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Strategic Communication in Tourism

**Background, conceptualizations,
introduction to analysis and
relations to sustainable tourism and tourism innovation**

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The present manuscript qualifies as unfinished work-in-progress and the reader should bear in mind that the manuscript is quite likely to contain a series of errors, flaws and weaknesses. Therefore, please do not trust the content of this document, but triple-check everything that might inspire you with peer-reviewed literature. That said, happy readings ☺

A SHORT INTRODUTION AND RATIONALE

This manuscript is written with EMTM and negot students taking the 7th semester master level class on Strategic Communication at University of Southern Denmark in mind and first and foremost, the manuscript is meant as notes that might come in handy for these students both during the course and later, when they do their one week assignment for this class. The close links between the manuscript and the specific course have vast implications for what is included in, and excluded from, this manuscript. Perhaps the most important implication is that the manuscript emphasizes the study and analysis of strategic communication in the form of publicly available data (by some labelled secondary data) and only occasionally and rather superficially touches upon collection and analysis of primary data. Furthermore, in accordance with the academic traditions, rationale and context of the course, the manuscript prioritizes the study and analysis of strategic communication in tourism, whereas the reader wishing for hands-on advice on how to design, craft and manage strategic communication, will not find such advice in this manuscript.

The aims of this manuscript are to introduce, define and discuss strategic communication in tourism and hospitality settings and to assist students in the investigation and analysis of such communication . The paper moreover links strategic communication with innovation and sustainability within a tourism context. The manuscript will hopefully assist students in acquiring knowledge and understanding of strategic communication as a central element of how authorities, destination marketing organizations, tourism companies, tourists,

local residents etc. position, present and (re)construct themselves as tourism actors and how they inscribe themselves in various discourses, including sustainability. Furthermore, students are invited to develop skills in analyzing strategic communication as the manuscript seeks to help them acquire an initial understanding of central methods and techniques for analyzing strategic communication in a tourism context.

In regard to analysis, the reader should notice that the manuscript emphasizes the analysis of secondary data. Traditionally, secondary data is defined as data *collected* by someone else that the user (i.e. the researcher doing the analysis)(Schutt, 2006). However, the definition of secondary data used in this manuscript is somewhat broader as secondary data here refers to data that are publicly available to the researcher. This broader definition is applied due to the unprecedented access to data that the World Wide Web offers those interested in studying communication in its variety of forms – an access that allows researchers to study large amounts of strategic communication data and to include the voices of many different actors in their research in a highly cost and time effective manner. As always secondary data are characterized by some central problems, including authenticity, credibility and trustworthiness and the reader is therefore urged to always critically examine the data, their sources and backgrounds and to never trust sources too much or see one source as representing what a company, organization, destination or place 'is' (and the issue of not trusting data too much certainly also applies to this manuscript ☺).

The manuscript first (in section 1) presents and discusses definitions of strategic communication, highlighting key differences between strategic communication and communication in general. In section 2, the manuscript introduces a series of central actors who strategically communicate about tourism, places and destinations and it points to key differences between strategies, core values and communications of destination marketing/management organizations and other tourism actors. Hereafter, the manuscript's section 3 introduces different methods for the analysis of strategic communication such as rhetorical analysis, semiotics, content analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis and netnography.

The manuscript also links notions of strategic communication to two other central aspects of tourism. In section 4, the manuscript relates strategic communication to sustainable tourism development by discussing why alignment of 'doings' and 'sayings' may be especially important and challenging in a sustainable tourism context, particularly emphasizing issues such as 'greenwashing' and 'greenhushing'. In section 5, the paper touches upon linkages between strategic communication and innovation, reminding the reader that there is more to innovation in tourism than new products and that new ways of communicating with tourism audiences also qualify as innovation.

Finally, in section 6 attempts are made to tie the content of the previous sections closer to students' independent work, pointing to ways in which the study of strategic communication can be converted to reasonable and researchable research questions adequate for structuring, 'doing' and writing open or closed home assignments.

1. WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

            Basically communication means little more than 'to share'. But where the sharing of a meal, a flat, a car or other physical entities entails that the one sharing will keep a lesser portion of these entities to him/herself, sharing through communication does not leave the one sharing with 'less' than he had before he shared his thoughts, feelings, ideas, values, perspectives, viewpoints or ideologies. This is because communication not only entails exchange (transmission, encoding and decoding) of information, but holds the potential to create new, potentially 'better' or more informed, meanings and understandings for all parties involved. Accordingly, communication is not only about *giving* or *sending* information, it is about *sharing* information and by doing so, accumulating, creating and advancing knowledge. Nonetheless, many definitions of communication neglect the interactive nature of communication and emphasize the *sending* of messages. As an example, Wikipedia presents communication as predominantly unidirectional when pointing to it as "the act of conveying intended meanings from one entity or group to another". Unfortunately, if communication is only seen as the act of sending information and conveying meanings, the interactive nature of communication and consequently, the crucial parts of the communication process that are not controlled by the sender are neglected. The vignette below may illustrate this problem. The vignette describes Arthur Dent's response when Ford Perfect comes to see him after Dent has lived in total isolation for two years (or four, if not including Bowerick Wowbagger the Infinitely Prolonged's insult) and Ford strikes up a conversation and Arthur makes the following comment:

"The difficulty with this conversation is that it's very different from most of the ones I've had of late. Which, as I explained, have mostly been with trees".

Douglas Adams (1982): Life, the Universe and Everything

As exemplified by vignette 1, although Arthur Dent has communicated with tress for the last four years and tried to share his thoughts, feelings, ideas, values, perspectives, viewpoints and/or ideologies with these trees, his interactions with Ford Perfect show how the lack of conversation with other (human) beings not only makes it extremely difficult for Dent to engage in a dialogue, but has also made him forget both many words and how to speak. This example hereby points to communication as not only being about sending messages, but also about creating meaning, hereby accentuating *sharing* and *interaction*, not one-directional *sending* as the cornerstones of communication. The fundamental difference between conceptualizations of communication as either one-directional or interactive is also evident in the many models of communication that have been presented over the years. However, one thing these models have in common is that they can be classified as either transmission models or interactive models.

The transmission model of communication conceptualizes communication as one-way/unidirectional transmission of messages. This model assumes that communication is about the transmission of information, ideas, attitudes, emotions etc. from one person or group to another (or others) (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1969) and emphasizes messages as something that is *sent* and *received*. Vignette 2 presents a typical example of communication as unidirectional transmission of messages.

Vignette 2: Communication as transmission

Turn on your receiver, I'm gonna lat it on the line
'cause I'm a great believer, in hangin' on to what is mine
So come over here and listen, I don't want you to be missin'
What I say
And I ain't gonna waste my time sayin' it all again

Nazareth (1973): Turn on your receiver

Nazareth's 'Turn on your receiver' lyrics from the album 'Loud 'N' Proud' represent the core rationale behind conceptualizations of communication that have inspired communication models that emphasize the transmission of messages from an active sender to a largely passive receiver that contributes to communication with no more than listening to what is said to them. For example, the classical Shannon and Weaver (1949) model emphasizes the sender's transmission of messages through a channel and reduces other elements to either 'noise' or 'feedback' from receivers. At its core, the transmission model of communication is thus concerned with how 'we' get 'our information' passed on to largely passive recipients. This take on communication is highly relevant insofar we wish to understand what one actor brings to the conversation and how (s)he designs, encodes and transmits messages. But this traditional take on communication has been criticized for being sender-oriented and under-prioritizing the critical role of interactivity in the communication process; predominantly because it casts one actor as an active sender and reduces the performances of other actor(s) to that of 'turning on their receivers' and listening. As an example of such criticism, Bauer (1964:319) points to understandings of advertising and propaganda based on the transmission model to be imbued with notions of "the exploitation of man by man" where "the communication does something to the audience, while to the communicator is generally attributed considerable latitude and power to do what he pleases to the audience". The notions of senders as powerful and effectively 'doing something' to receivers and receivers as subdued to whatever intended messages senders inflict on them are imbued with ideas of communication as asymmetrical in terms of power, impact and activity levels. However, as critics have pointed out, communication is not inherently asymmetrical, but includes different (at least two) actors that encode, send, receive and decode messages. These more interactive conceptualizations of communication pave the way for more symmetrical and interactive communication models.

In contrast to the transmission model of communication, **the interactive model of communication** (Blumer, 1969) is based on the fundamental assumption that communication involves not only *exchange*, but also *creation* of meaning (or more correctly, meaning*s*). Communication hereby becomes a symbiotic process through which messages and meanings are created, constructed, re-constructed, de-constructed and often transformed as the dialogue between actors informs both parties and leads to more advanced and nuanced

understandings. At its core, the interactive model of communication thus focuses on how shared understandings, meanings, realities and cultures evolve as actors engage in, shape and construct communication, hereby portraying communication as a more symmetrical process where it becomes less relevant which party initiated the communication process (i.e. by being the 'original sender') and far more relevant how communication creates new, possibly more informed, nuanced and advanced meanings. In everyday language, the interactive element of communication is often emphasized by using the word 'conversation', which points to communication as involving two or more people and encompassing mutual exchange of news and ideas.

Vignette 3: Communication as conversation

Let us make a special effort to stop communicating with each other, so we can have some conversation.

Mark Twain (n.d.)

Although the transmission model of communication (equivalent to the way Mark Twain uses the concept of communication in vignette 3) has been highly influential, today, the dominant discourse is that communication is not simply a matter of one-way transmission of intended (and consequently rather 'fixed' and static) meanings, but a matter of interactive communication between at least two, and often more, agents, hence pointing to the conversational nature of communication. Therefore, contemporary research (e.g. Blichfeldt & Smed, 2015; Gyimothy, 2013; Lee & Broderick, 2000; Rosengren, 2000) first and foremost points to communication as multi-directional processes of meaning making that are interactive and participatory. This entails that communication models should not be sender/receiver oriented, but actor-oriented as all actors should be seen as active and able to take initiatives in order to create, exchange, share and advance meanings. Hereby, communication becomes ongoing learning processes through which meaning develops and evolves.

Complexities increase dramatically when communication is defined as interactive learning processes as this means that many different actors can contribute to the (re)creation and (de)construction of meanings and messages. Not only are receivers transformed from

passive audiences (that can do little more but to, perhaps, give feedback to the original sender) to active producers of content, but interactivity also means that many different actors can join (or leave) a conversation. Furthermore, the social media make it easier for actors to join online conversations and particularly, social media conversations may fundamentally change the asymmetrical power relationships that have traditionally characterized mass communication.

Traditional theories of mass communication originate from a time and context where media institutions (such as radio and television networks) were the only actors with the capacity to disseminate messages and content to large (mass) audiences. Furthermore, these traditional media institutions used media channels that allowed for information to flow in only one direction. However, with the development of the Internet, "individuals and organizations of only modest means become content selectors and editors in their own right. Opportunities for self-expression once denied by the old media are celebrated by the new media" (Chaffee & Metzger, 2001:370). In practice, this means that communication through 'the new media' potentially redistributes power from 'elite' senders to 'modest' users and as the number of users that may choose to join on-line conversations is large, "Internet content is literally unbound" (Chaffee & Metzger, 2001:372). The following vignette exemplifies how communication through the new media may fundamentally change messages and content as viewers make use of opportunities of self-expression and comment on, and hereby edit and rewrite, the content associated with a video launched by a travel agency.

Vignette 4: Do it for Denmark or Do it to Denmark?

In 2014, the Danish travel agency Spies launched the video 'Do it for Denmark' (the video is available at: http://doitfordenmark. parseapp.com/), aiming to increase Danish customers' awareness of Spies' city break holidays. The video is not a traditional travel ad, but emphasizes that Spies is on a mission to 'save the future of Denmark with romance'. Falling birth rates and an aging population are introduced as problems, the Danish government has not been able to solve, but within the video, Spies offers a solution to this problem as people are more likely to have sex (and consequently 'make babies') when they are on holiday. The video hereafter tells the story of Emma (a Danish girl who was herself 'made in Paris') and her partner, taking a romantic short-break holiday in Paris.

If the video had been aired through 'the old media' (e.g. as an ad in cinemas, on TV or in newspapers) it would perhaps have triggered conversations between smaller circles of viewers, but it would not have reached as large an audience as it has as, at present, the video has more than 10 million views on Youtube (almost twice as many views as what constitutes the entire Danish population).

On the basis of a content analysis of 780 comments on the video, Blichfeldt and Smed (2015) point out that what happens as people comment on the video is not simply that Spies' original message is received and spread. Instead they identify six different discourses that are introduced in the commentary, ranging from the theme 'This is fun' (144 comments) over 'Sexism' and 'Antifeminism' (196 comments) and 'Nationalism' and 'Racism' (231 comments) to 15 comments that present strong and negative attitudes towards Denmark on the basis of mass media coverage of euthanization of animals in Danish Zoos and legality of animal brothels in Denmark. On the basis of the analysis of the 780 comments, Blichfeldt and Smed (2015:299) conclude that online commentators bring a welter of associations (from anti-feminism, sexism, nationalism and racism to a giraffe killing and animal brothels) into the online communication; associations that were not necessarily part of the marketers' original message, hereby suggesting that "viral processes create unforeseeable associations and meanings that may have little to do with the original message and meanings – in the present case changing meanings from 'do it for Denmark' to 'do it to Denmark'".

As vignette 4 exemplifies, in various on-line contexts opportunities for self-expression are extensively used, thus unbounding content and making it go (far) beyond the narrative and discourses introduced by the original sender (in the example above, the narrative of Spies' promotional video). Nonetheless – and as discussed in the subsequent section – although communication is a glue that binds people, cultures and societies together, not all communication is inherently defined as *strategic*.

1.1. What makes communication strategic?

Spies' 'Do it for Denmark' video qualifies as that, which we usually label strategic communication as it is communication infused with an agenda (in the Spies case, spurring attention, interest, desire and/or action in regard to Spies' city break holidays, marketing of the Spies brand and urging viewers to engage in certain practices (whether it is to go on a city break holiday or 'to make babies')). However, Spies is not the only actor that communicates on the basis of the video and Blichfeldt and Smed's (2015) analysis shows that individuals with modest means (at its very least, people with a computer/tablet/smartphone, internet access and the ability to write a comment online) contribute with messages beyond those initially introduced by Spies, hereby pointing to the potential of 'everybody' to actively contribute to the content of the 'Do it to Denmark' storyline. But if everybody communicate all the time about all sorts of things (and, for example, try to converge communication about animal euthanization, falling birth rates, racism and short break holidays into one overall conversation), a question left unanswered is what the differences between *communication* and *strategic communication* are. Communication is often defined as strategic when it involves *deliberate* spread of information, ideas, principles, doctrines etc. Before the word *propaganda* became infused with very strong and very negative connotations, this concept basically covered the same basic ideas as the concept strategic communication now covers as, at the outset, the Latin word *propaganda* was no more than the gerundive form of *propagare*; i.e. to *spread* or *to propagate*. As a result, originally *propaganda* simply meant *that which is to be spread*. Applying this take on strategic communication to the Spies case, Spies intentionally seeks to spread messages about their short break holiday product and about falling birth rates whereas the commentators seek to spread a variety of messages, some closer to, others farther from, Spies' original messages, but nonetheless all intentionally and consequently strategically adding to the communication initiated by the Spies video.

By now, strategic communication is a term almost exclusively used when discussing communication within, between and about organizations and institutions, such as governments, national agencies, businesses, non-profit organizations etc. However, this focus on

organizations does not mean that only organizations engage in strategic communication. On the contrary, all communicators who *deliberately spread* information, values, ideas, principles, doctrines etc. inherently engage in strategic communication. Nonetheless, traditionally the term strategic communication is used when defining and discussing organizations' communication that tries to meet the longer term strategic goals of that organization, and not e.g. individuals' spread of messages. This manuscript, however, tries to cover both strategic communication in the form of communication initiated by organizations and (hopefully) consistent with those organizations' goals, values and strategies and communicators that are not traditionally seen as strategic (particularly tourists as well as local residents and communities).

Unfortunately, the widespread delimitation of strategic communication to only cover communication initiated by organizations is closely linked to a fundamental idea of strategic communication being equivalent to deliberately *spreading information*. This is a way of thinking about communication that is deeply anchored in the transmission model of communication and not consistent with the interactive model of communication. It would therefore, perhaps be more correct to define strategic communication as communication that is strategic in that it is *not* random, unintentional or done without having the sender's mission, vision or fundamental values in mind. Consequently, strategic communication in a more interactive perspective is two-way (or multi-directional) communication processes that organizations engage in in order to create meanings *together with* other actors while letting the organization's strategic goals, mission and core values consistently inform the organization's contributions to communicative meaning making processes. The use of the term strategic should therefore *not* evoke a one-sided or one-directional approach to communication or asymmetrical/top-down perspectives on communication. Instead the use of the term strategic should be seen as more inclusive and although it emphasizes communication as grounded in management decisions and practices, it should not imply power or control over other actors, but should be seen as interactive communication where organizations not only present and promote themselves, but interact with other actors while intentionally trying to communicate meanings that align with organizational strategy, goals, values and 'reasons-to-be'.

