where possible. One challenge I identified was the ability to keep the company's identities from being revealed, as there were only a few sledge dog companies in West Finnmark and anyone reading the research might be able to guess to which company I was referring. One tourist-musher also mentioned this aspect regarding the utmost respect they had gained from their guide and afterwards wanted to protect their guide's identity. To achieve this, we decided together that we would not publish any photographs of the interviewee or guide in the research so the interviewees could be open and honest about the information they gave; at the same time, direct quotes that could identify the guides' unique personalities were also omitted. In summary, with my consciousness of holding power as a researcher, I feel I was able to provide a professional approach to my research design that enabled as much ethical consideration and adjustment as required.

One key aspect I considered regarding ethical challenges was that from the dogs' perspective, which I noted from existing sledge dog literature had also not been considered. The tourist-mushers repeatedly raised animal ethics during my observations and in the interviews, so it is important and contributes to the success of human-animal bonding activities. For the consideration of the dog's mental, emotional and physical welfare, I consulted with a distinguished dog behaviour specialist that teaches at a prestigious animal behaviour course in the United Kingdom and well-respected and experienced sledge dog veterinarians. These experts provided a reflection tool throughout the writing process but made it very difficult to write about in the space a Master thesis provides. This is an action for further research.

On writing my research proposal, I intended to collate statistical dog sledging data as little existed, but the task was too big and deemed to have less statistical power if I had included it in my smaller Master's study. I found the lack of statistical data a frustrating challenge.



### **3.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter covered methodological choices I considered and made during my research process. Based on my main research question of what we can learn about the tourist-mushers connection to the arctic landscape through dog sledging, a qualitative approach was chosen to uncover a rich tapestry of tourist-mushers individuals' attitudes, values and past related experiences. A method of nine open-ended, semi-structured in-depth pre-experience, and seven post-experience interviews, were primarily used to collect data. In parallel, two further in-depth interviews with tourism companies and informal interviews with cruise ship taster tour groups were conducted alongside participant observation. In addition, audio-visual representation in the form of autophotography and videography supported the deeper emotional socio-cultural meaning and memory making behind communication and bonding sensory interactions. To make sense and gain understanding of these multiple methods, thematic analysis data was the process used.

# 4 Findings and Discussion

This chapter describes and discusses my data findings relating to my research question learning about the tourist-mushers' connection to Arctic nature through dog sledging. My sub-questions dig deeper into what and how physical senses the tourist-mushers use interacting with the dogs and arctic landscape, and also what emotions and behavioural changes the interactions invoke. Dog sledging and HAB literature within a tourism context provided background, using thematic analysis in my methodology and multiple methods to process the data, I uncovered three themes associated sub-themes supported with relevant data extracts (Table 2).

Theme one, bonding, co-creation, and interaction, unpacks data into two sub-themes: co-created interactions and throwntogetherness, connected the human, non-human and arctic landscape cognitively, emotionally, and physically, as pockets of value and meaning. The second theme was rhythm, corresponding to three sub-themes: reflection, time, and flow. Reflection related to spatial awareness, physically and metaphorically speaking. Tourist-mushers relationship to time also emerged and sub-theme three revealed narratives on climate and non-human social flow. Discovery mechanisms were uncovered from the data as theme three with three sub-themes: physical senses, emotions, and learning. Physical sense touchpoints are described that led to emotions such as empathy and trust and invoked learning for memory-making and mindfulness practices. An overview of themes and associated sub-themes is provided below.

	Theme	Sub-theme	Outcome
1	<b>Bonding, co-creation, and interaction</b>	Co-created interactions	Pockets of value and meaning
		Throwntogetherness	
2	<b>Rhythm</b>	Reflection	Interrelatedness
		Time	
		Flow	
3	<b>Discovery mechanisms</b>	Physical senses	Trust Empathy Memory-making Mindfulness
		Emotions	
		Learning	

**Table 2.** An overview of Themes and associated Sub-themes.

## **4.1 Theme 1: Bonding, co-creation, and interaction**

Theme one divides into two sub-themes, 1) Co-created interactions and 2) Thrown-togetherness. The former, explores the relationship between the tourist-mushers, the sledge dogs, and arctic landscapes to discover pockets of interaction, meaning and value through embodiment. The latter, examines how experiencescapes are co-created interactions with the arctic landscape, culturally with others within and outside of the tour group and with the sledge dogs. Notions of knowledge, ability and experience are exposed through emotional, mental, and physical connections. Although the concept of identity arose as a sub-context during pre-experience interviews, there was insufficient data to explore identity further in this theme.

### **4.1.1 Co-created interactions**

I recorded the interviewee's socio-demographics and prior knowledge systems, such as culture, identity, values (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998) and memories (Bærenholdt et al., 2004) to help understand their interactions between the dogs and the arctic landscape. Lindberg et al. (2014), as stated in the literature and theory chapters, highlight the importance of understanding what happens before and after an event to get a full picture of interactions and co-created positive experiences that contain a value. In agreement, Haraway (2003, 2008), Prebensen (2010, 2012), and Heimtun (2016) highlight relevant interaction pockets and co-created embodied experiences between humans and dogs, humans and arctic landscape, dogs and arctic landscape, humans and guide, dogs and guide, guide and arctic landscape.

A pocket as a term in the context of this study I relate to a collection of sensory inputs tangibly and intangibly to create, transfer or store knowledge cognitively, emotionally and physically in the body (embodied), which can be built upon and adjusted whilst travelling with the arctic landscape again and again. An example of a co-created interaction pocket can be conversed through a story about Indy the weather frog. Indy was a kind and affectionate soul, yet difficult to manage in a large kennel setting at times as he preferred his own company, but he could read multiple sensory inputs (to read the weather) like no other dog in my kennel. Indy could use his sensory inputs of the arctic landscape and embody them, then through his movement, behaviour cues and vocalisation, communicate that information to human and non-humans. As a musher, the surprise of an unpredicted storm was initially a cognitive learning outcome of interpreting the pocket of interaction to derive meaning and value from it. I could take evasive action cognitively, ensuring safety initially. But in the same situation many times to follow, the emotive memory stored in my body used the pocket of interactions I carried that triggered the

cognitive consciousness for action before the obvious cues came from Indy himself. I would check my GPS to confirm my subconscious suspicions like a sixth sense, adjust communication with other members of the team, perhaps stop and move the team formation around so we could drive through the edge of said storm. These pockets of co-created interactions bonded me with the arctic landscape and increased my respect for Indy's valuable contribution to the team.

Heimtun (2016) inspired me to use a co-creation example of the guide's role in northern light hunting, where I propose switching the traditional guide's role with the dog. In my observation notes, tourist-mushers focused on the human as a guide playing a traditional role pre-trip, one interviewee shares their reliance on the human guide:

Maybe how the dogs react on different people. They go with me this time, next time other people, I behave my way, other people behave their way, how can the dog manage to handle all these different people they go with this dog sledge. I mean if it's the people who's working here, they're different, but they know them. We are totally unknown to the dogs and how will they react, will they listen to me? will they listen to the guide because they are in front if I'm at the back? will they do it if I was on my own? It's ok if we are on a long, long line the dog is just following but if they were over there and I had to go there. I don't know if I could manage to get the dog to go out of the track, yeah, just to pass the other one. I don't know. I don't know how to do it. And what if I am the last one and there's no guide behind me, and my dogs are tired and they don't want to listen to me, don't want to run, and I see them just miles in front, I don't know. (Interviewee I)

In contrast, other interviewees acknowledged the sledge dog as an overlooked guide in post-trip interviews:

As a tourist, you're a kind of team with the dogs but also the dogs will follow their leader, and you always have the owner of the dog, the leader of the trip so they follow his tracks all the time of course. (Interviewee G)

In addition to proposing the dog as a guide, leaning on Lindberg et al., (2014) in the same vein as Heimtun (2016), I argue that a tourist-musher adds value to their own lived experience based on their co-created interactions with the dog guiding them in the arctic landscape. What happens before and after a trip, not just the trip itself, is just as important. Lindberg et al., (2014) noted that memories established from past experiences (p. 500) in my research; with dog sledging, along with memories produced from the musher's journey are reinforced by pre- and post-experience interviews, as well as provided images and videos. The total sum of a positive co-

created experience added value. One interviewee describes their experience and company two adds a comment of the tourist-mushers reflections during the trip versus guest book entries:

When you go skiing alone, it's just you and the nature but this animal thing makes it bigger because I think we belong to the earth both humans and animals and to do these nice things together for me is something very big. (Interviewee H)

I always ask how their experience went as I like to hear their feedback I asked them whether they physically felt they drove the dogs initially I find they talk more about themselves then sometimes you will get them saying that the dogs were amazing and when you read our guest book you realise that some guests are really attached to the dogs But there is more variation in that as they will actually write their dog team in the guestbook. And sometimes you get a guest that says this is my favourite and I don't want to leave this dog behind, so you see that there has a real relationship been built. However, that isn't the majority, I think the majority is about their own physical experience of what they did. (Company 2)

Embodiment increased value and satisfaction for the mushers where social interaction occurred, more when the experience was co-created with the dogs (Lindberg et al., (2014) than the human guide. Thus, behavioural changes were recorded during the trips, with revisit intentions post-trip, as one interviewee shared: "It gave me a lot of energy doing this dog sledge trip, so I've had good times since I got back" (Interviewee H).

In contrast to positive memories co-created interacting with the dogs and revisiting intentions, another interviewee stated effects on the tour and looking to the future differently:

I would like to come in the dark season when the light starts coming back and see the northern lights. I would like to take my two kids and let them experience the same, to show them the beautiful country we live in. I would like to come back and see more of Finnmark, but it doesn't have to be with the dogs. (Interviewee I)

Prebensen's (2010, 2012) business-grounded stakeholder research analyses value-creation through exchanging tangible and intangible capital. Intangible capital that can influence a sledge dog trip is described by Prebensen (2010) as knowledge and authority (p. 39). I posit the dogs hold this capital and transfer it to the tourist-mushers through pockets of interaction. Because dog language is a difficult connection for mushers to grasp in a short time for the types of journeys I studied, the musher's physical senses are heightened to understand what cues the dogs send, to explore the arctic landscape and interpret their experience. Prebensen (2010, p.

40 cite Vargo & Lush, 2004) service-dominant logic (SD Logic), whereby in the case of dog sledging, the tourist-mushers and the dogs interact and co-create value. The story of Indy the weather frog springs to mind as an example.

My data revealed the concept of teamwork as an outcome of co-created value between tourist-mushers and dogs. Interviewees expressed this concept before their trip where Prebensen (2010, 2012) aligns with Granås (2015) notion of kinship and how it is transferred through materiality and technologies from a dog's body to the musher (2015, p. 307). An interviewee expressed this as:

I think that the dogs over years and years have been with humans and naturally there's a connection between the two species and I think to be able to work alongside them in a tourist way, in this scenario, is the best type of way you can be with an animal because it is mans best friend ya know and if you go on a tourist trip, it's the one animal you can really rely on that ya know, will cooperate with the whole trip and enjoy it just as much as you are, 'cos they really are. The minute they're barking so much at the start, and the minute you go, it's just silence, and I think that says a lot, I think. (Interviewee K)

Building stakeholder relationships is a vehicle to transfer knowledge and enhance value (Prebensen, 2012, p. 185-186). Sledge dogs as a stakeholder, transferred their knowledge on how to travel in the arctic landscape by sharing information via the senses of the tourist-mushers. These were via body cues, verbalisation and movement. Not all of these were picked up consciously by the musher. Still, based on my observations as a tour guide, the educational briefings the companies provided before the trip and answering tourist-mushers' questions during the trip, provided awareness of some of the communication cues. For example, interviewee C described their team of sledge dogs happily travelling through the flat bottom of a small valley one day on a training exercise when suddenly they veered up the side of the right incline to take a different route. They tried to correct them back to the path they had in mind, but they persisted until they realised why they opposed their instructions. The tourist-musher saw the open water they were travelling towards, so the dogs must have sensed under their feet with vibrations that they were heading onto a lake that had not properly formed ice thick enough of ice to carry them safely. Picking up on communication with my physical senses and utilising dog language through their cues took many years to develop myself as a musher. Yet the concept of navigation as a transfer of knowledge in the arctic landscape was endorsed in my data by two interviewees as valuable:

So, for me, it's just more at one with the nature, and it's a good way to go, it's like going into the bush in Australia on a horse. You can ride into places you couldn't normally go to experience and really experience the nature – how it works and what other animals are about. (Interviewee F)

We were taken off-piste with no tracks to follow so to speak, so that was nice, as you wouldn't normally get to see that side of it but at the same time, you probably have to know what you're doing. (Interviewee E)

#### **4.1.2 Throwntogetherness**

Throwntogetherness, natureculture and becoming with are concepts Granås (2015, 2018) put into practical terms in the dog sledging phenomenon analysing the fluid relationships between animals, people, and technologies that build on Haraway's work (2003, 2008). Connecting the arctic landscape, the dogs and culture with others within the tour group and outside of it, was a relationship-related topic that emerged from the data. Discussing the relationships between the dogs, between tourist-musher and the dogs, and tourist-musher and the arctic landscape was important for the mushers, as noted from the data. The tourist-mushers described notions of knowledge, ability and experience, and also questioned themselves. From my observations, these notions were difficult to measure from the dog's perspective, yet the tourist-mushers generally reflected upon the trip that overlapped with contexts of weather and landscape. One tourist-musher conveyed natureculture as:

The most amazing thing that took place was the interaction between dogs and man and nature. The silence and the possibility to think, you have a lot of time that no one talks, no noise, just silence and beautiful nature. (Interviewee H)

Physical and mental education was provided to the tourist-musher in the introductory briefings that took place adjacent to the kennel before entering the dog yard. The briefings took place in a lavo-type structure or around an open fire. The tourist-mushers were sometimes split into two groups, one supplied with refreshments and had a chance to ask questions while the other group took the physical part of the tour. One company manager commented on their observations of the tourist-mushers during this pocket of interaction:

The guests have very romantic preconceptions of dog sledging, very quiet, middle of nowhere, a kind of dream they have in their head that they want to be able to do it. Being on the sledge is a fun part but pre-bonding and building a relationship with your dog team

prior to your trip is a very important perspective, as they don't have any concept most of them of what an Alaskan husky is. (Company 1)

Prior to their trip, tourist-mushers reflected on their expectations, reservations and coping tools they had already thought considered and they elaborated on making up for the gaps they had in their knowledge and skills. Interviewees exhibited how connections were contemplated regarding the dogs (animals), others (people) and the equipment (materialities). For some interviewees, culture was an elusive concept as the arctic landscape was somewhere no one lived until they came across the Sami herding reindeer for example, "In Soussjavri we saw a Sami lady sitting outside of her house dressed in her traditional clothes which I find that exotic and interesting" (Interviewee H). Many interviewees were keener on connecting with the dogs than seeking other cultures and being social with people. My field notes did not reveal many direct associations with seeking and understanding of Norwegian culture. This was due to the context of being in the Arctic, tourist-mushers echoed they thought the culture was unique to the area, dog sledging or the broader Scandinavian term, and not a representation of the whole nation of Norway.

