

A Look Behind the Scenes of Iceland's Tourism Boom

Miranda Kort

Student number: s2196840

Supervisor: dr. S.L. Bolderman

Master thesis

MSc Cultural Geography

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Place of Residence

Emmen, Drenthe, The Netherlands

Contact information

Student e-mail: m.kort.1@student.rug.nl

Personal e-mail: miranda346@hotmail.com

Preface

I would like to thank the participants for joining me for a walk and for sharing their thoughts, feelings, experiences and hopes for the future. The stories have been both informative and fun.

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Abstract

There is widespread media coverage of local protests against ‘over-tourism’ or the rising number of foreign visitors and the consequences thereof in many popular tourist destinations around the world. This phenomenon is called ‘tourism-phobia’ and can be understood as an unwelcoming response of local residents towards visitors in a tourist destination. The objective of this research is to explore how the hospitality of local residents in a developing or developed tourist destination changes over time in response to the rising number of foreign visitors. The case study for this research is Iceland, where the upcoming years are expected to be critical in determining whether the local residents will develop more hostile responses over time like it has happened in many popular tourist destinations such as Amsterdam, Barcelona and Venice. The research question that is developed is: *How do local residents in Reykjavík experience and respond to the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland?* The research is based on participatory walking interviews conducted in downtown Reykjavík with local residents that are living in the capital region of Reykjavík. Contrary to the expectations, it is argued in the thesis that the negative attitudes of local residents towards the impacts of the tourism growth do not always result in more hostile responses to the visitors. Moreover, the approach of the Icelandic government to manage the impacts of the tourism growth in Iceland will be critical in the future development of the hospitality of the local residents in Reykjavík towards the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland. Even though the findings of this research are firmly grounded in the cultural and historical context surrounding the tourism growth in Iceland, the research findings might offer relevant insights to better understand the phenomenon of tourism-phobia and to develop strategies to anticipate the development of hostile responses from local residents towards foreign visitors in not only Iceland but also other developing and developed tourist destinations that are experiencing rapid tourism growth.

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1. Amsterdam, Barcelona, Venice and ... Reykjavík

'Imagine you live in Barcelona ... On Friday morning, like every week for years, you go to buy some groceries at the typical market in your neighbourhood ... But lately it is so crowded with tourists that it is hard to navigate the aisles; a trip that used to take you 20 minutes now takes over an hour. At the meat stand you run into your neighbour from the building opposite, an old lady who has lived there for decades. She looks upset; it turns out the owners are selling the whole building to an investor who is planning to turn the historic building into luxury apartments for wealthy foreigners, and the tenants have six months to leave. ... In the evening you head to a pub you love with some friends, only to find it is gone: it has been replaced by a touristy restaurant. ... You feel so much a stranger in your own city that it makes you angry. And one day you feel the need to express it somehow: writing angry graffiti fuelled by your sense of desperate isolation.' (Díaz, 2017: p.1)

Díaz (2017) has described how Barcelona is one of many popular tourist destinations where there has been extensive media coverage of local protests against the rising number of foreign visitors and the consequences thereof. One example of such a protest is the graffiti that was sprayed on the walls in the inner-city of Barcelona, saying: 'Tourists go home, you are not welcome'. The trend has become so widespread that it was named 'tourism-phobia' by the Spanish media (Barbería, 2017). According to Burgen (2018), 'tourism-phobia' is a feeling that local residents in many popular tourist destinations have developed of being occupied or displaced as a result of the rising number of foreign visitors. In turn, this feeling can result in the local residents becoming less welcoming to the visitors over time. And it is not only occurring in Europe either. For example, Sherlock (2001) described similar findings of 'tourism-phobia' in a small town called Port Douglas in Australia. More recently, a website called 'The Cultural Trip' created a list of destinations not to visit in order to avoid getting into a conflict with the local residents in these destinations (Jessop, 2018). The list included Amsterdam, Barcelona, Venice, and ... Reykjavík, the capital city of Iceland. The local residents in Iceland reacted surprised by the article, because even though the recent 'tourism boom' in Iceland had caused some anger and frustration amongst the local residents, there had been few reports of actual conflicts between the local residents and the foreign visitors in the country up until this moment (Helgason, 2017). However, a survey conducted in 2017 showed that the percentage of local residents in Reykjavík that was mostly positive about the tourism growth had dropped from 80 percent in 2015 to 64 percent in 2017 (Iceland Magazine, 2017). Although this is not to say that tourism-phobia will emerge in Iceland next, these are indications that it might as Ribeiro et al. (2017) found that the local residents with the least positive attitudes towards the impacts of the tourism growth are also often the least welcoming to visitors. In support of this finding, Doğan (1989) found that when local residents are frustrated with the course of the tourism growth, this frustration is often expressed towards the rising number of visitors.

1.1. The Research Objective

Tourism-phobia has become a large concern in many popular tourist destinations around the world. Especially the overcrowding or ‘over-tourism’ that is experienced at the top tourist attractions of a tourist destination is one of the largest complaints concerning rapid tourism growth of both the local residents and the visitors (García-Hernández et al, 2017; Richards, 2018). There is an abundance of knowledge in the academic field of tourism research about the consequences of the tourism growth, which are called impacts (e.g. McKercher et al., 2015; Sharpley, 2014), and the negative, positive or neutral evaluations that local residents have of the impacts, which are called attitudes (e.g. Deery et al., 2012; Williams & Lawson, 2001). However, the concept of hospitality appears to be under-researched. This is surprising since there have been scientific findings, such as the one by Ribeiro et al. (2017), that support the belief that negative attitudes of local residents towards the impacts of the tourism growth often result in hostile responses towards the visitors over time (Lynch, 2017). These hostile responses of local residents can make visitors feel less welcome, thereby decreasing visitor satisfaction and making it less likely that visitors will return and recommend the destination to their friends and family (Deery et al., 2012). This can lead to a drop in visitor numbers that can potentially threaten the future success of the tourism industry as well as the national economy at large (Lynch, 2017; Tasci & Semrad, 2016). Since the national economy of Iceland is heavily dependent upon the success of the tourism industry, it is of crucial importance to try and avoid this (Jóhannesson et al., 2010). For this reason, the objective of this research is to explore how the hospitality of local residents in a developing or developed tourist destination changes over time in response to the rising number of foreign visitors. Based on the research objective, the following research question was developed:

How do local residents in Reykjavík experience and respond to the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland?

The research will offer a look behind the scenes of the tourism boom in Iceland. The first part of the research is focused on the experiences of the local residents in Reykjavík with regard to the impacts of the tourism growth in Iceland and the attitudes that have been developed in consequence of these impacts. The second part of the research concerns the actual behavioural responses of the local residents in Reykjavík towards the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland. These responses are linked specifically to the concept of hospitality. In order to answer the research question, a qualitative research is conducted that includes participatory walking interviews with local residents in downtown Reykjavík. Contrary to the expectations, it is argued in the thesis that the negative attitudes of local residents towards the impacts of the tourism growth in a developing or developed tourist destination do not necessarily always result in more hostile responses to the rising number of foreign visitors.

2. Impacts, Attitudes & Hospitality

2.1. Impacts & Attitudes

This chapter offers a scientific basis for the research problem and a starting point for the exploration of the phenomenon that is tourism-phobia in light of the theory that already exists on the topic. The first part of this chapter will include a discussion of the impacts that local residents experience as the result of rapid tourism growth and the attitudes that they develop towards these impacts over time. Impacts can be understood as the consequences or the place changes that result from rapid tourism growth, which are often divided in economic, environmental and social impacts (e.g. McKercher et al., 2015; Sharpley, 2014). For example, the increase of employment opportunities as a result of the expanding tourism industry is often experienced as a positive economic impact. On the other hand, tourism can also lead to rising rents, thereby increasing the cost of living for local residents. This is called inflation and is often experienced as a negative economic impact. Next to the economic impacts, overcrowding and noise and air pollution are examples of social and environmental impacts (García et al., 2015).

2.1.1. An Introduction to Butler

Deery et al. (2012) found that attitudes have often been used to describe how individuals experience their surroundings. According to Williams and Lawson (2001), there is no single definition of attitudes in the academic field of tourism research, but the term has often been used to encompass the opinions and evaluations that a person has with regard to a particular subject. In this thesis, the subject consists of the impacts that local residents in Reykjavík experience as a result of the tourism growth in Iceland. The attitudes are then comprised of the positive, negative or neutral evaluations of the local residents with regard to the impacts of the tourism growth as they experience it. The tourism life cycle model by Butler (1980) was one of the first models to describe how the attitudes of local residents change over time because of the increasing impacts of the tourism growth. The model describes how a developing tourist destination moves through a number of different stages as the time passes and the number of visitors increases. While the tourist destination is moving through the different stages, Butler proposed that not only the attitudes of local residents towards the impacts of the tourism growth change over time, but also the hospitality of the local residents towards the rising number of visitors. An adapted version of the tourism life cycle model can be found in figure 1 on the following page.

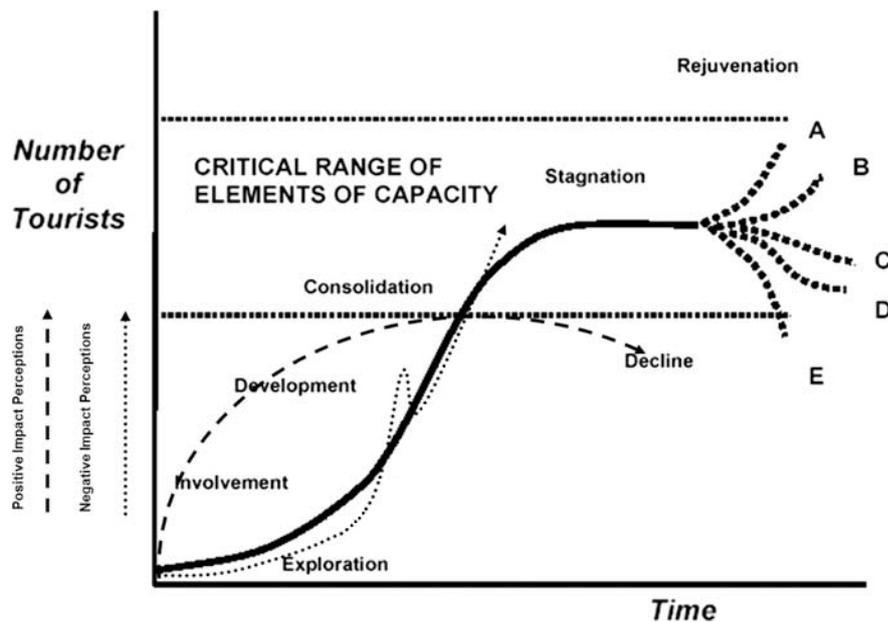


Fig. 1. Adapted version of the tourism life cycle model by Butler (1980) in Diedrich & Garcíá-Buades (2012)

The first stage in the tourism life cycle model is called exploration and describes the tourist destination in its infancy, which means that there is only a small number of visitors and the impacts of the tourism growth are minimal. In response to the rising number of visitors during the involvement stage, Butler found that local residents will start to develop services and facilities specifically for the visitors, which means that the interaction between visitors and local residents is relatively high during the initial stages. As the now tourist destination enters the development stage, tourism development is increasingly taken over by the rapidly expanding tourism industry, which will cause the level of local involvement to decrease. The number of visitors will probably equal or exceed the local population by now. The consolidation stage is entered when the relative rise of the number of visitors decreases, whilst the absolute rise continues to increase. It will be shown in the next chapter that this is currently the case in Iceland, which indicates that Iceland is currently moving from the development stage into the consolidation stage. According to Butler, this is a critical phase in the development of attitudes and behaviour, because even though the first signs of local residents developing feelings of discontent with regard to the course of the tourism growth will already become noticeable in the development stage, these negative attitudes will intensify in the consolidation stage. As the destination matures into a mass tourist destination, it will start to lose its attractiveness to many visitors and local residents. According to Butler, the future direction of the curve in the tourism life cycle model is then dependent upon the adaptive strategies and resilience of the destination, which can result in the destination entering the rejuvenation stage with continued growth, entering the decline stage and partly or entirely moving out of tourism, or some different path in between.

2.1.2. Social Exchange Theory & Social Disruption Theory

The tourism life cycle model by Butler (1980) has shown how the attitudes of local residents towards the impacts of the tourism growth change as the tourist destination develops and the number of foreign visitors increases. In addition, Butler has also described how local residents will develop more hostile responses towards the rising number of visitors over time. However, the model is lacking to explain what drives these changes. One theory that offers such an explanation is the social exchange theory (SET). SET explains that attitudes change as the result of a weighting of the positive impacts and the negative impacts. According to SET, it is expected that local residents have more positive attitudes towards the impacts of the tourism growth when they experience that the positive impacts outweigh the negative impacts. Vice versa, negative attitudes are expected when the local residents experience that the negative impacts outweigh the positive impacts. SET is supported by the finding by Ivlevs (2017) that it is not the actual encounter between the local residents and the visitors that influences the attitudes of local residents the most, but rather how they experience the impacts of the tourism growth.

