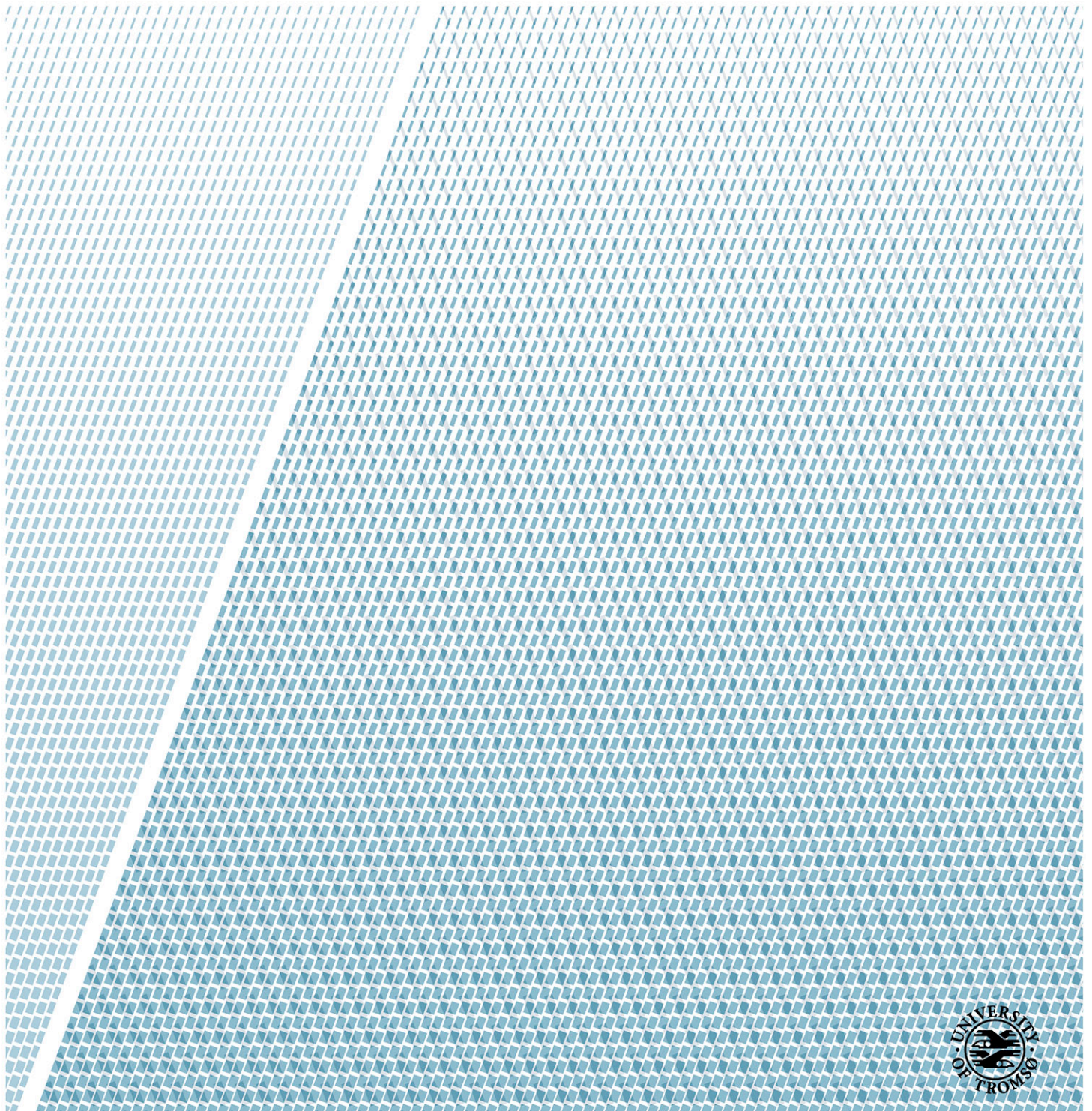


The East Coast or the Death

Performing expedition tourism on the Greenlandic icecap

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Master thesis in Tourist Studies - November 2014



ABSTRACT

In 1888 Fridtjof Nansen led the first crossing over Greenland, this was seen as a huge accomplishment and the expedition gain great recognition. Today more than 125 years later we see that people still follows in the historical “footsteps” of polar explorers. Often led by tourism companies who provide various ski expeditions in the polar regions, both in the Arctic and Antarctica.

This thesis will explore the expedition phenomenon through Edensor’s perspective of performance within tourism. The study brings up reflections on the phenomenon that can function as a source to get more insight to the participant’s relation to the concept and how they ascribe meaning to the phenomenon while being on the move in the polar nature for a month. Expedition tourism can be a way to perform identity, on a ski expedition in a tourism context, identities related to gender-, friluftsliv- and national-identity seems relevant.

Keywords: expedition tourism, performance, Edensor, Greenland, Nansen, meaning, identity, friluftsliv, cultural heritage

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Thanks to the group who wandered across Greenland and with humour and poetry strolled in Nansen's well snowbound ski tracks... It was wonderful!

Cathrine Moen

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Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background for the study

Greenland is the largest island on earth, Kalaallitt Nunaat, “the land of the people” is the Greenlanders own name of their country. It has an area of 2,166,086 km² and 81% is covered with ice, the number of inhabitants is in 2014 just above 56.000 (Statistics Greenland, 2013). Greenland has a nature that with Norwegian eyes can be compared to the nature we find in Norway and Svalbard. When it comes to tourism in Greenland the focus is on nature-based activities as well as adventure tourism. The main season is the summer, and among the products being offered are fishing, kayak trips, hiking as well as boat trips. Many tourists travel to the west coast where a part of the area is on the UNESCO’s world heritage list, here people can watch glaciers and the largest icebergs coming from the fastest glacier on the northern hemisphere. During the wintertime dogsledding, heli-skiing and ski touring are popular tourism products. There are no connecting roads between the villages and towns along the Greenlandic coast, since air transportation is a rather expensive possibility sailing is often a cheaper and better alternative for tourists. Greenland is therefore a perfect destination for cruises, several companies who provide expedition cruises on Greenland also visit Svalbard and Iceland during the Arctic summer months and Antarctica the other half of the year.

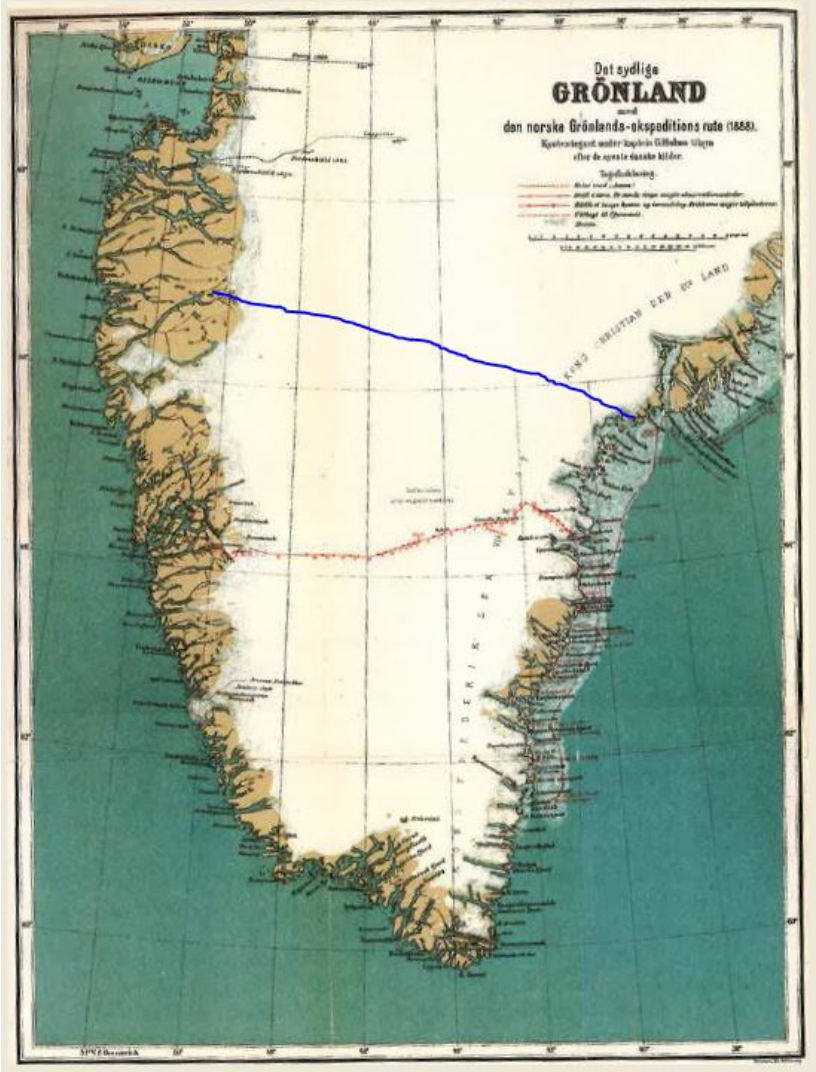
Greenland with its icy inventory was for a long time described by western explores as the “terra incognita”, the unknown land and a part of the globe that was not yet fully explored. Explorers from various nations made attempts and investigated parts of Greenland before Fridtjof Nansen led the first crossing in 1888, from the east coast to the west coast. This was seen as a huge accomplishment particular in Norway, (Huntford, 2006), but also worldwide he gain great recognition, (Jølle, 2011). Polar history tells about explorations and discoveries of the Arctic and Antarctic, as well as expeditions with various purposes stretching out from being the first one to reach a geographical point to doing scientific research (Drivenes & Jølle, 2004).

From 1962 the modern polar explorers in Norway started to follow in the “ski tracks” of the pioneer explorers. Around the 1990s there was a severe revitalisation of the expedition phenomenon (Drivenes & Jølle, 2004). Which again laid a foundation for these kinds of expeditions in Polar Regions to be tourism products. Ski expedition tourism has gained

increased popularity during the last years, and more and more people in Norway seem to have the interest for this kind of activity, as well as time and money to take part in guided expeditions to remote areas far away from home. With all its nature Greenland is a well-suited destination for longer and more demanding expeditions, to cross Greenland on skis has become an established tourism product in a Norwegian-Greenlandic context of Norwegian tourists and Norwegian companies operating on Greenland.

In May 2013 I took part in a crossing from the west coast to the east coast, 26 days on skis and with pulkas. This tour was organised by a Norwegian tourist company, altogether we were a group with three guides, one of them a trainee, and eleven paying clients where I was part of the latter group. The route went from Kangerlussuaq to Isortoq, about 590 km, and is among guides referred to as the “classic route” for crossings. This route is considered more practical in terms of logistics and also the weather conditions should be more stable, which increase the chances of succeeding, compared to the original “Nansen-route” which is a bit shorter and goes a bit further south, some companies use this one from time to time. In the autumn period 2012, most participants made their decision to formally sign up for this after conversations with the guides. In September there was a social gathering and in March we had one gathering where the focus was on winter camping and routines. This weekend was also for the guides to consider if they believed the participants were well enough prepared for the tour or not. For me, this crossing was a “true adventure” and a “dream come true”. Realizing also that I was part of a growing tourism phenomenon that builds on the expedition concept, I asked myself what this type of tourism is really about. How should it be understood and what potential does it have for further growth? And not least, what meaning does it actually have for those that participate and choose to pay considerable sum of money to spend 26 days under such demanding conditions?

This map shows a part of Greenland, the red line illustrates the route that Nansen and his group took from east to west in 1888. I have drawn the blue line on the map to show approximately the route our group took from west to east.



(Drivenes & Jølle, 2004:58)

1.2 Research question

Through this thesis I want to explore further the phenomenon of tourism in the Polar region based on the expedition concept. My focus is narrowed down and specified to that of studying the “classic route” described above, i.e. of a guided ski trip crossing the Greenlandic icecap. The main research question to be explored is what meanings paying participants ascribe to the phenomenon of doing this crossing.

The analysis is based on empirical data collected through participant observation during the trip and interviews with all participants after the trip was finished. This thesis aims to be a contribution to the field of expedition tourism, in this thesis expedition tourism is seen as an organised tourism tour which follows in historical expeditions tracks in polar areas. The thesis brings up reflections on the phenomenon that can function as a source for the tourism industry to better understand their own products and get more insight into the participant's relation to the concept and how they build identities and ascribe meaning to expedition tourism.

There has always been a tradition among polar explorers both in former times as well as today to write about their expeditions, this means that there is a large number of books dealing with various forms of expeditions where people tell their personal stories. From a research perspective I started to explore the world of articles within nature- and adventure based tourism to find related topics. The type of tourism I am studying is closely related to topics and cases studied through the perspectives of both nature-based tourism and adventure tourism. Nature is a precondition for a ski expedition in this tourism context to take place, as well as the aspects of adventure is a distinct feature to this kind of experience. Research on the field tends to present a rather wide picture of these concepts, Priskin wrote that nature-based tourism is; “Tourism that features nature”, (Priskin 2001:638). This is a very broad definition. It draws the primary objectives and presents the essence of nature-based tourism, as tourism that takes place in nature. Common for the concept of nature-based tourism is that activities, which formerly were mainly accessible only for people with the right competence and skills, now have become commercial products for providers to offer to “everyone”. Tangeland et al. mention two types of nature-based activities non-commercial and commercial (Tangeland, Vennesland & Nybakk, 2012:2). This is also how the development has been within expedition tourism, as the background chapter outlines the revitalisation of doing expeditions has made these tours available for tourists through commercial providers.

Buckley defines an adventure tourist by stating that it is a tourist participating in an adventure activity, which aims for excitement, we can agree that this applies for a crossing of Greenland as well (Buckley, 2010:19). Swarbrooke et al. states that expedition tourism is a niche sector within the tourism industry (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie & Pomfret, 2003:24). Expedition tourism is further described as mainly inspired by the exploration aspect of adventure (Swarbrooke et al. 2003:24). Exploration is a key term seen in the connection with former explorers, which also explains why some parts of the exploration history are presented in chapter three. The phenomenon, which is being studied, follows in a historical track. Expedition tourism seems to have a strong link between what has been done formerly and for this specific thesis Fridtjof Nansen is a relevant historical person and of great importance as to why Norwegians maintain the tradition of crossing the Greenlandic icecap.

My main theoretical perspective in the analysis is connected to Edensor (2001) and his performance perspective within tourism. Throughout the thesis I have worked with empirical categorisation and themes such as cultural heritage and national identity have been introduced through the informants and their stories, which have contributed to make this a different analysis in terms of an empirical categorization. During this research I have investigated literature both within nature-based tourism and adventure tourism and there is no doubt that expedition tourism as a phenomenon can be placed in both these categories, by the fact that it takes place in nature and holds several elements of adventure. I have through this work read various theoretical literature focusing on these concepts, from authors like Pomfret, Weber, Walle, Mehmetoglu, Cater, Viken and Valentine to mention a few. There is a tendency within this field of research that focuses on theoretical categorisation. In this thesis I take a different loop theoretically by an empirical categorisation. How the participants work with ascribing meaning and work with their identities during a ski expedition in a tourism context is something this thesis aims to focus on. In this matter how former research categorise nature-based tourism and adventure tourism becomes less relevant.

The phenomenon I investigate takes place in Greenland, but also “in Norway”, in terms of a Norwegian cultural space that encompasses the Greenlandic icecap through the endeavors of Nansen. Norwegian culture is strongly connected with this specific tourism concept, and there are other examples on expedition tourism that takes place in other parts of the Arctic or Antarctic regions, for instance the South Pole or the Northwest Passage, places where for instance Amundsen remarked himself. Expedition tourism in form of ski expeditions is

something that in Norway is provided by a handful of tourism companies, who through organising, planning, preparations, and competent guides facilitates these products.

The next picture is an example where one tourism company refers to polar history in their advertisement. This picture is from Spitsbergen Travels 2014-catalogue. They are one of the tour operators in Longyearbyen, providing a selection of ski expeditions among other products. This picture can be seen as a preliminary illustration and a “sneak peek” on issues I will come back to later on in the thesis.



(Spitsbergen Travel, 2014)

1.3 Structure of this master thesis

Chapter two presents the methods and methodology chosen for this project.

In chapter three I present some relevant historical events, also some secondary data. What is presented here forms the background material, it rolls up a part of the relevant context when it

comes to polar history and historical expeditions in polar areas. It makes a foundation for my further work and will be brought up and referred to in the analyses.

Chapter four provides presentations of theoretical perspectives hand in hand with the analyses from my empirical material. The reason for choosing to do it this way and not have an exclusive chapter with theory only is that I want to link it directly to my findings.

Chapter five presents a summary and concluding thoughts. The last chapter is followed by a list of references and attachments such as the interview-guide and information letter given to the informants of this study.

Chapter 2 - METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

When I decided to join this particular group across Greenland I had just started on my first year with the Master in Tourism Studies, at the Arctic University. From the beginning I had thoughts of doing research within this field and the fact that the crossing would be reality, triggered the thought to investigate the phenomenon expedition tourism.

This chapter will present the methods and methodological considerations used in the research process. In order to gain a better understanding to the expedition tourism phenomenon I focus on how the group of participants give the phenomenon meaning by exploring what meanings the participants ascribe to it.

The leading theoretical perspective is based on Edensor's approach to tourism from a performance perspective with references to Goffman. The methods used are both participant observation and interviews, which is applicable and fits well to the main perspective in the sense that it studies how meanings is created through corporal and discursive practises, Stone (2005) refers to Butler who has focused on how gender emerge between "a non-discursive element and a discursive element" (Stone 2005:10). Where non-discursive practises are corporal behaviours like gestures and rituals, and the discursive element is what people express through language (Stone, 2005:10). Butler theories on gender identity and that we ascribe meaning by doing gender can also be used when searching for meaning outside a gender perspective. To get a better insight in how corporal practises are lived out during expedition tourism was something I as a researcher could observe by taking part in the actual crossing over Greenland and do participant observation. Additional interviews were done after returning back to Norway. The interviews and the participant observation contributed to give insight in terms of how participants give meaning to the phenomenon, through discursive and non-discursive performativity, how they talk about what they had experienced and how things were done through corporal activities.

2.2 Qualitative research

As indicated above the focus for this research is on expedition tourism as a phenomenon and in my thesis this is exemplified with a ski expedition across Greenland. To investigate the phenomenon further I wish to focus on how people give meaning to this kind of tourism product. Qualitative research methods make a foundation to develop further a better understanding of various social phenomena (Thagaard, 2013). The overall goal within qualitative research is to develop a better understanding on phenomena dealing with people and situations in their social reality (Dalen, 2004).

Järvinen and Mik-Meyer writes “The meaning of an action or a phenomenon is created in the interaction between humans or between humans and things” (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2005:10). According to Järvinen and Mik-Meyer meaning is not something a researcher can reveal, meaning is not something that exists within the phenomenon, meaning is a social construction, this is also my approach when working with this project. Within the thinking of constructivist interactionism it is accepted that meaning is something, which the researcher co-creates in an interaction with for instance the interviewee. According to Järvinen and Mik-Meyer (2004:17) meanings are produced both through the research design as well as the interaction between the involved parts. I am aware that I as a researcher already from the start of the project contributes to produce meaning, for instance when I write, reflect and interview. This way, the approach I have chosen opens up to see that meaning is not something that is constant within the individuals, but rather something that is performed continuously. There is no constant truth consisting, but many nuances. The interviewee can in the meeting with the interviewer want to position himself to present the story he consider as the best one in order to present a “preferably self“ and not a “true self” (Järvinen, 2005:30) which is aligned with Goffmans (1990) theory of how people perform. As a researcher I cannot present an objective meaning, however I can shed light over a phenomenon and contribute to a wider understanding of it.