Six interviewees expressed connection to the dogs as a high priority where they would have a similar relationship to the dogs based on their own pet dog experience and watching videos or television. For example, through the value of kindness, interviewee C said: "If you are kind to the dog, then the dog will do anything for you". For three interviewees, there was a clear distinction between their pet dog experience and the concept of an Arctic sledge dog. Most tourist-mushers I encountered as a tour guide conveyed both their desire and parallel doubts on their ability to handle the dogs considering most trips booked were quite short in duration. Interviewee I said, "I hope I can find that dog, a particular dog from all the others, how they look and maybe get some contact with them". One tourist-musher I had observed before a trip arrived with a foot in a plaster cast, but they were still determined to sledge themselves to fulfil their dream. They lasted less than ten minutes before the guide had to take over to drive them back to base inside the sledge, but they were so thrilled to have achieved the dream. Another tourist-musher arrived using an oxygen mask, dragging a tank behind their wheelchair that was pushed by their carer. The carer informed me they had brought a backpack for the oxygen tank to go in and that he would hold onto her tightly. These two events showed me that some people have little idea of what is required regarding knowledge and skills to dog sledge, yet their motivation is high and they throw themselves into the challenge.



These challenges had to be picked up by the tourism operators and solved quickly to allow the trip to go ahead and to ensure a base level of satisfaction for the other tourist-mushers. After the briefings, the tourist-mushers moved into the dog yard, where the physical trip started. They witnessed the dog's energy in the yard, high volume and eager movement, the dogs singing from the top of their dog boxes or already attached to the sledge, vocalising on things that make them happy. For many tourist-mushers, this throwntogetherness of noise and technologies was intense and daunting as they could not interpret it or relate to it easily. Pre-trip interviews revealed the following doubts and lack of knowledge:

I don't know whether I'm allowed to pet them [dogs] or anything or sort of mingle with them, but I'd like to if I can. I have no idea how to even steer or anything, so I guess you've got one foot for the brake on one side, is it reins to steer with? (Interviewee A)

I think it would be nice to have a go in the sledge to start with, to get used to how the dogs run and learn how the driver handles them if you like and then you can, even if it was only 10-15 minutes, you can get an idea of how they are and how you should be able to do it as well. (Interviewee E)

Post-trip, the tourist-mushers talked about having a greater appreciation for the dogs, the knowledge passed from the dogs to them, that they value and that contributes to their quality of adventure, such as: "We had some bad storm on the way back but we all felt very safe with the right clothes and [the guide] in front" (Interviewee G).

In the briefings, the tourist-mushers were informed that the dog teams were allocated with the tourist-mushers' physical condition in mind and that the dogs used for tourist activity are unlikely to be the dogs selected for a professional racing team. In my field notes, three main reasons were given, 1) fear of dog injuries through tourist-mushers mishandling of them, 2) tourist-mushers lack of experience, and 3) the tourist winter season also falls within the same period as the race season. The tourist-mushers were also informed of the minimum confidence and control required, for example, not letting go of the sledge and using the braking systems. Evidence of this interaction point taken on board by the tourist-mushers was stated in one interview as advice for anyone else taking a trip in the future: "Whatever you do, don't let go of the sledge. I think it's impossible to communicate with the dogs, you have to use the brake to slow them down" (Interviewee I).

If tourist-mushers lack knowledge, ability, and previous experience with animals and/or dog sledge equipment, their trip can often be mismatched as valuable experiences (Lindberg et al., 2014, p 504). This resulted in a negative experience if the trip was too physically or mentally demanding compared to the tourist-mushers everyday life. Interviewee C told of another member of their tour group that almost refused to join the trip when informed there was limited access to toilets en route, then did not toilet for the first three days until they were forced to. A Scandinavian interviewee commented, “It must be a funny experience for those that come from a town to go to the toilet in nature” (Interviewee I). The data described the dog sledging activity as highly unfamiliar without prior education, expectation, or experience. The tourist-mushers verbalised it as an over-stimulating activity or load on the physical senses both from a negative and positive standpoint within the same trip. Negative associations included:

There is a lot of logistics with so many dogs on this trip, it's hard to sit down and relax, a lot more logistics than I expected feeding the dogs, sourcing water from the river, and tents. (Interviewee G)

The dog head from another team stuck in the pointy end of my sled was the most challenging. I couldn't get off my sled, I was too frightened that something would happen to this other dog – screamed for help. (Interviewee F)

In contrast, positive experiences were recorded by tourist-mushers post-trip:

I think it is something very strong to experience these beautiful landscapes and then have these five dogs in front of you, strong, eager to just pull you away, it was just more than I had expected. These dogs were very [pause], I maybe thought they would fight more and if they got loose they would run into each other but I could see they were very well socialised, they had been used to a lot of people; hugging them, talking to them, maybe people did things they didn't understand but they were very patient and had a very, very, good temper(ament) – working very much as a team. (Interviewee H)

Compared to the emotions analysed in the data of theme two rhythm, positive reactions were observed overall, even when interviewees indicated bad experiences. Prebensen (2008) describes the requirement of physical training and knowing the dogs to gain experience in the activity, which the mushers most likely lack but are unaware of. Interviewee D confirmed this on reflection of their trip “I would recommend the whole experience but be wary of the safety side of it and get fit”. Jack London's (1963) descriptions of working with dogs during the gold rush era in America noted the musher's “new appreciation of their own body and mind

connection” through their experience of dog sledging (London, 1963, p. 114). Tourist-mushers reflected on the differences between pet and working dogs pre-trip:

I also see people who come on the tour with me who treat them like their pet dog, and ya know, that quite annoys me, their lovely, their gorgeous, their friendly, they jump up when they shouldn't, they do all the things a normal dog does and then to me their just another working dog. (Interviewee F)

Dogs are more like a member of the family, especially family dogs, I think it's different with the dogs used for sledging; they keep 50-60 dogs, and the relationship is much different than with just one dog. (Interviewee G)

Post-trip interviews revealed how tourist-mushers were surprised by their interaction and relationship-building with the dogs:

We can have the same weather down here in the South with the cabin but we don't do trips, we stay inside or maybe just short trips for an hour or so... ..we overcome it because of the dog and hold on, I must say I'm amazed the dogs just kept going and going, they seemed happy no matter what, so they became wet as well... ..in this kind of weather you just felt safe with the dogs, they will take care of you and bring you to safety. (Interviewee G)

From my field notes, during a trip, an ideal mindset was also presented to the tourist-mushers that prepared them mentally for the extreme setting of the arctic landscape. Conditions of being outside reported by the interviewees included mental and physical challenges, slippery ice, big wind, lots of snow, extremely cold and unable to keep their hands and toes warm. In some cases, tourist-mushers were advised on how to prepare for the climate and activity by the company before travelling and/or provided additional clothing with accompanying education on arrival at the location. As many tourist-mushers are not prepared mentally or physically for the challenge, it can become a major adjustment that must be made quickly to ensure the trip progresses well. One example was providing extra clothes or blankets for their comfort, even if it was for a 45-minute taster trip around the local woods. One company stated:

The guests have very romantic preconceptions of dog sledging, very quiet, middle of nowhere, a kind of dream they have in their head that they want to be able to do it. (Company 1)

Another interviewee reflected on the accessibility of Arctic nature:

I don't know, I think it was that sense of exploring, somewhere I had never been before and it seemed such a kind of, when you don't know the whole sledge dog world and you don't know how it works and stuff like that, it seems like such a romanticised idea and almost unreachable, you think its going to be something that they do in the north pole or something like that, that you would never have the chance to do in your lifetime and when I realised it was actually accessible from a flight from London, I suddenly thought actually this something I should try and do myself. (Interviewee K)

Safety and unpredictability were also concepts repeated by tourist-musher interviewees and in my observations as a tour guide connected to technologies and climate. Lindberg et al. (2014) note that people choose activities that can take them out of their comfort zone and reconstruct their being in another way (p. 500). Prebensen (2010) also notes that the unpredictability of dogs and humans in wild nature proves appealing (p. 48). The motivation of the unknown, the line of safety, following in polar explorers' or more modern sledge dog racing footsteps, was noted in the pre-interviews:

I just hope my equipment works, but I don't really know. I have not experienced that type of cold. I've been skiing and stuff at minus twenty and that was bloody freezing but nothing like the Arctic. Robert Sorlie is my hero, a Norwegian musher who runs Finnmarksløpet and also the first non-American to win the great race in Alaska Iditarod – I've got all the DVD's of the races, I've read loads and loads of books and watched every video I could get from America. (Interviewee C)

A series started running on the arctic and then I started reading books on the great explorers of the polar regions and stuff like Captain Oates, Captain Scott, mainly British based explorers just because I grew up with a military family background, so they were, my dad was always telling me about these people and he was a royal marine commando as well, so he was doing arctic warfare training in Narvik for a few years. So I think a combination of being kind of, from a young age, being told about these places and that the explorers that went there and then combining with generally a bit more of a focus media wise on the arctic regions now as a possible holiday destination, it has become more, ya know, people chasing the northern lights, people wanting to go see a polar bear in Svalbard but I just yeah, I think, I guess media and everything like that, opens up to you what you can actually go and do. (Interviewee K)

You also need to be made more aware of the dangers of it as such, if you like, 'cos to me it's quite a dangerous sport, it's like if you could call it a sport and if you've not done it before you don't really know what to look out for, does that make sense? (Interviewee E)

Two Finnmark dog sledging heroes Gunnar Kaasen and Leonhard Seppala participated in the famous Nome serum run of 1925 that inspired the Iditarod sledge dog race in the USA. Yet, neither were mentioned in the tourism product briefings. This was an interesting point raised in the data by three interviewees with background information on sledge dog racing and as observed by the American cruise ship tourist-mushers. When I raised the issue with the companies, they replied they found little relevance to contextualise and affirm the local hero's connection to the area or sport in today's tourism climate. A further illustration of the unpredictability concept that proved appealing was shared post-trip by an interviewee:

They warned me not under any circumstances was I to go anywhere near these dog sledge huskies (tied up at a snow scooter stopover) as they were so dangerous. So, I squatted down out of biting range as it seemed friendly, I offered him my hand and he licked it to death, I thought this is unusual for an animal that's going to eat you alive, and that's what triggered my interest. (Interviewee F)

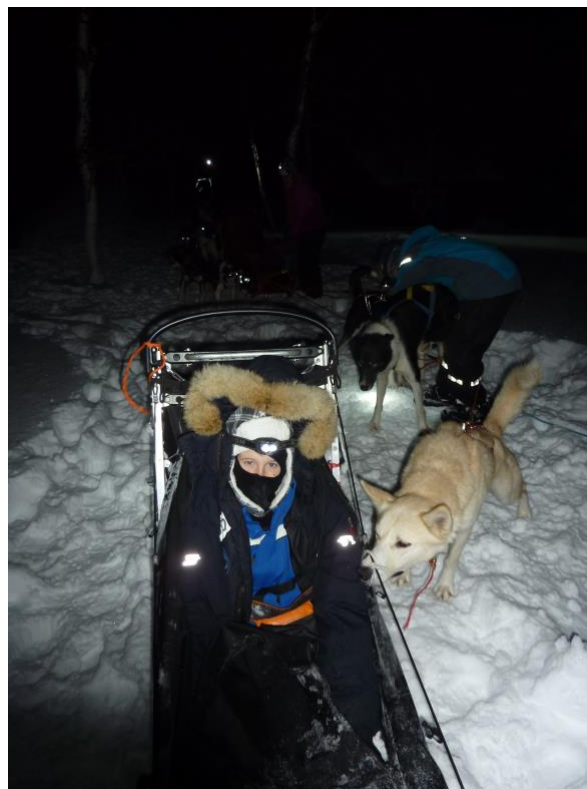
Interviewee E also voiced concern for their children's welfare in the photographs they supplied:



**Figure 3.** “A little stop off for a bit to eat and a thaw out. Kids were starting to feel the cold by now” (Interviewee E)



**Figure 4.** “Lunch provided complete with reindeer skins to keep you warm”. (Interviewee E)



**Figure 5.** “All wrapped up. Safety was a concern with the kids, but all worked out well”. (Interviewee E)

Yet in their post-interview, interviewee E acknowledged an emotional reaction of trust between the owner and their dogs which they reflected on:

I think we were lucky that every time we stopped, we could pat them and tell them how well they did – I don't know how close I would want to get as I don't know them, but if you're trusting the owner as such then it was good, you could get as close as you wanted too really. I think dogs help you feel a bit safer as well when they're around you – so you can feel scared of them but feel safe around them too. (Interviewee E)

The distraction of taking videos, photographs or even singing (or screaming) can help, yet in doing so, incidentally creates and records a relationship to the activity. Edensor (2000) throws light on the concept of destabilisation in terms of creating more self-awareness coupled with an activity of unpredictability resulting in “pleasure as an escape from everyday life” (Edensor, 2000, p. 338). Interviewee H expressed this self-awareness:

I also sang for these dogs, because when you stand there and you look at this beautiful landscape, you sometimes feel like singing and then they turn around and look at me again too, almost like – what are you doing now? Most of the pictures are in my brain, I think its important not to be preoccupied with the phone and take pictures. For me its important to be in this experience without having to think about the phone or the pictures. The beautiful nature is not easy to get on a photo, you have it on your mind and that's enough. (Interviewee H)

Lindberg & Eide (2016) identified tensions between tourists with different cultural backgrounds, for example, Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian origin, the former being able to relate more to the climate with relevant survival know-how in the context of this research. One non-Scandinavian interviewee confirms Lindberg & Eide's observations as:

So, for me, it's just more at one with nature, and it's a good way to go, it's like going into the bush in Australia on a horse. You can ride into places you couldn't normally go to experience and really experience the nature – how it works and what other animals are about. (Interviewee F)

One fearful male interviewee reflected this tension that reduced the degree of embodiment. He told me how he thought he lacked the skills and knowledge of a local to make the most out of the trip, but if his wife liked it, then he would like to come back and do it again for real:

I think the level of interaction (with the dogs) was right and if they do it day in day out [guides], it's very difficult for them to remember how hard it actually is for a newcomer. The big drops, if someone else was weaker or inexperienced or scared, could've been dangerous, the steep areas off-track were dangerous. (Interviewee D)

His wife also expressed concern post-trip that her sledge accident weakened her embodiment opportunity to gazing level. This, in turn also lowered her access to co-creation and social-cultural meaning for the rest of her trip when the guide had to take over driving the sledge and continue communicating with the dogs. “I fell off a couple of times, I think I'd prefer to be in the sledge rather than driving” (Interviewee E). This tourist-musher had repeatedly indicated to the company of her concerns about safety and ability before the trip started. A video filmed by her husband and son in the sledge behind captured the moment she crashed her sledge and afterwards where the embodiment process continued at a pace for them:

[Father] ja! ja!, Look at that view there, wow!, Look at this, it's amazing yeah?! [Child humming in the sledge filming]. Ja! Go on boys, Good boys, [Dogs speed up on the flat terrain], oh yes; yee-ha!, [Child humming winter wonderland Christmas song]. [Father] That was funny watching mummy wasn't it? I don't know how she held on, [Child in the sledge behind] Must've really hurt tho' I reckon, and her face in the snow. She was dragged along on her face, she went for quite a way as well, we mustn't laugh at her until we are home. [Father] We can laugh at the end of this, not yet tho, look sideways to see the mountains to the right. [Child humming] Good boys. [Speeding up downhill: Child] woah, bumpy, bumpy, C'mon doggies, uh, what happened? [Father] Stooooo. (Interviewee D video)

This example of interaction between a family's experience before, during and after a trip highlights the aspects of throwntogetherness and how pockets of interaction between each other and becoming with (or without) the dogs impact the value and meaning created of the activity. The number of companies establishing experience-based products to venture into the arctic landscape is ever-increasing. The tourist-mushers accessed this wild arctic nature in multiple ways, from local short hourly taster sessions to more demanding multiple-day journeys following explorers' footsteps. Competing in long-distance dog sledging is an influencing factor for many of the tourism kennels in Northern Norway. Training dog sledge teams and competing is a lifestyle that requires significant financial support that cannot be easily acquired alongside traditional work and family responsibilities. Still, due to a yearly population decline affecting employment opportunities in Northern Norway (The Norwegian Government's Arctic Policy Report, 2021, January 26, p. 2), a natural development has been to promote sledge dogs for tourism activities (Jæger & Viken, 2010, p. 133). Running tourism activities as additional economic security comes with constraints and thus becomes a paradox.



From my field notes with the companies, they shared that to sustain a living out of dog sledging as a tourism activity, the number of guests required during the short winter season had forced kennels into difficult issues relating to breeding volumes and kennel management reliant on unstable volunteer systems. Before a trip, the tourist-mushers frequently raised issues regarding the sustainability of dog sledging based on my field notes and pre-interviews. The tourist-mushers reflected upon and questioned finances, animal ethics and standards of care which might affect their trip. PETA was an organisation often mentioned as the tourist-mushers wondered if dog sledge tourism and competitive racing had been affected by animal rights in the same way as America. Interviewee A provided a typical comment made by others as to why they were motivated by the trip, but not wanting to insinuate any direct reflection on the product they were about to take a trip with: “Just see what it's like and to experience the dogs and how they're treated and everything”. Another interviewee provides another typical reflection in relation to their knowledge of dog sledge tourism:

It's this wild animal, if you don't race them, it's this crazy animal that can kill, and there can also be this thing working with humans, but the crazy dog, I would say, is raised by the crazy person because they don't know what they are doing. They [the public] have a negative reaction to sledge dogs when the press report attacking animals/sheep etc., so how the TV follows, Finnmarksløpet puts them in a different, more positive light. (Interviewee H)

In response to my main research question, sledge dog products control how tourist-mushers connect to the arctic landscape through narratives provided based on their own values and knowledge systems that do not always incorporate the tourist-mushers ways of knowing. From my field note observations, tourist-mushers are expected to adapt to information generally passed one way and not co-created with the non-human interactions of the activity.

To summarise theme one, bonding, co-creation, and interaction, provided insight on sub-themes of co-created interaction and throwntogetherness. In answer to my main research question, the data described and discussed the connection of tourist-musher to the arctic landscape in multiple ways. Bonding was described as both important to the human-non-human aspect in addition to the outcomes leaning on the side of human benefit. There was evidence of the sledge dog viewed as a stakeholder and also an acknowledgment of the dog's role as a guide in the tourist-mushers co-created experience. By overcoming challenges, the visitor's embodiment of throwntogetherness and becoming with the dogs, materialities and the arctic landscape is a key

factor in developing pockets of meaning and value through the physical sense in answer to my sub-research question two. Knowledge transfer pre- and during the experience in addition to memories that developed post-experience, were key to ensuring a successful trip. Emotion was a common link between the sub-themes elaborated on in theme three, discovery mechanisms.

## **4.2 Theme 2: Rhythm**

Three interconnected sub-themes make up theme two 1) reflection, 2) time and 3) flow. It was very difficult to isolate these three terms when describing them as the data showed clear overlaps within the same interviewee stories. Reflections were raised in the data relating to physical and metaphorical spatial awareness, accessibility to the Arctic, and comparison of the past and present tourist-mushers' experience of how the landscape was perceived. Sense-making through the time concept arose from the data as a sub-theme to rhythm. Lightness and dark formed a distinct pattern, as did the expected tourist-mushers' relationship to climate and social flow with the non-human. Types of flow were described in sub-theme three that, revealed peak experiences. Due to having insufficient data, I have excluded social interaction between humans from theme two, as the data focus was strongly on favour of the non-human.

### **4.2.1 Reflection**

My field notes repeated a narrative by tourist-mushers self-reflection on the dogs or the Arctic nature using metaphorical and physical spatial awareness expressions. Freedom was a term expressed and subjectively related to their own life cycle and what essential values they held. Two interviewees gave their reflections associated with freedom; “When we get up to my age, it was really lovely not to have to work so hard to see this nature” (Interviewee H) and:

One of the reasons Norwegians come back to Arctic Norway is for the variation in culture and mountain landscape from the south of Norway. They’ve found a way to explore their own country with no engines. Less impact on the environment and getting as close to nature as possible with feelings of freedom. (Interviewee I).

Nordic cultures rank high in worldwide happiness surveys, with Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Norway ranking top ten based on a three-year average 2020-2022 (Helliwell et al., 2023, p. 34), partly due to life-work balance and connection to beautiful nature. I found this point interesting that through dog sledging requiring no noise or pollution output, Norwegian interviewees needed to seek freedom at a deeper level than what they are known for. Dog sledging also provided accessibility to the arctic landscape in line with existing cultural beliefs

and at a point accessing nature becomes more difficult. The Scandinavian tourist-mushers embodied a connection with the arctic landscape in new ways that enforced a positive experience supporting revisit intentions (Everingham et al., 2021).

Jæger and Olsen (2005) pointed to the concept of time that structure new ways of embodying the arctic landscape to create emotions and behavioural changes through dog sledging. This finding of rhythm as a theme interprets my second sub-research question, what emotions and behavioural changes are brought into motion by tourist-musher interactions? One interviewee provides a reflection using their senses as:

To be a part of the nature, to listen to the silence and there's only you and the dog and you hear the sledge on the snow, that's the only thing that you hear then it goes in a rather slow rhythm. (Interviewee I)

Another interviewee reflects on the stage in their life cycle by comparing to childhood memories of using technology to access the arctic landscape. The tourist-mushers recalled making an original sense of connecting to nature that they sought more of. The empirical evidence supports Lindberg et al., (2014) DEM model in the context that comprised of three elements, 1) the physical tacit context being taught to ski or dog sledge, 2) previous knowledge recalling memory and 3) communicating socially with family. Sense-making was positively effective as the tourist-musher reflected on their own sentiments, growing ambitions, and social aspects all made possible by the dogs that affected future thoughts:

The first time I went skiing, my father took me for a long days skiing to a top like this and we were going along and I could see behind the top, this endless white, it took my breath, I feel I can't get it in enough, its so fantastic. So from that day, I learnt to love nature. (Interviewee I)

I was very much looking forward to see the ocean from the top of the mountains, that day it was perfect with sun, I'll remember that for all my life. It's such a great view, its such great nature, here where I live its people everywhere and noise and cars. You don't experience that huge wild nature, its very different, a wilderness in a different way from Southern Norway (Interviewee G)

From the perspective of the company, one manager summarised becoming with staff as an extension of family whilst on a trip:

It's why they come back to the same place. It's the peace, the atmosphere, it's almost like being home, your away but it feels like home as its so small, its not a big hotel, we feel like we are part of the family, so I think it's the interaction between the people working here and the guests that make them feel very welcome that they want to return to this place. (Company 1)

In pre-experience interviews and visual data, the sub-theme reflection (as Ingold, 1993 would describe it) quantified land as a term in the traditional seeing sense homogeneously. Initially, it was difficult to dig deeper into the patterns or meanings. The typical blue sky, white mountains stretching for miles, with reference to over thirty indistinguishable reflection-related terms or phrases. Interviewee, I confirmed another way of seeing being with the dogs: "The white vidda is fantastic, with the dogs its another way of seeing it instead of walking or skiing" (Interviewee I). Although interviewee I was one of many interviewees who provided a significant repeated narrative to support my argument of the dog's relevance in connecting to the arctic landscape, the thematic analysis provided a different perspective once I separated pre- and post-interviews. During the post-interviews, tourist-mushers describe an Ingold (1993) theoretically inspired qualitative story of a heterogeneous landscape. Dog sledging is a way of accessing the tourist-mushers perception of abstract arctic nature in becoming with (Haraway, 2003, 2008), or drawn into weaving the tapestry (Ingold, 1993, p. 153) of their own world, containing interaction with multiple entities. A statement from one company manager supports my argument:

Focus isn't on the nature during a trip, it's on the dogs actually. They are in the nature through the dogs, they are not busy looking around, non of them are, I don't think I've ever heard them mention the scenery or quietness when they get out, they are most concerned about the dogs. (Company 1)