The social disruption theory (SDT) was later developed to add the recognition that attitudes often do not change in a linear manner. SDT is included in the tourism life cycle model in figure 1. In line with the tourism life cycle model by Butler (1980) and the social exchange theory, SDT describes how local residents experience mostly positive impacts as a result of the tourism growth and therefore have predominantly positive attitudes in the initial stages of the development of the tourist destination. As the place continues to mature as a tourist destination, there will be a rapid increase of the positive and the negative impacts during the development stage. Since the local residents are still experiencing predominantly positive impacts, there is a period of adjustment to the negative impacts during which the attitudes do not change much. When the increase of the positive impacts that is experienced by the local residents begins to subside, another increase of the negative impacts is set off that will eventually exceed the positive impacts. This is the moment when the critical threshold between the development stage and the consolidation stage in the tourism life cycle model is surpassed and the attitudes towards the impacts of the tourism growth start to become more negative and the responses towards the visitors can become potentially hostile (Diedrich & García-Buades, 2009; Perdue et al., 1999).

2.1.3. A Critical Note

Even though the tourism life cycle model by Butler (1980) has been widely cited in the academic field of tourism research for being one of the first models to describe how the attitudes and the responses of local residents in developing tourist destinations change over time, the model is also widely criticized for assuming a unidirectional trajectory and portraying homogenous local communities (e.g. Deery et al., 2012; García et al., 2015; Nunkoo et al., 2013; Sharpley, 2014). In other words, the tourism life cycle model describes how all members of one local community start out welcoming towards visitors, but they will inevitably develop more hostile attitudes over time. In contrast, SET and SDT include the recognition that different individuals experience the impacts of the tourism growth in various ways and consequently develop different attitudes towards the impacts of the tourism growth. For example, a local resident who receives financial benefits from the tourism growth is expected to have a more positive attitude towards the tourism growth than a local resident who does not receive such benefits (Ap, 1990; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2011). Furthermore, even though the theories discussed so far have suggested that more negative attitudes often result in more hostile responses of local residents towards visitors, none of these theories have explained why negative attitudes result in more hostile responses. Carmichael (2000) has stressed that although attitudes are useful as indicators of behavioural intent, they are not indicators of actual behaviour. The second half of this chapter will therefore introduce the concept of hospitality to further explore how the actual behaviour of local residents towards the rising number of visitors changes over time in a developing tourist destination.

2.2. Hospitality

Ribeiro et al. (2017) found that the local residents with the least positive attitudes towards the tourism growth are also often the least welcoming towards the visitors. Nevertheless, Lynch (2017) found that the concept of hospitality has been under-researched in the academic field of tourism research as the relationship between impacts, attitudes and hospitality has often been assumed rather than researched and explained. In the academic field of hospitality research, the most basic definition of hospitality is the provision of food, drinks and accommodation to the visiting stranger (Lynch et al., 2011). Even though there are many extended definitions that are going far beyond this basic definition, Bell (2007) found that hospitality is fundamentally about making visitors feel welcome. The tourism-phobia that is growing in many popular tourist destinations does not tally with this idea of hospitality that exists in many (Western) parts of the world, which led scientific researchers in the academic field of tourism research to reconsider the meaning of hospitality in contemporary mass tourism practices.

2.2.1. A Moral Obligation

According to Aramberri (2001) and Derrida (2000), the traditional understanding of hospitality as it exists in many (Western) parts of the world is that of a moral obligation towards the visiting stranger to welcome them into your home. Aramberri (2001) proposed that this notion of hospitality as a moral obligation is consistent of three main components, which he named protection, reciprocity and duties for both sides. In practice, reciprocity means that the guest is offered hospitality with the expectation that the favour is returned once the roles are reversed and the host becomes the guest. This definition of hospitality that was proposed by Aramberri is grounded in the historical narrative of ancient Rome, where a guest would be welcome and treated as a friend as long as they would abide to the rules of the house, hence the duties for both sides. If the guest were to break the rules of the house, they would no longer be welcome and treated as an enemy instead. This definition of hospitality as a conditional offer differs from the definition of hospitality that was proposed by Derrida (2000). Derrida defined hospitality as a moral obligation to protect and nurture the visiting stranger *unconditionally*. This definition of hospitality was derived from historical religious narratives in which local residents were warned about the visitation of a key figure of their religious beliefs. The figure was expected to come disguised as a poor traveller to test the local hospitality (Lashley, 2008, 2015). According to Derrida, unconditionally means that the host should not impose any conditions, limits or expectations on the guest. In other words, the host should be welcoming all 'Others' regardless of their origin, appearance or any other characteristics that they might have (e.g. Derrida, 2005; Dikeç, 2002, George, 2009). However, Aramberri (2001), Lashley (2008) and Tasci and Semrad (2016) found that the notion of hospitality as a moral obligation has been losing ground to the notion of hospitality as an industry in its own right ever since the rise of mass tourism in the late twentieth century (Cohen, 2008).

2.2.2. Inclusion & Exclusion in Tourism Places

The notion of hospitality as an industry relies on the recognition that a welcoming environment can be created, for example by maintaining a clean environment or by receiving the visitors with a welcoming smile and servicing them in English rather than in a native language that they do not speak. According to McKercher et al. (2015), these are all examples of what they consider to be signifiers or markers that are in place to help local residents and visitors identify a place as a non-tourism place, a tourism place or a shared place. In this way, the signifiers tell local residents and visitors whether they will feel like they belong and are welcome in a particular place or not. The typical signifiers of tourism places often include symbols of mass tourism (Sherlock, 2001), such as the presence of tourist information centres, souvenir shops and international chain stores. The presence of other visitors can also signify an area as a tourism place. According to Saarinen (2004), the signifiers of tourism places are usually a lot more representative of the needs and the demands of the visitors rather than of the local residents.

For example, Mordue (2005) described how the city centre of York in Northeast England transformed as locally owned shops made room for souvenir shops, international food chains and visitor crowds. Even though some local residents were enthusiastic about the new options, Mordue found that many were starting to feel like outsiders in their own city as they no longer felt like they belonged there. Relph (1976, in Seamon & Sowers, 2008) described this a feeling of alienation, as if though the person has become a stranger to that place because it has changed a lot from how they once knew it. As such, it often happens that when an environment is developed to be welcoming and including to some, it can be experienced as unwelcoming and excluding to others at the same time (Lynch et al., 2011).

2.2.3. From Friends to Customers

It is not just local residents that can develop a sense of exclusion from tourism places, but visitors too. For example, anti-tourists prefer to avoid what they consider to be tourism places because they believe that such places are often crowded and only offer superficial tourist experiences (Doran et al., 2015; Jacobsen, 2000). The rapid expansion of the Airbnb industry in many developing tourist destinations has offered an alternative to these superficial tourist experiences as it offers the opportunity to ‘live like a local’ (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016; McIntosh et al., 2011). This kind of conditional hospitality that is offered with the expectation of a (financial) return is often called commercial hospitality within the academic field of hospitality research (Lashley, 2015). Aramberri (2001) argued that the historical understanding of hospitality as a moral obligation to welcome the visiting stranger is irreconcilable with contemporary mass tourism practices, since the guest is treated as a customer rather than a friend:

‘Now the main tie that binds the contracting parties is the deliverance of services – commodities – on the part of the hosts, and payment in cash for the tab they have been running on behalf of the guests. In fact, the hosts are no longer hosts, just providers of services, while the guests are no longer guests, just customers.’ (Aramberri, 2001: p. 746)

This quote explains how hospitality has changed under the rising pressure of mass tourism as it has become a financial transaction with little personal interaction between the host and the guest, rather than an acceptance of the ‘Other’ that can bring people closer together as friends rather than as enemies (Derrida, 2000; Kenway & Fahey, 2009). In support of this, Derrida (2000) has argued that commercial hospitality or the notion of hospitality as a commercial industry cannot be considered ‘real’ hospitality, because this kind of hospitality will only be offered as long as the benefits outweigh the costs and is therefore not unconditional. Similar to the attitudes of local residents becoming more negative as the negative impacts of the tourism growth increase relative to the positive impacts, it appears that the responses of local residents towards visitors can become more hostile when the costs of the tourism growth are starting to outweigh the benefits.

In contrast, Lynch et al. (2011) argued that the definition of 'real' hospitality as proposed by Derrida and Aramberri is overly romanticized. According to Cohen (2008), the post-modern tourist is no longer seeking out 'real' or 'authentic' experiences. Above all, the post-modern tourist wants to experience fun and excitement. In support of this argument, Williams (2000, in Bell, 2007) stressed that commercial hospitality should be understood as an inherent part of post-modern tourism, in which visitors knowingly participate in a staged and romanticized relationship between hosts and guests. In response to the debate surrounding the meaning of hospitality in contemporary mass tourism practices and the growing phenomenon of tourism-phobia in many tourist destinations around the world, it will be further explored in the thesis what the concept of hospitality still means in present day tourism. Since Iceland appears to be in the development stage at the present time, it is not surprising that there have been few reports of tourism-phobia in Iceland up until this moment. Still, the attitudes of local residents towards the impacts of the tourism growth in Iceland appear to have become more negative over the past years. If Iceland were to follow the trajectory that has been proposed by the tourism life cycle model by Butler (1980), it can be expected that the hostility of the local residents towards the visitors will grow as the number of foreign visitors in Iceland continues to increase. This makes Iceland an interesting case study for exploring how the hospitality of local residents in a developing or developed tourist destination changes over time in response to a rising number of foreign visitors.

3. Preparing the Stage for a Look Behind the Scenes

3.1. Case Study: Downtown Reykjavík

A case study is an in-depth study of one case or a few cases in which the phenomenon takes place that is being researched (Baxter, 2016). In this research, the phenomenon that has been explored is that of ‘tourism-phobia’ or how the hospitality of local residents in many developing and developed tourist destinations changes over time in response to a rising number of foreign visitors. The specific case that was scrutinized is the tourism boom in Iceland and the experiences and responses of local residents in Reykjavík thereof and thereto. It is increasingly recognized that quantitative research methods, such as questionnaires, are not sufficient to fully grasp the complexity and diversity of human experiences and behaviour (Clifford et al., 2010; Winchester & Rofe, 2016). For this reason, a qualitative approach was used for this research which included a case study of downtown Reykjavík in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and the responses of local residents in Reykjavík regarding the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland. Participatory walking interviews were used as the main method for the data collection. The research context and the choices that were made during the data collection and the data analysis are explained in this chapter.

3.1.1. Context: The Tourism Boom in Iceland

The tourism boom in Iceland started in 2008 when the financial crisis caused the value of the Icelandic króna to drop and it became less expensive to travel to Iceland (Jóhannesson & Huijbens, 2010). The volcano eruption in 2010 gave a boost to the tourism growth as Iceland was rediscovered as a land of natural extremes and intriguing landscapes (Lund et al., 2017). Subsequently, the campaign ‘Inspired by Iceland’ was developed by the Icelandic government and the tourism industry in Iceland to assure visitors that it was safe to visit Iceland after the volcano eruption. The campaign was the final push that was needed for the tourism growth to become a tourism boom (e.g. Gil-Alana & Huijbens, 2018; Huijbens & Benediktsson, 2013). The graph in figure 2 shows a comparison between the growth rates of the population in Iceland and the number of foreign visitor arrivals through Keflavík airport, which is the main airport in Iceland and is located in the near vicinity of the capital region of Reykjavík. Even though the number of foreign visitor arrivals in Iceland has been rising steadily ever since the late twentieth century, the graph in figure 2 shows a particularly rapid increase between 2010 and 2018 that has far exceeded the growth rate of the local population in Iceland in that same period. The rising number of foreign visitors also includes the rising number of foreign workers and immigrants that have been coming to Iceland for a variety of different reasons, but most often to find a well-paid job in the prospering economy (Jóhannesson et al., 2010).

Iceland's Tourism Boom in Figures

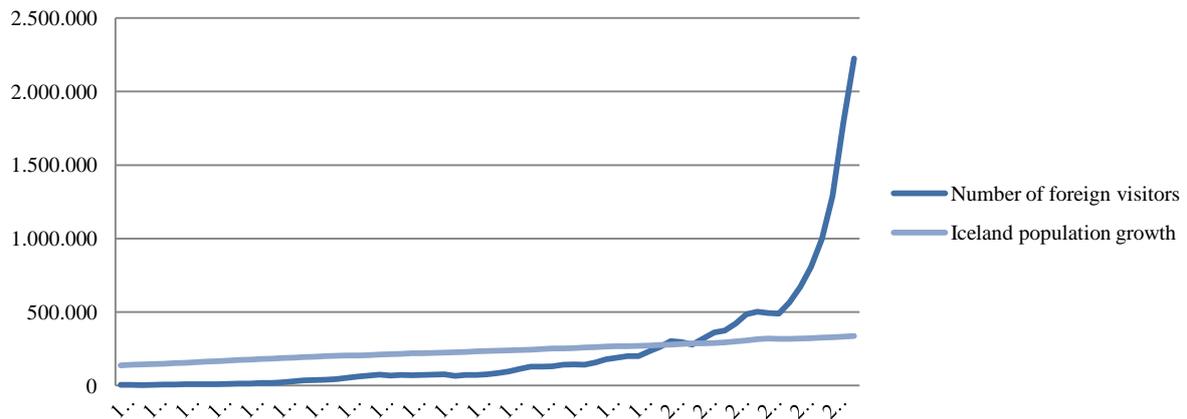


Fig. 2. A graph displaying the growth rate of the Icelandic population (Statistics Iceland, 2018b), and the growth rate of the absolute number of foreign visitor arrivals through Keflavík airport between 1949 and 2017 (Icelandic Tourist Board, 2018).