2.3 My role as a researcher

I have experiences from working with tourism and living on places such as Greenland, Svalbard and various places in Northern Norway and seen tourism in combination with the breath-taking nature at the various destinations. Greenland has been a country of my

fascination ever since 2007 when I made my first experiences through work within the tourism business. Skiing and friluftsliv has been an important part of my whole life growing up in Northern Norway, living on the country side with parents who used nature for recreation as well as harvesting from it such as fishing, hunting and picking berries, my siblings and I were taken out all year around. As a teenager I also discovered that I found freedom and time for own reflections by going out on hikes, on skis or sleeping under the open sky alone. Crossing Greenland was an idea I started to play with when I was about 15 years old and became more interested in polar history, this was a time when people like Liv Arnesen, Erling Kagge and Børge Ousland were frequently in the media and I became fascinated of their stories.

My interest for nature has taken me around and I have experienced much of the beautiful Arctic, I have always had a clear goal when travelling and moving around, it has either been related to work or studies. In 2011 I moved to Longyearbyen, the main town on the Svalbard archipelago, to start at the one year Arctic Nature Guide study. This year was focused on meaningful experiences in nature, the meetings between guides and guests, this is a value-based study and safety was always priority number one. Throughout the year we learned and improved our skills within areas such as glaciers rescue, tour planning, ski expeditions, navigation, first aid, communication equipment such as satellite phones, walking on sea ice to mention some. Because there is always a chance of polar bear encounters on Svalbard, we were trained in various scenarios should “the King of the Arctic” appear. We practised using a rifle and signal gun and focused on always having good routines in camp and while on the move. This year we were out on different tours, all year around, we had a couple of weeklong ski tours also with guests.

Before crossing Greenland I had never been spending a whole month outdoors, but I was familiar with the routines. This was my first experience with such a comprehensive project, both from the planning and preparation side as well as completing the actual tour. I enjoyed gaining those experiences. From the first gathering the group of participants had together in front of the Greenland crossing I found myself in a new role, I had no main responsibility and I was together with the other participants to do this for the very first time. I felt the enjoyment, the anticipation and the excitement of embarking upon something kind of new. I have spent some time reflecting on my new role, I did not always feel too comfortable in being led instead of leading, in retrospect I believe I some times was not that outgoing, in situations where I

could have shared my knowledge or give people advice I did not do that. I believe as a guide you are “on duty” during the whole trip, you feel the responsibility and want everyone to do well. If there were any situations I would rather step back as I did not want to interfere with the guide’s decisions, even though I did not completely agree in every situation. I believe this was because they were already three persons in the guide team and I knew some of them had several years with experiences, also I did not always knew what they talked about in the guide tent and what was the reason for their decisions. Because of this I think I was not that outgoing all the time, but more observing. That being said to me it was a valuable experience to have in my system, to actually have felt on how it feels be to be a participant and see how things can be handled in various ways. In addition to this I also learned through the work the guides did and this is something to fill into my backpack of valuable knowledge in terms of guide competence.

2.4 Participant observation

Material produced by ethnographers is created in communicative processes. When working with this approach it is necessary to spend time in the field in order to get a good understating of the phenomenon studied (Fabian & de Rooij, 2008).

My research project has clear elements from the ethnographic approach. As earlier described I was a member of the group on equal terms as the other participants. I can draw similarities to my experiences with Bruner (2005) who gives a description from when he as a researcher got the chance to work as a tour guide-lecturer in Indonesia, this way he was able to be a part of the group he studied and not standing from the outside looking in.

”It was an ideal situation for me as an ethnographer because it enabled me to study tourism from the inside, as I was there all the time, participating, observing, talking, travelling, eating, and sightseeing with the tourist who were my object of study.”
(Bruner, 2005:1).

In this sense Bruner was a tourist, yet at the same time a professional who could contemplate what he experience through the glasses of an ethnographer (Bruner, 2005). Like Bruner I have

something in common with the people who make the foundation of this research. We share an experience that we do not share with anybody else in the rest of the world.

Further my ethnographic approach resembles auto ethnography as describe by Ellis (2004) and Anderson (2006). Auto ethnography often refers to as “stories that feature the self or that include the researcher as a character” (Ellis, 2004:38). It is important to introduce some auto ethnographic characteristics and use Anderson (2006) who presents five key features of what he describes as analytic auto ethnography; “ (1) complete member researcher (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher’s self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis” (Anderson 2006:378).

When it comes to the work I have done with this thesis I can argue that these criteria are apt to my project. (1) I have from the beginning been an equal member of the group, according to Anderson (2006) I was a complete member researcher, a CMR. I took part in the preparations and the actual crossing on the same premises as the other paying clients. Through this I developed a relationship to the people in the group and got fully integrated and experienced this form of expedition culture as the others did. (2) Being reflexive is an ideal within research, I have worked after this principal both methodological, with methods and theoretical. Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009) writes “the research process constitutes a (re)construction of the social reality in which researchers both interact with the agents researched and, actively interpreting, continually create images for themselves and for others” (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009:10). I am aware that I also co-create meaning and shape the process, Anderson elaborates “reflexivity involves an awareness of reciprocal influence between ethnographers and their setting and informants” (Anderson, 2006:382) (3) By sharing some of my experiences and reflections from the expedition I am both a visible and active researcher in the text, I use my own experiences and reflections and present this throughout the text. I have tried to nuance this to avoid a “self-absorbed digression” (Anderson, 2006:285). (4) I conducted interviews with all participants after the crossing, and by this I have been in dialogue with informants beyond myself, with other self (Anderson, 2006). The informants are my main resource for empirical material for this project. Because I took part in the actual crossing I had the same points of reference as the informants, which made a good foundation for good conversations. (5) Anderson (2006) expresses the importance of

committing to an analytical agenda. I commit to theoretical analysis by presenting a thorough analytical chapter.

When doing a participant observation the researcher normally make systematically field notes. Under a ski expedition as the one I have studied there is no room, in sense of time, space and energy, for doing this in an extensive way. We had a routine on waking up at 6 am in the morning and walked from 8 o'clock in the morning until 17-19 o'clock in the late afternoon. We were organised in tent teams with two or three people together and normally after establishing camp, people spent time in their tents boiling water, eating and resting, some evenings there were social interaction between the people from the different tents, however this was not happening on a regularly basis. Therefore it was not possible for me to observe all what happened in the different constellations. The above description tells that there are several factors in play, which together contribute to that writing field notes in a larger scale becomes a challenge, the rhythm and progress during the day makes it very impractical. To have the Greenlandic ice sheet as the physical room for this research forced me to think creatively. In order to compensate the large number of field notes a tour like this could have produced, I wrote a diary on a daily basis. In addition to this I forced myself to take pictures everyday despite the weather conditions, this became the foundation to produce a report after returning home, the next session deals with this work.

2.5 Empirical report

The work I did with writing the report after returning back home was a way to reconstruct field notes. I am aware that this way of working gives me other material compared to what I would have had if I had systematically written field note while being on site.

The document that I produced was written over a two month long process where I focused on writing as much detail from every day, focusing on one day at the time. The report starts on the 5th of June 2012, from where the planning started and it also includes descriptions of the different preparations that were done prior tour. The document has a total length on 85 pages this also includes some pictures. I used my diary notes, pictures and my own memory to recall as much details as possible. The pictures I took were very useful to recall my memory in the work with creating the empirical reports, when looking through them I could by this suddenly

remember particular situations or parts of conversations. The diary notes have also been very useful in order to write as many details as possible for every day.

Forcing myself to write descriptive was challenging, and I experienced that I had to dig deep into my memory to create a solid description of every day. This was very time consuming, but the more I got into the work the more my mind kept spinning around details, and the longer I went in the process the more details I were able to recall. Sometimes I had to go back in the document and add information that I first had not thought of, yet suddenly remembered. Through this period of time with writings and reflections I first of all “walked across Greenland” all over again, I also realised that I managed to study the participants and the various situations in a way I was not able to do while being on tour. I had more time to reflect on everything, now with a little distance from the actual tour, which made me discover issues I had not been thinking of while skiing. This work gave me a solid foundation before starting on the next step in the process, to develop the interview guide. In connection to the work I did after the actual crossing I also have in mind Bendix (2002) who writes about narratives and how sometimes when we travel we adjust our understandings on what have been experienced in order to balance the perception between the information before going on a tour and the actual tour. According to Bendix the tourist can end up making new narratives along the way, a “pragmatically memory” (Bendix, 2002:475). In this way we design what stories we tell in order to “show off cultural capital accrued through travels” (Bendix, 2002:477). This can be linked to Goffman (1990) and how people work with impression management to negotiate social identity. Seen with reflexive eyes, in this sense the distance that I got to the project in the writing process, both functioned as a way to recall details and also as a space for making an overview and discover connections.

In total we were away for 32 days, this included all the days from when we arrived in Kangerlussuaq on West Greenland until we returned to Norway again. I tried to categorize all the different days, in order to get a firmer grip on the dynamics of the tour. I think that for all of us each day was in some way kind of special. However the further out into the trip we got things could be perceived as routines, daily habits that repeated themselves. In this respect it is an interesting reflection how approximately 30 days can feel as several months when thinking back to these weeks in a retro perspective. The temporality can be experienced as very different from how time can be perceived in the hectic everyday life. On Greenland I could be only focusing only on moving my fingers in order to get them warm again after a

break, or you walked and looked out on the vast landscape and felt how little you were. From day to day we experienced big changes in the weather. I categorized some days as “normal” days, days that we could perceive as maybe not ordinary but the pattern of how things were done and repeated itself. I have placed the other days into the “unusual” category. These were days that had some kind of unusual and new content. I ended up with 15 “normal” and 17 “unusual” days.

Date	Main content	Category
30th April	First day, arrived in Kangerlussuaq, packing and organising equipment	Unusual
1st May	Were transported to our start point – first night in tent	Unusual
2nd May	Skied a little bit and then we wore crampons, put up camp around noon due to increase of wind.	Unusual
3rd May	First real day, slowly getting in to routines	Normal
4th May	A lot of cold wind this day	Normal
5th May	My birthday, because of this we went one session shorter than planned.	Normal
6th May	A lot of wind	Normal
7th May	Stayed in camp all day due to lots of wind and snow	Unusual
8th May	First day without wind	Normal
9th May	A lot of wind again, skied only half a day	Unusual
10th May	Skied 25 km, birthday in the group	Normal
11th May	Skied 30,5 km	Normal
12th May	We could see DYE II when we reach camp	Normal
13th May	Reach first goal DYE II, camped early afternoon	Unusual
14th May	Could not walk due to bad visibility, snow and wind	Unusual
15th May	Skied 32,5 km	Normal
16th May	Skied until noon – then we put up camp (not all tents) due to bad weather	Unusual
17th May	Due to bad weather we stayed all day in our tent - National Day	Unusual
18th May	Normal day, finally a full day on skis	Normal
19th May	Skied 33,8 km	Normal
20th May	Skied 34 km	Normal
21st May	Got greetings from home - sentimental	Unusual
22nd May	A lot of sastrugi, difficult to walk	Normal
23rd May	Walked a lot also today, remember this as a special day because there was no wind, but sunshine, light snow crystals, and I listened to music for the first time as I walked.	Unusual
24th May	Skied over 33,8 km	Normal
25th May	Skied over 30 km	Normal
26th May	Second last day, a little “ceremony” when we could see the mountains in the east for the first time. One guide read the poem “Det er den draumen” (It is the Dream) and gave us schnapps.	Unusual
27th May	Last day, good weather, downhill for the first time	Unusual
28th May	Arrived in Isortoq	Unusual

29th May	Flew from Isortoq to Kulusuk	Unusual
30th May	Flew from Kulusuk to Reykjavik	Unusual
31st May	Flew from Reykjavik to Oslo and Alta, then home to Longyearbyen four days later.	Unusual

From day to day we experienced big changes in the weather. In the table above I have put each day into one category. I decided that one category is for the “normal” days - days that I could perceive as maybe not ordinary but the pattern of how things were done repeated itself. I have placed the other days into the “unusual” category. These were days that had some kind of unusual and new content. This way of categorising all days the group had been through gave an overview over the major content to each day, and became a tool to investigate and make descriptions over what I had been taking part in.

I also spent time writing down my own reflections, based on my own diary, thoughts and photographs taken through my own lens. While I wrote the descriptive report, which dealt with all possible details from every day, this report had a more reflective character. A place for thoughts and reflections only, in this work I tried to leave all practical details and descriptions but reflect over various social happenings, how I had felt in various situations, how I experienced others, how I experience myself etc. Through the extensive writing process after the actual tour I had to some extent reconstructed the meaning of what this trip had meant to me and in this sense “discovered” how it was a part of my life story. In what way it had been a part of my life several years before I even did it. I had accomplished something I had dreamt of half of my life, I had a family background where the nature experiences had played a great role and being outdoors was highly valuable, I had been inspired by polar heroes and had fantasised how such a trip would be like. Were these topics just as important for the other people in the group as I felt they were to me? I considered it highly valuable to bring in more stories from the other people and rather early in the process I decided to invite all of the ten participants to take part in my interviews. After completing the work with my descriptive and reflexive writing I focused on another way of collecting material, interviews.

2.6 Interview guide

With the empirical report I managed to build a rather solid foundation for further work I made some discoveries and various themes appeared. The themes that I wanted to focus on during the interviews were well planned in advanced. The result of what became the main themes was strongly connected to the work from the participant observation, which again the empirical report was based on. The overall themes were worked out on the basis of the constructed material. I had ten themes; 1. Background, 2. Motivation, 3. Expectations 4. The expedition as a whole, 5. The product, 6. The nature experience, 7. Social aspects, 8. The relation between the commercial and the non-commercial, 9. After the returning home, 10. What place this project has in the participant's life story.

Before I ended up with my final interview guide¹ I worked through several drafts and improved the questions to be sharper and to the point before I had my fourth and final interview guide ready. In addition to every theme I had made some follow-up and probing questions, if I experienced that the informant found it difficult to talk about a theme I could ask a question to get the conversation started, as well as if I felt that we did not quite touched upon the theme I could also introduce some questions.

After completing the interview guide I ran a pilot test, I wanted to test out the questions before I met the informants. I tried out the questions on one person who worked as an arctic nature guide. I did not want to run the pilot on one of my informants because if I experienced themes or questions not to working I wanted to have the chance to re-arrange before going "live".

2.7 Selection of informants

Through my research question I wish to find out what meanings participants ascribe to expedition tourism. To investigate my research question further I needed people who had experiences with expedition tourism. I ended up having a strategic selection of informants, meaning that the interviewees were chosen because of their qualifications strategic to the research question (Thagaard, 2013). My group of informants were ten participants who all had been taking part in the same crossing as I did. As the chapter of ethics describes I had

¹ The complete interview guide is found in the appendix

already from the start mentioned to the group that I might do research on this particular trip. This was an idea that I had from the beginning even though I did not have the possibility to do much pre-work in front of the expedition. The group of participants, without guides, consisted of ten people, whom all said yes to take part in the interviews. I am aware that my selection could have been done differently I could have included people who had done this crossing or other ski expeditions elsewhere earlier. I also chose to not include the guides or others who had contributed in the product development. I exclusively centred the empirical work to include only clients and who had been taking part in the same tour as myself. By doing this I knew in details the context of the project from start to end, and we as a group would have the same points of reference.

An argument for choosing all informants from the group that I also had been observing is that for the interview to have a significant value and contribute with more depth to the research there should be a strong connection between the participant observation and the interview. By choosing this combination of both participant observation and interviews, in addition having all possible informants from the group take part in the research makes the whole process a one case with more depth.

2.8 Presentation of informants

The group of informants held a variation when it comes to gender and age. The group consisted of ten people with the age span from 28-57 years, in the group there were four women and six men. I can divide the informants into two groups, were five people (three women and two men) were from 28 to 39 years. The other half (one woman and four men) was from 47 to 57 years. Some were married and had a family with children, some had grandchildren, some were living on their own, and some had a partner. Seven people were Norwegians, one German, one Dane and one Swiss. The language spoken was Norwegian/Scandinavian.

All informants had some kind of higher education. The group of informants consisted of well-educated people, many held high job positions. Within the group there were people working in the health sector, with media, as leaders and consultants within the private sector as, with research and people working within tourism. All informants had since they were children

spent time in nature in a various degree, some were passionate skiers, some did sport regularly, some were dedicated to friluftsliv and used nature for recreation, fishing, hunting etc. All seemed to live active lives with work and spare time activities. The range of experience and competence with this kind of ski expedition can vary a lot within the group.

2.9 Semi structured interviews

A qualitative interview can be formed mainly in three different ways (Thagaard, 2013). One way to make an interview is an unstructured form, where the interview is more of a conversation between the researcher and the interviewee. Although the themes for discussion are thoroughly planned beforehand there is room for the interviewee to bring up other topics as well, this type of interviews is often referred to as unstructured (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The opposite of this is a structured interview, where all questions and their orders are made beforehand (Thagaard, 2013). The third way of doing interviews is called semi-structure interviews this approach was the one I used.

When conducting semi-structured interviews there is room for the participants to talk without being too strictly directed by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews are common within qualitative interviews and are a conversation where the researcher has worked out some themes in advance (Thagaard, 2013:98). This way of organising interviews gives the informants opportunity to bring up themes they want to talk about. Because the interview was organised in this way I often experienced being told about situations or issues I had not thought of. This opens up for being introduced to new interesting aspects to study further that perhaps would not have been expressed by the informants through a structured interview. Altogether this has to do with the explorative nature of this research project, as the research question express.

I often started out by letting them talk about their background, I am aware that some researchers wait with these questions as the last thing in order to avoid that the interviewee feels inferior. Since the informants and I were not strangers but already knew a lot of each other's backgrounds I wanted to start the conversation with something familiar and then wait with the themes that might touch upon more personal reflections afterwards.

The actual interviews were done over a period of 8 weeks, it was up to the informants to choose where and when they wanted the interviews to take place. My aim was to meet as many as possible face to face. One interview was done in a cabin, three were done in peoples own home, one was done in a meeting room in connection to the informants work. One was done in a park where we walked around for a while before we sat down on a bench under the open sky. Due to geographical distance it was not possible to meet the remaining four within the timeframe, therefore four interviews were done by me calling their mobile phones via Skype, we did not see each other faces, it was like an ordinary phone call.

Each interview varied in duration from 45 minutes to 2 hours and 40 minutes, however the average interview lasted for approximately 1 hour.