#### **4.2.2 Time**

Although time is an obvious construct to include in my findings chapter, Lindberg et al., (2014) DEM model highlights the importance of time in developing a tourist-musher experience through embodiment influencing their identity and memory. The first aspect of time is sense-making, which influences a continual cycle of meaning before, throughout, and after post-activity. My data revealed a repeated narrative of stillness that influenced tourist-mushers meanings across the four different aspects in body, in interaction, in context and in time according to the DEM model. My field notes recorded repeated narratives pre-trip as the interviewees: "It's just something you don't do on a day-to-day basis" (Interviewee E) and "I wanted to experience new things, find quiet time when nothing happens" (Interviewee H). Post

interviews echoed revisit intentions mentioned in the reflection sub-theme such as: “I’d go for longer next time” (Interviewee D). One tourist-musher reflected apprehension of events during their trip: “After a steep, bumpy decline ‘we then we came to some forest country and it was just a whole different landscape, still and quiet, it was so amazingly different” (Interviewee F). Another interviewee reflects on time that was relatable in ensuring a positive trip:

These dogs were working really good together, you could see when we were starting they were quiet, they were a team, these stood there waiting for their time, the dogs were nice to each other I this group so I was comfortable with the dogs I had. (Interviewee I)

One company manager reflected on what their tourist-musher concept of time was when taking a booking for an extended trip: “Oh my god, what are they going to do for four days? But that’s exactly what they say they want to do, nothing” (Company 1). In the traditional sense, the manager thought they were expected to fill time by way of constantly entertaining and stimulating the tourist-mushers. Yet when the tourist-mushers encounter the arctic landscape, they are forced to enter a different perspective on time. Arctic climate time. Not just encountering the silent landscape but silence from the tourist-mushers themselves. From my field note observations, this concept is known to managers of sledge dog tourism companies that is not transferred to tourist-mushers they take out on trips. I discovered through my observations evidence of disconnection to their own cultural time relationships, a kind of disconnection from their everyday life and then a reconnection to what most people crave more of in everyday life, that of time. One company manager shared a comment on revisit intentions and time relationships:

Most of them actually talk about coming back to do this because they love the winter and they love this quietness, because then they talk about the quietness and the winter and the nature and ya know, they would like to have more time. (Company 1)

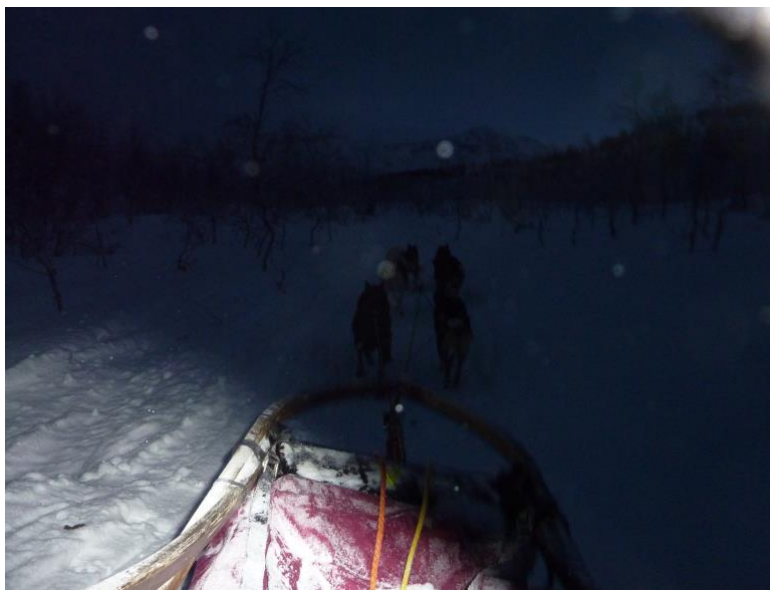
Interactions with darkness and light provided positive and negative connotations in constant flux that influenced the tourist-mushers embodiment of the arctic landscape. Jóhannsson and Lund, (2017, p. 184) situate lightscapes as dependent on each other with light being more visually distinct in culture. “To be wrapped up in darkness demands that one moves with its flow and adjusts to its rhythm” (Jóhannsson & Lund, 2017, p. 185), without complete control (p. 189). Terminology of magic and fairytale wrapped the interviewees descriptions as they encountered darkness early in the day or wonderful sunrises and sunsets.

It was cold but nice and dry, got dark very early. It was a bit more fairytale-like, when it got dark and you could see all the snow that had been not touched, all glistening and going to a log cabin for tea – that was amazing. (Interviewee E)

The tourist-mushers stories told of succumbing to the rhythm of Arctic climate time whether from Scandinavia or not: “Although I’m used to the climate and changeable weather skiing in Norway, it’s a whole new challenge being with the dogs” (Interviewee I). Two tourist-mushers photographs demonstrated their adjustment to Arctic climate time with their visual impressions:



**Figure 6.** “Wow! 13:15 and it’s getting dark, not used to that!” (Interviewee D)



**Figure 7.** “Didn’t realise we were going for so long, out for 5 hours or so into the darkness, scary! Proper Dark!” (Interviewee D)



**Figure 8.** “View outside early morning day 2. Perfect”  
(Interviewee F)



**Figure 9.** “Sun going down at Molliskjok” (Interviewee F)



**Figure 10.** “Sunsets always beautiful to see, and so vivid here”  
(Interviewee F)

These tourist-mushers impressions were typical of other interviewees' photographs and videos that captured the transitional points of experiencescapes, i.e., sunsets and sunrises, times of day they would normally relate to differently. For some interviewees, the contrast of colour, vibrancy of colour in the sky or even lack of colour struck them as unfamiliar. Where the white rolling hills of snow blended into a pale sky that made landscape and sky indistinguishable, it supported a feeling of freedom or lack of time they struggled to access in their daily life. Lindberg et al. (2014) outline how the familiar and tacit of daily life create meaning and the unfamiliar results in reflection and action. Thus, time as a sub-theme became an extension of the previous sub-theme reflection (p. 494).

### **4.2.3 Flow**

The situational factors such as emotion, the degree of interaction and perceived risk by the musher can incite a flow (Prebensen, 2010, p. 42). Emotion is unpacked in theme three, but in this sub-theme of flow in theme two, I concentrate on types of flow described in the data, predominantly related to climate and social interactions between tourist-musher and dogs.

Peak experiences (Whittaker, 2012) or flow, as referred to by Lindberg et al., (2014, p. 498) provide evidence of embodiment due to being immersed in the tourism activity (p. 491). Flow was reported by three interviewees below, two of whom relived their peak experiences evoking crying whilst recalling their stories to me during their interviews. Other transformations included a shift in knowledge and respect for the dogs and a further understanding of what the arctic landscape was:

After some days I thought that maybe they started to recognise me, especially one of them, I related to and also kept her in my tent. We went all the way to Nordkapp but, we couldn't take the sled up there because there was not enough snow and too much wind, but we took some dogs [to the edge] to see the view, so I brought this one [dogs name]. (Interviewee G)

The landscape was more than I expected, I had always thought that Finnmark was no mountains, very flat but there were big mountains... ...when we were crossing the big lake, the sky was dark blue and there was these white mountains in the background and for me it was magic and was almost like a religious experience – you almost felt like crying. (Interviewee H)



The second point the data raised under the theme of flow, is an extension of time from the second theme. Lindberg et al., (2014) DEM model recognises that sense-making can produce flow when the tourist-mushers can successfully negotiate a switch between environments (p. 497). The data reflected transitional points of experiencescapes the mushers had reflections on micro levels between stages of a trip, such as from the dog yard to the river in the first few minutes: “The 45 dogs were very eager to start, they were in good shape, very excited but then they calmed down and we got into a good tempo” (Interviewee H). The interviewees indicated flow in transitional points of their trip when they retold their stories: “At one point you felt like you were in a fairy-tale, going along really nicely and so quiet but nice” (Interviewee E) and:

With this many dogs, it was good to see how they interacted with each other. There was not much quarrelling and getting angry at each other, I would have thought there would be much more fighting, but it was not. There was good harmony with the dogs and with the people also. (Interviewee H)

Another type of flow expression from my own experience was also picked up on by the tourist-mushers via informal conversations, the communication of social flow between dogs. It was in the first season training in Finnmark that I noticed a different type of social flow between the dogs due to the fact we were taking the slower pace of long-distance mushing than that of UK sprint mushing. The dogs communicated flow by kissing each other as they ran. Over a short period of time observing this interaction, I interpreted a correlation between the efficient work of the team and the speed of pace covering the terrain that resulted in this acknowledgement of optimum flow between them. I discussed my interpretation of this interaction with tourist-mushers when they mentioned they had witnessed it too. My interpretation made sense to them, and the reaction was one of understanding the capabilities the tourist-mushers had on co-creating flow by understanding what was required of them in keeping the pace steady, which in turn raised their respect towards the dogs and overall satisfaction.

To summarise theme two, I build on Lindberg et al.'s (2014) point of contrasting a tourist-mushers everyday life to create meaning, reflection, and action, that weaves together the thread of the theme rhythm. Reflection, time, and flow emerged as sub-themes from my data where tourist-mushers disconnected from their daily life and reconnected to themselves in answer to my main research question on how tourist-mushers connect to the arctic landscape. Reflections and comparisons of experience were revealed that resulted in revisit intentions. Concepts of time described interactions with light and dark, resulting in a transition to Arctic climate time

through sense-making. Relived peak experiences also expressed embodiment due to immersion in the activity or intense emotive reaction. Peak experiences were an expected outcome in the data as identified by professional mushers and my own experiences. This is a significant finding that tourism companies can use to develop their experiences with using the DEM model.

### **4.3 Theme 3: Discovery mechanisms**

Theme three is broken down into three sub-themes, 1) physical senses, 2) emotions and 3) learning. First, I summarise the senses used by the tourist-mushers and dogs, and how tourist-mushers situate themselves through them and travel through the arctic landscape together. Second, I present positive and negative emotions and the most predominant trust and empathy. Third, learning through an experience provided new reflections for the tourist-mushers as they embodied their experience, created memories and discover mindfulness. Theme three, does not include descriptions of smell and taste physical senses as there was insufficient supportive data.

#### **4.3.1 Physical senses**

Dog sledging is a multi-sensory activity using sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. Kirshenblatt-Gimblet (1998) eloquently notes there is a new direction of self-conscious shift towards the visitor through their experience using the engagement of the senses, emotions and imagination once defined by object relationships. As stated in the chapter theoretical toolbox, humans' and dogs' senses vary in capabilities and interpret differently. Across all the interviews, sensory reflections were commented on the most, rather than emotional reactions or connections and interactions. Of all the traditional physical human senses, smell was not supported in my data, and taste was only inferred when mentioning rest stops within the photos and video data. The most dominant sense across the entire data collection revealed sight, followed by sound and then touch. Positive sensory input experiences were largely referred to in the pre-interviews, with fewer neutral or negative mentions equally. In the post-interviews, the number of senses mentioned positively outweighed the negative, as in the photographs and videos. However, there was almost equal standing between neutral and negative mentions in a given context.

Fennell (2022, cites Haanpää et al. 2021) and reflects Haraway (2008) in that “animals communicate and express their agency to others through their movement and behaviours” (Fennell, 2022, p. 3). Dogs communicate using cues or signals made by body movement and sound and interpreted by the musher by sight. In my own experience, vibration for example, is a sense the sledge dogs use through their paws to understand the depth of ice whilst running

across a frozen lake, which humans can not. The dogs communicate the potential danger of thin ice by urging the musher to reconsider the team's direction by looking back at the musher repeatedly. Communication between the tourist-musher watching body movement of the sledge dogs is when the dogs turn their ears backwards to listen for a verbal command when they think one is imminent, such as taking a turn in a fork in the upcoming track.

As uncovered in Theme one bonding, co-creation and interaction, before a trip, the data pointed to uncertainty by the tourist-musher on how to communicate with the sledge dogs using human or dog language, yet simultaneously were able to utilise other senses to interpret communication with the dogs using emotion and touch. From my field notes the simplest cues are presented to the tourist-mushers as tips, during the introductory briefings prior to the experience. The turning of the ears is one example of encouraging two-way communication and building a relationship through trust as given in the introductory briefings. Kuhl (2011) outlines the importance of two-way communication led by “body language, cues and an ability dogs have to sense things about the musher” (Kuhl, 2011, p. 29). My data confirmed that mushers also picked up on being sensed by the dogs and could interact with them without human language:

I think the dogs were communicating to me too because I said nice things, ‘your clever’, ‘good’, ‘come on’ like this and every time when we had a break, I was talking to them so they should understand they did a good job, then one of these dogs, she run away everywhere then come over to sit beside me just to get hugged. That was on the last day, so I thought she understood that I liked her, and I thought she was very clever in pulling the sledge. (Interviewee H)

When a sledge dog can provide information to a tourist-musher about how to travel in the arctic landscape, the dogs understand there is a symbiotic relationship that invokes flow. A simple cue shared in the briefings with the musher pre-trip was to slow the sledge down to let a dog poop. The dogs can poop while running, making it more comfortable for them and building the trust you know what you are doing. In turn, the speed or flow of the team travelling together is maintained, which is vital to the sledge dogs' motivation. Safety information is also prioritised as one musher recalled: “Whatever you do, don’t let go of the sledge” (Interviewee I), as it is a long walk home if you lose your team in the mountains, especially if the sledge contains all your food and equipment to survive. Another cue is the rhythm of the dogs' gait (how they propel themselves and which order their paws push from the ground). It lets the musher know if they have an ice ball in between their toes for example. This is relevant for the tourist-mushers

because if the dog starts to limp and get injured, you must put them in the sledge. The sledge can only hold a limited number of dogs, and you still need some dogs left to pull you back to base again. This is a very hard cue that took me a long time to capitalise on and from my field notes, none of the tourist-mushers admitted they were able to identify a dog limping unless it was very obvious.

