Tourism in the age of mobile media
The mediatized tourist practices in Icelandic tourism

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Abstract

Mediation processes are becoming increasingly salient in western society, and since tourism is one of the characteristics of modern societies the tourism practices follow this increase. The increasing emphasis on the visual as a prominent sense for our understanding of the physical world has led to increase desire for photography. Social media has created platforms for new remedies of photo sharing which does not require face to face interaction anymore. Due to mobile devices media has become more mobile and there for created a desire to be connected. Thus, social media has persuasive power that encourages engagement which drives tourists to share their experiences. Tourism and media are intertwining fields which have been widely researched with marketing emphasis however, more research is needed for the more social aspects of these converging fields.

By applying the theory on mediatization and the tourist gaze, this case study emphasizes on the tourist practices with the use of mobile social media through the viewpoint of tourism workers in Iceland. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate the tensions that emerge when media and tourism intertwine and how mobile media shapes the norms and values of the tourism practices. Through in-depth interviews with tour guides in Iceland and participant observation on day tours in the south coast of Iceland, this study therefore, gives an understanding of how the mobile social media and its persuasive power increases photo sharing practices. Furthermore, how these practices can affect the meaning of place and the norms and values that follow the places tourists travel to. Moreover, the study gives an insight into how these practices play as enablers for overtourism and cause unsustainable practices and negative attitude towards tourism in the country. The results of this study show that as society is getting increasingly mediatized and impacts social change, and tourism being a part of society the connection between media and tourism should not be ignored.

Keywords: Tourism practices; Social media; Mobile media; The tourist gaze; Mediatization; Smartphones; Photographing; Photo sharing; Overtourism

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

To be a tourist is one of the characteristics of the 'modern' experience.

Urry and Larsen (2011)

Iceland has become a popular destination for travelers for the last few years. Tourism in Iceland has been increasing since the economic crisis in 2008 and other factors have also played a role in the tourism such as the volcano eruption in 2010. The eruption played havoc in air traffic and bringing Iceland into the world news. Since then the number of foreign travelers started to grow fast from being 565.000 in 2011 until 2017 when the number reached its heights with over 2 million tourists visited the country (Benediktsson, Lund & Mustonen, 2010; Óladóttir, 2018) or six times the population of the country. This has led to tourism becoming the largest export in Iceland taking over the fishing industry that had been the biggest through generations (Íslandsbanki, 2018). Despite tourism being the largest industry in Iceland, providing a significant amount of revenue to the Icelandic economy and providing thousands of locals with jobs the discourse in society has not been very positive. A local said in a news article that tourism is a "grasshopper epidemic that has to stop" (Sverrisson, 2017) where he discussed the rising prices in the country and unsustainable tourism practices that have followed this rapid increase. Iceland has been well known for its uniqueness regarding the untouched nature, geological contrast and culture, equality and language. Furthermore, the government in Iceland has emphasized on improving the image of the country externally after the economic crisis in 2008 and the volcanic eruption in 2010 with the help of the media. The government has used many ways to be able to obtain a positive image and, for example, the economic affairs and trade committee of Iceland has been supporting foreign film producing projects by refunding a part of the cost incurred in the country with the hope of creating profit for the tourism industry. Consequently, the TV show game of thrones, a Bollywood film and music videos for Justin Bieber have, for example, been filmed in the country making the film locations a popular destination for tourists in the country (Iðnaðar- og velferðarráðuneytið, 2015).

With technological evolvement the smartphone and social media have become more mobile and accessible than before. Some have stressed that the social media platform Instagram has been an important vehicle for the increase in tourism in Iceland (Sítengd, 2018). Furthermore, digitization and internetization have challenged older binaries of travelling as it used to be an escape from the mundane everyday life however, with increasing connectivity the boundaries have blurred as travel and communication continue to converge (Wang et.al., 2015).

Photographing and photo sharing has always been a part of the tourist role however, with new technologies the remedies for these practices have changed as the smartphone has created more spontaneous ways to photograph and social media creating opportunities to share the tourist experiences. "The democratization of image production and circulation has had a great impact on the way the world is seen, experienced, and remembered" (Lo and McKercher, 2015, p 104). This has altered tourism as social media is now a significant part of travelling and constructs the tourist gaze and impacts the image of the destination. Furthermore, the persuasive power of social media encourages users to engage in sharing their travel practices (Gretzel, 2019). Icelanders have noticed the impact social media has had on tourism whereas two episodes on the national television channel have discussed growing social media tourism. One informant said, "*social media has been the driving force in this tourism boom*" (Sítengd, 2018) where he further mentions the influence of the Instagram and the amount of #Iceland posts on Instagram which have now reached to over 10 million. This extreme increase in tourism is problematic and has been called overtourism and is creating concern for governments and tourism workers and makes tourism unsustainable as destinations do not handle rapid increase (Goodwin, 2017) which may be the cause for the negativity towards tourism in the country. Justin Francis, the chief executive of Responsible Travel said

> "Seventy-five years ago, tourism was about experience seeking. Now it's about using photography and social media to build a personal brand. In a sense, for a lot of people, the photos you take on a trip become more important than the experience." (Manjoo, 2018)

There are different 'enablers' for overtourism, some are new and some of them are old factors, but their influence has been increasing resulting in unsustainable practices (Dodds and Butler, 2019). Like Francis discusses social media has been viewed one of the new 'enablers.' In the case of Iceland, some destinations have had to be closed due to tourist intrusion where they ignore signs and fences to be able to capture photogenic scenes on photo. Nature park rangers have been bribed to allow tourists to visit closed areas such as Fjarðarárgljúfur canyon (Bjarnason, 2019).

As Urry and Larsen discuss, tourism has become a big part of the modern lifestyle, however, might not be considered the most significant research matter within social sciences as researchers might have more heftier subjects to explain, for example, within politics. However, that does not mean that such trivial phenomenon should not be studied. In fact, researcher might have even more trouble researching such banal phenomenon. As the old binaries between

everyday life and tourism have become more blurred the relationship between them call for an interdisciplinary research with tourism and media studies. With that kind of perspective, it can provide means to investigate the convergence of both 'spatial and communicative practices within tourism' (Jansson, 2007, p 7). Tourism and media are becoming increasingly interwoven and John Urry (1995) discusses how in contemporary society 'people are tourists most of the time, whether they are literally mobile or only experience simulated mobility through the incredible fluidity of multiple signs and electronic images' (p, 148). As mobile social media has made it more accessible to travel from home and the smartphone being the vehicle to making tourism the mediatized activity it is today (Jansson, 2007).

1.1 Aims and research questions

Accordingly, this thesis aims to gain a social understanding of mediatized tourism practices and further to investigate the social and cultural tensions between tourists and tourism industry workers that emerge when social media and tourism interweave. That is to consider how social groups construct the social tourism practices with the focus on mobile media. In order to achieve these aims, tourism in Iceland will serve as a case study, representing one example of the intertwining of media and tourism. The following research questions will be asked:

1. How has mobile media impacted tourist practices and the tourism industry in Iceland?
2. How is the tourist media content used to create a meaning of place (for tourists and tourism workers) in Iceland?

Following this introduction, the thesis will continue into discussing the previous academic work that has been studied in the interdisciplinary field of media and tourism. There I will focus on five main areas and the theoretical framework of the thesis will be introduced. These areas are participatory media, visual culture in photography, mobile social media, mediatization and popular culture where I will use these concepts to look at how the technological evolvement in recent years has challenged the older tourist practices and how this evolvement has created new remedies for the older practices of photographing and sharing when travelling. Secondly the methodology of this case study will be explained as well as the methods used to collect the empirical data. Thirdly, I will analyze the empirical data with the theoretical frameworks of mediatization and the tourist gaze to answer the above research questions. Finally, I will conclude the thesis with the main results from the study and discuss how this study could be taken further.

2. Literature review

2.1 Participatory Social Media

Tourism and media have an encompassing interrelationship (Jensen and Waade, 2009). Therefore, there has been an increasing interest in research on the interdisciplinary field of tourism and media. The evolvement of the internet to web 2.0 has made it a platform for interactive communication. This has allowed tourists to be more participatory than before and has transformed the internet from being only informative to also being communicative and inclusive, allowing tourists to distribute content to others (Munar et.al., 2014). Web 2.0 has also changed how media is distributed. It has altered from being only a distribution produced and controlled for commercial interest, that is top-down but is now more of a circulation where there is a mix of top-down production and bottom-up (Jenkins et al., 2013). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that this gives individuals more opportunities to create, share, shape, and to reframe media within networks, which allows the media to spread between cultures. Research has shown that tourists find media texts that are not made for tourist purposes more trustworthy than the texts that are explicitly aimed at tourists (for example, Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1997).

Chatzigeorgiou (2017) discusses how social media has been spreading fast in the last decades, and in previous years, the use of social media has been rapidly growing. In 2017 more than half of the internet users logged into their social media at least once a day (ibid.). Social media has been defined in many different ways across disciplines, and as it evolves the definition changes. Most people know what social media is, but the lack of precise definition makes it difficult for us to tell why it is what it is (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Those many different definitions and constant changes in technology and peoples' usage make it difficult for us to create common connotation and theories on social media, especially in research. Most of the definitions across disciplines are lacking precise yet broad definition and have, therefore not managed to exclude other new media such as email, messages, etc. (ibid.). Carr and Hayes (2015) came up with a broad and precise definition where they describe it as "internet-based channels that allow users to interact opportunistically and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others" (p.50). They hope that their definition will help to research and theorize issues on social media. What other definitions have in common with the one above is that they often focus on the fact of the user-generated content that the users of social media produce and that is one of the factors that differentiates social media from other

new media applications (ibid.). The term user-generated content has been used to sum up peoples' usage of social media and defines the media content produced by the end-users. User-generated content has been available since before the web 2.0, but the technology evolvement, technical knowledge, and peoples' enthusiasm towards technology have changed its practices (ibid.).

The continuously growing use of social media has made it an essential factor in our social lives (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017), which also goes for tourist practices. Social media has become essential for people to participate socially and to maintain their relationships by sharing photos, comments, or other posts on their social media profiles (ibid.). boyd (2011) argues that people use social media to see other people and things as well as to be seen. These sites allow people to create an identity they want to present to the people in their social media community. Their online profiles give them the platform for self-representation where they can control who can see what information about them (ibid.). Social media has become an effective platform for more immediate and mobile way than before. The rapid development in technology has caused a fast-growing use of social media, which developed into a significant change in communication between people and social media where interactive communication online has become common in our daily life. Research has shown that people use social media for different reasons. The most common reasons are interaction, information seeking, entertainment, or to pass time (Whiting and Williams, 2013). Even though social media is now embodied in our travel practices does not mean that it should not be studied (Thurlow and Jaworski, 2011) and therefore, the interest of this study.

As the web 2.0 and moreover, social media has created a more participatory environment for tourists, scholars have argued that tourists now have more agency over the media products in circulation (van Dijk, 2009; Jenkins, 2006). Tourists have been viewed as passive consumers within research for years. However, the boundaries between producers and consumers are becoming more blurred as tourists can now produce media products for other tourists and future tourists to see (Williams, 2008). The user-generated content from the tourists, therefore, impacts the image of places and is, furthermore, important for both the tourist and the tourist destination. User-generated content has been researched at some degree concerning tourism for example about electronic word of mouth, also how YouTube video clips influence the tourist meaning of place (Ooi and Munar, 2013; Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2009).

While some scholars view this evolvement of media to be positive (for example Jenkins, 2006), others view it differently. Some scholars have been critical towards this change and argue how users are now providing free digital labor with their media production. Christian Fuchs (2013) criticizes the positive way of viewing digital labor. While Jenkins et al. (2013) do not view this as a problem as long as the users enjoy it and that they are not doing it for the profit. However, Fuchs argues that no matter how much users enjoy, it does not mean they are less exploited but rather that work structures are changing. In this case study, we will find the interviews reflecting on the tourist contribution to the circulating images online.

2.2 Vision and photography in tourism

Tourism has, for long, been visualized through photographs but is progressively becoming a more critical part due to increasing digitization in society (Konijn et al., 2016). According to Urry and Larsen (2011), vision is central to traveling but it has not always been that way since the nineteenth-century vision has become one of the prominent senses of modernity. This has been criticized because vision is not the only sense we use when we travel (Jansson, 2002). We can feel the weather, taste the food, or hear the sound of the city or nature we are visiting (Urry, 1992). Some have been critical about the constant focus of the visual sense in general however, throughout the history of western society, vision has been the prominent sense and is viewed as most dependable and perspicuous in our understanding of our physical world (ibid.). The ocularcentrism in society has led to a desire for photography. Before photography was discovered, there was still the desire for pictures of landscape and scenery and painters had taken that role of bringing it to paper. Paintings, however, did not travel well and were difficult to reproduce and time-consuming as well (Benjamin, 1973). With time and increasing technology photographs of places are now mass produced and sold all around the world making them consumable for people from distance and has been explained that places are now on the move because of the mass production of photographs. These photographs then contribute to our view of the physical world. Photography has now evolved from analog photography to digital photography, and internetization has created a platform to produce, reproduce, and circulate images online (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Photography has for long been prominent in the tourist gaze; however, photographing has changed as digital images are more immediate and more transferable. Tourists keep searching for the photogenic (ibid.) moreover, some tourist places are designed to yield photogenic opportunities that present the 'visual uniqueness' (Jansson, 2007). Furthermore, photographing is a part of the individual's practices within the gaze (Urry and Larsen, 2011).

Photo Sharing plays a significant role in sharing travel experiences online (Thurlow and Jaworski, 2011). Photo sharing has been increasing in recent years due to a visual turn where visual platforms in social media such as Instagram have emerged (Munar and Jacobsen, 2014; Munar et al., 2014). Instagram is a mobile phone application where users can post and edit photos and videos with captions and received likes, comments, and messages from other users. Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms in the world today and is growing fast (Smith, 2018). Instagram reported to have 800 million active users in 2017 and had grown 100 million users within the same year (Balakrishnan & Boorstin, 2017), and in June 2018 the application had reached 1 billion active users (Statista, 2019). Instagram users report that they use the app for connecting with friends, looking at food and fashion, but the application has also become an excellent traveling tool. Instagram is a very participatory media, and the users' engagement is high, whereas about 60% of users logged into their accounts daily in 2016 (Brandwatch, 2016). What differentiates Instagram from other of the most popular social media platforms is that on Instagram it is the aesthetics that matter. Instagram has the possibility to manipulate images quickly and in a semi-professional way (Gretzel, 2017). Fatanti and Suyadya (2015) studied how Instagram is used to promote tourist destinations, which is like many other studies within the intersection of media and tourism, focusing on the marketing perspective. However, this study emphasizes the media perspective where some economic themes were brought up.