In an interactive communication perspective, strategic communication is consequently *not* simply a matter of defining organizational goals and values and transforming such goals and values to communication strategies and information transmitted to passive recipients. On the contrary, strategic communication is about understanding how organizations interact with other actors (e.g. customers, employees, suppliers, investors, government agencies, mass media and society at large) and how organizations present themselves as social actors that engage in meaning making processes with these other actors. This means that there are different perspectives that can be applied when studying, for example, the Spies campaign as strategic communication. One perspective is to analyze the video itself and possibly the extent to which it aligns with Spies' strategy, goals, values etc. However, if we apply a more interactive approach to the study of strategic communication, this opens up for analysis of other actors' contributions to communication – e.g. how commentators transform the message from 'doing it for Denmark' to 'doing it to Denmark' or how the video positions itself in certain general discourses and/or contribute to construction of such discourses.

To better understand the many voices that strategically communicate about tourism, in the next part of the paper, we point to different important stakeholders in tourism and why tourism is more than an industry with set boundaries, direct competition between substituting products and clear definitions of relevant stakeholders.

2. KEY COMMUNICATORS WITHIN TOURISM

Industries are traditionally defined as groups of companies offering products and services that are close substitutes that satisfy the same basic customer needs, hereby making these companies competitors (Porter, 1979). Many researchers have discussed what an industry 'is' as it is not clearly evident what is needed for products or services to be 'close substitutes'. As a simple example, although a Michelin star restaurant, McDonalds, Ikea's meatballs, a Mars Bar and Magnum ice-cream all (to a greater or lesser extent) satisfy the basic human need for nutrition, few would argue that these products are close substitutes and consequently, it makes little sense to e.g. argue that Noma in Copenhagen competes directly with McDonalds or Unilever (the company behind the Magnum ice-cream brand). As another example, although an airline carrier, a car rental company, a taxi company, the local bicycle shop and a manufacturer of hiking shoes in different ways cater to tourists in need of transportation, a new bicycle is not a substitute for an airline ticket. Therefore, we typically speak of competition at different levels and would usually apply the term 'industry' to describe a group of suppliers that provide products or services similar enough for the customer to actually consider these products or services as providing similar solutions to the same problem. To illustrate this matter, vignette 5 presents a series of mission statements (i.e. written declarations of an organization's core purpose or 'reason to be') that point to the companies behind these statements 'seeing' themselves as being 'in the same business'.

Vignette 5: Mission statements in the car rental industry

Avis' mission: "We will ensure a stress-free car rental experience by providing superior services that cater to our customers' individual needs...always conveying the 'We Try Harder®' spirit with knowledge, caring and a passion for excellence."

Budget Car Rental's mission: "We will consistently deliver a quality product, friendly service and great value that make customers confident that Budget is their best car rental choice."

Europcar's mission: "Europcar is the leader in car rental services in Europe."

All information retrieved from official company websites, June 2017

As evident in the mission statements that are reproduced in vignette 5, Avis, Budget Car Rental and Europcar all cater to customers' needs to rent a car and hence, it makes sense to speak of car rental as an industry. This does not mean that car rental, at a more general level, cannot be substituted by taking the bus, the train, a taxi or borrowing a friend's car. All it means is that these three companies compete directly with one another whereas they compete more indirectly with other products and services that can provide transportation from point A to point B. Whereas industries are traditionally defined as groups of companies offering products and services that are close substitutes, tourism is a far more complex entity as the 'product' is not provided by one business, but instead by a variety of businesses, organizations, associations and individuals that market both their individual products and services and destinations to potential tourists. As an example, vignette 6 presents a series of mission statements for companies within the tourism 'industry'.

Vignette 6: Who competes with whom in the tourism 'industry'?

Marco Polo Hotels' mission: "We are exceptional operators of contemporary 4 and 5 star hotels."
Hilton's mission: "To be the most hospitable company in the world."
Scandic' mission: "To create great hotel experiences for many people."
Turkish Airlines' mission: "To become the preferred leading European air carrier with a global network of coverage thanks to its strict compliance with flight safety, reliability, product line, service quality and competitiveness, whilst maintaining its identity as the flag carrier of the Republic of Turkey in the civil air transportation industry."
Brussel Airlines' mission: "We want to be the most personal airline, bringing people together and making travel a pleasure".
Famous Dave's BBQ Restaurants' mission: "Outstanding barbecue combined with outstanding hospitality."
The International House of Pancakes' mission: "Good, quality food for breakfast."
Asanda's mission: "To create a community of artists and healers, guests and stakeholders, who share a common vision of an extraordinary beauty and wellness company".
Al Nadha Resort & Spa's mission: "To position Al Nahda Resort and Spa as the finest health resort in the Khaleej, by delivering a refreshing leisure experience, carving out a niche for itself by hosting unique hospitality service for its guests."

All information retrieved from official company websites, June 2017

The nine companies mentioned in vignette 6 define themselves as being in the hotel business, in the airline industry, in the business of providing food, in the wellness industry, as providers of leisure experiences or providing hospitality. As the mission statements reproduced in vignette 6 pinpoint, not all tourism actors offer products and services that are close substitutes as some actors (hotels) seek to satisfy the need for a place to sleep and/or a 'home away from home' whereas others try to satisfy needs for longer distance transportation (e.g. airlines), shorter distance transportation (e.g. taxis or subways), food and beverages (restaurants), wellness (spas), entertainment (amusement parks), educational experiences (museums) and so forth. These complexities made Tucker and Sundberg (1988) conclude that tourism is *not* an industry in the conventional sense as there is no such thing as a homogeneous tourism product that satisfies one basic need. In response to criticism of tourism not being an industry, some argue that it makes more sense to speak of the hospitality industry than the tourism industry, but unfortunately, the hospitality industry is also defined far broader than traditional industries as it includes companies offering products as diverse as food and beverages, accommodation and transportation. That neither tourism nor hospitality can be defined as industries does not mean that organizations catering to the needs of tourists do not have something in common; on the contrary, at the very least they do have in common that they try to satisfy the needs of people who are away from their home environment. However, Leiper (1990:602) convincingly argues that defining a firm as part of a tourism industry simply because it caters to the needs of tourists is "analogous to observing red-heads among the customers of the butcher, baker, and candlestick maker and deducing the existence of a 'red-heads industry'". This observation is certainly true when taking into account that, for example, restaurants and airlines have as little in common in terms of product offerings as butchers and candlestick makers. Furthermore, if we look at the many people that firms involved in tourism have as customers without these people being tourists (e.g. when locals dine at a local restaurant, visit a local museum, commute using the same transportation facilities as tourists, take their children to the nearby waterpark on Saturday or go to the same concert or event that brings thousands of visitors to the area) the 'red-head' argument seems even more trustworthy. Therefore, in this paper – and supported by the claims reproduced in vignette 7 - tourism is not seen as an industry, but as a mix of industries (or perhaps more correctly, tourism-related

industries) that, to varying degrees, cater to the portfolio of needs that tourists have (Leiper, 1990) – and usually also to the needs of customers that are not tourists.

Vignette 7: Tourism - not an industry

"There is not one tourism industry, but many."

Leiper (2008)

"The industries serving tourists directly may be designated tourism-related industries."

Witt et al. (2013)

"Tourism is not an industry, because tourists consume a variety of goods and services."

The European Parliament (2005)

That tourism is not defined as an industry hinges on the fact that the list of products and services that tourists consume is practically endless. Just think about your last vacation and try (possibly with the use of your social media posts, receipts and bank transfer accounts) to compile a list of the products and services you bought. Such a list could include everything from a stay at a hotel or paying the Airbnb host, buying a ticket for a show/concert/the local subway, an entrance ticket to a museum, a pair of sneakers, shower gel or a toothbrush, a dinner at a fancy restaurant or grocery shopping at a local food market or supermarket, a few souvenirs, a pair of sunglasses or a bottle of pain killers etc. etc.

Does it really matter whether tourism is classified as an industry or not? For people interested in strategic communication it certainly does, as the ways in which we speak about things and hereby frame them also construct these things. As an example, an influential Danish politician at one point said: "A *tøws det er ved at være den tid, hvor turisterhvervet skal til at være en rigtig erhverv*" (Simonsen, 2007:85), which could loosely be translated into: "I think it is time that the tourism industry becomes a real trade/industry". The comment made by this politicians is part of a political discourse that casts tourism into something that is not a 'real' industry and hereby comments such as this one are decisive not only for how we speak about tourism, but also for the political support, initiatives, funding opportunities, resource allocation

etc. and how politicians may not take tourism actors as seriously as they would, had the industry been 'a real industry'.

That tourism is not an industry not only has implications for how politicians enact tourism, it also has implications for how scholars study tourism. That tourism is not an industry and that tourists consume many different products and services during the holidays are key reasons why tourism researchers have taken a genuine interest in the notion of stakeholders (e.g. Allen *et al.*, 1993; Davis & Morais, 2004;Goeldner & Ritchie, 2002; Gunn, 1994; Markwick, 2000; Murphy, 1983; Ryan, 2002; Robson & Robson, 1996; Sautter & Leisen, 1999) – simply because we need some sort of definition that enables us to understand who is involved (and to what extent) in providing products and services for tourists, without seeing these providers as direct competitors. Such a definition is important as tourism is about providing a conglomerate product where conglomerate simply means that the tourism 'product' consists of a number of different and distinct products, services and experiences that are grouped together. The grouping of these products and services might be done by the tourism supplier(s); such as it is the case when tourists take a packaged tour and spend the entire holiday at a resort that caters to all these tourists' needs and wants. But more often, the tourist is responsible for the grouping of products and services into an overall 'holiday package', especially when doing independent travel, making their own travel and accommodation arrangements *en route* and/or choosing between different peak and supporting products, services and experiences *in situ*.

Traditionally, a stakeholder is defined as "any group or individual who is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman, 1984:46). Tailoring this definition to the special characteristics of the tourism 'industry', tourism stakeholders can be defined as any groups or individuals who are affected by tourism (not a specific organization's objectives) in a specific area (whether this is a village, a city, an island, a national park, a region or a country). However, substituting the notion 'industry' with a focus on stakeholders has vast implications as this means that stakeholders are not only actors with a commercial interest in tourism, but also actors with no direct commercial interests in tourism, who are nevertheless

affected by tourism – such as local communities and residents. We return to the issue of local communities and residents in section 2.3.

Within tourism research, seemingly endless lists of tourism stakeholders have been produced. Furthermore, which stakeholders are included in, or excluded from, these lists depend on the more specific objectives behind each list. For example, an overview of stakeholders within adventure tourism at destination X may differ profoundly from lists that try to map stakeholders within family tourism or gastronomy tourism at the same destination. As another example, a specific restaurant might be included both in lists of tourism stakeholders in a specific city, a specific region and/or in a specific country as well as in lists of e.g. the top 50 European seafood restaurants. As a third example, a hotel might both be included in a list of accommodation stakeholders in city X and in a list of top 20 hotels in terms of accessibility in region Y. However, one thing most of the lists of tourism stakeholders have in common is that they include five groups of central stakeholders in the form of the private sector (including tourism service providers, tour operators, non-tourism businesses and trade associations); the public sector (national government institutions as well as regional and local authorities); civil society (e.g. NGOs); citizens (oftentimes referred to as host communities); and consumers (oftentimes referred to as tourists, but also including people not included in the official UNWTO definition of tourists, such as one-day nearcationing tourists). The fact that so many different actors have 'a stake' in not only promoting, but also in using, working with, doing good for, living in and taking a keen interest in destinations means that the study of strategic communication becomes rather complex when it is done in a tourism context as the number of actors that strategically communicate about a destination is relatively high (or at least higher than when studying strategic communication in more traditional industry and business contexts). Furthermore, as exemplified by vignette 8, different actors might communicate about a specific destination/place in very different ways and may emphasize very different aspects of the destination/place when they communicate.

Vignette 8: CPH – One place (?) and many voices

"Copenhagen is not only the coolest kid on the Nordic block, but also gets constantly ranked as the happiest city in the world. Ask a dozen locals why and they would probably all zone in on the hygge which generally means coziness, but encompasses far more." [Lonely Planet]

"I've lived in Copenhagen for a while now, and I must say that spending every day coping with the endless tide of bearded, elitist, single-speed bikers inhabiting the most pretentious village in the world kind of makes Copenhagen seem like a terrible provincial shit hole." [Vice.com]

"There are way more people than apartments in Copenhagen. That's why it becomes almost a privilege to pay a rent so high it would make your grandma scratch out her eyes for a room in a concrete block in the outskirts of town." [cbslife]

"Copenhagen – the first carbon neutral capital in the world." [DenmarkDK – the official website of Denmark]

"The EU commission could be preparing legal action to force the government to finally address Copenhagen's air pollution." [The Local]

"If you have the drive, a good idea or an ambition to be an entrepreneur, Copenhagen is a good place to start a business." [The city of Copenhagen website]

"The 2011 GEM report marks Denmark as having the second lowest entrepreneurial activity of any country in the developed world." [Articstartup.com]

"Copenhagen is in general a safe city to visit." [visitcopenhagen]

"Police kill Copenhagen gunman suspected of terror attacks." [The National]

"Copenhagen is a playground for the whole family." [visitdenmark]

"Copenhagen has a great selection of adult locations." [WikiSexGuide]

As exemplified by vignette 8, not only do many actors communicate about Copenhagen, but the different actors may voice very different, oftentimes conflicting, ideas about what Copenhagen 'is', leaving it to the receiver/interpreter of all of these messages about Copenhagen to build his/her own understanding of Copenhagen as a place – an understanding that we may define as the place image.

Vignette 9: Every place has an image

"Whether positive or negative, focused or diffuse, held widely or by only a few, developed deliberately or by default, and formed from education, the media, travel, immigration, product purchases, business experiences or any combination of sources, every place has an image".
                                                            Papadopoulos & Heslop (2002:295)

As Papdopoulos and Heslop (2002) remind us, place images may be based on a multiplicity of sources and strategic communication crafted and transmitted by tourism actors is but one of the many voices that share their specific understandings and enactments of a particular place. Apart from pointing to ways in which different actors voice very different, oftentimes conflicting, ideas about what places such as Copenhagen 'are', vignette 8 also exemplifies how places are more than simply destinations as we usually use the notion 'place' when speaking of particular areas, locations or portions of spaces designated or *available for*, or *being used* by, 'someone' whereas the notion 'destination' refers to a place to which 'someone' *is going*. Places are thus defined more broadly than destinations as places are available for/being used by many different actors for many different reasons (including living or working there), whereas destinations are traditionally defined as places that tourists go to. The difference between these two notions is the reason why we sometimes differentiate between place and destination marketing and branding and, why - when using the later notion – we deliberately emphasize the touristic dimensions of places. In the following sections, we account for some of the key stakeholders that communicate strategically about destinations – while paying due respect to the fact that stakeholders communicating about places, not destinations, are also important as strategic communicators about places with *touristic* origins are but some of the senders of messages about places.

2.1. The roles of destination marketing/management organizations

The abbreviation DMO is widely used by both tourism researchers and practitioners in order to refer to the oftentimes semi-public organization (or organization*s*) responsible for maintaining and developing tourism at a specific destination. However, there is no general agreement as to what DMO stands for as the middle part (the 'M') sometimes refers to **management**, at other times to **marketing**. At the outset, the abbreviation DMO was the contracted form of 'destination marketing organization' and definitions of DMOs would concord with this emphasis on marketing. For example, Harrill (2009:451) describes a DMO as

"any organization at any level responsible for the marketing of an identifiable destination". Seeing DMOs as *marketing* organizations entails that these organizations are responsible for marketing and branding of the destination (e.g. Buhalis, 2000; Harrill, 2009; Gretzel et. al., 2006; Pike & Page, 2014; Li & Wang, 2010) and therefore, their primary objective is to make tourists aware of the destination and persuade them to visit this specific destination. However, both practitioners and academics (e.g. Bregoli & Chiappa, 2013; Beritelli et. al., 2015; Bornhorst et. al., 2010; Fyall et. al., 2012; Pike et. al., 2011; Zach, 2010; Wang & Pizam, 2011) also point to DMOs as having a crucial role in facilitating and fostering collaboration between local tourism stakeholders, hereby emphasizing DMOs' role as destination *management* organizations. The issue whether DMOs are marketing or management organizations is rather important as these organizations' raison d'être fundamentally differs depending this issue. As it is beyond the scope of this manuscript to go into a discussion of whether DMOs are predominantly 'doing' marketing or management at the destination level, we will adopt Beritelli et. al.'s (2015:27) argument that DMOs are "the appropriate organization[s] to undertake both destination marketing *and* destination management", hereby accentuating that DMOs not only market the destination, but also take active part in developing a destination that actually has something to offer that it is worthwhile to bring to the market's attention. Vignette 10 illustrates why it would be difficult for DMOs to only engage in *marketing* of destinations.

Vignette 10: DMOs as managers and marketers without mandate?