I believe that because I was a part of this group already from the very beginning, it added some value especially when I did the interviews. I experienced some people speaking openly about issues that can be seen as a bit more delicate, which I will return to in the analysis chapter. There were of course individual differences, to elaborate this further some informants brought up things I did not question, for instance if there were things they felt could have been done differently from the company's side or being fully open about their own personally experience for instance one informant described the feeling of not mastering the "expedition concept", the daily routines and dealing with practicalities until the second last day. I am not convinced that the informants would have brought up, what they themselves experienced as negative or vulnerable information, if we had not met before. My reflections regarding these issues are also supported by Thagaard (2014:113), she writes that the development of trust and credibility makes the foundation for the informant to speak openly about their experience. This is described as an aim of itself within ethnography and when dealing with interviews, that the dynamic between the persons involved is based on feeling safe and comfortable.

The fact that all informants agreed to take part in the project is a compliment to the project. Although I do not have any opinions from the informants in regard to relationship of trust between us, I do not actually know how they felt and if they gave me the "true story" during the interview, however the true story is not what I aim to search for by this dissertation. What the informants chose to tell me there and then is what I can relate to and work with to look at various meanings. I have experienced that the informants have had trust in me and all material that I have received through this work will be handled with respect of the informants.

Just as an important aspect to reflect over is that because we knew each other and had a common experience of significance to relate to which function as the binding glue between us, there can also be issues that do not contribute to an interview where both parts are truly open. As the interviewer I may leave things out that I know the person do not want to talk about, or because we share a history together we have earlier felt that the “chemistry” between us did not work out, or the informant leave out to talk about something because he knows or thinks that I have experienced the same as him. This can affect the interview in one way or another. These are some examples of issues that can turn out affecting the interview in a less fortunate way.

I made some discoveries in the process. During the first three interviews I met the people one by one, face to face, beforehand I had thought that the most ideal would be to meet everyone this way, however after the first phone conversation I realized that during this talk the focus was only on what was being said. While having these conversations there were no visual distractions or supports. Also I realized during some interviews that I did face to face that some people were a bit uncomfortable with the recorder lying on the table, especially in the beginning, this I did not had to think of while talking over the phone. Even though people were informed that I would record the interview they seemed not to care of this at all, perhaps because they did not see it and then it was easier to focus only on the words being spoken.

My experience was that it varied from interview to interview where themes we dealt with first or last. As the researcher I was the one who controlled this structured conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) however some people who were more talkative often touched upon different themes themselves before I had asked about it, this can be an indication of trust. Some were more eager to talk than others and I got the impression that they enjoyed this situation were they where able to share their stories about their experiences.

2.10 Transcribing and analysing

After all the interviews were completed I had about 13 hours with recorded talks, the next step now was to write this into text so that I could study the material further. To transcribe is to construct written texts of the oral recorded talks (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:183). I was

determined to do this work myself, this is an exceptional good opportunity to get to know the material collected and the analytical process starts already here, this is also supported by Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) and Dalen (2004).

I had a routine that after every interview was completed, I wrote down topics which I considered had been interesting, so already at the start of the process I made notes and reflected on the actuality and relevance of various themes. To first transcribe and then read through what became the written material over and over again was a large part of my analytical process. By reading the interviews several times I discovered interesting elements. I selected key text passages from various participants and started to work with this, I was very satisfied with the material and a huge part of the work has also been to decide what to leave out and what not to bring into the analysis.

The transcriptions of all recorded material were done from Norwegian spoken language to Norwegian written text. All the quotes from my informants that I used are translated into English by me, I am aware that information can get lost in translation, however I have focused to make the best possible translations to make sure no important opinions were changed.

To me it was important to do all the steps in the process, from taking part in the tour to write the empirical report, making the interview guide, do the interviews, transcribe the material and do the analyses. It demands a lot of time and effort, but the learning perceived from this process was very valuable. A part of this thesis is to contribute to study expedition tourism and perhaps contribute with some new knowledge. Through this work, there have been several steps, a link of connecting chains binding the research project together and by this making it to one complete case from the beginning to the end.

2.11 Ethics

As the background chapter also outlines the world of companies who provide expedition tourism products, such as crossing Greenland is not large within Norway. This means that the group of people both who have guided these kinds of expeditions and the participants who have taken part in them are not a very large group. This is one of the reasons of why anonymity is an important issue throughout the whole dissertation.

The main guide in the group was the first person who got introduced to my idea of possibly doing research on this crossing, he responded positively. Already in March 2013 when the group was gathered somewhere in the inland of Norway, I mentioned that I would most likely do a study on expedition tourism and in connection to this I most likely would want to do interviews with the participants. This was also a topic while we were on tour and the people in the group were all having a positive attitude towards this and expressed that they would with pleasure take part in an interview or contribute in other ways at a later time. Even though people had not formally signed a consent form before we went to Greenland, their attitudes towards the project gave me comfort that I could use what I observed along the way, as part of the research. For some of the informants I think it was good to be able to talk about their experiences. A couple of informants actually sent me text messages where they thanked me for that they had been given this opportunity to talk, which they expressed as being valuable for them as well. In this matter I am open to reflect over the fact that people had been introduced to this project orally and informally and perhaps they felt obliged in one way or another to do interviews, I truly believe that the informants experienced that it would have been fine to reject to participating in the project, without this leading to uncomfortable situations between the informants and me.

Before the interviews took place this research project was registered to NSD, the Norwegian Social Science Data Service. As part of this both data collecting methods; interviews and observation, were reported in to NSD. Before every interview I informed the participants about the ethical guidelines I would follow, they were informed that this was voluntary and they could at any time withdraw from the project without stating a reason. Every interview was recorded and transcribed, after finalising the master thesis all written and transcribed material are deleted. All info with ethical guidelines were written down in a formal letter² and given to the participants. The participants were also informed that the information I received would be made anonymous, in this respect I have throughout the work with the project strived to maintain the anonymity of all participants as well as the company involved.

During a month of skiing with strong physical and mental challenges people are in situations where they are showing their “true self”. Participants within the group can experience that

² The information letter is found in the appendix

they have different days to be vulnerable and there are few places to hide difficult emotions, people in the group go from being rather unknown to each other to suddenly have to depend on each other and see each other in various settings, sometimes emotional. As an example I can say that the people I skied across Greenland with have seen sides of me that my colleagues at work, who see me every day, have not seen and will probably never experience. With respect to the participants I have worked on making them unidentifiable in the text, however, there might be a chance for indirect identification. People who know of this particular crossing and people taking part in it can be able to identify participants. My consciousness in regard of these aspects have made me reflect over what to focus on and how to present it in a considerate way in respect of my informants and the stories they have shared with me.

Chapter 3 - BACKGROUND

During the work with the material from my informants I made various discoveries and I saw the importance of presenting a cultural context. This chapter will present the cultural historical context related to parts of the polar history. I will draw an outline from relevant sections of the comprehensive polar history and look at which nations have related to some of the polar areas and present some stories that seem to be of importance to the informants. In addition to this I also look at how the term expedition is used today in various contexts. This chapter consists of secondary empirical data and will function as a point of reference in chapter four which deals with my analytical findings.

The ski expedition I have studied and which is the foundation for my empirical material, can be considered as a tourism product in the “footsteps of Nansen”. The Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen became a famous polar explorer as he “invented” the concept of crossing Greenland on skis, through his achievement by completing the very first crossing in 1888 thus proving it was possible. This makes a strong connection between the Norwegian polar history and my empirical material. And is why I want to look closer into the cultural universe in which the participants relate to and live in.

3.1 The northern horizon - Ultima Thule

For about the last two millenniums Thule has been the name used to describe the ultimate north. It was the Greek Pytheas of Massalia who went as far north as anyone had previously described in the 3rd century B.C. who created the name Thule (Hastrup, 2009). How far north he went and what area he described as Thule, historians are not completely sure of, the essence is however that the more inhabited part of the world got a notion that there were something more and further north on this globe that was still unknown.

“Thule (...) was to refer to as a moving and imaginary horizon that marked the boundary between a habitable and civilised South and a barely habitable land of barbarians in the far North” (Hastrup, 2009:106).

The northern horizon moved in the same pace as Europeans and Scandinavians sailed longer distances and gathered new knowledge about the world. The first traces of the Paleo Eskimos, the first people living in Greenland go 4500 years back. The word Eskimo was used from the 16th century, however in newer times it is replaced with the word Inuit, and commonly today the people living in Greenland are called Greenlanders (Gulløv et al. 2005). The Norse in the Middle Ages were the first from what was considered as the civilised world to explore Greenland. The Old Icelandic sagas are literature based on oral storytelling (Gulløv et al. 2005). The sagas are passing on stories from this land in the west and descriptions of the people they had met (Hastrup, 2009).

In the second half of the 9th century the Norwegian Erik the Red was outlawed from Iceland where he then lived, this forced him to look for another place to stay. He sailed westwards and spent his three years in exile to explore the land. Three years later he returned and colonised the land, which he named Greenland. He brought people from Iceland and settled in the south of Greenland of what archaeologists have proved to be the first Norse settlement on Greenland (Gulløv et al. 2005). While the Norse held domestic animals and were dependant on the summer season to harvest enough grass for the winter, the Inuits were hunters and depending on the season they hunted various mammals both on land and in the sea, birds and fish. The Inuits stayed by the coast where the best possibilities for hunting were (Gulløv et al. 2005). This explains why they never have had any tradition of entering the inland ice. Crossing the inland ice of Greenland is not a Greenlandic tradition, the Inuit stayed close to the ocean and the mountains where they could fish and hunt. A myth I once heard in Greenland describes the inland ice as the “end of the world”. To them it made no sense of spending time in a frozen environment, associated with great danger. They were dependant on nature with whatever they could harvest in order to live.

The Norse settlement disappeared in the late 1400s (Gulløv et al. 2005) the stories from the middle age are the first ones linking Norwegians to Greenland. During a longer period of time the two cultures developed in the same land, the interaction between these two cultures was the beginning of shaping the Greenland we know today (Gulløv et al. 2005).

In the 15th century knowledge of maritime engineering expanded in Europe, this of course was a way for nations in Europe to widen their knowledge of the world they lived in (Drivenes & Jølle, 2004). In the sixteenth hundreds several European nations headed north for

whaling. Big nations like Spain and Portugal as well as France, England and Holland were seafaring nations who went to the areas around Spitsbergen especially for this purpose. The whale oil was a requested product in Europe at this time and used to make products such as soaps and lamp oil (Svalbard museum, 2014). Norwegian whaling in polar waters did not really start before the second half of the 19th century, (Drivenes & Jølle, 2004:8).

3.2 Fridtjof Nansen – the man who started it all

The polar explorer and scientist Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930) had a passion for being outdoors and used nature for sport and recreation. He was a talented skier as well as a proficient zoologist (Jølle, 2011). Nansen was curious of nature. He had his first experience with Greenland while he was joined a Norwegian seal-hunting vessel to the Arctic Ocean in 1882 to collect scientific samples in connection to his studies. In 1883 the Finnish-Swedish explorer Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld returned from an expedition on the Greenlandic inland ice, he concluded that Greenland was not the green oasis that some people might would imagine. Nansen got the idea that he would plan for a ski expedition on Greenland that would go from coast to coast (Jølle, 2011:25). Nansen was not the only one with an interest in crossing the inventory of Greenland, the American Robert Peary had been exploring parts of Greenland and was planning to make an attempt in 1887, for various reasons this expedition had to be postponed. The first attempt on crossing Greenland was made in 1751, and before Nansen accomplished to explore what at that time were described as a “terra incognita³”, eight expeditions had tried before him (Jølle, 2011:50).

Nansen gathered a group of five men⁴ who would embark upon this expedition together with him in order to win the race of being the first ones to cross Greenland from one side to the other. 10th of August 1888, after a challenging sailing they could step on solid ground on the East coast and start the expedition, on the 24th of September they could again step on rocks, this time on the west coast after having accomplished a successful crossing. From Umivik in the east to near Nuuk in the west. When they reached Godthåb⁵, which was a Danish colony at that time, they realised that the last ship for the season had already sailed back to Europe.

³ Terra incognita is Latin for the unknown land

⁴ Otto Neumann Knoph Sverdrup, Oluf Christian Dietrichson, Kristian Trana Kristiansen, Samuel Johansen Balto, Ole Nielsen Ravna (Berg, 2003).

⁵ Godthåb, the capital of Greenland. Godthåb in Danish, Nuuk in Greenlandic.

As there were no other possibilities to return to Norway the group spent around eight months in Greenland, which gave them valuable knowledge from the Inuits, the competence Nansen gained during this time was used in later expeditions (Jølle, 2011). These months also resulted in the book *Eskimo Life*, it was an important contribution and Nansen brought back ethnographical descriptions of the Inuits.

When Nansen and his men returned safely back to Europe after their successful expedition on Greenland they first made a stop in Copenhagen, after all their main sponsor for the project was a Dane, the merchant August Gamèl had financed the project (Jølle, 2011).

The celebrations of the successful polar expedition were big events, in Norway the whole nation waited for the expedition to arrive home. When the Fram expedition returned to Oslo in May 1889 around 50.000 people would have found their way to the streets to greet the returning men (Jølle, 2011:104). Jølle (2011) raises the question as to why this expedition received so much the attention, he writes that the expedition was something more than “just a successful ski trip” it was a great contribution to science (Jølle, 2011:106). During the crossing Nansen registered useful information both within geography as well as meteorology. Also the group had proved that the inventory of Greenland was not a green oasis, however covered with snow and ice from one side to the other.

Fridtjof Nansen was a sportsman, he was a good skier and comparing to other polar explorers Nansen expressed himself in a more humble way, he did not express himself as “a suffering polar explorer, Nansen did not need to – he felt at home in the snow” (Huntford, 2006:162). This was probably a reason for Norwegians fascination for Nansen, Norway was a nation of skiers and people identified themselves with him (Huntford, 2006:164). Nansen remarked himself and gained respect for his deed not only in Norway but also abroad, especially in England and Denmark. Authors like Tor Bomann-Larsen have uttered that Nansen made polar expeditions a nation building. Drivenes and Jølle (2004) are among those who do not share this point of view, they think Nansen is too strongly connected to the dissolution of the union between Sweden and Norway and argue that this is done in a retrospective interpretation of the historical happenings (Drivenes & Jølle, 2004:221).

It is possible to claim that without Fridtjof Nansen being the first one to lead a successful expedition across Greenland, Norwegian companies would not have offered this in the same scale as it is done today.

3.3 “Death or the west coast of Greenland”

Fridtjof Nansen wrote in this book about the expedition across Greenland;

“So it struck me that the only road to success was to force a passage through the floe-belt, land on the desolate and ice-bound east coast, and thence cross over to the inhabited west coast. In this way one would burn all one’s ships behind one, there would be no urge one’s men on, as the east coast would attract no one back, while in front would lie the west coast with all the allurements and amenities of civilisation. There was no choice of routes, “forward” being the only word. The order would be: “Death or the west coast of Greenland” (Nansen, 2001:14).

The above words became Fridtjof Nansen strategy for his Greenland crossing in 1888. His plan was by this to avoid having any option of retreat. He imagine that the motivation and the drive in the group would not be extensive enough if the participants knew that they could walk back and return to civilisation, therefore he decided that they would start from the East coast and walk to the more inhabited West coast of Greenland (Huntford, 2006).

From 1888 until today there are various routes that have been used to ski across Greenland. Since the inland ice is very large it is functions as a weather system of its own, often there is a high-pressure above the ice. What people have to be aware of is the notorious piteraq, a strong wind, which is created from cold air above the inland ice that can downburst and accelerates. Due to topography the east coast is exposed to this wind. Usually any expedition, which takes place during spring starts from the west coast and head across to the east coast, often referred to as “the classic route“ it goes from Kangerlussuaq to Isortoq – this was the route our group took. By this the group spent less time in the piteraq-exposed areas on the east coast, because people use less time to ski down than to walk up the glacier. In the midsummer there is not many expeditions taking place, the warmth from the sun melt the snow on the surface and create melt water, melt water channels can be large and make the navigation and progress difficult. While in the autumn period the expeditions often starts on the east coast, and by this start from the same side as Nansen, during the summer months the air warms up a bit and chances for piteraq decreases.

There is no doubt that there has been a tremendous modernisation when it comes to for instance in equipment since 1888. In 1988 Stein P Aasheim arranged a ski expedition starting at the east coast, on the same date as Nansen and they used the same equipment as what had been used 100 years ago. Supposedly Aasheim should have said: “The west coast or emergency beacon” (Sørpølen-2011/Norwegian Polar Institute, 2014). This gives a picture of the changes that have been, although focus on safety and risk assessment is taken very seriously as well as it is not sufficient to rely on getting help if needed. The groups today who enter the various areas for their expeditions have a different perception when it comes to safety in terms of good knowledge, safety equipment, etc. The Government of Greenland has decided that an expedition must hold a minimum of two persons in order to get permission to start, also they must confirm insurance details in advance. Expeditions are only allowed in the period 15th April until 15th September (Government of Greenland).

3.4 Which nations relate to the Arctic?

Norway has an extensive history in connection to both the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Nansen is often described as the one who “kick-started” polar exploration from a Norwegian perspective. Before this Norwegians had little attention and knowledge about these areas. This is also supported by Drivenes and Jølle (2004) who argues that when it comes to polar research Sweden and Denmark for instance were much earlier in making contributions compare to Norway, who entered the field of polar research in the late 19th century and can barely be referred to as a “polar nation” before this (Drivenes & Jølle, 2004:8).

Shaping and creating a national identity especially in connection to polar history is not a unique phenomenon for Norwegians only, there are several other examples on meta-narratives, being designed. Polar narratives have through the years influenced the Nordic countries, “the Arctic became a feature in the new national self-understanding of Denmark, Norway and Sweden” (Bravo & Sörlin, 2002:7). Bravo and Sörlin (2002) also bring up that there has never existed a common and collective “Nordic memory”, which means that the Nordic nations seem not to deal much with each other’s polar history, but focus on what has happened with explorers from their own countries. One could argue that this is because there has always been some kind of competition related to the polar areas, “the race to the pole” and so on, and the focus has mainly been on the successful deeds done by fellow citizens.

Norway had for instance Fridtjof Nansen and Roald Amundsen, Sweden Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld and Alfred Nathorst and Denmark especially Knud Rasmussen, Ejnar Mikkelsen and Peter Freuchen. These are just a few names, however these men were all explorers and made discoveries for further explorations in Arctic areas such as Greenland and Svalbard (Bravo & Sörlin, 2002). All were influential and gained high popularity in their own countries and made a foundation for the narration for generations to come. If we take a look outside Scandinavia there are other examples, Great Britain has also raised some explores, Robert Falcon Scott (Berg, 2003) most known for the race to the South Pole, Ernest Henry Shackleton and also William Cecil Slingsby (Huntford, 2006). Robert Peary was American and did expeditions on Greenland and towards the North Pole (Berg, 2003). The people above did all take part in and took initiative to expand their horizon and are topics for many history books.

3.5 The “network” of ski expeditions

Greenland can be described as belonging to a network of ski expeditions, one place among other geographical areas attractive for being visited. Often it seems as the degree of difficulty plays a significant part and people often want to start with an expedition they think is suitable for their level of skill and former experience. It is common that companies who provide expeditions require that people who sign up for crossing Greenland should have some kind of relevant experience within winter camping. Often companies arranged at least one gathering before flying to Greenland. Then all meet for some days with skiing and winter camping and the guides will get an impression on the participants competence as well as the participants will get a feeling if this is something they really would do. Places like the Finnmark plateau or the Hardanger plateau are considered to give a good taste on how an even longer expedition can be like. Other geographical areas on the globe that are considered as attractive for people with the urge to go on expeditions can be; the Northwest Passage, The South pole, Baffin Bay, The North pole, seven summits⁶, across Spitsbergen east-west or north-south (or vice versa), and Patagonia have also been a product. What most of these places have in common is that there is a polar history connected to them.