For the first time since 2010, however, the Icelandic Tourist Board found that the growth rate of foreign visitor arrivals through Keflavík airport in the month April in 2018 had decreased with 3.9 percent in comparison to the same month in the previous year. They also found that the growth rate in the four months prior to April had slowed down in comparison to previous years (Iceland Magazine, 2018). As the relative rise of visitor numbers is decreasing and the absolute rise continues to increase, the statistics indicate that Iceland is currently moving from the development stage to the consolidation stage in Butler's tourism life cycle model (1980). Iceland makes for a rather intriguing case study as the next years are expected to be critical in determining whether or not local residents will develop more hostile responses towards the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland over time.

3.1.2. Walking Interviews: 'Walk & Talk'

Iceland has a small population of nearly 350 thousand inhabitants, of which 64 percent resides in the capital region of Reykjavík (Statistics Iceland, 2018a). As nearly all foreign visitors arrive in Iceland by air or boat and subsequently travel through the capital area as they move along (Jóhannesson et al., 2010), the downtown area of Reykjavík can be considered as the key meeting ground of local residents and foreign visitors in Iceland. Since the actual encounter with foreign visitors is a fundamental part of this research, downtown Reykjavík was considered the best environment for conducting this research. According to Longhurst (2010), the ideal location for conducting an interview is in a relatively neutral environment in which both researcher and participant feel safe and comfortable enough to participate in the research on relatively equal terms. If this is not the case, the researcher or the participant might shut down or end the interview prematurely, which could result in the loss of any relevant information.

Since the researcher and the participants were both familiar with the area prior to the interviews, albeit to a varying extent, downtown Reykjavík was considered to be a relatively neutral environment for both parties with regard to their sense of safety and comfortableness.

In total, fourteen individual walking interviews were conducted in downtown Reykjavík with local residents that were residing in the capital region of Reykjavík at the time that the interviews took place. Walking interviews can be understood as in-depth interviews that literally take place in the field of interest (Kassavou et al., 2015). As such, the researcher and the participant discuss a phenomenon that is being researched whilst walking in the environment that the phenomenon is taking place in. The participants were not provided with a clear definition of the boundaries of the downtown area. Instead, they were offered the freedom to show the development of the downtown area as they experienced it. The major advantage of the walking interview is that it is a combination of the qualitative research methods interviewing and observing (Trell & Van Hoven, 2010). Kusenbach (2003) argued that mere observing is not sufficient for gaining an understanding of what is actually going on, whereas mere interviewing tends to distance the participant from the environment that is researched and this makes it more difficult for the researcher to understand what areas are discussed. In addition, Carpiano (2009) argued that observations alone are not sufficient for understanding the lived experiences of participants as observations are heavily dependent upon the interpretation of the researcher. In walking interviews, however, she found that the participant acts more like a local expert or a tour guide rather than as a subject under scrutiny of the researcher, thereby balancing out the unequal power dynamics between researcher and participant and allowing for a more inclusive research. Interviewing and observing can both be used as primary methods for data collection in their own rights, but walking interviews can bring together their strengths, as well as make up for their shortcomings (Trell & Van Hoven, 2010).

Walking interviews are designed according to the aim of the research. Evans and Jones (2011) proposed a continuum of designs based on the familiarity of the researcher and the participant with the environment that is researched. At the one end, the researcher-driven guided walk is often used when the researcher is familiar with the environment and the discussion is focused on specific places that should not be missed during the walk. On the other end, the participant-driven go-along interview is a more fitting approach when the participant is more familiar with the environment than the researcher or when the aim of the research is to empower the participants (Carpiano, 2009; Kusenbach, 2003). For this research, participatory walking interviews were used. Participatory walking interviews can be understood as a middle option leaning towards a participant-driven approach as the participants are let to determine the walking route (Evans & Jones, 2011). Since the aim of this research was neither to empower the participants nor to scrutinize their everyday routines, a more moderate design than the go-along interview was chosen.

The participants were seen as local experts in the environment because they had lived there at some point in their lives. In addition, the fact that many of the participants in this research were or had been tour guides themselves further strengthened the expectation that they would be more than able to lead a walk through an environment that was highly familiar to them. Being a tourist guide also made it more likely that the participant would have had frequent encounters with foreign visitors in their everyday lives, which they would be able to talk about during the walking interviews. The participants were also led to determine the duration of the walking interviews, apart from a minimal requirement of 20 minutes per interview. This minimal requirement was set to secure the opportunity for developing in-depth follow-up questions during the interviews. There was no maximum duration because it was considered to be undesirable to end the walking interview before the participant had exhausted most of the places they desired to visit, which could lead to the researcher missing out on relevant information. After all, the participant can find inspiration in the environment at any given moment. The participants were informed about the expectation that the walking interviews would take about 30 minutes of their time. The average duration of the walking interviews turned out to be 57 minutes, with the shortest interview lasting for 25 minutes and the longest interview lasting for more than one and a half hour.

As walking interviews usually take place in the outdoors environment, this method requires additional considerations in comparison to the sitting interview that often takes place indoors. First of all, the weather conditions need to be taken into account. In accordance with Carpiano (2009), it was found that bad weather conditions do not have to influence the research process in an obstructive way as long as there is some preparation. In Iceland, the participants were used to bad weather conditions and often came prepared with rain jackets. The participants were also informed before the walks about a back-up plan to take the interview indoors in case of bad weather. The outdoors environment can also insert disruptive sounds into your audio recording device, including the sound of traffic, wind gusts and people. It is highly recommended to anticipate by using high quality audio recording devices and some sort of a wind shield. Furthermore, walking interviews are often more time-consuming and physically intensive than sitting interviews. As a consequence, this method has a high probability of excluding elderly and disabled individuals who cannot walk for the amount of time that is required of them to participate in the research (Evans & Jones, 2011; Trelle & Van Hoven, 2010). Despite of these limitations, participants often experience walking interviews as a more informal and comfortable way of talking in comparison to the sitting interview (Carpiano, 2009; Trelle & Van Hoven, 2010). Evans and Jones (2011) and Kassavou et al. (2015) also found that participants find it easier to translate their thought and feelings into words whilst being in the environment that is being discussed. Moreover, Evans and Jones (2011) found that the environment can inspire participants to think of more space-specific answers, which can result in more spontaneous reactions and richer data.

3.1.3. Participant Selection

The first step in selecting participants was to send an e-mail to a few organizations and institutions that are involved in tourism research in Iceland, including the University of Iceland and Promote Iceland. Following their advice, the next step was to share a short message with the members of four Facebook groups. The message was a call-out to local residents in Reykjavík that would come along on a walk in downtown Reykjavík to talk about how they experience tourism in Iceland. Since the members in the groups were already discussing tourism in Iceland, it was expected that some of them would be open to participating in this research and that they would have informed narratives to share about tourism in Iceland. The message was deliberately kept vague to avoid steering their attitudes in a negative or positive direction before the walking interviews. The message also included a link to a small voluntary survey with personal background questions to make contact with potential participants and to check if the criteria stated below were met. The survey is included in Appendix C. As an alternative option, the potential participants were informed that they could send a direct personal message over Facebook.

The selection criteria for participants included mostly practical requirements. The participant were required to be available at some time between April 12th and April 18th, 2018. They also needed to be physically able to walk for a minimum of 20 minutes on end and they had to have a permanent address within the capital region of Reykjavík. Initially, the criterion was that the participant needed to have a permanent address in the postcode area 101, which is considered to include the main parts of the downtown area of Reykjavík as can be seen in Appendix B. However, it was found that as a result of the tourism boom, the rising rents and the expanding Airbnb industry have encouraged many local residents to move out of the area. In the end, it was too difficult to find participants from this postcode area alone, therefore the criterion was made more flexible to also include participants that did not live in the downtown area at the present time, but have lived there at an earlier stage in their lives.

The use of convenience sampling as described above resulted in twelve participants, while the use of snowball sampling resulted in two more as a couple of participants had shared the message with some of their friends on Facebook (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2016). The total of fourteen participants has exceeded the initial aim to select at least eight to ten participants. If this number could not be reached over the Internet, there was a back-up plan to add ‘on-site recruiting’. On-site recruiting is comprised of asking people face-to-face and on location if they are willing and able to participate in the research (Longhurst, 2010). It was expected that the selection of participants through the Internet would lead to the exclusion of individuals that are not using the Internet, for instance the elderly. There was already a high probability of excluding the elderly from participating in this research because of the physical activity that is required of the participant to be part of a walking interview (Evans & Jones, 2011; Trell & Van Hoven, 2010). The use of on-site recruiting would have allowed for the opportunity to include more elderly people in this research, but this was not the preferred option because it is time-consuming and would have left an even shorter amount of time available for conducting the walking interviews.

The fourteen participants that were eventually selected for this research are briefly introduced in Appendix A. Nine participants are female and five participants are male. The youngest participant is 23 years old, the oldest participant is 55 years old, while the median age is 33,5 years. Unfortunately, there were no elderly included in this research and this is considered to be the largest drawback in the data collection. The exclusion of the elderly who have been living in an environment for a relatively long while is often viewed as a massive loss of rich narratives (Carpiano, 2009; Evans & Jones, 2011). Eight participants were not born in Iceland but had moved to Reykjavík for a variety of reasons as can be read in Appendix A. It was expected before the walking interviews that the immigrants would have had different experiences of the tourism growth in Iceland, because they did not grow up in Iceland and therefore might not have experienced the place changes as much as the participants that have lived in Iceland for a longer period of time. On the other hand, comparing the experiences of the immigrants to the experiences of Icelandic residents can help in exploring the relevance of context in this research.

3.1.4. Interview Guide

The interview guide for the walking interviews is included in Appendix D. An interview guide exists of a list of prepared questions that helps the researcher to make sure that all the topics are covered that the researcher wants to cover during the interview. It also helps to refocus the interview when the conversation has wandered off. The questions were ordered in a hybrid structure (Dunn, 2016). As such, the interview guide begins with some easy-to-answer questions about the personal background of the participant, then some general questions about the connection of the participant to Reykjavík and their thoughts about the tourism growth in Iceland, and then surely progresses to the more specific experiences that the participant has had in their personal lives in connection to the tourism growth. However, the interviews were semi-structured rather than structured as the questions were not asked in a definitive order but according to the flow of the conversation (Dunn, 2016). This allowed for the development of more in-depth follow-up questions during the walking interviews rather than sticking to the questions in the interview guide alone as if though it were a questionnaire. This way, a semi-structured interview also better captures the informal feeling that walking interviews help bring about (Longhurst, 2010). Nonetheless, unstructured interviews might fit well with walking interviews, but a successful execution would be heavily reliant upon the experience of the researcher with unstructured interviewing, which explains why this was not the preferred option for this research.

3.2. Telling the Stories Behind the Data

The walking interviews have generated interview data and observational data. The walking interviews were audio recorded using a tablet that also contained the interview guide. The audio recordings were later used to write out the interviews in transcripts that could then be analyzed. There were no field notes used to collect the observational data because Dunn (2016) argued that the creation of field notes during the interview will distract the researcher from the conversation. Instead, the walking routes were both video recorded using a small action camera that was attached to a rucksack and GPS tracked using a smartphone that was carried in the rucksack. In this way, the data was being captured while the researcher could remain focused on the conversation and the questions in the interview guide during the walking interviews. Last but not least, there were photographs taken after the walking interviews of areas that had been discussed during the walking interviews. The fundamental basis of this research is considered to be the interview data, whereas the observational data is complementary. The findings that were derived from the observational data are presented in a narrative manner in the next chapter in the thesis, surrounding the quotes that represent the findings that were derived from the interview data. The purpose of the observational data is to challenge or support the interview data. The GPS tracking has resulted in additional quantitative data with regard to the walking routes. The findings from the GPS tracking data will be presented in maps. These maps also contain the photographs that will be used as visual representations of the findings that are discussed in the analysis chapter.