Touch was an obvious point of interaction and motivational for many interviewees who expressed the desire, before their trip, to have as much contact as possible with the dogs. Pink (2012, p. 107 cites MacDougall, 1998:4-52) on touching as an alternative way of seeing for a musher situating themselves in their sledge dog environment. Physical contact with the dogs, for example, by cuddling and caring for them with routines the dogs depended on, displayed the musher's tactile relationship, building communication and trust with the dogs and their own abilities through embodiment. This was also the case for the short taster trips by the cruise groups, who found socialising with the dogs in the kennel before and after the trip was just as important to their experience satisfaction as sitting on a sledge for 45 minutes. Company one stated “compared to their expectation, they are amazed how social the dogs are, with each other and with the guests. And that comment is made daily as the guests didn't think they would be able to touch the dogs” (Company 2). Often, the cruise ship groups delayed the departure of their bus as they did not want to leave the dogs. One tourist-musher in the pre-experience interview expressed an ambiguous relationship with the dogs per se, but in their follow-up post-experience interview, shared their surprise the dogs had a lot to offer the musher “I don't do it [dog sledge] because I love the dogs especially, I do it because it's a great way [to access the nature], works really well” (Interviewee F). Most mushers focussed on the dogs:

I could see between the dogs, how much attention they wanted from me, when we had been out for one day when we stopped. I would cuddle the dogs and the next dog stood begging cuddle me, touch me. Especially one dog, he was not interested at all, you can touch me but I don't care, but some are oooooooo its my turn. (Interviewee I)

I looked forward to feed them, hug them, even say nice things to them because they were so good in doing the work – so interacting with the dogs was something that I really enjoyed. (Interviewee I)

The relationship with touch is multirelational through technologies and material objects (Ingold, 1993; Lindberg et al, 2014). Tourist-mushers bodies gather multiple sensory measurements interpreted cognitively to make an imprint like a physical Global Positioning

System (GPS) technology used on the sledge for navigation (Ingold, 1993, p. 155). Therefore, the relational conditions is where tourist-mushers interact with the dogs to collect meanings from the landscape, rather than derive meanings attached to the space (p. 155). The sledge in this way becomes an extension of the mushers body (Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 503). One company conveyed “Being on the sledge is a fun part” (Company 1). Another musher commented on their physical senses as a mechanism to connect with the dogs through the sledge in more detail:

They turned around and looked at me sometimes, if I did something strange if I just stood on one side of the sledge. They looked, and then turned around and looked at me, why are you doing this? It looked like that to me. I had to explain why I did it. Like, oh my back is aching, I have to stand on one leg but I go back to both now. It was like wow, they really understand, they are very clever dogs. (Interviewee H)

Hearing has been outlined in this research as the dog's primary sense, as well as in Theme two rhythm and its corresponding sub-theme of time. Sensory reflections described in my field notes endorsed my experience that dog sledging is predominantly a silent activity once underway. The prominent sounds were of the dogs panting, dog booties padding on the crisp snow surface following the team's rhythm, and the sledge skis gliding across the terrain. Tourist-mushers gazed in awe at the beauty of the never-ending surrounding nature, I describe myself as something like out of a Sir David Attenborough nature documentary once my nerves and excitement settled down enough for my senses to focus. Haraway (2003) ascribes to the underutilised human senses and ability to see “who the dogs are and hear what they are telling us, not in bloodless abstraction, but in a one-to-one relationship, in-otherness connection” (2003, p. 45). Tourist-mushers retold taking in the glistening surfaces, colourful skies and overpowering mountains, the fresh cold against their face to remind them of just how alive they really were. At the same time, isolation and remoteness hit them, daunted at the prospect of not knowing where they were due to every surface being white and indistinguishable from the next and a perceived distance from the familiar. Many times as a tour guide we circled an area only metres from a road or the kennel itself, but as the tourist-mushers could not hear any relatable sounds they voiced their fear of distance. They relied on the dog's abilities, and that is when they were glad for the dogs, as the dogs knew where they were and what they were doing.

Sound was a term the tourist-mushers used to describe part of their activity. Silence was described by the tourist-mushers as deafening when there was too much or too little of it. If not

accustomed to it, lack of sound became unsettling at first. The effects generated by sound, or lack of it, on the body are powerful. If the interviewees deemed the sound unfamiliar, it raised the emotion of feeling unfamiliar, scary or mysterious. Edensor (2016, p. 237) refers to our immersion of our physical senses like sound, that connect us to other humans, non-humans and to the landscape and where “Silence characterizes the atmosphere on the land” (Granås, 2015, p. 307). An example to illustrate the point was given by one interviewee:

The dogs were more friendly than I thought. When you see them outside the tent barking all the time you think they are wild beasts – this is scary, but it was not. I would not be afraid of going into a dog yard now, no. (Interviewee I)

I argue, that making the tourist-mushers aware of the different sounds dogs make, as one example, during their dynamic experiencescape using the DEM model (Lindberg et al., 2014), can enhance the hearing sense to give the tourist-mushers a sense of control in building a relationship with the dogs and familiarising themselves with their capabilities (Fennell, 2022, p. 3) as well as raising their own.

#### **4.3.2 Emotion**

Lindberg et al. (2014) highlight that our physical senses and emotions are inseparable from our bodies in constructing our experiences and value (p. 499). Issues of safety and emotion of fear were expressed by interviewees already discussed in Theme one, but Theme three looks at different emotions as discovery mechanisms emerging from my data. In relation to my Sub-question two: what emotions and behavioural changes are then brought into motion by the interactions with the sledge dogs? The data unpacks anxiety, peak experiences, empathy, trust and even the dog's ability to acknowledge the musher's feelings.

Tourist-mushers described how powerful their emotions were regardless of a short taster trip in one afternoon or a ten-day trip in the mountains. One interviewee noted the relationship of power and complexities between humans and non-humans and also being acknowledged by the dogs, a form of two-way communication that incited emotion:

Humans have so many emotions, but with dogs, it's so real in a way. It's a simple, strong connection, uncomplicated with the dogs. The power is interesting, the dogs want to please you and they can see your feelings, its something complicated in a way. (Interviewee H)

This typical reaction of sledge dog interaction was expected to come out of the day as it reflected my personal and many other professional mushers experiences. Edensor's (2016) reflection of enveloping darkness hunting the northern lights and the ability to sense the presence and energies of others comes not just through the human primary sense of sight. I argue, that Edensor's (2016) point can be paralleled with the enveloping of lightness and all-encompassing white snow-covered surroundings in the same way, a two-way form of communication. During one of my guiding tours, one tourist-musher remarked: "I could have been driving my team in circles for all I knew, but I could have done that all day long". (A man around his thirties on a two-hour sledge dog taster tour). "We sense the presence and energies of fellow humans and generate noises and tactilities of our own through which others sense us" (Edensor, 2016, p. 232). A form of *communitas* where tourists sense with the landscape (p. 229). As an extension of Interviewee H's almost religious expression of flow in the previous theme, the interviewee went on to describe how their emotions changed their behaviour, positive reactions to being in the landscape with the dogs added value for their trip: "for me it was like a battery, and you fill it up with energy – this close-to-nature thing. That's very important to me, as that's my big energy bump" (Interviewee H). This data supports Edensor's (2016, p. 233) sense-making of *communitas* where connection to landscape evokes feeling of stillness, in conjunction with heightened awareness of the physical senses like sound and touch of others and the dogs. The data also echoes Andersons (2009) affects of atmosphere describing an intangible force or energy of shared affects in the material imagination (p. 78).

Empathy discourse was inferred towards ethics as a theme in the literature relating to the dogs (Fennell, 2022; Kuhl, 2011), but as well as in my field notes from tour guiding, empathy was also shown by the tourist-mushers in connection to the arctic landscape and global discourse such as climate change "I think I was very surprised at how much the snow had melted and what it meant when it does melt" (Interviewee F) and "It feels good to bring the dog into its right environment and share it with a dog, we share an interest for the same environment" (Interviewee G). Hare and Woods (2013) evolutionary research, posits that working dogs (specifically Siberian Huskies) are skilled at reading and using human cues, feelings and gestures such as gazing (p. 116). These authors state that empathy can also be inspired to co-create behaviour as they work better in teams with each other and with the musher (p.187). In addition, "thrive by watching others solve problems they could not solve on their own" (Hare & Woods, 2013, p. 186). Such musher-sledge dog interactions result in the co-creation of the experience and lay the foundation for empathetic behaviour (St. Ours, 2019, p. 32).

My data shows that empathy is explored in its own right as a mechanism of discovery or knowing in another way. As Lindberg et al. (2014) put it, evidence of dogs functioning as a social lubricant encouraging social interactions also depends on several elements such as guides, mushers skills, a priori, and cultural meaning (p. 501). From the dog's perspective, social influence is crucial for maintaining behavioural harmony in animals (Miklosi, 2016, p. 283). DeMello (2012, p. 20 cites Shapiro, 2008:191), who describes the concept of kinesthetic empathy. In the case of dog sledging, the musher tries to relate to the dog by comprehending its physiological sensations. In this way, the musher adopts the non-human position, "giving access to the intended world of the other". Empathy is cognitively driven by human emotional cues, and learning may not control behaviour to create social facilitation for dogs, yet the data held many indications of empathy, learning and behavioural changes:

Working sledge dogs can sleep outside in all kinds of weather and seem to be ok with it and sleeping. With a family dog, it could never ever do that, it would be very uncomfortable, barking and be very unhappy but these dogs are used to this kind of life, they also eat very quickly and go to sleep, in all kinds of weather they run and run and run, never seem unhappy with it. (Interviewee G)

I was eager to feed them and find a place for them to stand and eat, I was helping a lot with the guide, and I liked that very much, they had a very good temperament and were very confident with us. (Interviewee H)

I think it's great for kids growing up with dogs, you develop empathy for other creatures or living animals, human beings. Dogs they follow you, they're your friend, happy when you get back home, so it's a bond between you, more than a cat, more interaction. (Interviewee I)

It was really understanding a bit better how they work out, who works out best with each other, how they work and how you learn to pace your dogs. (Interviewee F)

Although empathy was a dominant emotion emanating from the data, from the emotion of fear emerged, the concept of trust. Trust is a theme raised by Kuhl (2011) on how relationships and bonds are formed by mushers with experience. Although mushers in my research were considered novice tourists, the theme trust was raised: "The dogs will come out of their dog houses to meet strangers if they feel they can trust them. (Company 1), and "I trusted the dogs to know where to go, there was not a moment of fear or anything, I was comfortable, apart from



the speed the first day” (Interviewee I). One interviewee raised the theme of trust in questioning to what level it was required:

Trust doesn't cross anyone's mind' - has that something to do with the myth of man's best friend? Even with communication reservations, the tourists have an expectation that the dogs already know what they are doing, they're absolutely fine, and they don't even have to think about it – so they can enjoy themselves and nature a little bit more. There are different levels of trust, say, between a horse ride and a dog sledge ride, dogs are way safer. (Interviewee F)

The data in this theme showed that dog sledging takes place in extreme temperatures, with a high dependency on trust with others, dogs and technologies. The data confirms the dog's role as a stakeholder through the materiality of care, immersing the tourist-mushers in co-creating their experiences with the sledge dogs, resulting in a change of emotion related to self-awareness, anxiety and trust (Benali & Ren, 2019, p. 251). Trust is co-created in these relationships where the dogs have a solid geographic and sensory understanding of the arctic landscape, that can adapt to the changing climate and travel with the tourist-mushers by communicating with sensory cues. My field notes described a rather large and physically strong middle-aged man who took a two-hour dog sledge taster tour, who spoke of his experience. He described how scared but exhilarated he was at the power the team of dogs he had, and how he was able to feel in control only at fleeting moments. This highlights levels of trust. The dogs were guiding the tourist-musher in addition to the human guide for the same reasons, the tourist expect to be paying for the guiding coming from the human but pleasantly discover how the dogs guide them too. It is crucial to mention here the trust and dependency of the participant themselves with their expectation of discovering a new self outside of the comfort zone or everyday life in contrast, managing challenges and limits of the body and soul. Pritchard et al., (2007) highlighting the importance of embodiment as the social discourses body intricately created and gendered in meaning. It mirrors the mushers experiences of political, social, cultural, and economic (and value-laden) context (Pritchard et al., 2007, p. 205 cites Wearing, 1996:80). It is far reaching in answering my key research question on what we can learn about the connection to arctic nature through dog sledging, how we can balance ourselves, our communities and on a broader scale for global tourism if voices can be heard that are “reuniting the head, heart and body” (Pritchard et al., 2007, p. 207).