Urry and Larsen (2011) discussed the tourist gaze and connected it closely to photographing and claim that it is central in the development of the tourist gaze. The tourist gaze is how we view the things we see while traveling. The viewing is just like language, socially- and culturally constructed. People do not only look at things but also view it in connection with other things, other people, and themselves. Jenks (1995) claims that nothing in the world has already been formed as beautiful or interesting but is it all culturally created by society. There is no specific tourist gaze; however, it varies between people because they build their gaze based on their memories, experiences and also other images that circulate in the society they live in, about the places they travel to. This means that the tourist gaze is both individual but at the same time, socially constructed. This gaze creates a specific frame for viewing while traveling. Gazing at landscapes, buildings, or other places is built upon fantasy, and it creates pleasure because it is out of the ordinary from the everyday life people live (Urry and Larsen, 2011). The gaze and photo sharing while traveling creates social norms on what practices tourist

should perform on the location they travel to. Social media plays an essential role in creating, recreating, sharing, and maintain these practices. Urry (1992) emphasizes though that with this theory about the tourist gaze he is not excluding other senses from the traveling experience but instead discussing how vision is the central sense in our experience because the things we see give our activities, when traveling, a rare feeling that we do not experience in our everyday life. Urry and Larsen (2011) argue that the sights that we see when we travel are interesting to us because some signs tell us that they are interesting. The things we gaze at while traveling is in some way, extraordinary and different from our everyday life. Urry and Larsen (2011) discuss the mediatized gaze as a gaze that is constructed through the media. They do not want the emphasis to be on the individual motivations for traveling but rather on how for example various gazes are dependent of social practices (ibid.) for example on social media practices that will be looked at in this study.

The idea of the tourist gaze is built on some of Foucault's ideas about how vision is the central sense in our society; however, this ocularcentrism has some downsides. Foucault discusses in several of his books how this constant focus of the vision is creating negative effects on our social life (Urry, 1992). Foucault discussed his idea of the power of the gaze in various books where he discussed how mental illnesses were merely seen but not communicated, the power of the gaze in Bentham's idea of the panopticon and lastly the idea of the medical gaze (see for example Foucault, 1967; Foucault, 1976; Foucault, 1979). Foucault's discussion about the gaze has similarities in leisure travel. The act of sightseeing is well known in tourism. Travelers visit places in most cases to see some new sights that are different from their daily sights and often focuses on collecting different sights, which are then often photographed. This process often takes over the travel process. Like Foucault discussed the dark side of the gaze, there is also a dark side of the tourist gaze. Even though sightseeing is often central to traveling people who only do sightseeing sometimes feel ashamed. Urry discusses how vision is not central in traveling but more of a 'superficial' sense that interrupts other senses from experiencing the destination (Urry, 1992).

Urry's idea about the tourist gaze has been widely criticized. Scholars say, as briefly mentioned before, that the tourist gaze excludes other senses and that the active bodily involvement is excluded. Perkins and Thornes (2001) argued that Urry's idea was too passive. Veijola and Jokinen (1994) further criticized the idea by saying

> Isn't it rather the tourist body that breaks with the established routines and practices? We do gaze at dance performances and museums at home, don't we? But instead, hardly ever engage ourselves in singing and dancing together; very rarely at home do we share the feeling of being together in this big, wild incomprehensible world, full of strangers whose words and gestures don't say anything. Here, we know it in our conscious bodies that are temporarily united in an utterly physical ritual. (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994: 133)

Moreover, Cloke and Perkins (1998) also criticized Urry's view of the tourist and argued that their view is not passive, however, both active and reflexive as they interpret and use media texts in their creative and unforeseen ways for the producers of the media products. They argue that it is not a one-way process where advertising exclusively contributes to creating a representation of destinations and creating expectations, but it is negotiated or sometimes conflicted between advertisers, tourists, and even locals. In the most recent edition of the tourist gaze Urry and Larsen (2011) rethink the idea due to the criticism of the ocularcentrism of the theory, and view the tourist gaze "as performative, embodied practices, highlighting how each gaze depends upon practices and material relations as upon discourses and signs" (n.p.).

2.3 Mobile Social Media and Travel

Since the emergence of the smartphone, it has become easier for travelers to express their experiences through social media. The smartphone has changed the way we communicate, and today, almost all mobile devices have a camera. Palmer (2013) discussed how the smartphone has made photography more mundane and intimidate. However, Tan (2016) studied the relationship between smartphones and tourism in nature-based destinations. He found that smartphones sometimes have a negative impact on experiences and can create a state of 'absent presence' for tourists which can affect their experience. The mobile device that many of us carry around at all times provides us not only with the opportunity to capture photos and videos whenever and wherever we are, but also share them with others through the internet. This is increasing because of more internet availability all around the world especially in western communities (Munar and Jacobsen, 2014; Munar et al., 2014). Related to this, Bolin (2012) argues that this has made our lives become 'media life' where we "live in media rather than with media" (p. 800) as mobile devices allow tourists to live their lives online and on the move.

The use of smartphones drives photo sharing and the growing use of peoples' social media usage as well as the fast internet connection that people have access to all around the world. Some people cannot imagine leisure travel without photographing their experience and share it online

(Gretzel, 2017). Shanks and Svabo (2014) described this as 'fluid, individualized connectivity' and how it has changed our practices in photography from being just one snapshot to constantly taking and sharing photos. It was the term new media that was prominent in the 1990s and brought out the "fluid individualized connectivity, a medium to distribute control and freedom" (Chun, 2006, p 1). Social media on a computer and mobile social media is quite the same; they have the same functions but mobile social media which is usually connected to the smartphone and relies more on the user to keep the mobile device connected at all times (Shanks & Svabo, 2014).

Media and tourism are converging fields (Crouch et al., 2005) as media and tourism continue to interweave it is allowing the tourists to depict, recreate, and relive their experiences. Since tourism has gotten more mediatized over the years, the term post-tourism has been brought up (Jansson, 2018). This means that tourists have almost traveled places by just looking at photos and information about the destination and that the leisure trip almost starts at home before even deciding to go. Nowadays, social media is a significant factor in this travel at home for people (ibid.). The tourist activity is merely semiotic and has therefore, becomes a mediatized activity as well (Thurlow and Jaworski, 2011). Thurlow and Jaworski further argue that photo sharing online should not necessarily be viewed as entirely new as it is just a new remedy of the older photo albums. Hjorth and Hendry (2015) agree on that note and argue that "in particular, smartphone apps like Instagram are both romanticizing older remediated analog practices while creating new ways in which images can be linked to place as a practice on the move" (p. 1). The array of social media has changed the way people can share experiences of leisure travel and has transformed the tourism industry (Munar et al., 2014).

The connection between social media and tourism has been a growing research field in recent years. The majority of the researches have been within the field of marketing or tourism management and how it is affecting tourists as consumers while little has been studied in the field of media (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Studies have shown that a large group of users of the social media application Instagram uses the application to get inspired for their travels and that the photos do have an impact on their expectations for the destination this might be influenced by the fact that communicated content online will ultimately become people's truth (Smith, 2018; Lanier, 2010). The fact that tourists are using social media more for sharing their traveling experiences supports the idea of 'the world is flat' by Thomas Friedman (2009). He discusses

that due to flattening, access to the internet, tourists are getting more power in establishing both production and distribution of their travel experiences.

Due to the mobility of both media and people Crouch (1999) argues this has blurred the boundaries of media and place. A place or a destination has been explained as a space where activities and social interaction happen, and the media is one of many factors that contribute to the understanding of place. Ek (2006) argues that as the meaning-making of place is something created through interaction and therefore, this meaning is not established in time but is rather more flowing. Other scholars claim that the meaning of places is individualized as it is developed through everyday experiences; however, it can also be shared with others (Rose, 2002; Tuan 1975). Therefore, tourist practices contribute to the meaning of place due to social norms and values. Some scholars claim that media has an impact on how tourists imagine places and furthermore, the meaning of places and what practices to do in those places. Therefore, media influence is reaching further than just within media culture (Couldry & McCarthy, 2004; Moores, 2005). The increasing intertwining of media and place the desire for visiting the places displayed in media products also increases. It is worth to mention that media is not the single factor that contributes to the sense of place, but since this thesis emphasizes the connection of media and tourism, the focus will be on the media. Wang et al. (2015) discussed how tourists can take the everyday mundane life with them to the exotic and extraordinariness of tourism as the tourist experience is not as distinct from everyday life as it used to be (ibid.). Pearce and Gretzel (2012) called the blurring boundaries between traveling and home life due to a cell phone technology a "digital elasticity."

Photographing and photo sharing while traveling does not only create a representation of the place but also has a personal meaning for the tourist. Photographing is the tourist way to freeze the moments that are worth to remember for a later memoir and as a tool to communicate those worthy memories (Lo and McKercher, 2014). Sontag (1977) argued that photographing was also a piece of evidence for tourist to show the "I have been" of their travels. The tourist can then use this frozen moment of "I have been" in the continuous shaping of the self. In Urry's and Larsen's (2011) theory of the tourist gaze, they discuss how tourists seek to escape the banal everyday life and find and experience the extraordinary. However, this they say is socially constructed by the media that creates this norm with photography. Moreover, this search for the extraordinary connects to the idea of using photographing and online sharing as prove of experience (Konjin et al., 2016; Boley et al., 2013). Gretzel (2019) discusses how this desire to

prove of being in must-see places has led to the hermeneutic circle of representation to change as tourist photo sharing is now influencing the destination image and the visitor experience. Lo and McKercher (2015) suggest that even though mobile media encourages spontaneous photographing and sharing there is careful thought put in posts as tourists have imagined audience to perform for which they do not want to be shamed or ignored by. Their suggestion is based on Goffman's (1959) idea of impression management. Concerning this discussion Gretzel (2019) argues how these posts are representing one's ideal self unless the purpose is to create a shocking content which is often published on other media channels. She further discusses how social media persuades users to share visual content online and led to what has been called overtourism. Overtourism has been identified as a condition where locals and tourist workers feel as there are too many tourists which causes their quality of life to be challenged or quality of the experience quality to worsen (Dodds and Butler, 2019). This phenomenon has been addressed by the world travel and tourism council where five problems related to over tourism are identified, and they are "alienation of the local community, infrastructure problems, poor tourist experience, environmental degradation and threats to heritage and culture" (Business destination, 2018). Which might create tension between tourists, tourism workers, and locals and is a challenge many countries have to deal with as tourism increases and is expected to increase even more (UNWTO, 2016). The overtourism causing unsustainable travel practices that are a challenge for tourism workers as well as part of political debate.

2.4 Tourism as a Mediatized Activity

The concept of mediatization has emerged in the field of media and communication studies in recent years. The fact that media's role in our everyday lives has been increasing massively since about the 21st century as well as growing internet access, emergence and growing use of the smartphone media has become multidirectional and needed new approach to critically analyze these changes from media being one-way production to the audience as it was before (Couldry and Hepp, 2013). In addition, mediatization highlights that media should not be looked at as separate from our society and culture since the changing importance of media in those institutions (Hjarvard, 2008). The smartphone evolvement discussed in the first part, and therefore, the mobility of the media has played a role both as a symbol and a vehicle of mediatization (Miller, 2014).

Winfried Schulz (2004) discussed that mediatization connects to social changes in communication media and defines those changes as extension, substitution, amalgamation, and

accommodation. The process of extension focuses on how media technologies have changed and extended human communication through time and space. The second process, substitution, focuses on how media has taken over either partly or fully some interactions that before were only possible in face-to-face interaction. The amalgamation is then how media activities and non-media activities combine each other that is how media is interwoven into our everyday life. For example, we scroll through our social media on the bus and listen to the radio while driving. The last one refers to the fact that the existence of communication media causes social change and that media has economic value and provide jobs. Media has become a part of institutions in society, and therefore, the media is influencing other parts of society while also being influenced by different causes (Schulz, 2004). Media is increasingly becoming a part of our everyday life and is affecting relation and communication among individuals and our understanding of ourselves (Livingstone, 2009). This has been discussed and debated on, and not everyone agrees on this approach to mediatization. Couldry (2008), for example, critiques this linear view of the mediatization and argues that there are many other not primarily media related factors that shape the different aspects of society. While Couldry wants to reject the concept, Hepp (2009) wants to position himself in between these views. He argues that mediatization is useful as a framework for researching cultural change and its relation to media but not as a linear media logic.

Mediatization has been discussed in relation to tourism. Jansson (2002) studied the mediatization of the tourist experiences and tested if tourism and media consumption remarked the 'end of tourism' or an era of post-tourism. His results showed that mediatization underpins what he calls 'first-hand tourism.' He argued in relation to mediatization in tourism that there are three scapes that can be distinguished on an analytical level. The first scape is landscape, which is the physical world we experience with our senses. Landscapes are commonly aesthetic and are, for example, tourist destinations. Secondly, there is the socioscape and is the social justification of the landscape. The physical spaces are turned into 'places' that are created for social interaction. The third space is the mediascape, which is the media text that we see in our everyday life. These media texts are intertwined into our sociophysical space and create a representation of spaces and places. Therefore, the tourist performances at tourist destinations have become more and more mediatized in recent years. Like discussed in the previous chapter, web 2.0 is highly participatory, and tourists have for long been viewed as passively consuming media (Jenkins, 1999). Thurlow and Jaworski (2011) stress that tourism is progressively becoming a mediatized activity and further (Jansson, 2007) discusses that understanding of

places is the debated framework of both material and symbolic processes and this understanding "moves beyond the commonplace understanding of communication as a matter of symbolic flows, or messages extended in space" (p 8). This is a process he calls texture but is called tourist practices in this thesis project. He further argues,

> we may imagine how media use both takes place and produces space through texture. Touristic media use, then, might either extend the relevance of pre-given textures (paths, patterns, rhythms, and so on), obeying ritual forms of touristic practice, or undermining the very same forms. Accordingly, new media might be used either for intensifying the touristic experience of a place, or for blurring the touristic qualities of texture (Jansson, 2007, p 8).

He further links this to the idea of the hermeneutic circle of representation, like many scholars have been doing in studies on the connection between tourism and media (Urry and Larsen, 2011). Researchers have been investigating this intertwining of media and tourism in recent years where the connection between tourist imagination and media (Crouch et al., 2005) and the tourist experience and media but Jensen and Waade (2009) discussed the mediated tourism where they discuss how there is a blurred line between media producers, users, and consumers. They view it as a mechanism of media-generated content infusing with the tourist experience of the destination. This thesis project takes a media point of view to scrutinize how media impacts the tourist practices and furthermore how it impacts the industry itself. Thurlow and Jaworski (2011) studied the mediatized tourist practices on Flickr where they argue that the mundane tourist practices even though they might be viewed as harmless and innocent they are what created what they call banal globalization. Furthermore, that they are not just trivial practices but embodied tourism practices of every day that "turn out to be global in their reach and possibly also in their impact" (ibid. p 246).