3.2.1. Analysis of the Interview Data

Transcribing is often a very time-consuming undertaking. A first attempt at transcribing the interviews was therefore already made in Reykjavík. Dunn (2016) defined a transcript as a written version of the interview that includes not only the conversation but also additional relevant information, such as body language. In the case of this particular research, this also refers to the observational data that was recovered from the video recordings and the GPS tracking data. The transcripts are verbatim, which means that the interviews were written out in the exact same way that the conversations developed, including laughter and pauses, as part of a truly in-depth research process (Dunn, 2016). After the transcripts were completed, a personal e-mail was sent to each participant containing the transcript that contained their interview. Each participant was given the opportunity to suggest alterations, additions or removals. According to Stratford and Bradshaw (2016), allowing the participants to reflect upon the transcripts will increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. There were no suggestions made by the participants to alter the transcripts.

The next step in the data analysis involved coding the transcripts. Coding involves ascribing labels to pieces of text and is a predominantly interpretive act that helps organize the data (Saldaña, 2013). In addition, Cope (2010) described coding as a *'thoughtful process that generates themes and elicits meanings, thereby enabling the researcher to produce representations of the data that are lively, valid and suggestive of some broader connections to the scholarly literature.'* (p. 442). As such, coding is not just labelling pieces of text but also connecting these labels to theories that already exist and findings patterns to generate themes and elicit meaningful findings from the pure data. The first round of coding for this research consisted of ascribing descriptive codes to pieces of text that were somehow deemed relevant to the research. In vivo coding was used, which means that the codes were formulated in the exact words that the participants used during the interviews (Cope, 2016; Saldaña, 2013). In contrast to Saldaña (2013), it was found more useful to start with splitter coding rather than lumping coding in the first round of coding. The difference between splitter coding and lumping coding lies in the number of codes that are ascribed to a piece of text. Saldaña argued that it is often best to start with lumping coding because splitter coding can result in the researcher feeling overwhelmed by the large amount of different codes. However, when the outset of the research is still broad, it can be difficult to summarize a piece of text in just one descriptive code. In the process of data analysis for this research, a bottom-up approach was therefore used that involved in vivo coding and the grouping of codes that felt similar somehow. The codes and categorizations were reconsidered in the second round of coding until the saturation point was considered to be reached, which was when all the codes were categorized into smaller groups that could subsequently be categorized into three main groups, which are called the themes. The process of data analysis was based on the *'codes-to-theory model'* proposed by Saldaña (2013: p. 13). A similar model was created for this research, which shows the different categories and the themes that were developed. The model is included in Appendix E.

3.2.2. Analysis of the Observational Data

According to Kearns (2016), the purpose for using field observations in a research can be for counting, as complementary evidence or for contextual understanding. For this research, the observational data was regarded complementary to the interview data. The main purpose of the observations was to better understand what areas were being discussed, which would allow for the creation of more in-depth follow-up questions during the walking interviews. The interviews were the more structured and fundamental part of the process of data collection, while the observations were considered to be supplementary to the interview data. Still, the observations were critical in determining the flow and the direction of the interviews since it provided the contextual understanding that was necessary to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and responses of local residents in that environment. The first step in the analysis of the observational data had already taken place in the process of data analysis of the interview data, where background sounds could be identified and interpreted.

The next step was to watch the video recordings and to ascribe descriptive texts to the videos. Only those parts of the video recordings that were considered to be somehow relevant to the research were described. These texts were then compared to the interview data in order to find out whether the observational data supported or challenged the interview data. The final step of the process of the data analysis was to link both the observational data and the interview data to the research question and the theoretical framework to create a coherent narrative of the meaningful findings that were generated.

3.3. A Critical Review of the Research Process

3.3.1. Ethical Considerations

According to Hay (2010), it is crucial that a researcher behaves ethically throughout the entire research process. From a moral perspective, the researcher should take accountability for their actions. From a practical perspective, the researcher should not undermine the trust that participants and readers have in the research because that could diminish their willingness to participate in future research. There are at least three main considerations that help establish ethical behaviour (Dowling, 2016). The first is informed consent, which means that the researcher should inform the participant about the aim of the research and the expectations that they have of the participants. For this research, an informed consent form was distributed amongst the participants prior to the walking interviews. On the first page, the participants were informed about the general aim of the research, the practicalities of the walking interviews, and their rights as participants in the research. On the second page, the participants were asked to fill out the informed consent form in order to receive permission for the use of the collected data for this research. The form is included in Appendix F. Almost all participants agreed with the interviews being audio and video recorded, except for one participant who did not feel comfortable with being filmed. The by-passers that were filmed during the walking interviews were not asked for informed consent, because it would have been close to impossible to achieve this (Dowling, 2016). Moreover, the video recordings were only used as complementary evidence and not shared with anyone, therefore the anonymity of the by-passers remained intact during the research process.

The second consideration is confidentiality, which means that the privacy of the participant should be protected unless the participant decides otherwise. For this research, the participants were asked in the informed consent form if they wanted to remain anonymous in the research and all participants checked that box. They were also given the option to provide for a pseudonym, which one participant chose to do. Although most participants allowed for the use of their first name in the thesis, all of the participants were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy. In combination with a few other characteristics, it would be easy to identify the participants due to the small population size of Iceland.

In hindsight, it was also highly likely that the participants would run into someone they knew due to the small population size and this happened three times. However, none of the participants mentioned this, which was probably because they expected it to happen beforehand. Still, it is recommended to discuss these events prior to the walking interviews to make sure that the participant feels comfortable with being recognized by their acquaintances whilst participating in the research. For example, the researcher and the participant can discuss prior to the walking interview how the researcher will be introduced to any acquaintances of the participants that are met during the walking interviews.

The third consideration involves protecting the participant and the researcher from physical and psychological harm. There are many unpredictable factors in the outdoors environment that could have caused physical harm to the researcher or the participant. However, the high familiarity of the participants with the environment probably helped to prevent this from happening. Since the research topic is concerned with the hostile responses of local residents towards visitors in many popular tourist destinations around the world, it was taken into account that the subject could bring back feelings of sadness, frustration or even anger with regard to the course of the tourism growth in Iceland. For this reason, the participant was never pressured to answer any questions that they did not want to answer in order to protect the participants from psychological harm. Fortunately, this was hardly ever necessary.

3.3.2. Positionality

It is important to recognize that the personal background and characteristics of a researcher will have an influence on the research process, for instance through the subjective interpretation of the research findings by the researcher (Longhurst, 2016). The choice of research topic has been heavily informed by the widespread media coverage of the phenomenon that is tourism-phobia. Having been a visitor in both Amsterdam and Barcelona, some of the concerns about tourism-phobia were witnessed firsthand. However, as a young person, the past developments that have led to the existence of tourism-phobia in many popular tourist destinations today have not been experienced that consciously, which fuelled the curiosity to explore the development of this phenomenon in more detail. The choice for Iceland as a case study for this research was inspired by an earlier field work visitation to Iceland in 2016, but it was also driven by the belief that Iceland is similar to the Netherlands in the sense that they are both wealthy European nations with a predominantly white population and a Western cultural background. For these reasons, Iceland was considered to be a relatively safe place for an inexperienced and young student-researcher to conduct her Master thesis research. There were no clear indications that being female has played an important role at any time in the research process, apart from the choice to conduct all walking interviews in the streets of downtown Reykjavík rather than in any nearby (natural) areas that were more abandoned and less familiar, and therefore less safe.

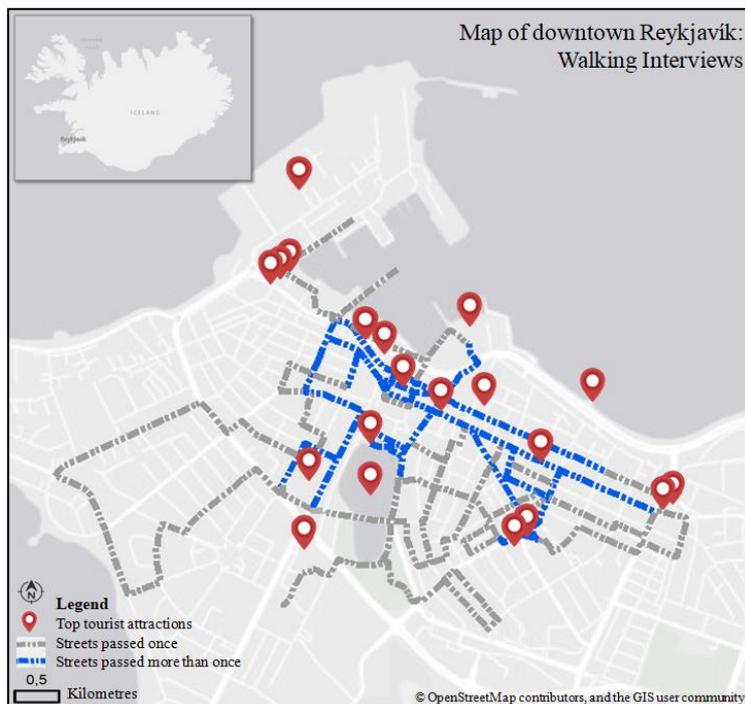
Dowling (2016) stressed that no person is ever just an insider or an outsider, similar to all people having multiple characteristics that together make up their identity. Being an outsider can be a real disadvantage when conducting an in-depth qualitative research when it takes more time for the participant to explain their wordings and there is less time for the researcher to develop more in-depth questions during the interview. In this research, however, it was experienced as an advantage in the sense that the researcher arrives with their own personal background, experiences and knowledge, thereby shedding a brand new light on the phenomenon that is being researched. For example, the participants were often informed about what had been discussed in the previous walking interviews after their walking interview had ended. As a consequence, the participants often started to explain their own thoughts and feelings in light of this new information, which resulted in richer data. Last but not least, being a foreign visitor in Iceland as a student-researcher from the Netherlands provided for the opportunity to experience the hospitality of the participants first hand.

4. Home Is Where the Tourists Are

The paragraphs in this chapter discuss the themes that were identified in the data analysis. The themes can be found in the code-to-theory model in Appendix E. The first paragraph describes the impacts of the tourism growth that the participants in this research have been experiencing as local residents in Reykjavík. These impacts are divided in economic, environmental and social impacts (e.g. McKercher et al., 2015; Sharpley, 2014). All of the participants mentioned that they were experiencing both the positive impacts and the negative impacts of the tourism growth in Iceland. For this reason, the theme was called *'Impacts: Tourism as a Double-edged Sword'*. The second paragraph will discuss how the attitudes of the participants towards the impacts of the tourism growth in Iceland changed over time as Iceland developed into a mature tourist destination. In line with the observation that was mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, it was found in this research that the attitudes of most of the participants had become increasingly negative over time, especially since the arrival of the mass tourists in Iceland. The second theme was therefore called *'Attitudes: The Rising Pressure of Mass Tourism'*. The third and last paragraph in this chapter will explore the extent to which the negative attitudes have led to the development of more hostile responses from the participants towards the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland over time. It became clear from the walking interviews that the participants chose to respond by withdrawing themselves from the impacts of the tourism growth rather than seeking out a direct confrontation with the foreign visitors. The participants explained that it is not the visitors that most local residents in Reykjavík are fed up with, but rather the Icelandic government for the under-management of the negative impacts of the tourism growth. For this reason, the third theme was called *'Hospitality: A Key Role for the Icelandic Government'*.

4.1. Impacts: Tourism as a Double-edged Sword

4.1.1. The Walking Routes



Map 1. A map of downtown Reykjavík in Iceland including the walking routes of all fourteen walking interviews. The grey lines represent the streets that were passed once in total. The blue lines represent the streets that were passed more than once in total. The red pins indicate the top attractions for visitors in downtown Reykjavík according to Visit Reykjavík (2018), including the main street Laugavegur, the church Hallgrímskirkja, the Sun Voyager statue and many museums.

Map 1 shows how the GPS tracking data was mapped out to display the walking routes of all fourteen walking interviews in downtown Reykjavík. The grey lines represent the streets that were passed only once in total, whereas the blue lines represent the streets that were passed more than once in total. This distinction has been made in order to build the analysis of the interview data and the observational data around the routes that were chosen most frequently. Since these routes were chosen most often, they might cover the places that are most indicative of the experiences of the participants with the tourism growth. When comparing both the grey and blue walking routes to the top attractions in the downtown area of the city, which are indicated by the red pins, it becomes visible that many of these attractions are found along or in the vicinity of the blue routes. It can therefore be concluded from the map that the participants might have chosen their walking routes based on the visitor attractions that would be passed. It can also be observed from the map that the main streets in the downtown area were most frequently included in the walking routes. One explanation for this observation is provided by Evans and Jones (2011). During the walking interviews that they conducted, they found that the main streets are highly familiar to the participants and that the presence of other people made them feel safe during the walks. It has remained uncertain whether this was also the case in this research.

Another explanation might be that the main streets are the places where the impacts of the tourism growth are most tangible according to the participants. This explanation would be in line with the finding by García-Hernández et al. (2017) that the pressure of the tourism growth is experienced most strongly in the near vicinity of the top visitor attractions in a tourist destination. This corresponds with the interviews which have indicated that the participants were searching for places that would support their narrative of how some parts of downtown Reykjavík have changed since the tourism boom, whilst others had stayed more or less the same.