### 4.3.3 Learning

Kuhl (2011) argues that learning increases respect and trust for the sledge dogs' abilities that change behaviour towards other humans (p. 33). Kim and Jamal (2007) also pay attention to self-making, where the boundaries on self-perception and constraints on actions produce many social and self-regulation behaviour choices based on everyday life, but in the dog sledging environment, my data found the musher does not find these constraints. In relation to my second sub-research question, emotions described in the second theme of Theme three brought about discovery mechanisms. Mushers were unrestrained by everyday life, which allowed them to employ their senses and enter a learning zone. Learning was a theme the data revealed as a mechanism of discovery in relation to the dogs that discovered self-making and where interactions initiated behavioural change. The emotion of fear was brought under control by learning to handle the dogs, as two interviewees stated a change in behaviour:

I learned that these dogs look scary when you first see them, barking, chaos, I've learnt that they bark to each other but never towards me, and it's never trouble to go in (amongst) two or three dogs, I think they were very friendly dogs and easy to handle, to move from the sledge to the line they never tried to run off or anything – that was a new experience for me – even the stronger dogs, I just grabbed them by the scruff and said in a strong voice come here. (Interviewee I)

It was a bit manic at the start, dogs were all over the place, but that was all right as you got to learn how to harness one up, I was happier once they were all harnessed up and not running about loads of them. (Interviewee E)

In Lindberg et al., (2014) DEM model of experiencescapes, many learning points on a dog sledging trip come to the surface. The briefings covered theory and expectations, preparation in the dog yard related to materialities such as equipment; all-in-one protective suits, dog harnesses and “including the sled, become an extension of the body during the trip” (Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 503). Transitioning from one culture to the next creates meaning for the mushers during the trip, this experiencescape point describes not just from urban to the arctic landscape but also into dog musher culture. As one interviewee states their learning experience that stood out during the trip in context and interaction points according to the DEM model:

I knew that they started to transport the animals by lorries (Sami culture/herding), I've seen it on telly, but to see it in real life, that was fantastic, and I never expected to see the

people (Sami) wearing these (traditional) clothes, that was very interesting... kofta, boots, hat, everything. (Interviewee I)

Post-trip, one company manager reveals tourist-mushers self-reflections they are keen to share in relation to time and interaction points of the DEM model:

A contrast of guests post snowmobile and dog sledge trip, including those who have done both, is that post snowmobile, it's a check box ticked. Post dog sled the guests won't let me go, they are so lively and talkative with so many further questions and wanting to share their experiences – being with the dogs makes them think – they come up with all sorts of questions that you wouldn't think they could come up with – I find that very strange. (Company 1)

This company goes on to share a feedback email summarising a tourist-mushers experience with a revisit intention based on their memories:

Being with the dogs, being in the nature, in the middle of nowhere, we would like to come back and bring our friends with us because we had this most amazing experience with you. [Interviewee] I think they take these things, stories & experiences with them and keep telling it to their friends and so on. (Company 1)

Through a special physical setting such as dog sledging, movement can enhance a participant's identity (Bruner 2005, p. 25), and memories can be evoked once back in everyday life by a similarity replicated, such as seeing snow or husky-type dogs. Photographs serve as “mnemonic devices for storytelling” (Bruner 2005, pp. 24-5), a new postcard perhaps? Turning the experience into a cultural production creates a new story, not just repeating an expected stereotype. The dog sledging experience itself becomes a story, and tourists think about this during participation, one quote regularly given by tourists reflects that of a 90-year-old lady on a two-hour dog sledge taster tour: “I can't wait to share this photograph and story, they will never believe me back at the home”. Another musher reflects on their trip as: “It's put a new layer on top of my experience from childhood, a new way of being in the nature I hadn't discovered before” (Interviewee I).

Company twos' statement sits partly in contrast Kuhl's (2011) argument of increased respect and trust for the sledge dogs but expresses self-making (Kim & Jamal, 2007) when overcoming challenges that involve emotion that gets recorded in real-time as a memory:

You get more comments of the emotion of it when they are actually in the middle of the trip. For example when they're in the middle of a climb and they say oh my God this is fantastic and then on the next section I'll ask 'how is everybody feeling?' and they will then talk about their feelings and when they come to the end, as a closure process. They talk about how their body is going to feel the next day rather than their emotions of what they have seen when they were out there. I would like to think that when people walk away, they have reflection about the feelings of the time, when they look at their photographs. When they first start they're often in panic adrenaline is running and they forget every single instruction that you've given them, the first few kilometres are usually quite hideous for a guide, then panic stops when they've worked out how to use the brake, they start to settle and I think then that's where the fun starts and they start to feel a bit in control. But it's still way outside their sphere of normal experience. (Company 2)

Post-experience, the interviewees sent photographs and videos that meant the most to them with a short description of why, so I could reduce the risk of misinterpretation. Most photographs indicated positive memories on their reflections as company two expressed. The photographs and video contained arctic landscape and dogs, giving reference to beauty, happiness, darkness, laughter and love as the top five expressions. What was interesting was the same number of human selfie photos, as photos taken just of individual dogs, which indicated a bonding relationship where the mushers learnt something by picking up on particular dog's cues and language for communication and bonded enough with them to want to take specific dog photos that meant something to them. A recognition of dogs being sentient. The interviewees called them special and friends in the captions. These memory-making postcards tell a story with a repeated narrative to their interviews. As one product manager expressed:

I think they want to get the trophy photo you know, cuddling a dog. You get the guests who arrive with treats or sausages they've taken off the cruise ship, wrap them up in a napkin and bring them into the dog yard so some of them come for closer interaction. Some of them just want to have the photograph and most photographed dogs are ones with the blue eyes. So again, people have this picture in mind of what a husky should look like and they want to say, this is me with a husky. (Company 2)

Below is a typical cross-section of memory-making photos as represented by interviewee C.



**Figure 11.** “First time alone in Finnmarksvidda with the rest of the team over a mile in front of us, my dogs behaving perfectly, listening to every command, a very special moment” (Interviewee C)



**Figure 12.** “Just another moment out on the trail bringing up the rear, making sure that everybody was okay, wonderful weather, wonderful people, wonderful place” (Interviewee C)



**Figure 13.** “Yippee was just the happiest dog in the team and loved that only the world but anybody who would tickle her tummy” (Interviewee C)

Mindfulness was not a term picked up on in most of my literature review except by Lindberg et al. (2014 cite Schouten et al. 2007:358) who refer to mindfulness as an extension of flow, and Prebensen (2010, p. 41), who classified social interactions accompanying enjoyment as crucial to living in the moment. As an unexpected finding therefore in my study, under sub-theme three learning as a discovery mechanism, the tourist-mushers displayed disconnection from everyday life and connection to the arctic landscape:

I think for many people it’s hard to learn to be in the moment because we always have to think ahead, to plan ahead. It [Dog sledging] gives you plenty of time to see, to take it in, to think about what you see and sometimes, suddenly in my head, some things from work pop up and just disappear again. It doesn’t matter, I can’t do anything about it, I’m here, now, in the moment. (Interviewee I)

The feelings were a lot stronger. It was bigger than I thought, and I expected quite a lot, but the nature was more than expected and these animals and the silence and the possibility to think and look and find peace in your mind. (Interviewee H)

You suddenly take everything in and then you realise, wow, this is where I am. That moment of like I guess, ya know awe inspiring kind of scenery is that moment where you kind of realise it was worth the trip. (Interviewee K)

The tourist-mushers' data was corroborated by a company manager who advises the tourist-mushers on the benefits of mindfulness:

Don't worry about what is happening tomorrow, just be in the moment and then you will have a great experience, it's all about being present in the now. (Company 1)

In summary of the third theme of discovery mechanisms, unpacking of the physical senses, emotions and learning as sub-themes led to emerging emotions of trust, empathy and pockets of meaning and value. In relation to my key research question, my audio-visual data established that tourist-mushers promoted their sense of sight principally followed by sound and then touch. Smell was not mentioned, and taste was rarely mentioned. Themes of safety, trust and mindfulness emerged. As discussed in the theme of emotion, learning contributes to behavioural change, sub-theme three of learning also demonstrated a connection between overcoming a challenge that created emotions and also is interrelated to memory-making taking photos or video of the pockets of interaction that occurred. My data demonstrated the concept of mindfulness as a behavioural outcome of learning that resulted in co-created value between mushers and dogs, and also as a behavioural output of an emotional discovery mechanism.

#### **4.4 Chapter summary**

The findings and discussion chapter have unpacked my three key data themes 1) bonding, co-creation and interaction, 2) rhythm, and 3) discovery mechanisms. Due to a thematic analysis approach, the research questions developed during the findings' analysis. Here I break down the findings under each research question as they are, on some levels, interconnected.

Directly relating to my main research question of what we can learn about the connection to Arctic nature through dog sledging, the findings revealed multiple ways this occurred. The two most prominent that supported the data were co-created interactions and throwntogetherness. Bonding was an important outcome of co-created interactions for the tourist-mushers that did not benefit the non-human to the same degree. Reflection, time, and flow emerged as sub-themes from the theme rhythm where tourist-mushers disconnected from their daily life, connected with the human, non-human and the arctic landscape, then reconnected to themselves. Self reconnection in new ways evidenced by future reflections such as revisiting intentions and developing other human relationships. Mindfulness was also an unexpected finding that was learnt about how tourist-mushers learn to connect with experiencescapes, including the human and non-human in a continual state of flux and adjustment.

In answer to my sub-research question one, how the dogs and tourist-mushers use the physical senses in interactions with each other and the arctic landscape, the findings exposed the following. Stakeholder perspectives of the dog and the dog's role as a guide. Overcoming the challenge of throwntogetherness embodied the sensory interaction through materialities travelling with the arctic landscape. Knowledge co-creation and transfer were produced through the physical senses driven by learning and emotion as a discovery mechanism. Emotions of trust and empathy led to pockets of meaning and value. Sense-making in light and dark enabled the tourist-mushers to transition to Arctic climate time. Reflections and comparisons of pre- and post-experiences resulted in memory-making and revisiting intentions. Audio-visual data evidenced a promotion of the sight sense by tourist-mushers with sound and touch thereafter. Senses of smell were omitted, and taste was barely mentioned.

Research sub-question two unpacked what emotions and behavioural changes by tourist-mushers and sledge dogs are brought into motion by the interactions, the findings disclosed emotions of fear, empathy, respect, and trust primarily. An unexpected finding of mindfulness arose from the transcripts, field notes, and audio-visual data. Emotion driven by sensory communication was a discovery mechanism for learning to overcome a challenge for example, that contributed to further emotions and/or behavioural change. Memory-making is interrelated to recording pockets of interaction audio-visually of the tourist-mushers experiences, in addition to stimulating revisiting intentions.

A critical evaluation of my methods would include the sheer volume of data uncovered that made analysis difficult using multiple methods. I also lacked a clearer plan for analysis of the additional audio-visual data. In retrospect, time and project management skills could have been made more of a priority in the timescale of collating data to make room for a third round of interviews relating to the analysis of audio-visual data and spread the interviews further apart. The lack of statistical data for refining the context and backing up my findings was frustrating. My findings are, however, rich in content and breadth, that a dog's perspective and sensory mapping models, coupled with a centralisation of regional data, can create an important development for sledge dog tourism companies and the northern Norway tourist board. The findings can also contribute to raising the profile of localised sledge dog clubs as well as the professional races.



## 5 Conclusion

This chapter will conclude my ethnographic sensory investigation of dog sledging tourism in Finnmark. The chapter aims to reflect on my research questions, give a broad overview on the implications of my findings and sum up the most important insights of my research. New knowledge will be shared in addition to future research directions. I will not let you leave without an end to my personal race story.

This study looked at my main research question '*what can we learn about the tourist-mushers connection to the arctic landscape through dog sledging*'? Two sub-questions unpacked the main research question by asking 1) '*how are physical senses used by the dogs and tourist-musher in interactions with each other and the arctic landscape?*' and 2) '*what emotions and behavioural changes by tourist-musher and sledge dog are brought into motion by the interactions?*'.

Regarding the main question, the data found pockets of co-created interaction and throwtogetherness that created meaning and value. Tourist-mushers disconnected from their daily life, connected with the human, non-human and the arctic landscape, then reconnected to themselves. Mindfulness was a dynamic tool for self reconnection that the tourist-mushers immersed themselves in the activity and reflected on the future making changes back in their everyday life or revisiting intentions to the Arctic

Regarding the two sub-questions, the data showed for question one dogs held a role as stakeholder and as a guide, embodiment of the senses through materiality helped overcome the challenge of throwtogetherness with new knowledge co-created, shared and stored made through learning and emotion discovery mechanisms. For question two emotions of fear, trust, respect and empathy co-created pockets of meaning and value through embodiment resulting in memory-making. Two-way communication is the method of knowledge transfer via physical multi-sensory interpretation related to the tourist mushes and sledge dogs' bodies in movement, both individually and in sensescape together, human, and non-human.

This communication utilises conversation *with* landscape both socially and culturally (Benediktsson & Lund, 2016). In the sensescape, mobility-related materialism or technologies such as equipment facilitate these conversations with the arctic landscape that can also harness

a sixth kinaesthetic sense. This sixth sense breaks down the traditional language barriers such as the human spoken word or between different human language nationalities, for example, English and Norwegian. The nonverbal communication barrier forces tourist-mushers other senses to sound be heightened, such as sight that reads bodily, for example, the tail or the ear position of a dog.