> *"... although any DMO would probably prefer that all local tourism enterprises at all times use logos and brand values promoted by the DMO, thus allowing the destination to market a coherent image across all target groups, most DMOs do not have any legitimate right to interfere with promotional material using other logos and/or values."*
>
> Blichfeldt, Hird & Kvistgaard (2014)

As vignette 10 points to, DMOs have a more difficult task than managers of traditional companies (especially manufacturing companies) as DMOs are not 'in control' of the products, services and experiences tourists consume while visiting a destination. Therefore, several researchers (Blichfeldt, Hird & Kvistgaard, 2014, Zach, 2011; Wang & Pizam, 2011) have pointed to definitions of DMOs as entities *marketing* destinations as too narrow as DMOs

should also position themselves as entities facilitating *development* and *deliverance* of tourism products, services and experiences that align with the destination brand promise. However, as local tourism actors (not DMOs) are the ones actually 'producing' and delivering the conglomerate tourism product, the task for DMOs in relation to development and deliverance of a coherent, consistent, credible and memorable tourism product becomes one of *managing* relations between local enterprises and facilitating *cooperation, collaboration* and *coordination* between these actors in order to fulfil the destination brand promise that (hopefully) pulls tourists to the destination. However, as discussed further in the following section of the manuscript, tourism actors may not agree on what the destination, or the destination brand promise, should be, nor may their communication align with that of other actors or the DMO.

2.2. Strategic communication by tourism operators

As destinations are defined as places that tourists travel to, at the core of the notion of destinations we find nested commercial interests in the form of the revenues that tourism can generate for the destination by means of its ability to pull tourists to the destination that will spend money on various products, services and experiences during their stay at the destination. However, what products, services and experiences tourists can consume during their holidays are not dictated by the DMO, but by the various tourism operators at the destination and vignette 11 introduces the idea that different tourism operators may have very different ideas about what products should be offered to the tourists and what destination identity (or identit*ies*) should be promoted.

Vignette 11: The issue of vested interests and multiple identities

> *"Many organizations and groups have vested interests in the promotion of particular identities (many of which may be in direct conflict with the interests of others)"*
>
> Morgan et al. (2003)

As vignette 8 showed, very different actors communicate about Copenhagen and what these different actors communicate reflects these different actors' vested interests in the promotion of particular place identities. For example, both 'official Denmark' and 'green' tourism operators may have vested interests in promoting Copenhagen as carbon neutral whereas the City of Copenhagen may have vested interests in promoting Copenhagen as a good place for entrepreneurial enterprises, including entrepreneurs that are not especially carbon neutral. On the other hand, VisitDenmark, along with amusement parks such as Tivoli and Bakken, are likely to have vested interests in promoting Copenhagen as an attractive destination for families with children whereas the WikiSexGuide is likely to have vested interests in promoting the aspects of Copenhagen that relate to its identity as an adult location. In the same vein, a hotel in Copenhagen that caters to the needs of families with children may emphasize Copenhagen's identity as a 'safe city' whereas a hostel catering to the needs of backpackers may emphasize Copenhagen's identity as a vibrant and buzzling city.

But is it a problem that different actors emphasize different versions of Copenhagen? Traditional branding theory and more functionalistic takes on communication would suggest that the answer to this question is 'Yes!', because the purpose of destination branding is to create a coherent and unique destination identity (i.e. what the destination 'is'). Destination brand image (i.e. how tourists 'see' the destination) is often said to be, at least partially, based on the destination brand identity (Pike, 2004; Daye, 2010; Temporal, 2010) and therefore, coherent and clear communication emphasizing a unique identity is often seen as necessary in order to establish a clear destination image that makes the destination stand out from the crowd (Therkelsen, 2007). Drawing on these kinds of arguments, it would be a problem if different tourism stakeholders accentuate different identities or versions of the destination in their communication as this will contribute to blurred and/or multifaceted brand identities. However, vignette 12 presents an alternative understanding of destination identities and images.

Vignette 12: Challenging simplicity in place and destination branding

> *"By exploring the possibility of the existence of several destination versions, "the" identity and henceforth "the" image of the destination is revealed as a simplistic and unproductive reduction. The clear identity of destination branding neglects and omits a variety of destination identities, actors, discourses, performances and artefacts. This suggests that branding, or in broader terms the cultural communication, staging and construction of a tourism destination is not an innocent enterprise but contains the capacity to normatively define and represent the place, people and activities of tourism in a certain place. Place branding does not just reflect a place, but actively takes part in creating what it is – and is not. When considering the aspects of power in relation to a tourism destination, one must direct attention not only to the abundant representations and identities of the destination, but also to the dynamics and complexities of the place."*

[Ren & Blichfeldt, 2011:430]

Place identity refers to processes of spatial integration, in which only some subjects, objects, activities, practices and discourse are included when connecting certain identities with certain places. As vignettes 8 and 12 suggest, various stakeholders discursively position themselves and their versions of 'the' destination in a variety of ways. Places are thus not 'empty containers' into which people, practices and objects can be placed (Murdoch, 2006), but are negotiated and contested 'turfs' (Modan, 2007) where actors struggle to define what the place is or should be (Ren, 2006; Ren & Blichfeldt, 2011).

Understanding strategic communication in a tourism context is therefore, first and foremost, a matter of identifying the many stakeholders that exist and to include all relevant voices in the study of what is being communicated about a certain place, a certain destination or a certain issue (such as 'green' or sustainable tourism). This does not mean that every piece of research that is done on strategic communication in tourism should include everything that every stakeholder communicates – if we tried to do that, we would never ever be 'done' with any piece of research. However, it does mean that we, as researchers, have a special obligation to be extremely explicit about which stakeholders we include in our research and which voices we exclude from our research and hereby silence.

2.3. What about the locals?

As mentioned previously, seeing tourism not as an industry, but as groups of stakeholders including not only those that have a commercial interest in tourism, but also actors with no direct commercial interests in tourism, who are nevertheless *affected by tourism*, makes the study of strategic communication in a tourism context a complex matter. As researchers it is imperative that we remind ourselves that our perspective is not inherently commercial and that our task is not necessarily to increase, expand or promote tourism. First and foremost, our task is to understand tourism in all its aspects, contexts and nuances and how it affects relevant stakeholders. From a commercial perspective, local residents are sometimes reduced to being seen as important insofar they are part of the 'product' that tourist 'consume' when visiting a destination, a perspective underlying much of what has been said and written about locals as *host* communities. But destinations are not only places that tourists visit, they are also (and potentially most importantly?) places where people live, work, love, build families, grow up, grow old, start businesses etc. – and tourism is but one of the many, oftentimes conflicting, interests within a given place, as exemplified in vignette 13.

Vignette 13: Barcelona no esta en venda

"Barcelona is not for sale" and "We will not be driven out" - these were messages on banners that protestors carried on the Rambla in Barcelona in January 2017. The protest was organized by resident and community groups in Barcelona and the aim was, amongst others, to point out how the massive upsurge in tourism and tourist apartments had driven up rents and residents out of Barcelona.

Source: The Guardian
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/29/barcelona-residents-protest-high-rents-fuelled-by-tourism
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/jun/02/airbnb-faces-crackdown-on-illegal-apartment-rentals-in-barcelona

Until 2012, the official slogan used by the city of Barcelona was 'Barcelona belongs to you' (with 'you' also being tourists) – a slogan that reflects core values that resonate poorly with those voiced by residents and community groups feeling driven out of Barcelona by tourism. Although the aim of this manuscript is not to provide an account of the many negative

(and positive) effects of tourism on local residents and communities (other texts already do that excellently), vignette 13 is included in order to remind the reader of the dangers of reducing locals to *host* communities happily, willingly and eagerly welcoming tourists to the destination and to urge students of strategic communication to pay due respect to this group of stakeholders.

2.4. Co-creation of meanings and messages

As most texts on strategic communication in tourism, this far this manuscript has emphasized the supply-side of tourism and how important it is to understand that tourism is characterized by a welter of actors communicating about places and destinations in many different ways and in pursuit of many different objectives (section 2.2.). In section 2.3., the reader was reminded of locals being more than simply a resource to be activated for touristic purposes – although vignette 14 introduces an example of how locals can be activated to promote a destination and may act as credible and trustworthy sources of information (or stories) about places.

Vignette 14: Curators of Sweden

> In 2011, Sweden was the first country in the world to hand over its official Twitter account to its citizens. The project Curators of Sweden, an initiative of the Swedish Institute and VisitSweden, is administered by the Swedish Institute.
>
> "Every week a new person gets to tweet through the Twitter account @sweden, which aims to present the country of Sweden through the mix of skills, experiences and opinions it actually consists of. Through the stories of the various curators, not one Sweden is conveyed, but several".
>
> http://curatorsofsweden.com/about/

Having introduced both more traditional tourism stakeholders and locals as communicators about destinations, one critical stakeholder within tourism has, this far, been unfairly silenced in this manuscript. Therefore, in this section we turn to the roles that *tourists* (including both potential tourists and those that have already visited the destination in

question) play in strategic communication and we start this discussion by introducing a story about a kite flying festival on a small island.

Vignette 15: Some Danish island starting with 'F' and ending with ø/oe

BBC news, June 18, 2017 aired a video showing hundreds (thousands?) of spectacular kites flying in the air under the headline: '5,000 kite enthusiasts from around the world have come to Fanoe in Denmark and they're flying high.

2 days later, the video had 1,3 million views, 40,000 likes and had triggered 1,400 comments, including: Commentary by Iwo Gross, Alabama: 'I'll visit Faroe Islands when they stop slaughtering whales'. Commentary by Sian van Es: 'Pity they murder dolphins there'.

The BBC video presenting the Fanoe International Kite Fliers Meeting is a short 'feel good' video that is imbued with pathos (see section 3.1) and does little more than show the many different kites flying 'high in Denmark'. Most of the commentary is posted by people, who find the event interesting, voice they would like to go to see the event, tag their friends and/or make references to childhood memories of kite flying (some even mentioning the video speaking to their 'inner child'). However, comments such as the ones posted by Iwo Gross and Sian van Es touch upon very different issues and especially the comment made by Iwo Gross triggered a series of responses. Some of these responses sought to 'rectify' the commentator's mistaking the Fanoe Island for the Faroe Islands (pointing to 'wrong island' and the 1,500 kilometer distance between these islands). However, if we take the matter of co-creation of meanings and messages seriously, it is problematic to reduce Iwo Gross' comment to something that is 'wrong' or 'mistaken'. After all, both the media coverage of the pilot whale killings at the shores of the Faroe Islands and the BBC video of the kite festival on Fanoe trigger associative links to Denmark, making it quite likely that audiences activate associations to the Faroe Islands (and whale killings) when seeing the Fanoe video. Simplistic as this example is, it nevertheless (and as the 'do it to Denmark' vignette) points to audiences not as passive recipients of messages, but at people linking new information to existing nodes in their memories when making sense and actively creating meaning for messages they receive. This illustrates how complicated it is to produce strategic communication that works in more

interactive and dynamic contexts as – given the audience(s)' active co-creation of meanings and messages - strategic communication is not only a matter of creating the 'right' messages and delivering them in the 'right' way, it is also a matter of taking into account which associations in audiences' minds our communication might trigger and subsequently trying to avoid signs, symbols, metaphors etc. that trigger undesired associations and emphasize elements that activate desirable associations. We elaborate on these issues and how different types of analysis of strategic communication can assist both researchers and practitioners in the uncovering of co-creation, meaning-making and interpretations of strategic communication in section 3. However, before turning to the *analysis* of strategic communication, we remind the reader that tourism marketing might be defined as a communicative genre in its own right and we close this section of the paper with a few examples of how actors that are not 'officially' promoting tourism may use touristic scripts and 'hijack' the tourism marketing genre's style to generate and transmit alternate messages and counter narratives.

Vignette 16: Suggestions for new United Airlines mottos

After a disturbing video of a man being dragged out of a United Airlines' overbooked flight was released on social media, on Twitter, people began to suggest new mottos that could replace United Airlines' "Fly the friendly skies" motto. Some of the suggestions were ...

So much for flying the friendly skies.

Let us re-acccommodate you.

We can re-accommodate you the easy way ... or the hard way.

We put Hospital in Hospitality.

Fight or Flight – We decide.

We treat you like we treat your luggage.

United. Because flying is always a drag.

http://www.boredpanda.com/united-airlines-motto-twitter/?page_numb=4

Vignette 17: Hastily made tourism videos

These videos are satirical videos parodying destination promotions and some common denominators for these videos are their low budget/amateur-style nature, the showcasing of elements not normally emphasized in destination promotions (e.g. ghettos, abandoned industrial sites and more embarrassing facts) and accompanying out-of-tune songs.

The first two videos (Hastily Made Cleveland Tourism video 1 and 2) were uploaded on Youtube in 2009, have had close to 20 million views and include lyrics such as 'buy a house for the price of a VCR' and 'watch all the poor people waiting for busses'. Follow up videos were done for cities such as Boston, Orlando, San Francisco and Detroit and most of the videos are still available on Youtube.

Vignette 18: The Netherlands second

On January 20th 2017, in the inauguration speech, U.S. President Donald Trump proclaimed that "from this day forward, it's going to be only America first" and on January 23rd 2017, the Dutch satirical news program 'Zondag Met Lubach' aired the video 'America first, the Netherlands second'. The video mock-beseeched Donald Trump and begged him to 'put the Netherlands second'. The video went viral and reached around 20 million views within a couple of weeks and on February 9th the video had 179,644 likes and 5,910 dislikes, had triggered 16,778 comments and was shared on many different platforms and by many different media. Appeals for 'second place' did not stop with the Dutch video as other actors (especially late-night shows across Europe) soon responded to the Dutch video by airing their own videos, presenting their specific countries, while (as the Dutch video) using Trump impersonating voice-overs as well as a web of, more or less direct, Trump references, to construct satirical narratives justifying why particular European countries should be second. Later on, videos presenting countries outside of Europe as well as videos presenting cities or regions (and even Westeros from Game of Thrones, Tolkien's Mordor or the planet Mars,), showcasing why they should be second, were also aired.

Both the Dutch video and follow-up videos stick to a format that resembles that used in many official nation branding videos. However even though most of the videos start with the words "this is a message from the government of ...", they are not official promotional videos presenting national tourism actors' strategic communication, nor do they represent induced country images. Instead, the videos are unofficial presentations of different countries, urging Donald Trump to put them second (or third, or tenth, or first on a continent, or not last, or at least before another specific country) inscribing these videos in narratives with strong references to both the Dutch video and Trump as well as self-ironic and self-critical references to a series of national and cultural elements of each country. Using views, likes and follow-ups as indicators of communicative impact, these videos are examples of relatively powerful organic country images that spread through online viral processes.* Blichfeldt (2017)

3. THE ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Traditionally, the analysis of strategic communication has centered on analysis of pieces of communication developed, staged, framed and sent by organizations. This kind of analysis could, for example, be an analysis of the Spies 'Do it for Denmark' video itself, perhaps supplemented by press releases and other material in which Spies accounts for their reasons to air this specific video. However, given the many actors who communicate about destinations and the interactive nature of communication pointed to by the examples introduced in the last part of section 2, there is more to the analysis of strategic communication in tourism than the analysis of single messages and commercial communication such as branding and promotions. Therefore, this section is divided into two subsections that each introduce different techniques and methods applicable to the analysis of strategic communication in a tourism context – the first emphasizing more traditional techniques, the second those suited for analysis of interactive communication and ongoing (potentially never ending) on-line conversations.

3.1. Analysis inspired by transmission models of communication

Analytical techniques that seek to analyze messages and content of individual pieces of communication align well with the transmission model of communication and its conceptualization of communication as one-way transmission of messages. Generally, such techniques work with smaller sets of data (e.g. 'one piece' of communication) and typically, they are used to gain an in-depth understanding of both *what* is communicated and *how* it is communicated. As individual pieces of communication may take many different forms, ranging from simple symbols, signs or other visualizations over extremely shorts texts such as slogans

and taglines to more complex pieces such as mission and vision statements, company websites, travel brochures, videos such as 'Do it for Denmark', strategy documents, advertising campaigns etc., a number of different techniques can be applied to the study of such pieces of communication. In this section some of these techniques (rhetoric analysis, semiotics, narrative analysis and discourse analysis) are introduced. However, this section should be seen as no more than an *introduction* to the welter of techniques that can be applied when studying individual pieces of communication and the reader is urged to seek further knowledge on the different techniques in the rich and 'thick' bodies of literature dedicated to each of these techniques. As this text is rather introductory, the reader should also notice that many of the techniques introduced in this section are defined in a variety of ways and that researchers do not always agree on what techniques are used when and how – as an example, some of the researchers that claim to do discourse analysis are, by other researchers, criticized for not actually doing discourse analysis, but rather simplistic types of content analysis. Furthermore, most of the techniques are subject to intensive academic debates and for example, some researchers would insist that discourse analysis is far more than a technique and should therefore be referred to as a method or a methodology. Consequently, the call for readers not to trust the content of this manuscript is particularly important to bear in mind while reading this section.

Analyses inspired by transmission models of communication often concern themselves with the analysis of specific pieces of communication, but at other times, the analysis aims to uncover the extent to which specific pieces of communication align with the intentions and core values of the sender. As an example, a transmission-inspired analysis of the 'Do it to Denmark' video could be done by analyzing the video itself, but it could also be done as an analysis that compares the use of language, signs, symbols, discourses and/or content of the video to Spies' core values and/or intentions with the video – potentially uncovering discrepancies between Spies' brand, identity and core values and the promotional video. In the remainder of this section, we emphasize the analysis of specific pieces of communication, but kindly remind the reader that transmission-inspired analysis could also include comparison of such communication with the identity that the sender wishes to convey.