⁶ Seven summits the term used for the highest mountain in each continent

3.6 Friluftsliv

As a social phenomenon friluftsliv holds a strong position in Norway, much of what friluftsliv is about is considered to be “typical Norwegian”. Friluftsliv is a tradition defined as value-based and environmental friendly and plays a part in Norwegians everyday life, friluftsliv is “key symbol of Norwegian culture and identity” (Gurholt, 2008:55). Translating the Norwegian word *friluftsliv* is challenging, because the way Norwegians use the word makes it more of a total concept and a way of living. In English *outdoor recreation* is often the word used (Gurholt, 2008). According to Gurholt (2008) the inspiration for this concept is the “romantic civilisation critiques and narratives about culture destroying nature” (Gurholt, 2008:56). The reason why friluftsliv is introduced in this thesis is because the concept seems to play a rather important part in Norwegian narratives, and function as a foundation of the Norwegian self-understanding, this will be elaborated more thoroughly in the analysis. On a ski expedition as the one studied it can be of relevance how the participants, guides and myself perceived the experience, by sharing a common narrative when it comes to friluftsliv as well as polar history this gives the participants a common foundation for giving meaning to what they take part in.

The Norwegian poet Henrik Ibsen had the first written use of the word friluftsliv in his poem “On the Heights” in 1859 (Gurholt, 2008:59). Some see Nansen as the creator of friluftsliv, he had a strong passion for the outdoor life and encouraged young people to explore this free life in nature as an opposition to the industrial turn in society. The friluftsliv tradition had from the early beginning a strong connection to a traditionally male dominance, and some of the harder values that is found within ski expeditions today can perhaps be traced back to these ideals? It is argued that the Norwegian national identity was shaped by bourgeois mountain trekking in Jotunheimen (Sörlin, 2002:109). The Brit William Cecil Slingsby is seen as a pioneer within mountaineering and the foreigner who introduced this form for outdoor recreation to Norwegians, according to Huntford (2006) Slingsby were the one who triggered the idea to ski tourism, which was not common in Norway in the 1870s (Huntford, 2006:136). Fridtjof Nansen can be defined as the one who made the foundation for how the expedition culture within ski tourism is lived out in Norway today. Gurholt (2008) states that during the late 1800s friluftsliv was a symbol for emancipation among women, and in newer times Norwegian women are still “challenging the male-dominated friluftsliv practices and discourses” (Gurholt, 2008:66). The author elaborates that this does not mean that women

want to compete with men, rather use the practice of friluftsliv to explore the various aspects of life, and through nature experience pleasure as well as social life with families and friends (Gurholt, 2008:66).

3.7 Modern polar heroes – a revitalisation of the expedition phenomenon

In the last three decades there has been a revitalisation within the world of polar expeditions. Norway have raised several people who have remarked themselves by doing various expeditions in polar areas and higher mountains.

Bjørn Staib and Bjørn Reese skied across the inland ice in 1962, and became the first in the “footsteps of Nansen” (Drivenes & Jølle, 2004: 295). In 1983 the Norwegian Carl Emil Petersen was the first one to cross the inland ice alone (Drivenes & Jølle, 2004:305). During the Nansen-Amundsen year 2011⁷ a group consisting of five people⁸ with wide competence within polar history selected out the ten most important Norwegian polar expeditions. Erling Kagge and Børge Ousland’s expedition to the North Pole in 1990, unsupported⁹ and without dogs were one of the ten important Norwegian expeditions. This expedition is considered as the beginning of the new and modern polar era (Schreuder, 2011). The criterions the group used during the selection were: originality, scientific value, new discoveries, records, symbolic value, trendsetters, daring, political significance, and sport deed. Their overall aim was to search for the expeditions that had been the most important ones for society (Schreuder, 2011). One aspect with Kagge and Ousland’s expedition in 1990 was that it received a rather huge attention from media and increased the general public interest in modern polar stories (Schreuder, 2011).

Børge Ousland, Erling Kagge, Liv Arnesen, Monica Kristensen, Stein P Aasheim, Cato Zahl Pedersen, Lars Ebbesen and around year 2000 and onwards people like Cecilie Skog, Christian Eide, Rune Gjeldnes, Torry Larsen and Alexander Gamme have remarked

⁷ 150 years since Nansen were born, 100 years since Amundsen reached the South Pole

⁸ Harald Dag Jølle (historian), Susan Barr (ethnologist and polar historian), Liv Arnesen (pedagogue and first women to the South Pole) Olav Orheim (glaciologist and former director at the Norwegian Polar Institute) and Robert Marc Friedman (science historian) (Schreuder, 2011).

⁹ Unsupported means in this context not to received help of any kind, to be self supported

themselves with different accomplishments. There are several other names on the list that are not mentioned here. However the above people can be used to illustrate in which new direction the expedition phenomenon has taken. These people have become important figures in the Norwegian modern culture. During and after their expeditions these persons have got publicity through media, book releases, motivational lectures, interviews in newspapers and magazines, blogs, programs on TV from their tours, some have also hosted television programs and etc. The spin-of effect they have gained through media and sponsorships have been used well, it has functioned as a way to brand themselves and have given many a strong position in the field of modern expeditions.

In Norway in newer times especially from the 1980s and onwards people like, Stein P Aasheim, Børge Ousland, Erling Kagge, Liv Arnesen, Monica Kristensen Solås and Cecilie Skog have been known names. Also an outdoor personality like Lars Monsen is popular in Norway, and it seems in fact that he has managed to reach out to a broader kind of “audience”, while the modern polar explorers are mainly known for people with that “special kind of interest”, this is at least the impression I have got when working on this project. The ones mentioned here are just a few names, what these people have in common is that they have remarked themselves by succeeding with different projects, for instance being the first woman to the South Pole or being the first ones to reach both the North- and South Pole and to climb Mount Everest or doing research in polar regions. There are many names and great accomplishments that are not mentioned here, those stories can be read in other books. However by having one after the other “polar hero” in newer times shows that such trips were possible for other than Nansen and Amundsen is probably a reason for the large interest for ski expeditions. They have build up their experience by conducting many of the expeditions within the “network” as referred to earlier.

3.8 Norwegian tour operators

Some of the above explorers have over the years started their own tourism companies. In Norway there are a few tourist companies who offer the kind of ski expeditions this thesis deals with, there have been a few smaller companies that have started up offering expedition products to polar areas but have for various reasons closed down the business. Overall there seems to be three main actors in the Norwegian “landscape” today. Ulf Prytz founded in the

1970s the first company “Eventyrreiser” in Norway that sold adventure travels, this company merged with Hvitserk in 2005 (Hvitserk, 2014). Hvitserk is today the largest company in Norway and was founded in 1997 by Sjur Mørdre, Lars Ebbesen and Martin Gudbrandsgård, the first two in particular have remarked themselves by doing various ski and mountaineer expeditions (Hvitserk, 2014). I have heard from people who have been involved in this for tourism quite a while that it was most likely Sjur Mørdre who arranged the first tour with paying clients across Greenland, with dogsleds in the early 1990s. Hvitserk have a wide selection of guided expeditions, not only to the polar areas. Some are more extensive than others when it comes to; distance, time and money spent and the degree of difficulty, for instance skiing across Greenland, the Northwest Passage, skiing on Spitsbergen, skiing the Finnmark plateau and expeditions to the South Pole. In addition they offer several expeditions to higher mountains such as Mt. Everest, Denali, Mt. Vinson and Aconcagua to mention some (Hvitserk, 2014).

Fram Expeditions is another company. It was founded in 2012, the Norwegian Cecilie Skog owns half of it. She was the first woman in the world to complete the seven summits, plus long distance ski expeditions to the North- and South Pole. (Sandberg Meløy, 2012:55). One of Fram Expedition’s main products is to cross Greenland, also it is possible to reach Kilimanjaro with their guides (Fram Expeditions, 2014).

The company Ousland, is as the name indicates owned by Børge Ousland, who became a part of the new generation of explorers by crossing Greenland in 1986, he holds a considerable long list of ski expeditions both in the Arctic and Antarctica (Drivenes & Jølle, 2004). This company have an extensive list of products, expeditions to places like, the Finnmark Plateau, Greenland on skis or on dogsleds, Patagonia, the North Pole, the South Pole, South Georgia which is in the “footsteps of Shackleton”, and kayak trips in the summer (Ousland, 2014).

3.9 Sport expeditions on Greenland after Nansen

When presenting Nansen earlier in the chapter this raises some questions, if Norwegians through the years, have been inspired by the crossing in 1888 this should stand out in statistical numbers. Statistics were not that easy to reveal, a person at the Norwegian polar institute informed me that the Danish Polarcenter was shut down in 2009. Danish Polarcenter

was the leading institution for polar research in Denmark and were formerly responsible for providing statistics over both scientific and sport expeditions. Since 2009 the government of Greenland is responsible for applications and formalities in regard of expeditions as well as providing statistics. An overview found in (Turøy, 2004) based on Polarboken¹⁰, present how many expeditions after 1888 and onwards which have crossed Greenland. From 1888 to 1988 there were 55 expeditions, out of these 21% were (12 persons) Norwegians, 15% Brits, 13% Americans, 9% Danish, 7 % Germans, followed by a range of other nationalities, Swedes, French, Spanish, Italian and Japanese (Turøy, 2004:15). From 1989 to 2000 the amount of people increased, 92 expeditions cross Greenland. When it comes to nationalities were 38% (51 persons) Norwegian, 17% other nations, 10% Brits, 5% French, followed by Germans, Swedes, Italian, Danish, Canadian, Greenlandic (Turøy, 2004:16).

I am aware that these numbers are not fully reliable, and we can expect various errors. For instance during the first hundred years after Nansen's crossing there are no numbers on or if any of the expeditions did not complete. It is also no guarantee that all expeditions have been registered or properly registered. However out of this we can see a tendency in regard of the varied nationalities interests in this particular form for expeditions across Greenland, which again is what this thesis will study closer in order to get a wider understanding of the expedition tourism phenomenon.

The Government of Greenland provided¹¹ me with a statistical overview from 2010-2013 on number of people taking part in what they define as "sport expeditions", this includes not only crossings of the inland ice, but also kayak expeditions etc. Additional information shows that the majority of these expeditions are crossings, mainly going from west to east, some from east to west, and a few north to south or south to north. This statistics does not tell whether the expeditions have been arranged commercially by a tourist company, or private. In total over the period of three seasons people from 25 different countries took part in sports expeditions. In total 317 Norwegians, 99 Brits, 50 Danes, 39 Germans and 38 Americans, followed by other nations as France, Greenland, Sweden, The Netherlands and others. What

¹⁰ The Polarbook, is published by Polarklubben/the Norwegian Polar Club, which was founded in 1933, and is an interests-organisation with focus on issues related to the Arctic and Antarctica. Formerly they made an annual overview over all expeditions crossing Greenland each year (Polarklubben, 2014).

¹¹ I received these numbers on e-mail after having requesting information

seems to be interesting with these numbers is that Norway represents the country with the highest amount of participants, on every statistic.

3.10 The everyday usage of the term expedition

In my search of interesting material on how the term *expedition* is used today I discovered something called an “Expedition test” on a Norwegian site online (Ut, 2014). The headline to this article asks the question, “What expedition is suitable for you?” and further informs that the Norwegian Stein Peter Aasheim¹² has tested out five smaller and bigger expeditions in Norway. What I find interesting here are the test criterions. Each expedition is measured by nine criterions, and each criterion is given points on a scale from one to six, where six is the best. The criterions are: 1.Originality (pioneer efficient), 2.Risks (is there a chance of getting bruises or dye), 3.Degree of nature experience, 4.Degree of spectacularity, 5.Potential of becoming a sponsor object, 6.Potential for a reportage, 7.Expected media attention, 8.Special challenges, 9. “Hair-on-your-chest-factor” (macho efficient).

The different expeditions measured stretches from paddling the Stabbursriver in Finnmark with kayaks, paddling Glomma¹³ on a timber fleet, reaching Øksfjordjøkulen¹⁴ on skis or taking your kids to a pond in the search of tadpoles. This article is clearly not to be seen as scientific research, and holds a considerably share of humour. However it says something about the usage of the term expedition today. By referring to it this way it builds up around how the reputation of expeditions very often is connected to something tough, rough and traditionally male dominant. If it is not tough or at least presented to be tough is it not a proper expedition?

I contacted a Norwegian tour operator, because I wanted to get some more input on the terminology and their usage of it. A representative from the company tells me that they do not have any clear definition of the concept *expedition* but further gives an unofficial definition.

¹² On his own webpage Aasheim presents himself as a writer, lecturer and “also referred to as adventurer” (Aasheim, 2014)

¹³ Norway’s longest river

¹⁴ Glacier in Finnmark county

“It is a tough tour, which demands a lot of the participants. People have to expect to work hard and give a lot of effort to reach the goal, the tours are physical and psychological demanding and it is necessary to do thorough preparations and have experience from similar tours. Often we demand that people have been done similar tours before. An expedition is often long (duration), with several nights in tent. The tours often go to colder areas or to higher altitudes (or both) and the equipment play an essential role” (Personal communication, 10th June, 2014).

This way of talking about the phenomenon builds up the concept of expeditions as something macho and tough. However if we see this from a company’s side they want of course to ensure that they do not present some of their products as too easy because then they risk having participants who have taken too lightly on the preparations and perhaps are not fit enough. There are stories of people who do not succeed even though they are walking with an organized group and they have to be rescued out if the conditions for helicopters allow it. Some realize after they have started out that this was not how they pictured it to be, they feel it is too strenuous and do not have the power to continue. As a participants, either you do this unorganized or with a guide company, it is the participants own responsibility to make sure he or she is well enough prepared. The guide company should have good routines to follow up the participants both to be able to give a push in the right direction when it comes to preparations and motivations and even be able to sort out if a person is not ready. Being prepared is not exclusively about physical preparations, working with you inner motivation and thoughts is just as essential for to be able to conduct.

Not only the providers of for instance ski expeditions contribute by giving meaning to the phenomenon, also more formal authorities are a part of this and some actual define the concept. In front the crossing in 2013 the company who arranged our tour informed the participants that it was necessary to have a good personal insurance that would cover for instance a stay at a hospital or transportation back home, lost luggage etc. A general insurance for the whole group, while we were one the ice, was provided by the arranging company. One insurance company in Norway responded to my question on how they define an expedition according to their standards.

“By expeditions we mean travels with a purpose to discover new areas or travels with a scientific purpose. Examples on travels that always will be considered as expeditions

are trips to Antarctica or to areas north of 80 degrees, trips where the medical defensible is challenged and trips where you are advised by locals or experts not to complete. (Despite this definition Greenland is covered by our travel insurance)”

(Personal communication, 22nd April, 2014).

Ascribe meaning to the expedition tourism phenomenon is not something only the participants do, like in the example above the insurance companies also have an influence in this “process”, as well as the tourism companies that provide these products, the guides who take part in the actual tours, outdoor-magazines, and well known polar explorers living today acting in media. All those who relate to the phenomenon contribute to ascribe meaning to it, and people get more or less a collective understanding on what it is.

3.11 Expedition cruising

An already solid established concept within tourism, is expedition cruising. There are a number of shipping companies who have different ships of various size and passenger capacity sailing in polar waters. When it is summertime in the northern hemisphere the ships spend most of their season around Svalbard, Iceland and Greenland, which are the main destinations. Some do landings¹⁵ on various other places as well for instance, in Norway or Scotland, and some visit Newfoundland. When the summer is in the southern hemisphere the Antarctic regions are visited. Focus for most is experiencing the nature, gazing and taking part in cultural events. The activities can be everything from bird safaris, museum visits, guided city-walks, hikes, on-board lectures, recent years some also offer for instant kayak trips or to sleep one night in a tent.

When the term expedition is being connected to cruises it gets a different meaning than if we look at expeditions where people hike, ski, dogsled or climb together. The group on a ski expedition can be seen as being in a more vulnerable position, they have to manage on their own, and the group of people are dependent on each other since they are on the same “mission” and driven by human force. There seems to be a rather large difference between the two phenomenon expedition cruising and expedition skiing. Expedition cruising is in

¹⁵ ”A landing” is a term that expedition cruises use when they go ashore and get solid ground under their feet – they land.

particular more connected to the theoretical concept of nature-based tourism. While ski expeditions have a more physical character and also psychological aspects involved, because of this the phenomenon is then more strongly connected to the concept of adventure tourism.

In connection to this we have to keep in mind that what is perceived as an adventure is individual. Meaning that passengers on an expedition cruise might as well have perceived their voyage as a great adventure. Gyimóthy and Mykletun (2004) has written that *all* tourism activities can be defined as adventurous, this because the tourism activities are designed for making consumers to feel that they escape from their routines and experience something different than their everyday life. This way of defining the concept also means that what is perceived as adventurous varies from one person to another depending on their level of experience.

What has been presented in this chapter will form a background for better understanding the phenomenon of expedition tourism, there seems to be several relevant issues to deal with when trying to add more knowledge to the concept of expedition tourism. This chapter will be referred to in the analytical part of this text, which forms the next chapter. With some stories from the relevant polar history in mind, as well as some secondary empirical data, we move on to the analysis.

Chapter 4 - ANALYSIS

4.1 Performing expedition tourism

We have now reached the part in this thesis, which include theory and analytical findings. Based on the empirical material conducted earlier in the process this chapter will present a broad analysis and various themes that will be dealt with. I will start to roll out the leading theoretical perspective. Edensor's theory of performance that he uses to study tourism will function as the main theoretical perspective for this study, in order to focus on the research question, what meanings paying participants ascribe to the phenomenon of doing a Greenland crossing. By studying this, the master thesis can contribute to a broader insight into expedition tourism and the knowledge can be of interest to tourism companies in order to gain a better understanding to what processes are in play among the participants they bring along. The concept of performance will be further presented and elaborated in the next section, and then throughout the analysis some other relevant theories will be used additionally and introduced along the way.

Goffman (1990) argued that we all perform in the social life's we live, that we play roles and act as if we were on stage. Performance is a metaphor to describe the social context people are part of. Edensor has studied how performance can be a tool in tourism studies in order to understand why people act the way they do in the various social settings. He also suggests that tourism "should be understood by its imbrication in the everyday rather than a special, separate field of activity" (Edensor, 2001:59). Edensor further expresses, "by using the metaphor of performance we can explore why we carry out particular habits and practices and, consequently, reproduce and challenge the social world" (Edensor, 2001:59). Tourism, which is as an integrated part of the social world is dynamic and the way people behave, are being challenged over time.

According to Goffman (1990) the reason why people perform is with the overall goal to impress others, he describes this as impression management. Edensor describes tourism as having different stages on which tourists perform, and uses the concept of performance to investigate the staged events. The various stages can be everything from festivals, tourist attractions, carnivals or theatrical settings were workers dress up in costumes and make

visitors take place in the staged event or heritage attractions built up around former historical events or places.