The tourist experience is strengthened by these new embodied ways of connecting to the arctic landscape through dog sledging. I draw the conclusion that we can learn more about how to connect to the arctic landscape from the non-human perspective, as dogs also have a voice, can express themselves, interpret human expression and have agency. To build further on the embodiment theory offered from the dog's perspective, I conclude there can be an increase in symmetry of agency between human and nonhuman actors through co-created interactions and the concept of throwntogetherness. First, the dog takes the role of the primary guide, in this perspective, the co-created experience is more multi-sensory and embodied than interaction with the human guide can offer. Second, the data revealed powerful memory-making that resulted in the expression of revisiting intentions and thoughts of the future in both sub-questions. Third, the dogs can construct more in-depth and timely knowledge transfer for adjustments to be made when navigating the terrain and climate during a trip with the tourist mushers. Not only notions of knowledge were discovered in the data, but also the tourist-mushers ability to fill expertise gaps, and kinship that were transferred through the materiality of technologies from the dogs to the tourist-musher. In practical terms, concepts of throwntogetherness, natureculture and becoming with, helped analyse the fluid relationships of bonding between tourist-musher and sledge dog. Knowledge of the dogs, arctic landscape and the tourist musher showed understated respect via kinship expressions that raised the satisfaction level of the tourist-mushers experience.

One important note was a contrast in findings regarding tourist-mushers ability gap, some tourist-mushers found a mismatching of expectations before and during their experience that posed a challenge due to an overload of sensory input. Some tourist-mushers successfully overcame their challenges by learning more about and adjusting their relationship to; time and rhythm, their body, the dog's body, the environmental context of landscape, materialities, and increased their interaction with and knowledge of the dogs by becoming with. The destabilisation of throwntogetherness and becoming with can be concluded as both positive and negative to the tourist-mushers experience. The concepts created more self-awareness and

duality to everyday life that the tourist-mushers aimed to disconnect with, yet required a minimum level of familiarity to participate in the activity successfully. Lindberg et al's.,(2014), DEM experiencescape model was harnessed to unpack the body, time, content and interactions. That concluded the tourist-mushers sensory experience could be adjusted in pockets of co-created interaction.

As the concept of landscapes cannot theoretically separate the tangible and intangible capital of human and non-human relationships they go beyond the economic. The exploration of how the physical senses are used by the sledge dogs and tourist-mushers in interactions with each other and the arctic landscape is in answer to sub-question one. The concept of sense-making produced three overlapping themes of reflection, time and flow. The tourist-mushers reflection of their relationship to past, present and future and to the non-human was embodied in a different way that led to a positive flow of their experience. The tourist-mushers reflected on cultural advantages and disadvantages and related to time differently causing a challenge because of times constant flux. Through relational materialism and two way communication with the dogs, tourist-mushers also reflected on their ability to negotiate between environments, mastering the equipment, speed, their own thoughts, darkness and light and social interaction. Overall they expressed feeling more connected to the Arctic landscape underlining a flow with a positive atmosphere that they found difficult to put into words but wanted more of. A freedom from everyday life was expressed using terms of nothing and stillness, a disconnection from everyday life and connecting to themselves was a what I call a switching to 'Arctic climate time'. Evidence of embodiment with multiple sensory input concluded for some as peak experiences when completely immersed in the activity or describing an intense emotional reaction.

Discovery mechanisms were unpacked in relation to my research sub-question one on, how the physical senses, emotion and learning were used by the dogs and tourist-mushers in interactions with each other and the arctic landscape. The sledge dog's perspective was evidenced in how they used their physical senses in positive interactions of two-way communication. The tourist-mushers confirmed the dogs had their own peak experiences when the team became highly vocal with trumpeting sounds, singing, even when the lead dogs were repeatedly and intermittently kissing each other whilst running along. Strong emotions were presented in the data most predominantly of trust and empathy that were indicated as a learning tool to create memories and mindfulness.

The tourist-mushers ability to master the materiality of dog sledging, communicate with the dogs and negotiate between environments provided a symbiotic relationship that was interpreted by the tourist-mushers as an approval of teamwork and how to travel together in the arctic landscape through the dogs' eyes. The materialities such as the sledge become an extension of the tourist-mushers body to navigate terrain and climate through the verbal and non-verbal sensory cues from the dogs, act as a tacit navigation system interpreted by the tourist-musher cognitively and emotionally through a sixth sense. Two-way communication between tourist-mushers and sledge dogs was revealed as mostly interpreted through the sense of sight. Visual cues were picked up by the tourist-mushers from the dogs. Urry (2002) pointed out that gazing provides a sense of competence and structure that connects the tourist-mushers and sledge dogs. Where embodying and mobilising the gaze and concept of time uses the human body and non-human body to relate to the world of multi-sensory. Tourist-mushers are empowered by the sense of sight and become emotionally driven. The data disclosed that tourist-mushers can adapt to learn, identify pockets of interaction and interpret their entangled and complex meanings kinaesthetically when travelling together with human and non-human and the arctic landscape. Trust was a discovery mechanism used to facilitate their own abilities and those of the dogs. Another way of exploring the sight sense was revealed as the ability to negotiate between environments of light and dark that evoked a sense of *communitas* and heightened the tourist-mushers other senses in darkness or in contrast, indistinguishable horizons of blanketing white snow.

Sound or the lack of it uncovered both positive and negative outcomes for the tourist-mushers. The negative side to the hearing sense can be disruptive through sensory overwhelm if unfamiliar or unwanted. For example, a large number of dogs barking or singing together in excitement or even where silence for the tourist-mushers allows their thoughts to come to the foreground. This duality opens an opportunity of adjustment to turn the experience to a more positive one when an understanding behind the sounds were presented to the tourist-mushers. Silence or lack of familiar everyday sounds that tourist mushers can normally relate to help them situate themselves in the world can produce emotions of anxiety related to safety and distance when missing. The conclusion was that those tourist-mushers who were able to adjust their senses of sight and hearing to interpret a different way of knowing when they found respect for relying on the dogs to overcome negative emotions gained an additional sense of atmosphere that contributed to their overall satisfaction level of experience.

Emotion as another discovery mechanism answered my research sub-question two, that empathy and trust are two emotions experienced by the tourist-mushers and sledge dogs that are brought into motion by the interactions. Empathy and trust created behavioural changes in the tourist-mushers, where the sledge dogs acted as a social lubricant (Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 501). My research also argued that social influence as key to inciting teamwork and maintaining behavioural harmony as a discovery method for the sledge dogs. By the tourist-musher putting themselves in the non-human position, they related through empathy and trust to the world differently and kinaesthetically, as also argued by Shapiro (2008 cited in DeMello, 2012).

Learning, as in behavioural changes, is the last discovery mechanism contributing to answering sub-question two. It increases respect and trust for the sledge dog's agency in the tourist-mushers dogsledding experience. In turn, I have found a further outline for the tourist-mushers as in a change in behaviour towards other humans. The tourist-mushers developed an appreciation not only towards the dogs but in understanding other cultures encountered, such as visiting the Sami Indigenous peoples and revisiting intentions as well as expressing changes in their everyday life.

Memory making was a natural behavioural outcome as an extension of the sub-theme learning for tourist-mushers. Taking photographs and video served as a record of the pockets of interaction capturing the tourist-mushers embodiment process and changed thinking. With today's technology, storytelling through sharing visual representations instantly and worldwide is the new postcard that contribute to sled dog tourism and arctic landscape narratives.

Mindfulness was an unexpected result in answer to my main research question and to my second sub question relating to emotions and behavioural changes by tourist-mushers who expressed the ability to be present in the moment. The tourist-mushers reflected in detail using sight, sound and touch senses to disconnect from their everyday life and connect to the sledge dogs, arctic landscape and themselves by pockets of co-created interactions. Tourist-mushers have the ability to connect holistically with the arctic landscape from the sledge dog's perspective and switch to 'Arctic climate time'.

The findings in answer to my research questions, contribute to the development of tourism in general, in understanding the arctic from the non-human perspective that can harness local knowledge on a global stage in new ways of co-creating, not only with dog sledging tourism but other nature-based tourism. The research underlines the potential of dog sledging as an

economic driver of regional development in a sustainable way, alongside raising ethical considerations for the non-human as stakeholders in tourism. My research positively reinforces revisit intentions influenced by dog sledge tourism into other areas of nature based tourism.

## **5.1 Limitations**

Limitations to my research is related to a small sample yet broader sample size concerning trip length (Table 1). Although I was able to conclude what can be learnt about the tourist-mushers connection to the arctic landscape, and what emotions and behavioural changes brought into motion by pockets of interactions by and to whom, only three of the five traditional physical senses were unpacked. Lack of data regarding the senses of taste and smell limited the research. Given more time I would have extended my literature review as since the beginning of the project there has been further sledge dog research in Finland and Northern Norway which would make an interesting case comparison.

The more I unpacked the themes with associated theories, the more complex my understanding became analysing the data the tourist-mushers provided. What I, along with the tourist-mushers have experienced through dog sledging, found difficult to put into words, was a powerful bonding practice using the senses that is embodied and emotionally driven. The research underlines the importance of understanding and including human, and non-human relationships, however, such relationships are complex to explore academically for a novice researcher. The results provided depth and richness with insight into how sledge dog experiences are created and what local knowledge can be harnessed to further dog sledging. This made for a difficult to draw a line in the time scale this study provided. Dog sledge companies can contribute to regional development but also the ability to make meaningful memories for storytelling and provide an alternative way of knowing the arctic landscape for those looking in from the global stage. This research has furthered my own understanding of what arctic landscape is and deepened the respect and trust I have in my dogs to show me the world and everyday life, through their eyes.

## **5.2 Further research**

Overall, this study has provided evidence that more sensory research is needed in tourism. As natural extension of my study I would like to investigate sensory mapping in dog sledging as a useful tool to both the tourism companies themselves but also to used by other non-human tourism experiences. Scoping pockets of sensory interaction as a new model would be inspired

by Lindberg et al's 2014 DEM model of situated, multirelational, and dynamic experiences and meaning, but also reflect from the sledge dogs perspective using Fennell's (2002) animal-informed consent framework. Sensory mapping would map the tourist-mushers journey using pockets of interaction that could be created from any 'scape' basis, for example, soundscape mapping, tastescape mapping, touchscape mapping and even an overlap of mapping with one of the senses with storytelling mapping as this is also a fundamental part of the activity I could not fit into my study. Storytelling are the mapping of sensory interaction points in themselves so could be used as a tool to adjust a tourist-mushers experience to a more successful outcome to incite repeat visits.

### **5.3 The finish line**

Just as I wheted your appetite for my research with my personal account of sledge dog life, it is only fitting to conclude the end of my race story. Sitting on the frozen river bank with a full face of sun and a belly of contentment, my full team of happy, healthy dogs and I soak up 355km of Sir David Attenborough documentary experiences, when my mobile phone rings. There has been a storm that has stranded many teams overnight and closed the trail to the finish line I am told, with the rescue teams stuck nine times themselves trying to get back to the next checkpoint I have yet to reach. So, what now? Is it possible to finish? I am not sure any of the team care, as do I, because we have achieved so much, seen so much as we travelled the arctic landscape together. As with my story, in my research too, there is no ending, just a curiosity to continue.

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# Appendix I

## The information letter

### Request for participation in research project "Sled Dog and the Tourist"

#### Background and Purpose

The study I am undertaking today is supported through the University of Arctic Norway (UiT), where I am a Master Student in Tourism and Northern Studies. The University is currently working together with Hurtigruten (Norway's famous Postal Steamer), and Arena USUS (Southern Norway cluster group of businesses in Tourism). The project is driven by Agder research Centre (Norwegian Research Institute) and financed by NFR (The Research Council of Norway). It focuses upon innovation and sustainable development in culture and the tourist industry.

You have been identified as someone who is taking a sled dog trip in Arctic Norway, willing to share this experience through short interview and observation; the aim of which is to contribute to future development of dog sledging, and Tourism in Arctic Norway.

#### What does participation in the project imply?

Participation in the study implies you agree to a short interview before your trip; my presence on the trip only as an observer, and a concluding interview post trip. The aim is to record pockets of interaction between a tourist and the trip through verbal interviews; observation notes, photographs and video, of your expectations and knowledge pre trip and experience post trip. If you agree, I would like to include your own photographs and videos taken during the trip.

#### What will happen to the information about you?

All personal data will be treated confidentially. Only the researchers directly involved in my research will see the data collected for the purpose of mentoring.

This project in its final approved state will be published in full and in part and made publicly available, your personal details will be coded to protect your identity, an example of this could be: 'Mike, 57, first time dog sledging tourist' or the like.

The project is scheduled for completion by December 2015. After this, your recorded interview will be deleted and any personal information collected will be stored on a password protected device, in a locked location with only myself able to access it indefinitely.

#### Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, your recordings and data collected will not be used in the research.

If you have any questions concerning the project, please contact:

Emma Cowell, Master Student at Brookhayes, Kingston Common, Kingston, Hampshire  
BH24 3AZ, [emmacowell@yahoo.com](mailto:emmacowell@yahoo.com) or mobile +44 (0)7976 700861 (UK)/ +47 941 79 100 (Norway).



Master Thesis Supervisor: Professor Britt Kramvig, UiT Arctic University Norway, Alta Campus, 9509 Alta, telephone +47 784 50459, britt.kramvig@uit.no.

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

**Consent for participation in the study**

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate

Signature of participant ..... Date .....

PRINTED NAME.....

Telephone .....

Email address.....