2.5 Popular Culture and tourism

Urry and Larsen (2011) discuss how the mediatized gaze is related to popular culture media products and how they construct the mediated gaze. The impact of popular culture on tourism has been widely studied, and film-induced tourism is a term that has been used to describe the impact of films and TV shows on tourism. Beeton (2016) discussed that film-induced tourism is when tourists travel to film locations of movies and TV shows. Månsson (2014) studied the connection popular culture and tourism by using mediatization and convergence to explain this intertwining of the two disciplines where she used The da Vinci Code as a case. In the case of Iceland, the country has been popular for shooting film, and TV shows, for example, the popular TV series Game of Thrones, Interstellar, music video for Justin Bieber's song I'll show you and

a song scene from a Bollywood movie have been shot in the country. There is a substantial amount of popular culture media products in circulation in our society and scholars have argued that media products that were made without the intention of the tourist are more trustworthy than marketing official marketing material that is made to create an image of a certain destination (Gretzel, 2019). That is, for example, popular culture media products such as mentioned above (Gartner, 1993: Gunn, 1997). In Urry's earlier editions of 'The Tourist Gaze' he argued how places are selected to be gazed at, and changes in society are what forms this gaze. Furthermore, he discussed how film, TV, and music, for example, create an interest in places to be gazed at. Urry and Larsen (2011) took this discussion further and discussed the mediatized gaze, and moreover, argue that mixed media products have an impact on the mediatized gaze and further the tourist practices. Earlier scholars such as Butler (1990) discussed how he thought film-induced tourism would take over other media products in the future due to its visual power and the number of people it reached around the globe. This has, however, proved to be wrong, and media products such as social media also play a big role as well as they interweave with the classic popular culture media products. The interviewees in this case study all reflected on the impact of popular culture on tourism in Iceland.

2.6 Positioning the thesis in the field

The previous chapters have discussed the previous research in the field of media and tourism. More specifically, the photographing and mobile media and its influence on tourism and tourists and the framework of the tourist gaze and mediatization. Although the convergence of media and tourism has been an emerging research topic in recent years, Munar et al. (2014) mention that many studies have emphasized on marketing or management which has resulted in "positivistic methodological approach" (p 3). They argue that moreover, due to this constant focus the research of social media and tourism is not progressing as researchers are not taking perspectives from social sciences, for example, and therefore not critically studying these phenomena. This leads to important perspectives being left out in the context of social media and tourism (ibid.). Therefore, this thesis will take the perspective of media and communication and adopt the theory of mediatization along with the tourist gaze to critically analyze the mediated tourism practices in the case of Iceland. As the theory of mediatization emphasizes on the impact of media on culture and society (Hjarvard, 2008). Hepp (2009) argues that mediatization should be viewed as a framework to give an understanding of the relationship between media and cultural change instead of single-medium the concept is useful. Therefore, the concept is relevant to the intersection of mobile social media and tourism, which is the focus

of this thesis project. Furthermore, Urry and Larsen (2011) rethought the theory of the tourist gaze after strong criticism as Urry had earlier had a single emphasis on the vision. Now the theory includes more ideas of the tourist practices that contribute to the gaze, for example, photographing and also the mediatized gaze. Therefore, I will, in this thesis project, use the two concepts, the tourist gaze, and mediatization to explore converging fields of media and tourism in the case of Iceland.

3. Methodology and Methods

3.1 Methodological approach

This thesis lies within the qualitative research paradigm. The qualitative research paradigm focuses on understanding how the participant views and interprets reality. Qualitative research seeks to explore how things work in their original settings and give a deeper understanding of participant's meaning-making (Stake, 2010). It considers reality to be socially constructed from an individual point of view based on their understanding of the reality they live in (Holstein, 2000). Qualitative research has sometimes been criticized and described as 'researched-lite' and being easier than quantitative research. However, qualitative research can be challenging, take practice and time to get them right, and they give a good insight into the subject being researched even though it is not in a quantitative form (Brennen, 2017).

The roots of this thesis lie in ethnography. Ethnography focuses on answering questions about how people live their lives, their actions, practices. The focus is, therefore, more on what people do instead of what people say they do in their everyday life (Brennen, 2017) which is the interest of this thesis, to gain an understanding of the tourist practices. The focus of ethnography is using our multiple senses in both watching, listening as well as communicating with others (ibid.). An ethnographer both observes and interprets what he observes, Clifford Geertz (1973) described this as 'thick description' of the subject being researched. He discussed that ethnography is not an objective data the researcher collects from the observation as it is based on the researcher's interpretations of how the people being research constructs and interprets what they do and say. The essence of ethnography is that it is methodologically flexible and Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) have described it as so:

> The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is concerned (p. 3).

With more digitization, the field of digital ethnography has been expanding (Bengtsson 2014). Ethnography within media studies has grown in recent years and emphasizes on expanding the view of the media context and to give an understanding of media engagement and usage (Brennen, 2017).

Digital ethnography is still a field in the making; however, it is a method used to understand the meaning and to understand in depth, people daily lives. Digital ethnography asks questions

like Hine (2015) examples if we are adopting more or less to social norms that the Internet brings. Even though ethnography was initially meant for the ethnographer to spend time with people that does not mean that doing an ethnographic study on the mediated part of people's lives is invalid since it is a part of their daily life ethnographers should certainly study what the people do there. Digital ethnography also does a "critical stance on over-generalized assumptions about the impact of new technologies" (Hine, 2015, p 2). It gives us an understanding of how people live their lives and how they adjust to technology and vice versa how technology adapts to their life. Ethnography is an extremely flexible method and can adapt to the circumstances the researcher will face on the way (ibid).

3.1.1 Combining Methods

Researchers have experienced that when doing ethnographic research combining methods gives a deeper understanding of the ethnographic experience. Both Hine (2015) and boyd (2015) agreed that when studying the Internet, it should be considered that it only gives a one-sided view, which is why combining methods gives a broader perspective of the subject. Furthermore, observation is often not enough but face to face interaction is the right combination with the observation. Interviews have gotten criticized for multiple reasons which Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe like a traveler coming home telling travel stories. They stress that interviews exclude the actions of the participants as they only sit and talk but not move and act. Also, that interviews are too individualistic and neglect what they call situatedness of the participant in the social, cultural, and material world (ibid.). However, by combining the interviews with observation should give a deeper understanding of the tourist practices. These two methods complement each other where the interviews give information on what people say they do while the observation shows peoples' practices. "When the researcher has access to group processes, direct observation can illuminate the discrepancies between what people said in the interviews and casual conversations and what they actually do" (Meyer, 2001 p 339). Mixing two methods like in this case has been called within social science triangulation and is used to increase the credibility and validity of the study.

3.1.2 Case Study

A case study is a methodology of looking at one example in detail, "providing an analysis of the context and processes involved in the phenomenon under study" (Meyer, 2001 p 329). Case studies have often been criticized in social science. Many social scientists claim that it is not possible to generalize from findings from a case study which many they mean is the purpose

of social sciences. Flyvbjerg argued for the "the social sciences are strongest where the natural sciences are weakest" (Flyvbjerg, 2001 p. 3) that is in terms of phronetic which is a term Flyvbjerg uses from Aristotle and means practical wisdom. He claims that social sciences cannot have theories that predict human behavior, however, that social sciences are contextual, experience-based, and therefore unpredictable. The Dictionary of Sociology says that a case study is a good method in the earlier stages of research on a larger scale but cannot be used in a broader context. Flyvbjerg, however, argues that the 'power of the example' can be used for generalization and not only a preliminary method for research of larger scale. Furthermore, analyzing a 'single example' in-depth can add to the knowledge of the broader concept (ibid, p 66). Since tourism is the largest export in Iceland and the world travel tourism council show that Iceland had the third fastest growing tourism in 2016. Furthermore, people have related the tourist boom in Iceland directly to social media, and therefore, I see it as a good example to investigate.

3.2 Sampling and conducting the research

Before carrying out the research, an interview guide[1] was created that primarily focused on the aims of this thesis project. An interview guide for semi-structured interviews should include an outline of topics to discuss and question suggestions for the interview (Kvale, 2007). The interview guide had four main themes which were: Social media and the tourism industry, Expectations, Influence, and lastly the changing tourist role. The themes were aimed to create a natural flow in the interview to make the interviewee the most comfortable and the conversation as natural as possible. The pilot was conducted four days before the first interview. I realized after the pilot that the interview guide needed to be reconstructed, and it needed to be revised to accomplish a better flow in the conversation and more profound answers from the questions. The pilot interview was lacking a natural conversation flow which is why I changed the order of the themes of the interview guide as I had realized at the beginning of the pilot that the previous order did not create this flow. Some of the questions also had to be rephrased in order to accomplish more in-depth answers.

Sampling for the interviews took place through social media. I wanted to get interviews with tour guides currently working in the field. I started by posting in a Facebook group called the background of tourism in Iceland[2] on February 18th and got no response. Two days later, I

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[1] See appendix 3
[2] Bakland ferðaþjónustunnar on Facebook

tried posting on my own Facebook wall asking the people I know if they knew someone working tour guide. From that post, I got ten responses of which two of them were message straight from people who were interested in participating while eight of them were my Facebook friends suggesting someone, they knew I could try to contact which I did and got six replies to my message. One of the persons that replied to me was not working as a guide however was working for a tourist agency that had many tour guides on their list, she offered to send me a list of people and their emails that I could contact. She sent me email addresses of 11 persons which I sent emails to and nine people responded. The participants[3] in this thesis are, therefore, the tour guides who replied to my emails and messages and were willing to participate. Three of the replies that I got, the person said that they could participate but mentioned that they were maybe not very familiar with the social media context. Kvale (1996, p 146) mentions that the quality interviewee has to have to be 'cooperative and well-motivated' which is the reason I decided not to include those guides who mentioned this in their replies. The sampling is therefore done through the idea of snowball sampling where participants are sampled by "who feature the necessary characteristics and, through their recommendations, finding other subjects with the same characteristics" (Gobo, 2007).

The first of two methods in this dissertation was an observation[4] of tourists in Iceland. Roesch (2009) discussed that to research what he called 'media tourists,' the place or concept of the field site has to be specific and well-defined, for example, a tour. This is why the observations for this thesis took place on a day tour with the Icelandic tour operator and travel agency Reykjavík Excursions which has grown into being the largest tour operator in Iceland (Guide to Iceland, n.d.). The observation was conducted on two different day tours, one went the golden circle and the other on the south shore of Iceland. Both of these tours were in the southern part of Iceland and were chosen because those are the most popular tours of the company and go to the area where over 70% of tourists that travel to Iceland visit (Icelandic travel board, 2019). The tours go every day in English and as well as they have some in different languages throughout the week all year. The purpose of this observation was to be able to describe how people act on site, what they say and do. I was a participant observer in this observation as I participated in the viewing and experience in the destinations of the tours as a participant observer I strived "to understand the meaning of action" (Brennen, 2013, p

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[3] See appendix 1
[4] See appendix 5

165). As previously mentioned boyd (2015) stressed a face to face interaction suits well as a combination to the observation which is why I saw an opportunity to interact with the tourists on the tours or the destinations the tours stopped on. I, therefore, had short conversations with nine tourists during the observation. The observation occurred at the beginning of March which is not considered as the high season for tourism in Iceland even though many tourists still visit the country during the winter months to experience the northern lights and the country itself wearing a winter coat. The days I did the tours Reykjavík Excursions had two buses doing the same route at the same time both of the days. One bus was entirely in English while the other bus was in another language and English.

The second method of this thesis was semi-structured interviews with tour guides. A semi-structured interview is "an interview in which the researcher asks open questions relating to a predetermined range of themes." Semi-structured interviews give the interviewer the possibility to ask questions in any order and also gives him the flexibility to dig deeper into the questions he would like to get deeper answers (Seale, 2017). The tour guides are the people that travel with the tourists to the places and therefore experience the tourist experiences and see tourist performances when they travel both the ones traveling on their tour and other people at the places they travel to. I conducted nine interviews, including the pilot interview, where three men and six women participated in this part of the research. The interviews lasted on the range of the shortest being 29 minutes to the longest being 79 minutes. The interviewees were on the age range from the youngest being 23 years old and the oldest 64 years old. As I had settled with a date and time with each interviewee, I offered them to choose the place where the interview should take place, a place that would be the most convenient one for them and where they would feel comfortable to discuss this subject. Two of the interviewees invited me into their homes, and the other seven interviews were conducted in coffee houses in the capital area of Iceland.

3.2.1 Working with the Data

The interview recordings were all transcribed, whereas the transcription[5] then became the empirical data for the research. While transcribing, I paid attention to the tone of voice to consider the emotions the interviewee was putting into their answers and also remembering their facial expressions and other body languages as it could influence the meaning of their

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[5] See appendix 4

answers. Bazeley (2013) stresses that "the goal in transcribing is to be as true to the conversation as possible, yet pragmatic in dealing with the data" (p 73) which is why it is essential to document every emotion and expressions. As the interviews were conducted in Icelandic, the transcription was also done in Icelandic to keep the data fruitful while analyzing (ibid.). The quotes were then translated into English later in the process.

To help developing ideas, I did open coding on the data, which is usually the first stage in the analysis (Bazeley, 2013). The codes were further used as equipment to determine the data into categories. Based on Bazeley (2013) idea of 'read, reflect, and connect' as the data was read and reread to gain a view over both depth and breadth of the data content (101). The transcripts were, therefore, read and reread, and the theories were revisited. The thematic categories were contextualized to mediatized tourism practices. The themes and categories functioned to "draw on the relevant context to help consider potential motives" (Brennen, 2013, p 22) for the informant's actions. As I read the transcripts, I wrote all the open codes on the margins of the printed-out transcripts and as well as I had a document where I wrote down my thoughts. I later color coded the codes into categories and themes[6] on paper and in the end was able to write all my thoughts into a whole text.

3.2.2 Method reflections

Ethics surrounding this thesis project have to be taken into consideration. Every interviewee signed a consent form[7] where each individual was informed about that participation in this project was voluntary and their right to quit at any time. They were also informed about that the answers that they gave were confidential and that their names or other information about them would not be available in the thesis. Kvale (1996) stresses that confidentiality is an important matter when it comes to interviews to protect the interviewees from any harm. Research subjects have the right to know that they are being researched and what they are being researched for (ibid.). The participants in the observation part of this project did not sign a consent form; they were, however, given information about the research orally at the beginning of the tour. They had the opportunity to ask me, the researcher, any questions that came up during the tour or deny participating in the project. This thesis topic might not have a sensitive topic; however, as some relatively sensitive topics were brought up in the interviews such as

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[6] See appendix 6
[7] See appendix 2

stories about specific tourists and comments related to race. Also, even though the tourist practices might not be sensitive matter, my presence on the tours during the observation might have affected some participants as one of the tourists sitting next to me expressed in a somewhat ironic way that he usually takes photos when travelling, however, he did not want to do it there because I was "judging." I told him however that my role there was not to judge but to investigate and that I had no place to judge as I do many of those practices myself which brings me my position in this research

Reflecting on my position as a researcher in this case, especially in the role of a researcher in the observations is essential. As media studies, ethnographers have discussed that it can be problematic to gain 'critical distance' from the subject as it often is a part of their own culture and therefore, difficult to view the situation as strange. As I am an Icelandic individual, I have visited these destinations multiple times as well as me being a tourist myself both in other countries and my own doing tourism practices regularly. Therefore, when conducting the research Corner's (2011) words of 'assume less and investigate more' was kept in mind.