Edensor writes that “tourism has several commonly understood and embodied practices and meaning” (Edensor, 2001:71) and tourists through their performances are reproducing them. In order to follow up the research question this is something the analysis will study closer. Edensor states that tourist’s ways of behaving are both dynamic and changing on-going processes. Tourism has several different norms and tourists often are influenced to have pre-assumption before entering a tourist stage.

During performance identities are being produced through body and language in order to “communicate culturally and socially coded knowledge” (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen & Urry, 2004:52). This kind of culturally coded knowledge is something this thesis aims to look for throughout the analytical chapter.

“There is now a general acceptance that it is not possible to speak of people as having a single, consistent identity. Rather identity is shifting, multiple and decentred. Identity does not have an ‘essence’ but is fluid and people engaged with the world through a range of (sometimes contradictory) subject positions” (Wearing, Stevenson & Young 2010: 38).

With support in various theoretical sources identity is something, which changes all the time, we create and build the stories of ourselves and how we want to present ourselves. I choose to understand this as to working on our identities is a constant changing process. According to Edensor “performance maps out both individual and group identity” (Edensor, 2001:71). This is highly relevant for my study, how can crossing Greenland be a vehicle for transmitting identity?

Edensor has written about how tourists share norms of how to behave or what to do in different settings, he refers to them as tourist-habitus (Edensor, 2001:40). Bourdieu wrote about the cultural coded patterns that are formed by for instance class, gender, ethnicity and sexuality, according to Edensor, Bourdieu describes this as an un-reflexive way of being (Edensor, 2001). Often people who can be seen to belong to the same social group follow the same pattern when it comes to for instance travel patterns. When it comes to the groups of

participants taking part in this case all had some kind of higher education, all worked and seems to belong to a group of resourceful people. On this kind of ski expedition the group is away in what can be described as a liminal space, this “both include a transition to and returning from this “other world” (Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2004:871).

In my analytical approach, I will consider touristic performances in terms of how tourism may become “...a vehicle for transmitting identity, by undertaking a particular form of travel in a particular style” (Edensor, 2001: 74). One way of performance that Edensor writes about is that some tourists have a strong need to stand out, a classic example on this are backpackers who want to differentiate themselves from package tourists. However still they often rely on travel books, so they are not completely off track. People have a need to distinguish themselves from others. Crossing Greenland on skis can be described as a particular form of travel as Edensor writes about. Do the participants on tours like these talk about this tour in a way that distinguish themselves from others? How do people who ski across Greenland make this travel a meaningful and special experience for themselves?

Edensor writes about how performative norms need to be constantly played out to retain their power. “Tourists are imbued with their own conventions, their own unreflexive assumptions about what distinguishes them from the “others” (Edensor, 2001:62).

Various themes have been rolled up while working with the empirical material. Some of these themes are what the remaining part of this chapter will go deeper into in order to investigate the research question. The first themes that are being touched upon are some relevant issues in connection to nature, as stated earlier this is a tourist product that would not exist without nature. As a start I will search for how the participants ascribe meaning to the phenomenon in some dimensions connected to nature.

4.2 Nature - Wind, weather, light

Nature and the various aspects of it seem to be one of the things that people had clear thoughts of in advance. Some had hoped that there would be more variations in the surroundings and had pictured it to be different from how they experienced it. Before going to Greenland I had some expectations and images in my mind, I had images of blue sky in my

mind and we would walk on a white large plain with perfect snow conditions, the first part would be physically challenging and then after coming up on the plateau it would be rather flat, that was how I had pictured it in advance.

“I had some images in my head that I had seen in books (...) for instance to only see ice and snow and the horizon and the loneliness” (Informant 2).

Some informants were focused on the balance we find in nature, the margins can sometimes be small and on expeditions people may get reminded of exactly this balance, which again can lead to reflections over life.

“It is so infinite large and there are no mountains so you can see the very wide horizon and I remember that some afternoons when we had put up the tent that I took a little walk (...) and then you see how small the camp becomes in all the white. (...) And there you got something to think about and also if you see it in the perspective of an ecosystem, then you see how small we are or how big we are depending on how you look at it. (...) I think it is an important enrichment to a life that you have that experience in your body, it is not something you have read or heard others talk about. You felt that storm yourself, right, you know how the forces of nature can rip you down as a human and you know how close you are to death. And to taste what it can be like to be close to death is to feel that you really live and that is a delicate balance” (Informant 9).

This informant reflects upon how the natural surroundings reminds people that we are a part of something larger, in such a context as described above it contributes to give people perspective on the life we live back home. And perhaps appreciate life in a different way when returning back? In settings like a crossing over Greenland nature is not something people can choose to visit, it suddenly becomes a part of the everyday life, you cannot leave if you do not feel comfortable with the storms or the cold, you have to function and find solutions that makes your existence in this environment good and comfortable.

One of the informants had some interesting reflections on what he experienced crossing Greenland to be like, how the informant had partly pictured it to be in advance and also how he experienced it to be after having done it.

“You get pictures in your head of what it is to be lying in the tent with a deafening noise (...) I understood that the weather could get bad and that we had to lie still (in camp) and that stuff, but what was a bit surprising to me is that skiing across Greenland is not first and foremost a nature experience, at least it is not only that. (...) It is a lot of monotone (...) you have to work with keeping yourself going and that stuff, compared to the Finnmark plateau which is a totally different tour, there it is a lot more to look at, there are some ptarmigans and some reindeers and then you see the tracks of a wolverine... Greenland is not like that. (...) I have several pictures showing the white plateau and red and blue anoraks, so that is not so much to show hour after hour (laughs). (...) But when you first are there...you are in a mode for changes in the weather and the light and just being outside from morning till evening (...) and in a way see how the light change that is also a nature experience” (Informant 3).

The informant talked about how he was not prepared to find such a different type of nature compared to what he was used to from Norway. This quotation indicates that the weather is a great part of this experience however, there is something more to this particular phenomenon. To me it was clear that this kind of ski expedition was different compared to other trips that I have formerly done, you are very dependent on the weather, and vulnerable. Here we needed to have a certain progress in order to reach the east coast in time for our flights. Our group had three full days and three half days where we stayed in camp due to strong winds and whiteouts. Some days you could not even see the neighbouring tent, even though you knew it was just a few meters away. In the diary notes I have written, that the guides told us that they had never experienced as much bad weather on Greenland as the group did this year. They had never experienced to having to lie in camp as much as we did because of wind, snow and whiteout¹⁶. A reflection in connection to this is that when guides who have done this crossing several times before, express that this year is much more difficult than former years, it might have an effect on the group. At least afterwards it can give the participants a feeling that they took part in something extraordinary and unusual, something that made this expedition different from previous ones that the guides had taken part in. Harsh weather conditions can

¹⁶ Whiteout is the word to describe when the visibility is low, and there are no contrasts and no horizon to use as a reference point. Whiteout can be caused by snow, fog, and special light conditions.

build up around the tough image expeditions sometimes seem to get, and the weather should of course be treated with respect.

The experience of having walked across Greenland on skis can vary from time to time. There will always be x-factors in relation to nature, like crevassed areas and challenging terrain, and also weather conditions. There are stories from people who have experienced mostly sunny days and good snow conditions, while others have a wider variation of weather.

In March the whole group was gathered at a place in the inland of Norway. Four days where skiing, pulling pulkas and testing out routines for winter camping were the overall aim. Two of these days were very windy and some people made their first experience with this kind of weather condition. One informant talked about the days on Greenland when it was windy.

“I think it was important to have experienced storms earlier. And therefore I was not shocked, but it was a little bit worse weather than I had expected and a little less sun and warmer days than I had expected, I think in particular...well we always had a lot of wind coming from the same direction and I easily got frostbites on my skin, and to know that you have frostbites and still have to walk outside I think that was exhausting because I worried all the time if it would get worse” (Informant 2).

Within nature based tourism or adventure tourism, there are several activities that are reliant on the weather conditions, however often these activities can be postponed and the company arranging the activity can try later to accomplish the planned activity. When having started on a ski expedition across Greenland you only have one attempt at the time. If the weather gets very bad it is possible to stay in camp, and there are more factors to consider. How much spare food did we bring? Will we reach our transportation out if we get too late due to weather? The group can never predict how many days of bad weather they will get, if any. Our group ended up in a situation where we had many days in camp on the first half of the tour. At some point we realised that if we would get more days with no progress in kilometres one option could be to return back to where we started to ensure the transportation back. As chapter three also mentions is when Nansen and his group reached the west coast they did not reach the last ship and possible transportation back to Europe. Today’s expeditions are not to be compared completely with what happened back in 1888. The margins might be tight in some occasions, however if someone miss their flight back, the consequence is to spend more

money on flight tickets and perhaps return some days later back to work and their family. Today there are back up solutions for most situations and the group's safety should come first. Weather is an essential part of the studied phenomenon when we see how the informants talk about how they expected it, experienced how it was along the way and after the crossing was done. An expedition across Greenland both takes place in nature, in relation to this the weather will contribute in one way or the other to shape the impressions the participants get as well as the total experience. Some informants referred to some of their strongest memories from the experience which related to nature.

“To reach solid ground again (...) when we reached the rocks, then I felt “Yes I did it!” To have achieved this...that part was tremendous, otherwise to see the ice in the west and to see the icebergs and the sea and the impressive nature” (Informant 4).

Several informants, like the one quoted above talked about the nature as something that made a great impression. Icebergs are not part of the nature we find on the mainland of Norway and were not familiar to most of the participants, in combination to having reached the east coast and by this the end of the trip was memorable. The natural surrounding on the east coast made new impressions on people, this was a completely different environment to what the group had been spending the last weeks walking in, and these days stood out when it came to variation in the natural setting the group was in.

“I had strong expectations to the nature on the east coast. I have seen pictures and stuff like that, so I looked very much forward to it. It was kind of a disappointment that it was only the last day that we got the feeling with the grandiose nature. I was not quite prepared on the endless plain and the ice, I had pictured myself maybe more nunataks¹⁷ and some more variation” (Informant 1).

What seems to be common for this informant and also the rest of us taking part in this crossing for the first time, was that everyone had some kind of expectation in advance directly related to the nature. We all put into words our expectations to these issues, and in addition people talked about how it was to experience the reality and how the reality lived up to the expectations they had. Some felt that their expectations were not met and therefore people

¹⁷ A nunatak is the description of a mountain peak “rising” up from an ice sheet.

have to reproduce the reality that they experienced. Why did it seem to occur as a surprise for someone that the nature on the Greenlandic icecap was not as varied as in Norway? Is it so that Norwegians follow a “Norwegian cultural track”, and because the participants had gained the majority of their friluftsliv-experiences in the Norwegian nature, the expectations were automatically centred on what people already were familiar with?

4.3 An inner journey

Our globe does no longer have many untouched geographical spots. Most places are discovered, mapped and named. What is then left for adventurous people to search for? The inner journey that seems to take place during a ski expedition is an aspect, we find within modern expeditions. Addison (1999) states,

“Since most of the world has been mapped and studied, true adventure has become more deliberate (...) there is little geographical need to ‘discover’ places on earth (...) so what remains is the pure brutality of elements and the interest of the ‘inner journey’ made by the explorer” (Addison, 1999:418).

Addison manages to describe something, which seems to touch upon a highly relevant dimension within the phenomenon of ski expedition tourism. Several of my informants also mentioned this inner journey as Addison (1999) writes about. Some seemed to have expectations that they would get all things and thoughts sorted out along the way. One informant put words on the experience it was to leave the daily life for a month.

“Many days were very monotone and then you were inside your own hood. (...) I had pictured the endless long days that would be as long yawns and the sun would shine (...) but that was not how it was. It was more about here and now. I did not think many great thoughts and that became different than what I believed it would be. I believed I would get a lot of things in place in my mind, however it was only one track under my feet, and one track in my mind. They went parallel. It was kind of “will it be just as bad weather tomorrow and are we not putting up camp soon? I am cold. Have I drunk enough? Will I have time to pee in the next break?” At the same time I thought it was fantastic to get the chance to be taken out of my everyday life and not have any other

worries than natural functions. I did not think much about my life back home. The kind of problem oriented thoughts that we have here back home... I left those thoughts behind on the plane. On one side it was a disappointment on the fact that not “all the pieces came into place”, although also incredible grateful to have experienced that we did not have to take into consideration the other factors in life (back home) (Informant 8).

The informant further describes that after finishing the trip this informant had a huge feeling of mastering and elaborates that the trip was more of an inner journey:

“I felt I could manage everything, because I had made that tour. (...) I felt on the feeling of having mastered this for a long time. I have faced a few difficult situations lately and then I tell myself “You did that trip” despite the difficulties. I think we should not underestimate the meaning of having completed a trip like that (...) We were few and we are few who have done it and it demands something more than just a sport achievement, it demands an inner journey that some people do along the way, and I actually think I can still make use of this” (Informant 8).

A monotone landscape seems to trigger the thoughts in a different way compared to if one get a lot of impressions all the time. Many of us had the same experience as informant 8 talks about, the expectations of getting all thoughts sorted out, even though this was not what happened. People experienced that suddenly there were time to think all kinds of thoughts. And because we often walked in a line you were alone with your brain activity. So there was room for focusing on your own thoughts in a very different way than what most people experience in a hectic modern life. Listening to the sounds around you, to the wind and the snow when you ski upon it. One informant introduced a term in the interview, and called it the “expedition bubble” and for him this had turned out to be an essential and special part of being on an expedition.

“First and foremost the length of the trip brings you into a “bubble”, in a way I have never experienced before. And of course it is exotic to travel that far away (...) the length on the trip and the experience of being in the bubble, the “expedition-bubble” (Informant 1).

The inner journey can perhaps be described as modern man's need for something more simple, a space that opens up for less outer distractions, but then again the important things are in focus, people are present and in the moment.

“It is something with the light and there is something with the sounds and in a way to be isolated (...) In that sense it is complex, or it is more of a mental condition. I remember best to be there and to think that it is the best place to be right now (...) It is another perspective in a different way, it is somehow the next hour that counts (...) it becomes very different from the everyday life (...) because then it is daily routines and work and all that. So it was a luxury I think, to be able to put oneself in a situation where those you are with is what it is about right now” (Informant 3).

The quotes in this section express that this phenomenon is not purely about physical skills. When the body finds itself for a longer period of time in a place where the impressions are of a more monotone character than what it is used to, the senses open up and focus on the little things. Stemple (2013) writes about what he describes as slow adventures, “natural rhythms and extended immersion provide time to play with the identity and develop relationship to place and others” (Stemple, 2013:69). The days on the ice were following a pattern of routines and the pace was slower to what people were used to from their lives back home. The group had a structure for routines when arriving to camp, putting up camp, there was a walking pattern during the day and a pattern for the breaks, even a pattern for food. What we ate for breakfast, snack and dinner was repeating itself, we did not have to worry of what to eat we just opened a bag and poured hot water over it (more or less). All these routines were easy to relate to. Routines in connection to winter camping in particular was something the company wanted the participants to be experienced with before starting out from West Greenland, and they were based on the experiences that the Norwegian guides formerly had made as well as knowledge they had gained from other companies and by arranging expeditions like this before.

4.4 “You owe me a beer!”

This section will illustrate how participants can bring their former experiences into the group, and what kind of meaning dimensions are in play in those kinds of situations. There are various ways in which meanings are being expressed. I want to describe to you a scene from one of the earlier days where the terrain changed often from snow to blue ice in addition it was hilly and this made it partly difficult to balance with the skis and the two pulkas behind. When you were on top of a hill your pulkas were the weight wanting to pull you back down again. At some point I was walking behind one of the other participants when this person suddenly fell and dropped a ski. I went ahead to see if I could help, we managed to pull the pulkas up on the patch of ice and at some point the other person was standing on the rope that I used to attach myself to my pulkas. I immediately said “hey - you owe me a beer!”. This expression was something I had heard this expression from when I had been on glacier walks and learned that this was a commonly used saying when glacier walking, because stepping on the rope with crampons¹⁸ can make the rope more fragile and you are dependant of a solid rope if someone would fall. Skis with steel edges can also make cuts in to a rope, even though the consequences are much less severe. I knew that this person was experienced with mountaineering and I assumed he knew the phrase. We did not talk more about it, however on my birthday some days later, to my big surprise he gave me a beer can that he had carried in his pulkas.

The above example of a situation where tourism can be a way of conveying identity, according to Edensor’s theory of identity-oriented performance (Edensor, 2001:74). By using phrases like the ones mentioned above we state to ourselves, and others that we are experienced. In some cases we bring expressions and a jargon, a way of talking and competence that is gained in advance through experience. We place ourselves in an exclusive group of people who are able to use this particular competence in a correct way. By this we dissociate ourselves with others and by acting this way we indirect tell where we want to belong socially.

When Edensor introduce what he calls status-oriented identity. He points out that status and distinction are important in some settings were people want to distinguish themselves from others by for instance wearing a particular style of clothes or “go native” as they travel

¹⁸ Crampons are what you attached to your boots when you walk on a glacier, they have spikes, which give you a solid grip and prevent you from slipping.

(Edensor 2001:74). When it comes to outdoor equipment there is a lot to choose from and even though we were given a list on items to bring, people can still distinguish within the group by having equipment that signifies they are experiences within this kind of tour and by this follow a jargon. Some informants talked about that they had spend a lot of money on equipment in order to bring “the right stuff”. So within the group you want to blend in by “going local” which in this context would mean to follow a Norwegian expedition culture.

The participants will have several pre-assumptions in front an expedition. The participant’s assumptions and expectations before an expedition like this are shaped by for instance stories they hear from others who have done similar things, by polar literature and also by what the guides talk about in front of the tour.

”I read a little from Gamme and a little by Cecilie Skog and so, but I feel that becomes something else. Also it is so difficult to read up on that because they have the knowledge about this stuff and have done it a thousand times so it is difficult to know when you arrive and have not done it before how it is” (Informant 5).

The participants will act on norms and will behave in a way they consider to be culturally right for the concept expedition tourism. What is culturally right in this sense? As mentioned in chapter three the native people of Greenland have never had traditions of embarking on expeditions across the inland ice of Greenland. This expedition culture the participants find themselves in is not defined nor connected to the local culture existing in Greenland, however it is exclusively linked to the western explorers, and in particular Nansen who made the foundation a couple of centuries back. It can be argued that the expedition culture, the “doing of expeditions” and the dynamics that are in play during such a tour will be the same whether it takes place across Greenland, in the North west passage or on the way to the South Pole. It is a culture that builds heavily on the Norwegian traditions of friluftsliv (Gurholt, 2008). Even though we find differences between how friluftsliv and expeditions are practised and lived out today. The expedition culture is heavily influenced by history, polar heritage and by traditions based on the Norwegian social phenomenon friluftsliv.

“The shifting processes of identity formation and the making of meaning in tourist space are complex” (Edensor, 1998:15). This says something about how compound it is to do identity

and meaning in a tourist context. In addition to the expressions and former experiences the various participants bring along, there is also a special jargon developed within the group.

4.5 Ski trip or expedition?

During the work with this thesis both by studying the informants and other relevant literature it is clear that the term *ski trip* seems to be used as an equivalent to describe this kind of ski expeditions arranged by a tourism company.

