



Exploring Participatory Approaches in Euroregion Fehmarnbelt

Tourism Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Since the 1980s there has been increased interest and attention on citizen and stakeholder participation in tourism planning and policy. Additionally, there is broad consensus in academia about its importance (Marzuki et al., 2012; MacMillan, 2010). Despite the acknowledgement of this importance, literature and policy documents often fail to provide insights on the practical side of participation. Therefore, this project looks at participatory processes in the political decisions about the Fehmarnbelt project and the construction of a fixed link between Denmark and Germany. In addition to this, it includes the perspective of citizens and tourism operators on Lolland-Falster and their perception of the Fehmarnbelt project and its potentials. This project contributes to the research on participation in tourism policy and planning in a northern European context, since participation is often investigated in a global south context (Marzuki et al., 2012). Finally, the project explores the influence that the Fehmarnbelt project has on Lolland-Falster's image of a peripheral region with socioeconomic challenges.

This project is concerned with social science and through qualitative research the researcher seeks to broaden the understanding of the practicalities of citizen and stakeholder participation in political decisions. In a case study on the Fehmarnbelt project interviews with public and private actors on Lolland-Falster were conducted and two workshops and a public meeting were attended by the researcher. The data, which was collected by means of interview and participant observation, contributes to important practical insights on this particular topic and these are relevant to the current understanding of participation and the relationship between the government, businesses and civil society. Additionally, this thesis suggests that regional and local authorities should have, and continue to develop, appropriate strategies for participatory processes that can ensure implementation, local anchoring and sustainable projects.

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Introduction

European regional policy describes tourism as a sector that plays a “*key role in the development of many European regions, in particular the less developed regions, due to its considerable spill-over and job creation potential*” (European Commission, n.d.a, para. 1). Since the 1970s many regions in the industrialized world have experienced a transformation from primary production and manufacturing towards an increased importance of the service industry (Nilsson et al, 2010; Larsson & Lindström, 2013; Weaver, 2005). Today, many northern peripheral regions are facing population decline, increased unemployment and remoteness, and therefore industrial development is low in most branches as compared to central areas (Prokkola, 2008; Weidenfeld, 2013). Tourism is, thus, prioritized in regional policy and presented as a real opportunity for the development of peripheral regions (European Commission, n.d.a; Prokkola, 2008; Weidenfeld, 2013; Marzuki et al., 2012; Hatipoglu et al., 2014). This project takes its point of departure in the peripheral region Lolland-Falster, Denmark, where tourism is acknowledged as an important asset for the region and its inhabitants, especially after the turn from primary industry to tertiary industry where the region has been struggling with socioeconomic issues: “*The challenges of imbalance in the economy and employment can be balanced by tourism development, as the tourism industry is characterized by low- skilled labor and tourism has a spill-over effect in the community*” (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010, p. 171). Lolland-Falster (LF) is an interesting case study, since the region is a part of the planned Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link, a major European infrastructure project, and the region is expected to benefit from this in terms of increased economic growth and tourism (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010).

Taking a closer look at the European regional policy, we will find the European cohesion policy. It is defined in the Single European Act (1986) and is about “*reducing disparities between the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favored regions*” (European Commission, n.d.c, para. 2). In general, it deals with economic, social and territorial cohesion across the European continent. As for the vision of territorial cohesion, it is described in the European Transport Policy of January 2014 and it aims to “*close the gaps between Member States' transport networks, remove bottlenecks that still hamper the smooth functioning of the internal market*” (European Commission, n.d.d, para. 1). This becomes relevant in the case of the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link, as it is part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T, see appendix O) and its nine core network corridors that are

bringing Europe closer together (European Commission, n.d.b). The Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link will be an 18 km long immersed tunnel between the Danish island of Lolland and the German island of Fehmarn, and it is planned to connect Scandinavia to the rest of Europe in 2026 (*ibid*, n.d.b). The European cohesion policy also acts on economic and social cohesion across Europe, which translates into cross-border region building and cross-border cooperation between Denmark and Germany in Euroregion Fehmarnbelt (Klatt & Herrmann, 2011).

1.1 Significance of the Research Topic

This project looks at the political discourses about the Fehmarnbelt project (FBP) both from a European regional policy perspective and from the perspective of Lolland and Guldborgsund municipalities. In these political discourses we meet grand thoughts about the new transport corridor and its many opportunities for the region. There are, however, two problems here: the missing instructions on how to implement these grand thoughts and the missing reflections on who will be the individuals and the driving motors implementing these political visions. Therefore, this project looks at participatory processes in the political decisions about the Fehmarnbelt project and, furthermore, includes the perspective of citizens and tourism operators on Lolland-Falster, as well as their perception of the Fehmarnbelt project and its potentials.

This project seeks to contribute to the research on participation in tourism policy and planning processes in a northern European context. Participatory processes are often investigated in a Global South context and, therefore, this project wishes to shift focus to the Global North (Marzuki et al., 2012). Finally, the project explores the influence that the Fehmarnbelt project can have on Lolland-Falster's image of a peripheral region with socioeconomic challenges.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

This project aims to explore the participatory processes in the Fehmarnbelt project, more specifically: how civil society and tourism operators on Lolland-Falster are involved in the political decisions about the future of the Fehmarnbelt region. It will also look into the influence that the Fehmarnbelt project has on the image of Lolland-Falster. In order to achieve the research aims, the following objectives have been set:

- 1) *Investigate how citizens and tourism operators on Lolland-Falster are involved in the political visions of Lolland municipality plan from 2010-2022 and Guldborgsund municipality plan from 2013-2025 with specific focus on tourism and the Fehmarnbelt project*
- 2) *Examine how the image of Lolland-Falster is discursively deconstructed in connection with the Fehmarnbelt project*
- 3) *Explore how the image of Lolland-Falster is discursively reconstructed in connection with the Fehmarnbelt project*

1.3 Outline and Structure

The project consists of six chapters arranged in the following manner:

The current chapter provides an introduction to the research topic and its significance, and it outlines the aims and objectives for the project

The **second chapter** consists of the methodological considerations behind the project and the steps taken in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the project

The **third chapter** presents the Literature Review made for this project

The **fourth chapter** presents an overview of the case study

The **fifth chapter** analyzes the empirical data

The **sixth chapter** concludes on the Analysis and presents the contributions of the project and further inquiry

Method

This chapter describes the methodological considerations behind this research project. The project takes a qualitative explorative approach based on social constructivism. The chapter elaborates on ontological and epistemological considerations, the rationale for choosing the qualitative approach, reflections on data collection, choice of respondents and validity and reliability of the project. The chapter starts with a description of my motivation for the research topic.

2.1 Motivation

On my 9th semester I choose to be enrolled in the module called ‘Mobility’, which was a combination of courses taught in the study program Global Refugee Studies and my own program, Tourism. The lectures and academic material took point of departure in developing countries and dealt a lot with sustainability, community participation, community-based tourism, social change, ethics and development theories. I found these topics very interesting and learned that tourism is not a path of ‘one-size-fits-all’. Additionally, I learned that in tourism planning it is important that the community affected by tourism is involved in the decision-making process in order for the project to be successful and sustainable.

When preparing for my Master thesis I, however, wanted to shift the focus from developing countries to developed countries and look at the participatory process there. Another interest was to look into tourism in the island of Lolland where I was born. The mix of these two interests led to a project about how local tourism operators and citizens are involved in the political visions for the Fehmarnbelt project.

The European transport project is interesting, as it contains several controversial aspects: environmental concerns, tourism impacts for Lolland and Fehmarn, loss of jobs in connection to reduced operation of the ferry company Scanlines, the cost of constructing the fixed link, etc. (Ministry of Transport and Building, 2006).

2.2 Ontological Considerations

The ontological approach of this project is based on social constructivism. Ontology addresses the nature and essence of the social entities in focus and it can be studied from a positivist or constructivist point of view (Cohen et al., 2007; Bryman, 2012). From a positivist point of view, the social entities being studied should be considered as objective with a reality external to social actors. On the contrary, constructivists see the social entities as socially constructed. Here the social entities have an active role in the construction of the social reality and meaning is constructed through interaction, implying that reality is in a constant state of revision and that there can be multiple realities (Bryman, 2012).

In this project the social entities are the 13 interviewed respondents, a description can be found in section 2.10. According to Lincoln & Guba (1994), realities are *"apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experimentally based, local and specific in nature"* (p. 110). For instance, when talking about participation, I have a certain idea and impression about what this entails, which I learned from academic articles, whereas an interviewee working in the municipality might see participation from another angle due to his/her daily work. This means that the researcher will influence the construction of the social reality together with the interviewees when applying social constructivism. If we take the example again with the interviewee that represents the municipality, a social constructivist will argue that it is actually his/her social construction that we learn about, which is influenced by his/her life world and pre-knowledge. For example, in the interview with City Planner in Guldborgsund municipality, Maria Østergaard, I was introduced to how she is using citizen participation in her daily work and gained practical knowledge from her social world.

When it comes to the researcher's role, Klotz & Lynch (2007) state that *"all researchers engage in interpretation, both in collecting evidence and when making choices about what questions to research"* (p. 12). This means that the research questions that have been set up, the methodological choices, the analysis and the final conclusion presented in this project are the results of my own social construction and reality. Another example could also be that the answers I will get from the interviewees will be mirrored in my own social construction and reality, because I was the one asking the questions (Hagen, 2005). The validity of my findings will be elaborated on in section 2.13.

2.3 Epistemological Considerations

Epistemology studies “*the nature, scope and production of knowledge*” (Coles et al., 2013, p.17) and there are two perspectives on how to achieve knowledge: positivism and interpretivism, where the latter has been chosen for this research project. If we look at positivism, it is oriented towards the natural sciences, since the researcher here is objective (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Opposite to this, we have interpretivism, which “*requires the social scientists to grasp the subjective meaning of social action*” (Bryman, 2012, p. 30). This means that when applying interpretivism, the researcher tries to understand the social world from the point of view of the individual that is being researched (*ibid*, 2012). Knowledge is being co-created in the unique relationship between the researcher and the interviewee, and both will influence the outcome of the research and create an understanding of the discussed problem (Guba, 1990). This is reflected by the kind of knowledge that I gained when doing ethnographic fieldwork and conducting qualitative interviews. Finally, hermeneutics is relevant when taking on a social constructivist approach, as it also intends to understand the world of the social entities and it focuses on “*interaction and language; it seeks to understand situations through the eyes of the participants*” (Cohen et al. 2007, p. 27).

This goes well in line with this project, as it seeks to understand the Fehmarnbelt project from the point of view of the interviewees. There is, however, a danger of falling under what Habermas (1984, cited in Cohen et al. 2007) calls the ‘double hermeneutic’, where researchers “*interpret and operate in an already interpreted world*” (p. 26). This means that the researcher should pay attention to the issue that the field or phenomenon under investigation, in this case the Fehmarnbelt project, has often been imposed with different understandings and meanings by the interviewees (Cohen et al., 2007).

2.4 Qualitative Research Method

In tourism research, both qualitative and quantitative methods can be useful. If we look at their main difference, the quantitative method uses statistics and other means of quantification. The qualitative research method, on the contrary, emphasizes words and observes real-world settings (Bryman, 2012).

The qualitative research approach has been chosen for this project to gain an in-depth knowledge about the dynamics and issues in the case study of the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link. This project uses

the qualitative method, as it conforms to the constructivist and interpretivist approaches chosen for this project. They all have the common aim to understand the social entities, while their experiences, attitudes and beliefs are central to the research (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). The analysis of text and documents are one of the main research methods here and this conforms to this research project, since the political visions described in Lolland and Guldborgsund municipality plans are part of the secondary data collection (Bryman, 2012).

Primary data for this project was collected by means of interviews with public and private tourism actors – in the best traditions of Kvale & Brinkmann (2015), who state that “*the knowledge is produced in the social context between the interviewer and the interviewee and their interplay*” (p. 91). Ibid (2015) states that “*qualitative interviewing is chosen when the topic concerns aspects of the subject’s experience of the world*” (p. 153). It is precisely the subject’s experience of the world that is important in this project as it sets out to explore how local tourism operators feel included in the vision for the Fehmarnbelt project.

2.5 Data Collection

In order to get a holistic view on the dynamics within the Fehmarnbelt project, primary data of ethnographic fieldwork in forms of participant observation was collected on two workshops and a public meeting (see section 2.6 for a detailed description). Furthermore, 13 in-depth semi-structured interviews with both private and public actors on Lolland-Falster were also collected as primary data (see section 2.10 for further information).

The secondary data is gathered via desktop research and mainly consists of Lolland Municipality Plan (2010-2022) and Guldborgsund Municipality Plan (2013-2025). These plans are written in Danish, and relevant quotes are translated into English by the researcher. Secondary data, especially from online platforms, has also been used to gain background knowledge about the Fehmarnbelt project and the debates about the fixed link in different communities. I have also signed up for monthly newsletter from the Interreg 5A Community and weekly newsletter from Business LF and Lolland municipality. Furthermore, I have followed different Facebook groups, e.g. Femern A/S, Femernbælt Development, Embassy of Lolland-Falster and VisitLolland-Falster. This has exclusively worked as background knowledge and, therefore, these newsletters and Facebook groups have not been analyzed. The advantage of writing about a project that is in the planning

process is that when checking the newspapers there is often an article or two about the project. By applying both primary and secondary data, this contributes to *“richer and potentially more valid interpretations”* (Decrop, 1999, p. 158) and thereby it heightens the validity of my final results.

2.6 Participant Observation

Part of the empirical material gathered for this research was done through ethnographic fieldwork. I participated in two workshops hosted by Business Lolland-Falster (a joint business association between Lolland and Guldborgsund municipalities and businesses on LF), which had a specific focus on the Fehmarnbelt project and its tourism potentials and challenges. The workshops took place on November 27, 2014 and March 12, 2015 in Holeby on Lolland, from approximately 17-20h and it was a mix of presentations and group work (for more details see section 5.3.7). Participant observation was also conducted at a public meeting on August 19, 2015 that revolved around potentials for the South coast of Lolland in regards to the construction of the Fehmarnbelt tunnel. The meeting was hosted by Lolland municipality and held at the conference facilities at Lalandia. The location was divided into five stations, each representing the following bodies: Femern A/S, Business LF, Lalandia, University of Copenhagen and Feriehusudlejernes Brancheforening (the association for vacation rental). At each station a short presentation was made and the time that was left was dedicated to discussion. On the workshops and the public meeting participant observation was conducted by writing down keywords on what was being discussed, the atmosphere and the relations between participants.

As Fetterman (2008) explains, when doing participant observation the researcher participates in, and makes observations of the everyday life. This is a unique opportunity where the social setting under investigation can be observed. Haldrup & Larsen (2009) stress that ethnographic fieldwork can be very useful, since *“there can be significant differences in what people “do” in practice and what they say they do (...) much social life is conducted unintentionally and habitually”* (p. 38).

It was on these workshops and the public meeting that I had the chance to observe policy debates ‘from the inside’ and observe how local tourism actors were ‘invited’ to participate and utter their opinion on the topic, and thus this worked as a form of ethnography. The two Fehmarnbelt workshops took place early on in the research project, and it enabled me to identify important key

players, enthusiasts, and smaller tourism businesses. Also, it enabled me to identify some of the major issues that local tourism operators seemed to deal with in regards to the Fehmarnbelt project.

As Fetterman (2010) states, "*ethnography gives voice to the people in their own local context*" and "*the story is told through the eyes of local people as they pursue their daily lives in their own communities*" (pp. 1-2). When using participant observation, it is important to look at how the researcher is taking part in the social setting. The concept of 'outsider' and 'insider' researchers was introduced by DeWalt & DeWalt (2010) and focuses on the level in which the researcher is on an equal basis with the locals.

In the two workshops I participated as an 'outsider' due to my status of being a student and due to the fact that I am not a part of the business community on Lolland-Falster. With this status I had the opportunity to stay neutral and appear merely as an 'observer'. An important point to be made is that in a social constructivist paradigm researchers will never be able to reside fully objective (Schensul et al. in DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010). This was proven during the interviews when discussing the image of Lolland-Falster, since it was difficult to stay neutral and objective due to the personal commitment to Lolland-Falster.

2.7 Explorative Case Study

The field was approached with an open mind and with the curiosity to learn more about tourism planning and policy in practice. Hence, a specific theoretical standpoint was not chosen beforehand, which gives this project an inductive approach, as the theory will be generated on the background of the collected data (Gray, 2004). According to Stebbins (2001), exploratory research becomes relevant when there is little knowledge about a particular group, process or situation.