4. Exploring mediatized tourism practices

In this chapter the empirical data will be analyzed with the concept of mediatization and the tourist gaze. Three themes emerged from the coding of the data which will be analyzed through the theoretical framework of the tourist gaze and mediatization. Each theme has two to three categories which play as a narrative where each category leads up to the next one. The first part of this chapter emphasizes on the evolving technology has impacted the way tourists travel and how tourist practices have changed. The second part will focus on the photographing and photo sharing practices that have evolved with more mobile and digital media and how photo sharing changes and how it is influencing the tourism practices while travelling. Finally, the last chapter will emphasize on how the sharing practices have evolved to tourist creating economic value for the tourism industry and how other media products can influence the tourist-generated content that go into circulation online.

4.1 Technology Change challenging the tourist senses

4.1.1 Mobile media and mobile practices

The evolvement of the smartphone has changed our communication patterns as increasing media technology has resulted in expanded limits of our natural communication abilities and moreover, changed the way we travel. This shift has resulted in easier ways for the tourist to take, edit and share photos and also communicate through time and space while travelling (Wang et.al., 2015). Before the evolving technology of the smartphone the binaries that used to separate the tourist experience from everyday life were for example work/leisure and home/away, however, due to the evolving technologies and increasing connectivity during travelling these boundaries have blurred (Ibid.). Not only are people able to be away and connecting to their home life but also the "globalized (and globalizing) media culture, [...] enables people to travel mentally and emotionally without moving in physical geography" (Jansson, 2002, p 430). The mobile device that we carry around has shifted photo sharing to being mostly driven by the smartphone and has the quality to engage in many ways. The interviews showed that people seemed to experience an immense difference because of the smartphone both regarding photography, communication and information search.

> For sure, because now you have the media in your face all day every day. Before you could just turn off the TV or closed the newspaper but now it is all in your hands
>
> Erna (F, 36)

In some languages like German and also at times in English the mobile phone has been called a handy which refers to the fact that it is a mobile device that is small and fits into your hand (Miller, 2014). Erna describes how nowadays the smartphone is constantly in our hands and information and news are therefore always in front of our eyes in our everyday life. Consequently, we are more connected in our everyday life but also during our travels as both the smartphone and internet technology has shifted our communication pattern in a way that we are constantly connected. This be linked to Wang, et.al. (2015) suggestion that the connection makes the tourist experience not as different from the everyday life. Furthermore, this constant connection the tourist has decreased the adventurous experience and the feeling of escape due to better information and the connection to the everyday life they have out of the tourist context or like Pearce and Gretzel (2012) called it "digital elasticity". This has led to easier access to information. Hildur experiences this and says that information is so close to the tourist and provides them with the information they want to while travelling the country.

> I have sometimes experienced that people are googling the things I'm talking about [...] if it's something that cannot be seen something like culture or something then people bring their phone and show it to me something I had been talking about but they can just see it on the internet
>
> Hildur (F, 49)

Furthermore, Hildur described that digitization and internetization have resulted in increasing access to information while travelling. While some scholars have talked about how more information is subsiding tourist experience, other scholars have mentioned that technology is also creating new ways of experiencing travels (Neuhofer, et.al., 2014). The smartphone and the extensive internet access have the same functions as a computer but is much handier and mobile and therefore is ideal for the tourist to use as an information tool on their travel like Erna and Hildur describe. Moreover, this creates an environment for mediatization. Jansson (2002) discusses the three scapes of mediatized tourism where landscape is the natural environment of for example the tourist destination. Socioscape is the scape where the landscape turns into a place due to some kind of social interaction. The third and last scape is the mediascape where multiple media text is consumed and dispersed in the socioscape create meaning and representation for these places. Therefore, the smartphone is important in the mediascape which gives information and therefore constructs the socioscape that turns the landscape into a place since, without any social interaction a place is only a 'neutral material space' (Ibid.). Furthermore, this has turned tourism into the mediatized activity it is today. This

means that the tourist has access to information wherever he/she travels and can as well share their experiences through social media while travelling.

> On day tours when you are the whole day with the same group, people are on their phone the whole time and they use the time between destinations to put filter and edit their photos and post them simultaneously so this takes the whole day, you are somehow never free from this on these trips and while travelling because then people go to coffee houses and keeps on sharing everything
>
> Inga (F, 30)

Inga further describes that tourists constantly utilize their smartphone during tours and moreover describes that the smartphone is an important tool when it comes to the photographing practices of the tourists. This also showed in the observations as I wrote in my notes on the second day of observation "there is a big crowd of people in the area in front of the waterfall and I see all their hands up with their smartphone taking photos." The smartphone has made a social change like Schulz (2004) discusses regarding mediatization, amalgamation is one of the social changes where media is interwoven in our everyday life as media is not only extending or alternating non-media activities but also intermingle with each other. Furthermore, Schulz claims that media use is intertwined into the habits of everyday life and that media infuses spheres of our society for example culture, politics, and the public sphere. He further mentions "the specific constraints new media impose on communication processes lead to new forms of dependency and heteronomy" (Schulz, 2004, p 89, 96). Inga describes on this note how the smartphone interweaves media into the tourist practices by constantly and simultaneously being able to share while on the move and travelling. Inga agrees with Erna that we are never free from this mobile device we are carrying around. José van Dijck (2013) argued that social media is not the only media which is social, and that all media have always been social and even socialities have also always been mediated but not always by technologies. However, he further argues that social media restricts and spreads ideas and content faster and in a more data heavy way.

4.1.2 Travelling Through the Screen

Consequently, with evolving technology, the smartphone has made media more mobile than before. Tourism has become more mediatized in recent years like other aspects of our everyday lives and like Thurlow and Jarowski (2011) argued tourism has become a highly mediated activity. That is in harmony with what the interviews especially from the observation show, most people who were interviewed mentioned that social media in some way influenced their

travels in one way or another. One couple said that they use social media when travelling to keep in touch with family and friends while they are away which shows the blurring boundaries between home life and travel. Like Schulz (2004) argues, mediatization influences social changes, one of the four processes in social changes related to mediatization is that extended human communication through both time and space which shows for example with social media where people communicate with their friends and family.

> There is maybe nothing like special that comes up in my mind that is negative, this is, of course, a bit special and you can see a little or you know I feel like it's stealing a lot of people's attention but on the other hand people might just want to experience places through their phone[...]I feel like to a certain degree that people don't get these connections to the nature and this experience that I would want to share with the tourist but on the other hand that is maybe something that people are not necessarily interested in so disadvantage or not but this is what I have noticed
>
> Inga (F, 30)

Inga expresses here that she feels like tourists focus too much on their phones when they travel. She, however, does not want to say so as it is a negative way of travelling but also expresses that is not a positive way by saying that it is "stealing the attention". Therefore, in Inga's experience, it is as if the tourist does not have the same ability to get the experience Inga feels like they should get when travelling. Tanti and Buhalis (2017) also addressed that travelers that spend a substantial amount of time in the online sphere potentially "neglect the opportunity to discover the physical world" (ibid. p 137). As mentioned before some scholars do agree with Inga on this note that the smartphone interrupts the tourist experience however others say it creates new ways of experience (Neuhofer, et.al., 2014). It is, however, interesting to wonder why Inga says she does not see it as a negative but at the same time in a way stresses that it is in this aspect a negative effect. This might be caused by social norms towards the use of smartphones. The discourse towards both smartphones and social media has at times been negative. Both of these phenomena have been shown to be addictive and influencing peoples' self-esteem in a rather negative way (Tanti and Buhalis, 2017). Further, at the same time as they are connecting people, they also disconnect us from ourselves and others, "thus, the greatest cost associated with the need for immediacy may be emergent addictive behavior that negatively impacts the way we communicate and intimately interact with others" (Lundquist et.al., 2014, p 87). This might be resulting the connotation of the use of smartphones and social media in our daily life to be socially constructed as a negative aspect of our daily behavior or

that we at least should feel that it is not a positive part of our lives. Arnar (M, 57) experienced this as he said that tourists are so stuck on their phones that they miss important information.

> Sometimes people have the tendency to get lost in taking videos and photos and that's maybe what I mostly see is that people are too busy taking photos of what they are doing instead of experiencing what they are doing
>
> Guðrún (F, 23)

Guðrún agrees with Inga that in her experience photography has taken over the tourist experience and that people forget to experience in the physical space that they are in. By saying the word "instead" she indicates that it is hard to experience places when the attention goes to the smartphone, social media or the camera. This can be related to what Urry and Larson (2011) mentioned about the emphasis on the visual in our modern society and further what Urry (1992) argued about the vision being a superficial sense that interrupts other senses and moreover creates a new type of gaze as they gaze at places through the screen. This constructs the understanding of place and the tourist practices of place. This leads to, according to the interviewees, as if the depth of the place is lost when tourists travel through the screen which can be connected to the visual turn in society. The interviewees were in general positive towards how tourism has evolved due to technology changes like internet access and social media and see it as new possibilities. However, the undertone of most of the interviews is negative towards the growing internet access and increasing technology. The reason for this negative undertone can be due to the new online communication patterns that have been progressively challenging the traditional way of travelling where the boundaries between home and away used to be clearer and travelers disconnected themselves from the everyday life to travel into a new fruitful and challenging zone (Pearce, 2011). When a tourist is constantly connected, the need to maintain "the same level of presence, attention, and intimacy with their friends and relatives" increases (Tanti and Buhalis, 2017) when they are travelling. Furthermore, when tourists are able to be in the virtual and the physical world despite the location they are in, smartphones could change "the temporal and spatial organization of social interaction" (Tan, 2016 p 615) and therefore create a constant state of 'absent presence' which is created by mobile technologies and internet connectivity. This state can sometimes cause the connection with the tourist experience at destination to decrease (Tan, 2016). Arnar (M,57) states "the most common things people complain about on tours is that there is no wifi". The smartphone and connectivity lead to tourists gazing at the screen instead of the surroundings which might result in a tension between the tourists and tourism workers. As the interviewees

expressed a rather negative attitude towards the technology change and mobile media in tourism the informants expressed how new media and technology is in a way creating a filter on the tourist experience which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

4.1.3 Filtering the Experience

As discussed, the smartphone has changed tourist practices radically in recent years. Pocock (2009) discusses how the camera has created new ways to both see and experience places. Photographing creates the opportunity to create the ideal photo by framing the real world and while photography has always been a part of the tourism practice digital photography and photo editing has made this process easier and makes the presentation of self easier than ever (Scarles, 2009). In relation to what Sontag (1977) discussed, tourists feel the obligation to put the camera between themselves and what is worth seeing. As the interviewees discussed how it can take the attention away from the experience of the travel and they experienced that travelling through the screen felt like a more negative practice rather than positive they also discussed the possibilities and impossibilities of the camera.

> in my opinion a bit good that there are always places that you just can't properly capture on a photo [...] I think it's just a little bit cozy to know that then people actually have to come there to see it [...] I think that with stuff like the northern lights they are a perfect example about something that you know you will never capture on photo like it is in real life so it is a bit nice that you can't like mimic it at home in your living room like being at the place.
>
> Inga (F, 30)

Inga discusses the landscape and the places which are difficult to capture on photo and that is when they get the real experience because that is when the phone is not in their way. It is as they feel like the smartphone screen is creating a filter that filters the experience. However, Inga discusses that some may just choose to travel through the screen, however, she would rather want them to experience with bare eyes and live in the moment. Inga continues and talks about that the northern lights will never be the same on photo as in real life. Although, other interviewees like Arnar (M, 57) says "the camera shows them much better than the human eye can see" which is like Pocock mentions that the camera brings opportunities for the tourists to see things differently with the camera which without the camera would not be possible to experience. This can also be seen on tours as I wrote in my notes during observation "there is a brochure in the seat pocket on the bus with instructions on what settings to use to capture the northern lights on picture" Inga also mentions that she thinks it is nice that the tourist is not

able to mimic the photos at home which show that in her experience tourists are trying to recreate photos that they have already seen which like Urry (2002) mentions which further keeps on constructing the tourist gaze.

> This is like a zen moment you know, you have sacrificed so much time and effort and money to come here and remember to also create memories for yourself that will live even though you lose the memory card or the camera or someone steals the camera or you know hacks your computer or your cloud so you also just have the moment for yourself
>
> Hildur (F, 49)

Hildur described how she always reminds her tourists to also be in the moment at the tourist destination as the camera is not the only thing that can keep our memories. She further said that even though the tourist thinks other people like to see their photos they do not like it as much as the tourist thinks they do. On that note, scholar have said as tourists can instantly share their experiences with others in the virtual world. This possibility of sharing on-site instead of previously being only possible in the post-trip stage has created a possibility for tourists to gain immediate responses and comments while on site. Feelings form instant feedback on their experiences further becomes a part of their experiences in the physical space (Tan, 2016). Therefore, not only the looking constantly through the screen affects the experience the responses could affect the experience on the travel which could be linked to Hildur's advice to the tourists to be in the moment and not let the virtual world take over the experience.

These evolvements that can be related to the evolvement of smartphone being a vehicle for media becoming mobile and thus, making tourist practices increasingly mediatized whereas tourists are gazing on screen (Gretzel, 2019). As they gaze at or through the screen which according to the tour guides experience seems to be the norm in modern travel experiences, and thus, emphasizes on the visual and almost filters away the 'real experience' and the feeling of 'being there' is not as strong as the tour guides hope. Moreover, this has led to the change of the tourism environment as it creates a tension between tourist workers and the tourists. As Arnar (M, 57) discusses some tour operators "have started using iPads instead of tour guides". This is a result of increasing information through the mobile device and connectivity, often leads to the tourist to be more independent and therefore less social with the society at destination (Gretzel, 2019). Following the evolving technology, tourist photographing, and photo sharing practices have changed as briefly mentioned above and will be further discussed in the next section.

4.2 Tourist Photographing and Sharing Practices

4.2.1 Photographing for Online Sharing

Photographing and photo sharing online has become embedded in our everyday lives and taking photos has for long been the norm when it comes to travelling. It is a part of the role of the tourist to take photos. People take photos for memories and to share with others from their change from everyday life. This new way of sharing travel experiences and memories has been said to act as the new way of postcards (Tanti and Buhalis, 2017). Like Urry and Larsen (2011) argue, photographing is closely related to their concept of the tourist gaze and moreover that the focus on vision in society is what creates the desire for photographing. Some researchers have viewed tourist as passive consumers when it comes to places while others see them as more active. Viewing the tourist as passive photographers' researchers argue that tourist seeks to recreate photos they have seen before in travel advertising (Sontag, 1977; Urry, 2002). While passive photographers are recreating images, active photographers are more creative which creates a more social connection.

> there is nothing cool about standing in the back of a large group of people and take a photo nobody wants to see that, no one is coming to see all kinds of colorful jackets you know that's everywhere, everyone just wants to be alone in these places
>
> Inga (F, 30)

The ideal photo when travelling is not of other tourists like Inga mentions a crowd of people and colorful jackets is not photo material tourist want. She then says that tourists do not want to take a photo of something no one wants to see. This indicates that in her experience people are taking the photos for the purpose of sharing them with others more than for the intention of using them as a memory of their travels. This relates to the focus on the visual in travelling which is a driving force in photography (Urry and Larsen, 2011). Bára (F, 64) discusses further how it has always been a part of the tourist role to take photos however, today she says, "it's just more now for Instagram and Snapchat and all that". Likewise, Drífa (F, 61) mentions that this "of course, influences only those who use social media but not as much for those who do not". Further on this note, Guðrún (F, 23) claims it shows when tourists are photographing for memories but not for sharing because they are calmer than when the aim is to share.