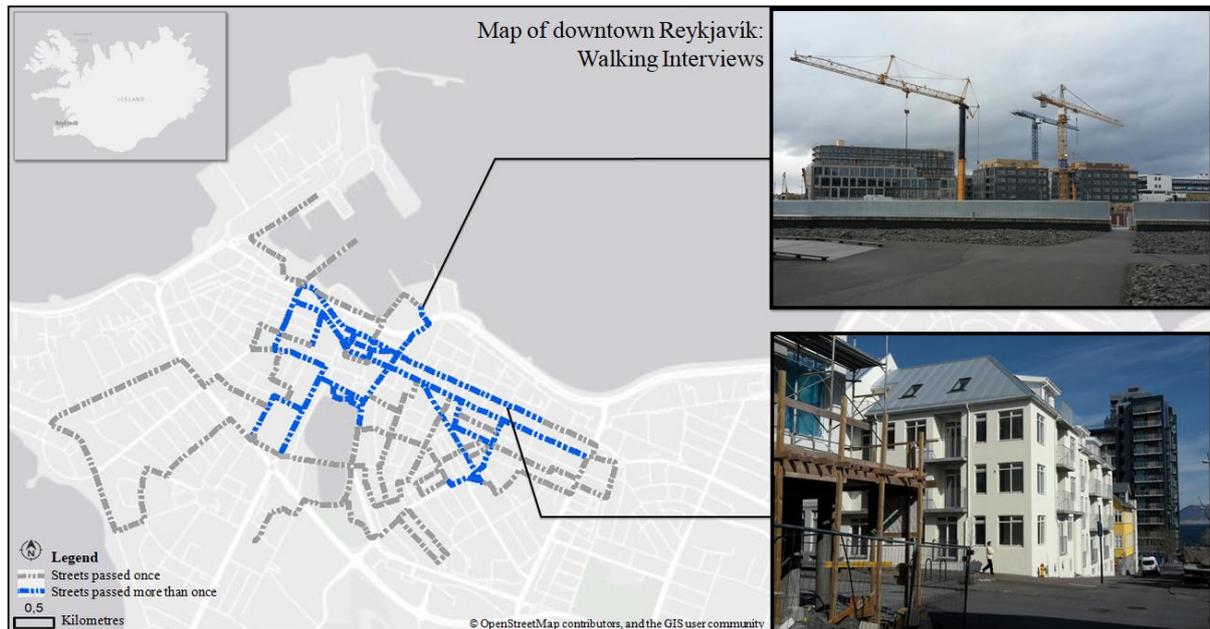
4.1.2. Environmental impacts

It was expected that most of the impacts of the tourism growth would be experienced in the downtown area of Reykjavík as it is the key meeting ground of local residents and foreign visitors in Iceland, but this was not the case for all impacts. The environmental impacts, such as environmental pollution, were mostly experienced in the countryside rather than in the city of Reykjavík. Since the case study for this research has been demarcated to the downtown area of Reykjavík, the environmental impacts are considered to be beyond the scope of this research and will therefore not be discussed any further in the thesis. However, since the environmental impacts that have been mentioned by the participants during the walking interviews were consistent of mere negative impacts, it can be expected that the environmental impacts have played a part in the development of more negative attitudes over time.

4.1.3. Economic impacts

All of the participants shared the notion that the tourism boom in Iceland is a good development with bad consequences. The participants recognized the tourism growth as a good development because it was tourism that had pulled them out of the financial crisis in 2008. The most frequently mentioned positive impact of the tourism growth is the increase of employment and opportunities for starting a business. This finding is supported by the rate of unemployment in Iceland that was only 2.8% in 2017 (Statistics Iceland, 2018a). At the time that the walking interviews took place, all of the participants were employed in the tourism industry, mostly working as full-time or part-time tour guides. A more detailed description of the participants is included in Appendix A. According to Deery et al. (2012) and García et al. (2015), there is wide-spread consensus in the academic field of tourism research that economic dependence on the tourism industry often results in positive attitudes towards the impacts of the tourism growth. Contrary to this belief, Sigrún (55, Icelandic) found that her involvement in the tourism industry had brought her closer to experiencing the negative impacts of the tourism growth. The economic benefits of the tourism growth have not masked the other impacts, both good and bad.

When Marc (34, French) moved to Reykjavík four years ago, he had fallen for this fairytale of a place called Iceland. Standing in front of the concert hall ‘Harpa’ at the beginning of the walking interview, Marc pointed out the construction cranes that were being used to build a new five-star hotel next to Harpa. This is shown in the photograph in the upper right corner in map 2. On the other side of the construction site, there were brand new apartment buildings that looked nothing like the traditional Icelandic architecture in the older parts of the city. The clean, flat roof and brightly coloured and clean white buildings were in stark contrast to the older and more grim-looking buildings next to them. The photograph in the lower right corner in map 2 shows how these brand new apartment buildings have been transforming the face of downtown Reykjavík ever since the tourism boom. Marc explained how the rising number of foreign visitors to Iceland has raised the need for visitor accommodation, which has resulted in numerous construction sites as well as a rapid expansion of the Airbnb industry. As many homes are currently rented out to visitors, there exists a housing crisis in Reykjavík that literally forced both Marc and Saskia (46, Dutch) to move a large number of times over the past years. Katla (53, Icelandic) and Elín (32, Icelandic) also described how they had experienced that the cost of living has increased as a result of the tourism growth. At the time that the walking interviews took place, Júlia (46, Brazilian) and Laura (30, Dutch) were actually looking for a new home in Reykjavík but found it incredibly difficult to find a place that was large enough and still affordable.



Map 2. The routes of all fourteen walking routes in downtown Reykjavík, Iceland. The photograph in the upper right corner shows the construction site for a new five-star hotel next to the concert hall ‘Harpa’. The photograph in the lower right corner shows a brand new apartment building in the street Hverfisgata in downtown Reykjavík.

4.1.4. Social impacts

The main street Laugavegur was the place most frequently visited in all fourteen walking interviews. According to Katla (53, Icelandic), the biggest complaint of the local residents and the visitors is that there are just too many people at the same time in the same place. This is particularly the case near the top attractions of Reykjavík that were displayed in map 1, which include the main streets. Katla and Marc (34, French) described how the rising number of foreign visitors in the downtown area had been causing inconveniences in their daily lives, such as needing to wait in line for 20 minutes before being served at your favourite bakery. However, whereas some participants wanted to show the main street because they were experiencing the visitors in the area as a nuisance, others chose to show the main street because they experienced it as a lively meeting ground for foreign visitors and local residents. For example, Arnar (33, Icelandic) and Sigrún (55, Icelandic) applauded the tourism growth because:

'Ten years ago, if you would go up the main shopping street Laugavegur, every second building was empty. ... It was quite dull and dropping down, but now there is a lot more life ... new restaurants, ... a higher standard of food culture than before.' (Arnar, 33, Icelandic)

This quote supports the idea of tourism as a driver of place change (Butler, 1980; McKercher et al., 2015), seeing that the tourism growth has not only transformed the face of the downtown area, but also the atmosphere as the number of foreign visitors in the downtown area has risen. The tourism growth has resulted in the development of new restaurants and shops that both local residents and foreign visitors can visit. According to Helene (25, German), these places could not be sustained by the local residents alone if it were not for the visitors buying stuff there as well. However, in line with the findings of Mordue (2005), the developments were not appreciated by all participants because the new stores and restaurants are often developed at the expense of smaller and 'more special' stores:

'We are having tourist shops popping up in places where there were shops I would visit. ... I do not need a hat that looks like a puffin, but I like my candle store and my kitchenware store, and all these things are disappearing. ... They could not afford the rent anymore because they were just smaller places. And then they have to leave and get replaced by Vietnamese restaurants or Dunkin' Donuts.' (Helene, 25, German)

The two quotes on this page have shown that the participants are experiencing the impacts of the tourism growth in varying and sometimes contrasting ways. Moreover, most of the participants in this research experience the tourism growth in Iceland as a double-edged sword, which means that they recognize both the negative and the positive impacts that have resulted from the tourism growth.

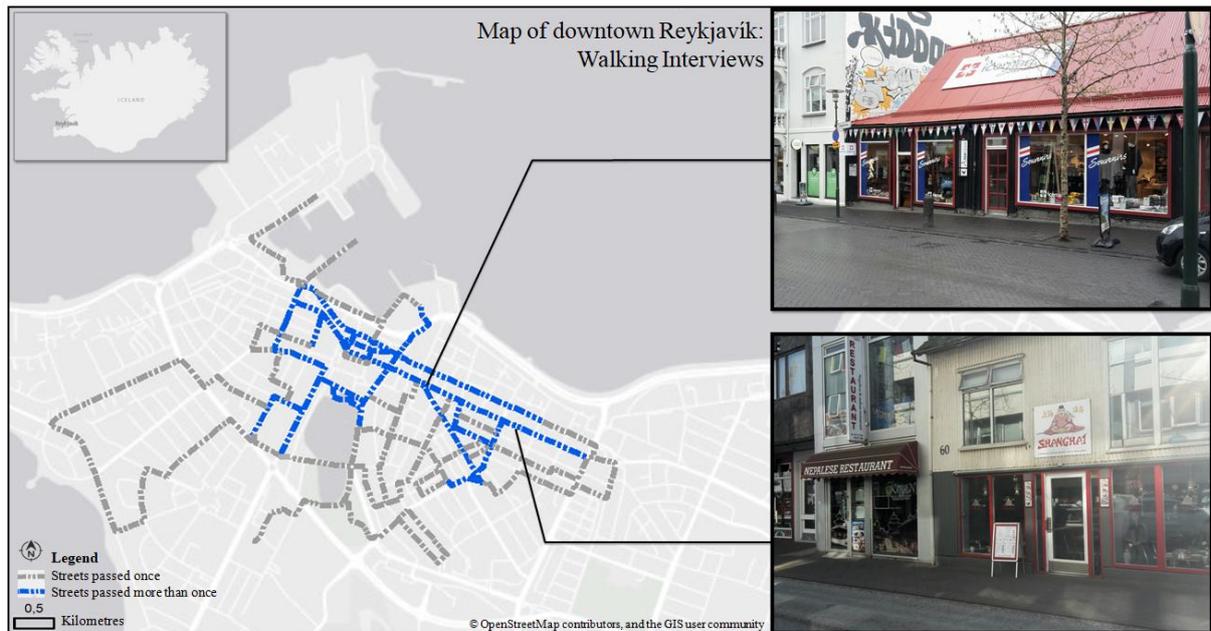
4.2. Attitudes: The Rising Pressure of Mass Tourism

4.2.1. From Backpackers to Mass Tourists

Even though the tourism growth is extremely important for the Icelandic economy, most participants were starting to feel like the negative impacts from the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland have been increasing fast. The social exchange theory and the social disruption theory discussed in the second chapter of the thesis explained how the attitudes that local residents develop in response to the tourism growth is often the outcome of a weighting of the negative and the positive impacts (Ap, 1990; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2011). In support of these theories, it was found that the participants who experienced a more rapid increase of the negative impacts as compared to the positive impacts were also more negative towards the impacts of the tourism growth. It was also found that the attitudes of most participants had become more negative over time, especially since the rise of mass tourism in Iceland. This is not surprising, as Butler (1980) and McKercher et al. (2015) found that place changes become particularly noticeable during periods of rapid tourism growth and these periods occur mostly when a destination is maturing into a mass tourist destination. One explanation for this in the case of Iceland was found in the change of the type of visitor from backpackers to mass tourists:

'It slowly starts to become kind of mass tourism. And so we have a different type of tourist here than we had maybe thirty years ago. And that tourist needs to have his gigantic latte, and that tourist wants his American burger. Maybe not so much a fish stew.' (Helene, 25, German)

Helene described how in contrast to backpackers, mass tourists are seen as 'typical' tourists that stand out from all others because of their physical appearance and demeanour. Luo et al. (2015) found that the participants in their study had a more positive view of backpackers and the impacts they generate than of mass tourists. The findings of this research support the belief that the local residents prefer backpackers over mass tourists. As if providing for a description for a forensic sketch, all of the participants described the mass tourist by a combination of these 'typical' characteristics: a camera, hiking shoes, a backpack, dressed according to the weather (e.g. umbrella, gloves), a curious look, and slow walking. For example, David (29, American) spotted a man in short pants during the walking interview, who he quickly recognized as an American tourist. In fact, the American tourist has long been regarded as a symbol of mass tourism since the late twentieth century (Cohen, 2008). *'They are just different from us'* was stated by Jón (47, Icelandic). The mass tourist was often stereotyped as the opposite of the local resident: a 'typical' tourist that wants 'typical' tourist things, like souvenir shops and international chain stores, which are often regarded as symbols of mass tourism (Sherlock, 2001). In this way, downtown Reykjavík is gaining signifiers which indicate that it is increasingly becoming a tourism place as the result of the arrival of the mass tourists. These signifiers are displayed in map 3.