“I mostly use expedition. For a ski trip can be so much. A ten kilometres trip in Oslomarka that is a ski trip. No, I really think this is an expedition, I do not know what other words I can use for it. (Informant thinks) Greenland crossing”
(Informant 2).

In a general introduction to a chapter Drivenes and Jølle (2004) refer to Nansen’s crossing as a “ski trip”. This indicates a way of talking about the concept in Norway, it can be perceived as an understatement, since this ski trip was one of the most iconic and pioneer deeds in polar history. Nansen was a sportsman, and he and his company were experienced skiers. For them being outdoors during the winter and skiing was a normal part of life. “I like to go on long ski trips”, this has been said frequently by for instance Cecilie Skog and this is also the way it is presented on her webpage (Skog, 2014). What does this way of talking about the phenomenon do with it? Once you use the word “ski trip” instead of “expedition” it is some kind of de-masculinization, taking away the traditional macho image and present it as something common, ordinary and easy. A ski trip is something most Norwegians can relate to, skiing on a Sunday perhaps together with the family or friends and with your lunch and thermo bottle in your backpack is often used as the classical image on how a ski trip is in Norway.

A possible reason for why the term ski trip sometimes is used is that it has something to do with toughness that is related to the phenomenon. It distances the term from elements associated with traditionally masculine characteristics such as harsh conditions, getting frostbites, struggling, feeling hungry it creates and present the phenomenon as something easier, more accessible, pleasurable, something most people can do if they want. And from the perspective of a tourism company to make it more sellable? A tourism company would

aim to present it as not too hard although factors as preparations etc. has to be properly presented so that the participants do not draw the wrong presumptions. During a ski expedition across Greenland one thing the participants have to prepare themselves properly is the physical shape. If such an expedition is presented as very light people might not make the right preparations and this can cause trouble along the way, for the individual, as well as for the whole group. For the providers of these expeditions it is a balance between presenting the product as too hard, although not too easy either in order to attract potential participants.

One informant brought the issue of how providers might balance the information given in front of this kind of expedition.

“I was not quite prepared that there would be such long days and so physically tough, at least compared to how things were presented (...) it was insofar communicated that you had to train. But I did not actually understand what it was before having tried it out for 14 days continuous. (...) And then I had not done several longer days on a row in advance so it was a bit surprising, it might also have something to do with it...it is probably a balance from the different tour operators, it is as well as a commercial side of it and you cannot frighten the customers either, it might have something to do with that. (...) So it is a balance between that and then we should be prepared on that stuff and without having to frighten anyone, so it becomes a tricky balance”

(Informant 7).

When it comes to the way the tourist companies presents this kind of product soft and hard values are in play. Tough or easy, it is something about presenting the reality in a way it does not scare away too many. On the other hand presenting something as extremely challenging would perhaps in many situation also make the product even more attractive for some.

Goffman (1990) writes about performance as a general social mechanism and for studying the research question his theory seems to add some value.

“All the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (Goffman, 1990:32).

Goffman elaborates that a person would underplay in such a way that he presents a perfect way of himself. In other words people will always strive to present as the best versions of themselves, depending on the circumstances such as audience, setting and so on. If we look back at the quote in the beginning of this section, the informant says that when this person talk with other people, who did not take part the crossing, the informant is willing to use the word expedition to make it sounds very impressive and tough.

“I have held a few smaller presentations for people at work and to family and showed some pictures and video and those things, I do not know, I think I call it both (ski trip or expedition)...if I should brag then I probably call it an expedition, I do not know where the boundary goes, but first and foremost it is a long ski trip” (Informant 3).

In situations where people talk about situations in everyday life the word expedition seems to be used, however when it is talked about trips that are long and demands a lot it seems as if some used words as long ski trips and in some occasions when the participants spoke with others who were not a part of this the word expedition is used.

4.6 Being a tourist or a tour companion?

I wanted the participants to share their opinions and thoughts in the interviews regarding the term tourism and tourist. Do they identify themselves as tourists? One informant responded like this when I asked him what kind of words he uses to describe the travel he had done:

“Expedition members. (...) I do not know maybe I use companions. I often talk about The Greenland-gang” (Informant 2).

It seems to be different terms that are being used, and also there is moderation in the way this informant uses the expressions from expedition members to “the gang”, from dealing with being professional and more extreme to the more informal aspects with these kinds of tours. A little later in this conversation I asked if this person ever considered himself being a tourist during the crossing.

“Informant 2: I have not really thought much about that, but yes I was one (a tourist). I think. You book a package (laughs) so you are a tourist.

Me: Do you think that there is a difference between being a tourist and being an expedition member or a participant or a companion?

Informant 2: Ehm...no, the fact that we booked this through a tour operator and got most things organised by the company I think it is very similar to...not a charter tour, but a package tour you book yourself even though there are different conditions on this tour. I think I had seen differently on this if I had planned the whole expedition myself and travelled with a group of friends. So in this sense I think we were tourist on tour (laughs)” (Informant 2).

In relation to meaning and expressions that utters meanings this is interesting, we know that meanings are not constant, but changing (Wearing et al., 2010). When he talks with his family and friends this travel is referred to as an expedition while to me, which the informant knows study tourist related issues, the informants has no problems to say that “yes I was a tourist”. When the informant talked about being a tourist it was every time said with laughter, this can indicate that it is not really something he wants to be identified with or that he just realized that we all could go into that concept he never had thought of in connection to this kind of tours. According to Bendix (2002) as a part of the identity work, we do a reconstruction of our narratives and much of this process happens after we return home.

“Tourists, I do not think that I use that (word) much, I think I use ”tour companions”. You feel a companionship, which is much stronger than... well I remember for instance I did some multiple day trips on Svalbard on a boat and this was a small boat, so we were relatively few, maybe just 10-15 people on board so you really got to know people, although that was more of a tourist-feeling. This was not that, this was much more. You work together that much so it becomes in a much larger scale of companionship and fellowship. (...) We did the whole job, we cooked ourselves, we had to do everything, if not it would not be done. (...) We did not come to a completely finished set up, there you actually had to do the job yourself and it is much more learning and becomes more interesting that way” (Informant 1).

Taking actively part in the activity seems to be a relevant explanation as to why this participant did not want to associate himself as a tourist. Being responsible for their own and the group's progress was something that more participants brought up.

"No, I do not think that I felt like a tourist, because being a tourist sounds more negative. I think that if I had had anyone that carried my backpack or pulled my pulka or put up the tent then I would have felt as a tourist, but I felt more as a participant" (Informant 8).

This informant points out that the feeling of being a tourist was lacking, not only because the word itself brings negative associations to this person. Even though there were guides each participant was responsible for their own equipment and each individual were together contributing to the group's overall progress. When Cecilie Skog (Skog, 2009) writes about the climbing expedition to K2 in 2008, she describes the group she was part of with four Norwegians as well as the other groups they meet, as tourists. How come she refers to herself and the other mountaineers as tourists in that setting? She tells stories about the local guides, often referred to as Sherpa that they are paid to carry some of their equipment and cook for them in camp. In the Himalaya this is common, people with various nationalities meet in the different camps established on their way to a mountain summit and they hire local guides who are used to the special conditions in the high altitude. The frames for ski expeditions are different from Skog's example, it is expected that people are able to carry their own equipment as well as being independent.

"No, I did not feel as a tourist. No, well tourist ehm...then I think that you are almost on a charter trip, or you are also a tourist during a weekend in a big city as well, but here it is more...here you had to contribute something yourself" (Informant 6).

The participant expressed that this experience was not something he would compare to a mass tourism product, he uttered an aspect that several informants pointed out that everybody had to contribute, and this was a part of the "driving force" in order for to everybody to succeed.

"Informant 5: Calling (name of the guides) for guides is a bit weird, of course they were the guides, and they were a part of the gang even though they had the overall responsibility and stuff. I do not like to call them guides actually, I do not know why (informant laughs) but it has probably something to do with if we does not think at an

expedition tour that we actually have been on and just think on a regularly travel in the world and stuff, then I think the whole thing with guides and tourists are a bit silly. (...) Sometimes when I talk about us who were not the guides I actually say tourists in quotation marks (...) because we are tourists because we have bought a travel to a place that we do not administrate ourselves, it is not us that organises the tour ourselves and then we become tourists (...) but I do not like to use the term because I hate to be a tourist. (...) Then it is this thing again about this being on an expedition (...) we were more than tourists we were also tour participants...often I say the gang, the group.

Me: Expedition members?

Informant 5: No...(...) I like to do things myself, and this we could have done ourselves but then it would have been something else... so actually it is just because I do not want to put myself in this kind of tourist package. (...) But really we are tourists because we have bought a package tour it is just another kind of package tour then what everybody else buys” (Informant 5).

The informant has some negative presumptions to the word tourists and did not want to associate with the term. Within the group of people who are experienced with ski expeditions, some would probably claim that those who sign up for a guided ski trip are nothing else but “package tourists”, they buy a product that is well planned in advance, go with people who know the conditions and all aspects with such a trip, get guidance in the planning phase when it comes to preparations such as training, food, equipment etc. In an interview with Sandberg Meløy (2012) Liv Arnesen is asked a question of what she thinks of “these tours?” and answers “with these kind of packages tours people shirk several levels of learning” further she explains that she does not believe that everyone who leave on expeditions are as prepared as they should practically or mentally, and then she adds “if you have the money you can do almost whatever you want – but do you do this for yourself or to show others and have it on your résumé?” (Sandberg Meløy, 2012:133).

Most of the informants shared the opinion that they were something else other than tourists in this setting.

“Yes we became a good gang. You can say we were different in many ways, but we became a gang and it worked well together. Bonded together, supported each other” (Informant 4).

Although some of the participants used the words tourists about themselves and the group when they compared this to a package tour, most were not able to relate to the idea of being a tourist. How come that participants on these kinds of expeditions in a tourism context do not want to defined themselves as tourists? Is it because of the “anti-tourist in us all” (McCabe, 2005)? McCabe has written about tourist identities and studied how people resist describing themselves as tourists in order to sustain individuality. According to McCabe the concept of the “anti-tourist” is “placed within the context of the expected or perceived shallowness of experience of place within traditionally tourism” (McCabe, 2005:91). This can be linked to what some of the informants talked about. Stating that the participants are reluctant to the term “tourists” because of the “anti-tourist” seems too easy in this context. The concept of being a “companion” was brought up by several, and people emphasised how we were dependant on each other, that the groups was never stronger than the weakest link, that they got close to the guides and closer to each other by showing their “true self”. The next section will explore this a bit further.

4.7 The crossing of intimate spheres

MacCannell (1999) argues that the authentic experiences are what motivate the tourists. He writes about the relevancy of front- and back stage related to the understanding of the concept of authenticity. The front stage is the meeting place of hosts and guests, for example the receptions areas. While the back stage is referred to as a place where the workers rest between performances, examples can be the kitchen, copy room, the space where the locals actually live etc. Front and back staging goes under MacCannell’s concept *staged authenticity* (MacCannell, 1999). When something is staged it is arranged for someone, for visitors to see or do something planned. The terms are inspired by the dramaturgy in theatres and like theatres workers within tourism business can work both in the front and back stage areas. According to MacCannell the back region is commonly the area where tourists do not have access, nevertheless it is seen as an attractive area to be able to enter (MacCannell, 1999). In many situations it can be difficult for tourists to recognise whether a situation is authentic or not, it might be faked and a set up (MacCannell, 1999:101).

When crossing Greenland on skis people are far away from the traditional touristic space, there are no hotels, no fancy restaurants, no one making the beds, no souvenirs to buy in the traditional sense. The tents functions as the hotel, the meals people are responsible for themselves and have to make sure to eat and drink enough, when it comes to souvenirs pictures are taken in a larger scale and also when we arrived on solid ground on the east coast a few found a stone they wanted to bring back home. On an overall and day-to-day basis the guides had the overall responsibility over the group, however not the complete control over all upcoming situations, like weather, injuries or illness in the group etc. Much of the progress during the day are given to each participants effort and what each person contribute with both physically and mentally, with keeping the mood up and so on. The main guides had done this crossing several times and knew in a much larger scale than the participants what to expect. It seems to be very little room for back stage on a ski expedition like this.

“Doing the tourist” works in some situations when it comes to this kind of expedition tourism, because the participants have bought a product from a company who provide all the practicalities around it, there are guides, there are situations that invite participants into a couple of staged events, arranged by the guides. However there are several examples that indicate that the reason why several of the participants do not associate themselves with being a tourist is valid.

”I hardly know who have kids and that kind of stuff, on the other hand I know a whole lot of other things about them - I know when they go to the toilet and stuff”

(Informant 5).

This quote says something about the crossing of Greenland is also a crossing of people’s intimate spheres. Several private spheres are broken down in a different way compared to what happens in most people’s everyday life. If there is a break and you need to pee or poop you walk a few meters away from the group and do it. You know that if you do not bother to do it in the break you will probably regret when the group start walking again. So you listen to the physics of your body and just adapt to the situation. And while everybody did this on the tour people learned to ignore things that in a “normal social setting” back home would have been considered weird. For this group, people were a bit shy in the beginning and some walked away and dug holes. However the further the days went by people did not bother to

spend too much energy on this. So you accept the situation and learn to leave behind a part of the behaviour you are used to from back home.

“It is actually a bit funny the things with the toilet on a tour like this, because (...) as little as we know each other... then one person is sitting there to go to the toilet and it was very special in the mornings just before we would start walking (...) there were three-four people sitting spread across. (...) What I think is exciting with only give yourself...your own body and your own mind the contrast, because it is a contrast to the life we live normally, right. Here you taste on the existential foundation, which is about getting enough food and drink (...) keeping warm and those things. (...) It is probably why we seek it more and more (...) because we want a contrast we want to taste a little of it, and then it is something about to feeling how the body is the instrument (...) it is probably the greatest feeling of mastering to see how the body works day after day and the ability to have the inner motivation is a driving force...to look forward step by step and then you are closer” (Informant 9).

Crossing Greenland is a very transparent existence, if you one day do not feel well, people in the group will notice. Compared to what might happen back home if you are ill one day and call in sick. In the life back home most private things do not have to be shared, but skiing for several days and weeks is different. If someone was not able to keep the same pace as the others this was very visible and the person that struggled that day could feel that he or she was slowing the rest of the group. People had different days to feel tired and perhaps needed some extra support or help from the rest of the group. MacCannell (1976) imply how tourism is cultural constructed and take people away from their everyday lives and contribute people to let go of their normal routines. As Edensor also describes, “It offers opportunities to explore different identities and take on new roles“ (Edensor, 2001:60).

In informal settings such as the back stage described by Goffman (1990) people will be able to release themselves from the role they play when they are performing front stage. In the back region there is no one to impress, back stage people do not have to work on building images and strive to present and act in their best possible way to make a good impression on others. The example above describe a situation where people let go of what we in this context can describe as “masks”, they let go of maintaining the image they normally work on. And

because everyone has their time for being tired physically or mentally, showing this “weaker” side is accepted.

I experienced waking up with a terrible stomach ache one morning, this was a situation where I did not feel comfortable. The day before this happened we had met another group which had camped not far from us, one of the participants were picked up by a helicopter and flown out. One guide offered to help with one of my pulkas. If I accepted the help I felt I broke some of my personal “principals” of being able to manage on my own. However I realised that accepting the help offered would actually be the best for all of us and on both in the short and long run be the wisest decision.

“The stomach ache got worse, I walked slowly around in the camp to pack the things that had to be packed, I was not able to stand straight upright. Fresh in my mind I had the incident with the woman being picked up by the helicopter yesterday and I started to think what would happen if my pain got worse” (Empirical report).

Can the front and back regions apply to this kind of expedition tourism? On a tour like this the boundaries between people are being broken down, people are binding together in a special way, through humour, through physical exhaustion, by helping each other when needed and actually by acceptance of the help offered by others. The participants see each other without “masks”. In our everyday life we all have different identities, we identify ourselves through our work, hobbies etc. But on a tour like this and in the “heat of the moment” or in moments totally opposite of heat, when your fingers are freezing cold, when the group has walked over half of the distance and you feel that you get hungry just right after finishing breakfast, when you take off your hat after weeks and reveal a “birds nest” in your hair, all these moments makes people forget about masks and images, at least for a while. Bit by bit over many days the participants get to know each other in different ways, and learn to know things about each other. The room for having a back stage here is little towards the other participants, the main back stage becomes the one towards the people back home, those who did not take part in this.

4.8 Touristic borderzones

“Isortoq was like a social anthropological experience, with people who looked out from behind the curtains, and all these Greenlandic dogs that were standing outside and you had the wooden sledges and the polar bear skin on the wall...so you almost felt that you had arrived in a new world” (Informant 9).

A few of the informants referred to memories they had from the days on the East coast and in particular the time in the little village of Isortoq, which was the group’s first encounter with civilisation after a month, there were not many meetings with local people.

Tourism industry gets more and more creative with creating new concepts for purchase, also when it comes to offering products to remote destinations. MacCannell (1999) refers to tourism in remote areas as “the frontiers of the tourist world” (MacCannell, 1999:184). These places are often considered to be exotic areas far away in many cases difficult to access, yet available for people who can afford the ticket. The culture on these faraway places are perceived as exotic, different and contrasting to what the “ordinary” western tourist is familiar with from home. Arctic and Antarctic regions are no exceptions of such places.

Bruner (2005) states that tourism takes place in what he describes as borderzones. These borders are by Bruner characterised as both floating and dynamic and possible to compare with “a stage always ready for performances” (Bruner, 2005:192).

“The touristic borderzone is like an empty stage waiting for performance time; this is so for both the audience of tourists and for the native performers. The natives too, then, move in and out of the touristic borderzone. But the perceptions of the two groups are not the same, because what for the tourist is a zone of leisure and exoticization, for the natives is a site of work and cash income” (Bruner, 2005:192).

Bruner’s (2005) conceptualisation of the borderzone is seen from a Western point of view and seems to be rather exclusively located on the boundaries of Third World countries. It is possible to say that the way Bruner describes this concept is not always the case in reality. Mathisen (2012), who has worked on the indigenous Sami people, presents some more nuanced thoughts in connection with the concept of borderzones.

“Crossing national borderzones and visiting remote places is not the only objective of leisure travel. The interests of some tourists go beyond space and geographical movement, and express a desire to cross boundaries of time to visit old and pre-modern cultures.” (Mathisen, 2012:56).

By this it is possible to argue that different cultures create borderzones. Not only because we deal with Third World countries, however because different cultures meet each other.

Earlier in this thesis there has been presented quotes from informants who did not consider themselves as tourists. For the borderzones to be triggered there must be encounters with people. During the time on Greenland there are not many of these encounters. In the setting this study deals with there are in fact no staged meetings between tourists and locals during the crossing and the time spend skiing. On the first days in Kangerlussuaq participants do get a feeling that they visit a country different from home, and these impressions are confirmed when arriving at the East coast and spending first one day in a small village and then another day in a town, informal meetings also participants refer to as memorable, as the first quote in this section shows.