> Before you just took photos of things and people and you only took one and you really had to think hmm am I going to take a picture of this it costs to develop you

know. Now you just take photos of everything and you always have to capture the right photo with the correct Instagram filters and du du du du

<div align="right">Erna (F, 36)</div>

Many of the interviewees discussed the fact that in their experience the tourist hopes to capture the perfect shareable photo on their travels. As Instagram is a platform which people use for photo sharing and it emphasizes on the aesthetics, that every photo is aesthetically beautiful to be worth to post it (Gretzel, 2017) and like Erna discusses the Instagram filters that create the right aesthetics for Instagram sharing which encourages others to engage in the sharing. It is therefore socially constructed through social media what is desirable to have in the photos and what should not be in them. Furthermore, like mentioned in the literature review Hjorth and Hendry (2015) say that Instagram is just older remedy of the old analog photo sharing which happened in face to face interaction, but now digital photos transfer better and faster between people. Erna describes her experience and also mentions that technology has changed the way tourists think about photography. Digital cameras and especially the inbuilt cameras of smartphones have changed the photographing behavior from being selective to more spontaneous and also taking more photos. Digital photography and especially the smartphone cameras have made photography more intimate and mundane than before (Palmer, 2012). Erna amongst other interviewees discuss this, in her experience people have more space to be spontaneous as there is not the same cost of developing photos. Bára (F, 64) also discusses this that this actuates frequent photographing "they just take more photos and then throw bad ones out" which is in line with what tourists said during the observation. Two women from Australia said that they "take a lot of picture and then throw the bad ones out when they are at the hotel." Urry and Larsen (2011) argue "Photographs that do not instantly charm are erased and retaken, which affords experimentation and control over how people and places are represented" (n.p.). The flexibility in digital photographing and constantly improving technology makes photo sharing online easier. Studies have shown that the camera phone has supported more spontaneous photographing and sharing practices as well as "it supports a particularly mobile and informal way of taking and consuming images (Palmer, 2012, p 88). Consequently, the constant online flow and circulation of tourist photographs online contribute to the image of the destinations which can be linked to the idea of 'fluid individualized connectivity' where the media especially the mobile media and photo sharing (Shanks and Svabo, 2014) create a medium for tourists to "distribute control and freedom" (Chun, 2006, p 1) Jansson (2002) argues that images create a representation of places influences "the authenticity of a tourist

destination may be defined in terms of how well it meets the customer's own ideas of what the particular destination is about" (p. 439). This is what he calls 'symbolic authenticity'. Guðrún (F, 23) discussed this by describing how social media creates expectations "they expect less people in the places and mostly because of social media where people see photos of the places and there is no one there because the pictures taken during the night in the summer".

> there is Wi-Fi in all our cars so they spend a lot of times on social media and are posting a lot and of course that influences their behavior, how people act,[...] I have also noticed for example in hikes up in the highlands when we lose signal their behavior changes, yes people have more time and start enjoying what is happening around them. So I wonder if it is for the best to have Wi-Fi in the cars
>
> Fannar (F, 50)

The increasing access to the internet, especially in the western world has made it easier for people to share their photos online in real time when they are on these destinations. As Fannar says the Wi-Fi access in all the cars, which was also available in both buses during the observation, allows people to post during the time they travel between destinations. Fannar is however, skeptical about the constant connectivity and as other informants stressed because it gives them more time to enjoy. Researchers have some found that disconnectivity while travelling can sometimes cause tension which might further be related to the need of being constantly online and internet addiction (Paris and Pietschnig, 2015). Immediacy connectedness tension is one of them which is often caused by the fact that the society expects people to be constantly connected. This tension may explain the constant need of the tourist to immediate photo sharing online as the reactions to the photos then act as a reward which is what keeps people constantly checking their social media on their phones (ibid.). However, the constant photographing and sharing can cause overtourism as recreational Instagrammable photos of places authenticate destinations and assures approachable experience for the tourist which further creates more desire for engaging (Gretzel, 2019). This links to Jansson (2007) discussion of tourist practices on new media "blurring the touristic qualities of texture" (p.8). Due to visual culture in society causing more photographing and sharing changing the practice and resulting in overtourism which furthermore has unsustainable consequences for governments and locals to solve.

4.2.2 Presenting self or unsustainable tourist practices?
As a result of tourists sharing photos online, the photo sharing platforms have created a space where tourist can present their identity and self. Photographing and sharing have not only to

do with the representation of the place but also the tourist him- or herself. The photographing practice while travelling also emphasizes on capturing the "I-have-been" (Sontag, 1977) moment which then is used as a memoir for nostalgic and emotional experience for the tourist after the trip. Furthermore, photography and especially photo sharing on social media plays a vital role in presenting the self to others (Lo and McKercher, 2015). Goffman (1959) mentions that when presenting the self, one has to have the presence of the other in mind, furthermore, Urry and Larsen (2011) agree and mention that when people are setting up and posing for a photo, they keep in mind the presence of present, future and even imagined audience of their photos. Goffman (1959) also argues that the self automatically becomes a product in social performance and the "socially desirable" self depends between performances.

Everyone is aiming to capture the perfect photo to put on their social media

Erna (F, 36)

Goffman discusses impression management as a term to describe the process of obtaining the "socially desirable" self. Like Erna mentions tourists seek to capture the perfect photo when they travel but we might question, a perfect photo for whom? This is also what has been discussed in relation to impression management on social media, that is even though technology has made photo sharing easy with almost only one click there is substantial amount of thought behind the posted photo so it will be useful for the impression management of one's self (Lo and McKrecher, 2015). This can relate to what I wrote down in my field notes in the observation about two girls who had been by a waterfall taking photos on their phones and had just returned back to the bus "One said that all of the pictures were terrible and they ran out to try to capture better photos of them next to the waterfall in the last 5 minutes of the stop". Guðrún has a similar experience as Erna regarding the need for the ideal photo and says:

> You do notice when people are doing it for the social media because there goes more thought into gaining this ideal photo and there can't be any flaws and it has to be something crazy and you do notice if they are only taking photos for the memories or for social media.

Guðrún (F, 23)

This implies that tourists are doing what they can to construct their identity to their audiences that they are communicating with through their social media platforms even though they do not know who the audiences are exactly and what they require of them. Urry (2002) argues that

tourist seeks to explore and see the extraordinary and that travelling emphasizes on leaving everyday life to experience something different. Like Guðrún mentions the photos have to include "something crazy" and no flaws are allowed, therefore, like Urry (ibid.) mentions show the extraordinariness of their travels. With his or her own estimation the performer evaluates what the audience expects from their media content which they have gotten clues of from previous performance which means that it depends on the performer's interpretation of the reaction from the audience. In the social media context, this means that reactions on their posts for example likes and comments implicate what is desirable and what not like Fannar mentions

> They are a little bit preoccupied with taking pictures of themselves in certain places and get the likes or the reactions, the comments, that is a little or at least my experience is that this is triggering people on these social media sites to gain acknowledgement from others
>
> Fannar (M, 57)

Fannar's experience, therefore, supports the idea of the tourists are hoping for reactions of their photos to get the acknowledgement they need for their performances as they build on social interaction. Furthermore, these reactions to the photo will act as clues for future performances the tourist will share online during his or her travel (Goffman, 1959). The tourist performance adds to Urry's and Larsen's (2011) idea of the tourist gaze as the constant social comparison of the performer on social media are important in constructing what should be seen, remembered, photographed and shared online. Literature implies that tourist photography is both a performance of self and tourism and that "through framing foreign places and otherness, tourists can exhibit their worldviews and a ''heroic romanticized self'' to their audiences, and by doing so they reconstruct and revitalize their everyday selves for idealization and to maintain a beneficial sense of presence" (Lo and McKercher, 2015, p 105). This constant aim of presenting the desirable self contributes to how tourists "behave and structure their experiences" (Gretzel, 2019, n.p.). Furthermore, this creates desire for the tourist to be creative and to impress their audiences which results in more unsustainable tourist practices as tourist endanger themselves for the sake of a good photo which is a topic the interviewees mentioned for example

the dangers that arise when everyone is playing the same game of sitting on the edge of a cliff. I also know examples from Jökulsárlón[8] where people are going out on the icebergs and people are endangering themselves and then also Reynisfjara[9]

<div align="right">Fannar (M, 57)</div>

More interviewees described similar examples of tourists endangering themselves for the sake of the photo and furthermore, during the observation the tour guide said as we approached Reynisfjara "it's not woth it to take the perfect photo if no one will ever see it". That shows how problematized the tourist photo sharing is and the increasing desire for creative ways to impress the imagined audiences of tourist social media content. Thus, this has led to the hermeneutic circle to be challenged as people are finding new ways to impress their social media audiences while in the tourist places, they are visiting. Overtourism can intensify this problem and becomes more challenging for tourism workers and governments to handle.

4.2.3 The Travel Selfie

The year 2014 was named the year of the selfie after the selfie had taken over social media after the word had just been put in the dictionary the year before. The front camera of the smartphone brought the opportunity of the selfies beside the fact that social media profiles require the user's self-image (Gretzel 2017). In relation to Goffman's (1959) idea of the presentation of self, the Selfie has both been seen as a way to portray one's identity online and using it as a self-performance to alter one's identity. Tourist photography is a part of the presentation of self and plays a vital role in the online performance for social media users (Gretzel, 2017). With the growing interest of selfie photographing hotels even started to offer selfie sticks for tourists (Paris and Pietschnig, 2015).

it is a bit fun to watch how people are posing when they are taking photos [...] they are a bit … they are very selfie oriented

<div align="right">Hildur (F, 49)</div>

It is no surprise that people are selfie oriented like Hildur mentioned. We are used to seeing pictures of ourselves and we usually get more reaction online of pictures with people in them

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[8] Glacial lake in the south east of Iceland.
[9] Reynisfjara is a black sand beach on the south shore. It is known for its basalt formation but also one of the most dangerous destinations in Iceland due to powerful sneaky waves that sweep tourists out to sea. https://icelandmag.is/article/yet-again-travelers-grave-danger-reynisfjara-black-sand-beach

(Bakhshi, et.al., 2014). And as mentioned above people seek for these reactions online. As travel and communication keep on converging the selfie plays an important role in the mobile media culture (Paris and Pietschnig, 2015). On Instagram, selfies are the social norm as people use that platform to present their self visually as it focuses more on the visual compared to other social media platforms. In the first day of observation, a young woman from Indonesia living in Belgium said she mostly takes pictures of nature and selfies when she is travelling and keeps the best ones to share. Two older Australian ladies did not discuss selfies directly but said "somehow I like the photos better when we are also in them" which either requires them to take selfies or ask someone to take their photo which can be explained by the fact that we do react better to photos with people in them. The ladies explained that they felt this way because it makes it easier to relive the memory of the travel. As the photography freezes the moment and makes it a nostalgic and emotional memoir.

> people take photos or selfies and are constantly posting it on Instagram or Facebook
> which they were not doing if these mediums did not exist
>
> Fannar (M, 57)

"Studies on the hermeneutic circle of representation show, one of the motives behind why people post their travel accounts is 'been there and seen that'," (Kim and Stepchenkova, 2015, p 30) to have a prove that they have physically visited a particular place (Boley et. al., 2013). However, the travel selfie is not only a narcissistic portrait oneself but also a 'new form' of digital photography in tourism that "can be many different 'things' according to how they are assembled, made meaningful and performed in specific contexts" (Larsen, 2008: 143). Further, the travel selfie has been discussed as a representation of "intimate and personalized mediatization of the tourism experience, affording an added level of personal co-presence and sustained interaction over distance" (Paris and Pietschnig, 2015) and furthermore create an additional gaze, a selfie gaze which puts the destination as a background and requires the tourist to find creative visual ways of shareable selfie (Gretzel, 2019). Jenkins (2013) discusses how we only share media content that we value and also hope others will value. "Some of what is interesting to individuals may not be material they want to spread through their communities, and some media texts they spread may become more interesting because of their perceived social value" (Ibid. p 199). Therefore, tourists create social value for themselves when they present themselves by posting online, and moreover a personal value (Zhao and Lindley, 2014) as the reactions and comments on their posts give them value. Thus, people have the desire to continue sharing, adding meaning to the destination for future tourists to understand what is

worth to see and what practices should be performed. However, scholars have also discussed sharing and spreading media being free labor as companies make profit from the users' content (Fuchs, 2013). The third and last section will therefore focus on how tourists create value by sharing their travel experiences online.

4.3 Tourist Media Content Creating Economic Value

4.3.1 Users Generating Content for Tourism

> Many of those secret spots that you hear about just from knowing people have now started to spread out because of exactly that people take photos and say where they are, and other people follow the picture they have seen [on social media]
>
> Guðrún (F, 23)

The theme of user-generated content often came up in the interview as it is a big part of social media. As the web 2.0 has allowed audiences to be more participative and in fact moved towards making them both producers and consumers of the media and has sometimes been called prosumers by media scholars. That is referring to the fact that consumers are creating content out of the professional producer area (van Dijk, 2009). The switch in technology that as now created a more participative culture within media and allowed the users to have agency in the media content especially online. Jenkins (2006) discussed this transition on a positive note and argued that it gave a more direct power to the citizens while before the power had been within the media companies. Guðrún mentions the hidden places that are not so hidden anymore and mentions that social media plays a big role in revealing them to the tourists. She also further discussed how users geotag their photos on their social media which further leads to them appearing on navigation applications like google maps. Economics have also shown the participatory media culture interest. The interviewees discussed the marketing potential of social media in a positive way as most of almost all of them discussed the potential of good promotion of the country.

> The market doesn't control this because the internet is alive and free you know and there is just this one that says 'hey go to Reykjadalur'[10] and then when you arrive 200 other people are already there
>
> Hildur (F, 49)

By mentioning that the market does not control this and using words like 'alive' and 'free' she indicates that the power is with the users and therefore, the travelers that come to Iceland. Urry and Larsen (2011) mention this in their theory of the tourist gaze where they discuss how the media suggests what is worth to see when travelling. Therefore, it is the tourists who now have

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[10] Reykjadalur is a geothermal valley with a popular hiking trail and hot springs to bathe in

more power over where to visit and in shaping the tourist gaze through social media. Furthermore, new popular destinations in Iceland start to appear as more people start to take and share photos online from the places. The increasing connectivity the tourists have, and constant and immediate photo-sharing online have changed media users from, in the past being passive consumers and to nowadays making them more participatory in producing content which is shared and circulated on the internet (Jenkins et al., 2013). Average people are therefore able to create and produce their own media as amateurs through for example social media like Instagram. This has created a new social norm in the digital world as production has shifted from professionals to amateurs (Cayari, 2015). Therefore, tourists have gained more power in the production of media production related to tourism destination and like Hildur states is less in the hands of the marketing companies and now in the hands of the tourist. However, as these scholars view this on a more positive note Fuchs (2013) argues that desire to share and use social media and social and communicative needs is the user's main motivation, further, he argues that users are free labor workers for companies who profit from their production. While Jenkins (2013) does not approach this as a problem as long as the users like it, Fuchs (2013) argues that even though users do it for their pleasure users are not less exploited even though it might not feel like exploitation.