Although ***content analysis*** is the analysis techniques that it is easiest to apply to the analysis of strategic communication, we leave the introduction of this technique to section 3.2., as this particular technique is proposed to offer especially interesting insights when analyzing more interactive aspects of strategic communication.

Narrative analysis is concerned with how narrators not only communicate, but tell stories where characters are positioned in time and space and it thus seeks to systematically investigate narrative means in order to understand how stories are constructed and told. As such, narrative analysis seeks to identify which stories are told about a certain phenomenon (e.g. 'tourism' or 'tourists') and how such storytelling represents this phenomenon. Narratives are used consistently not only as part of everyday life when individuals try to share their experiences with others, but also to share and transfer cultural values and norms. In western societies, one of the most well-known examples of storytelling is probably the fairytale, which usually contains a series of well-established elements (or narrative means) such as special beginnings and ends (i.e. 'once upon a time' and 'they lived happily ever after'), good, evil and perhaps also poor characters, royalty (or at least a prince or princess), magic (fairies, trolls, elves, speaking animals etc.) and some essential norms, values or morale (e.g. that 'the good guys win' or that he, who is brave wins the princess and (half) the kingdom).

Storytelling enables us to transfer knowledge and helps us make sense of ourselves, others and culture. Benjamin (2006:161) argues that stories are handbooks on 'how to behave' that ensure access to 'the wisdom of the past' and hereby, "storytelling gives collective heritage a tangible form and helps the culture create a collective, distinct and, sometimes, isolated identity". Fogg, Budtz and Yakaboylu (2004) suggest that storytelling contains four elements in the form of message(s), conflict, characters and plot (storyline). Applying this understanding of storytelling to fairytales, a fairy tale not only makes collective heritage tangible, but also becomes a handbook on how to behave that, as vignette 19 illustrates, is perhaps not as 'innocent' as it might seem.

Vignette 19: Damsels in Distress and Brave Men to the Rescue

In Australia, the $21.8 million two-year Respectful Relationships program aims to prevent family violence and address gender inequality. The program includes audits of preschool books and toys to determine whether they promote gender stereotypes among boys and girls.

According to newspaper coverage, the program suggests that children should act as 'fairytale detectives' that investigate the roles of male and female characters and the gendered messages in fairytales. This way, the program suggests that children will become aware of the fairy (or merry or wary or scary) tales of men being strong and brave and women being beautiful and in need of male rescuing.

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/respectfulrelationships.aspx

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4384780/Fairytales-banned-public-schools-promote-gender-stereotype.html

Regardless of whether one believes that fairytales create or reinforce certain gendered stereotypes or not, vignette 19 points out how storytelling conveys meanings through language and text. Sometimes, we distinguish between storytelling (the act of telling a story) and the narrative (the story itself). Usually, a narrative will include the communicative construction of a sequence of events (with a beginning, a middle part and an end), or as Noy (2004:84) puts it; "the term narrative or story generally denotes the sequential linkage of certain selected events in one's life, depicting a personal trajectory that begins in the past and continues into the present". Accordingly, the narrative can be understood as "a form of communication in which an individual can indicate which elements of those experiences are most significant" (Elliott, 2005:4). A narrative is thus not a 'true' account for a series of events, but a piece of strategic communication constructed in order to convey certain meanings and messages. When doing qualitative interviews with tourists, interviewers often look (or even dig) for stories that can convey not just factual information or accounts for holidays, but also the tourists' narrative accounts of their experiences and vignette 20 offers an example of such a narrative account.

Vignette 20: Tourists as storytellers

"If you had asked me 8 years ago, if I would ever go to the same place [on holiday] *more than once, my answer would have been: 'No, are you crazy? I want to go and experience something new'. But, in that respect our needs have changed, so that now – when we go on vacation with the children – I mean, we don't have a lot of energy left in everyday life; at least not enough to say; 'Okay, let's use a lot of energy and do a lot of things during the holidays'."*

Blichfeldt (2008)

The interview extract presented in vignette 20 is an example of how tourists (in this case a mother of two children aged four and six) tell stories about their holiday experiences. This does not mean that the vignette represents 'the' objective reality of this woman's travel career patterns. On the contrary, as Bruner (2005:8) suggests:

"The original experience is much richer and more complex than any narrative, and what tourists tell themselves, the first telling, is always different from what they tell others, the second telling. As everyone experiences the world differently, what arises to consciousness is different for each individual tourist, as it is filtered through past understandings, personality, knowledge base, and other factors. All tellings may be seen as interpretations based on but not exact duplicates of an objective reality."

In tourism, tourists are not the only ones telling stories about their experiences in different places. For example, in his discussion of roles narratives play within tourism, Bruner (2005:2) lets 'narrative' cover "not only stories told by one person to another, or to those in fictional texts, but also the larger sometimes implicit pre-tour master narratives about destinations, sites, and people" and he points to the existence of established master narratives about destinations that "are not only stories of meaning but of power" (p. 3).

Vignette 21: Bruner exemplifying master narratives

"Balinese master narratives are about paradise, mysticism, and beauty; Egyptian master narratives are about the pharaonic period, the ancient royalty, tombs and pyramids; Jerusalem accounts are about the origins and holy sites of the Judeo-Christian and Islamic religions; East African stories are about wild animals, wild landscapes, and wild tribes. It is no accident that in Kenya the government bureau in charge of travel is called the Bureau of Wildlife and Tourism. Master narratives give meaning to sites and places. A mountain fortress like Masada would be just another large rock in a barren landscape without a story."

<div align="right">Bruner (2005:4)</div>

Bruner (2005) moves on to pinpointing that master narratives are neither monolithic, nor uncontested and for each of the examples of master narratives offered in vignette 21, there are competing or counter narratives. However, Bruner's (2005:5) point is that master narratives in a touristic discourse may exist "almost separate from the rest of the society and its history", such as it is the case when the master narrative on Africa as a destination is a romantic narrative on animals, tribes and nature that has little in common with the mass media-induced African narrative that emphasizes poverty, corruption, disease, war and starvation. Not only individuals, mass media, governmental agencies and bureaus etc. tell stories: Also in business and organizational settings, storytelling is important as the stories in and around organizations deliver certain messages about the organizational culture(s) and values (Fogg et al., 2004) and accordingly, all tourism actors mentioned in section 2 are likely to be storytellers (as well as subject to storytelling). A strand of tourism research has focused on exploring destination narratives in guide books, on websites, told by tour guides or tourists, and in magazines, movies etc. while other researchers have studied the roles of narratives and stories in interpretive settings, such as museums, galleries, science centers, historical sites, zoos etc. (Moscardo, 2010). At the destination level, it is perhaps especially interesting to study whether the destination is mostly subject to detached stories or a more coherent story frame and/or whether one can identify both master narratives and counter narratives. Furthermore, it could be interesting to study which characters and events are emphasized, which stories are told by whom and/or which practices and behaviors are recommended by which 'handbooks' (i.e. narratives).

Although ***rhetorical analysis*** has been defined in many different ways (some of which very close to the definitions of narrative analysis), these definitions usually emphasize that rhetoric is *the study of language* and *the study of how to use it*. Rhetorical analysis is often applied in order to analyze the form and the content of a message (McCroskey, 1978). As such, rhetorical analysis relates to critical reading of a text (in whatever form), how it is composed and which techniques are used to create a message. Rhetorical analysis seeks to shed light on how language and other symbols are 'manipulated' for persuasive purposes (McCroskey, 1978).

When doing rhetorical analysis, many researchers use Aristotle's three elements of persuasion or rhetorical appeals; i.e. ***ethos*** (relating to the credibility of the source), ***pathos*** (relating to the use of emotional appeals) and ***logos*** (the use of logical arguments). Although a text may not use all of these three rhetorical appeals, most texts will contain some elements of all three appeals. One noteworthy exception is the scientific text as academic writing (including exam papers in a master level class on strategic communication) will traditionally prioritize ethos and logos and contain little (if any) elements of persuasion in the form of pathos.

Ethos (or the credibility and authority of the writer) can be extrinsic (e.g. when we find articles in peer-reviewed journals written by well-known researchers more credible than Wikipedia, popular writings by non-academics published through dubitable media or someone's dubious notes on strategic communication) or intrinsic (e.g. when research written up so that it follows academic standards is deemed more credible than writings that do not conform with such standards). Pathos entails attempts to engage the audience's emotions whereas statements rely on logos when the rhetor seems to be making reasonable claims that are supported by proof or 'facts' – usually by putting forward logical arguments. Vignette 22 closes this introduction to rhetorical analysis by offering an example of how these three rhetorical appeals can be applied to tourism research in order to suggest how DMOs should communicate in the aftermath of disastrous events.

Vignette 22: Disaster recovery communication – don't say you're open for business!

In order to suggest which types of messages DMOs should use to communicate with tourists in the wake of a disastrous event, Walters and Mair (2012) used an experimental methodology. In practice, what they did was to generate nine mock advertisements, each presenting a commonly used disaster recovery message (e.g. the 'open and ready for business' theme, visitor testimonials or price reductions/discounts). Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the nine mock advertisements and asked to respond to a series of questions regarding the effectiveness of the message based on 16 items that measured ethos, pathos and logos of the message.

A key finding is that the message that used celebrity endorsement was rated highly on all three rhetorical dimensions whereas one of the most commonly used messages (i.e. 'open and ready for business') performed relatively badly on the ethos dimension and worst of all nine mock advertisements on the logos dimension (suggesting that respondents found this ad to not be accurate, realistic or truthful).

Semiotic analysis was defined by De Saussure (1916:16) as "a science that studies signs within society". According to De Saussure (1916) a sign is the result of the relationship between a signifier (a word, symbol etc.) and the signified (object). Peirce (1934) suggested that meaning is derived from the triadic relationship between an object, the sign (the signifier presenting the object) and the interpretant (or translatant in the form of the sense made of the sign), hereby emphasizing that signs mean something to somebody, but not the same thing to everybody. For example, smoke might be a sign of fire (the object), but the sense made when seeing smoke may differ across translatants as signs are "always polysemic, that is, there are always several equally valid ways of interpreting any sign" (Gottdiener, 2001:10). Consequently, signs are 'read' and "their meaning interpreted in terms of cultural codes which we have to learn in order to make sense of the signs around us" (Hackley, 2003:166). For example, in many western societies, the sign 'smoke' and its signifying 'fire' might also activate connotations to the saying that 'there is no smoke without fire' and its metaphorical qualities. However, soldiers stationed at the Great Wall in ancient China or the crowd waiting to hear news about a papal conclave's selection of a new pope, might not see smoke as a sign of fire, but as a sign of news transmitted through one of the oldest forms of long-distance communication (i.e. smoke signals). It is these cultural codes that make signs polysemic and therefore, the researcher doing

semiotic analysis has to be extremely careful not to take his/her own cultural codes and translatants for granted, but always must scrutinize which cultural codes (s)he draws into the analysis when trying to derive meaning from the triadic relationships between objects, signs and interpretants. Vignettes 23 and 24 offer two examples of the kind of results tourism researchers can generate on the basis of semiotic analysis.

Vignette 23: Escape, excitement, sexual arousal etc. as themes in tourist brochures

> Uzzell's (1984) analysis of six tourism brochures aimed to decode the myths and meanings packaged holiday companies seek to communicate through their holiday brochures and some of his findings are that these companies "focus on locations which promote self-actualization, social interaction, sexual arousal, and excitement" and that the brochures "contribute to the creation of a mythology which treats holidays as a liberating, constraint-free, annual escape."

Vignette 24: Heteronormativity in tourist brochures

> On the basis of his analysis of the pictures in 12 tourist brochures produced by Qantas, Edelheim's (2007) suggests that: "... in 83% of the pictures portraying two people, those were of different sexes; only ten per cent of the pictures were of two women and only seven per cent were of two men. Further to that it can be noted that the majority of couples of the same sex pictured were from different generations, in other words, pictures of mothers and daughters or fathers and sons. It can therefore be claimed that Qantas in their general marketing brochures is only selling holidays to heterosexual people. Or, if that suggestion is too controversial, it is at least evident that it is a heterosexual Australia that Qantas wants to portray in general terms ..."

Discourse analysis is concerned with the structure and content of thought and communication and how language is used to convey meanings within the social conditions of its use (Henry and Tator, 2002). Along with the techniques introduced above, discourse analysis can be applied to different types of communication such as single sentences, pictures, Instagram updates, webpages, official documents, websites etc., but irrespective of the nature of the pieces of communication studied through discourse analysis, the piece of communication analyzed through discourse analysis is usually referred to as 'the text'. The most interesting thing about discourse analysis is that it emphasizes that texts are produced 'intertextually' and

relate to others text as well as to broader notions of authority and power. Texts are hereby seen as "mediated cultural products which are part of wider systems of knowledge" (Hannam & Knox, 2005:23). The text thus becomes 'more' than simply a text as it is a product of the cultural context(s) in which it is embedded and is inscribed with intertextual meanings. This also means that the discourses we operate within to a large extent determine what we read into a text (Shotter, 1993). If this sounds confusing, perhaps the simple example offered in vignette 25 might be helpful.

Vignette 25: What is this thing called 'induction'?

> *"A preface, prologue, or introductory scene especially of an early English play"*
> *"The act or process of inducting (as into office)"*
> *"The inspiration of the fuel-air charge from the carburetor into the combustion chamber of an internal combustion engine"*
> *"Inference of a generalized conclusion from particular instances"*
> https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/induction

As vignette 25 shows, the word 'induction' takes on very different meanings depending on the contexts in which it is used. So when a student studying Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet is asked to analyze the induction, (s)he will turn to the famous fourteen lines starting with "Two households". On the other hand, if one applies for a job as Induction Officer, the job description contains no references to the works of Shakespeare and the biker that cannot kick-start his vintage motorcycle, has carburetors and combustion chambers on his mind when he identifies induction as the main problem. Finally, the student taking a course on philosophy of science will, when the lecturer speaks of induction, hopefully think of induction as broad generalizations derived from specific observations and how this differs from deduction where we go from the general (the theory) to the specific (the observations). The thoughts the word 'induction' triggers for different people and the definitions of 'induction' offered in the Merriam-Webster dictionary are products of the different cultural contexts, in which they are embedded and each of them are inscribed with intertextual meanings embedded in authoritative uses of this concept in the different institutional settings, in which the concept is used. Therefore, any piece of communication containing the word 'induction' can only be fully

understood if we understand the intertextual meanings of this specific text and how it relates to other texts on induction (such as a general introduction to early English plays, an Induction Officer manual, the biker's Haynes' owners workshop manual or the lecturer's slides on methods of reasoning).

As the small 'induction' example shows, there are often competing discourses as the connotations of specific words vary across people and (sub)cultures. Often, competing discourses struggle for dominance and sometimes, one of the discourses becomes the dominant discourse; i.e. the meaning that is/becomes most prevalent in society. Returning to vignette 8 and the different aspects of Copenhagen different actors accentuate in their communication about this place, although some discourses about Copenhagen (such as being 'hyggelig' or 'happy') may be more prevalent than others, none of the different discourses about Copenhagen seem dominant enough for other discourses to be silenced or ignored. On top of that, discourses are not static or 'set in stone', but likely to change over time as discursive content is continuously refigured and recreated (Foucault, 1972). Furthermore, as critical discourse analysis accentuates, discourses are not only a matter of which connotations texts include, but also about connotations that are 'left out', voices that are silenced and 'secret' meanings that are not directly obvious (Duncan & Duncan, 1992). Vignette 26 introduces an example of a critical discourse analysis that shows how advertisements not only speak to some travelers, but also cast other travelers into the role as not socially and culturally acceptable travelers.

Vignette 26: In-flight magazines: Not as ideologically innocent as they might seem

Using Critical Discourse Analysis, Small, Harris and Wilson (2008) analyzed advertisements from a selection of Quantas and Air New Zealand in-flight magazines. A main finding is that the magazine advertisements aim to speak to a certain 'elite' type of travelers who are mobility-rich, financially wealthy and have the money to buy expensive luxury products. Hereby, these magazine advertisements become both a medium that speaks to privileged groups in society and a way of 'socially sorting' airline travelers into travelers that are socially and culturally acceptable and those that are not.

Although discourse analysis is included in the part of this chapter that looks into analysis inspired by transmission models of communication, the observant reader might have noticed that this is a somewhat problematic choice as discourse analysis accentuates that the text subject to analysis relates to others texts and the analysis itself thus is intertextual. However, the reason why discourse analysis is included in this part of the manuscript is that even if such analysis is inherently intertextual, it normally focuses on deep and 'thick' analysis of one, or a few, specific texts and interpretations hereof as discourse analysis is the analysis of language in context and is concerned with language 'in use', 'beyond the sentence' and in situational, social and cultural contexts. Discourse analysis is interpretive as it aims to make sense of (or interpret) phenomena by understanding meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The body of literature on 'how to do' discourse analysis is too extensive to be covered in this manuscript. However, Fairclough's (1989) critical discourse analysis provides a three-dimensional method for discourse analysis that might be a good starting point for students interested in doing discourse analysis. Fairclough's first dimension *description* deals with the linguistic properties of the text and is usually done as a text analysis. His second dimension *interpretation* deals with the relationships between the discursive process of production and interpretation and usually involves the asking of questions such as who the producers of the text are, what their main objectives are and what the context is. His third level *explanation* deals with relationships between processes (production and interpretation) and social conditions and usually entails investigation of which discourses or social practices the text interrelates with. Obviously, a text may interrelate with (far) more discourses than it is possible to include in the analysis and therefore, researchers oftentimes reduce the number of discourses they present in their final (strategic communication of their) analysis. For example, Spies' 'Do it for Denmark' video interrelates with many different discourses and a feminist researcher focusing on gender representations might emphasize other discourses than a tourism scholar interested in representations of short-break tourists and their 'doings' during the holiday.