Map 3. The routes of all fourteen walking interviews in downtown Reykjavík, Iceland. The photograph in the upper right corner shows a souvenir shop near the junction of the main streets Laugavegur and Skólavörðustígur. The photograph in the lower right corner shows a Nepalese and a Chinese restaurant in the main street Laugavegur.

4.2.2. Outnumbered by Visitors

Another explanation for the experienced increase of place changes since the rise of mass tourism is that with the arrival of the mass tourists, the number of foreign visitors has exceeded the number of local residents in Iceland (Statistics Iceland, 2018b). It is important to recognize that such a threshold is reached far sooner in a country like Iceland with a population size of only 350 thousand inhabitants than in a city like Barcelona that is home to nearly 1.7 million residents (World Population Review, 2018). During the walking interview, Sigrún (55, Icelandic) talked about how fifteen years ago, there would be no one in the streets of downtown Reykjavík in the daytime because all the local residents would be working at that time. However, when asked about the people that were in the streets during the walk, she countered that they were all visitors. This observation supports the finding by Semyonov et al. (2004) that is not the actual number but rather the experienced number of foreign visitors relative to the number of local residents that can result in local residents feeling threatened or excluded from a place. Regardless of where the threshold is, the interviews support the idea that when this threshold is exceeded and the local residents are being outnumbered by visitors, this can lead to local residents feeling like they are becoming strangers in their own homes:

'When I walk downtown, I feel like I never really meet Icelandic people. I feel like 90% of the people I meet are tourists. ... And I feel like the atmosphere you get when there are only tourists is a bit like you are in a zoo and you are the specimen.' (Elín, 32, Icelandic)

This quote by Elín is a good example of how McKercher et al. (2015) found that when non-tourism places become tourism places, the signifiers for tourism places can make local residents feel like they do not belong there anymore. The experience of being a specimen in a zoo can be related to the feeling of alienation that can occur when a place has changed a lot from how they knew it, like it happens during a period of rapid tourism growth, as described by Relph (1976, in Seamon & Sowers, 2008). The participants also described how the rising number of foreign visitors to Iceland has resulted in a housing crisis, which in turn encouraged the development of new apartment buildings, hostels and hotels, and the rapid expansion of the Airbnb industry. Marc (34, French), Saskia (46, Dutch), Júlia (46, Brazilian) and Laura (30, Dutch) described how many local residents in Reykjavík *feel* like they are being pushed out of the downtown area, leaving mostly visitors behind:

'I do not believe that my colleagues visit the downtown area much. If I share with them that both of my neighbours are Icelandic, they react surprised because they do not believe there are Icelanders living downtown anymore.' (Laura, 30, Dutch)

The quote by Laura shows that it is not merely about being forced to move out because of rising rents or because the homes of local residents are rented out to visitors. More to the fact, there seems to exist a feeling of wanting to avoid the downtown area. An explanation was provided by Saarinen (2004), who stated that when the signifiers for a tourism place increase, a place can change to become more representative of the needs of the visitors than of the local residents. It were mainly the participants that were not born in Iceland who stressed the housing issue. In response to this, Kristín (29, Icelandic) explained that many local residents that grew up in Iceland have friends or family that they can rent a place from. According to Kristín, these personal arrangements provide the Icelandic residents with '*a good shield*' that protects them from rising rents and being forced to move out.

4.3. Hospitality: A Key Role for the Icelandic Government

4.3.1. Losing Patience

Since the arrival of the mass tourists in Iceland, many of the participants experienced that the negative impacts have been increasing more rapidly than the positive impacts. Subsequently, these participants have developed more negative attitudes towards the tourism growth over time. Based on the tourism life cycle model by Butler (1980) and the findings by Ribeiro et al. (2017) and Doğan (1989), it was expected that such negative attitudes would result in an increase of more hostile responses from local residents towards foreign visitors, assuming that they started out welcoming before the tourism boom:

'Up until 2009, everyone would be taking in tourists like this crazy phenomenon: "oh my god, you are a foreigner. That is amazing!" ... A foreigner was incredibly strange. ... People were inviting tourists home and they would feel like "I have to be a good host. I have to do anything for you." ... At the time, the only people that came here were kind of extreme tourists, backpackers.' (Kristín, 29, Icelandic)

This quote describes the traditional notion of hospitality as a moral obligation to welcome the visiting stranger into your home and to protect and nurture them (Derrida, 2000; Aramberri, 2001). In support of the quote, Marc (34, French) described how he would often be invited into the homes of the farmers that were living in the countryside to share a meal with them when he first came to Iceland as a hitchhiker about six years ago. Since the rise of mass tourism in Iceland, this friendly relationship between local residents and foreign visitors has been changing. More recently, Marc had noticed that the traditional understanding of hospitality has grown less and less over time, and he was not the only participant in this research to have noticed this. Elín (32, Icelandic) and Jón (47, Icelandic) felt like the patience and the tolerance of local residents in Reykjavík is starting to decrease:

'It is growing, or it was. It seems to be a bit contained now, but the main season has not started yet ... The people living in the suburbs, the patience that they have for tourism is growing less, and less, and less.' (Jón, 47, Icelandic)

This quote supports the belief that Iceland is currently moving from the development stage into the consolidation stage in the tourism life cycle model by Butler (1980), because the first signs of the local residents having feelings of discontent with the course of the tourism growth are starting to become noticeable. Still, most participants found it very difficult to recall any specific occurrence of a hostile encounter between the local residents and the foreign visitors in downtown Reykjavík up until now. However, if Iceland were to continue on following the trajectory of the tourism life cycle model, it can be expected that the hostility towards the visitors will be growing in Iceland in the next years.

4.3.2. Withdrawal

Contrary to these expectations, however, most of the participants did not believe that tourism-phobia will emerge in Iceland next. Júlia (46, Brazilian) explained that the local residents in Iceland are too nice to become hostile. It was observed firsthand during the walking interviews how kind and helpful the participants were towards by-passers that were asking for some directions or for a photograph in downtown Reykjavík. In compliance with these observations, the participants thought of themselves as welcoming to the foreign visitors in Iceland, *regardless* of their attitudes towards the tourism growth:

'In general, people want them to have a nice stay. ... I think we all want people that are coming here to travel, to enjoy it just as much as they want to enjoy their travels as Icelanders.' (Elín, 32, Icelandic)

This quote is an excellent example of what Aramberri (2001) described as reciprocity, which is when the guest is offered hospitality with the expectation that the favour is returned once the roles are reversed and the host becomes the guest. Reciprocity was important to all participants because they are all frequent travellers. As such, the quote indicates that the traditional notion of hospitality as a moral obligation as it existed before the tourism boom has not disappeared over time, but it has been under an increasing pressure since the rise of mass tourism in Iceland. While some of the participants mentioned that they will be moving out of downtown Reykjavík to get away from the impacts of the tourism growth, others have been increasingly avoiding the tourism places in the area, thereby limiting the number of tourist encounters that are taking place within the downtown area:

'You try to find places where there is not a lot of tourists going to. ... For example, if you walk to the other side of town, one of the places that I like to go to a lot is the same coffee shop that we just took a picture of, but it is on the other side of town so it is much quieter there.' (David, 29, American)

The quote by David shows that it is not just Icelanders that might be feeling the need to avoid the tourism places, but immigrants as well. In support of this finding, Saskia (46, Dutch) said that she preferred to not hear 'tourist-talk' in her free time away from work, whereas Irina (23, Romanian) and Mike (40, American) described how they had been adjusting their usual routes through the downtown area to avoid the often crowded places. 'Icelanders do everything for the tourists', was stated by Irina (23, Romanian), but this responsibility to meet the needs and demands of the visiting stranger appears to be increasingly limited to a customer relationship rather than a friendship. The Icelandic participants were a lot more divided in their responses to the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland. Whereas Arnar (33, Icelandic) and Sigrún (55, Icelandic) appreciated being around the foreign visitors, the four other Icelandic participants preferred to avoid and withdraw from downtown Reykjavík because they were feeling overwhelmed by the large number of foreign visitors that is in the area most of the time.

4.3.3. Not the Tourist's Fault

Any rare occurrences of hostile responses from local residents towards foreign visitors in Iceland were explained by the participants as an expression of frustration that the local residents have with regard to the poor management of the impacts of the tourism growth by the Icelandic government. Nearly every participant had this strong opinion that the impacts of the tourism growth are *'not the tourist's fault'*:

'I think that as far as blame goes, if there is a list from 1 to 50, the tourists are at like 49 or 48. It is not their fault, it is not their fault at all. ... The country has gone too far to please the people who are benefitting from it at the expense of the regular people who live here and who have to bear the burden.'
(Mike, 40, American)

It becomes clear from this quote that Mike is not projecting his feelings of sadness, frustration and anger onto the rising number of foreign visitors that are coming to Iceland. This is different from the phenomenon of tourism-phobia that is being experienced in many popular tourist destinations that are also experiencing a rapidly rising number of visitors. In the case of Iceland, the few incidents of hostile responses from local residents towards foreign visitors that have taken place appear to be more indicative of a conflict between the Icelandic government and the local residents, rather than between the local residents and the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland. This recognition is supported by Ivlevs (2017), who discovered that it is not the actual encounter between the local residents and the foreign visitors that influences the attitudes of local residents towards the tourism growth most, but rather their experience of the impacts. Most participants would like to see the Icelandic government take their responsibility in steering the course of the tourism growth in a more favourable direction by developing more regulations, more education and more facilities for the foreign visitors. However, the role of the Icelandic government has often been controversial and has made the participants sceptical:

'Iceland used to live mostly on fishing and somehow I think that they are dealing with tourism the same way that they used to for fishing. You know, in the way that they used to go out at sea and whatever they could catch they would, because they did not know how the next season would be. They would just grab and not necessarily think, and I find that it is the same with tourism.' (Marc, 34, French)

This quote is a good example of the *'thetta reddast'* attitude that has been an historical part of the Icelandic culture and still appears to be the attitude of the Icelandic government for dealing with national concerns in the present. In the case of the Icelandic fishing industry, this attitude was part of the reason for the industry to collapse because there was no more herring left to catch in the waters surrounding Iceland during the 1960's and 1970's (Gil-Alana & Huijbens, 2018).

The ‘herring crisis’ is one of many examples that suggest that there is a long existing conflict between the local residents and the Icelandic government. In turn, this also explains the strong focus of the participants on the undertakings of the Icelandic government rather than the foreign visitors:

‘I think they really think this tourism thing is going to regulate itself. ... It is this “thetta reddast” – “everything will be alright”. Sometimes it is just too much, it is almost Brazilian. It is even worse than in Brazil. ... There are other matters that seem more important than to regulate.’ (Júlia, 46, Brazilian)

In support of the quote by Júlia, Arnar (33, Icelandic) described how it is not in the Icelandic nature to plan ahead. On the other hand, the cultural and the historical context of the tourism growth in Iceland has shown that the Nordic country has been a very hospitable and adaptive society in the past, and that this is probably not in spite of the flexible attitudes of many Icelandic inhabitants, but because of it. The quote supports the belief that the Icelandic government and the approach that they choose for managing the impacts of the tourism growth is going to play a key role in the future development of the hospitality of local residents in Reykjavík in response to the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland. Moreover, the quote supports the observation that it were not only the Icelandic participants that based their attitudes and responses towards the impacts of the tourism growth on the cultural and historical context surrounding the tourism growth in Iceland, but the immigrants too. One explanation for this was found in the widespread media coverage of the tourism growth in Iceland. The words that the participants had used to express their thoughts and feelings were at times nearly identical to the words that had been used in Icelandic and foreign news articles regarding the same topic. In support of this, Postma and Schmuecker (2017) also found that the attitudes of people are often highly informed by the media. As such, the way that the extensive media coverage of tourism-phobia can influence the attitudes of local residents towards the impacts of the tourism growth in a developing or developed tourist destination can provide for an interesting future research question on tourism-phobia in itself.

5. Conclusion

The research question stated in the introduction to the thesis was: *How do local residents in Reykjavík experience and respond to the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland?* The research objective was to explore how the hospitality of local residents in many developing and developed tourist destinations changes over time in response to a rising number of foreign visitors. A qualitative approach was used including fourteen individual walking interviews with local residents in downtown Reykjavík to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences of and responses to the rapid tourism growth in Iceland. The participants considered the tourism growth to be a good development with bad consequences. In relation to the theories described by Saarinen (2004) and McKercher et al. (2015), it became clear that the downtown area of Reykjavík is gaining signifiers that indicate that the area is becoming a tourism place that is more of a home to most visitors rather than most local residents. In support of the social exchange theory and the social disruption theory, it was found that those participants that experienced predominantly negative impacts rather than positive impacts as a result of the tourism growth were also the participants that had the most negative attitudes towards the impacts of the tourism growth in Iceland. In addition, it was found that the attitudes of most participants had become more negative over time, especially since the rise of mass tourism in Iceland. This was explained by the change of the type of visitor from backpackers to mass tourists, as well as the local residents feeling outnumbered by the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland, but especially in the downtown area of Reykjavík.