> You see like for example Kirkjufell[11] which was unknown about 5 years ago then some comes up with taking photos of the northern lights by Kirkjufell on Snæfellsnes and now everyone wants to go there to see the northern lights
>
> Bára (F, 64)

Like Bára describes social media has revealed new places like Kirkjufell in Snæfellsnes peninsula in west Iceland. The user-generated content created by tourists creates economic value for the tourism industry. One young female tourist mentioned during the observation that the reason for her coming to Iceland was "because of social media" and that "it's kind of a hip trendy place." Therefore, by seeing content on social media from others gives the idea of it being a place that is worth a visit. Another female tourist said by Gullfoss that she had seen a photo of the waterfall from an acquaintance on Facebook she mentioned that she does not use Facebook herself but saw the photo and decided that instead of being jealous of this person she decided to travel to Gullfoss herself. This jealousy she wants to escape, can be related to the concept of social media induced FOMO 'the-fear-of-missing-out which further increases the

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[11] Kirkjufell is a mountain on a peninsula in the western part of Iceland and is claimed to be the most photographed mountain in the country https://www.west.is/en/west/place/kirkjufell-mountain

desire to travel to places that are hip like one tourist mentioned or "bucket list items" like Inga (F, 30) described Iceland. Urry and Larsen (2011) discussed how there is the mediatized gaze which they explain as a site known for its mediated viewed nature. They say that these places are usually connected to the movie-induced tourism. However, according to what the informants mention above it can be argued that the mediatized gaze is also created by the tourist photo sharing online as they have more power than before in producing content for circulation. They further claim that tourist places are increasing due to how tourism has become 'massively mediatized'.

Bruns (2008) argues that consumers have now the ability to be more selective in their consumption as they have gained more access to media production and therefore tourists have gained more power in selecting the products they need. Arnar (M, 57) states that in his experience connectivity to the internet and social media tourist are more independent in their travels as they can collect information, they consider important for their trip and also contribute to the circulation by sharing photos. As Bára states above and interviewees agree with her, for example, Drífa (F, 61) said that people who use social media are influenced by that in their travel behavior. Because social media has created an internet platform where tourists can share their information with new potential tourists to the destination (Munar, 2011). Therefore user-generated content will impact the tourists as well as the tourism industry as it for example creates attraction to new places like Bára describes. Furthermore, like mentioned earlier can actuate overtourism which Iceland has been experiencing and trying to solve in a way without impacting the revenue the tourism industry provides to the country (Goodwin, 2017) to create a more sustainable way of traveling and make the industry more enjoyable for tourists, tourism workers and locals.

4.3.2 Popular culture products and tourism

Tourist interprets the destinations from different texts which will influence their action on destination. However, every individual interprets the place in their own way and therefore acts in their own way (Falkheimer and Jansson, 2006; Hall, 1996). Marketing brochures and other marketing material that has the intention of creating an image of the destination are not necessarily the texts the tourist views as the most trustworthy. Popular culture has for long influenced tourism in multiple ways. The media product that he tourist normally views as trustworthy is rather media that has not been produced with the tourist in mind. Films, TV shows, music videos are examples of media products that influence tourist behavior (Månsson,

2015). Every interviewee in this thesis mentioned something related to these media products that were in their experience influencing the tourists in Iceland.

> Definitely, Justin fucking Bieber came to Iceland and walked around on some plane wreck[12] that has been there since 1970 [...] So I can definitely tell you that there is a huge amount of people that follow him and Shahrukh Khan [...] biggest Bollywood star in the world and the highest paid actor in the world is Shahrukh Khan and he came to Iceland [...] and now there is a huge amount of Indian tourist coming to Iceland [...] before no one wanted to go to this airplane wreck, there is nothing interesting about it [...] until someone started filming music videos there.
>
> Erna (F, 36)

Erna discusses the influence of these celebrities coming to Iceland and filming their music videos. Interviewees saw this influence in general in a more positive way and that this had a good influence on the promotion of the country. However, Erna says this in a rather negative way even though she views it as a big factor in drawing tourists to the country. Hildur (F, 49) also mentions Justin Bieber and says that the parking lot that was specially made for tourist going to the airplane wreck is often called "the Justin Bieber parking lot." Fannar (M, 57) also discusses Justin Bieber and also mentions Game of Thrones which has filmed a part of their series in Iceland. Maria Månsson (2015) mentioned that some places are overshadowed by the media products related to them which therefore creates a changed meaning for the place. Like Erna describes the airplane wreck was not important before the celebrities shot their videos there and that its history has now disappeared and is taken over by the history of celebrities shooting their music videos there and creates the desire to visit the place moreover, constructs the meaning of the place.

> Because of Game of Thrones, there are people that come and want to go to places where Game of Thrones was filmed and some other films or where Justin Bieber sat in some music video
>
> Fannar (M, 57)

Game of Thrones has also played a vital role in increasing tourism in Iceland. Fannar says it is one of the reasons why some people travel to Iceland and also where they travel. Fannar also mentions Justin Bieber like previous interviewees which shows the influence the singer has had on tourists in Iceland as some of the places he filmed the music video have grown into becoming some of the popular tourist places. Like Sontag (1977) discussed people seek to

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[12] Abandoned US navy plane wreckage since 1973 which has become a popular tourist destination. https://guidetoiceland.is/travel-iceland/drive/solheimasandur

photograph the "I-have-been" and further other studies showing that tourist use images as a prove of being in a specific location. Therefore, tourists follow the popular culture media products to recreate their photos in these locations and prove that they have been there by photographing it and sharing online which then both contributes to their presentation of self and the representation of the destination.

> Justin Bieber has had so much effect on the tourism in Iceland, he was just a one big commercial for the country as a destination and tourist keep coming here to take pictures of them in the places where he did the video and I think it shows the best in the Fjarðarárgljúfur canyon which has been closed now for the public because so many people have followed his footsteps. I have heard someone call this wave the Justin Bieber effect
>
> Jóel (M, 31)

Jóel keeps on mentioning Justin Bieber like the others and discusses the marketing influence the pop star has had on tourism in Iceland. This creates economic value for the largest industry in the country. Even though people do not necessarily go to the same destinations directly because of popular culture influence they have created a path for these places. Since Justin Bieber went to the Fjarðarárgljúfur canyon and since then pictures have started circulating online. People have posted them on social media, travel blogs which then creates the desire for other people even though they are coming for the purpose of following Justin Bieber. However, this is no coincidence as the Economic affairs and trade committee of Iceland have put their effort in getting production companies by offering a refund of film and TV production costs incurred in the country as they see it as profit for tourism (Iðnaðar- og velferðarráðuneytið, 2015). This has then led to increased tourism in these areas where films, tv shows and music videos have been filmed. This shows in the experiences of the interviewees in this thesis project. Their experience is that it influences the number of tourists coming to the country and their behavior on destination.

As boundaries between media products and tourist agency become more unclear it is impacting the tourism places. Popular culture often creates new popular places just like discussed in the chapter on user-generated content and when that happens the places are often not fixed in time.

> …then you can see the consequences because like in Fjarðarárgljúfur where the vegetation is ruined out on the mesa where Justin Bieber walked on where people follow his steps even and this places and other tourist places have now been closed due to tourist intrusion
>
> Jóel (M, 31)

This can be linked to one of the five problems caused by overtourism the world tourist and tourism council mentions about overtourism causing infrastructure problems. Media products like popular culture also create an understanding of the place which then further creates cues on what kind of performances should be performed at the destination (Månsson, 2015). However, media products like the ones from films, TV shows or music videos are not the only products that create an understanding of a place or produces economic value. There is a range of media products that as mentioned before media users have now gained more power over "their own selections of multiple media products concurrently and make their own links between various products, regardless of producer identity, which is then independently decoded" (ibid, p 71). Hildur discussed this in relation to images online of the volcano eruption in 2011 impacted the industry substantially and even though travelers do not relate to this volcano as much anymore to their travels the tourism boom has often originally been related to this eruption. Therefore, as the time passes the reasons for visiting destinations change due to circulating media products online. As mentioned earlier tourist have the tendency of reproducing photos they have already seen, therefore tourists initially might go to places to follow a film location for movies, TV shows or music videos. However, when more media products start to circulate of the place the meaning of the place changes from being merely because of film location to become a place people gaze upon like Larsen and Urry (2011) discuss when they discuss their idea of the mediatized gaze.

4. Conclusion

This thesis has examined the mediatized tourism practices and the tensions that have emerged with growing media use as media and tourism intertwine with a focus on mobile social media in the context of Iceland. This study used interviews with tour guides and participant observation during day tours on the south coast of Iceland. These methods complemented each other to get a prosperous narrative to understand mediatized tourism practices. The thesis has shown how the technology evolvement of the smartphone has played as a vehicle for mediatized tourism practices as social media has become mobile. Due to the increasing mobile media, tour guides had a negative undertone to the increasing use of mobile media as it was an attention thief that interrupts or even neglects the physical experience of the country.

Furthermore, this evolvement has led to more spontaneous and mundane photographing practices where mobile social media plays like a new remedy of sharing photos, which supports the suggestion of visual turn in society. Furthermore, sharing practices on social media have led to an increasing need for the prove of 'being there' and presentation of the tourist self which has further generated new mediatized tourist practices. In addition, this thesis showed how the sharing practices have led to tourists generating content and creating economic value and act as digital labor for the tourism industry. Furthermore, how popular culture influences other media products like the ones made by tourists in triggering the mediatized gaze. Moreover, how these changing practices have played a role in increasing tourism into becoming overtourism which followed by unsustainable practices and challenges for the tourism industry. The concluding chapter of this thesis, the findings will be discussed in detail in relation to the research questions.

As mobile media has become increasingly intertwined in our everyday life, tourism is no exception. The mobile media has become an essential factor in tourist practices. Looking back on the empirical data of this study, the interviewees expressed the impact of mobile media on the tourism industry in Iceland. As they expressed, the smartphone has become a device the tourists use in multiple ways for their travel. It is an information source, their camera and communication tool; therefore, tourists have more access to information during their travels as connectivity has increased rapidly. The tour guides interviewed expressed that in their experience the increasing use of the mobile media during travel interrupts the experience in a way that tourists gaze is through the screen of the smartphone which focuses more on the visual

as modern society tends to have an emphasis on visualization (Urry and Larsen). The interviewees expressed that the constant focus on the individuals can neglect the experience of other senses and of just 'being there'. As connectivity increases, while traveling, the boundaries between home life and travel are blurring, which influences the tourist while traveling. As they gaze on the screen, they are present both in the physical destination they are at and virtual sphere on their phone, which creates a state of 'absent presence' (Tan, 2016). According to the interviewees, this seemed to create a tension between the tourist and the tour guides as the tour guides mentioned that this is a matter, they have to mention on tours that 'being there' is also essential. The connectivity has said to decrease the feeling of escape that tourism used to be about and therefore like the interviewees mentioned is in some way filtering the experience. Meaning they have to remind them also to use their other senses while traveling. Further, it should not all be about experiencing through photos. As Urry and Larsen (2011) discussed the practices are what the gaze is dependable on, thus, this study has given empirical evidence that in the experience of tourism workers the practices are what creates the tourist gaze. However, it works vice versa, the tourism practices are also dependent on the gaze.

Consequently, due to the increasing use of smartphones and the visual emphasis in society photographing is becoming more mundane and spontaneous due to digitization from the analog photography where more thought had to be put into what should be photographed and what not. Photography has always been a big part of the tourist practices, but as the interviewees explained, they have now the ability to take more photos. Furthermore, this has led to, as the interviewees explained, that people are taking more photos than before as they can use spare time for example on the bus during tours, as tourists were during the tours that were observed in this study, to go through the photos they have taken. The visual power drives these photographing practices in modern society in the western world (Urry and Larsen, 2011). As photographing has been embedded in our everyday life, so has photo sharing, which has shifted from being in face to face interaction to be through social media. Furthermore, media is now extending the human interaction through time and space and partly taking over the face to face practices of sharing travel photos (Schulz, 2004) as tourists are due to connectivity able to share their experiences in real time online. The interviewees expressed how photographing has turned to be about sharing online more than for memories.

Mobile social media has created this desire for sharing as social media sites are designed to make users engage or even addicted which further, makes society expect immediate share their

tourist experiences during their travels (Gretzel, 2019) which is said can cause tension when traveling when there is no internet connection. Interviewees discussed how the internet connection is often a subject of complaints from tourists; however, without it, they have more time to be there and use the other senses apart from the vision. As the web 2.0 has become more participatory tourists have more persuasive power as they inspire other future tourists to visit the destination as tourist generated content is considered more trustworthy than professional advertising media material. This media content the tourists share online contribute to the meaning of place as it creates expectations as well as it constructs what practices are expected of the tourist on destination. This is created by the mediatized gaze Urry and Larsson (2011) discussed; however, they discussed this mostly concerning popular culture media products such as films. Even though such products play an essential role as well in Iceland, the circulating photos online seem also to be playing as essential role in constructing places through the mediatized gaze. According to Jansson's (2002) of the three scapes of mediatization in tourism the socioscape is where spaces become places through interaction, however, as the interaction is increasingly becoming mediatized the socioscape of tourist places are therefore partly constructed in the mediascape. Tourists have for long been viewed as passive photographers who seek to recreate photos they have seen before, which has been called hermeneutic circle (Urry and Larsson, 2011). This study shows that they are not only passive as photo sharing online has challenged that view and made tourists more active and creative, and they have more power in the construction of destination than before, which can cause problems.

As a consequence of the persuasive power, social media has led to people to share more of their experiences online. As sharing increases, the desire for traveling follows in the increase as it gives the intention that this is a place worth seeing as they become a 'bucketlist item' as Inga (F, 30) mentioned in the interviews. Furthermore, this can create a so-called FOMO for future tourist (Gretzel, 2019) as they try to escape the feeling of jealousy of other tourists that have been before like this one tourist said during the observation and that sharing photos online is, in fact, the prove of being there (Sontag, 1977). Tourists, therefore, begin their travel at home by looking through images online and like Urry (1995) discussed that people are therefore tourists most of the time. However, the increasing production and consumption of tourist media products follow a problem as tourism follows this increase, and tourists become too many for the destination to handle. Social media encourages the mass tourism to go to the same places and creates crowded places and as interviewees said that social media users frame

photos to make them look like no one is there which further creates expectations to future tourists. As the mass tourism crowds to a destination to capture photos of worthy destinations, social media has also created an increasing desire to present the self through images online in new and creative ways. Therefore, the hermeneutic circle is challenged in a way as tourists find new ways of reproducing photos they have seen before in new creative ways (Gretzel, 2019). This can result in tourists endangering themselves by ignoring signs and fences on destination, to capture the ideal photo for the socially desirable self they hope to present online. Not only are they endangering themselves but also influences fragile vegetation at destination. On social media, tourists get recognition with reactions on the social media post that can enhance the tourist experience if the reactions are positive, like Fannar (M, 57) discussed that in his experience the tourists seek for the reactions online and other interviewees also expressed this.