As mentioned previously, researchers do not fully agree on the definitions of the different analysis techniques introduced in this section and what one researcher labels a discourse analysis, another researcher might consider as no more than a rather simplistic

rhetorical analysis. Consequently, the reader should not trust the text in this section too much, but should consult a variety of qualified texts when digging deeper into each of these methods. That said it does make some sense to consider deductive quantitative content analysis (which is discussed in section 3.2.) as the simplest of these techniques and discourse analysis as the technique that best enables the researcher to study subtle and hidden messages within and beyond texts. Finally, regardless of the complexities inherent in the actual use of these different techniques, what the student should foremost have learned after reading this section is that strategic communication in tourism – including everything from photos included in a travel brochure over promotional videos to elaborate strategy documents - are not 'innocent', nor value-free, but define and inscribe themselves in certain ways of *seeing* tourism and hereby contribute to the *making* of tourism by prescribing certain ways of '*doing*' tourism and *being* tourism actors. As a result, the analysis of strategic communication is not only something we do in order to understand or discuss the qualities of a specific touristic text, it is also something that sensitizes and extends our understandings of what this creature we call 'tourism' is (and is not) and how it relates to the wider fabrics of society and human being.

3.2. Analysis inspired by interactive communication models

As discussed in the previous sections, strategic communication is *not* only a matter of defining organizational goals and values and transforming such goals and values to information transmitted to passive recipients. Instead, interactive communication is a matter of how organizations and other actors (e.g. customers, employees, suppliers, investors, government agencies and society at large) engage in communicative and meaning making processes. However, such perspectives broaden the scope of what to analyze when analyzing strategic communication as the analysis of strategic communication becomes a matter of analyzing not only original messages, but also content and interactions between a, potentially infinitive, number of actors. As an example, in such an interactional perspective, the analysis of strategic communication of the 'Do it for Denmark' campaign entails more than the analysis of Spies'

video, as the creations and constructions of meanings continue long after the video was launched as viewers comment on the video and, as shown by Blichfeldt and Smed (2015) add new layers of associations and meanings to the content. This also means that the analysis of content cannot be reduced to the analysis of unidirectional messages, but that the researcher will have to make a choice in regard to how much of the conversation to include in, and exclude, from his/her analysis. The making of such choices becomes especially problematic when we study web-based communication. Blichfeldt and Smed's analysis of 'Do it for Denmark' commentary is an example of a **content analysis** and even though their analysis is rather simple, their analysis does point to the benefits of using more simple techniques when the amount of communication to be analyzed increases, such as it usually does when researching content and interactions between a larger number of tourism actors. Furthermore, as content analysis is often used in combination with **netnography,** the purpose of this section is to introduce these two techniques and their application to the study of interactive communication.

In recent years, the notion of viral marketing has become a 'hot topic'. Viral marketing is by Van der Lans et al. (2010) defined as how consumers mutually share and spread marketing information, that is initially sent out deliberately by marketers to stimulate and capitalize on word-of-mouth [or, we add, word-of-keyboard] behavior. Furthermore, Montgomery (2001:93) defines viral marketing as a type of marketing that "infects customers with an advertising message which passes from one customer to the next like a rampant flu virus". Viral marketing seeks to activate consumer-to-consumer communication (as opposed to company-to-consumer communication) to disseminate information about companies, brands, products and/or services. The fundamental rationales behind the activation of consumer-to-consumer communication relate not simply to cost effectiveness, but predominantly to the idea that non-commercial messages from peers are considered to be far more reliable, credible and trustworthy than commercial messages from marketers; an idea that made Rosen (2000) coin word-of-mouth as the oldest and most effective marketing strategy. However, viral marketing is not simply defined as any, positive or negative, word-of-mouth consumers engage in as it is heavily imbued with traditional ideas about what marketing 'is'.

Kotler (1972:522) defined marketing as "a set of human activities directed at facilitating and consummating exchanges of promises", a definition that highlights that commercial enterprises exchange products and services for consumers' money and that marketing is the activities that *facilitate* such exchanges (e.g. making the products and services (product), making them available for consumers (place), setting the price for these products and services (price) and telling consumers about these products and services (promotion)). In 2008, The American Marketing Association defined marketing as "an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders". In 2013, this definition was changed to marketing being "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large". Although there are some important differences between the two definitions offered by AMA, they both emphasize marketing as 'something' that *companies* and *organizations* 'do' to and/or for *customers* in order to produce, inform about and deliver (or more correctly 'sell') values, which are embedded in the company's or organization's products and services. Taking these definitions of marketing into consideration, viral marketing is thus not simply communication that 'goes viral'; it is marketing – in the form of communication about products and services and how they can deliver value to customers – that is spread through viral processes. Such takes om viral marketing are anchored in transmission models of communication as it is the intended messages about the marketers' products and services (and the value they may provide for consumers) that qualify as the focal content. However, there is more to *viral communication* than *viral marketing* as viral communication may take on a 'life of its own' and may not benefit the organization or lead to the intended exchange of the companies' or organizations' offerings, hereby making online conversations anything but imbued with market exchanges of value propositions suggested by marketers. As vignette 28 suggests, in contemporary society successful companies and organizations may be the ones that are best at engaging in interactive viral communications whereas those that enact viral communication as only being a matter of making flashy or catchy advertising that triggers viral marketing processes might have misunderstood the kind of relationships, consumers might wish to form with brands.

Vignette 27: Brands that thrive

"... people are connecting with brands in an increasingly two-way relationship. . . Brands that thrive are no longer simply trying to publicise themselves in a monolithic way, they are inviting consumers to join them in creating meaning and being a part of the process".

[Hodder, 2002:16]

It is exactly the consumers that are connecting with both brands and other consumers and doing so increasingly online that made Kozinets (2002) introduce marketing researchers to the notion of **netnography** and this section of the manuscript introduces students to various aspects to be considered when using netnography to study interactive communication in online contexts. However, one issue that is not discussed in this manuscript is the ethics of doing netnography – including the critical questions on whether online forums are public or private sites, how to define informed consent (and how to deal with the issue that those originally creating content did probably not intend or welcome its use for research purposes), the ethics of researchers as 'professional lurkers', whether to do covert or overt observations and whether to prioritize unobtrusiveness or opportunities to engage in direct dialogues with those researched. The reason why these matters are not discussed in this manuscript is not that they are not important. They are! as research ethics are *always* important and must be scrutinized by researchers. But as the issue of research ethics in netnography is well-covered (albeit still subject to intense discussions and disputes) in the academic peer-reviewed literature, the reader is referred to this literature in order to dig into the matter of research ethics in online contexts.

In order to introduce the reader to netnography, vignette 28 offers an example of the kind of knowledge netnography can provide (and the one Kozinets presented in his seminal article that qualifies as the starting point for labelling and unfolding netnography both as a method and a methodology).

Vignette 28: Coffee lovers

> *Kozinets (2002) studied contemporary coffee consumption by doing netnography on online coffee cultures in*
> *order to understand dedicated and devoted coffee consumers' 'coffee meanings'.*
> *One of his key findings is that coffee consumption for these 'coffeephiles' has religious aspects of search,*
> *passion and transcendence as well as deeply meaningful ties to identity.*
> *Furthermore, he suggests that the online communities are particular consumption webs that draw a group of*
> *consumers into deeper and more profound levels of (sub)cultural involvement and enthusiasm, consumption*
> *and investment and that the deepened understanding of these webs could provide businesses with ideas for*
> *new products and services.*

According to Kozinets (2002:2) netnography, or ethnography on the Internet, uses the information publicly available in online forums etc. and "adapts ethnographic research techniques to the study of cultures and communities emerging through computer-mediated communications". Since Kozinets introduced netnography it has become a very popular research method, not only because it is supposedly faster, simpler and cheaper than it is to do traditional ethnography, but also because it is more naturalistic and unobtrusive than traditional research methods such as questionnaires, focus groups and qualitative interviews. In other words, netnography may provide researchers with access to consumers' hitherto 'hidden' conversations on consumption.

The popularity netnography has gained as a research method unfortunately also means that much of what researchers label netnography may have much to do with the Internet, but very little to do with ethnography. Acknowledging and accepting the watering down of what netnography is (and is not) that has taken place since Kozinets introduced this method 15 years ago, this manuscript accepts netnography as an umbrella term that also covers research that does not live up to more rigid standards for doing ethnography (research that is sometimes referred to as 'small scale netnography'). Regardless of the extent to which netnographical pieces of research meet the standards of ethnographical research or not, what is especially appealing about netnography is that it provides the researcher with direct access to, or a window into, communication between actors (particularly consumer-to-consumer

communication, but also consumer-to-company and consumer-about-company/brand communication) – a strategic window that did not exist in the past. It is the existence of these strategic windows that allows researchers to 'lurke' online and allowed Kozinets to point to netnography as a particularly *naturalistic* and *unobtrusive* method adequate for studying interactions and communication between actors in online social situations. However, as Marabese and Blichfeldt (2014) argue, what researchers 'see' through such windows is not any objective truth (or 'lives lived' as these authors call this), but staged strategic performances (or 'lives posted' in their words).

Netnography primarily analyses textual discourses in online communication. In regard to such analysis, it is important to consider that writers of online texts "may be presumed to be presenting a more carefully cultivated and controlled self-image" (Kozinets, 2002:7) and be more strategic in their communication than in many offline contexts. Furthermore, in online contexts often the researcher does not have access to external information on informant identity, hereby experiencing the problems inherent in social representation and lacking knowledge on informant identities, backgrounds and contextual matters (Turkle, 1995). These issues made Kozinets suggest that the unit of analysis in netnography is not 'the person' or consumption per se, but the act of posting a text (and/or picture etc.) as social behavior (or a communicative act or language game). It also made Marabese and Blichfeldt (2014) suggest that tourism researcher using netnography do not study what tourism 'is' or who tourists 'are', but how tourists position themselves as tourists in online-contexts and how tourism actors develop discourses on tourism, tourists and touristic behavior.

As mentioned previously, the array of research that is labelled netnography is large and diverse and vignette 29 introduces a piece of research that uses small-scale netnography (and not that much ethnography) to simply split customers into a series of rather homogeneous groups (i.e. segmentation).

Vignette 29: Wine tourists

Cavallo, Scorrano and Iaia (2015) did netnography on wine destination websites and wine tourists' online discussions to study wine tourism. On the basis hereof, they point to the existence of the following three types of wine tourists:

Sophisticated wine tourists, who emphasize 'fashionable' aspects of a location and exchange views on the best chateau to visit or the best vintage offered by wineries during tastings.

Wine-oriented tourists, who mostly discuss Napa Valley and California, often discuss people involved in the production chain and talk about the best wines, wine-cellars/vineyards to visit and the importance of aspects linked to cultivation and production during their tours.

Tradition-oriented wine tourists, who tend to be talking about Italy, Tuscany and France and analyze the cultural and architectural aspects of these places, emphasizing their history and traditions, as well as the "food" and characteristic local products.

Vignette 29 presents a rather simple piece of research where data are used to do segmentation on the basis of the aspects of wine tourism commenters accentuate. However, netnography can do much more than simply provide data on consumers in cheaper, easier and more cost effective ways than traditional methods such as interviews and surveys. For example, although many researchers favor to do unobtrusive netnography, researchers also have the opportunity to interact directly with those we do netnography on. For example, if the researcher is not only 'lurking', but from the start openly declares that he wishes to do netnography in a specific online forum and gets permission to do so, the researcher has a unique opportunity to supplement textual data with other kinds of data. Such opportunities could include e.g. the researcher asking those studied to participate in (skype) interviews or online surveys or doing member checks of preliminary findings and conclusions.

Most importantly in regard to the potential advantages of netnography, this methodology allows researchers to study ***interactions*** between consumers as well as interactions between consumers and companies/organizations/brands and hereby we can *follow* conversation and interaction dynamics and potentially get a better understanding of the social structures in such virtual communities. As an example, Kozinets (1999) identified four member types in online consumption communities in the form of devotees, insiders, tourists and

minglers (where the first two types are more heavily involved and more knowledgeable in this specific type of consumption, consequently ranking higher in the social hierarchy of the tribe than the latter two types). The researcher fully immersing herself into the online conversations about a certain subject matter may also get a fuller understanding of power structures, hierarchies, social ordering and conversational dynamics underlying the posts and comments studied, as illustrated by vignette 30, which directly reproduces some of the findings in Gyimothy's (2013) analysis of the Facebook fan site of the Roskilde (musical) festival.

Vignette 30: Better Music, Less Crap

"Most postings are autocommunicative (status) messages that are not responded to by the rest of the community. Particularly active, self-acclaimed devotees or insiders are likely to be considered "village tossers" or being collectively ignored, which questions a virtual hierarchy based on posting frequency alone. The wall owner itself (Roskilde Festival) is often subject to critical comments, which are sometimes responded to, sometimes not. However, representatives of the wall owner may use their position to settle debates and arbitrarily expel members from the rhetorical community. By letting fans appropriate the social media platform for a variety of comments, Roskilde delegates the communicative task of enacting and re-enchanting the Orange Feeling. On Facebook, the rhetorical vision is constantly evolving: it is confirmed, questioned, redefined, or reflected upon. In other words, it is kept alive by the tribe." Gyimothy (2013:131)

Whereas Gyimothy (2013) does a rather 'deep' analysis of rhetorical events on the Roskilde Facebook fan site, other researchers choose very different approaches when they try to make sense of online communication. When doing netnography, we often have access to large amounts of data and the mere amount of data is probably the reason why researchers doing netnography often do **quantitative and/or qualitative content** analysis. Therefore, the closing part of this section is dedicated to a short introduction to this method. Content analysis studies 'what' is said in a text and seeks to uncover the content/meanings expressed by a text (or a number of texts) and as content analysis enables the research to assure that all units of analysis receive equal treatment, it is often a good starting point to get an overview of large sets of data (such as the data sets one may work with when doing netnography). Krippendorff (1989: 404) argues that content analysis can "provide aggregate accounts of inferences from large bodies of data that reveal trends, patterns, and differences ..." og he further points to content analysis

mostly being used "to infer the importance writers, producers, media, or even whole cultures assign to particular subject-matter categories from the frequency or volumes with which that subject matter is mentioned". So in its simplest form, content analysis entails little more than counting the occurrence of a 'subject matter' (or a concept, a word etc.) in a text. Vignette 31 offers an example of how simple a content analysis can be.

Vignette 31: I'm not a tourist!!!

Whereas most people resist being labelled 'tourists', the label 'traveler' is everything but stigmatizing! Wait … Hang on … it that really true? Do we really avoid labelling ourselves 'tourists' while we proudly wear the badge 'traveler' in order to let the world see how good we are at actually experiencing the real, authentic deal while interacting with the locals and avoiding the beaten track?

Let's imagine that you wanted to dig into these stereotypes and choose to do so by studying the extents to which bloggers describe themselves as 'tourists' or 'travelers' – what could be the easiest way to check that? One way of checking it could be to simply count the number of times bloggers use these two terms (which would be a straightforward quantitative content analysis). And you don't even have to do the counting yourselves, but could simply feed the text from a series of blogs into programs such as Wordle, WordClouds, Tagul etc. - these programs will even provide you with a neat visual display of word-clouds ready to copy paste into your written reports.

But why stop there? It could be that bloggers use both the labels 'tourist' and 'traveler' but are highly positive when it comes to labelling themselves as the latter and extremely negative when referring to others as tourists. So why not take the analysis one step further and make subcategories that allow you to check the frequencies with which 'tourist' is laden with negative connotations and 'traveler' is laden with positive connotations – or why not check whether it could be that bloggers extensively use the word 'traveler' when describing themselves and tend to use the term 'tourist' when referring to inferior others? Could be that you, at this stage in the research process, could show that across 157 posts from the 19 travel bloggers you study, the word 'traveler' is used six times as often as the word 'tourists', that 94% of the instances where the word 'tourist' is used contains negative expressions about inferior others, that 65% of the instances where the word 'traveler' is used contains accounts of the bloggers' own authentic, off-the-beaten-track encounters with locals and 27% contains references to the bloggers' social interactions with others interested in experiencing 'true cultures' and avoiding herds of mass tourists.

And hey, while you're at it, why not go back into the text and find a few text bits that do an excellent job at exemplifying the content of each of your sub-categories, such as the sentence where Jenny argues that she'd never visit the Taj Mahal and find herself surrounded by "tourists in their stretchy pants with way too many pockets, Hawaiian shirts, white socks in sandals and the camera working overtime to prove that they've actually been there"?