I agree to:

- participate in the interview
- share photos and video for analysis
- share photos and video for dissemination (no recognisable people included)

# Appendix II

## The Interview Guide

### Introduction

My name is Emma Cowell, a Masters student, Tourism and Northern Studies, Arctic University of Norway, Alta Campus.

In March 2013, my partner Peter Kay-Kujawski and I, become the first UK British Champion Team to complete the Worlds Northernmost Sled Dog Race ‘Finnmarkslopet 500km’ in Alta. Living with and racing sled dogs, and working as a tour guide observing tourists interaction on sled trips over the past three winter seasons, has shown me the importance of how people relate to dogs. Through my own research, I hope to look into this in more detail; what the relationship is, how it is formed, its level of importance and why – within a tourist environment.

My plan is to make short interviews before and after a sled dog trip. Beforehand gives me a chance to understand your views and expectations, and after I wonder if it’s possible to talk more about your experience?

I am more than willing to find a way for this conversation to go on after the trip according to your other plans, possibly the following day, if not directly after the trip?

I have been selected for a scholarship programme enabling my research, which is run through the University in partnership with Hurtigruten; USUS, Agder Research Institute and Funded by NSR. I am regulated by the University’s Ethics and National Research Committee of Ethics. To aid note taking, this interview will be recorded and transcribed. All information held will be confidential, your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without explanation, your interview deleted and not used in the research.

### PRE ACTIVITY TOPICS

#### A. Social Background

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself?

Probes:

What do you do/have done for a profession?

What country have you come from?

What other countries have you travelled to? Types of holiday? Business or pleasure?

How many holidays do you take on average a year? What types?

Have you travelled here in a group or on your own? Detail?

2. What brought you here today on this type of holiday?

Probes: Could you tell me a little more about that...?

3. Why is important for you to take holidays and travel?

Probe: Experience new things/Experience something exciting/ Get away from Daily life/Relax/Learn about myself and others/Be together as friends or family/other reason?

## **B. Holiday Motivation**

1. How do you usually plan your holidays?  
Probe: Travel Agents/Online/Magazines/Friends suggestions  
Tell Stories...?
2. How did you find this particular holiday?  
Probe: How did you come to learn about the possibility of travelling to the North of Norway?
3. Did you pre book any activities in your holiday plans?  
Probe: How did you find this information?
4. What is the main attraction or experience you want to have whilst in the North?  
Probe: Is it possible for you to list some others in rank order of preference?
5. Why did you choose this location in Northern Norway?  
Probe: Did you know about the North before you came here?  
Did you read about Alta/other destinations? or hear about it from others?

## **C. Activity Motivation**

1. What attracted you to this particular sled dog trip today?  
Probe: What is the main reason you made this particular booking above others?  
Have you any knowledge about dog sled trips from previous travels, or have done it, read about it or seen pictures/video that motivated you to give it a try.
2. Have you ever owned or worked with animals?  
Probe: Can you tell me a little more about...?
3. Have you ever reflected on the relationships between human and dogs?  
Probe: Why do you think dogs are so important within human society?  
Why have they become important as pets?  
Do we even consider them as family members?
3. Do you know anything about the particular type of dog used for sledging?  
Probe: Do you consider them to be different from other dogs? How?  
Physical/behavioural/husbandry?  
Keywords... Dogs/Nature/Arctic/Geographical Area – come out in the stories?
4. Where did you learn about sled dogs?  
Probe: Have you read about them, or seen films where they appear...  
Gold rush, Serum run, famous races, links to famous people  
Media/Online/Videos/Friends/Family  
Can you tell me a little more about...?
4. How much interaction would you like to have with the dogs on this particular journey?  
Probe: In what way? How involved exactly?

6. Are there any specific aspects of nature, in particular, animals that you are attracted to?  
Probe: Is this relationship with animals a motivation for coming on the trip?
7. What do you think is going to be the most difficult thing about your sled dog trip?  
Probe: What makes you think that?  
Do you have any smaller challenges that wont bother you as much?
8. What are you looking forward to the most on your trip?
9. Is there anything your looking to gain from your sled dog trip?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to add that I haven't covered?

#### **D. Personal data**

Sex  
Age  
Name  
Email  
Address if no email

#### **POST ACTIVITY TOPICS**

##### **E. New Knowledge**

1. Having now completed your trip, could you describe the experience for me?  
Probe: Describe start, middle and end of trip – start with in the dog yard etc..  
What about the scenery/guide/dogs/weather?
2. Have you learnt anything new?  
Probe: How did you find that?  
Local culture/other nature/animals
3. What was the most unpleasant thing that took place?  
Probe: How did you overcome it?
4. What was the most amazing thing that took place?  
Probe: Can you describe more about it?
5. What was the most unexpected thing that took place?  
Probe: Could you tell me more about that story?
6. Can you tell me if your view of the sled dog changed?  
Probe: Can you describe why/how? Describe how the sled dogs were on the trip.
7. Would you have liked to interact any differently at all with the dogs?  
Probe: For example; communicate more, harness/feed/walk them  
(Touch, Feel, See, Hear, Taste)

8. Would this change in relationship with the dogs make you want to interact again with the dogs, nature or location for example?

Probe: How would you do it differently next time?

### **F. Further Activity**

1. Would you recommend any part of your experience?
2. Would there be anything you would not recommend?
3. Do you have any hints and tips for future sled dog tourists?
4. Has the trip prompted any thoughts about the future?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to add that I haven't covered?

### **G. Sharing**

1. Would you like to share any photos or videos that you took on your trip?

Post Interview Comments and/or Observations:

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### **Notes**

1. Identify yourself and set the respondent at ease.
2. The respondent's reaction often mirrors that of the interviewer. The respondent will know if you are uncertain and uneasy. Your pleasant, positive, well-informed approach will be reflected in the interviewees readiness to respond.
3. If you want longer and detailed responses, reinforce those kinds of answers—say, “Yes,” “Okay,” or “I see,” or nod. Using similar reinforcers for unresponsive answers gives the wrong signal; save them for responsive answers.
4. To teach and motivate the respondent, use feedback expressions like these: “Thanks, this is the sort of information we're looking for in this research.” “it's important to us to get this information.” “These details are helpful.” “It's useful to get your ideas (your opinion) on this.” “I see; that's useful information.” “Let me get that down.”
5. Master the probe: repeat the question; give an expectant pause (an expectant look or nod of the head); possibly repeat, summarize, or reflect the feeling tone of the reply. Say: “Anything else?” “How do you mean?” “Could you tell me more about it?” “I'm not sure I know what you mean by that (bewildered look).” “Could you tell me a little bit more?” However, don't overuse these, or the respondent will think you can't recognize a valid answer.

6. Where probing recall, use probes that give memory cues of items likely to be forgotten. For example, if probing hospitalization, say, “Well, people quite frequently forget; it is more difficult to remember just an overnight hospitalization, for instance. Was there any chance you had something like this?”
7. When overtly interviewing, sit in a comfortable spot where you can record the responses verbatim, using abbreviations to get them down. Record abbreviations, probes, and interviewer comment in parentheses. Write as the respondent talks.

# Appendix III

## The observation guide

Zina O’Leary (2014) states that ‘A systematic method of data collection relies on a researcher’s ability to gather data through his or her senses’ My choice of observation is through the ethnographic method, this will provide in depth, rich background information that I can use to quantify, develop and evaluate the data collected from the in-depth tourist interviews. It enables me to also collect verbal and non-verbal data and explore what people actually do and not just rely on the interviews of what they said they did.

Although this allows me to follow a story as it unfolds, I must be aware of considerations i.e.:

- What can get lost in translation through my notes?
- My physical presence makes me part of the story
- Whose story am I really recording and telling?

My observation takes place accompanying the tourist on their sled dog trip as a **non-participant**; although I will physically be there, I will not become directly involved or intend to contribute to their trip experience - as my existing knowledge and experience could have effect, which would equate to the input you would get from a guide, and I have delineated this study to not include the guiding aspect. In addition, I already have cultural empathy from the perspective of the observed position.

A written ‘interview information guide’ and ‘consent form’ will be provided to the tourist disclosing my intentions of the project as an ethics consideration and requirement as my role as a researcher. This will provide an open and trusted basis for the overall success of the study.

My observation guide is **semi-structured** in advance to cover a basic number of criteria and attempt to be neutral, removed and objective. I am also looking to capture the unexpected and look for patterns overall when my data is ordered. Below is a table to aid my notes.

### Useful template for field notes

<b>Type of interaction</b> (and who initiated it?)	<b>Where/ When</b> (Dog yard before going out/during trip/break on trip/end)	<b>Impressions/ Intuitions</b> (your impressions here – no where else. Include weather)	<b>Non verbal notes</b> (other behavioural cues)	<b>Notes and Direct Quotes (Verbal)</b> (directly related to what is going on in interaction; what people are saying)

Date/Time:

Impressions of physical space/place:

**Theme ideas:** Dog yard, Instruction, Reactional points, Conversations en route, Breaks, Dog Yard

### **Reflexivity**

Whichever paradigm is chosen to view the world through, it is difficult to see all of it as a true reflection if we are interpreting and understanding it through filters on the basis of our own senses, this highlights the need to be reflexive, structured and consider many relationship aspects including ones with the participants themselves as mentioned earlier (p232). In this study of a tourist dog sledging, it is a physical activity that requires balance and concentration in a remarkable arctic setting, all of which assures me that it will help lower the level of my presence acknowledged by the tourist, not hindering natural responses I wish to record. I will work closely with the tour operators to map out the logistics of the trip and discuss how to handle scenarios in which I may have unexpected contact (such as the tourist letting go of their sled/falling off – helping from a safety aspect or what best to do during planned breaks where there are more pockets interaction and that I may be taking photographs of them taking photographs). Discussing and planning this with each operator not only is a key factor to gaining their trust in my professionalism as a researcher and success of my study but in also supporting the success of their business and products that they are providing to that tourist.

**Planning** – The who, what, why, where and when (Pro forma p235)

1. My type of observational study (non-participant), lends itself to the context of the activity of dog sledging and the goals of my study; length of trip covering at least a couple of hours to a day.
2. The sample that I have chosen (tourists on a half day/full day trip minimum) has been selected to gain the most rich data; delineated from much shorter or extremely long products for this initial study.
3. The dog sledging community of which I am part of and welcome in Alta, provides sufficient access to my chosen sample as the trust is already built. Language issues between myself and the tourists is a consideration but the English language is a criteria for the trips for safety instructions. The written information sheet is also in English, that needs to be read, understood and signed for the interviews to take place.
4. Preconceived biases will be brainstormed, reviewed constantly as an overall aspect but also case by case situations if they arise, to ensure credibility.
5. From a physical and logistical perspective, my skill set is sufficient for this study, however, with practise, I can develop and fine tune field note taking for instance where I have less skill, beforehand.
6. The presentation of the study and myself will be explained before the pre interview with a chance for the tourist to ask questions or talk about anything they feel uncomfortable with.
7. Strategies for ensuring credibility include; bearing in mind an overall picture of the phenomenon, prepared to look past a superficial level of an observation, utilising a



minimum of three very different tour operators and customer bases to increase the chance of capturing a broad representation of International as well as domestic tourist, finish collecting data when there is nothing more that can be added/gained to this particular study and ensure a thorough methodological case is included in my final thesis.

8. Tools used include a prepared observation schedule with themes, created in conjunction with each tour operator and tailored to their product offered logistically. Other research peers and mentors can also be called upon for support in clarification, confirmation and subjectivity issues for example.
9. The timeframe of each trip depends on the product the tourist is taking and can range from 40 minutes- infinity but for the purpose of this study, 40 minutes maybe too short and to over complicate this initial study, more than one day maybe too much for logistical reasons on the trip accompanying part. I have chosen approximately a half day trip extending to a day offering the widest sample opportunity before other factors outside of my design would take effect and need further consideration (a 10 day trip could induce more extreme emotion and physical reaction, i.e. tiredness and a considerably longer period for interaction with dogs).
10. From an Ethical perspective I have also considered my own level of experience in a researching role in order to achieve a bigger goal such as recording a longer trip (my own physical, mental and emotional condition as well as the tourists).
11. In terms of contingencies, if I find myself in a position that if one company could not support my study any further, I have two others in the immediate area, as well as companies in other parts of Northern Norway that I have been in contact with. With regard to the tourists themselves, the three kennels are a short drive from Alta, so if an interview cannot go ahead there are other opportunities that could be set up along with a further month of peak bookings before the snow fades for the season.

## **Recording**

Based on my observational setting and study plan, it may not always be possible to record written notes or to see a researcher constantly physically analysing the tourist themselves could be intrusive and affect their experience. My note-taking can be done partly on the trip if I am following in a sled and out of sight and of course immediately after the trip while fresh in the mind but raw data can be collected to review, confirm and process information later (in the form of photographs and video) to aid the note-taking. The equipment used in capturing raw data could be deemed as intrusive so this needs to be highlighted that it will take place, with any objections raised before the trip. In part of this conversation with the tourist I will also be highlighting a request to be able to view their photographs and videos, to capture the story through their own eyes and promoting credibility and which also can be used to facilitate the post-interview. Through the tourist eyes (visual ethnography) is an important structured part of my study plan.

## **Reference**

O'Leary, Z (2014). *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project. Second Edition. The University of Sydney. Sage Publications Limited. pp. 230.*