As mentioned in the introduction, tourism is Iceland's most significant export creating revenue for the country. With participatory and spreadable media in the age of social media, tourists are now creating economic value for the tourism industry, and therefore, what scholars call digital labor (Fuchs, 2014). Popular culture also plays a similar role where tourists want to visit film locations and as mentioned above, take pictures to prove that they have been there, which contributes to the meaning of place. The meaning-making of place can come through popular culture, but those meanings are either maintained or changed through the user-generated content the tourists produce from these locations. However, as the interviewees indicated, this makes the marketing companies, in this case, the tourism agencies, lose control over their destination, which further can result in overtourism. Moreover, overtourism can result in infrastructure problems like the interviewee mentioned and fragile nature, amongst other problems that governments have to handle and even influence the tourist experience.

5.1 Concluding reflections

As an in-depth case study of the example of mediatized tourism practices in the case of Iceland has given insight into the tourist practices surrounding mobile social media from the viewpoint of tour guides. Moreover, it has illustrated how tourists are not only stuck in the hermeneutic circle of representation as many scholars have suggested (Urry and Larson, 2011) but are also creative producers of media products for other tourists which constructs what is worth seeing and further what practices should be performed at destination. Furthermore, it has shown that the smartphone has been a vehicle to make the tourism practice more mediatized causing social change in these practices to the extent that it is not only providing the tourism industry with

economic value. Moreover, it has played a role in causing overtourism in places that are not fixed in time to receive the mass tourism causing the vegetation in many places to destruct. This is challenging for the government to find new ways to solve the problem without decreasing the industry, which is essential for the economy of the country. However, it is essential to address that the media is not the only factor in society that causes overtourism however, this study has shown that mediatized tourist practices play a role in this phenomenon. This study has shown what, for example, Hjarvard (2008) argues that mediatization is throughout modern society and therefore as tourism is a part of our society, the consequences of mediatization on tourism should be discussed as the use of media is expected to keep growing which will continue to impact the industry of tourism.

Iceland is a wealthy western country which might affect the results of this study as they should have the resources to solve such problems. Therefore, going forward with this study it would be interesting to study how the mediatized tourist practices can impacting non-western countries that might not have as good resources. Also, the theory of the tourist gaze has been studied quite a lot in the western world but very little has been studied in non-western societies. Moreover, doing in-depth interviews with the tourists themselves could give a deeper understanding of these practices and how they can impact the tourist experiences on destination. To conclude, this study adds to the field of intertwining field of media and tourism, specifically in terms of mobile social media, and the increasing interest in this interdisciplinary field. This was done by investigating one example, and the continuing media processes the destination of Iceland is a part of.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interviewees

Arnar - Male, 57 years old, has been working as a tour guide for almost 20 years. Interviewed with H. M. Pálsdóttir 4/3/2019

Bára - Female, 64 years old, worked as a tour guide during summers since 2002 but has been working full time as a tour guide for over 2 years. Interviewed with H. M. Pálsdóttir 8/3/2019

Drífa - Female, 61 years old, has been working as a tour guide unofficially for over 30 years as a freelancing tour guide. Interviewed with H. M. Pálsdóttir 8/3/2019

Erna - Female, 36 years old, has been working as a tour guide for 11 years. Interviewed with H. M. Pálsdóttir 10/3/2019

Fannar - Male, around 57 years old, has been working as a tour guide for almost 5 years. Interviewed with H. M. Pálsdóttir 10/3/2019

Guðrún - Female, 23 years old, has been working as a rafting and mountain tour guide for about 3 years. Interviewed with H. M. Pálsdóttir 11/3/2019

Hildur - Female, 49 years old, finished tour guide school 25 years ago and has been working full time as a guide for 3 years. Interviewed with H. M. Pálsdóttir 12/3/2019

Inga - Female, 30 years old, has been working for 3 years as a tour guide. Interviewed with H. M. Pálsdóttir 12/3/2019

Jóel - Male, 31 years old, has been working as a tour guide for about 5 years. Interviewed with H. M. Pálsdóttir 13/3/2019

Appendix 2 – Consent form

Participants were informed orally on the purpose of the study, but the below consent form was given to them to get a consent and inform them on that participation was voluntary and confidential.

Form of Consent
Lund University, Department of communication and media
Researcher: Hrefna María Pálsdóttir

I confirm that that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and the researcher has answered any questions about the study to my satisfaction.
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason and without any consequences.
I understand that I can withdraw my data from the study at any time.
I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
I consent to use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving.
I consent that audio is being recorded as part of the project
I agree to take part in the above study:

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix 3 - Interview guide

<u>Backgound</u>
5. How long have you been working as a tour guide?
6. What kind of tours have you mostly been doing?
    a. Freelance? Tour operator?

Social media and the tourism industry
7. How would you describe the connection between social media and tourism?
    a. Any special platforms more or less?
8. How do you think social media can be useful for the tour guides?
    a. Good or bad?
9. What do you see negative in the increasing use of social media in tourism?
10. What would you say is the positive side of it?
11. How do you feel like the industry is adapting to this change?
12. Do you feel social media has influenced the role of the tour guide in any way?
    a. Positive or negative?
13. How do you see the connection between social media and the tourism industry will be in the future?

Influence
14. How do you think social media influences how tourists view the places they visit?
15. do you notice tourists wanting to visit places outside of the mainstream places?
16. Do you think any places are more photogenic than others?
    a. Why?
    b. Why not?
    c. What makes them photogenic?
17. how do you think celebrities can influence tourism in Iceland?
    a. Positive?
    b. Negative?

Expectations
18. Do you feel that tourists have any expectations towards the country when they come?
    a. What kind of expectations?
    b. Where do they get the expectations from?
    c. Any examples you remember?
19. Do think people are ever surprised because of how many tourists are here?
    a. Why?

Changing the tourist role
20. Do you feel like tourists have knowledge about the destinations before they come?
    a. What kind of knowledge?
    b. Where do they get the knowledge?
21. What do you think are the main reasons for people visiting the country?
    a. What do they tell you is their reason?
    b. Any examples you remember?

22. How do you think social media is affecting the role of the tourist in Iceland?
    a. Positive?
    b. Negative?
23. How do you think smart phones have change the tourist environment?
    a. Change in their practices?
24. Have you noticed people endangering themselves when they are taking photos?
25. Anything you want to add?

Appendix 4 – Translated interview transcript example

H: How long have you been working as a tour guide?

I: For about 3 years

H: And what kind of trips are you mostly doing?

I: I have mostly been doing glacier hikes and ice climbing and also been driver guiding and then done south coast trips where there are almost always glacier hikes included but I'm then driving and going to the waterfalls and just all kinds of day trips. Uhmm yeah, I was doing that now for about 2-3 years and am now switching to kayak and stand up paddle boards

H: How would you describe the connection between social media and tourism?

I: I think it is just very important and I see it actually .. there is of course a really big market and a lot of people that only see trips here through social media and also a lot of people, almost everyone that do the trips that I have been guiding that are sharing everything that they are doing on social media so I think that today this is just an essential factor for a big part of the tourists that are coming to Iceland, they are doing this to share with others.

H: Do you think any social media platforms have more impact than others?

I: I think, I feel like Instagram is growing very fast .. and Facebook, I would say it is mostly Facebook and Instagram, I think that people talked about that snapchat was something here but I don't necessarily have much to do with the tourist, they rather want to share this where it stays alive but not where it disappears again so I think that for photos and stuff that Instagram actually is the platform.

H: How do you think social media can be useful for the tour guides themselves?

I: Yeah I think it can definitely be useful, I have used it a lot myself, both to share on the company's social media I was working for and also just my personal social media and then you use the hashtags to get people to grab it and there are a bunch of people who go on Instagram just to get inspiration and then just send message and ask hey where were you and where can I do this and something like this so definitely useful

H: What do you see negative in the increasing use of social media in tourism?

I: hmmm there is not really anything special that comes to my mind that is negative, it is a bit special and you can see it a little bit.. I think it's steeling the attention from people a lot but then again some people maybe just want to experience the places through their phones but I have often experienced while guiding and giving advices and especially when I'm taking people up on the glacier then people have to pay attention and listen while I go through the security measures and stuff like that but some people are just lost in their phones taking videos and are maybe not paying full attention to these important information and also just other information like interesting facts that I have been sharing and I have been asked to stop talking and asked to take a photo instead, I mean it's not very common but it has for real happened and more often than once so I can feel for some parts that people are not able to connect to the nature and this experience that I would want to share with the tourist but on the other hand this people might maybe not have interest in doing that so negative or not this is what I have noticed. And also when we are driving in buses and I have been driving in all kinds of weather conditions of course and people find that very interesting when we are driving blinding snowstorm and people stand up from their seats to come next to me to capture the weather out of the window on photo or video you know so there are all kinds of factors that I feel are taking over on unfortunate times but otherwise I don't really know what is negative

H: Okay can you name anything else that is positive about this?

I: Yes, there is of course the benefit of this is that this brings these places forward and attract and people maybe, this is of course a bit funny I sometimes have a big group of people and there are a lot of people on the glacier and it doesn't really give up a realistic image of how the trip is or how the places here are when people are cropping their photos and pretend they are alone and jumping over fences to take some nice picture that is of course less positive but what is positive about it is like I say that this attracts maybe people to new places and new viewpoint and people often see a picture and maybe say wow I want a picture like this of me and you know instead of photoshopping you can just go to the place and get a similar picture or yes so I think that this is just a more fun way to look into places to be able to see photos that say more than 1000 words rather than reading text even though that works well together but yeah it is very positive and I see this more as a positive evolvement rather than the other way around.

H: How do you feel like the industry is adapting to this change?

I: I would say that they are adapting quite well and I would say that it has become more common now, there is of course still market for good photographers and to make drone videos and stuff like that that are not necessarily for anyone to do but to keep the social media active and post content every day and to keep the audiences attentions it is not that hard to post daily content and have a lively sites and lively social media for the company because everyone can share and it is not difficult for the tour guide to take a lot of pictures on each trip that is.. yeah like I say to keep it lively because people have such a short attention span these

days that it doesn't really work to just post one picture and wait a month to post another one. There has to be some movement In this and I mean Instagram everyone can do it, it only takes a few seconds.

H: Do you feel social media has influenced the role of the tour guide in any way?

I: Yes I haven't been working as a tour guide for that long as a full time job but I have been taking groups to Iceland for like 10 years and like before this was like this I feel like people can really appreciate that I take a lot of picture both for them on their phones and also that I take pictures myself and post on the site of the company and tag them. They think that is interesting to get their 5 minutes of fame so yeah... [laugh]

H: How do you see the connection between social media and the tourism industry will be in the future?

I: I think this is just becoming more and more like you can just see that you are able to book trips on Instagram and that you can book trips on those social media platforms not necessarily have to go and find some brochure in some gas station and book through there, I think this will just become more electronic bookings. I do love the brochures and booking offices and that kind of stuff so I hope that it doesn't disappear completely of the market but I think that there are a lot of possibilities and also just because these social media sites are always evolving and always appearing more and more possibilities within these apps to do more than just share a photo, you have a chat, you can book, you can send a person on another website in one breath to book and you can always do this faster and faster

H: How do you think social media influences how tourists view the places they visit?

I: yeah uhmm… you can really see it that it is a bit sad maybe that I mentioned before how much people view the places through their phones. And I have of course many times done for example the golden circle and stuff and it is known that people stand for hours at Geysir and maybe never see it blow because they are always just staring at the screen and I think it's a bit weird, they are maybe not able to do both and of course maybe capture it once or twice but then you also have to put your phone in your pocket and just try to take a deep breath and look around you and take it in a little bit

H: do you notice tourists wanting to visit places outside of the mainstream places?

I: That is the thing, there are a lot of people that want to go to these 'Eiffel towers' we have, these basic places and want their own pictures of those places and a photo of them by this and this waterfall but then everyone or at least a lot of people are looking for those hidden gems and there are of course pros and cons about that because there are not a lot of hidden gems left in some places especially in the south part of the country there are no.. I mean secret waterfall everyone knows what waterfall that is and also secret lagoon is no secret anymore because now everyone is going to those hidden places so there is a lot of all kinds of

people everywhere there soo I'm just hoping a bit that with time and this is maybe happening slowly that some other places are getting attention a little bit further from the capital area but I still hope that they won't all be recognized because I also want to keep this Icelandic and keep those untouched places that aren't covered in mud and footsteps and trash and all those things that often come with those off the beaten track places where there is no service.

H: Do you think any places are more photogenic than others?

I: yeah yeah yeah there is actually … do you want examples or [laughs]… yeah of course there are places that .. and I see it myself just because I take a lot of pictures myself so it is maybe in my opinion a bit good that there are always places that you just can't properly capture on a photo you look somewhere and you think it's beautiful but then you take a picture and just think like wait uhh okay this is maybe not as cool here on my phone but I think it's just a little bit cosy to know that then people actually have to come there to see it but then there are also all kinds tricks that I use when I'm guiding telling them to go there and there and bend a little bit there and show them or just take the picture for them to make it look better or to get a better viewpoint but you learn all kinds of ticks like that to make it look better but I think that with stuff like the northern lights they are a perfect example about something that you know you will never capture on photo like it is in real life so it is a bit nice that you can't like mimic it at home in your living room like being at the place.

H: Do you feel that tourists have any expectations towards the country when they come?

I: oh yes a lot and I thing that the pros and cons of manipulations of photos for example people don't notice and some people are really good in changing the contrast and this and that and high definition and some filters and stuff that make things look totally different than in reality, if you take a picture with you know higher aperture and you know I don't even know what I'm saying .. all kinds of tricks to make things look a certain ways, waterfalls for example are a good example for this because you can't really capture it well on photo but when that picture is taken on a slower time then it looks great and the northern lights also again a perfect example about this because you change the light condition to make them like bright green and huge and then people see them just think like uhh wait is that?? It's not like the picture and you know the water in the blue lagoon is more blue and all kinds of stuff so yeah also just the weather in Iceland you know is something that changes the tourist experience a lot and you can somehow never really capture that on photo you know the experience of a snowfall or something so yeah I have seen people both being pleasantly surprised and also unpleasantly surprised so yeah disappointed and stuff.

H: how do you think celebrities can influence tourism in Iceland?

I: I mean people love this and I could quickly feel when I started guiding all kinds of facts about stratum and the nature and how… there is a very small group of those costumers that I have gotten that really are interested in those interesting things, people seem to come here more to only see some places but not necessarily to learn about them and everything that you can just read on google or that is just something people just google if they want to and I saw for example I was guiding a lot on a glacier where game of thrones was filmed and where interstellar was filmed and people didn't care at all how old the glacier was or how many years it had left until it would completely melt or something like that which I think is very fun to know but when I pointed out where the spaceship in interstellar exploded that's when people literally screamed and everyone wanted a to get a picture because that is not necessarily something you can find information about on the internet not where exactly on the glacier so that was … so yeah there are a lot of people that travel to Iceland because they heard about it in movies or tv shows and I recently heard numbers about that and it's up to 40% of young people that come here are inspired of movies and episodes and stuff so that is huge. So quickly my trips started this started to take bigger and bigger part in my trips to explain the places, if we went to the places that appeared in Justin Bieber's music video or the Bollywood movie they thought that was super interesting even though they hadn't even seen some of this, it is somehow like some places earn some extra respect or like rock points.