As vignette 31 exemplifies, although content analysis often starts out with some kind of counting, this method is not inherently quantitative, but would usually, as the researcher digs deeper and deeper into his/her data set, become more qualitative (i.e. turning from counting frequencies towards analyzing the *meanings behind the words* that are most relevant for the specific piece of research). Furthermore, whereas the example of a content analysis introduced in vignette 31 is predominantly deductive (i.e. starting with an interest in the concepts 'tourist' and 'traveler' and 'testing' the frequencies of these two concepts in a series of blog entries), content analysis can also be highly inductive (such as it was the case in the study of the comments on the 'Do it for Denmark' video) or a combination of inductive and deductive approaches (such as it would be the case when the researcher works her way through a series of seemingly endless hermeneutical spirals while working with her data set and different theoretical lenses). Furthermore, as content analysis allows the researcher to work with (and condense) large data sets, it is also usable when the researcher wants to compare the content of different texts, e.g. when (s)he is interested in comparing the induced image of an attraction (e.g. how Tivoli is presented on its official website) to organic images (e.g. the photos tourists take in Tivoli or the reviews of Tivoli they post on tripadvisor) and hereby point to potentially problematic discrepancies between Tivoli's identity and its image(s). Finally, smart researchers often combine the use of different methods and techniques and could, for example, decide to first use content analysis to get an overview and preliminary understanding of larger communication data sets and follow up on this by deeper rhetorical, narrative, semiotic and/or discourse analysis of specific themes or data fragments 'worthy' of further academic pursuit.

The introduction to content analysis closes this section of the manuscript. However, before closing this section entirely, the reader is reminded that whenever that which is subject to analysis is referred to as 'text' in this manuscript, 'text' should be understood as suggested within semiotics; i.e. as 'something' we can interpret for its meanings. Hereby, 'text' becomes that (potentially everything?) which the researcher chooses to analyze as a text – including written texts, visual texts (logos, photos, videos, children's drawings – you name it ☺) or perhaps even material objects or cultures. And on that note, we wish the reader the very best in his/her quest to explore the wonderful world of touristic texts that are 'out there', waiting for curious students to apply the different techniques introduced in this section to them ☺

4. COMMUNICATION AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The Brundtland Report (i.e. 'Our Common Future') from 1987 is often pointed to as a turning point that made world leaders aware of sustainability as well as sustainable development and popularized these concepts (or even made them prominent discourses or counter narratives to growth). Since that time, sustainable tourism has been subject to much debate and the concept is now accepted as "applicable to all tourism ventures, regardless of scale" although "a precise definition of sustainable tourism is less important than the journey towards it" (Hardy, Beeton and Pearson, 2002:483). The purpose of this section is *not* to discuss what sustainable tourism 'is' (not) or whether it is most appropriate to speak of 'sustainable tourism development' or 'sustainable tourism' to avoid the perhaps parochial assumptions of the latter of these concept. Instead, the purpose of this section of the paper is to inspire the reader to apply his/her knowledge on strategic communication and skills in analyzing such communication to the study of sustainable tourism. Consequently, the reader should not expect these pages to extend or deepen his/her knowledge on sustainable tourism development, but they will hopefully inspire him/her to see such development not only as something that is 'done' or 'practiced', but something that is also *made sense* and *meaning(s)* of *through tourism stakeholders' communication on sustainability* (and/or sustainable tourism development).

Tourism actors at many different levels in many different ways and in many different contexts communicate about sustainability and Hardy, Beeton and Pearson (2002:475) argue that references to sustainable tourism are "now made in most strategic tourism planning documents". Writings about sustainability in tourism planning documents

are not only accounts of sustainable 'doings', but such writings may qualify as master narratives (that – in section 3 – were argued to be not only stories of meaning, but also stories of power) that may reveal dominant (or competing or emerging) discourses. What sustainable tourism 'is' (not) can thus not only be investigated by studying how tourism actors communicate about this issue, but relevant (and especially the most powerful) stakeholders' strategic communication about sustainability may also actively construct what sustainability 'is' (not) – an issue that is exemplified in vignette 32.

Vignette 32: Content analysis of proposed coastal development projects

> Coastlines in Denmark have traditionally been protected from development and construction, hindering e.g. construction of 'front row' hotels, resorts etc. However, in 2014 Danish government softened the regulation of the Danish coastline and invited municipalities and other actors to propose tourism development projects within these hitherto protected areas. In the call for development projects, it was explicated that the projects should be sustainable (although this requirement 'vanished' during the subsequent selection process). Andersen, Blichfeldt and Liburd (2017) compared the written project proposals to academic discourses on sustainability, identified a series of discrepancies and concluded the following:

> It is unclear how Danish policy makers envisaged the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas or why sustainability vanished during the selection process. What is clear, though, is that without a clear communication of how decision-makers define STD, there were no clear guidelines for tourism actors to follow when writing sustainability into their project proposals. The result of this, it seems, is that the definitions of sustainability used when proposing tourism development along the Danish coastline in many ways differ from academic discourses on sustainable tourism development.

As vignette 32 shows, how e.g. governmental agencoes communicate about sustainability can have vast implications for how other tourism actors enact sustainability, or at least, lead to enactments of the concept that do not align with the knowledge we already have accumulated, hereby opening up for a wide variety of activities (and development projects) being pointed to as 'sustainable' without necessarily aligning with relevant conceptualizations. Wight (1993) argued that sustainable tourism might, as ecotourism, suffer from the potential of

it being little more than a marketing label. Although Wight might have been overly pessimistic, there is certainly much 'greenspeak' going on – as exemplified by vignette 33.

Vignette 33: Greenspeak

> *Doing a rhetorical analysis of print media advertisements, Dann (1996) points to 'Greenspeak' as a promotional discourse which focuses on the environment and the corresponding motivations of green tourists. One of his main findings is that Greenspeak tries to convert the conventional mass tourism themes (sun, sea, sand and sex) to those of eco-tourism (nature, nostalgia, nirvana and narcissism).*

Whereas Dann's (1996) **greenspeak** simply points to 'green' as what is being communicated, without reference to the 'truth value' of such communication, others (e.g. Self, Self and Bell-Haynes, 2010) more critically point to discrepancies between 'sayings' and 'doings' when it comes to sustainability. Such critics often use the word **greenwashing** to describe situations, in which businesses, governments and other groups promote green-based environmental initiatives or images, but actually operate in ways that are not environmentally friendly, or may even be damaging to the environment etc. Vignette 34 introduces a piece of research that tries to determine the extent to which a series of tour operators in the Galapagos Islands engage in greenwashing.

Vignette 34: Greenwashing

> *Self, Self and Bell-Haynes (2010:111) argue that "because there is no universally adopted certification program for ecotourism, tourism operators may market their operations as 'ecotourism' while in reality they are 'greenwashing'" and they define greenwash as to "promote ecotourism while effectively doing the opposite". Using the criteria established by the Mohonk Agreement for responsible ecotourism, the authors did a content analysis of fifteen websites of ecotourism operators in the Galapagos Islands to determine the extent to which they are "ecotours" or "greenwashed tours."*
>
> *Although the websites suggest that the companies operate in concordance with many of the criteria for responsible eco-tourism, "greenwashing is evident when it comes to sustainable practices" and "only one company [...] is eco-certified through an outside, performance-based audit" (p. 122).*

The study referred to in vignette 34 attempts to uncover acts of greenwashing. However, greenwashing is not only a matter of what is strategically *communicated* it is also a matter of what is (not) *done* by the organizations in question. Therefore, researchers should always be extremely careful not to equate what is communicated strategically with what is actually done as there might be many (and sometimes very good) reasons why organizations do not communicate about all they do. Self, Self and Bell-Haynes (2010: 122) touch upon this issue themselves as they immediately follow up on their claim that only one company is eco-certified with the sentence: "While the companies may actually engage in these practices [being eco-certified], their websites do not specifically mention them". Discrepancies between what is 'said' and what is 'done' may consequently not only be the result of greenwashing organizations pretending to be 'better' or 'doing more good' than they actually do. As exemplified in vignette 35, quite other rationales might be decisive for how organizations (do not) strategically communicate about sustainability or other social desirable actions.

Vignette 35: Greenhushing

> *Greenhushing refers to the situation where fewer pro-sustainability actions are communicated than practiced by businesses. Font et. al.'s (2017) analysis of gaps between the communication and practices of sustainability of 31 small rural tourism businesses in the Peak District National Park (UK) suggests that these businesses only communicate 30% of all the sustainability actions practiced. Font et al. (2017) suggest that greenhushing is a form of public moralisation that adopts communication practices similar to those at work in relation to greenwashing, reflecting the social norms expected from a business; however, in the case of greenhushing reflecting moral muteness, rather than moral hypocrisy, that businesses accept but resent.*

> Font, Elgammal & Lamond (2017)

Font et al.'s (2017) study is rather interesting in a strategic communication perspective, because it is a case of deliberate **under-communication** of sustainable initiatives (i.e. engaging in far more sustainable practices than what is communicated). In a broader perspective, their pointing to deliberate under-communication of (positively laden) actions, practices and doings opens up for a more nuanced and advanced understanding of strategic

communication where organizations and businesses not only create and transmit messages intended to emphasize the most positive aspects of their business, but where they may be reluctant to use moral expressions in their communication even if they act morally (what Font et al. refer to as ***moral muteness***). There are many different reasons why organizations engage in moral muteness, but one of these reasons could be deliberate attempts not to reduce sustainability to a marketing label (something that would please Wight), another could be that these organizations have made a strategic decision to generally avoid communicating about moral issues in order to avoid becoming part of discourses inscribed with public moralization. However, the reason could also be as simple as these organizations not knowing enough about strategic communication to make a website that sends messages that align with what the organization behind it actually 'is'. As this example points to, there is only so much we can do when we analyze secondary data and one of the things we cannot do is to make claims stating exactly *why* organizations communicate as they do and *why* there are often differences between what they say and what they do. Consequently, the reader is reminded never to draw conclusions beyond what our data actually allows us to (and to always be aware of situations, in which primary data are needed in order to answer our research questions ☺).

Regardless of the extent to which organizations (do not) communicate about sustainability, whenever they do so there is a strong tendency for such communication to be filled (potentially littered) with quite powerful signifiers (as defined in the section on semiotic analysis) and strategic communication of sustainable tourism might be an especially fruitful field for the study of signs and symbols. Remember Peirce (1934), who suggested that meanings are derived from relationships between objects, signs and translatants? And Gottdiener (2001), who suggested that translatants differ across cultures, and therefore signs are polysemic (i.e. there always being several equally valid ways of interpreting any sign)? How could these researchers aid us in our quest to analyze and understand ***green tourism***? Vignette 36 offers one (of many) suggestion(s) for actively using the techniques introduced in section 3 to analyze aspects of sustainability – in the present example emphasizing ways in which the study of colors could add to our understandings of the particular type of tourism called green tourism.

Vignette 36: Being Green, or Blue, or ...

Colors are inscribed with different meanings across different cultures, meaning that different cultures enact and describe the meaning(s) of colors differently, making the symbolism of colors a 'tricky business'.

So why is green tourism green and not, say, blue or purple? Why is green tourism a discourse that makes sense to most of us when blue tourism is not?

If we did a thorough analysis of cultural meanings of colors, we might be able to argue as follows:

Blue may signify water, oceans, the skies, but it could also be said to be the 'safest color' due to its many positive associations – such as trust, security, authority or it being soothing and peaceful (although in some cultures it also triggers associations to sadness and loneliness – such as when westerners 'still got the blues').

In western societies green often represents nature, freshness, spring, luck etc. (and it's probably these associations and not the tales of the Green Fairy or the Green-eyed Monster that makes Ireland proudly present itself as the Green Island).

So why is green tourism green when the meanings of the color blue could also trigger relevant and positive associations? Or wait ... is green tourism always green or could the Blue Flag be interpreted as a sign suggesting that that which is green is sometimes blatantly blue when it comes to signaling sustainability and greenness?

Are there other examples than the Blue Flag where communication of greenness is actually blue? Is green really the dominant signifier for green tourism or is blue an alternative signifier?

Hmmm ... perhaps it's best to stop this vignette here – before we get the philosophical blues or awake any green-eyed monsters ...

In regard to sustainable tourism development, the issue of communication being interactive is perhaps even more important than in other touristic contexts as the definitions of sustainability have consequences for which and how many stakeholders should be included in our analysis. The critical question on who to include in a study of sustainability not only relates to sustainability being about environmental, social and economic dimensions, but also to the idea that stakeholders are both present and future users of resources. Furthermore, although carrying capacity is a contested concept (partly due to its reliance on upper limits to growth as being rather static, but also due to a set of other reasons this manuscript will not go into) it does point to the issue that preservation of nature/heritage/cultural sites and tourism demand may clash and there are many examples of destinations (or at least certain stakeholders at these destinations) that are not interested in having (more) tourists visiting the destination.

Nonetheless, the dominant discourse within tourism is that tourism is wanted and tourists are welcomed (indicated e.g. by many DMOs calling themselves VisitThis or VisitThat whereas not a single one (?) has tried to use the name DoNotVisit). However, a series of theoretical concepts do center around the phenomenon of not wanting to market a destination and the three most important concepts in this regard are **selective marketing**, **demarketing** and **selective demarketing.**

Dolnicar (2006) suggested that *selectively inviting* more environmentally-aware and friendly tourists to the destination could be used to complement existing sustainable tourism practices that typically try to make tourists more environmentally friendly *at* the destination. In the same vein, Inskeep (1991:349) argued that "selective marketing techniques can also be used to attract environmentally-oriented tourists who respect the environment and are conservation-minded". Selective marketing as suggested by Dolnicar and Inskeep does not break free from the dominant discourse of tourists being wanted, but simply converts the issue to one of 'proper' segmentation and targeting (including getting environmental-friendly messages across to environmentally-friendly tourists). Consequently, selective marketing is very different from demarketing – a concept that was coined by Kotler and Levy in 1971, but has not had much of an impact on tourism. Kotler and Levy (1971:75) defined demarketing as ". . . that aspect of marketing that deals with discouraging customers in general or a certain class of customers in particular on a temporary or permanent basis' (Kotler & Levy 1971: 75). As this definition shows, demarketing is fundamentally different from both selective marketing and non-marketing as it involves deliberately (as in strategically) *discouraging* customers (or in our cases tourists) from consuming (e.g. a destination). Furthermore, by pointing to both 'customers in general' and 'a certain class of customers in particular' this definition also opens up for demarketing being both general and selective, hereby paving the way for the definition to also cover *selective demarketing.*

There is quite a number of examples of demarketing to be found in the literature on environmentally friendly tourism – including making it too expensive or difficult to visit the destination (the latter being exemplified by e.g. making it difficult to park, red-taping permission to visit, making it difficult to move around at the destination etc.). However, there

are, to the best of our knowledge, no examples of *strategic communication* done by DMOs or tourism businesses that deliberately and explicitly discourages tourists from visiting the destination (although there are some vague references to Venice having launched some unsuccessful demarketing promotional campaign at some point in time). There are, off course, many examples of other tourism stakeholders that actively and deliberately engage in demarketing – as exemplified by the 'Barcelona is not for sale' vignette. But there are no examples of 'official' tourism actors that do demarketing by directly communicating that the destination does *not* welcome tourists and is *not* 'open for business' (although one might argue that foreign offices' travel advice in the aftermath of terrorist attacks etc. could qualify as demarketing *if* such agencies were defined as marketers – but that's another story). On the contrary and although this may be an over-interpretation on the author's behalf, as exemplified by vignette 37, it does seem that authorities, organizations and businesses across the globe are willing to do everything *but* directly and deliberately engage in strategic communication that applies demarketing to iconic tourism sites.

Vignette 37: Do NOT come and destroy the works of Michelangelo?

> *The 5 million tourists who visit the Sistine Chapel every year are to be vacuum cleaned and cooled down before entry in an effort to reduce the pollution damaging Michelangelo's frescoes, the director of the Vatican museums said.*
>
> *https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/21/sistine-chapel-tourists-vacuumed-cooled*

But why go to the trouble of vacuum cleaning and cooling down 5 million visitors a year instead of simply communicating that if the frescoes are to survive for the enjoyment of future generations, then tourists should not visit the Sistine Chapel? Part of the answer to this question could be found if we fully understood the dominant discourses that define what tourism 'is' and 'should be' and although the aim of this manuscript is not to offer such grand answers, this example – together with the seemingly non-existence of demarketing as a strategic communication tool in tourism – does point to how the study of strategic communication is not only about what is being communicated, but also a question of what is *not* being said.

The introduction to (selective) demarketing of tourism closes this section of the paper, which has been devoted to potential linkages between the study of strategic communication and studies of sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism development. This does not mean that there is no more to be said about this issue. On the contrary, there are many relevant relations between these two issues to be pursued and this section is therefore closed with the hope that the reader will contribute to establishing such relations by doing studies on how knowledge on, and analysis of, strategic communication can contribute to better understandings of sustainable tourism and how sustainable tourism can help us to better understand, and study, how sustainability issues, narratives, stories, discourses etc. are either strategically communicated or silenced.