The overly focus on participation and community-based tourism in developing countries made me interested in looking at the same issues but in a North European context, as described earlier, and this is done in a case study. Atkinson & Hammersley (1994) describe a case study as a detailed and intensive analysis of a single case: it is a real life contemporary phenomenon in its natural order. Dredge and Jenkins (2011) argue that "*tourism planning is best understood when examining real-life experiences grounded in detailed accounts of contexts*" (p. 106). Therefore, a case study approach seems appropriate when exploring the Fehmarnbelt project.

2.8 Interview Design

The qualitative research method focuses on in-depth knowledge and understandings of the social setting, whereas the quantitative approach favors generalizability (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Semi-structured interviews focus on the subject's experience of the topic and the interviewer seeks to let the subject speak as freely as possible. This type of interview allows for spontaneous, unpredictable and free responses where feelings, perceptions and impressions are coded in words (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015; Jennings, 2010). Therefore, in-depth semi-structured interviews have been chosen for this project. This type of interview will help me reach an understanding of local tourism operator's view on the Fehmarnbelt project and how they are involved in political visions.

2.9 Interview Guide

Semi-structured interviews are characterized by a set of pre-designed questions, yet still open-ended and with the possibility to be elaborated on (Jennings, 2010). The interview questions for this project were designed on the background of the secondary data from the municipality plans, newspaper articles, academic articles and participant observation at the workshops and the public meeting, and a guideline was then developed.

A general interview guide was developed, but always adapted carefully to each individual interviewee. This was necessary due to the fact that the interviewees had different roles in the Fehmarnbelt project and represented a range of very different people: from CEO's to municipality staff, academics and local tourism operators. The questions revolved around a future scenario about Lolland-Falster in connection with the Fehmarnbelt project, citizen involvement in public policy planning, actor network, private-public collaboration and the image of Lolland-Falster.

When developing the interview guide, Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) suggest that the research questions of the project are translated into easily understandable questions that are short and free from academic language. The interview questions should be formulated in everyday language that will contribute to a dynamic and natural conversation flow. With this in mind, the interview always started with a brief presentation of the research project and afterwards the interviewee was asked to introduce himself/herself, their job and their daily activities. Then the interviewee was asked to answer a set of questions that focused on a futuristic scenario of Lolland-Falster in relation to the construction of the fixed link between Denmark and Germany. These initial questions functioned as

an icebreaker and as a helping tool for sensing the interviewees' emotional position in regards to the Fehmarnbelt project.

2.10 Choice of Respondents

As previously mentioned, I attended two Fehmarnbelt workshops and this allowed me to build a network within the tourism operators on Lolland-Falster, offering the possibility for an unproblematic re-establishment of contact and easing the interviewee's willingness to participate in an interview. After the two workshops contact was established with five respondents over email, who were provided with a more detailed description of the research project. During the first five interviews 'the snowball effect' came into play, as the interviewees provided suggestions to relevant actors that would be interesting to contact in regards to the research topic (Bryman, 2012). Due to geographical distance, most interviews were conducted over Skype or phone, while two interviews took place in Copenhagen.

In total there were 13 interviews conducted between August 10th and October 6th 2015, with the average duration of approximately 45 min., but ranging from 20 min. to 1h 20 min. Table 1 provides an overview of all respondents. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Relevant quotes from the transcripts were translated from Danish into English and used in the final analysis.

In order to meet the aims and objectives for this project, both public and private actors were interviewed. I have two representatives from Lolland municipality and one representative from Guldborgsund municipality who are public actors. They are relevant in terms of discussing the municipalities' visions for the Fehmarnbelt project and the issue on participation and tourism actor involvement. Next, there are two public/private actors where both the municipality and local business owners are part of the organization. These two actors are interesting, since they can help elucidate the relationship and collaboration between private and public actors. In the group of private actors I have six respondents ranging from hotels to tourist attractions and a small tourism operator. These actors are relevant in terms of examining participation and involvement in the political visions and their feelings towards the Fehmarnbelt project. Furthermore, I have two respondents representing Roskilde University, who have the strength of having an academic angle on the topic and who worked with cross-border cooperation.

2.11 Ethical Matters

The knowledge that is produced in an interview depends on the social relation between the interviewer and the interviewee. Furthermore, it depends on the interviewer's ability to create a situation where the subject is comfortable and has the freedom to speak about personal experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

The atmosphere during the interviews with the five respondents from the Fehmarnbelt workshop was relaxed and friendly. The fact that we participated in the workshops means that we shared the same interest in the Fehmarnbelt project and had a common experience to talk about, which made it easier to share feelings and observations. In the remaining eight interviews the interview situation was more formal.

Recently, due to technological advancement, interviews over phone and the Internet have become more prevalent and one of the advantages is the possibility to talk to people in a different geographical location (James & Busher, 2012 in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The disadvantage of a telephone interview is not being able to see your interviewee and missing out body language. Regarding confidentiality, interviewees were asked if the interview should be confident or available to public. Two respondents asked to review and approve quotes and one respondent asked to approve quotes if the project is to be published.

2.12 Data Processing

When analyzing my interview data, I used K. Löfgren's (2013) step-by-step guide for coding qualitative data. In order to code the sizable amount of data of approximately 110 pages of transcription from the 13 interviews, I made two 'screenings'. In the first screening I quickly browsed through the transcripts and wrote down the impressions from the top of my head, leading to 28 codes. In the second screening all transcripts were read carefully and I ended up with 138 codes, which were divided into categories, with a total number of 35. These categories provided an overview of important issues that could be used in the analysis when answering the three objectives of this project.

2.13 Validity, Reliability and Generalizability

When conducting a research project, the reliability, validity and generalizability of the project must be reflected on. Generalizability refers to whether the findings of the research can be regarded as valid and representative for other groups or social phenomena (Kvale, 2006). However, the aim of this project is not to generalize the opinions of the tourism industry on Lolland-Falster, but rather to gain a deeper understanding and meaning of the social context of it. In a case study the researcher *“typically produces a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases. This increases the depth of understanding of the cases and situations but decreases the generalizability”* (Patton, 2002, p. 14).

Reliability refers to the consistency and replicability of the research results (Kvale 2006). As this project takes on a social constructivist approach, I will argue that replicability is not possible, since *“people act within their own situational context, and their understandings of the world may, therefore, differ depending on the situation”* (Jørgensen, 2012, p. 35). Therefore, full reliability is impossible to reach in a project like this.

Furthermore, this project is a reflection of how the interviewees perceive their social reality; hence, it is not a full reflection of the entire community on Lolland-Falster. Validity refers to the overall quality of the research and the knowledge production (Kvale, 2006). Reliability is considered a prerequisite for validity (Bryman, 2008) and validity should be understood as the researchers' ability to *“gain an accurate or true impression of the group, process, or activity under study”* (Stebbins, 2001, p. 48) in exploratory research, and *“exploration comes to a halt temporarily in a particular area, when researchers there believe that no significant new ideas can come from further open-ended investigation and pressing confirmatory issues begin to dominate”* (Ibid., p. 10). This became relevant for this project when about 10 interviews were conducted and the respondents continuously pointed at the same issues, and the researcher decided that sufficient data had been collected for the scope of this project.

Table 1: Overview of interviewees

Company/ Organization	Company type	Representative	Public/ Private	Interview method	Name
Lolland Municipality	Municipality	Deputy Head of Development and Business	Public	Telephone	Henrik Madsen
Lolland Municipality	Municipality	Director of Tourism	Public	Telephone	Henriette Pedersen
Guldborgsund Municipality	Municipality	City Planner	Public	Video call on Skype	Maria Østergaard
Femern Belt Development	Center for Knowledge and Development (FBD)	Development Manager	Public/ Private	Telephone	Tonni Kragh
De Danske Sydhavskyster	Marketing Association (DDS)	Chairman	Public/ Private	Telephone	Jan Harrit
Roskilde University	University	Phd. Student w/focus on Fehmarnbelt		Telephone	Dirk Keil
RUC Innovation	University	Researcher and Project Employee w/focus on Fehmarnbelt		Face to face	Annika Carstensen
Hotel Søpark	Hotel	General Manager	Private	Telephone	Andreas Milling
Hotel Femern	Hotel	CEO	Private	Telephone	Jesper Kristensen
Orenæs Saloner	Event venue	CEO	Private	Telephone	Birgitte Getting
Cordt Consult	Fundraising and project consultancy	CEO of Cordt Consult, previous project leader at Østdansk Turisme, co-founder LF Lovestorm	Private	Video call on Skype	Dea Cordt
Lalandia (Rødby)	Tourist attraction	General Manager	Private	Face to face	Karsten Juhl
Knuthenborg Safaripark	Tourist attraction	Sales and Marketing Manager	Private	Telephone	Susanne Ptak

Literature Review

The following literature review has been divided into three main sections. The first section reflects upon the European Union's values and goals for development and economic growth. More specifically, it outlines the existing literature on the emergence of cross-border regions, cross-border cooperation and, finally, the institutional structures behind cross-border regions. The second section then examines the discursive construction behind cross-border regions and notions of narratives and visions. The third section will look into citizen and stakeholder participation, network theory, tourism planning and policy and legitimacy. Due to the explorative approach of this project, the theory does not arise from one specific field in tourism studies. In order to successfully meet the aim and objectives established for this research, a range of relevant theories for the issues identified in the introduction will be applied instead.

3.1 European Regional Policy

The following section will introduce the European Union and European regional policy. Cross-border region building and cross-border cooperation will also be introduced. This section is relevant in understanding aspects of the political visions about the Fehmarnbelt project set forth by Lolland and Guldborgsund municipalities.

In the aftermath of the Second World War a European Economic Community was established in 1958 to ensure economic stability between the six founding countries. In 1993 the name was changed to the European Union (EU) and by this time the union also engaged in political matters like development aid and environment. Today the purpose of EU is to create a unified European territory and to promote political and economic stability, as well as cooperation and integration between the 28 member states (European Union, n.d.).

Cross-border regions are examples of European regional policy that entails visions about integration and development. In this sense, institutionalized cooperation between public actors across national borders has become more and more common across Western Europe (Timothy & Teye, 2004). In 1972 The Council of Europe stated that cross-border regions are “*characterized by homogenous features and functional interdependencies*” (Perkmann, 2003, p. 4). Since then many connotations on cross-border regions can be found in the academic literature (*Ibid*, 2003). This project follows

the definition by Perkmann (2003) who defines a cross-border region as “*a bounded territorial unit composed of the territories of authorities participating in a cross-border co-operation initiative*” (p. 4). He understands a cross-border region as a functional space, but also as an outcome of a process of social construction, hence a socio-territorial unit based on certain organizational arrangements (*Ibid*, 2003).

Having defined cross-border regions, I will now turn to the political visions behind cross-border region building. In the 1990s cross-border region building gained ground after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The emergence of the so-called Euroregions “*was a way of solving traditional economic problems in border areas and reducing regional disparities in preparation for EU integration*” (Timothy & Teye, 2004, p. 588). The goal was to become a ‘Europe of the Regions’ or a ‘Europe without Borders’. Since then, European regional policy has been about integration, cohesion, infrastructure, economic growth, education and cultural exchange across the European continent (Klatt & Herrmann, 2011).

The literature points to an increase in the number of regional and local authorities engaging in international cooperation, and the development towards Europe as a macro-region “*contributes to a blurring of the distinction between what is ‘international’ and internal ‘policies’*” (Perkmann, 2003, p. 4). *Ibid.* (2003), for example, sees this as an ‘Europeanization’ of local and regional governments, since they are recruited as ‘partners’ into various EU policy fields.

Finally, O. Löfgren (2008) makes a critical argument towards the academic literature on cross-border regions, as it has mostly been concerned with governance and institutional structures, but the studying of more soft elements such as ‘regions as lived’ and how regions are created through cultural practices has been neglected.

3.2 Borders

Since the 1990s there has been a great expansion in the geographical literature on borders and border regions. Other disciplines like sociology, anthropology, political science and economics are being increasingly integrated into the border studies. The usage of concepts and insights from a wide range of disciplines makes borders an interesting field of science (Houtum, 2000). Traditionally, international borders have been perceived as barriers to human interaction and to the mobility of people, goods and ideas between countries. However, the notion of borders is changing,

especially as a result of globalization and supranationalism. Today border policies support trade, human mobility, cooperation and *“liberalization of economic activities, including international cross-border tourism”* (Weidenfeld, 2013, p. 191). Hence, borders are no longer seen as barriers, but as resources to development and cooperation across borders that have mutual benefits for both nations (Prokkola, 2008; Timothy & Teye, 2004; Paasi & Prokkola, 2008; Trillo-Santamariá, 2014). This shows that EU is interested in a thriving internal market without borders hindering the flow of capital and people.

3.3 Cross-Border Cooperation

Since the 1960s, cooperation across national borders has gained great interest within the European Union and today cross-border regions are to be found all over the European continent. The notion of cross-border cooperation is being studied among various disciplines such as sociology, geography, political science, international relations and administrative science and Perkmann (2003) defines cross-border cooperation as *“co-operation arrangements between contiguous territorial authorities, resulting in the emergence of cross-border regions”* (p. 5).

A critical approach to the concept of ‘Europe of Regions’ and cross-border cooperation is that it is *“considered to be merely symbolic action to disguise the centralizing effects of the European integration project and the failure of effective and meaningful local cross-border cooperation”* (Klatt & Herrmann, 2011, p. 67). Paasi & Prokkola (2008) also point to the issue that *“co-operation is often looked at from an economic or political perspective in the border literature and cultural and social viewpoints are neglected”* (p. 21).

Klatt & Hermann (2011) find a paradox in cross-border cooperation: while being encouraged and financially supported by EU, the mechanisms behind cross-border region building and successful cross-border cooperation achieving still haven’t got too much research invested in them. In line with this, Timothy & Teye (2004) believe that true cross-border cooperation is difficult to achieve. This is an important point, as cooperation across national borders must be assumed to be quite different from cooperation within national borders. There are issues like language, culture, values, codes of conduct etc. Ricq (2006, in Trillo-Santamariá, 2014) also points at *“different economic, administrative, political, social and cultural obstacles”* (p. 258) that make it difficult to achieve a ‘Europe of the Regions’.

3.4 Tourism and the European Commission

In the Treaty of Maastricht from 1992 *“tourism was officially recognized by the European Commission as a distinct subdivision within the EU administration”* and today it *“is presented as a real opportunity for the development of border regions in the European Commission’s rhetoric”* (Prokkola, 2007, p. 124). Hence, tourism is regarded as one of the main industries and as a development tool for Europe’s peripheral areas where *“low population density and long distances impede the development of other industries”* (Prokkola, 2007, p. 124).

In tourism development strategies there has been a shift towards, and encouragement of, cross-border cooperation and partnerships. Building cross-border tourist destinations has also gained great importance (Prokkola, 2008). If smaller and less developed regions unite with cross-border neighbors, there are advantages to gain, and tourism is increasingly gaining a position as an economic driver for change in peripheral areas (Timothy & Teye, 2004; Marzuki et al., 2012; Weidenfeld, 2013). Linking regional development policies and the touristic production of space contributes to the process of giving these new cross-border regions meaning and identity (Prokkola, 2008). However, Klatt & Herrmann (2011) are a bit more critical to this statement and argue that it still remains to be proven whether *“cross-border cooperation can guarantee a resolution of peripheral regions’ socio-economic problems”* (p. 82).

3.5 Interreg Programs

The European regional policies on integration, cohesion and cross-border region building are performed through the Interreg programmes and promote regional development and cooperation. The many Interreg projects under the Interreg programmes are co-financed by the European Commission Structural Funds. The financial support is often both a major encouragement for cooperation and it often motivates new forms of cooperation (Nilsson et al., 2010; Prokkola, 2008).

Academics often criticize the Interreg projects for lacking sustainability and continuity. The critical points here is that many cross-border activities are induced by EU funding, which means that when the project period with funding ends, the cross-border activities often end as well (Klatt & Herrmann 2011; Stöber, 2011; Perkmann, 2008). This also means that if the implementation level of the project has been low in the program period, the project will not be locally anchored and most of it will be lost. Hall (2008) questions the level of private-sector participation in cross-border

cooperation due to its bureaucratic character and whether cross-border cooperation initiatives are merely a strategy to obtain public subsidies.

Since 1990 there has been four Interreg Programs: I, II, III and IV, each consisting of three strands of cooperation: A, B, C. 'A' stands for cross-border cooperation, 'B' stands for transnational cooperation and 'C' stands for interregional cooperation. The fifth program Interreg V has been running from 2014 and will end in 2025. Interreg 5A, called Deutschland – Danmark, is the focus of this thesis (European Union, n.d.; Interreg, n.d.)

3.6 Narratives and Visions

The second part of the literature review looks into notions of narratives and visions, as well as the discursive construction behind cross-border regions. The notion of narratives is relevant for this project when investigating the political visions about the new Fehmarnbelt region. Place narratives will be used to examine the reconstruction of the image of Lolland-Falster in regards to the Fehmarnbelt project.

Warnaby & Medway (2013) look at the concept of 'place' in a marketing and branding context and they look at the construction of place narratives when evaluating the concept of a 'place product'. The place product consists of changing and competing narratives which means that a net of coexisting narratives can be found about a place. These narratives are developed by numerous stakeholders and their different perspectives on the place. This goes in line with Cresswell's (2004) statement that *"places are constructed by people doing things, and in this sense are never 'finished' but are constantly being performed"* (cited in Warnaby & Medway, 2013, p. 351). This means that the place is constantly rewritten by human actions and Florek (2011, in Warnaby & Medway, 2013) also regards place as a basic component of human identity. The notion of a place is created and produced by people and their actions, and it can be on an individual level or in the context of an organization. Hence, places are socially constructed and redefined, and reinterpreted through spoken and written words.

If we look at the marketing and branding of a place, marketers can try to 'sell' an image of a place through the construction of narratives. Marketing is often connected to the need of either changing or creating a new narrative about the place, and an example could be a former industrial city that wants to change its image in order to enhance competitiveness (Warnaby & Medway, 2013).

Moving on from narratives to visions, in this project the term vision refers to the written visions in different policy documents, mainly the municipality plans of Lolland and Guldborgsund municipalities. Kotter (1996) mainly deals with overall company visions. However, I find his perspective on vision relevant for this project and for the way I plan to investigate political visions: *“vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future”* (Kotter, 1996, p. 68). The advantage of having a vision is that it can lead to major changes if action is motivated.

3.7 Discourses about Cross-Border Regions

The discursive dimension of cross-border regions is usually dominated by discourses and narratives about common cultural, ethic or economic elements in the ‘new region’ (Perkmann, 2003). Hajer (1995, cited in Nilsson et al., 2010) defines discourses as *“a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities”* (p. 162).

Since the establishments of the first cross-border regions a positive discourse towards cross-border regions and cross-border cooperation among politicians has gained momentum across the European continent. On the contrary, many academics challenge this positive discourse and cross-border projects are criticized for being top-down projects rather than bottom-up. The projects often entail rhetoric of an exciting future of integration and economic growth, and this becomes means to help local authorities implement supranational policies and create visions for the future (Perkmann, 2003, in Trillo-Santamariá, 2014). According to Paasi (2001, in O. Löfgren, 2008) this results in a gap between the elite and the more popular discourses.

Stöber (2011) examines how culture is being used as a strategic tool by politicians when developing cross-border regions, specifically in the case of the existing Øresund link and the planned Fehmarnbelt link. Here the wish is to develop an economic well-functioning region, but this is covered behind narratives about culture and works as a distraction to the critique that such infrastructural projects often entails; the discourse draws attention towards a *“more inclusive, harmless regional project, and consequently culture is instrumentally used to achieve other ends”* (Pratt, 2009 cited in Stöber, 2011, p. 230). Stöber (2011) further explains that a fixed link between two regions does not only have the benefit of a faster transportation mode but it also entails official

narratives on *“human connectivity, cultural potentials and coherent regions”* (p. 230). This underlines her statement that *“there is a strong link between the physical link and an official regional and cultural discourse”* (p. 230.). In O. Löfgren’s (2008) point of view many cross-border regions remain *“more political dreamscapes than strongly integrated transnational territories”* (p. 195).

If we shift focus back to the case study of this project, cooperation in the Fehmarnbelt region between Denmark and Germany started in 1977 and the region has institutionalized itself as a cross-border region and *“developed narratives of spatial region-building as a motive to improve cross-border cooperation”* (Klatt & Herrmann, 2011, p. 65).

In cross-border policy documents we meet the idea of a functional region, as well as historical and cultural narratives about a culturally coherent region. In cross-border region building EU funds are available to foster this sustainable cultural growth (Stöber, 2011). When Ibid. (2011) examines the notion of discourses she argues that they are *“mostly beneficial for politicians both on regional and EU level, since these might enable them to argue for the necessity of large-scale projects, to raise money (e.g. EU subsidies) and to pave the way for private investors and thus economic upswing”* (p. 240). This shows us that culture is being used as a strategic tool to achieve economic ends and this theoretical perspective will help shed light on the political visions of the municipalities in the analysis.

3.8 Participation

The third part of the literature review will look into citizen participation, stakeholder involvement, network theory, tourism planning and policy and, finally, legitimacy.

“Public participation in decision-making processes is regarded as important for successful tourism planning” (Marzuki et al., 2012, p. 585). Following this quote, there is a tendency in the academic tourism literature to focus on developing countries when talking about participation. It often deals with community-based tourism in order to achieve sustainable tourism, to ensure benefits to communities, to increase local communities’ skills and knowledge, and avoid cultural and heritage degradation (Marzuki et al., 2012).

In the 1970s governments in developing countries discovered the potential tourism had for their national economies, and since the 1980s the tourism industry in developing countries has grown dramatically. However, tourism was poorly planned, which led to environmental degradation, and projects were often struggling due to lack of local inclusion and participation in the projects (Marzuki et al., 2012). However, this has changed, and participation has become a buzzword and an important issue. France (1998) defines participation as *“a process of empowerment that helps to involve local people in the identification of problems, decision-making and implementation, which can contribute to sustainable development”* (cited in Marzuki et al., 2012, p. 585). When including community in tourism planning, this creates higher quality of the product or project, and it ensures that plans are accepted and implemented at the operational level (Hatipoglu et al., 2014). Another advantage of public participation is that it can enhance citizen’s support for the proposed tourism project, increase the credibility of the agency within the community, and lastly – improve stakeholder relationships (Marzuki et al., 2012).

With this in mind it becomes clear that successful tourism requires effective tourism planning and that public participation is paramount, regardless of looking at it in a context of a developing country or developed country (Spencer, 2010). I believe that, due to the well-established democracies we see in northern Europe, there is not as big focus on participation, as there is in developing countries, where the voices of locals have difficulties to get through. MacMillan (2010) is one of the scholars working with citizen participation in public policy and he states that this is a current issue in democratic countries around the globe. There is a growing consensus to move away from traditional approaches of solely providing information and inviting citizens to attend formal public hearings at an already advanced stage of the policy-making.

Sheedy et al. (2008) refer to polls on citizen engagement in Canada reporting that *“85 per cent of Canadians would be more favorable to government decisions if citizen input was obtained more regularly, and 68 per cent believe that there is not enough effort by government to engage citizens on issues of public policy”* (cited in MacMillan, 2010, p. 88). Consequently, MacMillan (2010) suggests four ways of engagement: consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering. He further states that communication and media coverage is important when informing citizens about policy consultation. In continuation, Marzuki et al. (2012) suggest that if residents are not adequately informed about the planning process and their potential for participating as citizens, it will consequently prevent them from participating.

As with everything else, there are also disadvantages when facilitating citizen inputs. There is the time perspective, since it adds time to the already long decision-making process, and action on important issues can be stalled for weeks or months as a result of a hearing process, especially if special interest groups have a lot of demands (Jordan et al., 2013). Another challenge in tourism planning and the inclusion of stakeholder groups is that there are many individuals and groups with a stake in tourism development, as tourism is affected by many different fields (Jordan et al., 2013). One of the main criticisms of participatory approaches is when assuming that the local community is homogeneous and therefore decision-making is easily made. In reality *“collaborative planning processes are often characterized by conflict and power struggles that detract from the attention paid to important issues”* (Dredge, 2006 cited in Hatipoglu et al., 2014, p. 2). Other barriers to stakeholder participation in tourism planning can be poor leadership, lack of a shared vision among stakeholders and the lack of a long-term strategy. These factors can challenge collaborative planning (Hatipoglu et al., 2014).

Coming back to cross-border regions, Perkmann (2003) finds it interesting to look at their institutional form and the type of participating actors. This has been done by Trillo-Santamariá (2014) who did research in the Galicia-North Portugal Euroregion. Here the results showed that there is a gap between the political elite's cross-border projects and people's knowledge of the projects and that most inhabitants were actually unaware of the political initiatives and projects in the region. Furthermore, 55 % of the respondents had never heard of the euroregion they were living in. Taking this into consideration it seems that *“the idea of euroregions as laboratories for European integration is failing, at least, from a democratic and participatory point of view”* (Kramsch, 2010, cited in Trillo-Santamariá, 2014).

In Boman & Berg's (2007) study on the Estonian-Russian border they also found that this Euroregion remained an elite project, involving mostly regional and local authorities. Trillo-Santamariá (2014) suggests that *“the European institutions' and stakeholders' discourse on cross-border cooperation as the ground for a more democratic and integrated Europe remains unachieved. This objective can only be met if inhabitants participate in cross-border regions' matters on a daily basis”* (p. 266).

Strüver (2005, cited in Trillo-Santamariá, 2014) argues that people's lack of awareness of cross-border projects is a 'passive form of ignorance' *“because if they are not aware of European politics, how can they know of a specific policy, i.e. cross-border co-operation programs?”* (p.

259). An example of this is in the Galician-North Portugal Euroregion, where cross-border flows and mobility have increased, and people are using the bridge over the Minho River, which is build with European funds. The only thing is that people do not know about the European origin of this funding. In the field of cross-border region building and cross-border cooperation Timothy (2001, cited in Prokkola, 2007) emphasizes the importance of recognizing *“what is happening on the other side of the border in order to achieve sustainable tourism planning”* and *“take note of what structures and processes may influence tourism on the other side of the border”* (p. 121). With this in mind it becomes clear that participatory approaches in cross-border regions and cross-border cooperation needs to be revised.

3.9 Tourism Planning and Policy

To achieve sustainable tourism the planning process must be democratic, and the key words here are participation, collaboration and inclusion. This section examines collaborative tourism planning and its challenges.

Collaborative planning and partnership building has gained increased attention in the tourism planning literature, and Bramwell (2004) and Jamal & Getz (1995) underpin the importance of *“involving diverse stakeholders in participatory processes of consensus-building and partnership formation”* (Dredge, 2006b, p. 569). Collaborative planning in a tourism context is *“a process of joint decision-making among autonomous, key stakeholders of an inter-organizational, community tourism domain to resolve planning problems of the domain and/or to manage issues related to the planning and development of the domain”* (Gray, 1989 cited in Jamal and Getz, 1995, p. 188).

Democratic planning and policy-making is neither fast nor easy, but it is important in terms of having a successful long term project, it is important in ensuring implementation and local anchoring (Dredge & Jenkins, 2011). If we look at the planning process, it is often conceptualized as unproblematic, uni-dimensional and a linear process. However, in reality the process is rather characterized by conflicting and cluttered decision-making and that *“inclusion and exclusion take place and that power differentials play a part in who participates, how engagement takes place and what issues are identified and moved forward”* (Dredge, 2006b, p. 563). In line with this, it is acknowledged that equitable democratic participation is difficult to achieve and *“distortions in communication can affect the extent to which consensus building is democratic and participatory”*

(*Ibid*, 2006). Collaborative planning has also been criticized for its simplified and idealistic version of democracy, and Bramwell (2004, in Dredge, 2006b) suggests further research into the notion of power in collaborative planning. Past research has showed that *“power differentials play a significant role in shaping the collaborative process, and the extent of ownership over the solutions that emerge”* (Dredge, 2006b, p. 570).

The shortfall of traditional planning approaches has long been discussed in planning and tourism literature, and Bonilla (1997, in Dredge and Jenkins, 2011) has pointed out that the best plans are not those of the highest technical quality, but those where locals input have been included in the planning process, and are responsive to local needs, as these plans have a far better chance of ensuring commitment to implementation and community acceptance (Dredge & Jenkins, 2011; Jordan et al., 2013). The tourism planning literature has pointed out a number of prerequisites for a meaningful participatory planning processes and this is dialogue and cooperation and collaboration between the various stakeholders involved.

Dredge and Jenkins (2011) further points to tourism planning and policy-making as highly being influenced by social processes. This is due to the many stakeholders that must be included and their social relationship. Planning takes place in a social world in both formal and informal settings and there can be political intrigue, manipulation of knowledge, power imbalances, issues of leadership and ethical issues (*Ibid*, 2011).

3.10 Network Theory

One of the main objectives of this project is to look into inclusion of citizen and tourism operators in Lolland and Guldborgsund municipality plans. Here the network theory, governance network and collaborative planning are relevant to look at.

In the last twenty years we have seen a change in government structures where government has been downsized, responsibilities offset and there has been a shift from government to governance. The idea of the sovereign state with a top-down steering approach is losing its grip and is *“being replaced by new ideas about a pluricentric governance based on interdependence, negotiation, and trust”* (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007, p. 3). Today it is important that government is attuned to the needs and interests of industry and that community groups *“have access to policy and decision-making processes in a forum where learning, creativity and innovation are fostered amongst both*

government and non-government actors” (Dredge, 2006a, p. 5). This also means that in policy-making the roles of public and private sectors have become blurry and with this there has been an increasing interest in the interplay between government, business and civil society (Dredge, 2006a; Sørensen & Torfing, 2007). Dredge & Jenkins (2011) explain that the idea of empowering the private sector and reducing government regulations is a key feature of neo-liberalism. Continuously, in a macro perspective globalization has had a great impact on human and organizational behavior due to the advancement of technology; the world is becoming smaller and more interlinked, and globalization encourages alliances and networks across both organizations and nations.

If we turn to look at the term ‘network’, it seems to cover many things and is applied in many different fields and in different conceptual constellations. One could claim that we live in a ‘networked world’ (Scott et al., 2008). The field is as broad as communication networks, social networks, cross-border networks and even terror networks (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007). A change in the nature of interaction means that we increasingly come across more networked inter-organizational relationships in forms of partnerships, clusters, alliances and communities of practice (Scott et al., 2008). However, tourism has always been a networked industry due to the many different actors involved and affected by tourism; DMOs, travel agents, tour operators, hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions and transportation. This network of relationships shapes the basis of the tourism industry and enables it to deliver its product and overcome problems of fragmentation within the sector. The concept of networks can “*provide a means of conceptualizing, visualizing and analyzing these complex sets of relationships*” (Scott et al., 2008, p. 3). And with this in mind, the tourism industry is ideal to study in the context of networks (Scott et al., 2008).

According to Dredge (2006a) networks are “*sets of formal and informal social relationships that shape collective action between government, industry and civil society*” and are “*characterized by a variety of participants that transcend organizational boundaries and structures*” (pp. 4-5). It is the interplay between these three actors that she refers to as network theory. Here she looks at how these relationships “*shape issue identification, communication, resource sharing and collective action*” (Dredge, 2006b, pp. 564-65), which makes network theory useful in collaborative destination management policy and practice (*Ibid*, 2006b).

It is important to note that networks can be difficult to work with and define. They can be formal or informal, operate independently and interdependently, operate over different spatial scales and time, overlap and interlock, exist at macro, meso and micro levels. Network members can participate in

several networks at the same time (Dredge, 2006a/b). With the many different elements networks can entail, it becomes relevant to study the *“less tangible, cultural aspects that go beyond structure and relations to explore the dynamics associated with actor strategies, rules of conduct, levels of institutionalization and power relations”* (Dredge, 2006a, p. 9). When researching networks, it is not only about *how* the collaboration between different actors occurs, but it is also interesting to look at *how* the networks create opportunities in terms of communication, dialogues, innovation and the development of new ideas (Dredge, 2006a). In line with Dredge’s (2006a/b) description of network theory, Sørensen & Torfing (2007) talk about network governance, where policy-making is based on negotiations between public, semi-public and private actors, and state that network governance is increasingly seen as effective and legit. Including affected groups and organizations in the governance network has a positive effect on overcoming problems such as societal fragmentations and resistance towards policy change – and the outcome is a more effective governing process. Furthermore, by inviting different stakeholder groups to participate in the decision-making process, this *“enhances the democratic legitimacy of the public policy and governance”* (Sørensen & Torfing 2007, p. 4). In the 1970s and 80s the studying of theories of organization, policy and implementation showed the failure of central planning due to resistance from user groups and interest organizations, and *“the inescapable conclusion was that the formation and implementation of policy becomes more efficient if the key actors are somehow included in the policy process”* (Ibid, 2007, p. 5).

Sørensen & Torfing (2007) line up four advantages of governance networks. First, it is their potential to identify policy problems and new opportunities at an early stage. Second, they can provide information and knowledge that can influence the policy decisions. The third advantage is the networks ability for consensus building and for easing conflicts among stakeholders. Finally, the governance networks have the potential to reduce implementation resistance. This happens if the actors in the network are involved in the decision-making process and thereby responsibility and ownership for the decisions are fostered (Ibid, 2007).

It is important to note that governance networks also have their challenges. If the network is not well-functioning, the abovementioned advantages might be lost. It could be problems like conflicts and unresolved tensions, ineffective and weak leadership, etc. If this is the case, *“governments and other political authorities must use their power to influence the composition, conceptions and incentives of the network actors”* (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007, p. 14).

3.11 Legitimacy

Suchman (1995) looks at strategic and institutional approaches to management of organizational legitimacy. He observes that in the literature on organizational legitimacy many researchers use the notion of legitimacy, but few researchers actually define it. Suchman (1995) defines legitimacy as a “*generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions*” (p. 574). He explains legitimacy as socially constructed, as it reflects a resemblance between the behaviors of the legitimated entity and the shared beliefs of a social group. This means that legitimacy relies on a collective audience. To exemplify this, an organization may deviate from the values of individuals and still be seen as legit because the deviation does not hold public disapproval (*Ibid*, 1995).

Legitimacy also affects people’s understanding and behavior towards the organization. In the case of having legitimacy, the organization appears meaningful, predictable and trustworthy to the group. Also, with legitimacy comes a collective rational explanation what the organization do and why. Reversely, if the organization lacks legitimacy, it is more likely to be seen as unnecessary, irrational and negligent (*Ibid*, 1995).

A critical point in studies on legitimacy, according to Suchman (1995), is the under acknowledged distinction of active versus passive support. If the organization does not need or want interaction with the audience, the degree of legitimacy can be quite low. On the contrary, if it seeks to do business or engage in social activity with the audience, the degree of legitimacy must be high. Continuously, managers of legitimacy can make a difference in how an organization’s legitimacy and their activities are perceived, and here communication between the audience and the organization is important (Suchman, 1995).

Case study context

In order to explore the second and third objectives, which are asking the question on how the image of Lolland-Falster is deconstructed and reconstructed, the following chapter presents the case study for this project. This chapter focuses on Lolland, since an emphasis on the poor image of Lolland was made in the interviews, whereas Falster was not really mentioned as having a poor image, besides being part of 'udkantsdanmark', which inherently has a negative connotation. Hence, people are making a distinction between Lolland and Falster in regards to image. This chapter presents an overview of the socioeconomic context of Lolland and the tourism industry will be explained. The first section will be a short description of the German attitude towards the fixed link.

4.1 The Fixed Link in a German Perspective

On September 3, 2008 the Ministry of Transport and Building in Denmark and Germany signed a treaty on the establishment of a fixed link across the Fehmarn Belt between the Danish island of Lolland and the German island of Fehmarn (see appendix N). On March 26, 2009 the Danish Parliament ratified the State Treaty and adopted the planning legislation treatment. In the summer of 2009 German Bundestag and German Bundesrat adopted the law on the ratification of the State Treaty (Femern, n.d.).

There is heavy resistance towards the Fehmarnbelt project from citizen movements and interest groups in Germany, and this has caused an ongoing delay of the fixed link. It is issues like environment, nature degradation, uncertainty about the economic basis for the project, decline in tourism during the constructing phase – that causes the concern (Beltquerung, 2009). Germany's largest environmental organization Naturschutzbund Deutschland is particularly determined to stop the establishment of the fixed link. Their lead argument is that the immersed tunnel will go right through a Natura 2000 area (which is protected by EU legislation), and the area will be negatively affected by the construction phase. The organization has supplemented its environmental appeal with a legal complaint and a possible lawsuit can delay the project for several years (Andersen, 2015).

Citizen movement 'Citizens Action Committee against the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link' consists of more than 400 members living on the Fehmarn Island. Today, the island's main industry is tourism,

where 80 % of the population is employed, and locals fear that a new traffic line across the island will destroy nature and, thus, the island's economic base. The citizen movement and interest groups have submitted more than 3000 objections to the public hearing in Kiel, Germany, in November 2015 (Femern Belt Development, 2015). The public hearing is an important element in the final approval for the project by the German authorities. In this way the start of the project can be delayed with several years due to the amount of legal paperwork. Since the 1980s citizen movements have been very powerful in Germany, and highway projects and other construction projects have previously been stopped or changed due to the influence of citizen movements (Nielsen, 2015). If we look at the Danish side, less than 50 objections has been submitted against the Fehmarnbelt project, and this shows that Denmark and Germany have different traditions for citizen involvement and participation in public projects. In Germany it is common that both NGOs and individuals attend public hearings (Viskinde, 2014).

4.2 Socioeconomic Challenges Described in Lolland Municipality Plan 2010-2022

When Lolland Municipality Plan (LMP) was published in 2010, it described that *“Lolland was, and still is, facing some very big challenges and only targeted and long-term efforts can move the municipality away from the heavy end of the statistics”* (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010, p. 8). Being a peripheral municipality (‘udkantskommune’) means that there is a number of challenges at play. First of all, the uneven demographics; the number of people dying is twice as many as being born and young people are moving due to pursuing educational opportunities in larger cities. The educational level is lower on Lolland than the national average, the average income is lower than the national level and the state of health of the population on Lolland is also below the national average. Despite the lower average income, the population in Lolland municipality has a relatively high disposable income due to the low level of expenditure on housing, as compared to people living in larger cities. The decline in population has resulted in many abandoned and empty properties in the area and *“these empty properties affect the image and profile of the municipality in an unfortunate direction”* (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010, p. 15). Lolland has a relatively large number of unemployed, pensioners and early retirees, resulting in a preponderance of people on social benefits compared to the national average. 51.5 % of the citizens in Lolland receive social benefits as their main source of income compared to the national rate on 42.8 %. Furthermore, there

is a tendency among people from lower social classes to move to the municipality, e.g. early retirees and unemployed (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010).

4.3 Tourism as Described in Lolland Municipality Plan 2010-2022

Tourism is one of the core businesses in Lolland municipality. Tourism generates annually 1035 full-time jobs in the municipality, representing 5.4% of the municipality's total employment. The majority of tourists are Danish, German, Norwegian and Swedish. Germans in particular have a long history of renting holiday cottages and spending holidays on Lolland as they love the proximity of the coast and the sea.

The municipality plan describes a great interest from its citizens in establishing new tourism-related attractions, as well as products based on artistic and cultural events, cultural heritage and development of gourmet products. The unique manor houses are slowly opening up for the public and some of them are establishing multi-star sights and wellness concepts (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010). In order to enhance the tourist inflow and to strengthen the established attractions, *“there is a need for an experience offer that connects the many different attractions and gives tourists a holistic experience that differs from other places”* (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010, p. 30). If the municipality and its citizens manage to create good tourism experiences, this will strengthen the municipality's image. The municipality has a particularly large potential for developing 'blue' tourism in its coastal areas and due to its location at the South Danish Archipelago, making the island a unique and attractive area in Europe (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010). The municipality describes the collaboration among local tourism actors as good. At the same time, further strengthening of cooperation combined with better marketing is expected to increase the number of visitors, followed by an increase in the need for accommodation facilities in the municipality.

It is seen as essential for Lolland municipality to develop the tourism potentials that exist in the area: *“as a peripheral region the challenges of imbalance in the economy and employment can be balanced by tourism development as the tourism industry is characterized by low skilled labor and tourism has a big spill-over effect in the community”* (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010, p. 171). Today tourism on Lolland is characterized by a few large players and many smaller ones. Tourists are primarily visiting Knuthenborg Safaripark and Lalandia Aquadome, with approximately one million

visitors annually. The remaining visitor numbers in the area are relatively modest (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010).

Analysis

The aim of this research is to explore how citizens and local tourism operators are involved in the future of the Fehmarnbelt region and how the Fehmarnbelt project will influence this particular region. To do so, three objectives have been set. The first objective seeks to explore the participatory processes in the Fehmarnbelt project, more specifically how tourism operators and civil society on Lolland-Falster are involved in the political decisions about the future of the Fehmarnbelt region. The second and third objectives set out to explore how the image of Lolland-Falster is respectively deconstructed and reconstructed in connection to the Fehmarnbelt project. Chapter four provided a background of the case study and the socioeconomic situation of Lolland, as well as the German attitude towards the Fehmarnbelt project. In the current chapter these elements are combined with empirical data collected from the interviews with public and private actors on Lolland-Falster. Additionally, municipality plans from Lolland and Guldborgsund municipalities are also put into play. In order to meet the aim and objectives of this project, these items are combined and interpreted based on the literature review presented in chapter three.

5.1 Deconstructing the Image of Lolland-Falster

The first chapter of the analysis consists of two parts. First, it looks into the discursive deconstruction of Lolland-Falster's image and what role the Fehmarnbelt project plays in this regard. The second part moves on to political visions and discourses about the Fehmarnbelt project and explores how tourism and culture are used as strategic tools in the political visions of Lolland and Guldborgsund municipality plans, Guldborgsund Municipality Fehmarnbelt Strategy, STRING¹ and Interreg projects.

5.1.1 Poor Image

Among the 12 respondents who were asked about Lolland-Falster's image there was a striking agreement that Lolland has a poor image, and this is especially due to the socioeconomic situation of Lolland-Falster and the media representation of the island. General Manager of Lalandia, Karsten

¹ STRING is elaborated on in section 5.3.1

Juhl, explains that nine out of ten times the region is mentioned in the media it is with negative stories: *“then we have the record in unemployment, record in people registered in RKI, record in youth unemployment”* (App. F, q. 17). In line with this, Chairman of De Danske Sydhavskyster (DDS), Jan Harrit, states that over the years Lolland has been connected with this sort of ‘social numbers’, which *“has contributed to the consolidation of Lolland’s poor image together with things like ‘På Røven I Nakskov’² and all this contributes to this unfortunate image”* (App. I, q. 12). What is interesting here is to look at how this poor image can be changed and what part the Fehmarnbelt project plays in this regard.

It is clear that both Lolland municipality and tourism operators on Lolland-Falster see the Fehmarnbelt project as a great opportunity for economic growth and development, but also as an opportunity to reposition the regions image from ‘udkantsdanmark’ to a region that has more to offer: *“Lolland municipality will create attractive commercial areas close to the highways and ports, a new tourist area across national borders and good transport links between Lolland, other parts of the country and across the continent”* (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010, p. 45).

General Manager at Hotel Søpark, Andreas Milling, states that *“Fehmarnbelt is a very-very interesting project (...) and we hope that it will succeed so that we will be a player that will benefit from it”* (App. H, q. 1). As for the Fehmarnbelt project and how it can influence image of Lolland-Falster, Deputy Head of Development and Business in Lolland municipality, Henrik Madsen, states the following: *“The Fehmarnbelt project will definitely create some positive pictures that will affect the image positively (...) right now we are the last stop before the ferry, but if we build a close relation across the border, work for integration on the labor market – we might become the port to Germany or Europe – or a part of something that is not ‘the last stop’, so I believe that we can talk about something that can change when the tunnel comes. But the prerequisite is that we built relations and offers that are attractive”* (App. C, q. 4).

Continuously, CEO of Cordt Consult, Dea Cordt, also believes that the Fehmarnbelt project will have a positive influence on Lolland’s image: *“There are so much focus on huge investments in the area, so I think when one hears Lolland-Falster, you don’t think about all these negative ‘På Røven I Nakskov’ things, but there are also other things now”* (App. A, q. 4).

² See section 5.1.2 for further explanation of ‘På Røven I Nakskov’

For a long time there has been focus on ‘udkantsdanmark’, and this expression has become a buzzword in political discussions and a self-image in popular discussions. This section shows how the Fehmarnbelt project becomes an opportunity for politicians and citizens to enhance the image of the region, as it enables them to tell the story of a region that experience increasing investment, flourishing economy and not just ‘udkanstdanmark’ where everything decays. It is still the same region, but the Fehmarnbelt project becomes a chance to stir the bowl of symbolism attached to Lolland-Falster and to reposition the region. Finally, in the political discourse about the Fehmarnbelt project it becomes ‘an offer that we cannot refuse’.

5.1.2 Place Identity

As we learned from Warnaby & Medway (2013), the narratives about a place are changing over time and a net of coexisting narratives is developed from numerous stakeholders and their different perspectives on the particular place. In the case of Lolland-Falster, it is not only the politicians who are interested in enhancing the image; local citizens have taken this matter into their own hands. It started in the summer 2015, when TV2 was airing the program series ‘På Røven I Nakskov’ depicting Lolland from its worst sides when following seven families and their ups and downs with economic challenges and fights with the social system (Tv2, 2015). This ‘Shitstorm’ was turned into a ‘Lovestorm’ with the Facebook group Lolland-Falster Lovestorm, devoted to tell the good stories about LF (Lolland-Falster Lovestorm, n.d.). It is interesting to see how citizens are making a huge effort to change the image of the place by engaging in the Facebook group and it becomes an example of how places are constantly rewritten by human actions. As Florek (2011, in Warnaby and Medway, 2013) explains, place is part of the human identity, so living in a place where the positive image factor is down to zero must inherently affect the citizens. It can also explain why people reacted so strongly against the negative place perception depicted in ‘På Røven I Nakskov’.

The Lovestorm phenomenon is interesting because it is not initiated by marketers and branding experts, it is the citizens themselves who want to change the image of Lolland-Falster. At the same time, this shows that places are socially constructed and redefined through spoken and written words, as explained by Warnaby & Medway (2013). In the interviews there was great optimism about Lovestorm and most of the time respondents brought forth the theme when they were asked about Lolland-Falster’s image. For example, Henrik Madsen said the following: *“I see two points where Lovestorm has really succeeded. First of all, they hit a spot, a wounded pride in the region –*

people was sick of being exposed – this gave Lovestorm tremendous momentum and helped them to get beyond the limit and get a lot of publicity. The second thing that helped them was that they succeeded in finding an original approach to the whole situation (...) I think that it meant a lot that it was not just another negative Facebook group where people were complaining. Another essential reason for the success was that the municipality was not involved – because that would not have made it trustworthy” (App. C, q. 15). The Lovestorm campaign was a spontaneous bottom-up response from concerned citizens who saw the program series as yet another threat to how the place was represented (Warnaby & Medway, 2013). Lovestorm then became a reclaiming of the place product from others who had created and projected it as ‘udkantsdanmark’ and a ‘social looser place’. However, the campaign in itself cannot erase the perception of Lolland-Falster as ‘udkantsdanmark’ for those still wishing to understand or perceive it as such.

The important thing about Lolland-Falster Lovestorm is that it mobilized people to take an active role in the ‘quest’ of changing the image of their region. Internally, Lovestorm was about getting citizens to open their eyes for the lovely place they live in and being able to see past the negative media coverage. Externally, the campaign was about changing the negative image into a more positive image by having citizens to tell the ‘good stories’ from LF (Lolland-Falster Lovestorm, n.d.).

5.1.3 Strategic Tools in Political Visions

This section looks at how tourism and culture are used as strategic tools in the political visions of Lolland and Guldborgsund municipality plans, Guldborgsund Municipality Fehmarnbelt Strategy, STRING and Interreg projects. If we look at Guldborgsund Municipality Fehmarnbelt Strategy, we will find that tourism acts as a strategic tool used to promote cross-border cooperation. It is described as follows: *“The municipality is working actively to seize future tourism potentials that will be brought with the establishment of the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link by increasing cooperation with our Danish and German tourism partners”* (Guldborgsund Kommunes Femern Bælt Strategi, 2009, p. 27). Here, the goal for the region is to develop into one Fehmarnbelt destination, which *“is achieved through the development of joint actions, joint tourism offers and activities and targeted marketing of the Fehmarnbelt destination to relevant markets”* (Guldborgsund Kommunes Femern Bælt Strategi, 2009, p. 27). In this sense, the Fehmarnbelt project becomes both an example of the

political visions of ‘Europe without borders’ and an example of the integration of peripheral border areas through cross-border cooperation, as described by Klatt & Herrmann (2011).

Guldborgsund municipality has participated in the Interreg project ‘Kulturbro Fehmarn Belt’ that acts as a framework, which specifically contributes to *“the development of a cultural infrastructure for all parties in the Danish-German cultural cooperation in order to build and strengthen the common regional identity”* (Guldborgsund Kommunes Femern Bælt Strategi, 2009, p. 28). This goes in line with Stöber’s (2011) argument that a fixed link between two regions often entails narratives on a coherent region, human connectivity and cultural elements. Lolland Municipality Plan (2010-2022) describes how the fixed link has a huge potential to *“strengthen local business development, engage in regional cooperation with the Fehmarn area and achieve a more central location in the growth corridor between the major metropolises Copenhagen and Hamburg”* (p. 7), which goes in line with Stöber’s (2011) argument that *“there is a strong link between the physical link and an official regional and cultural discourse”* (p. 230). Another example of tourism being used as a strategy to promote cross-border cooperation is a bicycle trip from Lolland to Fehmarn called ‘FeLoFa’, announced in Lolland-Falster’s local newspaper Folketidende and Lolland municipality webpage (Lolland, 2015). It is an invitation to ‘Rapsblütenfest’ with music, performances and local markets. The brochure informs that *“this celebration is also an opportunity to strengthen the Danish-German cooperation through joint bike ride on Fehmarn and exhibition of artists from both sides of the belt”* (Lolland, 2015). The bicycle trip is an example of how tourism together with social and cultural elements becomes tools to enhance cross-border cooperation.

The Fehmarnbelt project is part of the ‘Trans-European Transport Network’ (TEN-T) and the European regional policy of creating a unified European territory with political and economic stability, cross-border cooperation and integration between member states (European Union, n.d.; Transbaltic, 2012). Institutionalized cooperation between Danish and German public actors is enhanced with the Fehmarnbelt project and the ‘Green STRING Corridor’ is an example of this. STRING is a political cross-border partnership with the vision of strengthening the cooperation and collaboration between the regions of Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Region Zealand, the Capital Region of Copenhagen and Scania (Femern Belt Development, n.d.).

The objective in the ‘STRING 2030 Vision and Strategy’ is: *“to create integration, cultural, economic and social exchange that will benefit the inhabitants and the development of the region”* (Stringnetwork, 2012, p. 17). This vision goes in line with what Perkmann (2003) has found in his

extensive research on cross-border regions, which are being dominated by narratives about common cultural or economic elements. According to Stöber (2011), narratives about a culturally coherent region can also be found in Interreg projects like KulturLink and RegioSkills, where EU funds have been given to foster sustainable cultural growth. O. Löfgren (2008) argues that greater focus should be put on ‘soft element’ when studying cross-border regions. If we look at the STRING partnership, we will find that tourism, culture and marketing are described as instruments to enhance the integration process between Germany, Denmark and Sweden. STRING believes that by visiting each other and getting ‘comfortable’ this might lead one to start working, do business, study or even move to one of the other countries and tourism “*is the first step towards enlarging your comfort zone*” (Stringnetwork, 2012, p. 17).

5.1.4 Who are the Winners in European Regional Policy?

During his interview PhD student Dirk Keil questioned the Fehmarnbelt infrastructure project, raising the question if it is beneficial for the metropolis regions or the regions in between. The European Union is very interested in the TEN-T railway link (see section 5.1.3), but Dirk Keil predicts that the main stops on the high-speed rail network will be Stockholm, Malmö, Copenhagen, Lübeck and Hamburg, and if this is the case, “*the trains will whiz right through Lolland*” (App. G, q. 4). Dirk Keil’s point is that everything between Stockholm and Hamburg will disappear from the map and the hinterland is the big loser. With this scenario the European regional policy discourse about a unified European territory does not seem to benefit peripheral regions. Instead, it rather seems that the great vision about European cohesion is a disguise for building the TEN-T.

Another problem Dirk Keil points out is that with this new European growth region (Copenhagen-Hamburg) everything will be centered in the metropolises and this will increase the gap between city and countryside. Other respondents see the same issue: “*The surveys made so far predict that the metropolises Copenhagen and Hamburg, are the big winners, and with the areas in between it is difficult to predict what will happen here*” (App. C, q. 2). Researcher at Roskilde University, Annika Carstensen, also sees the risk of Lolland-Falster becoming “*perhaps even more of a ‘no man’s land’ and that the region will fall even more in the background in the Danish map*” (App. B, q. 2).

5.1.5 Two Parallel Projects

According to O. Löfgren's (2008) point of view, cross-border regions are top-down projects with positive discourses on integration and economic growth with the purpose of helping local authorities to implement supranational policies. This can be found in the Fehmarnbelt project, where the tunnel project is justified due to being the missing link between Scandinavia and Europe – and TEN-T, the transport corridor, will create development and economic growth (Stringnetwork, 2012). In this way the Fehmarnbelt project becomes a top-down project that entails rhetoric of an exciting future of integration and economic growth. This goes well in line with Stöber's (2011) argument that European regional discourses are *“mostly beneficial for politicians, both on regional and EU level, since these might enable them to argue for the necessity of large-scale projects”* (p. 240).

Dirk Keil argues that there are actually two parallel projects within the Fehmarnbelt project. The first project revolves around the question of ‘How do we link Europe together?’ This can, for example, be done by establishing a strong traffic network: Copenhagen-Malmö already exists as a growth area, and if Copenhagen and Hamburg is linked closer together, they can also profit from each other. Furthermore, if Stockholm and Oslo are also included, it will become a huge European growth region with several metropolises.

The second project is about ‘How do we support the hinterland regions and create growth here as well?’ This is a core part of the bigger project of linking Europe together and Dirk Keil says that *“my gut feeling tells me that hoping that the traffic axis will automatically create growth is a bit too optimistic”* (App. G, q. 10). Here he refers to the risk that after the construction phase, when the tunnel is open, people will just pass by Lolland because now there is the highway and the railway all the way, so why stop on Lolland-Falster or Fehmarn? So he argues that it requires a lot more to develop this region. Furthermore, we should be aware that it is not a German or Danish region, but a common region that is now in between these big metropolises. Dirk Keil states that in order for it to become a common region, *“it will require that people living there understand themselves as part of the common region. And there are different levels of this understanding: state, municipality and civil society – and in between there is all the institutions and businesses – and they all must work together”* (App. G, q. 10). In other words, Dirk Keil's argument here is that it is important to see Fehmarn and Lolland-Falster as one common region and that all institutions and civil society must work together on this.

5.1.6 Discussion

The first chapter of the analysis looked into the discursive deconstruction of Lolland-Falster's image and it showed consensus between public and private actors. It showed that the Fehmarnbelt project is an opportunity for the region to change the image and show the world that Lolland-Falster has more to offer than having the record in statistics on 'negative social numbers'. For the politicians the vision of the Fehmarnbelt project also becomes a narrative about a 'great offer that we simply cannot refuse' due to its many advantages and potentials it can have for the region.

The poor image of Lolland was reinforced by the program series 'På Røven I Nakskov', leading to a bottom-up response from local citizens, and with the Lovestorm campaign locals were mobilized in the 'quest' of changing the poor image.

This chapter also looked into the political discourses on the Fehmarnbelt project in the policy documents of Lolland and Guldborgsund municipality plans, Guldborgsund Municipality Fehmarn Strategy and STRING, and the arguments for building the fixed link is the expected advantage of becoming a part of an important European transport and growth corridor. But the question is: who benefits from these regional policies? It seems that the metropolises are the big winners and the hinterland is the big loser. Cross-border cooperation between Fehmarn and Lolland-Falster needs to be strengthened if they are to benefit from the new transport corridor. The first step in this process is to start perceiving Fehmarn and Lolland-Falster as a common region, and here institutions and civil society must work together. As described in the literature review, academics are pointing at an increase in the number of regional and local authorities engaging in international cooperation. Perhaps, Perkmann (2003) is right when talking about a growing 'Europeanization' of local and regional governments. At least, this seems to be accurate, as this project has demonstrated that political visions about European integration and cohesion are used as a disguise to build the tunnel.

The chapter also demonstrated that tourism and culture are used as strategic tools in political visions to promote cross-border cooperation. On the regional policy level the rhetoric about the Fehmarnbelt project is very positive, but what do citizens on Lolland-Falster think about it? The next section will explore if there is a gap between the elite and the more popular discourses about the Fehmarnbelt project.

5.2 Reconstructing the Image of Lolland-Falster

This second chapter of the analysis explores to what extent local citizens and tourism operators on Lolland-Falster share the same idea about the Fehmarnbelt project as the local politicians. It will furthermore look into what opportunities and challenges are at play in the Fehmarnbelt project seen from the perspective of local citizens and tourism operators on Lolland-Falster. This will shed light on how the image of Lolland-Falster is being reconstructed.

5.2.1 Opportunities in the Fehmarnbelt Project

Being out in the field and attending two workshops, a public meeting, conducting 13 interviews, reading daily updates from the local newspaper and following several Facebook groups – has made it clear that when talking about the Fehmarnbelt project, citizens and tourism operators on Lolland-Falster are generally positive and excited about this ‘new’ future. The respondents see a lot of opportunities with the fixed link as it will *“attract some tourists and attention to the area”* (App. L, q. 9) and *“there will be greater international attention on the region for a period, so it is important to get the maximum out of this ‘open window’ of at most 10 years and be ready for it”* (App. K, q. 4). Lalandia also sees a number of opportunities, since they will host both construction workers and administrative personnel during the construction phase. Furthermore, this will give a boost to the local area – both in terms of economic spill-over and also in terms of increased tourism, as when the construction workers or administrative personnel have a day off, they might go out and do some activities, or they will have friends and family visiting (App. F, q. 4). Also people interested in the construction of the tunnel, the so-called ‘construction tourists’, are also mentioned by several of the respondents as interesting. Sales and Marketing Manager in Knuthenborg Safaripark, Susanne Ptak, explains that these construction tourists *“might decide to drop by Krenkerup or Middelaldercenteret, so that it can have a positive impact on all of us”* (App. M, q. 8). Furthermore, 12 out of 13 respondents pointed to the fact that preparation and focus before, during and after the Fehmarnbelt project is essential in order to get a ‘bite of the cake’: *“We are preparing for the tunnel. And it is both for under the construction phase and afterwards. And that is because in Lalandia we see the Fehmarnbelt link as a growth area for Lalandia in Rødby. So we are ready for the start”* (App. F, q. 2).

As described by Weidenfeld (2013) and Marzuki et al. (2012), tourism is gaining a position as an economic driver for change in peripheral areas in regional policy. This goes in line with the Lolland Municipality Plan (2010-2022), where it is stated that *“it is necessary for Lolland municipality to develop the tourism potentials in the municipality. As a peripheral region the municipality has great challenges of creating balance in the economy and employment sector, and developing the tourism industry can create opportunities for at better balance”* (p. 171). In regards to an ‘udkantskommune’ like Lolland municipality tourism has great focus and potentials. If we take a closer look at the goals for Lolland municipality in regards to the Fehmarnbelt project, they are: *“to develop into a center of sustainable growth, settlement and job opportunities in the upcoming Fehmarnbelt Region and to become a dynamic development area with global competitiveness. The improved European transport corridor opens many doors for Lolland municipality and it is an opportunity to optimize development and growth in the area, both before, during and after the opening of the fixed link”* (p. 42). This is commented on further by Deputy Head of Development and Business in Lolland municipality, Henrik Madsen: *“It is important that we get our self ready. We want businesses to become subcontractors; we would like the local labor market to have the required competencies to be hired on the project”* (App. C, q. 6). The municipality sees the European transport project as having great potentials for the region, but at the same time they are also aware of the necessity of taking action now and not just being passive in the process, since *“the tunnel does not automatically guarantee growth in the municipality”* (App. C, q. 3).

5.2.2 A Bump in the Road

Everyone is aware that there are also risks involved in the Fehmarnbelt project, as also described by General Manager at Lalandia, Karsten Juhl: *“The tunnel can mean two things, it can mean something good and it can mean something bad. The risk is that the Danish guests we have today and the Swedish, they will pass by and go directly to Germany (...) The opportunity is that Germany and Eastern Europe will open up for us because today the ferry connection is so expensive that it is a hindrance for these markets* (App. F, q. 3). On Lolland-Falster there is a fear of becoming a region ‘in between’ or solely a ‘bump in the road’. This issue is taken seriously and in the interviews it was a topic where people really had their feelings involved. As explained by CEO at Hotel Femern, Jesper Kristensen, *“there needs to be something that will make people stop. Because there will no longer be a ‘natural’ stop as we have with the ferry today”* (App. J, q. 4).

5.2.3 Delay Creates Frustration

The construction of the tunnel keeps getting delayed as described in section 4.1. In Lolland municipality plan from 2010, the opening of the fixed link was estimated to happen in 2018 and the same was described in Guldborgsund Municipality Fehmarnbelt Strategy from 2009. Currently³, the tunnel is expected to open earliest in 2026 and maybe as late as in 2028 (“Miljøgodkendelser”, 2015). Clearly, this has resulted in frustration among local businesses in the area and it makes it difficult for businesses to incorporate the fixed link in their business plan. Director of Tourism in Lolland municipality, Henriette Pedersen, said the following: *“Some are waiting in a vacuum, hoping that soon something will happen down there. Some have business ideas that they would really like to get started down there but the problem is that their plans are aimed at a situation where 3000 more people is living in Rødbyhavn”* (App. E, q. 12). This is further exemplified in the following quote: *“I talked to a restaurant owner the other day – he has been ready for three years now”* (App. F, q. 16).

For the municipality the unclear time schedule also means challenges in terms of helping businesses and jobseekers to stay ready for when the construction phase starts. Deputy Head of Development and Business in Lolland municipality, Henrik Madsen, also points at the difficulty for small actors in keeping up the spirit, as they often do not have the resources to keep waiting and be in a ‘stand-by’ position (App, C. q. 9). So all partners involved in the Fehmarnbelt project are frustrated about the delay, but to this PhD Student, Dirk Keil, makes an interesting point about a ‘failed’ understanding of Danish and German processes in approving large infrastructural projects: *“It is no surprise that the German approval process take much longer than the Danes could ever dream about, but that is nothing new for me as I have lived in Germany most of my life”* (App. G, q. 8). With this quote it becomes apparent that knowledge about Danish and German differences is neglected and that Denmark and Germany are not yet cooperating, and thinking in terms of ‘a common region’ seems far out, which is elaborated on in section 5.3.10.

³ Data retrieved in October 2015

5.2.4 Discussion

The optimism towards the Fehmarnbelt project that I have met in the conversations with the interviewees and during workshops and at a public meeting demonstrates a strong desire to take advantage of the opportunities that the Fehmarnbelt project entails. People are realistic and aware of the risks as well, but the optimism definitely wins over this. The fact that Lolland happens to be the one island in Denmark from where the tunnel will be built is a unique opportunity and it will create a lot of attention on the region and has the potential to reconstruct the image of Lolland-Falster. As described earlier, many people on Lolland-Falster are tired of the negative connotations associated with their region. They are determined to prove that they are more than ‘social benefits’ and decay - they want to show that they can take initiative and be innovative. Citizens, tourism operators and the two municipalities agree that the Fehmarnbelt project creates a two-sided situation where preparing and being ready for the start of the construction is essential.

An interesting point made by Dirk Keil is that we need to start planning the future together – not separately. Lolland-Falster is a part of the cross-border region ‘Fehmarnbelt’, but this is not evident in the interviews, as when respondents talk about opportunities in the Fehmarnbelt project, they only talk about Lolland-Falster and not Fehmarn, which also applies to a great extent to Lolland municipality. But why is it so? Why do we only think about our own area and our own opportunities and challenges? This will be elaborated on in the following chapter of the Analysis. This chapter will also look into citizen and stakeholder participation in political visions.

5.3 Stakeholder and Citizen Participation

The first part of this chapter on stakeholder and citizen participation explores how citizens and tourism operators are involved in the political visions of Lolland and Guldborgsund municipality plans. Additionally, it looks at drivers and forms of citizen participation. The second part explores strategic tools, drivers and barriers to cross-border cooperation. To shed light on these issues empirical data collected from the interviews, workshops and the public meeting will be put into play.

5.3.1 Citizen Participation in Lolland Municipality

The Lolland Municipality Plan Suggestion was adopted by the City Council on June 24, 2010 and was available for public hearing from 17/8 – 12/10 2010 where a total of 57 objections were made. One of these objections concerned a missing section on citizen involvement and the potential for a more organized dialogue between villages, neighborhoods, rural areas, islands and the municipality. Furthermore, missing information on possibilities for establishing local councils, citizen or residents' associations, as well as opportunities for locations where such meetings can take place, were also pointed at (Lolland Kommuneplan Hvidbog, 2010, p. 10). The assessment from the Technology and Environment Authority's who looked into these matters stated that *"one of the basic elements of the Planning Act is that the public - individuals, companies, associations, etc., should be able to influence the planning and, hence, future land use in urban and rural areas. It implies that the population must have information about council consideration and it must be in a form that opens real opportunities to influence decisions"* (Municipal Guide, Ministry of Environment, 2008, cited in Lolland Kommuneplan Hvidbog, 2010, p. 10).

As described above, the LMP (2010-2022) has no specific chapter on citizen participation. However, after a search on the municipality webpage, a section called 'New Future', located under the policy tab, had a description of a 'Policy for Active Citizenship' followed by two documents for download (Lolland, 2014). In 2014 it was decided to establish a committee for 'Active Citizenship' in Lolland municipality and the final policy is expected to be finalized in summer 2016. The purpose of the committee is to develop a model for enhanced dialogue and cooperation between the municipality and its citizens. Citizen participation is described as necessary for Lolland municipality, since it faces massive economic and structural challenges. Therefore, there is a need

for significant readjustments in the local community and *“in order to meet these readjustments we must be able to prioritize and make decisions in a way that is most beneficial to Lolland municipality as a whole, and this requires that all local forces and all local knowledge is put into play. It also requires that politicians, citizens and administration collaborate”* (Lolland, 2014). As for Lolland Municipality Plan (2010-2022), it is interesting that public participation is not described here at all and that the committee is not set up until 2014, when enhanced citizen participation is written into the overall political agreement for the Danish municipalities (Lolland, 2014). There seems to be a mismatch with Sørensen & Torfing (2007) who describe that over the last twenty years there has been a shift from government to governance.

5.3.2 Citizen Participation in Guldborgsund Municipality

If we look at citizen participation in Guldborgsund Municipality Plan (2013-2025), there is a lot of reflection on how to deal with this issue. The municipality wishes to support assembly and activity places and they are interested in greater interaction between the municipality and civil society. With this constellation they wish to promote and motivate new ways of solving tasks: *“There is a great need and rationale in working strategically with testing and introducing new methods and new organization types and to create a new framework for interaction between municipality, civil society and the private sector. There is a need to rethink problem solving and techniques that can contribute to the development in the community”* (p. 21). It is also important for the municipality to ensure an open dialogue for the project in focus and that civil society is involved early in the process in order to build sustainable solutions. Throughout the municipality plan, it is clear that they strive towards interaction with citizens and organizations and there is a general encouragement and expectation towards local citizens to engage and participate in the existing or planned initiatives within the municipality. Responsibility is also being increasingly delegated to volunteers, which is elaborated on in section 5.3.6.

The approach that Guldborgsund municipality takes to citizen participation goes well in line with France's (1998) definition of participation as a process where civil society is empowered when participating in identifying problems, decision-making and implementation of the project. The municipality sees advantages of building partnerships with businesses and civil society, which goes in line with Dredge's (2006a) network theory, where the interplay between the three actors is studied.

Guldborgsund municipality also sees an advantage of involving civil society in a project at an early stage, which goes in line with Hatipoglu et al. (2014), who argue it creates higher quality of the project and contributes to the acceptance and successful implementation of the project. As Bonilla (1997, in Dredge & Jenkins, 2011) explains, the best plans are those where local input have been included in the planning process and where the plan is responsive to local needs, since this ensures commitment to implementation and enhances community acceptance.

5.3.3 Forms of Citizen Participation

In the following section I will look at forms of citizen participation and use the experience from City Planner in Guldborgsund municipality, Maria Østergaard, to shed light on how citizen participation takes form in practice. Maria Østergaard has a lot of experience with citizen participation and she explains that when involving the citizens early on you will get a solid foundation for your project, both with the municipality's view and the citizen's view. However, the challenge when you involve citizens early on in the project is that *"you don't really have anything tangible to present and then some people get lost. Because, 'what is it that we are doing, what is it that I should consider, what can I, what can I not?'"* (App. D, q. 2). The risk is that people simply cannot relate to the project and then you lose them. On the other hand, if the municipality involves the citizens later on in the process, their options for influencing the project becomes very small, and Maria Østergaard says: *"So what I experience in this process is that you need to find a balance between involving early but also making it concrete enough in relation to the citizen"* (App. D, q. 2). In order to get the whole city on board on the ideas that the project group has developed, the municipality then makes an invitation for a public meeting, so everyone who is interested can be informed about the process of the project (App. D, q. 6). However, not all projects are suitable for citizen participation. For example, in some major projects the State and Ministries have the greatest power, and here citizens are simply invited to a public meeting where information about the project is presented (App. D, q. 13). However, it is evident that in Guldborgsund the municipality is moving away from traditional approaches of citizen participation, as described by MacMillan (2010), towards more participatory processes.

According to Jordan et al. (2013), citizen participation also has challenges and one of them is the time perspective, and Maria Østergaard recognizes this issue: *"There is no doubt that citizen involvement requires an incredible amount of time, but you'll just get much better projects, they are*

more thought through and they are much more locally anchored. When people have been involved they will also get a feeling of ownership” (App. D, q. 3). The above mentioned example illustrates what Sørensen & Torfing (2007) mean when arguing that if actors are involved in the decision-making process, responsibility and ownership for the decisions are fostered. Jordan et al. (2013) also point to the challenge that citizen participation can stall projects for weeks or months, e.g. if an interest group has a lot of demands in a hearing process. This is exactly what is happening in Germany right now, where more than 3000 objections have been submitted to Femern A/S and was presented on the public meetings in Kiel, which took place from 9th to 12th of November 2015 (Femern Belt Development, 2015).

To continue, Maria Østergaard explains that a positive element in citizen involvement is when barriers between them and the municipalities are broken down. The fact that citizen involvement is becoming more popular also proves the point about the changed role of municipalities and that the system is not as rigid and divided as earlier. Today, the municipality also sees an advantage of involving citizens in their visions and plans, Maria Østergaard explains. This goes in line with Sørensen & Torfing (2007) and their observation that ‘a top down steering approach’ is losing its grip and new ideas about pluricentric governance based on “*interdependence, negotiation, and trust*” (p. 3) are gaining ground. An example of this is when citizens are invited to participate in meetings about the municipality budget. In this way, the citizens are given responsibility and their opinions and perspectives listened to. This is very important, since we learned from Sheedy et al. (2008) that people are more favorable to government decisions when citizen input is involved and that citizen engagement enhances the legitimacy in policy initiatives. This goes in line with Marzuki et al. (2012) who argue that public participation can increase the credibility of the agency.

Seen from the municipality’s perspective, citizen involvement acts as an ‘exit strategy’, as Maria Østergaard calls it. If the municipality has a project that runs for five years and by the time it ends they have the citizen’s goodwill and interest, and the citizens have established contacts and networks, there is a chance that the citizens themselves continue with the project, or establish new forms of cooperation and, perhaps, local intrigues and old disputes have been settled (App. D, q. 9). This is an example of why citizen involvement is so important, since it enhances the acceptance, implementation and sustainability of projects (Hatipoglu et al., 2014; Dredge & Jenkins, 2011, Jordan et al., 2013).

In the interview with Maria Østergaard one particular issue kept popping up: when using the strategy of citizen involvement, it is important that the overall project is broken down into smaller units that the citizens can grasp, so that the project is ‘manageable’ in their minds. Furthermore, it should be *“something that they have an interest in, and they should be involved where they feel that they can benefit both on a personal plan but, perhaps also businesswise”* (App. D, q. 2). Maria Østergaard explains that citizens are often engaged in their local areas and they are passionate about their neighborhood because this is where they live, where they go to the park, where they do groceries etc. In regards to the Fehmarnbelt project it might be difficult to engage people because it is such a vast area: *“Very few people have Fehmarn as their ‘neighborhood’ and this also make it difficult for people to relate to (...) Businesses, on the other hand, can presumably more easily relate to it as they can see potential customers”* (App. D, q. 7). One of Maria Østergaard’s observations is that citizens need to have their feelings involved if they are to participate. An example of how the Fehmarnbelt project is broken into smaller units is the project about a beach park in Rødbyhavn, which *“is something they can relate to, a beach, that’s nice, it’s a place where you can lay down”* (App. D, q. 7). A beach is easier to relate to than, for example, the highway on Lolland that is being upgraded because *“a highway you can’t walk on, a highway you can’t be on, a highway is for cars”* (App. D, q. 7).

This section demonstrates that Guldborgsund municipality is applying MacMillan’s (2010) four ways of engagement, as they consult, involve, collaborate and empower their citizens. Maria Østergaard explains, there is no correct answer or manual on how to involve citizens in political projects: *“Everyone agrees that public participation is the right path to go down, but there are 350 opinions on how to do it and there are examples on how the same strategy has been used in two different projects, but did not have the same effect in the end”* (App. D, q. 7). On the other hand, Dredge (2006a) states that it is important that the government, in this case the two municipalities, is attuned to the needs and interests of the industry and that the civil society has access to policy documents and the decision-making process.

As for Lolland municipality and commitment to citizen participation, the ‘Committee for Active Citizenship’ is the first step towards greater citizen participation and collaboration between the municipality and civil society. In section 2.6 a public meeting taking place in Lalandia in August 2015 was described. It was the Deputy Head of Development and Business in Lolland municipality, Henrik Madsen, who told me about the meeting. He explained that Lolland municipality is making

a strategy for the potentials for the South coast of Lolland in regards to the physical changes that will take place around Rødbyhavn in connection to the construction of the Fehmarnbelt tunnel (App. C, q. 11). Lolland municipality invited the public and businesses in the area to attend this meeting, as they found it important to hear out inputs from these two groups. Henrik Madsen, pointed out that those *“who own a business and can create development and jobs, those we would like to spend extra time with and listen to what they have to say”* (App. C, q. 11). In regards to setting up a planned laguna beach close to Lalandia, it is important for the municipality to have a close dialogue with Lalandia and ask their opinions and listen to their inputs (App. C, q. 13).

General Manager in Lalandia, Karsten Juhl, is very pleased with their cooperation with Lolland municipality and he explains that the municipality has a pretty open policy, and when it comes to tourism they have workshops and strategy seminars where businesses are invited to participate. Here Karsten Juhl says: *“They are interested in our knowledge and what we can bring to the discussion”* (App. F, q. 9). The public meeting is an example of how Lolland municipality is consulting and involving its citizens in their planning process and we see that the municipality is interested in dialogue with relevant businesses.

5.3.4 Drivers of Citizen Participation

According to Bramwell (2004) and Jamal & Getz (1995) collaborative planning and partnership building has gained increased attention in the tourism planning literature. Building partnerships between tourism actors on Lolland was discussed with many of the respondents. Karsten Juhl explains that collaboration between actors has changed a lot over the last five years. Earlier Lalandia was only interested in their customers visiting them, but this has changed completely, and together with other tourism actors and six municipalities they have established a marketing association called De Danske Sydhavsøer (DDS). Here public and private actors work together on telling guests about all the experiences available on South Zealand, Møn and LF (App. F, q. 10). This public-private partnership goes in line with the tendency described by Dredge (2006a) and Sørensen & Torfing (2007), and the increasing interest in the interplay between governments, businesses and civil society. Chairman of DDS, Jan Harrit, also explains that earlier it was just the private actors that would team up and do marketing campaigns together. The new thing with DDS is that they also cooperate with the six municipalities in the region and *“this means that as they contribute economically, then we can also take part in telling about the areas, I mean, what is*

going on in these areas. It can be Karresbækminde, it can be Møns Klint (...) and there is some nature that we can market, together with the municipalities” (App. I, q. 4).

It is important to note that it is not only the big tourism actors and the municipalities working together: Karsten Juhl explains that it is also important to get the small actors and the grassroots on board, since DDS wishes to inform about all the things that tourists can experience in the region, not only the big tourist attractions (App. F, q. 10). The advantage of this cooperation is that the more actors team up, the more money there are for marketing, hence they will achieve a strong position and image (App. I, q. 4).

Sales and Marketing Manager at Knuthenborg Safaripark, Susanne Ptak, also confirms that collaboration between tourism actors has become more popular. For example, Knuthenborg cooperates with camp sites where the camping guests get a discount coupon to Knuthenborg – and that is an example of how the smaller actors can be helped by the larger ones, according to her. Knuthenborg is also in cooperation with Lalandia, Hotel Bandholm, Hotel Søpark and all the big hotels, they cooperate on tourist packages where the guest can stay at, for example, Bandholm hotel, and then they also get tickets to Knuthenborg. In the winter season the safari park closes down for three months and here Susanne Ptak spends all her time on establishing new collaboration partners (App. M, q. 4).

General Manager at Hotel Søpark, Andreas Milling, also describes a good collaboration with other actors on Lolland-Falster and explains that some actors see the advantage of working together instead of competing against each other (App. H, q. 8). CEO of Orenæs Saloner, Birgitte Getting follows up on this when telling her story of moving from Islands Brygge in Copenhagen to Orenæs on Falster. Here she immediately fell in love with the atmosphere on the island, the openness, spaciousness and interest from people in her business: *“People were kind and friendly (...) and people were interested in collaboration. Everything is much more low-key and less individualistic, compared to Copenhagen, people are just interested in having some activities and you are not competitors in the same way, you are almost collaborators, right?”* (App. L, q. 2-4).

From this section we have learned that the perspective on actor cooperation has changed over the last decade and that the cooperation is seen as an advantage and as a chance for everyone to get ‘a bite of the cake’.

5.3.5 Barriers to Stakeholder and Citizen Participation

Dredge (2006a) describes networks as social relationships that can shape collective action between government, industry and civil society. Additionally, Scott et al. (2008) explains that we live in a networked world and that we increasingly come across inter-organizational relationships like partnerships, clusters, alliances and communities of practice. These two descriptions of networks go very well in line with Business LF (a joint business association between Lolland and Guldborgsund municipalities and businesses on LF). The mission of this association is to promote business development, including tourism on LF and to enhance cooperation, networking and clustering in the tourism sector (Lolland Kommuneplan, p. 173).

One of the problems when looking at the possibilities for participation or influencing the tourism industry is that if you want to be a member of, for example, Business LF, this is rather expensive. Jesper Kristensen, CEO at Hotel Femern explains that they do not participate in the Business LF tourism network due to this economic issue: *“I have looked into some of these associations, but I can’t see the advantage because there was something about a 20.000 DKK fee up-front”* (App. J, q. 10). So here the economic aspect becomes a barrier to stakeholder participation.

DDS is another example of a tourism network and here the municipalities and the big tourism actors put down 500.000 DKK to be a part of the marketing association, but if you are a smaller actor *“you can become a network member and pay 10.000 and participate in meetings and become visible on the webpage”* (App. F, q. 11). However, you will not have an influence in the final say about a project. This is another example of how economy becomes a barrier to participation and this issue will be discussed in section 5.3.12.

5.3.6 Municipalities, Businesses and Civil Society

As mentioned earlier, Guldborgsund municipality sees advantages in cooperating with its citizens and they encourage and expect local citizens to engage and participate in the existing or planned initiatives within the municipality. Responsibility is increasingly being delegated to volunteers: *“The many volunteers are part of central functions in our local community and they are an important resource that we must support and cooperate with”* (Guldborgsund Kommuneplan, p. 20).

If we look at Lolland municipality, the ‘Active Citizenship’ policy also shows an engagement towards more dialogue and cooperation between the municipality and its citizens (Lolland, 2014). CEO of Cordt Consult, Dea Cordt, recognizes this and explains that the municipality *“encourages volunteers and businesses to take some initiatives which are not relying on the municipality and I suppose that this is also the most sustainable and something that will be locally anchored. I’m sure that they want as much development as possible, but there are economic challenges and other areas to attend to. So I think that they will be pleased if private actors also take action”* (App. A, q. 12). She further explains that locals are very engaged in the area and that many events are promoted and arranged by locals, *“And that is also how it should be; the municipality does not have to do everything, right?”* (App. A, q. 7).

On the other hand, Dea Cordt also criticizes the municipality and argues that they must take tourism seriously. Most of the tourist offices in the municipality are closing down and that is problematic, as personal contact with tourists is important. Many tourism associations are run by volunteers and they are doing a great job, *“but you can’t leave it all to the volunteers. So there is an office somewhere, open for a couple of hours and its volunteers sitting there are dealing with tourist information, you know, the actual information to the tourists. And as it is one of the major businesses on Lolland-Falster, I think it is strange that they don’t invest more in it”* (App. A, q. 7). Delegating responsibilities is both good and bad, it can be argued. Independence is good in terms of having a product that is not dictated by the authorities, but you also need a budget for marketing and to pay well-educated staff working at tourism offices.

Chairman of De Danske Sydhavskyster, Jan Harrit, explains that it is very expensive for the municipality to operate small tourist offices, which has led to a tendency of either reducing them, shorten their season or establish a cooperation and move it to a place where there is already staffing. It could be in Lalandia, Knuthenborg, trains station or a café, *“so the tourist offices are being closed down but they are trying to spend the money more efficiently”* (App. I, q. 11).

CEO at Orenæs Saloner, Birgitte Getting, also criticizes Guldborgsund municipality and the general tendency there is in Denmark to delegate more and more tasks to enthusiasts and volunteers who are expected to carry out the tasks on their own and in a professional way. According to her, volunteers do not always have the right competencies. What she says is: *“My impression is that many projects fall to the ground because there is no financial help or funding for professional management. There need to be someone who knows how to delegate tasks, apply for funds and stuff like that. The*

municipality should spend some money on the many good initiatives down here and get them managed” (App. L, q. 10).

This section shows the interplay between government, businesses and civil society as described by Dredge (2006a) and Sørensen & Torfing (2007). The empirical data shows that adjustments in this relationship are still needed and that everyone needs time to find their own role in this interplay. Regarding the role of the municipalities, Chairman of DDS, Jan Harrit, explains that *“one of the challenges in cooperation with the municipality is that they often feel they have an obligation to help the small tourism operators”* (App, I, q.8). Jan Harrit suggests that in a marketing perspective it is more profitable to market some private beacons and when the attention of the tourist has been caught and the tourist has arrived, then they will be distributed out to the smaller operators, *“so the mindset in the municipalities needs to be changed so that they are not afraid of not helping the small actors directly, but rather indirectly, by cooperation with the beacons which can actually attract tourists”* (App, I, q. 8).

5.3.7 Forms of Citizen Participation: Workshops

The following section will look at workshops as a form of citizen participation. I attended two Fehmarnbelt workshops at Business LF and both of them started out with brief presentations by researchers from Roskilde University, as the workshop was a result of the cooperation between Business LF and Roskilde University, and afterwards the participants were engaged in group work. At the first workshop the group work revolved around mapping out the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism industry on Lolland-Falster and what possibilities the new Fehmarnbelt tunnel could give. On the second workshop the group work revolved around establishing a sort of exhibition center that would inform about the opportunities that exist on Lolland-Falster for tourists and businesses. After the second workshop the project of the exhibition center was left in the hands of the participants and it was encouraged that participants stayed in contact to further develop the idea, and the final step would be to present the project to the municipalities.

One of the observations made during the one hour group work session at the second workshop was that there was a broad consensus about the importance of establishing one common profile for Lolland-Falster. It should be something that the region could be branded on and that businesses could gather around and relate to. However, this proved to be rather difficult, as everyone had

different opinions on what should be done, which corresponded to their own self interest, business or work background. This is what Hatipoglu et al. (2014) touch upon in their theory about barriers to stakeholder participation. Due to the many actors involved in tourism planning, there is also a diversity of views on tourism and this can lead to an absence of shared vision.

In the group work we were nine participants, three of them were tourism entrepreneurs and enthusiasts, there was an editor in chief from a regional newspaper, an employee from the tourism association Østdansk Turisme, a representative from Lolland municipality and from Guldborgsund municipality, and finally a student from Roskilde University and I, as a student from Aalborg University. Being a group of different actors like this is something touched upon by Hatipoglu et al. (2014), who explain that one of the main criticisms to participatory approaches is the assumption that the local community is homogeneous and, therefore, decision-making is an easy process. They argue that collaborative planning is rather characterized by conflict and power struggles.

This moves us forward to Dredge (2006b), who argues that in tourism planning *“inclusion and exclusion take place and that power differentials play a part in who participates, how engagement takes place and what issues are identified and moved forward”* (p. 563). On the second workshop, Business LF had invited an expert panel consisting of owner of Knuthenborg Safaripark, Christoffer Knuth, owner of Saxkjøbing Sukkerfabrik, Martin Skibsted, and CEO at Femern Belt Development, Stig Rømer Winter. These three gentlemen belong to the group of powerful men on Lolland-Falster and the idea was that their legitimacy, due to being three big actors on Lolland-Falster, would attract some people to the workshop. After the group work session the idea of the exhibition center was presented to the expert panel. This is an example of power differentials, as we have the panel on one side, evaluating the project idea and deciding the future and the business operators at Lolland-Falster on the other side. Workshops are examples of how tourism planning and policy-making are influenced by social processes considering the many stakeholders involved in such a process, as explained by Dredge and Jenkins (2011). This leads us to the next chapter on drivers for citizen participation, which looks into incentives for citizens and stakeholders to participate in workshops like the ones in Business LF.

5.3.8 Drivers and Barriers for Participation in Workshops

Director of Tourism in Lolland municipality, Henriette Pedersen, explained that she participated in the first Fehmarnbelt workshop to network. The reason, as she explained, was: *“Because I want to know what is going on and be inspired by people’s ideas. If I am invited to an event and it doesn’t make sense to me, I won’t come”* (App. E, q. 18). She did not attend the second workshop and to this her reason was: *“I actually don’t remember. But I remember that I had a feeling that it had been a waste of time (...) Several times I have experienced that there has been made an initiative to something, but no follow up. If people do not feel that the workshop they participated in has changed anything, if they don’t see the point in why they were there, then you don’t feel like participating next time* (App. E, q. 18). Furthermore, she points at the importance of invitations stating clearly what the workshop is about, so that people do not show up with some expectations and when the workshop is over, they are left disappointed (App. E, q. 17). For PhD student, Dirk Keil, and CEO of Cordt Consult, Dea Cordt, things like being updated on what is going on, creating networks, curiosity and new collaborations are important reasons for why they participate in workshops or public meetings (App. G, q. 20 & App. A, q. 15).

After the second Fehmarnbelt workshop it was up to the participants to continue the ‘cooperation’ and further develop the idea of the exhibition center, but nothing has happened in this regard. When asking researcher at Roskilde University, Annika Carstensen, about this, she explains that *“it was difficult to see the next step for the participants, how the process should be, and what they could actually achieve from having participated. So I think that for some it kind of just fizzled out; it was too fuzzy in regards to their own reality somehow”* (App. B, q. 15). In Annika Carstensen’s perspective, drivers for people to continue a project like the exhibition center are: a facilitator, a ‘need’ revolving around a pressing issue, ability of people to see an economic perspective and an advantage of participation and, finally, available funding (App. B, q. 17). Maria Østergaard, who works a lot with citizen involvement, agrees with this statement and explains that in order for a person to engage in something, it is important that *“one can see a personal win in it and that it can have an impact in their everyday life”* (App. D, q. 7).

5.3.9 Forms of Cross-Border Cooperation

This section looks into discourses in European regional policy regarding cross-border cooperation and puts them into context with how tourism operators on Lolland-Falster understand cross-border

cooperation. The section will also look into Lolland and Guldborgsund municipality plans and their expectations for cross-border cooperation.

As explained by Prokkola (2008), national borders are no longer seen as barriers, but as resources for development. Cooperation across borders, in this sense, is perceived to have mutual benefit for both nations. Hence, the EU is interested in a thriving internal market without borders hindering the flow of capital and people, and therefore cross-border cooperation is encouraged. However, when asking local tourism operators about cross-border cooperation, there were different opinions to this. Lalandia's response to the question about establishing collaboration with a German partner was: *"We don't really have plans for that. It's like there is an invisible frontier in Fehmarn Belt and there is not too much trade. I'm not really sure why, but many people have looked into this matter. The project can contribute to an increase in the trade between Germany and Denmark, and also Germany and Southern Europe. But so far there has not been too much interest in the project from the German side, besides the critical one, so let's see"* (App. F, q. 6). When Hotel Femern was asked, the answer was that they do not have plans about collaboration with German partners (App. J, q. 9). Hotel Søpark, on the other hand, is open towards establishing collaboration with partners in Germany, and it is something that they have already looked into: *"If we could collaborate with some of those on the other side of the border, that would be just perfect, it's like, if people need the Danish comfort but wants to go to Germany once in a while, well then we would be happy to do it. Anyways, we see a lot of potential. And this is just another advantage about the tunnel"* (App. H, q. 6). Orenæs Saloner also sees perspective in the fixed link and potentials in working on some Danish-German relations. CEO, Birgitte Getting, already has cooperation with a German partner in Germany and previously she has participated in an Interreg project called 'Kulturstrømmen' (App. L, q. 9). Finally, Knuthenborg has talked about making cooperation with Hansapark in terms of annual cards, tickets, etc. – *"and there will definitely be more of this the further we get, no doubt about that. Then we could be 2-3 partners joining forces, I can imagine"* (App. M, q. 15).

These answers tell us that tourism operators on Lolland-Falster are considering a form of cross-border cooperation to some extent. Two of them did not have any plans, other two were considering it and one actor is already cooperating with a German partner. But it was clear that the question about starting cooperation with a German partner was far down the agenda. It was more somewhat a consideration for the future, but there was nothing concrete initiated, except for the case of Orenæs Saloner.

According to Prokkola (2008), there has been a shift in tourism development strategies towards encouragement of cross-border cooperation, since there are advantages to gain if a collective regional effort is made. In the following I will look at how the two municipalities perceive cross-border cooperation. If we look at Lolland Municipality Plan (2010-2022), we will see that in 14 out of 17 chapters the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link is mentioned. This shows that the Fehmarnbelt project is taken very seriously in Lolland municipality and is incorporated into almost all sectors. However, the municipality plan talks about the positives effects of the Fehmarnbelt project in a very superficial way. For example, it does not have a single chapter or a paragraph on how cross-border cooperation should be handled. It states that the Fehmarnbelt project has great potential to engage in regional cooperation with the Fehmarn area and that they see potential in a new tourism area across the national border, but there is no further elaboration on any of these statements (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010, p. 7 & 45). Further, *“the objectives for the municipality is to develop into a center in the new Fehmarn Belt Region, with a strong national and internationally brand as a visionary and dynamic business area with optimum frameworks for growth and development”* (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010, p. 102). The municipality expects that Lolland will be part of a cross-border region and *“by 2030 the municipality hopes that the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link has contributed to the creation of new cooperation constellations and new opportunities for development and that a common labor market has been built up and mutual commuting over the belt has become part of everyday life* (Lolland Kommuneplan, 2010, p. 9). Again, it is very vague and superficial and without any elaboration. This goes in line with Klatt & Herrmann (2011), who questions if cross-border cooperation really is the solution for socioeconomic problems in peripheral regions. At least, in the case of Lolland municipality, cross-border cooperation is not incorporated in the municipality plan.

If we turn to Guldborgsund Municipality Fehmarnbelt Strategy (2009), there is great focus on partnership with Germany. There are many reflections on how the municipality should engage in the Fehmarnbelt project in the municipality strategy, and what becomes clear is that *“in order to benefit from the new transport link and the effects it can have on the municipality, it is important to cooperate with relevant Danish and German partners, including other municipalities, businesses, tourism and educational institutions”* (Guldborgsund Kommunes Femern Bælt Strategi, 2009, p. 30). What is noticeable here is that throughout the strategy, cooperation with German partners is equally important as with Danish partners, and there is a clear will to engage in cross-border cooperation.

The area where the municipality sees the greatest opportunities is in transport and logistics, and their goal is to make Nordfalster an international transport and logistics center, since *“Nordfalster has an ideal location in the traffic junction between the two international transport corridors E47 and E55”* (Guldborgsund Kommunes Femern Bælt Strategi, 2009, p. 16). The municipality also works strategically to establish partnerships with educational institutions in Northern Germany and they *“work for greater cooperation with the German labor market as the fixed link anticipates increased mobility”* (Guldborgsund Kommunes Femern Bælt Strategi, 2009, p. 23). This demonstrates that Guldborgsund municipality is very much interested in cross-border cooperation in connection to the transport corridor. However, Guldborgsund Municipality Fehmarnbelt Strategy does not describe the more ‘soft elements’ of cross-border region building, like culture and people-to-people interaction. This goes in line with Paasi & Prokkola (2008) when they argue that cross-border cooperation *“is often looked at from an economic or political perspective (...) and cultural and social viewpoints are neglected”* (p. 21).

5.3.10 Drivers and Barriers to Cross-Border Cooperation

Dirk Keil and Annika Carstensen, two respondents who have both worked with Interreg projects and also have German background, could point to some important issues when discussing Danish-German relations. Annika Carstensen was a coordinator on the two Fehmarnbelt workshops at Business LF and what she learned here was that people do not think in terms of Danish-German relations, but they think very locally about Lolland, simply because that is what they are used to, *“and somehow people are still very limited by the national boundaries”* (App. B, q. 13). Another explanation could be that the water between the two nations also make a barrier for thinking across the border (App. B, q. 14). With this in mind, it seems that the European vision about ‘a Borderless Europe’ has some challenges and that the vision has not been implemented yet.

There is broad agreement between the tourism operators and the municipalities that Lolland-Falster will gain from the positive effects of the Fehmarnbelt project, but action is needed. Dirk Keil sees the Fehmarnbelt project as an interesting and important chance for the region, but he also states that it is important that we cooperate with the Germans to get the maximum benefit - for example, building a concept for the region (e.g. conference focus): *“If we don’t succeed in linking the two regions together, this chance will be lost... But the situation is still the same, the Germans look on their own side of the belt and the Danes look at their own side of the belt. And yes, we are good*

friends, we are neighbors and we work together, yes we do – but it is only in connection with the tunnel and in connection with Interreg projects, where programs are initiated and there is an increase in activities across the border” (App. G, q. 7). Dirk Keil’s argument for cooperation across the border goes in line with Timothy & Teye (2004), Marzuki et al. (2012) and Weidenfeld (2013), who state that when smaller and less developed regions unite with cross-border neighbors, there are advantages to gain, as they will stand stronger together.

Dirk Keil makes the same argument as Annika Carstensen about people being very much concentrated on their own local area, and states that: *“Right now, I think that most people think about their own problems and the problems in their own country and then they talk with their own people in their own country. So it is not in the minds and in the hearts that we live in a common region or think in terms of being a common region. I think we are far from that”* (App. G, q. 7). This is exactly what Timothy (2001, in Prokkola, 2007) emphasizes when discussing tourism in cross-border regions and cross-border cooperation, and how important it is to recognize *“what is happening on the other side of the border (...) and to take note of what structures and processes may influence tourism”* (p. 121).

To exemplify that people are only concerned about their own local area and own problems, Dirk Keil then uses the example of a Bed & Breakfast; here they are busy with marketing, keeping contact with customers, making sure that there are fresh bed sheets on the beds, breakfast on the tables, etc. This means that there is not too much time to strategic thinking about ‘how my B&B can collaborate with a German B&B’. So Dirk Keil believes that, perhaps, it is wrong to look at the small B&B’s or small tourism institutions. He argues that there needs to be a central authority perspective that teams up and creates the framework so that small actors can see the advantage in teaming up with a German B&B. The politicians, EU and Interreg *“must all inter-coordinate and make some people-to-people projects, so that people meet and find out what should be done jointly”* (App. G, q. 8).

Cross-border cooperation between Danish and German partners is a part of the European regional policy, but the empirical findings of this research show that this vision is not a part of the mentality yet. This goes in line with Klatt & Herrmann (2011), who are critical towards cross-border cooperation and the European integration project, and argue that it fails in terms of effective and meaningful cross-border cooperation. Paasi & Prokkola (2008) also point to the issue that *“co-operation is often looked at from an economic or political perspective in the border literature and*

cultural and social viewpoints are neglected” (p. 21). This is evident in the case of the Fehmarnbelt region, as the two nations in focus do not have the culture of thinking across the border and in terms of cross-border cooperation. One can say that Lolland-Falster and Fehmarn is a cross-border region according to the book, and the evidence can be found in the Interreg projects – but people do not think in cross-border terms in their everyday life. The local tourism actors on both sides are doing their own things; there is no commitment to look across the national borders. It is still a political vision, as it is not implemented yet. Cross-border cooperation and cross-border region building is a very long process; despite the many Interreg projects that Denmark and Germany has participated in, there is still a long way to achieve genuine cross-border cooperation (App. G, q. 17).

If we look at Boman & Berg’s (2007) research in the Estonian-Russian Euroregion, they found that it remained an elite project, involving mostly regional and local authorities. This goes well in line with the Fehmarnbelt Euroregion, where partners in Interreg projects mostly consist of regional institutions, local municipalities and large companies. The STRING partnership is a good example, since it represents a partnership between five regional bodies. The European regional policy discourse, where cross-border cooperation is the fundament to achieve an integrated Europe, seems to remain unachieved. Boman & Berg’s (2007) argument that the objective of a integrated Europe can only be achieved if *“inhabitants participate in cross-border regions’ matters on a daily basis”* (p. 266), goes in line with Dirk Keil’s words when he argues that cross-border cooperation needs to become part of everyday life in order to be successful (App. G, q. 17).

Dredge & Jenkins (2011) acknowledge that democratic planning and policy-making is neither fast nor easy, but it is important in terms of achieving a successful long-term project and in terms of ensuring implementation and local anchoring. If we look at planning and policy-making in cross-border regions, Trillo-Santamariá (2014) questions if there is a gap between the political elites’ project and the local tourism operators’ awareness of the project. In the case of the Fehmarnbelt project there is great awareness about the overall project and the tangible side of it, constructing the tunnel. Citizens and local business owners are aware that lots of activity will be connected with this project and this is where they see opportunities for starting up a new business, for example. With these hopes for the future, they engage in the project in their own way. But are the political visions locally anchored? I think that businesses and civil society do not think about the fact that they live in a Euroregion, and as Dirk Keil also says, *“we need to start planning together, not separately”* (App. G, q. 8) and that we need to start thinking in terms of being a common region. It also appears

that the local elite is not yet fully onboard on the cross-border project, as cross-border cooperation is not an integrated part of the municipality, but rather a vision for the future. Perhaps, Kramersch (2010 in Trillo-Santamariá, 2014) is right when questioning the idea of euroregions as ‘laboratories for European integration’, since real cross-border cooperation is not yet implemented, and this is when taking into consideration that the first Interreg project in the border area was in 1977. This demonstrates that when talking about cross-border cooperation there are certain challenges to take into consideration.

Klatt & Hermann (2011) argue that research on practical implications in cross-border cooperation is necessary, since collaboration across national borders can entail differences in language, culture, values, code of conducts, etc. Development Manager at Femern Belt Development, Tonni Kragh, makes the same point when stating that the greatest barrier with the Danish-German relations is the language. Then, there is also the cultural barrier, as many things are done differently in Germany than in Denmark. The code of conduct and social norms differ *“and that is something you need to learn if you want to do business across the border”* (App. K, q. 7). He further explains that the Fehmarnbelt project has received inquiries from businesses on courses that can teach them understanding each other. Tonni Kragh says: *“Like, why can’t you just pick up the phone, or write an email to an employee in a German company that you cooperate with? You do not write in the same way as you do in Denmark, like ‘Hey you, Henrik, could we discuss this matter, it could be interesting’ ... I mean, there is another tone. It is not that easy”* (App. K, q. 7).

This leads us to the question of *how* we can achieve successful stakeholder and citizen participation in cross-border projects. Trillo-Santamariá (2014) argues that communication strategies in cross-border programs and cross-border institutions need to be strengthened, and ways for participation and engaging in common projects must be improved. Director of Tourism in Lolland municipality, Henriette Pedersen, explains that making an application for an Interreg project is not easy, since *“you need to prepare a whole report about what you want and with a very detailed budget and you need to have part financing in place and you need to know a bunch of laws and rules just to get started in the first place”* (App. E, q. 17). This is an example of a barrier to cross-border cooperation, especially in the case of small tourism operators who have scarce resources. Therefore, to enhance cross-border cooperation, it should be easier for smaller actors to participate in projects.

5.3.11 Strategic Tools for Cross-Border Cooperation

Academics have criticized Interreg projects for lacking sustainability. A critical point here is that, since many cross-border activities are induced by EU funding, when the Interreg program finishes, they end as well (Klatt & Herrmann, 2011; Stöber, 2011, Perkmann, 2008). Development Manager at Femern Belt Development, Tonni Kragh, recognizes this ‘classical’ problem with the Interreg programs, but he also explains that there is often a wish to continue the project when the period ends, but sometimes this can be difficult. However, *“the contact that has been established in the Interreg projects does not disappear just because the money is gone”* (App. K, q. 6). He gives the example of cooperation between Danish and German museums, which has unfolded from Interreg (App. K, q. 6).

In Annika Carstensen’s experience, what happens when the Interreg period ends varies a lot. She gives an example of a project about an information center for commuters at the Danish-German national border (Sønderjylland - Schleswig): *“When Interreg ended, this project continued because the municipalities funded it, but then there are other projects that don’t continue at all (...) I believe that they can become locally anchored, and perhaps it depends on where, again, if there is a need for it, I mean, if either Interreg or some of the municipalities sees a need to continue with it”* (app. B, q. 18).

CEO at Cordt Consult, Dea Cordt explains that the Interreg projects are very ‘person-dependent’, *“so there is like some key persons from those organizations who collaborate and then find out that it was pretty nice and cozy and a lot of good things came out of it”* (App. A, q. 10-11). She explains that when a project ends, the people who were involved agree on trying to establish a new cooperation when the new Interreg period start, *“so in this way there is kind of a red thread of persons, I mean, it is really up to key persons (...) so yes, the projects end, but in most cases contacts are established and this creates some kind of development. So I think it’s good with these projects, otherwise people would never meet each other”* (App. A, q. 10-11).

Dea Cordt and Annika Carstensen’s examples of Interreg projects can be linked to Dredge and Jenkins (2011), who explain that tourism planning is influenced by social processes and takes place in a social world. In the interview with Dirk Keil it was also discussed how it could be ensured that Interreg projects would continue even after EU funding ends. Here is what he said about the continuation of Interreg projects: *“I only do it if I see an advantage in it, it’s like you don’t go to the cinema if there is a bad movie, because then I don’t feel like it (...) So if there is nothing useful in*

the project for me, I will not participate” (App. G, q. 14). This statement demonstrates how Interreg funding can become a strategic tool for cross-border cooperation. As Dirk Keil explains, if there is Interreg funding available, *“I might be willing to participate anyways, and I’ll even do it in cooperation with Danes and Germans”* (App. G, q. 14). In this way, Interreg projects start to look like an arranged marriage, as the parties involved are doing it because ‘there is a win in it’.

Dirk Keil and Tonni Kragh also talks about the sustainability of Interreg projects. The new operation program for Interreg 5A has changed character compared to the last period, *“this means that the small intercultural, people-to-people projects are more difficult to conduct. In the 5A program period there is more focus on the larger projects and larger geographical areas”* (App. K, q. 5). He explains that the consequence is that the smaller actors are more difficult to fit into the program as compared to earlier. Dirk Keil further explains that in Interreg 5A there are a lot of performance requirements: *“It is no longer enough to just meet and get to know more about our common culture. Now it is being looked into if there is sustainability”* (App. G, q. 11). So Interreg is also learning that there needs to be more results after the projects ends.

5.3.12 Discussion

The first part of this chapter looked into citizen and stakeholder participation and the relationship between municipality, businesses and civil society, as described by Dredge (2006a/b). There is not much information about citizen participation in the policy documents of Lolland and Guldborgsund municipality. However, Guldborgsund municipality explores this topic in greater depth than Lolland municipality. The empirical data collected in the interviews provided important insights on this issue.

Maria Østergaard explained that there is no correct answer or a manual on how to involve citizens in political projects. As she emphasizes, it is important that political visions and projects are broken down into smaller units to become more tangible for citizens and business owners. She further explained that when working with participatory approaches, it is important to balance the point in which the citizens are involved: early in the process or late in the process.

Participation is also a time consuming process, but the projects become more locally anchored and citizens will feel ownership over the projects, which will make citizens more favorable towards political decisions if they have been involved in the process. A concrete example of citizen and stakeholder participation is the two workshops at Business LF. Here ideas were formulated and discussed, but in the end the project was left in the hands of the participants. This strategy did not have a positive outcome, as the project was never further developed, and it can be discussed if the workshops lead to genuine participation. Annika Carstensen argued that there should be a facilitator (like Business LF) that supports the development of the project and provides the necessary settings. The empirical data also demonstrated that economy can be a barrier to participation – for example, the membership fee in Business LF. So does this mean that it is only the resourceful actors who have the possibility to get an influence? The same can be discussed in the case of De Danske Syshavskyster, where those who have the resources to pay 500.000 DKK will have the most influence.

The second part of the chapter looked into forms, drivers and barriers to cross-border cooperation and the following will discuss the factors that are important when pursuing successful cross-border cooperation. Klatt & Hermann (2011) finds a paradox in cross-border cooperation being encouraged and financially supported by EU - but only limited research has been conducted on the mechanisms involved with cross-border region building and how successful cross-border cooperation can be achieved.

This project has sought to shed light on the practical implications for achieving successful cross-border cooperation, but the information in policy documents from Lolland and Guldborgsund municipalities has been scarce. The potentials that the Fehmarnbelt project can have for Lolland are described in almost every chapter of Lolland municipality plan, but there is only a weak indication of commitment to engage in cross-border cooperation. In the sections where cross-border cooperation is mentioned there is no elaboration on how cross-border cooperation should be conducted, and the reflections are vague and superficial.

In Guldborgsund Municipality Plan (2013-2025) cooperation with Germany partners is mentioned as being equally important to Danish partners. However, cross-border cooperation is still looked at from an economic and political perspective. Cultural and social viewpoints are neglected in terms of enhancing cross-border cooperation and region building. These findings show that the local elite is not fully onboard with cross-border cooperation and that if cross-border regions are to be ‘laboratories for European integration’, there is a long way and a lot of hard work to have local authorities and citizens to engage in this.

As the municipality plans did not provide many thoughts on cross-border cooperation, the respondents provided useful insight on this topic. According to Dirk Keil, “*we need to plan the future together, not separately*” (App. G, q. 8). There is a need for a change in mentality, which implies starting to think in terms of a common region. Dirk Keil, for example, says the following: “*Isn’t it strange, that we all the time talk about this huge project, but we only take about Denmark, and not about Germany, isn’t that a defect in all this?*” (App. G, q. 16). Cross-border cooperation should be a part of one’s everyday life, it should not be an extra part of your work. He continues: “*It’s like in a marriage, where you state that you are going to be together, but then afterwards, I only talk about myself, how I have earned money and that I want kids, etc. and my wife is on the other side and she talk about what she wants (...) how is this marriage going to work? This is not cooperation*” (App. G, q. 16). Dirks Keil underlines, that people need to learn about the advantages of working together. It is a long process, but he suggests starting out with small things: it can be cooperation in an Interreg project that might lead to further opportunities for cooperation. Hence, cross-border mentality does not come from one day to another or simply because there are some political visions about it. It seems like there is a long way to achieve the dream of a ‘Borderless Europe’. Dirk Keil also points to the need for establishing a central authority that can create the framework for cross-border cooperation, so that small actors can see the benefit in establishing

cooperation with German partners. These are the preconditions for tourism operator to go on board with the visions. Annika Carstensen suggests educating ‘regionauts’, which are people who understand how to act in different countries, because way too often one focuses solely on the local region: *“So perhaps we should train people in these skills and enable them to think more European, or at least in a German/Danish context”* (App. B, q. 19). Cross-border cooperation between Danish and German partners is part of the European regional policy, but the empirical findings of this research show that this vision is not part of the mentality yet.

Conclusion

This research project aimed at exploring participatory processes in the Fehmarnbelt project and the involvement of citizens and tourism operators in political decisions about the future of the Fehmarnbelt region. Furthermore, the Fehmarnbelt project's influence on the image of Lolland-Falster was explored. The motivation for this project was derived from the incentive to explore participatory approaches in a Global North perspective and to grow a broader understanding of the practicalities in tourism planning and policy. The project used a qualitative approach to the case study on the Fehmarnbelt project and interviews with public and private actors on Lolland-Falster were conducted and two workshops and a public meeting were attended by the researcher. The collected data in forms of interviews and participant observation, together with secondary data in forms of policy documents, was used in the analysis to explore the objectives of this research project.

The aim of this project has been achieved by meeting three objectives. The first objective was to explore the participatory processes in the Fehmarnbelt project and the objective was achieved in Chapters 5, where academic literature was reviewed in Chapter 3, and the interview data collectively highlighted these influential factors. The second and third objectives were to examine the deconstruction and reconstruction of Lolland-Falster's image in connection with the Fehmarnbelt project. By combining the background material from Chapter 4 with empirical data collected from interviews and literature on place identity and European regional discourses, these two objectives were accomplished in Chapter 5. The following paragraphs outline the conclusions that were made in relation to these three objectives.

The narrative about the Fehmarnbelt project is characterized by liberal economic rationality and there are lots of grand thoughts about this 'new' region in the policy documents of Lolland and Guldborgsund municipalities, Guldborgsund Municipality Fehmarn Strategy, STRING and Interreg. The argument for building the fixed link is the expected advantages of becoming part of an important European transport and growth corridor, which would result in the Fehmarnbelt project becoming 'an offer that we simply cannot refuse' from a political standpoint. However, there is a gap between these grand thoughts and local tourism operators and citizens. Down here it is difficult to relate to the visions of STRING and European regional policy and its vision about a 'Borderless

Europe'. In this way it becomes difficult to acknowledge one's own role in it, which has to do with the decision about the Fehmarnbelt project being taken far from local stakeholders.

Naturally, a project of this size must be found in the hands of government authorities and experts in the field, but it is important to listen to and involve those citizens or stakeholders who have an interest in the project and are affected by it. In Germany we see a great deal of resistance towards the project, where the hearing process, legal paperwork and a possible trial is stalling the project for several years. Therefore, this thesis suggests that government authorities should have, and continue to develop, strategies to appropriate participatory approaches.

Cross-border cooperation in the 'Fehmarnbelt Euroregion' existed since 1977, but what this thesis found out is that cross-border thinking and doing is not a part of citizens and tourism operator's everyday life yet. Local tourism actors on both sides are continuously doing their own things and when respondents talk about opportunities in the Fehmarnbelt project they talk about opportunities for Lolland-Falster, not for Lolland-Falster and Fehmarn, and this also applies to a great extent to Lolland municipality. This demonstrates that there is not a strong commitment to look across the national borders and it seems that the 'Fehmarnbelt Euroregion' is a political dreamscape rather than a strongly intergraded cross-border region. Therefore, when pursuing cross-border cooperation, it is important that central authorities establish a framework where citizens and business owners can see the advantages of engaging in cross-border cooperation.

In continuation, it has been suggested that regional policies about European integration and cohesion that are embedded in a project like the Fehmarnbelt are more likely to benefit the metropolises over the hinterlands. Therefore, in the case of the hinterlands of Lolland-Falster and Fehmarn, this thesis recommends that cross-border cooperation between these two regions is strengthened in order to achieve the maximum benefits from the new transport and growth corridor. The first step is to start perceiving Fehmarn and Lolland-Falster as a common region – and here institutions, businesses and civil society must work together. In line with Annika Carstensen, this thesis suggests educating 'regionauts' who have the necessary cultural understanding of the nations involved in particular cross-border cooperation and cross-border building.

This thesis presents some central aspects regarding practicalities in citizen and stakeholder participation. Maria Østergaard explained that there is no correct answer or a manual on how to involve citizens in political projects and, when working with participatory approaches, one must try

to find a balance when involving citizens. Participation is also a time consuming process, but the projects become more locally anchored and citizens will feel ownership over the projects. This will contribute to citizens being more accepting towards political decisions if they have been involved in the process.

In Germany we see that acceptance of the Fehmarnbelt project among locals is partially missing. This demonstrates the importance of regional and local authorities acknowledging that the driving forces and motors, as well as the ones who will be implementing the project, are the people and businesses living in the area. In continuation, another point made in this thesis was that when working with enormous projects like the Fehmarnbelt project it must be broken down into smaller and more tangible units that locals can find meaning with and be involved in. Therefore, this thesis suggests that regional and local authorities should have, and continue to develop appropriate strategies for participatory processes that can ensure implementation, local anchoring and sustainable projects.

Regarding the deconstruction and reconstruction of Lolland-Falster's image, empirical data and literature on narratives and place identity demonstrated that the place where you live have great influence on your identity and this explains why Lolland-Falster Lovestorm became such a huge success. People living on Lolland-Falster had had enough of the negative connotations and poor image that the region had got over the years. The program series 'På Røven I Nakskov' was the last drop, which mobilized citizens in a 'quest' to change the regions image. The Fehmarnbelt project has played a role in regards to contributing to something new and positive for the region and something that could be used to tell a narrative about a place with activities, growth and development.

6.1 Contributions

This case study is focused upon participatory approaches in a Global North perspective and it calls attention to the importance of applying citizen and stakeholder participation in political visions and policy and planning processes.

In academic literature it is argued that participation is paramount for successful tourism policy and planning (Spencer, 2010; Marzuki et al., 2012). Also, there is a tendency in the academic tourism literature to focus on developing countries when talking about participation. It often deals with community-based tourism in order to achieve sustainable tourism, to ensure benefits to communities, to increase local communities' skills and knowledge, and to avoid cultural and heritage degradation. With this thesis I have shifted the focus from developing countries to developed countries and looked at the participatory processes there.

There is a growing consensus to move away from traditional approaches of solely providing information and inviting citizens to attend formal public hearings at an already advanced stage of the policy-making. This thesis calls for further discussion and analysis of the advantages of including citizens and stakeholders.

Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of participation, literature often fails to provide insight on the practical side of participation. The interview data from this project contributes to important practical insights on this particular topic, and these are relevant to the current understandings of participation and the relationship between government, businesses and civil society.

6.2 Further Inquiry

As pointed at earlier, the examined policy documents and the academic literature is scarce on information on practicalities on citizen and stakeholder participation. It could be interesting to look further into how participation can be encouraged and look at the processes, drivers and barriers in this context. After the opening of the fixed link and in the following period it could be interesting to look at the image of Lolland-Falster and if the Fehmarnbelt project has had an influence. Finally, it would be interesting to explore the level of cross-border cooperation between Lolland-Falster and Fehmarn, and see if cross-border cooperation has become part of people's everyday life.

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