H: Do you think this is positive or negative?

I: I can't see anything negative about it, I don't know how this goes when they are filming these things but I think this is just a good promotion of the country as for now but I think I don't see that this is taking over or that people are endangering themselves by mimicking some stunt scenes I think this is just a really good promotion and that people are coming here for the right reasons and I also think that something that having interest in movies and see something beautiful and want to travel to that country that then you are coming here with the mindset to enjoy the nature but not to stay here and do some scandal or ruining the places or to throw trash, I'm hoping that we are attracting the ideal traveller to the country and that is a bit the group that is coming rather than promoting the country as a party country or you know a place where women are naked in the nature like it was some years ago so you know I think this is a great promotion

H: Do you feel like tourists have knowledge about the destinations before they come?

I: Yes and no I thing now because directions have become so accurate that you can see pictures of each destination in the booking process that you almost can't avoid to just reading the name but also see pictures and video of all these places so this is not a complete surprise when they come to the trip, they know what they signed up for and what they are about to see but there are more like the things we talked about before that feeling that experience of being there feel spray of the waterfall fall on you that is an addition but people usually know what exactly what they are about to see and why they chose that place and not the other one and I think yes they have become very conscious.

H: What do you think are the main reasons for people visiting the country?

I: I think that now recently is this just some bucketlist item that people have just heard about this or like I said seen in movies or just known someone that came to Iceland and someone told them you just have to go there and see this and there is a lot of that people I get that tell that story that everyone is going to Iceland and I also want to come before everyone has already been here and this is just trending you know. Also there is of course no one coming here because of the weather or at least very few people but I think Iceland is even though we have become a very commercialised country you don't have to far out of Reykjavík to get to almost untouched nature and we have become such an accessible destination that it is for people that are coming for large cities which is the largest group of my costumers, people coming from the US or Europe that live in large cities or where there is just no nature to take a relatively short flight to country like Iceland that is on their scale just a complete wilderness yeah I think the nature is their biggest attraction at least those who stay for some time but then again we also have a lot of people that just stop here on the way somewhere else and use this as a stopover and go to the blue lagoon but yes I think this is just a little bit trending now

H: more to see stuff then for example experiencing culture for example then?

I: yes I think so even though it's sad, I have been working a bit in skaftafell which is like 5 hours from the capital and often when I was getting groups I introduced myself hand say Hi and my name and tell them I'm Icelandic and people then often ask me a lot of personal questions and ask me about my life and stuff like that and too often in my opinion people said that I was the only Icelander that they had had the opportunity to talk to since they came to the country and then it's just like people are just led forward when they come to the hotel where there is a foreign person working and then the tours are maybe not the opportunity for them to meet Icelanders or get to know Icelandic daily life and you know then they go to gas stations on the way somewhere to the country side and there are no Icelanders either so I think that people are much more coming here to experience the nature and see that instead of the emphasis being on seeing how it is being an Icelander which is sad but maybe that's also just in that place I have been in because I have been so much in the south area of the country where the mass tourism is which is the main group of tourists but the other also exists but that seems to just be the minority that have more interest in diving into how it is to be an Icelander but I think most people have some interest in both.

H: How do you think social media is affecting the role of the tourist in Iceland?

I: I think of course it changes behaviour a lot if you imagine someone viewing a place with empty hands and someone that is going to experience it through their phone or to share it with others, when you see people that come to some place to just experience then they usually stand more and enjoy and look around but you are a bit inhibited of course when you are experiencing the places through your phone and then you are also

maybe going into a different mindset, you are more looking into what looks cool and from what viewpoint do I need to bend here or stretch to this direction or the other and of course this takes a lot from the experience because I see that some people have a certain picture in their mind whether you, yes and think about being sure that there is no one in the background and this is a full time job to get a good picture so yes, I'm pretty sure that this changes a little bit their behaviour in these places because and I think people would yes I think that people would take much more time to internalize what is happening rather than when in emphasis is on capturing it on photo or making it look right

H: Do think people are ever disappointed because of how many tourists are here?

I: yes people are often very surprised which is also a bit funny but of course it is possible to 'blame' it on social media, there is nothing cool about standing in the back of a large group of people and take a picture nobody wants to see that, no one is coming to see all kinds of colourful jackets you know that's everywhere, everyone just want to be alone in these places but of course 2 million people are not going to be alone anywhere but I think thought that people can appreciate that, I mean there is no place that comes to my mind quickly where you can never get that moment where you can just turn around a little away from the crowd or just close your eyes and take a deep breath and take in the sounds and the experience but yes of course people seem to be just like wow I did not expect it like this but if it the world will ever be that social media or photos will give the correct image of how things are I don't think that will necessarily ever happen, people and the companies of course don't want to show that either, everyone is using phrases like mini bus or small private groups and stuff like that and you maybe have 8 people in the car but then you go to a place where 300 other people are on a small parking spot or a small pathway than there is nothing small and personal about it so it really doesn't matter if you come in a big bus or small everyone is going to meet on the same place at the same time.

H: How do you think smart phones have change the tourist environment?

I: well you don't see people using cameras a lot anymore now the phones are of course just the thing people use and I can just look at myself also that you know this is.. I see it a lot in the day trips when you are the whole day with the same group that people are always on their phones and they use their time between places to put filters on and work on their photos and post them right away so this takes the whole day you are somehow never completely free from this in those trips and not only in those trips because then people go to coffee houses and keeps on sharing all of their photos, I do it myself also when I'm travelling I don't just take a few photos and then comes home and a month later goes and shows people where I've been so this is a big time thief so this is yes just like through everything, so I don't believe anything else than this has changed something

H: Have you noticed people endangering themselves when they are taking photos?

I: oh yes almost every day. I learned it quickly that when I have a group myself I just have to preach to them and point out the signs and explain that there is a reason why there are signs and fences and that it's not there just so you won't get a good photo of the place but to protect the nature for one part and also to keep people safe but yes then I had also started saying that they will see people that won't follow the signs and fences but please don't be one of them that there is a reason for this but when you go to those places it is very difficult, you can maybe try to control your own group that booked a trip with you but then again you are maybe the only tour guide in a place where there is a lot of tourists that are there on their own hand just ignore this and jump over fences to get a photo like they see on Instagram or do Justin Bieber's pose by the Dyrhólaey lighthouse where he went out of the place you are allowed to be and it's hard to deal with this and I actually thing just a bit impossible and that is maybe a bit yeah negative about those music videos and movies and that kind of stuff that they are not giving the correct image of how it really looks like when you come as a tourist to these places… it is unbelievable though how few accidents there have been, I think it's unbelievable not to justify that people keep on doing this but I think it's really hard to deal with this and I would rather want to keep this like this even though there are some fools each day that go over the fence rather than putting up bigger fences or make people pay to get to those places to have security or something, I think we just have to put more emphasis on informing people that come to the country that when you come you are your own responsibility and you know as soon as they start to putting too much security in this, to close this off to much then you are also decreasing the view and ruining for the majority of people that follow those rules but of course it is annoying to not allow them to do the same as what the other tourists are doing

I think people often get away with being fools but the accident that happen to people even though they don't happen as often as you would think then they still happen and they are very serious and people die yearly here in Iceland but that's maybe nothing something that reaches the tourists it's more in local news both when people are showing wreck less behavior but also when tourist companies don't follow rules and are wreckless that's just something that goes to the local newspaper in Iceland and has disappeared the day after so I also think it's difficult for the tourist to realize both the danger of the nature and also to make sure that the company that they are travelling with is a company that shows responsibility or people that are going to be nice to their customers and allow them to do something that is not allowed so it's also something like that you can see when you are in those places every day that it's not good to say I booked a trip and my guide allowed me to over the fence or allowed me because we were getting this and that, that's a little bad

It's a super nice picture to stand alone in an empty road but I can't even count I have seen people do it and there was a period where cars were stopping on a one-lane bridges on the main road which is really dangerous you know but a really cool picture but then I ask myself is it worth it to endanger not only yourself but also others then people can just photoshop if they want that kind of picture

[discuss the dangerous sneaky waves in the black sand beach Reynisfjara]

I've started to use all kinds of phrases to make this fun though not only just some kind of a fear propaganda, then also just I often just said to my people that if they want this kind of a photo the smartphones all so good today that they all come with a zoom so it's possible to use all kinds of tricks to make it look like you are closer to the destinations then to penetrate in the front or jump over or go right in the root of the wave, you don't have to be there it's not really cool

Appendix 5 – Field notes example

Observation – south shore

There is free wifi on this bus.

Two elderly couple sitting behind me have been on their phone since the tour started.

The guide says that it doesn't make sense to walk behind one waterfall that would most likle be closed that day just for a photo if you will get hurt.

The man in front of me is taking a lot of photos of the landscape

The guy next to me is looking at facebook and pictures online of iceland while we drive on the bus.

One girl is sending pictures of her iceland trip on whatsapp and scrolling through instagram

As we drive past one of the waterfall the guide has already mentioned that we will stop by on the way back people get very excited and have already forgotten or were not listening to the schedule for the day. Almost every single one of the tourists sitting on the left side of the bus take up their camera to take a photo through the window and get mad as the bus passes the intersection to the waterfall. The guide sound a little bit annoyed and goes through the plan again.

After the stop at skógarfoss: Almost everyone were taking pictures the whole time. The majority on their smartphone but some people were better equiped than others with lights and cameras and even one couple with personal photographer. I saw a lot of people post pictures right away on instagram especially in their stories. I followed two girls from the waterfall to the bus, they sat down for a few minutes and looked at photos of them next to the waterfall. One said that all of the pictures were terrible and complained that their friend who took the photos was not taking the photo like they wanted. They ran out to try to capture better photos of them next to the waterfall in the last 5 minutes of the stop. One of them had a camera and seemed to be taking just nature photos there while the other one had only her smartphones where they asked people travelling with them to take of them in front of the natural wonders we stopped at. I saw them do that both at the black sand beach and at Skógarfoss

Father and daughter sit and look through their photos together. Seem to be happy and the daughter says she has already shared one photo that they are looking at on Instagram.

As we go the the black sand beach with tha basalt formation people again get very excited. The tour guide says on the bus that the waves are very dangerous and sneaky and people really have to be careful and that it's not woth it to take the perfect photo if no one will ever see it. As we come to the black sand beach a lot of people are standing with cameras either in their hands or on a tripod down by the sea despite big signs explaining life threatening sneaky waves. One couple ask me to take their picture in the basalt formation cave there. I talked a litle with them. They said they share their pictures online some of them they just send privately to family and friends while others they choose good ones and post some online. They say they use instagram but also share their instagram posts on facebook and usually get more responses on facebook. They said they are mostly taking pictures of the landscape and this amazing nature the country is offering but they also like to take pictures with them in it because that shows somehow that they are on the spot and enjoying their time. They say that think people like more to see pictures with other people in it. The woman says „At least somehow I get more response of pictures where we are in them than only nature"

Our next stop was a glacier we walk up to the glacier as far as you can go without equipment but there are always people that go further than allowed just to capture the glacier on a photo as close as possible. There are also icebergs on the lagoon that has formed next to the glacier that is a very popular photo to take photos of.

The last stop was seljalandsfoss that is a waterfall that is possible to walk behind. This day was cold and it had been snowing earlier that creates icing behind the waterfall and that area is therfore closed. As we came here people had stopped around the area that was open and there is a crowd of people with their phones up and everybody were taking photos of the waterfall. After a while one person decides to ditch the fence and go behind the waterfall and that led to a lot of people to do the same. As I stood there two girls from my bus came soaking wet running from walking behind the waterfall saying that they took a photo and „just posted it as the phone died" and tried to turn the phone on again to see if the photo made it to social media or if it was lost.

I talked to two men from the US that were not on my bus but were on that stop. They said that they had seen a lot of photos of iceland on social media especially instagram. One said instagram is becoming a big platform and a big travel platform these days. They said that they came for the northern lights but hadn't seen anything yet. They hoped to get some photos of them for their social media but are also amazed by the nature. One of them had a camera but the other one only had his smartphone. They said that the smartphone is capable of almost everything the camera can do but they use the camera to film videos as one of them likes to make videos and says that the Icelandic nature is amazing scenery for a videos and photos. When I asked them how they decided which places to go to they said that they looked online „a lot of these places have been photographed so many times and there are endless photos

of these main places to go to on instagram for example" They said they had also seen some youtube videos that inspired them and google helped them a lot to plan their trip.

I talked to two girls after the trip that were on my bus. I asked why they had decided to come to Iceland. They said they had seen a lot on their social media and that they felt like everybody were going to Iceland these days. They had heard a lot about the nature and that Iceland is protraied as some kind of a utopia on social media and in media in general. They said they had seen videos on facebook where it said how safe the country is and the equality here. They were most excited about the nature they said. The had been to a northern lights tour the night before and were amazed and showed me some pictures. I asked if they shared any of them online and they said that they had shared their trip on their instagram account that they were active on instagram stories and shared their favorite moments in regular posts. They said that to be honest they probably were just sharing to show off to other people. They liked gettin a lot of likes on their photos and said that on their regular posts. They said they had some expectations and said that they did not expect so many people to be at all the destinations but were not bothered by it. They had also seen a lot of pictures of northern lights online and in brouchures and stuff and said that what they saw was not exactly the same but still an amazing experience that they will never forget.

Had some discussion with the person sitting next to me through out the trip. He said that he was not very active on social media but said that social media is very accessable even though you don't have account for example in his case on instagram. He said that he does not have an account but said that it is a good platoform to look for travel inspiration is it is a big platfrom for travel. He said that he does sometime take some pictures when he travels but does not share them online. He says he takes a lot of them but then goes through them to and deletes the ones that he doesn't want to keep and keeps the other ones to use for memories. This was not his first time in Iceland but he first time visiting these destinations

Appendix 6– Coding example

Theme	Categories	Open codes examples
Technology change in photographing and sharing	<mark>Mobile media</mark>	Always In front of us; Smartphones; Possibility to look up information; Never free; information online; Everyone has smartphones; Connectivity; some people live on their phone; Makes things easier; Technology evolvement; waterproof cases; googling information on tours; google translate; google maps on the phone; looking at the phone on the bus; accessible; going through photos between destinations; independence; better informed
	<mark>Travelling through the screen</mark>	Attention thief, negativity towards the phone; connecting with family while travelling; gazing rather than experiencing; forgetting to be in the physical world; experiencing through the phone; lack of connection to the environment; travel through social media; lost opportunities; online sphere vs offline sphere; lost in the screen; busy taking photos; gazing through the phone; lack of direct connection; time consuming
	<mark>Filtering the experience</mark>	Have to be there; tricks to photographing; difficult to photograph; new opportunities; be in the moment; Remember to just be there; creating expectations; instructions how to get a photo; virtual world overtaking the physical experience; framing; visual; short attention; seeing nature; camera framing;