5. INNOVATIVE TOURISM COMMUNICATION

Innovation has been defined in many different ways and scholars continue to struggle to define what exactly innovation 'is' (and is not). However, as Hjalager (2010:2) reminds us, innovation is "generally characterized by everything that differs from business as usual or which represents a discontinuance of previous practices in some sense for the innovating firm". Although innovation takes places at many different levels; ranging from systemic innovations (i.e. interconnected innovations that are characterized by inter-dependencies – such as automotive transformation of transportation that required not only the invention and commercialization of the car, but also roads, petrol stations, mechanics, driving schools, tire manufacturers etc.) to incremental and new-to-the-firm only innovations that are introduced by individual companies, in this manuscript – and in accordance with Hjalager – we emphasize innovation at the company/organization level; including innovations brought to the market by DMOs and tourism enterprises. This does not mean that innovations at other levels are not interesting – this choice simply reflects a wish to keep the writings at a simpler level than when discussing innovations that spans across many different levels and involve a larger number of actors.

A particularly interesting part of Hjalager's reminder is the use of the words 'everything' and 'in some sense' as these wordings illustrate the broad range of practices that may qualify as innovation, hereby pointing to the scope of innovation being far broader than introducing new products and services to the market. This means that innovation also includes e.g. new service delivery systems, new intra-organizational processes, new distribution channels

and new ways of strategically communicating with external audiences. As this is a manuscript focusing on strategic communication, this section focuses on **_marketing innovations_** and DMOs' and individual tourism enterprises' **_innovative uses of strategic communication_**. Hjalager (2010) convincingly argues that DMOs and tourism enterprises may misuse the term innovation when they label their attempts to identify with new segments, redirect messages and/or strengthen their brands as innovative. However, she also acknowledges that new marketing concepts can be innovative insofar they fundamentally change the overall communication to, and with, customers and she uses the development of the World Wide Web and how that has led to a series of marketing innovations that have fundamentally changed how the majority of tourism businesses communicate with potential tourists as an example of such innovations. Drawing on these insights, this section of the manuscript discusses innovative uses of strategic communication in tourism. Although most of us think in terms of 'something' that is ground-breaking and radical different from what already exists, when we hear the word innovation, to qualify as innovations new practices need not be radically new or fundamentally change the world. On the contrary, many innovations are more incremental in nature and do not differ that much from business as usual, but nevertheless still represent enough of a discontinuance to be innovative. As an example, one could ask the question whether the 'Curators of Sweden' initiative that was introduced in vignette 14 is an innovation. On the one hand, in 2011 it was business as usual for most countries to have a presence on social media and Sweden was certainly not the first country to have an official Twitter account. On the other hand, Sweden was the first country to hand over its official Twitter account to its citizens and hereby, the handling of the Twitter account might qualify as a discontinuance of the established practice of official country Twitter accounts being left in the hands of professional communication personnel. Consequently, whether Curators of Sweden qualifies as an innovation depends on the level of newness that is required for something to be an innovation. Obviously, communication that could be classified as new-to-the-world is innovation, but what about ways of communicating that are not new-to-the-world, but new-to-the-industry (or new to tourism even though tourism does not qualify as an industry) or new-to-the-firm? Or what about promotions and advertising that are not 'new', but simply improvements of what a company or organization already does – such as using its marketing and/or communication budget more

wisely? As an example of exactly how difficult it is to determine whether innovative communication practices are actually 'innovative', vignette 38 introduces a promotional campaign that many have classified as successful and innovative.

Vignette 38: The Best Job in the World – Island Caretaker Great Barrier Reef

About the job

Tourism Queensland is seeking applicants for the best job in the world! The role of Island Caretaker is a six-month contract, based on luxurious Hamilton Island in the Great Barrier Reef. It's a live-in position with flexible working hours and key responsibilities include exploring the islands of the Great Barrier Reef to discover what the area has to offer. You'll be required to report back on your adventures to Tourism Queensland headquarters in Brisbane (and the rest of the world) via weekly blogs, photo diary, video updates and ongoing media interviews. On offer is a unique opportunity to help promote the wondrous Islands of the Great Barrier Reef. Other duties may include (but are not limited to)

Feed the fish - There are over 1,500 species of fish living in the Great Barrier Reef. Don't worry – you won't need to feed them all.

Clean the pool - The pool has an automatic filter, but if you happen to see a stray leaf floating on the surface it's a great excuse to dive in and enjoy a few laps.

Collect the mail – During your explorations, why not join the aerial postal service for a day? It's a great opportunity to get a bird's eye view of the reef and islands.

About the job package

Living above the Great Barrier Reef is a pretty unique benefit, but the successful candidate will also be paid a salary package of AUD $150,000 for the six-month contract. You'll receive return airfares from your nearest capital city (in your home country), accommodation and transport on Hamilton Island, travel insurance for the contract period, computer, internet, digital video and stills cameras access, plus travel to a number of the other Islands of the Great Barrier Reef. The six-month contract commences 1st July 2009.

About the location

Stretching for 2,600 kilometres, and composed of over 2,900 individual reefs and 900 islands, the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland, Australia is the world's largest coral reef system. The World Heritage Listed area supports a diversity of wildlife including whales, dolphins, sea turtles and more than 1,500 species of fish. The reef is an extremely popular destination for tourists, sustainably managing approximately 2 million visitors each year.

http://www.parbica.org/content/Personnel%20and%20Establishment%20record%20titling%20example%20%234_tcm50-79453.pdf

http://teq.queensland.com/industry-resources/teq-case-studies/best-job-in-the-world

At the surface, the 'Island Caretaker ad' looks like a job advertisement. However, according to the sender (Tourism Queensland), the objective of this advertisement was not 'just' to hire an Island Caretaker, but to motivate travel to Queensland's Great Barrier Reef Islands. Although the reader should critically assess the subjectivity and credibility of the source material, Tourism Queensland does present a series of rather staggering impact measures for this campaign (http://teq.queensland.com/industry-resources/teq-case-studies/best-job-in-the-world), suggesting that the 'Best Job in the World' campaign resonated well with audiences across the world and generated ROIs not often seen within tourism branding and advertising. At the surface level, answering the question whether the campaign was successful or not seems to not be too complicated. But the question whether this campaign is innovative is much harder to answer; albeit researchers subjecting this ad to rhetorical analysis, semiotic analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis etc. might be able to point to elements of the ad that are particularly innovative. Furthermore, a researcher doing netnography could investigate how much of a 'buzz' the ad created, to which extents it went viral and/or which associations it created in the minds of people, who commented on the ad or even applied for the job, hereby indicating the extent to which audiences found the ad innovative. However, what about the ad introduced in vignette 39 – is that piece of strategic communication innovative?

Vignette 39: Danish Mother Seeking Father

> In 2009, a video was released on YouTube. The video was seemingly created by a single Danish mother who was looking for the father of her baby boy, the result of a one-night stand with a foreign tourist. A few days after the video was posted on YouTube, it turned out that VisitDenmark was the sender of the video.
>
> The idea behind the video was to create an image of Denmark as a free country where "a grown-up woman … accepts the consequences of her actions". However, Valentini and Pollach's content analysis revealed a different symbolism where national and international media interpreted the campaign as Denmark being a country with promiscuous women willing to have one-night stands with foreigners.
>
> The Danish media not only pointed to people being offended by the video, but actively engaged with the video and its possible effects on Denmark's image. In the end, the video was removed and VisitDenmark's director, Dorthe Killerich resigned.

As mentioned in the vignette, the 'Danish Mother seeking Father' video has been removed from the internet, but should (as most things posted online) be available when one digs a little for it (e.g. through http://www.wimp.com/seekingfather/). The video qualifies as one of the first (perhaps even *the* first?) example of masked/stealth marketing (i.e. covert marketing through social media) done by a tourism government agency. Being (one of) the first government agency to actively engage in stealth marketing through social media, VisitDenmark's video could be defined as innovative. But is it? Again, researchers subjecting this ad to netnography, rhetorical analysis, semiotic analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis etc. might be able to point to elements of the ad that are particularly innovative – and perhaps also to key reasons why this video led to other kinds of effects than the sender had hoped for. The key reason why vignettes 38 and 39 are included in this manuscript is to point to the tendency we have to deem that which is different and successful as innovative while we do not traditionally think of that which is different, but unsuccessful as innovative. However, in Hjalager's definition of innovation there are no such value judgments as innovations differ from 'business as usual' and represent 'discontinuance of previous practices' for the company (or an industry or a market or across industries or to the world). So there is more to innovation than success stories and the two vignettes are included simply to remind the reader to *not* reduce the issue of innovativeness of strategic communication to a matter of successfulness.

Although this manuscript predominantly points to strategic communication in the form of advertising, marketing and promotions as well as less commercial actors' (such as local residents and tourists) voicing of their beliefs, meanings, ideas, attitudes, feelings, thoughts etc. on touristic issues, strategic communication entails more than this. Especially when focusing on the business level, it is important to bear in mind that *everything* companies and organizations do, communicates 'something' as they have an exceptional number of touch points with different stakeholders. For example, the touch points Chanel as a brand has with customers include, amongst others, Chanel clothing, their perfume and cosmetics products, their flagship stores, the personnel in these stores, the in-store promotions in department stores or airport stores, the packaging and their website. Although this manuscript does not cover all of these touch points, the reader is encouraged to have an open mind when thinking about

what can be characterized as strategic communication. As an example, next time you have a stop-over in a larger (hub) airport, try to take a closer look at the different airlines' flight attendants and their uniforms as they pass through the terminals. Does it matter what these attendants wear? As an air traveler, do you even notice what they wear? Vignette 40 suggests that the airline companies certainly think so.

Vignette 40: Alitalia's new flight attendant uniforms

> In 2016, Alitalia launched their new flight attendant uniforms and the Chief Executive Officer of Alitalia, said: "We are introducing a new look which captures the spirit of Alitalia today as it continues on its journey of renewal and growth. Our aim was to create a stylish collection which would represent Italian excellence around the world. This is a country at the forefront of global style and design. The new uniforms complement the renaissance of the Alitalia brand and the rejuvenation of its aircraft fleet and products for its customers." Ettore Bilotta, who designed the uniforms said: "Being given the opportunity to design the new uniforms for this much loved Italian symbol was very exciting and gave me the opportunity to create a special collection which symbolises Italy and our pride in Alitalia as its ambassador to the world. [...] Working closely with Alitalia on every aspect of the design process was crucial. This ensured the whole project was created, managed and completed in Italy by Italians, and to showcase the arts, culture, people, design and landscapes of this great country."
> https://thedesignair.net/2016/05/19/alitalias-new-uniforms-are-flagship-of-new-brand-image/

As exemplified by vignette 40 (and to be validated if you try to google more about this topic), flight attendant uniforms vary much across airlines, many of them are designed in collaboration with famous fashion designers, the launch of new uniforms is a 'big deal' (resembling or even being part of fashion shows) and oftentimes the introductions of new uniforms receive extensive media coverage. This relates to the issue that something as seemingly mundane as flight attendant uniforms, by airlines, are considered to be critical visual brand elements and the vignette is included to remind the reader that even though this manuscript emphasizes strategic communication in the form of more traditional text, **visual communication** is an issue taken very seriously by many tourism businesses and innovation may also relate to uniforms not only as functional clothing, but also as representations of brand identities.

Companies not only communicate through how their employees look (e.g. what they wear), but also through how employees behave when interacting with customers. The literature on emotional labor (and research indicating how more and more employees need to manage feelings and expressions to fulfil the emotional requirements of their jobs as we continue to move from a manufacturing towards a service- or experience-based economy) is quite extensive and in recent years, much has been written about issues such as complaint management. Vignette 41 introduces an example of customer-company representative interactions that we might not think about as strategic communication at the outset.

Vignette 41: 47 years layover in Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport

Searching for flights for a journey from New Zealand's Christchurch to London on Skyscanner, James Lloyd got the suggestion from the website that he should make a stopover of 413,786 hours in Bangkok.

On Skyscanner's facebook page, he then wrote: "Hi Skyscanner. Just wondering what you'd recommend I do during the 47 years layover your website has suggested?"

The reply he got from Skyscanner was:

"Unless you're a huge fan of the Terminal, I'd probably recommend spending those years outside the airport, so here are a few suggestions:

- *Missed Songkran but you've got another 46 years to enjoy it.*

- *How do you feel about heights? The Moon Bar is pretty good and it's open until 1am so you could spend a good chunk of time there.*

- *A cruise on the Chao Phraya river could keep you busy for a while*

- *If you get puckish there's a floating market. Not only good for grub, but you could make a few mates there. Win/won.*

- *Become a Tai Chi expert in Lumpini Park*

    Jen (p.s. thanks for letting me know about this – I'll get some folk to look into it!)"

The response from Jen not only got more than 9,000 likes, but it also spurred elaborate dialogues between Skyscanner (Jen) and the hundreds of people, who joined this conversation.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/skyscanner-jen_uk_57c6a870e4b09f5b5e34a245

Although most (or at least more than 9,000) people found the response from Skyscanner hilarious and although many of us probably appreciate the way in which Jen does everything but publicise the Skyscanner brand in a monolithic way (Hodder, 2002), for researchers interested in strategic communication it is more complicated to deconstruct the response from 'Jen' (remember that this section is dedicated to innovative strategic communication, *not* successful strategic communication). If strategic communication is about companies and organizations communicating the 'right' messages - given organizational and communicative goals and objectives that concord with the company strategy and core values - is vignette 41 then an example of innovative strategic communication? Well, if the mission and vision statements, brand values and communication strategy of Skyscanner emphasize 'meeting the customers where they are and responding in innovative ways that match the customers' ways of communicating' then there is no problem with Jen's response. But what if the mission statement emphasizes that Skyscanner wants to be the most professional and serious travel search site in the world and that it wishes to communicate with customers in a consistently professional way and without discontinuance of established communication practices'? If that was the case, then the initial response from Jen and the subsequent dialogues that this response triggered could be a major issue as this would be an example of individual employees conducting themselves in a manner that collides with company goals, objectives, values and policies.

Vignette 41 is **not** included in order to assess whether Jen's response is 'right' or 'wrong', but simply to illustrate that every encounter between a company (and its personnel) and its stakeholders signals something and conveys certain messages. And if it is left to individual employees to decide what messages to convey in everyday interactions with stakeholders, then it is quite likely that the company will end up with a blurred image – which would be the exact opposite of the rationale that leads companies to invest huge sums of money and years of hard work in developing and maintaining brand identities, core values, mission and vision statements, communication strategies, company policies etc. In recent years, integrated marketing communications (i.e. using marketing strategies to optimize the communication of a *consistent* message of the company's brand to all stakeholders in all contexts

and at all times) has become increasingly popular and leaving it to individual employees to decide on the use of humor, irony, sarcasm etc. in individual encounters with e.g. customers would very likely make communication anything but consistent.

Tourism is sometimes argued to be a 'copycat industry' and even though this is a problematic concept, it does turn attention towards the problem that, for tourism actors, it is difficult to maintain 'first mover advantages' as successful and innovative practices (including innovative communication practices) are *easy* to copy and hereby also *likely* to be copied. Therefore, this section of the manuscript is closed by encouraging the reader to take a keen interest in keeping up-to-date with the latest initiatives taken by various tourism stakeholders in regard to strategic communication, hereby increasing the likelihood of crafting effective and innovative strategic communication. And such keeping up-to-date should include not only being attentive to flashy ads, marketing campaigns and videos that go viral or innovative uses of 'new' concepts such as stealth marketing or de-marketing, but could equally well include looking into innovative visual communication (including logos, uniforms, headquarters and buildings etc.) or how tourism companies handle customer comments and complaints. In regard to these issues it might even prove particularly useful to dig into the 'shitstorms' that pieces of strategic communication such as the 'Danish mother seeking farther' trigger in, and beyond, online contexts.

6. CRAFTING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

The preceding five sections of this paper introduced various aspects of strategic communication and different ways to analyze such communication. However, what the paper has *not* done is to provide guidance in terms of how to craft strategic communication and how to, more precisely and practically, communicate strategically. In section 1, the claim was that all communicators who *deliberately spread* information, values, ideas, principles, doctrines etc. inherently engage in strategic communication. As a result, regardless of what jobs we have, we as employees will engage in strategic communicative acts where we share and try to spread certain ideas, principles etc. (re)presenting the organizations we work for. For example, DMO personnel may be especially interested in spreading positive stories about the destination through mass media, a resort may do marketing that shows their bests rooms or apartments, an amusement park might want to spread information about its newest ride, a museum would try to spread information about its latest exhibition, a flight attendant will engage in emotional labor when she suppresses tiredness or boredom and puts on not only her uniform, but also 'a happy face', a community group might try actively to demarket Barcelona as a tourist destination in order for local residents to be able to pay the rent and a researcher might want to share the results of his/her research projects with the general public. However, by now and as illustrated in the subsequent vignette, it is hardly any surprise that what messages tourism actors try to send and which ideas they try to share and what is actually shared might be very different things – particularly when intermediaries such as mass media are involved.

Vignette 42: Researchers trying to share complex messages and journalists with an agenda.

In collaboration with industrial partners, a group of researchers spent four years analyzing camping/ caravanning tourism in Denmark. At the end of the project period, these researchers were 'known' to be experts in this particular type of tourism and one of the largest Danish television networks contacted them in order to produce a news story on why the sales of caravans in Denmark had dropped during the last ten years or so. In interviews for the radio and national TV, one of the researchers said the following:

The traditional caravanning product and its somewhat 'dusty' image of common bathrooms and kitchens does not appeal to guests accustomed to hotel standards. Luckily, by now there is a huge difference between this dusty image of the past and modern caravan sites offering e.g. glamping, own bathrooms, 5 star luxury cottages and gourmet camping."