The focus when skiing across Greenland is not really on others and their native cultures, the trip is not planned to have encounters with locals in an extensive way. We are one group travelling together in an exotic destination. Still there are no meetings with foreign cultures and native people (as long as we are skiing). As the background chapter informs the people of Greenland have no traditions on crossing the inland ice, so what is then the cultural aspect with this kind of Arctic ski expedition? Well, the group seem to move in a Norwegian defined culturally concept. We are surrounded by Norwegian values and traditions, shaped with influence from former polar history and friluftsliv traditions. One reason why many informants do not really want to identify themselves as tourists can be explained that to articulate the tourist identity is very little relevant in this setting and in the environment the participants find themselves in most of the time.

One of the non-Norwegian informants shared some experience in relation to what this person experienced.

“I had trouble with my skis to get up the glacier the first days (...) and then I walked as the last and I am not used to that (...) so it was a bit difficult because I did not understand what I did wrong with my skis (informant laughs). It was not a question about power or condition, it was just technique (...) and I have not understood, it is just something about Norwegians and non-Norwegians (...) and I thought “what the fuck am I doing, why don’t I ski as the others?” (Informant 10).

Further this informant describes that it was a conscious choice to walk with a Norwegian company.

“I was very, very happy that I decided to walk with a Norwegian group, because I wanted to be with Norwegians and I am happy it was a Norwegian group and not...other nationalities. (...) I knew that Norwegians (...) have this system with walking in sessions. And I know that (some other nations) do not use the same system (...) to me it was clear that there are only Norwegians who survive Greenland and snow and ice because they have a system which is good (...) all Norwegians use the same system and they know why and it works and it is the best” (Informant 10).

What this informant describes is something exclusively related to a Norwegian culture and seems to refer to a system and competence based on outdoor traditions. The cultural universe that regulates the “correct behaviour” is based on Norwegian traditions. To walk across Greenland is not a cultural experience in form of frequent meetings with locals from another culture or experiencing cultural elements such as music, dancing, communicating with people with a foreign language etc. We move in a Norwegian cultural universe. It is a way of living out national identity and to follow a historical trail in the “ski tracks” of the polar explorers.

4.9 We don’t know who we are if we don’t know where we come from

Much of what we do today is strongly connected to our history, we relate to what has been and live our lives sometimes inspired and with influenced by our ancestors. Why is the past so important? Why is it not possible just to focus on the future rather than the past, Urry (1996) asks? Sometimes we feel there is a heritage to forward, we contribute to pass on the stories by being active and the sum of all this is a part of a process of working on our identities.

In the background chapter I referred to the rather significant number of Norwegian participants who have crossed Greenland during the last 126 years, that heritage is important for the way we live our lives is little doubt. And through these stories we build our identities, and choose what we want to focus on or not. Franklin states that heritage is important in our everyday “because it is concerned with who we are, how we will be and how we make sense of the cultural world we find ourselves in” (Franklin, 2008:96). Even though many of the polar expeditions and discoveries that polar history still refers to today were made over hundred years ago, the stories and the way of perceiving these seems to be transferred from one generation to the next. One of the informants answer a question if there are other tours she could have done as well in addition to Greenland:

“Yes, I actually would like to do the Northwest Passage and the South Pole is something I have wanted to do for a long time, I believe from I was little I heard much about Olav Bjaaland from Morgedal who walked with Roald Amundsen to the South Pole and I saw his sled (...) I notice that they have been role models for me throughout my adolescence because my parents and grandparents talked about it” (Informant 9).

The informant was told stories about one of the five men who reached the South Pole together with Amundsen. Bjaaland grew up in Morgedal that is referred to as the “cradle of skiing” in Norway. This seems to have been a huge inspiration and a trigger to the informant’s interest in polar areas. This kind of “life-cycle-outdoor-interest” - having an interest for being outdoors since they were young seems for many to be of importance. “Heritage is what contemporary society chooses to inherit and pass on” (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996:6). Some of the informants who have children on their own expressed how important they think it is to pass on the same value and appreciation for nature to their kids.

“Being outdoors is a part of life and I tried to pass this on to the children when they grew up. Out in the forest, make bonfires and get the smell of bonfire smoke in their clothes. Burnt slices of bread with cheese and stuff...so that became a part of their adolescence” (Informant 4).

The two informants describe stories and values being transferred from one generation to the next. Palmer (2005) brings this topic in play as well “the heritage discourse of Englishness

does promote the belief that identity is in some way primordial, with fixed and unchanging aspects of identity that can be handed down through generations” (Palmer, 2005:9).

4.10 Is crossing Greenland a pilgrimage?

The background chapter outlined that people have been fascinated by the stories from former explorers and their journeys and persons like Nansen and Amundsen have gained high status in Norway. Our group did not see Nansen’s ski tracks, it was well covered with layers of snow. However walking there knowing that the polar heroes did the same 125 years back ago adds something special. To some extent you can picture for yourselves that if you just hurry up you will reach them eventually. Numerous of people have embarked upon ski expeditions “in the footsteps of Nansen or Amundsen or others”. Can crossing Greenland on skis be a pilgrimage?

If we compare this kind of expedition tourism with traditionally pilgrimage, overall we had few things with us. On an expedition like this you do not really need more stuff than if you were to go away for one week, expect for the food and fuel rations the amount of clothes and other necessities is more or less the same. Also like traditional pilgrimage we have time to reflect, and even though there is a clear goal in reaching the east coast, being able to enjoy the time along the way is important.

Many of the informants related to former polar explorers in the interviews, they talked about their childhood memories where polar stories had made an impression on them and how these former stories triggered their idea of doing this themselves later on.

“I have always been very fascinated by the polar explorers and read a lot about it and Eskimos I remember from I was little, it was a very exotic term. Always I have dreamt of coming to Alaska and the North West Passage. Svalbard has been a realistic place for me to come to. (...) So I think it lies in my childhood and the environment I grew up in, and not least the environment I belonged to during the studies then it was a lot of glacier walks and mountain hikes, so it was just reinforced” (Informant 8).

In tourist studies the concept of pilgrimage is often brought up as an explaining reason of why people travel to visit a particular site. MacCannell (1999) write about modern rituals lived out by tourists and compare these to religious pilgrimages. To some extent friluftsliv in all forms, whether the trips are short or long, can be considered a “religion”, in the sense that is it of great value for very many to be able to spend much time outside and gain balance and renew the energy.

MacCannell draws an example on how tourists visiting for instance various cities in Europe to visit all the “must sees” – famous places, well known buildings, paintings etc. He explains this by an own moral structure which modern international sightseeing possesses (MacCannell, 1999:42). This can be perceived as a search for ticking off places, “been there, done that” and a way of doing “trophy hunting”. This behavior elaborates from John Urry’s conceptualization of sightseeing, the gaze (Urry and Larsen, 2011). As written in the background chapter, we can talk about a “network” of other geographical places where people with interest in doing ski expeditions in polar areas often have on their “wish list”.

“I still dream of the South Pole, but it is totally out of the question to do the South Pole (informant laughs) without having been on another ski trip. So really, I thought Greenland was very tempting, given that it also have such an historical importance. (...) I dream about the South Pole, but I do not know if it is do-able. I really would combine the South Pole with Mt. Vinson¹⁹” (Informant 2).

For some people a part of the drive of doing these particular expeditions in polar areas seems to be to complete expeditions in other polar areas. In two of the interviews this was brought up as a topic.

“I have a little dream about the South Pole for instance and then I thought Greenland is the first step in that direction. (...) I have said that I do not want to do exactly this trip again because I feel maybe it was a bit monotonous. Although I want to go on similar tours, the North West Passage and the South Pole are both trips I would like to do. On both those trips there are more things happening, it is a little more nature. (...) It is the desire to experience something new, the North West passage is a different

¹⁹ The highest mountain on Antarctica and one of the seven summits.

place, however that is a long ski trip and winter camping and stuff (...) Baffin Island is another one. Well yes both the North Pole and the South Pole” (Informant 6).

Crossing Greenland seems to function as a way of “enlightenment” in the sense that it is by some adventurous persons considered to be a step on the way to quest more polar areas that seems holds an even higher “status”, like for instance the South pole.

In Kangerlussuaq where the group spent a couple of days doing the last practical preparations, breakfast were eaten in a building with a part of the Norwegian expedition history literally written on the wall, names of expeditions from earlier times. People were reminded that this is something that Norwegians before them have been doing for years. Norwegians seem to have a common era, before and after 1888. When it comes to this Palmer (2002) writes that when people feel they are connected to the line of history it contributes to personalise “the relationship between past and present” (Palmer, 2002:15). Expedition tourism in areas strongly connected to former history seems to be important to people, as doing such an expedition is a part of completing or satisfying a desire for being more connected to a person’s own roots. That leads us into the next section, which raises some issues when it comes to Norwegian national identity and Norwegianness.

4.11 National Identity - Norway a nation of skiers

We have earlier in this thesis seen that Norway is the nation represented with most participants on sport expeditions across Greenland. It seems impossible not to draw the line back in history when writing a thesis dealing with expedition tourism. It also makes me wonder if this phenomenon would have had the same strong position in Norway if Nansen not were the first one to cross over. It is likely to believe that if Peary had been the first one to cross, Americans would have had a stronger relationship to this historical event.

Identity is something that is constructed, reconstructed, negotiated and contested (Palmer, 2005:7). This means that humans work with building and designing their identities all the time it is very much a dynamic and constantly on-going process. Tourism is one activity that contributes to form how people understand central issues such as self and other, nation and nationness (Palmer, 2005:8).

“Above all else, cultural identities have been related to nations. Throughout modern history, national identities have given rise to strong collective feelings, uprising and even wars have been their dominating factor, often comprehended as a natural platform for the establishment of sovereign states” (Pedersen and Viken, 2003:17).

During the last three centuries and in particular in the Romantic Age the relation between nations and nature was rather dominant. Norway is drawn as one example of a nation where nature has played a significant role (Pedersen and Viken, 2003).

Crossing Greenland can be seen as a part of some kind of “Norwegian-ness”. Is it of importance for people to go on tours like these because they feel strongly connected to their roots? One informant answers a question if he could have travelled somewhere else do to a similar ski expedition:

“It was Greenland that was the thing. And then it is this about Nansen and that story. (...) I believe it comes from my parents perhaps. I recently discovered that we have polar heroes in our family tree (informant laughs) (...) or maybe not polar heroes, but someone who has contributed to the Norwegian polar history (...) I remember he had a polar bear skin in his living room” (Informant 7).

This is clearly something that takes him back to his roots and connects him to history. In an article Palmer (2002) reflects upon what she calls “Englishness” and by studying tourists visiting historical sites she describes how these people express feelings of “belonging and understanding of collective roots” (Palmer, 2002:14). Palmer highlights that gazing is not enough to emerge these feelings, for example listening to stories and looking at props from the particular historical happening can make people almost look back in time and get themselves in to what happened earlier in history. If we link this up with the ski trip across Greenland, the participants can to some extent re-live the historical polar expeditions. After talking with my informants this seems to be an issue for some of them.

“I do not really know, I think it was in 2010 the thought, suddenly it was there. When was it...in 2011 it was the 100th anniversary for the South Pole and it was the 150th anniversary for Nansen’s birth. So it was a lot of polar stuff. That might have triggered the thought a bit” (Informant 4).

Palmer raises the issues between experiencing identity through encountering sites of national significance (Palmer, 2005). In this context Greenland is the site. Although Greenland is neither political nor geographical a part of Norway, Norwegians have through the history a connection to the country. On the second last day, when we could see the mountains on the east coast for the first time, the guides arranged a little ceremony and the Norwegian flag was symbolic planted in the snow.

As chapter two describes all the informants had a solid education and several held good job positions. Palmer refers to how some dominant groups in society often are the ones to construct and define identity (Palmer, 2005:8). In Norway skiing is important, in various channels and with phrases like “Norwegians are born with skis on their feet” people are reminded that they come from a ski-nation. It is possible to state that going on these kind of expeditions is a part of a “high-culture”, doing expeditions holds a high social status, at least within some social groups and the experience can be seen as a “trophy” to bring home. Gurholt (2008) draws the lines of friluftsliv as having a traditionally masculine dominance as well as “cultivated by the bourgeoisie and upper middle class” (Gurholt, 2008:61).

It also seems that when it comes to the expedition culture, Norwegian traditions hold a strong reputation, which attract people outside Norway. This non-Norwegian informant had built up knowledge in advance before the decision was made to walk with a Norwegian group.

“Informant: I don’t know why but I started to read a lot about Nansen and Amundsen (...) about expeditions, also about Cecilie Skog (...) I read books on plenty and plenty of expeditions (...) I also read about Mt. Everest but I have no interest for Mt. Everest (...) I read about mountaineering. I know that I am not as good with heights as I am on the flatlands. Maybe that was the reason why I thought “I want to know how it was for Nansen and Amundsen” even though I know it is not the same today, we have phones and Gore-Tex and it is not the same.

Me: So it was also a fascination for Nansen’s stories?

Informant: Yes! Yes that was it, yes, yes and I thought it was so much freedom in a way (...) to go on a longer trip, spend much time on it” (Informant 10).

To picture the pioneers with their woollen clothing, wooden skis and having to walk with uncertainty because they did not really know what lied ahead of them is exciting. The only thing that has remained more or less the same since 1888 is the inland ice itself, pure white landscape that gives you a feeling of being very small in the enormous nature. What must have gone through their minds during this expedition? Nature, friluftsliv and skiing all have strong positions in Norway and represents values many Norwegians like to identify with. By developing products that have a strong connection to historical events, the tourism providers contribute keeping national heritage alive and present.

4.12 Soft and hard values across Greenland

The title on this master thesis “The east coast or the Death” is a clear parallel to the words of Fridtjof Nansen as written about in chapter three. The sentence that became the title of this work was said of one of the informants on one of the last days before we started out from the west coast. By this quote the informant states that he has knowledge about the polar history and automatically draw a connection to Nansen. The historical quote gets modernized to suit the concept we embarked upon by starting on the west coast and ski to the east coast. In this saying there is something tough and dramatic - life and death is involved.

The coming sections will raise awareness on the contrasts during a ski expedition. Soft and hard values which seems to be an essential part for the expedition phenomenon. My informants referred several times to various positive situations or feelings they had gone through while being on the ice, everything like basic things such as the food.

“This feeling you get when you ski the whole day and are so tired that you are about to lay down on the snow and almost cry, and at once you get inside the tent and inside the sleeping bag and get served food then the whole thing turns. And in just two seconds you are happy again, it is so little it takes. (...) This happened every day (...) to get inside the tent and be so satisfied it was a really good feeling (...) also how happy food can makes one” (Informant 5).

Gyimóthy and Mykletun (2004) outline how risk is connected with play for people who seek outdoor adventures (Gyimóthy and Mykletun, 2004:858). To elaborate this, risk is an

essential parts of the total experience, however people will also strive to feel safe. So there is a balance between these opposite terms. For the informant above it is essential to have a place for restitution and fulfilment for basic needs, this place becomes for the informant the tent. During the day the group could face various challenges with physical exhaustion, strong winds, cold temperature and other outer factors and the participants will work to handle the different situations as they occur.

“To fire up the stove after a long day (...) When I held lectures I say that this I can’t really convey, the feelings I have in this picture (showing the informant sitting inside the tent boiling water) it is not possible to convey you have to have experienced it. (...) To get inside, get warm, just the sound of the stove. Sheltered from the wind”
(Informant 4).

The balance between the hard and the soft is essential and the margins in this context can be small.

“The reflection over (...) how vulnerable we were (...) it was the tent and the cooking stove that kept us alive” (Informant 4).

Nature strives for balance. The seasons changes, the weather changes, in one moment the wind is strong a while later calm, one day freezing cold the other day too warm to wear a woollen hat. By the time you reach camp you feel hungry and after having eaten the dinner your stomach is full again, after a long day walk your body gets tired, you sleep well during the night and feel fresh the next morning. One day it might feels as though the mind-set only twirls around negative thoughts, but suddenly the loop of thoughts break and you are able to focus on the good things again. Sad, worried, satisfied, vulnerable, safe, happy, peaceful, thrilled, strong, weak. So it goes on, the balance between the basic needs pushing and challenging the body both physically and mentally.

The total appreciation of something seems in this expedition context not to be possible if it was not for having experienced the total opposite. When it comes to the soft and the hard components they seem to amplify each other on this kind of ski expedition. Toughness is not really something without the opposite. Further this contributes to make the experience more complex for the participants. Which again might get people in touch with a larger range of feelings.

There seems to be a double dimension on the usage of the concept and how people refer to it. One of my informants brings up this issue, as something she thinks of as problematic.

“...Sometimes I feel...you know about... in quotation mark, expeditions...I think it is so easy that people convey that things are so tough and it is so wild and it is almost close to death and “see how bad it is!”... And then I think “oh...but can we not show the good things?” Or why we do this, and the feeling of what might not have been the front page of a newspaper, but what maybe is the driving force to do it. But still we do the trip in the perspective that you are vulnerable, you are alone” (Informant 9).

This informant seems to problematize the way the term is sometimes used today, she criticise a way of over exaggerating when referring to the phenomenon and that it is very often described as something that always comes with a dramatic undertone. The informant comment “in quotations mark, expeditions” is also interesting seen in the perspective of performance.

On days where the wind was blowing strong or on those days where the group had to walk through a landscape of sastrugis, it happened a few times that the participants said “If you’re walking through hell keep on walking”. We all knew that there was no alternative, no matter the conditions we had to A rather powerful expression, which contributes to maintain expedition as something taking place in a “male adventure landscape” as Pritchard and Morgan writes about. “The “northern male landscapes” are active, wild, untamed and often harsh and even penetrative” (Pritchard and Morgan, 2000:897). “Women who engage in these landscapes “are exposed to a male interpretation of the outdoors and outdoor activity” (Humberstone and Collins, 1998:140).

4.13 Gender issues in relation to expeditions.

In her writings Gurholt (2008) describes the friluftsliv traditions that exist in Norway as traditionally being male dominated, she outlines how this friluftsliv tradition has been an “expression for of a socially-related need for the confirmation of a male identity” (Gurholt,

2008:57). From around the mid-1800s friluftsliv was linked to for instance conquering challenging nature, adventurous expeditions as well as masculinity (Gurholt, 2008:57).

Liv Arnesen is an example on a woman who by entering the male dominated expedition-sphere challenged it. When Liv Arnesen was preparing for her expedition to the South Pole potential sponsors asked her “have you ever pull a pulka before?” (Arnesen, 1995). She met people that did not have believe she was able to reach her goal and she had to prove that she was good enough. About a decade later for instance Cecilie Skog and Randi Skaug entered media with stories from their expeditions. Through media we have seen that women who have entered the field by embarking on various expeditions have gained a lot of attention. They have told stories of having to convey others that they were capable of doing similar adventures as their male colleagues. Arnesen has a pedagogic background and has connected social values more to the expedition concept, Arnesen and Ann Bancroft have on some of their longer expeditions used the time on skis to reach out to youngsters with an educational programme where they inspired and passed on knowledge and the importance of having dreams (Arnesen, 2014).

If we look at female guides, this is also a field were there has traditionally been a male dominance. Harr Moen (2010) has done research on female guides working on Svalbard. The author raises the issues how women feel in positioning themselves in order to gain authority and respect from male co-guides as wells as male tourists. The women describe how predictability in their work situation is important also that it is difficult to combine seasonal guide jobs with family life and raising children (Harr Moen, 2010). This can be an explaining reason for why women do not stay in this kind of work as long as men do, as well as why there seems to be a majority of male guides, but on the other hand, there are more women entering the field through for instance guide educations as the Arctic Nature guide course. In especially the last decade there seems to be more women who seek adventures in the nature and go on expeditions on their own, such as the Baffin Babes, Maria Grøntjernet “Villmarksjenta” and Tonje Helene Blomseth, these are all young women who works with building up a reputation and an image which connects them to the free outdoor life.

One informant had clear thoughts when it came to on what kind of group would be most suitable for her, this informant was a woman,

“It wasn’t so that I wanted to walk with only girls. I thought if you walk only with girls then the motivation is different. I had been mountaineering with boys who had a different motivation than I. (...) And sometimes...it is not about being tough or not tough...it is difficult to explain but some have focus on the sport and just want to do athletically things and only want to do what is hard and about muscles or...(...) my motivation is also...it is a lot of mediation in a way to be on a trip like this, and I knew that I did not want to be in a group were everybody wanted to do it with focus on the sports achievement. You have to exercise of course, physical exercise is very important but that is not the only motivation for me” (Informant 10).

These reflections present the contrasts between the hard and soft that is to find in the expedition phenomenon. The physical motivation and the testing of strength compared to the inner processes. These values are also in a way dependant on each other, on a crossing where you ski for 3-4 weeks it is not either or. While the body is moving forward and work a lot harder physically compared to most people’s regular everyday life, the mind suddenly is working on how to process the white open landscape, and compare to what it is used to from work life at home it now gets a lot less information to comprehend.

Several of the male informants who now had grown up children talked about going on expeditions like a crossing over Greenland had not been possible earlier, because they had felt the responsibility that comes with founding a family did not allow one adult part engage in such a time- and money consuming project as they now had.

”In a longer period of life the family, and in particular the kids and their leisure activities have demanded a lot. (...) I do not feel it (the experience) has been that profound. I am an old man you know, so I have experienced quite a lot, I think perhaps it had been different if I had been 20 plus, then this would probably have been a much larger and soul-setting experience in life, then you have not experienced that much” (Informant 1).

In particular one day during the expedition the group were divided on the basis of gender.

“As we walked the wind increased, in the ten minutes long breaks my hands cooled down, and then I used the next session to work with my fingers to get them warm

again. In the next walking session the guides advised us to walk two and two together – the men on the side where the wind came from and the women in the leeward side”
(Empirical report).

This was never brought up as an issue within the group as I registered, in retrospect we can reflect on why this was done. Did it really matter if the women walked on side where the wind came from? The group was less spread out and perhaps it felt safer for some people to walk side by side with another person. I assume the reason was that the women would by this be a bit more protected from the wind, although walking in two lines side by side did not always quite work, some of the guys were both shorter than some women and because of shorter legs the pace was not always the same. What thoughts did the male guides have behind this decision? It is interesting to experience how gender can be done in a setting like this, also because of all the wind and snow, no one asked questions to how things were done, you just act in the most efficient way.

4.14 Touched to tears

The last section focuses on how an expedition like the one studied can get people emotionally moved. Crossing Greenland on skis is a complex trip, where there is a great chance of getting in touch with a wide scale of emotions. It happened a couple of times that while we skied that I would suddenly just lift my head and glance over all the white and the sky and get overwhelmed how infinite this place was and how enormously simple yet extremely beautiful. It happened sometimes during the weeks and miles we spent together that people cried, got emotionally touched. One example, is from the 11th of May we were not even half way, but had walked for several days already

“When we had walked 45 minutes in the twelfth session the person who walked in front raised his poles over his head in a cross, this was the sign we had for camp. We gathered in a circle, (name of the guide) was the first one who talked. We could see that he was moved in some way, he expressed that he was so impressed by us. We had walked 30,5 kilometres and had had such a steady pace all day. He said he had never experienced such a large group manage to walk both so straight with little corrections when it came to the compass bearing and also we had been excellent in keeping track of the time. While he

talked tears came from his eyes, I could feel the same happening to me, I had my sunglasses on. Everybody was quiet. We stood there for a while” (Empirical report).

I remember this moment as very real, you could feel that he meant every word he said to the group and that he was proud of everyone. This seemed not to be done after a manuscript this was the guide’s honest reaction. Situations like these, when the participants experience them as real, can contribute to a good spirit in the group, the group would want to receive this kind of feedback later and will do their best to keep on with the established function routines.

One day the group experienced that the guides had thoroughly planned to surprise people with greetings from home. The contact person the group had back in Norway had asked family and friends to write some greetings on Facebook and the person would pick out some. Then all the greetings were called in to the guide’s satellite phone and they recorded this message so that they were able to play it from an iPhone for the group later on. This session contributed to many wet eyes, suddenly people were taken out of the “expedition bubble” and reminded strongly on the people they cared about back home. More informants told me that this was for sure the strongest memory from the trip.

“That day we received messages from home, then we had been quite long in the bubble and I had only been thinking on my self and then suddenly we got some signs of life. (...) It was just like you were ripped out of the bubble, suddenly you were... there are actually other people in this world as well, and many that loves you (...) so that afternoon, there were enormously many feelings. So that in the middle of all the grandiose surroundings, that mixture I have felt and been thinking a lot on, that was huge” (Informant 1).

Being emotionally touched while participating in a tourist product, is in general not possible for the company to reveal in advance. Providers of tourism products really wish to touch their clients in different contexts. One guide reminded the group regularly of the importance of being “here and now”. Giddens writes, “The art of being here and now generates the self-understanding necessary to plan ahead and construct a life trajectory which accords with the individual’s inner wishes” (Giddens, 2000:249). For our guide it seemed important to convey that such an expedition the group took part in, the focus should not only be to reach the east coast, but working on being in the moment.

Chapter 5 - CONCLUDING REMARKS

By using the perspective of performance (Edensor, 2001) I have looked at how people behave and express themselves and thereby ascribe meaning to the situation they are in. Through this the participants on a tourism product as a ski expedition across Greenland also work on their identities. Various meaning topics have been identified and have been dealt with in the analysis.

Despite skiing across Greenland requires dedication to preparations in order to be physically prepared for the physical effort, this phenomenon is not only related to physics. Being away on a ski expedition requires also a more psychological focus as well. It seems as taking part in this organised expedition can trigger an “inner journey” in modern people (Addison, 1993). The inner journey can be understood in different ways. Because of the walking rhythm, people often are “left alone” with their thoughts and have time to dwell with these thoughts. The impressive yet monotone landscape does not feed people with the same amount of impressions like they are used to handle back home. The focus is on basic needs, and because the pace is steady people are often in an existence that is concerned about what happens “here and now”. On days that felt tough people needed to work with inner motivation and find the strength to always continue. After having accomplished this ski expedition it seemed for some that this was something that contributed to a solid feeling of mastering. Informants referred to this as experiences they could take advantages of in for instance their work life or other situations after returning home. In this sense the inner journey can contribute to personal growth and faith in the self.

Expedition tourism can be a way to perform identity, on a ski expedition in a tourism context, people with various experiences bring different knowledge into the group and are connected. Parts of what people bring into this social context are discursive practises, such as the expressions they use, a jargon and competence they have gained formerly. By introducing expressions, or acting in a particular way people can show who they want to be. We often tend to place ourselves in an exclusive group, to show our abilities and by performing this way we indirectly give signals on where we want to belong socially.

This research has pointed out that performing identities are essential key elements within this kind of tourism. This thesis has identified different types of identities, in particular identities related to gender-, friluftsliv- and national-identity seems relevant. A performative perspective (Edensor, 2001), which this thesis has used, takes us to cultural practises and can manage to reveal new dimensions to the phenomenon. In this sense a type of cultural perspective has been applied and supplemented by theory from cultural heritage tourism. A tourism product as this thesis deals with seems to cultivate a Norwegian heritage. The focus has not primarily been to see this kind of tourism product in a nature-based tourism or adventure tourism perspective. Within nature-based tourism and adventure tourism theory there are however aspects that can be interesting to look at in order to study how the participants ascribe meaning to what they have been taken part in, such as the inner journey as discussed above (Addison, 1993).

Through the empirical work we can understand that informants relate to “polar” narratives, a crossing over the Greenlandic icecap can be a way for people to work with national-identity. Palmer states that identity can be passed on through generations, in this sense following in the footsteps of former polar explorers can have a great value for people (Palmer, 2008). Crossing Greenland can be considered as a pilgrimage in connection with national identity. The narratives of Nansen being the first to complete a crossing of Greenland, or Amundsen were the first to reach the South Pole, these stories lives within Norwegian traditions. And perhaps functions as something Norwegians are very proud of feel that they distinguish “themselves” from “others” in various contexts. The concept of borderzones as discussed with theory from Bruner (2005) and Mathisen (2009) has contributed with a discussion to realise that this form of tourism has little to do with ethnic tourism, this phenomenon follows in a Norwegian cultural track.

Expedition tourism can include the doing of gender-identity as discussed by Gurholt (2008), in relation to friluftsliv. The expedition universe has traditionally been male dominant, when women have entered this world they have challenged these traditions. We can look at expeditions to feature several hard values. Some female informants pointed out that to them it was just as relevant to focus on the softer aspects by going on this kind of expedition. In general we can say that this phenomenon embrace a symbioses of equally important soft and hard values (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). There can be several openhearted meetings between the guides and the clients that open up for a broad range of feelings were people show parts of

their “true self”. An expedition like this makes it challenging for people to maintain an upper front, it is difficult not to show yourself without the “mask” during the week, and it seems to be little room for backstage (MacCannell, 1999) during a expedition like this. These are all factors which are very difficult for a tourism provider to advertise in front, it is difficult to convey a feeling that perhaps lead a person to tears because the nature is so impressive or the team-work is so outstanding. Some informants referred to these situations as “it is hard to describe”, and this is for some an essence of a product like this. It is a nice secret that is being revealed along the way when you are on the actual expedition.

”So far so what?” Liv Arnesen’s (1995) famous words after reaching the South Pole initiate the next reflection. Does it make a difference by choosing a somehow untraditional perspective to a phenomenon which often is seen through the glasses of nature- or adventure tourism? As summarised throughout this section, I can argue that this brings other dimensions to the study of this phenomenon. And the track, which I have chosen, contributes to shed light on important aspects.

Suggestions for further research can be to study how the participants actually have communicated what they have taken part in after returning home. A part of this could then be to look at how the participants use social media. This could give an insight to other aspects than what they have talked about in the interviews I conducted and it would be a contribution to better understand this form for tourism. It could also be interesting and fruitful for my study if someone does a comparative study, by following a group of a different nationality where this group travelled in the “footsteps” their historical “ancestors” potentially unveiling other “national pilgrimage” tours part of international expedition tourism or through other findings illuminating the particular practice this project has studied. Since I have actually taken part in the project from beginning to an end it would then be ideal if the researcher of this comparative study could do the same. I would think that nations like Sweden and Denmark will have a different approach to the particular ski expedition studied here, with support from Bravo and Sörlin (2002) who argues that the Nordic countries never have had a “common memory” when it comes to polar history. This would then be a possibility for tourism companies, for instance a company like Hvitserk who are expanding their ground and is soon starting up business in Sweden, to develop ski expeditions or other products and by this be able to target and reach out to different markets more efficiently.

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APPENDIX

I. Interview guide

INTERVJUGUIDE

Problem statement:

EN: What meaning do participants ascribe to expedition tourism during a longer guided ski trip on Greenland?

Problemstilling:

NO: Hvilke meninger tilskriver deltagere, på en lengre guidet skitur på Grønland, til fenomenet ekspedisjonsturisme?

TEMA	INNLEDNING/BAKGRUNN
Spørsmål 1	Kan du fortelle litt om deg selv
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Navn, alder, hvor du kommer fra, bosted nå, familiesituasjon, arbeid/studier• Kan du fortelle litt om oppveksten din – var du ofte ute, på turer etc.
Spørsmål 2	Fortell om din tidligere turbakgrunn
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Har du fra barndommen av vært mye på tur og hva er det som har gitt deg den interessen i så fall?• Hadde du erfaring fra vinterturer tidligere?• Overnattet i telt tidligere?
Spørsmål 3	Hva gjør du i din hverdag og din fritid?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Har du spesielle interesser• Fritidsaktiviteter

TEMA	MOTIVASJON TIL TUREN / BESLUTNINGEN
Spørsmål 1	Hva var det som ga deg ideen til å melde deg på et slikt prosjekt?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Idé fra venner/familie, alltid vært en drøm
Spørsmål 2	Tenkte du lenge på denne turen før du meldte deg på?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gikk du med tanken i flere år eller var dette en forholdsvis rask beslutning?• Beskriv for meg hva som var avgjørende i forhold til å si endelig ja til dette.
Spørsmål 3	Veide du for og i mot før du bestemte deg?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Var du i kontakt med andre operatører?• Var du inne på tanken å gå alene, uten guide?• Var det andre turer som du overveide å gjøre i stedet for denne?

TEMA	FORVENTNINGER
Spørsmål 1	Hvilken forventinger gikk du med før turen?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvordan så du for deg at dagene skulle være? • Folkene? • Naturen?
Spørsmål 2	Hva tenkte du ville bli de største utfordringene?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gruet du deg til noe?
Spørsmål 3	Hva gledet du deg mest til?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Det å være lenge ute, naturopplevelsen, blir kjent med nye folk etc.

TEMA	SELVE TUREN
Spørsmål 1	Hva vil du trekke frem som det sterkeste minne fra turen?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noe du husker spesielt godt? Noe som vekket sterke følelser i deg? Hvorfor tror du du husker dette spesielt godt?
Spørsmål 2	Fortell om det du husker som den beste opplevelsen
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Var det tilsvarende negative opplevelser?
Spørsmål 3	Hva følte du var ditt sterkeste bidra til gruppen?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Følte du at du fikk brukt de sterke sidene dine ordentlig?
Spørsmål 4	Hadde du med deg noe spesielt som ikke sto på utstyrslisten?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maskot, dagbok, bilde av familien, bidrag hjemmefra - fortell om dette.

TEMA	PRODUKTET
Spørsmål 1	Når du forteller andre om turen til andre – hvordan omtaler du den da?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvilke ord bruker du for å beskrive turen • Hva kaller du den: Skitur/ekspedisjon
Spørsmål 2	Hvordan omtaler du deg selv og de andre du var på tur sammen med? (fellesbetegnelse)
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deltager/turister/turkamerater/turvenner/"gjengen"/ekspedisjonsmedlemmer • Anså du deg selv som en turist før og underveis på turen?
Spørsmål 4	Hva mener du blir forskjellen på det å være deltager og det å være turist?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Spørsmål 3	Kan du fortelle litt om forberedelsene du gjorde i forkant, både litt om dine egne og også de som var organiserte
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fikk du hjelp til å legge opp riktig trening/mentale forberedelser/utstyr • Trekk frem styrker og svakheter i forhold til den jobben som firmaet gjorde på dette området

TEMA	NATUROPPLEVELSEN
Spørsmål 1	Hadde du noen forestillinger om hvordan naturopplevelsen kom til å bli?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvilke bilder hadde du i hodet ditt i forkant? • Blå himmel og hvite flate vidder?
Spørsmål 2	Opplevde du at dine forestillinger stemte med virkeligheten?
Probing	
Spørsmål 3	Når du tenker tilbake til turen hvilke naturopplevelser er det du husker best ?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Er det dager med vind og dårlig sikt du husker best? • Var det den enorme flaten som gjorde størst inntrykk?

TEMA	DET SOSIALE
Spørsmål 1	Hvordan vil du beskrive din egen rolle i gruppen?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvilken rolle i så fall?
Spørsmål 2	Hvem ble du best kompis med underveis?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvorfor tror du at det ble sånn?
Spørsmål 3	Hvordan vil du beskrive styrkene til de andre i gruppen?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samspillet i gruppen?

TEMA	FORHOLDET MELLOM KOMMERSIELLE OG IKKE-KOMMERSIELLE
Spørsmål 1	Nå har du selv erfaring fra en lengre skitur - kan du beskrive den perfekte guiden på en slik tur?
Probing	Hvilke egenskaper bør en guide ha?

TEMA	ETTERKANT AV TUREN
Spørsmål 1	Ga denne turen mersmak til flere lengre ekspedisjonsturer?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Går du med planer om andre lignende type turer?
Spørsmål 2	Vil du anbefale andre å gjøre denne turen?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvorfor evt hvorfor ikke?

TEMA	HVILKEN PLASS HAR TUREN I DIN LIVSHISTORIE
Spørsmål 1	Hva har turen gjort med deg?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praktisk – har du lært noe (ferdigheter) • Mentalt – • Personlig -
Spørsmål 2	Føler du det ha skjedd noe med deg som menneske etter turen?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Har du den med deg i livet i noen sammenhenger? • Har du merket en forandring inni deg selv som person i forhold til hvordan du tenker på ting, hvordan du håndterer situasjoner? • Er det spesielle situasjoner du har opplevd at turminnene har kommet sterkt frem?
Spørsmål 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hva føler du at du sitter igjen med etter turen?
Probing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Har den beriket livet ditt på noen måte?

- Er det noe du ønsker å legge til som du har på hjertet?

II. Information letter given to the participants

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

”Ekspedisjonsturisme – på ski over Grønland”

Bakgrunn og formål

Jeg inviterer deg til å delta på et intervju i mitt mastergradsprosjekt innen reiseliv. Formålet med denne studien er å se nærmere på fenomenet ekspedisjonsturisme, eksemplifisert med en guidet skitur på Grønland.

Hovedproblemstillingen lyder som følgende:

Hvilke meninger tilskriver deltagere, på en lengre guidet skitur på Grønland, til fenomenet ekspedisjonsturisme?

Spørsmålene under intervjuet vil ta for seg dine opplevelser vedrørende skituren over Grønland.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Intervjuet vil ha en varighet på maks 1 ½ time, vi avtaler et passende tidspunkt for intervjuet som kan foregå enten ved at vi møtes fysisk eller over Skype/telefon. Intervjuet vil bli tatt opp og senere overført til tekst/transkribert.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og oppbevart på passord beskyttet pc. Etter prosjektets slutt i 2014, vil all lyd data og transkribert materialet bli slettet. Materialet blir anonymisert slik at deltagere ikke skal kunne gjenkjennes i oppgaven.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn.

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS og har prosjektnummer 37675.

Vennlig hilsen,

Student: Cathrine Moen

Masterstudent ved Norges Arktiske Universitet

– Finnmarksfakultetet, institutt for reiseliv og nordlige studier

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Veileder: Brynhild Granås

Førsteamanuensis ved Norges Arktiske Universitet

– Finnmarksfakultetet, institutt for reiseliv og nordlige studier

Telefon: +47 78 45 01 63 E-post: brynhild.granas@uit.no

III. Consent form

Samtykkeerklæring til deltakelse i studie om ekspedisjonsturisme

Prosjekt: Ekspedisjonsturisme - På ski over Grønland

Intervjuansvarlig: Cathrine Moen

Prosjektveileder: Brynhild Granås

Jeg kan når som helst trekke meg fra studiet.

Alle opplysninger vil bli anonymisert.

Jeg har mottatt og lest informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta.

Sted

Dato

Underskrift