Based on the tourism life cycle model by Butler (1980), it was expected that the next years will be critical in determining whether or not the increase of negative attitudes is going to lead to an increase of hostile responses in Iceland like it has happened in tourist destinations such as Amsterdam, Barcelona and Venice. However, in contrast to the findings by Doğan (1989) and Ribeiro et al. (2017), the participants chose to respond by withdrawing themselves from the impacts of the tourism growth rather than seeking out a direct confrontation with the visitors. The finding that negative attitudes do not necessarily lead to hostile responses is supported by the belief that attitudes are mere indicators of behavioural intent and not actual behaviour (Carmichael, 2000). Moreover, the notion of hospitality as a moral obligation as it existed before the tourism boom in Iceland has not disappeared over time, but it has been under an increasing pressure since the arrival of the mass tourists in Iceland. In line with Aramberri (2001), Lashley (2008) and Tasci and Semrad (2016), it was found that the participants still feel a sense of responsibility to ensure that the visitors will have a nice stay in Iceland, but that the interaction with the visitors is increasingly limited to a customer relationship rather than a friendship. Since visitor satisfaction relies on visitors feeling welcome, the traditional (Western) understanding of hospitality as a moral obligation that has been described by Derrida (2000) and Aramberri (2001) can become more relevant again *if* the local residents in Reykjavík will start to develop hostile responses towards the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland in the upcoming years.

The few hostile responses that did occur appear to be more indicative of a conflict between the Icelandic government and the local residents than between the local residents and the foreign visitors. The findings have indicated that as long as the impacts of the tourism growth are managed effectively, there is no reason to believe that the local residents in a developing or developed tourist destination will inevitably become less welcoming over time as was proposed by the tourism life cycle model by Butler (1980). This conclusion was supported by secretary general Taleb Rifai of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), who stated that tourism growth is not the enemy; it is all about management (Rifai, 2017). It is therefore concluded in this thesis that the Icelandic government and the approach that they will choose for managing the impacts of the tourism growth is going to play a critical role in the future development of the hospitality of the local residents in Reykjavík in response to the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland. Since the Icelandic government has started to focus its tourism policies on spreading the rising number of foreign visitors over the country (Jóhannesson et al., 2010), it should be interesting to conduct a follow-up research with the participation of local residents living in the countryside in order to explore how the hospitality of local residents changes when the number of non-tourism places to withdraw to decreases. Furthermore, it would be interesting to conduct a longitudinal study as an extension of this research that will allow for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of tourism-phobia in a singular case study over a longer period of time as opposed to comparing snapshots of tourist destinations in various development stages (Baxter, 2016).

Since tourism-phobia has become a large concern in many developing and developed tourist destinations around the world, it is relevant to better understand and to develop strategies to anticipate the development of this phenomenon. Based on the findings in the research, it can be argued that the management of the impacts of the tourism growth should receive more attention both in Iceland and other tourist destinations, and especially during the rise of mass tourism, to try and prevent hostile responses from being developed. Even though the findings of this research are firmly grounded in the cultural and historical context surrounding the tourism growth in Iceland, the research has offered some relevant insights that might be transferable to other tourist destinations that are experiencing periods of rapid tourism growth in the present and the future, like it has more recently been the case in Dubrovnik and a number of cities in the United Kingdom (Seraphin et al., 2018).

5.1. Final Reflections upon the Research Process

The use of walking interviews for this research and the reflections upon the process of data collection and data analysis in the thesis offer some insights that can contribute to the development of this still relatively new qualitative research method. The walking interviews have been positively reviewed by both the researcher and the participants, the latter describing the walking interviews as a refreshing approach to traditional interview methods that are often considered more static and uncomfortable. However, there are always things that can be improved. For example, the reflection on the walking interviews by the participants could have been extended, particularly in relation to the chosen walking routes. Also, the questions in the interview guide could have been more related to the environment to create a stronger cohesion between the interview data and the observational data that would have allowed for the observational data to be more than supplementary. In particular, the participants should have been asked more about their behaviour during the walking interviews in order to find out to what extent the hospitable responses of the participants towards by-passers during the walking interviews were genuine and representative of their everyday responses to visitors in Iceland, or that it was a conscious decision to act a certain way because of the presence of a researcher. In relation to this, Winchester & Rofe (2016) concluded that a participatory approach that includes the immersion of the researcher into the phenomenon can generate a deeper understanding of that phenomenon, but it will also influence the research process and findings. If this needs to be avoided in any future research, it is recommended to use a go-along interview instead, during which the researcher follows the participant in their everyday routines in an as unobtrusive manner as possible (Carpiano, 2009; Kusenbach, 2003).

The participants were asked about how they had experienced the conversation about tourism with a student-researcher who is both an outsider and a foreign visitor herself. Most of the participants found that they had not consciously taken that knowledge into account during the walking interviews, but some of the participants did wonder if they might have unconsciously left out information that they would have shared if it were another local resident posing the questions. Apart from this reflection, it was discussed that it is very likely that the extensive media coverage of the tourism growth in Iceland has influenced the findings of this research, since the words that the participants used to express their thoughts and feelings were at times almost identical to the words that have been used in Icelandic and foreign news articles regarding this topic. It is recommended in this thesis to use the media coverage for designing an interview guide to be prepared for such standardized answers and to be able to go deeper into the reasoning behind the answers rather than to regenerate findings that are already known.

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Appendix A: Introduction to the Participants

Irina, 23 years, Romanian

Originally from Romania, Irina decided to move to Reykjavík about a year ago after she had followed an internship at an hotel in Reykjavík. At the time of the interview, she was working at the same hotel as a breakfast waiter and she was residing in the postcode area 101 with her Icelandic boyfriend.

Saturday April 14th 2018, 16:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Helene, 25 years, German

Originally from Germany, Helene is half Icelandic but finds herself more connected to her Icelandic roots. She had lived in Norway for a while before she moved to Reykjavík six years ago. She lived in the postcode area 101 between 2013 and 2016, after which she moved to another neighbourhood in Reykjavík. At the time of the interview, she was studying tourism at the University of Iceland and she was working as a travel consultant.

Thursday April 12th 2018, 10:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 1 hour and 5 minutes.

Kristín, 29 years, Icelandic

Kristín was born in Reykjavík and she has lived in the postcode area 101 ever since. As a result, she feels strongly connected to ‘her’ neighbourhood. She has travelled a lot, mainly to cities in Europe. At the time of the interview, she had just finished studying geography at the University of Iceland.

Monday April 16th 2018, 14:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 1 hour and 7 minutes.

David, 29 years, American

Originally from the United States of America, David moved to Reykjavík over a year ago because his girlfriend was writing her PhD in Iceland. Before that, he had lived in Germany for about three years. Although he studied to become an engineer, David worked as a tour guide for the last six years. At the time of the interview, he was working as a Northern Lights guide and he was living just outside of the postcode area 101 in Reykjavík.

Friday April 13th 2018, 14:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 1 hour and 27 minutes.

Laura, 30 years, Dutch

Originally from The Netherlands, Laura moved to the postcode area 101 in Reykjavík in 2013. After having travelled to Iceland for several holidays, she fell in love with the country and started working in Iceland as a freelance journalist. Even though it took some time adjusting, Iceland is her home now. She used to travel a lot before she moved to Iceland, but now she mostly travels to visit her family.

Saturday April 14th 2018, 13:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 43 minutes.

Elín, 32 years, Icelandic

When Elín was nineteen years old, she moved from the countryside in the north to Reykjavík to study geography at the University of Iceland. In 2009, she left Iceland for a while to travel around Europe, but she moved back to Iceland in 2013. At the time of the interview, she was a Master student living in the postcode area 101 in Reykjavík. At times, she has also worked as a ranger in the countryside.

Wednesday April 18th 2018, 15:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 51 minutes.

Arnar, 33 years, Icelandic

Arnar used to live in a town called Akureyri in the far north of Iceland before he moved to Reykjavík about five years ago. Although he had lived in the postcode area 101, he did not live there anymore.

At the time of the interview, he was working at a company that imported goods for hotels, restaurants and bars. He was also working as a tour guide. Arnar has mainly travelled around Europe, but he was planning to expand his travel experiences in the near future.

Tuesday April 17th 2018, 19:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 36 minutes.

Marc, 34 years, French

Originally from France, Marc moved to Reykjavík about four years ago after finding a job at a tourist office. At the time of the interview, he was residing at walking distance from the postcode area 101 and he was working as a tour guide. Marc has lived in Germany before moving to Iceland and he has been thinking about moving away, onwards to a new adventure.

Thursday April 12th 2018, 16:45 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 1 hour and 1 minute.

Mike, 40 years, American

Originally from the United States of America, Stuart had first visited Iceland in 2005 and was drawn in by the way that Iceland took care of its people and its environment. Before moving to the postcode area 101 in Reykjavík in 2007, Stuart had also lived in Russia. At the time of the interview, he was working as a photographer. He was thinking about moving to the countryside because of the tourism growth in the city.

Thursday April 12th 2018, 14:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 53 min

Saskia, 46 years, Dutch

Originally from the Netherlands, Saskia had already been working as a tour guide in Iceland for a decade before she decided to move from Amsterdam to Reykjavík five years ago. She felt herself drawn to the beautiful landscapes, in particular the mountains. At the time of the interview, she was living in the postcode area 101.

Friday April 13th 2018, 19:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 1 hour.

Júlia, 46 years, Brazilian

Originally from Brazil, Júlia and her family moved back and forth between Germany and Iceland between 2006 and 2011. At the time of the interview, she was residing in the postcode area 101 in Reykjavík and she was working as a tour guide. Before that, she had been working in a souvenir shop. However, she never felt quite happy in that job because it did not allow her to use her Master's degree.

Wednesday April 18th 2018, 11:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 1h. and 32 min.

Jón, 47 years, Icelandic

Jón was born and raised in Reykjavík. At the time of the interview, he was not living in the postcode area 101 and he was working as a tour guide. Apart from France, Jón has not travelled that much.

He is actually thinking about leaving Iceland in the future, because he feels that Iceland has changed.

Tuesday April 17th 2018, 18:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 51 min.

Katla, 53 years, Icelandic

Katla was born in Iceland and she moved to Reykjavík when she was 22 years old. At the time of the interview, she was not living in the postcode area 101. She has been working at an airline company for over twenty years. She is also a part-time guide and likes to travel both abroad and within the country.

Tuesday April 17th 2018, 17:00 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 25 min.

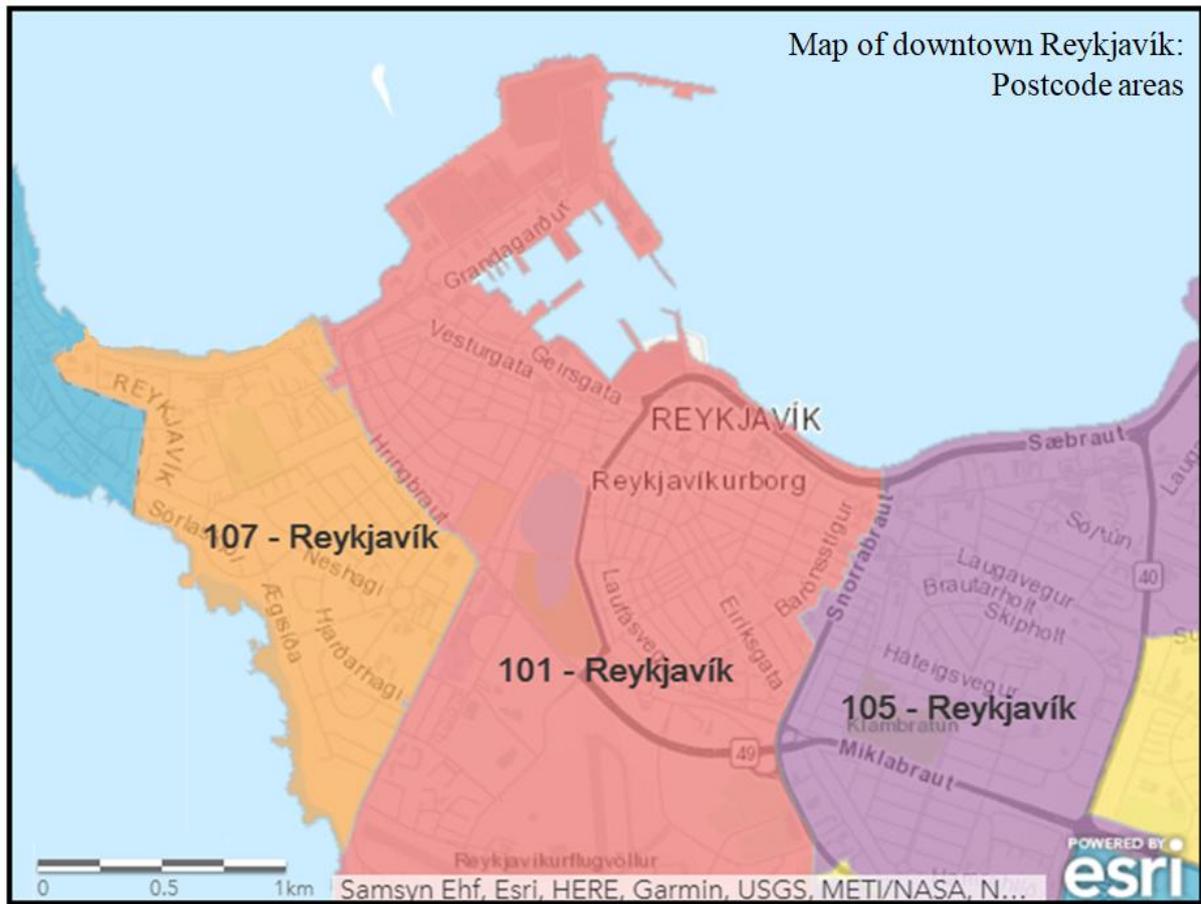
Sigrún, 55 years, Icelandic

Sigrún grew up in one of the outskirts of Reykjavík and she had also lived in the countryside for some years.