However, the part of the interview that was broadcasted was:

The traditional caravanning product and its somewhat 'dusty' image of common bathrooms and kitchens does not appeale to guests accustomed with hotel standards.

The vignette above illustrates one of the main problems when we try to communicate through traditional communication channels such as radio/TV or through social media; i.e. that 'news of the day' bits reduce more complex messages (or 30-60 minutes interviews) to very simple messages (or what journalists deem to be the best 10 second soundbite). In the example presented in the vignette, the message delivered by the national network is not 'wrong', but it does show how meanings may be fundamentally altered when complex messages are reduced to 'one-liners'. Therefore, this closing section of the paper focuses on the issue of how to craft strategic communication. Unfortunately this issue is far more complex than what can be dealt adequately with in a document such as this one. As a result, this section emphasizes what it means to communicate strategically **on the basis of academic work** and how students can ensure that their academic work enables them to develop theory that can lead to better crafting of strategic communication. As for the many questions that are not dealt with in this section, such as how to generate and disseminate clear messages (and how to ensure never to be put in the same situation as the researcher in the camping vignette), the reader is kindly referred to the bulk of both academic and popular science literature that deals with this subject (a simple google search on 'how to communicate

strategically' should indicate just how many actors have an opinion on how this should be done and we'll leave it to the reader to immerse her/himself in this world of recommendations ☺).

As researchers, we not only wish to analyze and understand the world around us, we often also want to make it a better world. Although there are many different ways in which we, both as laypeople and as researchers, define what exactly will make the world 'better', many researchers try to improve things by giving normative recommendations. Normative recommendations can take many different forms - anything from "you should put on a jacket 'cause it's cold outside" to "companies should formulate an explicit communication strategy and ensure that all campaigns align with this strategy". Whereas most us constantly offer others everyday pieces of advice that are based on common sense, researchers' normative recommendations are (or ought to be) based on sound academic work and theorization. This has led researchers such as Hunt (1979) to point to the fundamental differences between **positive theory** and **normative theory**. Basically, a positive theory is a theory that attempts to understand and explain how the world works whereas a normative theory points to how the world should be; i.e. the former expresses what '*is*' and the later expresses what *ought to be*. In the preceding five sections, this paper has emphasized positive theory as it has centered around what strategic communication 'is' and how we can understand and analyze it. This does not, however, mean that it is not important to provide students with the tools necessary to develop normative theory that can lead to better crafting of strategic communication. On the contrary, this paper will hopefully aid and assist students in their future quest to become better strategic communicators within, on and about tourism matters. What it *does* mean is that, as researchers, we should always remember that 'good' normative theory rests on a positive foundation; i.e. in order to suggest what strategic communication should be and how it could be improved, we first need to understand what it is.

But does this mean that students are expected to come up with radically new and groundbreaking theories on strategic communication? Should students be able to suggest how a country, a DMO, a hotel, an airline, a museum, an amusement park, a restaurant chain or a small tourism entrepreneur should formulate their communication strategy or design their integrated marketing communication? Should students be able to recommend how tourism

actors should deal with mass media or how they should behave in social media contexts? Should students be able to tell tourism actors how to design and manage their website, Twitter account or Instagram profile? Should students be expected to develop smart logos, catchy taglines and memorable slogans? Is it the responsibility of students to suggest which master narrative, storyline or discourses should be chosen in order to best represent a tourism organization's core values? The simple answer to these questions is No! But in order to understand what it means to develop normative theory, we need to understand what theory 'is' – or at least what it ought to be (☺) and this entails understanding that we can discriminate between different layers, or levels, of theorization. At the highest level of abstraction, we find grand theories, which according to Wright Mills (1959) are highly abstract theorizing separate from variations over time and in space as well as concrete concerns. A grand positive theory on strategic communication would therefore be a theory that explains what strategic communication is at any given time and across all contexts whereas a grand normative theory on strategic communication should point to how strategic communication should be done regardless of specific contexts. However, whereas grand theories might work splendidly within nature sciences (e.g. claiming that water will boil at a certain temperature), grand theories are more problematic within the social sciences and humanities. Flyvbjerg (2006:224) even argues that "*predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is, therefore, more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals*".

Merton (1957) argues that it is more appropriate to work towards development of middle-range theory that theorizes about aspects of social reality that can be studied as separate social phenomena rather than attempting to explain the entire social world. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge and middle-range theories have a more 'narrow' scope than grand theories. But the issue remains how narrow a statement can be and still qualify as theory? Oftentimes, we think of theory as something 'grand', but basically a theory is no more than an idea or set of ideas intended to explain something (e.g. facts or events). In practice, this means that a positive theory on strategic communication could be as 'small' as suggesting that "viral processes sometimes create unforeseeable associations and meanings that may have little to do with the original message and meanings". Likewise, a middle-range normative theory on

strategic communication could be as simple as to claim that "as viral processes sometimes create unforeseeable associations and meanings that have little to do with the original messages and meanings, strategic communication is not only a matter of creating the 'right' messages and delivering them in the 'right' way, it is also a matter of taking into account which associations in audiences' minds our communication might trigger and subsequently trying to avoid signs, symbols, metaphors etc. that trigger undesired associations and emphasizing elements that activate desirable associations".

Does this thing about 'small' normative and positive theory being what researchers strategically try to communicate to their audiences sound confusing? In practice, it is not, as we as researchers luckily have this thing called a research question that not only guides our research, but also ensures that we can provide the reader of our work with exactly that positive or normative middle-range theory that we promise to deliver. As such, a research question is not just something that teachers and supervisors pester students with; it is a promise to the reader of our research about what positive and normative theory our work will provide. A research question is also a highly condensed piece of strategic communication and this means that every single word we include in the research question is both extremely important and embeds the research question in certain academic discourses. To exemplify these matters, try to take a look at the research question presented in vignette 43.

Vignette 43: A RQ promising a tiny positive theory and a tad of normative theory?

"Using the Fanoe International Kite Flier Meeting as a case, how do the organic images conveyed by user-generated content compare to the induced image projected by the DMO and what could be done in order to ensure better alignment of induced and organic images?"

The research question in vignette 43 gives some clear pointers to the study's theoretical positioning (i.e. UCG, DMO, induced and organic images). Furthermore, whereas the first part of the RQ promises to provide insights into organic and induced images and potential differences between these images (positive theory), the second part of the RQ promises that the researcher will suggest how such differences can be reduced (normative

theory). But what if the first part of the study suggests that there are no differences between organic and induced images? Obviously, then it makes little sense to include the second part of the RQ. This points to the fundamental issue that it only makes sense to promise to develop normative theory insofar there is a 'problem' to be solved. In some research traditions, researchers use the term **problem formulation** to emphasize that academic research needs to be problem-oriented. This is for example the case when, in the curriculum for a MA tourism program, two of the general competence objectives are formulated as "to delimit and define an **academic problem** at a high scientific level" and "to **investigate**, **analyze** and **solve** academic problems thoroughly by means of relevant academic theories and methods as well as incorporating current international research" (curriculum 2015 for the master programme in tourism at SDU – the full curriculum is available at (http://www.sdu.dk/en/information_til/studerende_ved_sdu/din_uddannelse/kandidat/negot_i_international_turisme_og_fritidsmanagement_kandidat_kolding/uddannelsens_opbygning/studieordning).

The last issue with the research question in vignette 43 to be brought up in this manuscript is that the question directly points to the middle-range or micro-range of theory by explicating that the study does not compare induced and organic images in general, but does so on the basis of a specific case (i.e. the Fanoe International Kite Flier Meeting). 60 years have passed, since Merton (1957) recommended that researchers should theorize about aspects of social reality that could be studied as separate social phenomena rather than attempting to explain the entire social world and since then, case study research as a research method involving in-depth and detailed examination of a case has become a very well-established method (or methodology). Try for example, to search scholar.google for 'case study tourism' and take a look at not only how many pieces of research that exist, but also try to look at the *kind* of studies that come up (vignette 44 offers a few suggestions ☺).

Vignette 44: Scholar.google suggestions for 'case study tourism' – a few of many

"The perceived impact of tourism by residents: A case study in Santa Marta, Columbia."

"Evaluating the use of the Web for tourism marketing: A case study from New Zealand."

"Segmentation by motivation in rural tourism: A Korean case study."

"The role of food tourism in sustaining regional identity: A case study of Cornwall, South West England."

"Social media and tourism destination: TripAdvisor case study."

"Farm-based tourism as an alternative farm enterprise: A case study from the Northern Pennines, England."

"Destination life cycle: The Isle of Man case study."

Even though the titles of the peer-reviewed journal articles listed in vignette 44 suggest that these articles investigate very different themes, what they do have in common is that the first part of the titles presents the theoretical area of interest (e.g. tourism impact, web-based tourism marketing, rural tourism, food tourism, social media, farm-based tourism or destination life-cycles) whereas the second part of the titles points to the case study and hereby the contextual conditions of the studies (e.g. Columbia, New Zealand, Korea, Cornwall, England, Isle of Man or TripAdvisor). Furthermore, although the second parts of the titles listed in vignette 44 (except from the TripAdvisor case) point to the geographical dimension of the cases in questions, a case does not have to be a place or any other geographical entity. On the contrary, a case study is "a general term for the exploration of an individual, group or phenomenon" (Sturman, 1997:61), thus enabling case study researchers to focus on an individual, a group of people (e.g. tourists, local residents or stakeholders), an organization, an event, an action, a destination, a place etc. According to Yin (2006), case study research is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context and relies on multiple sources of evidence. Although some researchers (e.g. Stake, 1995) define case study research as a qualitative research strategy, others (including Yin, 2006) argue that case study researchers can use both quantitative and qualitative methods. Furthermore, both single case studies and multiple case studies exist, meaning that the researcher can choose between investigating one case (as is the case for the pieces of research pointed to in vignette 44) and doing multiple case studies (such as when comparing or contrasting different cases).

Regardless of how we define case study research, one issue that is crucial is the selection of cases as all cases have advantages and disadvantages and although we as researchers do not 'know' the case fully before we have concluded our research, the selection of cases is critical and should, first and foremost, be based on the academic problem we want to investigate. This means that we do not select cases because they are typical or 'average', but because they seem *particularly interesting* in order to investigate the academic problem we are interested in, or in the words of Flyvbjerg (2006).

Vignette 45: On case study research and knowledge creation

"That knowledge cannot be formally generalized does not mean that it cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in a society" (Flybjerg, 2006:227).

"When the objective is to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon, a representative case or a random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy. This is because the typical or average case is often not the richest in information. Atypical or extreme cases often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied (Flyvbjerg, 2006:229)

That cases are selected because they are especially interesting is very different from the criteria applied when doing quantitative research where the sample has to be representative enough for us to generalize across the population at large. As an example, the choice of the Fanoe International Kite Flier Meeting as the case for a study of potential differences between induced and organic images will only work *if* we have access to data on both induced and organic images and *if* there are interesting differences between these images. This also means that the researcher, who posed the research question on the Kite Flier Meeting did not set out to do a study on a kite flier meeting, but set out by wishing to study the *academic problem* of discrepancies between induced and organic destination images and only thereafter started to look for cases allowing her to study this problem. The pairing of academic problems and relevant cases is a critical cornerstone in the quest to become reliable researchers. Therefore, when students present supervisors with their first ideas for a research topic, they are often asked

to define and delimit the problem at hand and to continue this process until they can formulate a *relevant* and *researchable* research question. An academic problem is relevant when it has the potential to be solved by developing (even the tiniest) positive and/or normative theory and it is researchable when the student has a case (however defined) that can provide the data necessary for developing such theory. Especially in the beginning of our academic careers, most of us struggle to find 'good cases' and 'the right theories'. Luckily, as we become more skilled researchers, start to master methodologies and get to know more theories, we become better at looking for cases that enable us to fill solve academic problems. One reason for this is that we start to understand the theoretical landscape well enough to identify research gaps; i.e. we start to understand not only what researchers communicate about, but also which issues they do not communicate about. Another reason is that our studies change the way we 'see' things and inspire us to look at the cases we come across on a daily basis when we, for example, surf the Internet through theoretical lenses. That it takes time to develop competencies in the pairing of academic problems and relevant cases is probably why Stake (1995) not just write about case study research, but about the *art* of case study research.

As mentioned in the beginning, this manuscript is written with a group of students in mind, who – during the first semester of their MA program – are asked to conclude a course on strategic communication with a seven days home assignment. A week is a very short time for doing a piece of research, but these students are nevertheless assessed on the basis of their ability to define and delimit an academic problem and to investigate, analyze and solve this problem by using relevant academic theories and methods. Does this sound like mission impossible? Well, the last vignettes presented in this manuscript might offer some inspiration on how to do this?

Vignette 46: What is in a (nick)name?

During the 2016 class on strategic communication, students were asked to present and analyze cases of their own choice on strategic communication in tourism.

One group of students chose to present the case of the destination Magaluf.

According to wikitravel (http://wikitravel.org/en/Magaluf), Magaluf is "a purpose built resort in Majorca popular with Britons as a stag-weekend or package-holiday destination for visitors looking for sun, sea and sex (although not necessarily in that order). Affectionately known as "Shagaluf", the resort seems to thrive on its downmarket reputation - a British enclave of tacky-souvenir shops and theme-bars offering the same tawdry appeal as Blackpool, but with much better beaches and weather. If sex and alcohol are top of your holiday wishlist, Magaluf offers the promise of both in copious quantities".

Under the headline 'Magaluf tests the limits of rebranding as it sobers up', in 2015, Michael Skapinker's article in the Financial Times (https://www.ft.com/content/046a081c-8178-11e5-a01c-8650859a4767) digged into how this destination wants to attract families and higher spenders instead of their current visitors and how different initiatives (e.g. banning drinking in the street after 10pm, fining urinating in public, restricting bar crawls, extending the tourist season, encouraging cultural and leisure events for families and upgrading hotels) were taken to accomplish this task.

Furthermore, a critical part of the plan to turn Magaluf into an upmarket resort is the use of the brand 'Calvia Beach' instead of Magaluf.

Reading the media coverage of the intended rebranding of Magaluf, a common theme is whether it is possible to do this (seems like most journalists agree with Papadopoulus and Heslop's claim that every place has an image) – but why do those wishing to rebrand Magaluf want to re-introduce this destination as Calvia Beach? After all, it is usually far more expensive and far more difficult to make a new brand part of the destination branscape than it is to communicate on the basis of something people already know.

Well, the students' analysis of how different actors communicate about Magaluf (and especially the ways in which the nickname 'Shagaluf' is used) gives some clear pointers to the answering of this question.

Vignette 47: Do not screw your eyes – a student paper

In 2012, a Ukrainian travel agency launched the ad "See Asia like Asians do", a primary objective of which was to promote the agency's Asian destinations to its Ukrainian customers. The slogan was hidden in the space between colorful blocks and the basic idea was that the text could only be read by slanting one's eyes (emphasized by a slanted-eyes face icon and the "screw your eyes" tagline). The students doing this paper wanted to understand how audiences interpret this ad and whether they interpret it as a case of cultural insensitivity.

The students quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed 38 comments posted on MailOnline, 85 on Twitter and 10 on Buzzfeed. Acknowledging the non-representativeness of this sample, the students nevertheless point to 57% of the commenters from different nationalities describing the ad with words such as 'racist', 'offensive', 'unacceptable' and 'rude' whereas only 14% described it as 'sassy' and 'fun'.

Vignettes 46 and 47 introduce two pieces of student work that are actually 'doable' within a short time period and the vignettes are included to remind the reader that this manuscript was written with such smaller pieces of academic work in mind. However, all research has limitations and the smaller our research, the larger its limitations. As an example, the two pieces of work introduced in vignettes 46 and 47 cannot answer 'grand' questions such as whether it is possible to rebrand sex and alcohol destinations or when exactly ads become cases of cultural insensitivity, although they can provide small pieces of knowledge that others can use when working with such questions. In regard to this issue it imperative to remember that our research questions and the theories and methods we apply to answer them always give voice to some actors while silencing others. Hereby, even the smallest pieces of research (as well as someone's notes on strategic communication) are not innocent endeauvours or simply stories of meaning, they are stories of power.

This manuscript was meant as a tool that a group of 7th semester students might find useful as they embark on their journey to study and analyze strategic communication in tourism in the form of publicly available data. Consequently, the manuscript is no more than one of the sources students can draw in as starting points when studying strategic communication and the reader should be aware of the simplicities that characterize this manuscript and that it only covers a small fraction of the data, theories and methodologies that

are relevant when we wish to study strategic communication in tourism. Many, many more theories, concepts, methodologies, methods, techniques and tools are relevant for such studies and there are so many more kinds of data that qualify as strategic communication – particularly when taking into account that not only everything organizations and destinations do communicates something, but that objects also communicate. For example, actor network theory opens up for understandings of how not only human actors, but also material objects are enacted in and shape tourism and Ren's (2011) work at the Polish tourist destination Zakopane shows how a smoked cheese (i.e. Oscypek) is a destination actor, the four versions of which shape and construct this destination. The example of a smoked cheese as an tourism actor that it could be relevant to study closes this manuscript – hopefully inspiring students to keep an open mind when digging into the webs of meanings that construct this 'thing' we label tourism.

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