However, she soon moved 'back home' to the city. Sigrún like to travel a lot and she also likes having the tourists around in Iceland. At the time of the interview, she was living in postcode area 101 and she was working as a pre-school teacher and as a tour guide as well.

Monday April 16th 2018, 10:30 local time in Reykjavík, Iceland. Total duration: 38 min.

Appendix B: Map of Postcode Areas in Reykjavík



Map 4. Postcode areas in Reykjavík (Íslandspóstur, 2017).

Appendix C: Online Survey for Participant Selection

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this! With your help, I hope to learn more about life in Reykjavik and your experiences as a local resident with tourism in Iceland. Walk-along interviews are a rather new idea in doing research. In a normal interview, I could just ask you questions about it, but do you not agree that it is much more fun and informative to go outside where you can show me what we are talking about? If the weather does not allow for a nice walk, we can do the interview indoors.

If you are still interested in participating, and I really hope you are, please take a minute to fill in this survey. It contains some short questions about your personal background, preferred dates for the walk to take place, and contact details.

This survey is not binding. It is merely a way of getting in touch with participants. You can also send an e-mail to miranda346@hotmail.com if you prefer to take that route.

By filling in the survey and participating in the interview, you allow for the answers to be used in this research. The information you share will be used only for this research and will be processed anonymously throughout. You can withdraw from participation at any time.

Thank you! – Miranda

Q1. Is your current address in postcode area 101? Yes No

Q2. What is your gender? Male Female Other:
Open answer

Q3. In what year were you born? Open answer

Q4. What is your current occupation? Open answer

Q5. From April 12th to 18th, what are your *preferred* dates for the interview to take place?

Please check the boxes. If none of these dates work for you, April 25th to 26th can be discussed.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Thursday April 12 th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday April 13 th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday April 14 th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday April 15 th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monday April 16 th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday April 17 th	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday April 18 th (morning or afternoon)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6. Please leave your e-mail address for me to get into contact with you. Your address will remain confidential. You can always contact me directly by mailing to miranda346@hotmail.com

Contact details: Open answer

Thank you so much! Please share this link if you know others who can help.

I will get into contact with you as soon as possible and I hope to see you soon!

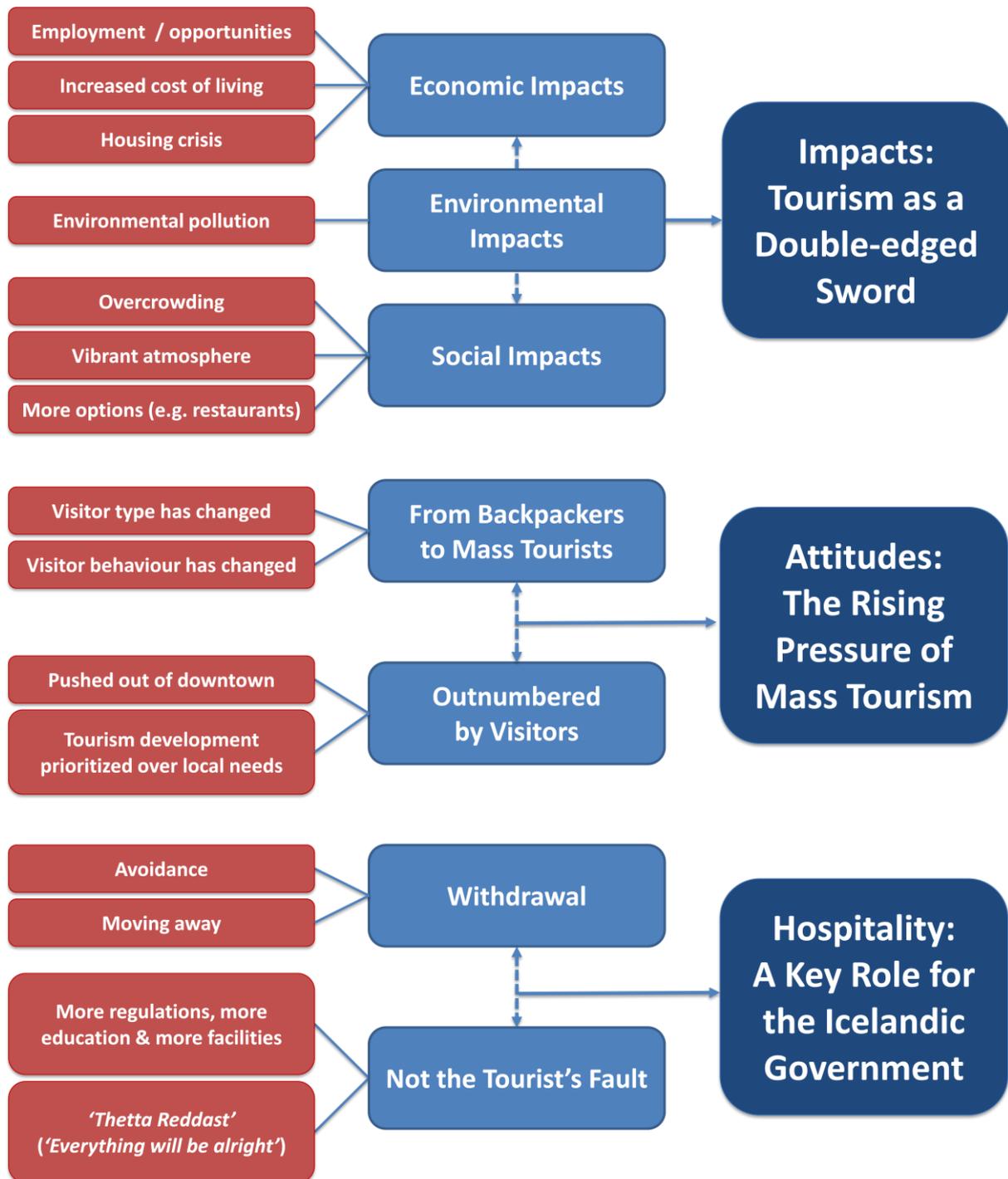
Kind regards, Miranda

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Topics	Research question: <i>How do local residents in Reykjavík experience and respond to the rising number of foreign visitors in Iceland?</i>
Introduction	I have prepared some questions for the interview, but you can share what is on your mind at any time. It is expected of you to determine the walking route. Background: Can you start by telling something about yourself?
Living in Reykjavík	How long have you lived in Reykjavík for? - Why did you decide to move to Reykjavík? - OR: What was it like growing up in Reykjavík?
Place connection	How would you describe Reykjavík today? How do you experience living in Reykjavík? - Do you feel connected to Reykjavík? - What does Reykjavík mean for who you are?
Downtown area	Do you live in or near the city centre of Reykjavík? - What words would you use to describe the city centre of Reykjavík? - Is it different from the other neighbourhoods in Reykjavík? How often do you visit the city centre of Reykjavík? - For what purposes do you usually visit the city centre of Reykjavík?
Tourism in general	In general, how do you feel about tourism? How do you experience tourism in your everyday life?
Tourism in Iceland	Do you yourself travel much? - Why (not)? - Do you find that you look differently at tourism in Iceland after you have visited other countries as a tourist yourself? – Why (not)?
Tourism in Reykjavík	Do you believe that the physical appearance of Reykjavík has changed because of tourism?
Tourist encounters	How often do you come into contact with tourists in your everyday life? - Where do these encounters usually take place? - How do you feel about the presence of tourists in Reykjavík?

Tourism boom	Did you know that the number of tourists has increased rapidly over the last ten years? – How do you feel about that?
Stereotype tourist	Can you tell who is a local resident and who is a tourist? – Why (not)? - How would you describe tourists? - How would you describe the behaviour of tourists? - In an ideal world, how would you like tourists to behave?
Hospitality (<i>Welcoming the visiting stranger</i>)	How welcoming do you believe you are to tourists in Iceland? - Can you give an example to explain this? In your knowledge, how have the reactions of local residents towards tourists in Reykjavík been so far? - Can you give an example of such a reaction? - How do you feel about these reactions?
‘Tourism-phobia’	There are other places, especially in Europe (Amsterdam, Berlin, Barcelona), that have also experienced or are experiencing a fast growth in tourism and where the local residents have reacted somewhat unwelcoming towards tourists because of the negative consequences of tourism. To what extent have you heard about negative reactions from local residents towards tourists in Iceland? - Do you believe that such negative reactions can develop in Iceland too? - Why (not)?
Future directions	How would you like to see Iceland develop as a tourist destination in the future? - How do you see your own role in this?
Reflections	How do you feel about talking to a tourist about tourism? - Do you think that your view differs a lot from mine considering that I am an outsider, and a tourist? – Why (not)?
Finishing the interview	Is there anything you would like to show me or add to what we have discussed that you feel is relevant? Thank you for participating in this research, you have been very helpful and I have enjoyed getting to learn about your life as a local resident of Reykjavík.

Appendix E: Code-to-Theory Model of the Interview Data



Appendix F: Informed Consent Form

Information about the Master research project

For my Master research in Cultural Geography at the University of Groningen, I would like to learn about everyday life in Reykjavik and the local opinions of and experiences with tourism in Iceland. During a study fieldtrip to Iceland in 2016, I became inspired to write about this topic. This is why I would like to talk to you about your experiences during a half-hour walk through the inner city of Reykjavik.

Practical information

1. The walk is expected to take about half an hour.
Dependent on our conversation and movement, the walk can take longer or shorter, although I would like to talk and walk for at least 20 minutes.
Please inform me beforehand if you need the interview to be finished at a certain time.
2. Also, please inform me beforehand if you have any constraints or uncertainties regarding the (length of the) walk so that I can take this into account.
3. If the weather does not allow for our walk to take place outdoors, I would like to have a conversation with you indoors, at a location we will choose together.
4. With your permission, I would like to audio record the conversation. I will use the audio recording will for this research alone and I will not share the recording with anyone besides my supervisor.
5. With your permission, I would also like to video record the walk with a small action camera. This will help me to look back at the walking route and the places we walked through after the interview.
6. Apart from a good opportunity for physical exercise, there is a Dutch gift in it for you!

Confidentiality and participant rights

During the interview, you have the right to not answer a question.

You have the right to ask to have the audio and/or video recording to be turned off at any moment during the interview. You also have the right to end the interview at any moment.

You have the right to ask for a copy of the written text of the interview.

The recordings will be kept confidentially. They will be not be shared with anyone other than my supervisor and are used for this research alone.

You have the right to remain anonymous, for instance by choosing a different name for yourself. I will withhold any personal characteristics that could help to identify you from publication if you choose to remain anonymous.

The results of this research will help me towards my Master thesis. When completed, the thesis will be made publically available through the University of Groningen library.

You have the right to withdraw from participation at any time.

Informed consent form

Please fill out the informed consent below if you would like to participate in this research. Your rights as a participant are explained on the previous page. Please take your time to read them carefully so that you fully understand and are able to fill out the informed consent below.

For the participant to fill out (please tick the boxes if you agree and fill out the text boxes):

I have read my rights as a participant on the previous page of this information sheet and I fully understand their meaning. I understand that my personal information and the results of this research will remain anonymous and confidential.

I would like to remain anonymous (your name will not be used in this research). If you want to, you can suggest a different name for yourself in the text box below:

I understand and accept that the interview will be *audio* recorded and that this recording will be used for this research alone.

I understand and accept that the interview will be *video* recorded and that this recording will be used for this research alone.

Name participant:

Date:

Signature:

For the researcher to fill out:

I have strived to inform the participant about their participant rights and the aims of this research in a transparent and comprehensive way.

I will remain open to any and all questions in relation to this research at all times.

I will strive to protect both the participant and myself from harm and negative consequences resulting from the research.

Name researcher:

Date:

Signature: