

# The Municipality of Slagelse

An insight into tourism collaboration in a municipality



*Picture 1 Edited from The Municipality of Slagelse's logo (Slagelse.dk 30/5-2017)*

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this study was to explore the understanding and use of the term 'tourism collaboration' among local government, LTOs and tourism actors in the municipality of Slagelse. The term is often used when tourism strategies at different levels are being written, and it is also a keyword in the latest coastal and nature tourism strategy in the municipality.

By assuming a social constructivist approach, the qualitative data for this research has been collected through an observation study of a tourism workshop and semi-constructed interviews with tourism actors and key persons from LTOs and the local government.

The findings show that the term 'tourism collaboration' is understood and used in significantly different ways, depending on who is asked.

It has been found that the lack of collaboration and coordination between the local government, VisitVestjylland and local tourism associations is highly influencing the local tourism actors, and their ability to collaborate. The difference in the overall destination long-term objectives, and the local actors' short-term interests has proven to complicate collaboration between the destination tourism development organisations, and the local tourism associations. The lack of a joint tourism strategy, and the lack of coordination in the destination level, has caused the local tourism actors to lose trust in the organisations ability to create collaborations.

Power relations, both structural and individual, plays an important role in the development and implementation of collaborations between actors. Especially it is relevant in relation to the old disbanded municipalities of Skelskør, Korsør and Slagelse who with their local anchoring have different approaches to tourism collaboration. The findings in this thesis contributes to the theoretical fields within tourism network and power relations theory and opens up for an unexplored field of municipal tourism research in Denmark.

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## Introduction

Collaborations in tourism destinations has by many scholars (Jamal and Getz ,1995; Morrison, 2013; Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Lankford and Howard, 1994) been described as an important element of tourism development. There has been a specific focus on the involvement of tourism actors from the local level to the overall destination level and all the way up to the national level. However, there has been a “[...] *lack of a critical mass of empirical work on collaboration in the destination context.*” (Fyall, Garrod and Wang, 2012: 11), and the intention of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of collaborations between actors in tourism destinations.

Back in 2011, the local government of Slagelse took the first steps towards a new tourism development in the area, by outsourcing three specific work areas to VisitVestsjælland: tourism marketing, tourism product development and networking among tourism actors. VisitVestsjælland is a local government funded organisation, which is operating as a subsidiary of VisitDenmark. Also, a part of VisitVestsjælland, are the two neighbouring municipalities Kalundborg and Sorø, which means that it is covering a rather large area of western Zealand.

The Municipality of Slagelse is rich on coastline with about 180 kilometres of beautiful nature along the coast, and small islands in the south. In 2017, the development department at the local government of Slagelse, created a report, Tourism Policy Considerations (appendix M), that outlines what should be prioritised over the next four years. One of the main initiatives, a three-year project named *coastal and nature tourism*, is placing great emphasis on creating and developing synergy and interaction between tourism actors that are working within the field of coastal and nature tourism.

*“The project will run over a three-year period, where the goal is to create interconnection and development across the tourism actors and activities that should end up in bookable experiences that can be easily communicated to the potential tourists.”*

(Appendix M, Tourism Policy Considerations, 2017: 8)

The vision is to establish better and more productive collaborations and partnerships between tourism actors, but equally as important is to create a stronger relationship between the local tourism organisations (LTO's) (Dredge, 2006: p 270), and the private tourism actors.

*“The intention is to involve larger, as well as smaller tourism actors, and help to bring coherence to the tourism industry. A relationship which is reflected in the way Slagelse marketed as an active and scenic tourism destination.”*

(Appendix M, Tourism Policy Considerations, 2017: 8)

As seen above, these well-meaning initiatives from the local government are meant to be involving tourism actors of all sizes. The Tourism Policy Considerations-report, with its coastal and nature project is a project that involves the whole destination of Slagelse, a municipality that before the merging of municipalities in 2007, were three separate municipalities.

One of the researchers of this thesis, Christoffer, has since the summer of 2016 been working part-time in the tourism department of the local government in Slagelse. Through this job, he has been involved with the development of tourism collaborations in the municipality and has learned that previous collaboration initiatives often have quickly been shelved.

This thesis will, based on the municipality of Slagelse as a destination, try to contribute to the understanding of tourism collaborations, the development of these and the challenges and implications that may be in it. By empirical data collected through qualitative semi-constructed interviews with both public and private actors and an observation study, this research will seek to gain a more comprehensive understanding of tourism collaborations in a Danish municipality. We find it interesting to investigate upon how these smaller coastal and nature tourism actors perceive their roles and influence in the bigger tourism picture of Slagelse municipality. Maybe by listening to the tourism actors and the LTO's, we can get an understanding of why earlier initiatives have not been successful, and how the local government can ensure that all actors are collaborating towards a coherent tourism strategy.

## Problem formulation

As explained in the introduction, the aim of this thesis is to gain an understanding of tourism collaborations in the municipality of Slagelse. As seen in the forthcoming coastal and nature tourism strategy in the municipality and generally in strategies from national to local destination level the term collaboration is a keyword in political discourses around tourism planning and tourism development. With the above as a starting point, this research will seek to answer the following question:

*How is the term 'tourism collaboration' understood, used and implemented by the local government and tourism actors in the municipality of Slagelse?*

With this problem formulation, this thesis seeks to understand how the term tourism collaboration is understood and used by public and private actors and the possible challenges that lie within developing this in the municipality of Slagelse. To help answer this overall problem formulation, this thesis will seek to answer the following sub-questions:

- *Is there a common thread in tourism strategies from a national level down to the municipal level, in relation to collaboration and partnerships?*
- *Does the merging of the municipalities in 2007 influence the understanding and development of tourism collaborations in the current municipality?*
- *How do power relations between organisations and individuals in the municipality affect the understanding and development of tourism collaborations?*

## Subject field

In the following section, a brief geographic and demographic description of the municipality of Slagelse will be presented to the reader, followed by a look at the structure of the leading tourism stakeholders and actors within the municipality,

The Municipality of Slagelse is located on the west side of Zealand, Denmark, and is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest populated municipality in Denmark with a population of approximately 80.000 inhabitants. The city of Slagelse is the largest city, and it is where the local government of Slagelse is located. Korsør, Skælskør and Slagelse are the three cities within the present municipality border, who both used to be separate municipalities before the merging of them in 2007.

The 180-kilometre coastal line can be seen as an attraction in itself, for tourist seeking active activities in the nature, or a relaxing vacation. Along the coast there is larger areas with holiday cottages, which are the most used accommodation in the destination of Slagelse.

VisitVestsjælland, the tourism marketing organisation, has marketed the area as Sjællands Vestkyst (Zealand's West Coast) as a reference to the Danish west coast in Jutland. The reason is that the coast is as beautiful as Jutland's west coast, but is much more protected and therefore more safe and family friendly.

In the southwest area of the municipality close to the city of Skælskør, are there two islands not far from the mainland, Agersø and Omø. These islands are attractions in themselves, due to the special island community and atmosphere. They are only a short ferry ride away, and have different kinds of accommodations for tourists. The area in the south, from Skælskør to the border in to the municipality of Næstved, is quite rural with low population density.

The local government in Slagelse outsourced most tourism development work, by creating the before mentioned VisitVestsjælland. VisitVestsjælland is a cooperation between the three municipalities of Slagelse, Kalundborg and Sorø, which each support VisitVestsjælland financially. The agreement between the three municipalities and VisitVestsjælland is that VisitVestsjælland do tourism product development, marketing and facilitate networking between tourism actors.

Within the local government of Slagelse there is not a specific tourism department, but the responsibility lies within the department of Culture and Leisure. But to simplify it, the analysis will refer to it as the *tourism department*, when tourism projects at the municipality level is discussed, since it can be argued that there is a tourism department within the Culture and Leisure department. In the spring of 2016, the local government of Slagelse began a tourism project, where the vision is to strengthen the costal and nature tourism at the destination. To get an understanding of the resources being applied to this tourism project, it is worth mentioning that there is budgeted with 75% of one fulltime employee to work with the strategy.

## Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the methodological considerations and approaches that underlie the research conducted in this thesis. To begin with, a review of the thesis' ontological and epistemological standpoints will be presented and what is perceived as reality in this present research. Secondly, an examination on the use of hermeneutics and its relevancy to understanding the findings and data collected in this research is presented to the reader. The last parts of the chapter are concerning the approaches taken in relation to the qualitative data collection – which includes a review of the methodology used in conducting qualitative interviews and the choice of respondents and an explanation of the approaches taken during observation studies.

### Ontological and Epistemological considerations

This part of the chapter will clarify and present to the reader the ontological and epistemological approaches which the research in this thesis is based on.

The term ontology is dealing with how we perceive the world and how we believe that a reality is created. In ontology, often based on specific streams of sciences such as social or natural science, we find different approaches to the acceptance of reality and the construction of it. Natural science researches are found to be working within the positivistic or post-positivistic field where social reality is external and objective (Wahyuni, 2012), and positivists are in “[...] *the belief that ‘there exists a (knowable) truth out there, driven by immovable laws’*” (Hollinshead, 2006: 45). In stark contrast to the more rigid thinking of positivism, we find social constructivism, which perceive reality and the construction of it in a significantly different way. The constructivist approach believe that reality is constructed by relations between social actors and “[...] *they recognize that individuals with their own varied backgrounds, assumptions and experiences contribute to the on-going construction of reality existing in their broader social context through social interaction*” (Wahyuni, 2012: 71). Not only is reality constructed in the interaction between social actors, but it is also in a “[...] *constant state of revision [...]*” (Bryman, 2012: 33). When speaking of reality as constructed by social actors and relations between, it is important to notice that this also very much includes the researches themselves who are equally as much a part of the reality construction than the subjects of the research (ibid.). Although, in recent years, there have been an increased support an

encouragement for the appliance of social constructivism in qualitative tourism research (Hollinshead, 2006; Dredge, 2010; Wayuni, 2012), then it must also be noted that there has been criticism of the rather free interpretation of reality found in constructivism (Bryman, 2012; Botterill and Platenkamp, 2012). Social constructivism has been accused of presenting a fictive reality where everything is relative and only exists because it is perceived that way (Jacobsen, 2001: 122). However, this critique has been denounced by social researchers who argues that the criticism stems from a misunderstanding of the concept of social constructivism and an exaggeration of its claimed denial of reality (Pernecky, 2012).

#### Social constructivism and interpretivism in this thesis

The research question(s) in this present thesis proposes a search for an understanding of tourism collaborations in a complex municipality as Slagelse and the complications of creating synergy in such a rather large region. With a qualitative approach through semi-constructed interviews an observation study of a tourism workshop, it is recognized that reality and meaning is constructed as an interplay between the subjects of the research. Thus, this thesis will be taking the perspective of a social constructivist approach. From interactions such as interviews and observation, we are seeking to understand the tourism actors and their opinions and assumptions. With a social constructivist approach, it is important to notice, that the version of social reality presented in this thesis, cannot be definitive because it also will be a construct of our, as researchers, own opinions and assumptions (Bryman, 2012). When we, as researchers, attend a workshop and observe tourism actors interact with each other and their reactions to issues that are brought up, we are forming our own assumptions and interpretations of a social reality in the municipality. Thereby constructivism “[...] adds a valuable dimension to tourism by allowing new constructions to emerge” and it has “[...] both a critical and a hopeful aspect because of its ability to expose and challenge prevailing understandings” (Pernecky, 2012: 1132). At times during the research for this thesis, the researchers prevailing understandings of the subject was challenged. As one of the researchers, Christoffer, is employed in a part time job in the organisation that is the local government for the destination, there were some presumed perceptions about tourism actors and associations. These perceptions were sometimes challenged because, as researchers in a social constructivist role, we were given

the opportunity to investigate the social life of tourism actors from a different perspective than Christoffer has otherwise done.

The epistemological considerations are evolving around what we, as researchers, perceive and approve as acceptable knowledge. In a somewhat natural prolonging of the ontological position taken in this thesis, an interpretivistic approach will be followed. With the epistemological position within interpretivism we are making a subjective interpretation of our findings during observation and interviews, and “[...] *taking an interpretive stance can mean that the researcher may come up with surprising findings, or at least findings that appear surprising.*” (Bryman, 2012: 31).

### Participant observation

This section of the chapter intends to introduce the reader to an observation study as a methodical approach to qualitative research in this thesis.

Observation studies can be approached and performed in a wide variety of ways, and can have different purposes in relation to the research question and the aim of the study in general (Cole in Ritchie, Burns and Palmer, 2005: 63). In social research, the method of participant observation is widely considered an acceptable and useful method in understanding human nature and social interaction (Bryman, 2012: 431), and it is the observation method applied in the research for this thesis. Before going into the practice of a participant observation study, a few things have to be taken into consideration, especially; the role of the observer and the physical and social setting of the study itself. In participant observation studies, there is an important distinction, between choosing a covert or an overt role. As the name implies, the covert role sees the researcher not revealing himself or his intentions to the observed participants. The benefits of the covert role are that the researcher gets to observe participants in their ‘truest nature’ so to speak. Without having in the back of their heads that their actions and spoken words are evaluated and observed by a third party, it should be assumed that they are acting more natural and without outside restrictions (ibid.). The covert role has limitations in the means that they often can only be conducted in public spaces, where researchers not beforehand has to negotiate access and that it to some degree limits the researcher’s options of honest interaction with the observed individuals or groups.

The overt role, in contrast to the covert, sees the researcher revealing the nature of his presence – or at least revealing it to the ones with whom he negotiates access the observed space. Researchers in overt roles has the advantage of being able to be honest with the observed, thus the risk of being caught in ethical dilemmas will be decreased. With an overt role, the researchers will also be able to take notes openly and maybe even steer conversations in certain directions beneficial to the observations (ibid.:436)

The use of participant observation in this thesis has been conducted with two relatively different intentions in mind. First of all, we sought a preliminary methodical exercise where we could collect some basis knowledge of the tourism actors in the municipality of Slagelse: Who are they, and who are the most prominent ones? How are they geographically distributed throughout the municipality? Secondly, the observation study was conducted with the intention of learning something about how tourism collaborations are created in a social setting and what complications that lies within.

#### Choice of observation study – tourism workshop

As mentioned briefly above, one of the intentions of an observation study was to use it as a preliminary method to gather basic knowledge about tourism actors in the municipality of Slagelse. Through Christoffer's position as a student employee in the tourism department of the municipality, we became aware of a workshop to be held for tourism actors in the region. The workshop was initiated with the intention of creating network relations, presenting new tourism initiatives and innovation in general. It was initiated and facilitated by Landudvikling Slagelse which is a local action group working for development of rural areas in the municipality. They are responsible for allocating funds from EU's rural area program and from the development pool from the municipality to new projects in the region. The new tourism initiatives presented at the workshop were projects developed with help from these funds, and it was also indented to work as a form of motivator for the other tourism actors, by showing them what can be achieved with funding from Landudvikling Slagelse. Following the project presentations, the actors was divided into groups that rotated between five innovation stands, each with a different tourism theme for the region, where some interesting discussions and issues emerged.

An invitation was sent out to tourism actors in the municipality, but it was furthermore stated in the invitation that actors not directly involved in tourism, were also welcome. The actors could sign up for the workshop after a principle of first come first served. The fact that it was not mandatory for actors to attend, made it interesting for us because it could tell something about what areas of the municipality has the most interest in tourism development – who were there? And, perhaps even more interestingly, who were not there?

#### Overt or covert roles?

For a researcher with the intention of doing an observation study, gaining access to a closed or semi-closed setting can be a challenge, and it can often require quite a bit of perseverance from the inquiring part (ibid.). The tourism workshop facilitated by Landudvikling Slagelse, can to some degree be categorised as a closed setting because only Christoffer, by virtue of his work, had natural access. On the other hand, Søren was not guaranteed access and Christoffer had to negotiate his participation beforehand.

At the workshop, we were able to assume mostly a covert position, and taking an overt role when we saw it beneficial for steering conversations and gaining information about tourism actors present. The covert role was naturally assumed by Christoffer as he had to help with practicalities during presentations and to the participants at the workshop were seen as an employee for the municipality. Søren, at least in the first half of the workshop, assumed a covert role, and was able to blend in among the other actors at the tables. As mentioned above, one of the disadvantages of a covert role is the inability to take notes while the study is being carried out. At this workshop, several attendees were sitting with their laptops in front of them, so Søren was able to also use a laptop to take notes of the observation without it being suspicious. The covert roles were maintained until two thirds into the workshop. At this point the presentations and smaller rotation workshops was done and dinner was served. An example of how we saw a good opportunity to switch to overt and reveal our position as researchers came during dinner, where we came into talk with a government official sitting next to us. The official showed to have valuable general knowledge of the tourism situation in the municipality, and because of this he was also able to give provide us some interesting interpretations of some discussions that had arisen between actors during the

workshop. We estimated that his knowledge was too valuable in relation to our study, that we had to reveal our true intentions of our presence, to which he luckily reacted positively. We were now able to ask more in-depth about the topics he previously had indicated to have more knowledge of. The conversation with this government official will be more profoundly examined in the following analysis chapter, as this is just an example of how switching from covert to overt can be beneficial for the researcher(s). But it must also be remembered that this revealing of and changing to an overt role can have the effect that it causes reactivity (Bryman, 2012) amongst the participants who now know the true intentions of the researchers. Reactivity can occur when the participants who are the target of the observation study clearly begin to change or organise their behaviour because they have become aware that they are being observed (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). As the shift in observation roles took place relatively late in the observation study and close to the ending of the workshop, it must be assumed that any reactivity caused by this has had little impact on the overall result of the observations.

#### Taking notes and analysing participant observations

The purpose of conducting a participant observation in this thesis is, as mentioned in the previous section, was to collect general knowledge about the tourism actors in the municipality as well as to investigate the process and possible complications of creating a tourism collaboration. To remember important situations, words and actions that occurred during the workshop, notes were written on a laptop. During participant observations, depending on the researcher's role and the setting in general, there are different approaches to taking field notes: ranging from only using memory when writing seems inappropriate, to jotted notes with very brief descriptions of situations to full field notes (ibid.: 450). In the previous section it was described how Søren was able to, without standing out, sit with a laptop at the workshop. This allowed him to take some in-depth descriptive notes about the observed. On the basis of these full field notes, complementary knowledge was created for the forthcoming qualitative interviews.

## Interviews

The following section is intended to clarify the methodological considerations underlying the interviews conducted in this thesis. On the basis of this, the rationale behind the choice of the interview respondents will be presented to the reader.

When using semi-constructed interviews as a qualitative method in this thesis, it is because the interviewees hopefully can provide the research with valuable insights and knowledge about their experiences of being a tourism actor in the municipality of Slagelse and the possible complications of creating a tourism collaboration. Much in relation to the social constructivist approach, the research questions in this thesis are calling for us, as researchers, to engage in conversations with the actors to gain insights into their social reality and everyday lives (Kvale, 2007).

## Choosing interviewees

In this research, 7 tourism actors have been chosen as interviewees. As touched upon in the previous section, one of the benefits of having the opportunity to observe the tourism workshop was to use it as a preliminary exercise and gain an understanding of who the active (and non-active) tourism actors in the municipality are.

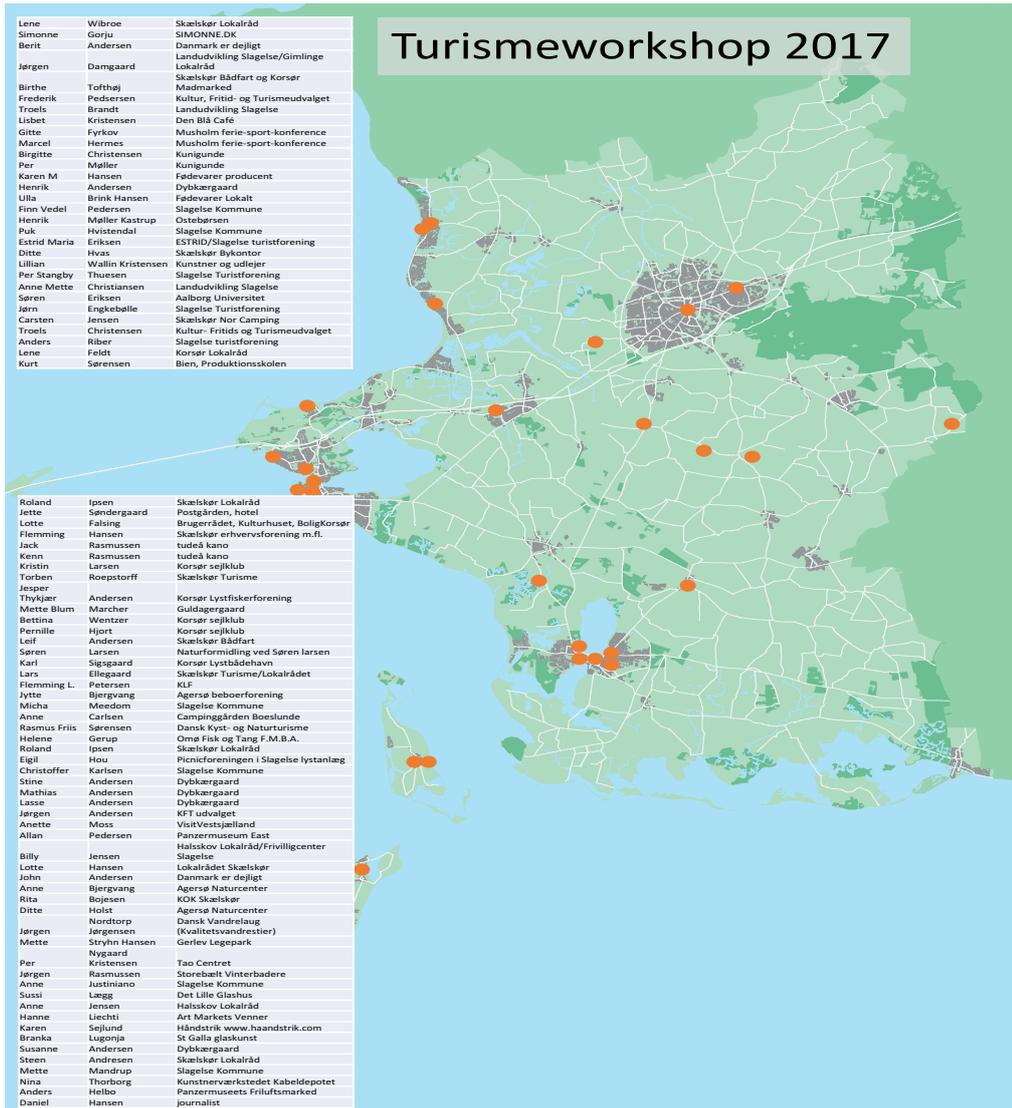


Figure 1 Map of participators at the 2017 tourism workshop in the municipality of Slagelse (Source: The Tourism Department)

As seen in the above map of participating actors at the workshop, a large part of them was concentrated in and around the cities of Korsør and Skælskør and otherwise spread out through the municipality. First and foremost, we have therefore interviewed actors from the most densely represented areas on the map as we know that these are areas who actively are pursuing a development of tourism in the municipality.

In addition to our interest in the densely represented areas of the map, our attention was also drawn to a gap in the southern part which was not represented at the workshop. Through Christoffer's knowledge of the region we were aware that the southern part, mainly in and around the town of Bisserup, indeed is involved in tourism with camping areas, beaches, bird sanctuaries and a popular

inn. It was therefore also a crucial part of our study to interview someone from Bisserup to understand why they were not represented at the workshop.

Besides providing us with a more complete insight to the actors' perception of the tourism initiatives in the municipality, their geographical diversity may also help give us insights about if actors physical location relative to each other can affect the synergy of them and their willingness to be a part of a tourism collaboration.

Lastly, we interviewed Puk Hvistendal from the municipality of Slagelse, who is a tourism project leader. She was interviewed to gain basic understanding of the tourism projects in the municipality and how they handle the creation of tourism collaborations.

### Interview design

Interviewing can be a challenging process and needs to be planned and conducted carefully, but if executed right, interviews can be one of the best qualitative methodical choices in understand the world of our fellow human beings (Brinkmann and Tanggaard, 2010). In our case, the planning of the interviews was done with inspiration from Christoffer pre-knowledge about the municipality, inspiration from the participant observation and the literature review (which will be presented to the reader in the next chapter).

As mentioned earlier, the interviews were conducted as semi-structured which, compared to structured interviews, *"[...] can make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee."* (Brinkmann, 2013: 21).

The interviews were conducted with the assistance of some loosely themed guides. The guides all consisted of two or three main questions, each containing follow-up questions to help in the cases where the conversation was turned to much away from the overall themes.

### The interviewees

This part of the methodology chapter will introduce the reader to the respondents that have been conducted semi-constructed interviews with for the purpose of answering the research question of

this thesis. Each respondent will be presented with a short description and with the rationales behind choosing them.

### **Jette Søndergaard, Hotel Postgaarden, Skælskør**

Our first interview was conducted with Jette Søndergaard who is the owner and daily manager of Hotel Postgaarden in Skælskør. She has been managing and running the hotel since she bought it in 2007 where it was almost just a ruin. She then invested a lot of time and money and spent the next years rebuilding what is now a small hotel with good facilities such as; banquet facilities, conference room and restaurant. The hotel is very well-liked in the local area and with its location right next to the city harbour and its beautiful exterior, it has become a bit of a landmark in the city of Skælskør. With ten years as a hotel owner, she possesses valuable knowledge about tourism in the local community. Jette Søndergaard was chosen as an interviewee on the background of observations we did at the earlier mentioned tourism workshop, where we sat at the same table as her. We noticed that she was obviously irritated during the workshop, and we became interested in learning more about her perception of and opinions on tourism collaborations in the municipality of Slagelse and in particular why she was reacting the way she did at the workshop.

### **Tine Jensen, Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre, Korsør**

Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre is located in the outskirts of Korsør, and they are specialising in making holiday experiences for people with special needs. This is mainly concerned around people with physical challenges as they have developed their facilities and rooms to receive these kinds of guests. The typical guests at Musholm are families, in which there are a person or persons who fall within the aforementioned group of physical challenged. A large part of their visitors during summer are also institutions on holiday or who are doing summer camps. Families or persons without any disabilities are also able to, and very much welcome to visit the centre for at stay, but activities and facilities are designed and targeted for people with physical disabilities.

Tine Jensen is the daily activity coordinator at Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre, which means that she is planning and coordinating activities and events with partners and customers. She has been working at Musholm for a little over two years, and she is originally not from the area. This opened up for a different approach than most of the other interviewees, who all have a longer

history in the municipality. This gave us the opportunity to interview a person who maybe is not biased by a historic connection to a certain area in the municipality. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, Musholm is located in the Korsør area, which is one of the three big cities in the municipality and therefore it was important to talk with actors from there.

#### **Hans Larsen, Boeslunde Camping, between Korsør and Skælskør**

Boeslunde Camping is located somewhere in the middle between Korsør and Skælskør. It is a regular camping area with additional holiday cabins and holiday apartments. Boeslunde Camping was chosen as an interesting target for an interview because of the location between two of the bigger cities. It was important not only to interview actors from the three big cities, but also to find tourism actors placed outside of these.

#### **Toni Andersen, Bisserup Town Council, Bisserup**

Based on the observations from the tourism workshop, where it was noticed that no one from the southern part of the municipality around Bisserup was attending, a curiosity was awakened as to find out why they were not there, and if they maybe have a different view on tourism collaborations in the municipality. Contact was made with the spokesperson of the Bisserup Town Council, Toni Andersen, who agreed to do an interview. Bisserup is a small town placed at the coastline in the southern part of the municipality. There is only about 500 inhabitants, but nonetheless the town has quite a lot of tourists visiting every year – especially the beach, the harbour with organic fish sales and bird sanctuary are popular among the visitors.

#### **Susanne Andersen, Dybkærsgaard, between Korsør and Slagelse**

Dybkærsgaard is a family owned farm with a farm shop open for visitors all year around. They are a fairly new actor in the tourism sector, as the shop has only been running for two years. The shop is steadily growing with even more visitors every year, and they are planning on expanding the tourism business with a bicycle rental for tourists who want to drive around in the scenic area. Because they are a successful newcomer in the field of tourism, it was interesting to listen to their story about how they have gotten to this point and how much interaction they have been having with the local government and other tourism actors.

### **Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association, Slagelse**

The local tourism association in Slagelse is, like the other tourism associations in the municipalities, a volunteer organisation. The chairman of the board is Per Thuesen, who in his day job is working as a royal equerry in Copenhagen. He has been the chairman for the last couple of years, and he has been working hard on changing the focus of the organisation to a more tourism collaboration oriented direction. In the local area, he is known as a hardworking and dedicated man who is doing a lot to help the local tourism actors. When he retires from his regular job next year, he will be dedicating all of his time to the tourism association. He was chosen as an interviewee because he first of all is a member of one of the tourism associations in the municipality. The tourism association has an interesting role in the creation of tourism collaborations because they in many ways are functioning as links between the local government and the tourism actors, and therefore might have interesting views on the subject of collaboration. Furthermore, Per Thuesen has been involved in the planning process of the very workshop which was the subject for our observation study in this research.

### **Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal, project leader in the local government, Slagelse**

As the project leader of the Coastal and Nature project and as an employee of the local government, Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal was an important respondent. She was chosen as an interviewee because she, in her position, was able to provide us with knowledge of how the local government are approaching the creation of tourism collaborations between actors.

### **Validity of the research and limitations**

The validity of research within social science is concerned with “[...] *the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research*” (Bryman, 2012: 47). To ensure that a satisfying level of validity was reached for the research for this thesis, which to a very high degree is based on qualitative research methods through semi-constructed interviews, several considerations about the preparation and conduct of interviews can be made. When conducting interviews and asking the respondents to recollect memories of the past (which in this case happened often because of

questions concerning the old municipality structure), it is important not to rush and pressure for a quick answer but instead give the respondent time to think (Brinkmann, 2013). When approaching possible respondents beforehand with an inquiry for an interview, they were told that it would last for an approximately 30 minutes, but before every interview it was ensured that significantly more time was available from the researchers if the respondents use more time on their answers. Furthermore, if it was visible that the respondents seemed to be stressed about not being able to answer quick enough to the questions, they were told that should take the time they needed.

In order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how tourism collaborations are created and how it works in the municipality of Slagelse, the respondents were selected on the basis on some criteria that there should a certain geographical diversity between them. The geographic diversity amongst the respondents was to a certain degree reached with the exception of the two small islands of Omø and Agersø which lie outside of the southern part of the coast in the municipality. The two islands have a council that in some ways also is functioning as a LTO, and it would indeed have been interesting for this research to listen their stories. Unfortunately, it turned out to be impossible to establish contact and set up an interview. Similarly, it would also have been rewarding for the research if it had been possible to set up an interview with the LTO in Korsør to give them the opportunity to give their opinions of the topic of tourism collaboration in the municipality. In both instances, contact was first attempted by mail and then followed up with phone calls which were not responded.

### Ethical considerations

All the respondents interviewed for this thesis were given the opportunity to be anonymous. We were aware that some of the questions in the interview guides evolved around topics related to the respondent's attitudes towards other actors in the municipality. None of the respondents interviewed chose to be anonymous, and they are therefore appearing by name in this thesis. During the observation study, the majority of the participants were not aware that they were being studied and because of this, some specific participants mentioned in the analysis will not appear by name. This is either because they have chosen not to do so or that it has simply not been possible to get in contact with them afterwards.

## Theoretical considerations

In this chapter, a review of relevant literature associated to the research question asked for this project, will be presented to the reader. With the research questions asked for this project, we wish to look into collaboration and partnerships within a tourism destination, and how these are affected by the planning and development on the destination level. Understanding how relations and collaborations functions between tourism actors and stakeholders, both public and private, is the point of departure. The focus for this research will therefore be based within the research field of stakeholder and collaboration theory, and power relations within stakeholder networks. Furthermore, it is interesting to look into the literature concerning public/private relations, since we are interested in finding out how the tourism actors perceive the strategy made by a local government.

In the following section of this chapter, a review of research and theory within stakeholders, stakeholder networks, power relations, tourism policy instruments, collaboration among tourism actors and tourism planning in community-based tourism, will be presented.

### Stakeholder theory

As in any other industry, a destination consists of stakeholders which are affected by the state of tourism in the area. Stakeholders are also affected by each other, and sociocultural and economic factors. Freeman (1984) defines stakeholders as *“any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation’s objectives”* (Freeman, 1984: 46).

Freeman’s (1984) definition involves a massive number of companies, individuals and organisations, so what needs to be determine is what category of stakeholders is relevant for this research. In Tinsley and Lynch (2001) description of what a tourism destination is, they also describe the verity of stakeholders there is within a destination. They say that a tourism destination consists of *“a number of components such as attractions, accommodation, transport, and other services and infrastructure”* (Tinsley and Lynch, 2001: 372). A stakeholder in a tourism destination can be organisations or individuals who are, or not are, working with tourism, or see themselves as a part of a tourism destination. According to Gray (1989), stakeholders are all individuals, groups, or organizations *“directly influenced by the actions others take to solve a problem”* (Gray, 1989: 5).

According to *actor-network theory*, which we will talk more about later, “*actor-network theory employs a semiotic definition of actors who take their form and acquire their attributes as a result of their relations with other ones. An actor is anything that acts or receives activity from others. So, their scope is extended far beyond individual humans*” (Jensen, 2001. In. Van der Duim, 2007. P. 963).

#### How we study actor-networks

According to tourism researchers (Tribe, 2005; Murdoch, 2006; Law, 2004; Latour, 2005), tourism studies has taken a turn from a distant observing task, to a more active way of studying. Tribe (2005) describes this new era of research as; “*the totality of tourism studies has now developed beyond the narrow boundaries of an applied business field and has the characteristics of a fledging postmodern field of research*” (Tribe, 2005: p. 5). Scholars such as Murdoch (2006), Law (2004) and Latour (2005) claims that researchers can no longer study actor-networks from a distance, but should examine how networks are formed and created among tourism actors. It is by observing these relations we can study “*who gains and who loses, and by which mechanisms of power*” (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 40), and what values and meanings are attached to the network. Law (1994) states “*that everything you seek to explain or describe should be approached in the same way*” (Law 1994. P. 9-10), which in theory makes sense, but in reality, might be hard to follow. Because, if we follow Murdoch (2006), Law (2004) and Latour (2005) argument about studying tourism networks and its actors closely, by putting ourselves in the field, the research can quickly go in different directions depending on responses, obstacles and focus points. But the way we as researchers initially approach the tourism network, should be the same, as Law points out.

#### Researching networks

Networks in a tourism destination can be hard to identify, since they can be both formal and informal, and actors can be part of many networks at the same time, and drop in and out of them as they like (Dredge, 2006). Dianne Dredge (2006) has in a case study of Lake Macquarie, New South Wales, describes how to structure the process when researching networks in a tourism destination (Dredge, 2006. P. 271-274). The following will draw from the four steps described Diana Dredge.

**First**, we should identify what networks are interesting for the research. By mapping the tourism actors in a touristscape, it is possible to draw ties between the actors and map out the relations

between them. According to Knezovich (2014), there can be three different reasons for mapping a network: understand how we can engage in a system, understand the broader implications of our engagement in a system or describe how a system is working.

**Second**, we should decide what aspect of a network is relevant for our research. Is it to understand sociocultural aspects of a community, or is to understand the economics that drives the tourism actors in network. Another aspect could be values and power relations within a network. *“From a structural-functionalist perspective, networks can be investigated according to a number of dimensions including centrality, density and the strength and reciprocity of relational ties”* Dredge, 2006: 272). This argument from Dredge is something we will come back to later in the section describing literature and theory within network power relations.

Dredge (2006) has adapted Waarden’s (1992) table of dimensions and properties of networks, which functions as a listing of aspects of networks that can be researched (see Table 1).

Dimensions	Properties
Actors and agencies	The number and type of actors involved; needs and interests of actors; interdependencies between actors, structures, capacities and resources; degree of professionalization; mandate; perceived role and attitudes of actors.
Functions of the network	Access to the decision-making process; consultation and exchange between participants; negotiation; coordination; co-operation in policy formulation.
Structure of the network	Size of the network; boundaries (open or closed); membership requirements; pattern of linkages; strength of relations; density/multiplexity; clustering; centrality of the network; reciprocity of interconnections.
Characteristics of institutionalisation	Ad hoc, temporary or informal organization to formal, stable, permanent coalition structures.
Rules of conduct	Negotiation and accommodation of conflicting interests; shared sense of public welfare; secrecy or openness; politicalization or mutual understanding to depoliticise issues; rationalist pragmatism or ideological disputes.

Power relations	Capture of state agencies by business interests; autonomy of the state; capture by private interests; balance of power between state-interest groups, hegemony.
Actor strategies	To structure relations within the network; to influence the selection of actors in the network; to influence the function of the network; to create or nurture certain convention or interests.

Table 1 Dimensions and properties of networks (Waarden, 1992: In. Dredge 2006, p. 273)

With the list above, and Knezovich's (2014) reasons for doing network research, it is important to accept that the shape and condition of networks are affected by many different aspects. Therefore, we as researchers has to keep an open mind when approaching a network. For example, power relations can affect economics, and the other way around and so on.

**Thirdly**, how does a network, or a cluster of networks, influence the relationship between public and private partnerships. Some networks are actively created by public department in a local government, might strengthen the communication between the private tourism actors and the local government. Networks with only private actors could create a distance between the public and the private.

**The fourth** and final step of Dredge's (2006) steps on how to approach a network research, is to reflect on how the findings will be preserved by the actors, the local government and the network in general. What outcome should the research have in order to develop and innovate the destination and the networks within it. Some finding might call for a new strategy from the local government's side of the table, but that might not be in every tourism actors interest. When reaching a conclusion on how to develop, we should carefully think about how to implement.

### Collaborations in a tourism destination

Jamal and Getz (1995) were the first to introduce collaboration theory among tourism stakeholders. Their argument for more collaboration in tourism destination was that the industry is fragmented with many different stakeholders (Jamal and Gertz, 1995). Other than strengthen the relationship between private stakeholders, Jamal and Gertz further argued that collaboration could benefit public/private relationships. *"In addition to aiding public- private sector interactions, collaboration*

*may provide an effective mechanism for community involvement in tourism planning, through selection of key stakeholders to represent the various public interests” (Jamal and Gertz, 1995: 200).* Morrison (2013) has listed five examples on how partnerships and collaboration among tourism stakeholders is a valuable contribution to a tourism destination:

- **Destination planning:** Planning within a destination can be a difficult task, since it often involves a wide range of different stakeholders. If all stakeholders have a common objective, planning will become easier.
- **Research:** This is as relevant for us as it can be. Researching with the objective to better the destination can be hard if the stakeholders is not willing to provide the necessary data to research upon.
- **Product development:** Sharing of knowledge lead to development, and if tourism stakeholder is willing to help each other, development of tourism products become much more successful.
- **Marketing and promotion:** Joining resources to promote a whole destination is much more effective than if every tourism actor tries to promote themselves.
- **Community relations:** Tourism effect the everyday life of the local community at a destination. Through collaborations the local communities can have a say in the tourism planning of their area, which will resolve in less counteracting of the tourism development. (Morrison 2013. P. 193)

#### Public/private relations

A destination is a multilevel phenomenon (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad, 2010), which success are depending on the destination’s ability to create healthy public/private relationships. There are no limitations on the geographic scale a tourism network can have, which means it can be a connection between actors far beyond the destinations borders. What we now want to explore is the relation between public networks and private network, and even more interesting is the networks which include both public and private actors.

*“Local governments in many countries are becoming increasingly involved in a variety of activities to boost tourism, including destination marketing, strengthening local*

*tourism industry networks, and offering incentives in order to attract investment in new tourism development”*

(Long, 1994; Elliot, 1997; Godfrey, 1998; Hall, 1998. In Dredge, 2001: 356)

One of the actions that local governments take to try and develop tourism, is to establish a kind of local government funded DMO. An organisation which the local government can outsource the tourism responsibility to, which is popular among local governments with smaller destinations. There is an economic explanation for this choice of strategy, since local governments are restricted by different laws that can limit their actions in relation to develop tourism. A private organisation does not have the same restrictions, and can for instance have paying partners (Morrison, A. 2013). *“In most destinations, the LTO (Local Tourism Organisation) is the industry’s peak body, which is in turn supported by sets of formal and informal networks that span public and private sectors”* (Dredge, 2006: p 270). An enthusiastic and productive relationship between a LTO and a local government, are of great importance to the development of a destination, and can create other networks within the tourism sector in a destination (Dredge, 2006).

Researching these public/private networks can be difficult, and past studies do often describe and analyse one moment in time, but cannot conclude the transformation of a network over time. *“Case studies, in particular, contribute important insights into networks since the role and influence of networks are best understood at the level at which destination planning and management takes place”* (Dredge, 2006: 271). Analysing tourism actors and their view on a public/private relationship can be hard, since they can be unwilling to completely open up since it is the community they also live and work in, in their civil life (Dredge, 2006).

#### Collaboration among stakeholders

‘Partnership’ and ‘cooperation’ are two other terms that often are used when talking about stakeholders working together for a common objective. According to Jamal and Stronza (2009), the term ‘collaboration’ describes a much deeper inter-organizational relation. *“Collaboration provides for a flexible and dynamic process that evolves over time, enabling multiple stakeholders to jointly address problems or issues”* (Jamal and Stronza, 2009). Twenty years earlier Gray (1989) described collaboration as *“a process of joint decision making among key stakeholders of a problem domain*

*about the future of that domain"* (Gray, 1989: 227). Even though Jamal and Getz (1995) introduced collaboration theory among tourism stakeholders back in 1995, collaboration among stakeholders in other fields has been researched upon earlier. Gray (1989) described how collaboration among stakeholders can develop shared visions, and resolve conflicts in networks, when the stakeholders recognize the advantage of working together (Gray, 1989). This could be a key point for tourism developers in a destination, to get stakeholders and tourism actors to see the advantages of collaboration.

Jamal and Gertz (1995) has in their work with community tourism planning, used Gray's description of collaboration, and adapted it to tourism planning.

*"Collaboration for community-based tourism planning 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."*

(Jamal and Stronza, 1995: 188)

'Community' refers to the group of people living in destination, but their definition does also align with Van der Duim's (2007) idea of a touristscape consisting of both human and non-human elements. Stakeholders are 'autonomous' do to the fact that even though they are collaboration and working for common visions, they still have their independent interests, and must value their own interests high (Wood and Gray, 1991). The 'problem domain' is how problems and situations within a destination and a network of stakeholders, can be a type that cannot be solved by just one stakeholder, but calls for an inter-organizational action.

Gray (1989) has five key points about the collaboration process:

- *"The stakeholders are independent*
- *Solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences*
- *Joint ownership of decisions is involved*
- *The stakeholders assume collective responsibility for the ongoing direction of the destination*
- *Collaboration is an emergent process, where collaborative initiatives can be understood as emergent organizational arrangements through which organizations collectively cope with the growing complexity of their environments"* (Gray 1989: 236)

Gary furthermore describes a three-stage model about developing collaboration among stakeholders. First, the problem and key stakeholders must be identified. Who is the stakeholders that are these stakeholders, individual or organisations (Freeman, 1984), that are directly influenced by the identified problem. The next step is to find a common sense of purpose. As mentioned by Wood and Gray (1991), stakeholders are mainly focused on their own agenda, which means that a common path must be found. *"Identifying and sharing future collaborative interpretations; appreciating a sense of common purpose"* (Jamal and Stronza, 2009). The last stage is to implement and nurture the collaboration.

Trist (1979) has an interesting point on collaborations among organisations, and collaborations leading to change. The argument is that individuals' minds can change faster than whole organisations', so individuals' values can benefit and be the starting point for collaborations that can change the future (Trist, 1979).

Residents within a destination is a stakeholder which must be manage correctly to gain their much-needed support. Lankford and Howard created the Tourism Impact Attitude Scale (TIAS), a model that can be used to analyse tourism's impact on residence in a destination. Their findings where that local governments and tourism developers and planners, must make extensive efforts to involve locals in the development process, and make collaborations with these groups of stakeholders (Lankford and Howard, 1994). It is important to recognise that tourism development in an area affect the everyday life of the residence.

*"Local governments and tourism promoters should pay particular attention to the finding that if people feel they have access to the planning/public review process and that their concerns are being considered, they will support tourism."*

(Lankford and Howard, 1994: 135).

They further argue that residents who have benefitted from tourism in their area, are less likely to perceive the social and environmental impacts as damaging the area, but do on the other hand perceive the economic impact to be greater than the reality might be (Lankford and Howard, 1994).

Jamal and Getz (1995) has made six propositions as a tool for tourism managers and planners, as well as researchers, to use when working with collaboration on a community level.

Proposition 1:

*“Collaboration for community-based tourism planning will require recognition of a high degree of interdependence in planning and managing the destination”* (Jamal and Getz, 1995. P. 197). There must be a good collaboration between the local community and the tourism actors, because they are sharing the same resources and space. *“Tourism development that exceeds the carrying capacity of the economic, natural, and sociocultural environment will impact negatively on the overall tourism industry of the community, due to the close interrelations of the elements within the community's tourism system”* (Jamal and Getz, 1995: 197).

#### Proposition 2

*“Collaboration will require recognition of individual and/or mutual benefits to be derived from the process”* (Jamal and Getz, 1995: 197). As Waddock (1989) argues, there must be three conditions in place before a collaboration can happen between organisations; *“recognition of interdependence, perceptions that significant benefit will result from the collaboration, and recognition of importance of the issue(s)”* (Waddock, 1989 in: Jamal and Getz, 1995: 197).

#### Proposition 3

*“Collaboration for community-based tourism planning will require a perception that decisions arrived at will be implemented (i. e., the process has legitimacy and power to either make or strongly influence the planning decisions”* (Jamal and Getz, 1995: 198). Stakeholder has to feel that they are in some kind of position to change or influence things, for them to want to invest time in collaborate relations.

#### Proposition 4

*“Collaboration for tourism destination planning will depend on encompassing the following key stakeholder groups:*

- *local government plus other public organizations having a direct bearing on resource allocation*
- *tourism industry associations and sectors such as Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor Bureau, regional tourist authority*
- *resident organizations (community groups)*
- *social agencies (e.g., school boards, hospitals)*

- *special interest groups*” (Jamal and Getz, 1995: 198)

#### Proposition 5

*“A convener is required to initiate and facilitate community-based tourism collaboration. The convener should have the following characteristics: legitimacy, expertise, resources, plus authority, and may be derived from a government agency, an industry firm, or group such as the local Chamber of Commerce, or the local tourist organization” (Ibid: 199).*

#### Proposition 6

*An effective community collaboration process for strategic tourism planning for the destination requires: formulation of a vision statement on desired tourism development and growth; joint formulation of tourism goals and objectives; self-regulation of the planning and development domain through the establishment of a collaborative (referent) organization to assist with ongoing adjustment of these strategies through monitoring and revisions” (Ibid: 199)*

Tourism planning in a community is complex task do to the mixture of residence and tourism planners, sharing of economic and environmental resources and getting stakeholders to recognize the interdependence. A collaboration strategy *“(…) may be suitable to manage turbulent planning domains at the local level” (Ibid: 200).*

#### Local government policy and planning

According to Tinsley and Lynch, (2001), a tourism destination is *“a number of components such as attractions, accommodation, transport, and other services and infrastructure” (Tinsley and Lynch, 2001: p.372).* Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad (2010) describes how a destination is multileveled, since it has issues on many different levels within the destination. There can be issues on actor level, that should be addressed differently that issues on a destination level, meaning that planning and strategies also needs to have different levels. Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad (2010) argues that there are three main levels, the actor level, the destination level and the larger geographical level, and for that reason it is important to incorporate an integrated multilevel strategy (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad, 2010).

Tourism destination development is the activity that should lead to value for the destination and the tourism actors. If we look at it from a local government perspective, or/and a DMO, tourism development is not only nurturing of tourism actors. A tourism development strategy must span the boundaries of the destination, and engage with the world around it. Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad has in their work with integrated multileveled strategies, developed a framework showing three different levels of a destination.

- **Destination capabilities:** *“The more advanced capabilities a destination possesses, in terms of image and branding, and utilization of distributed resources and competencies, the better will the destination be at developing integrated multilevel strategies.”*
- **Coordination at the Destination Level:** *“As the level of destination integration increases, in terms of replacing conventional, individualistic inter-actor relationships with administered, contractual, or corporate relationships, the destination’s ability to develop integrated multilevel strategies will increase.”*
- **Inter-destination Bridge Ties:** *“Combining different inter-organizational forms at the destination level will contribute to more efficient integrated multilevel strategies, as this enables comparison between forms of coordination and stimulates intra-destination competition.”*

(Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad, 2010: p. 274-280)

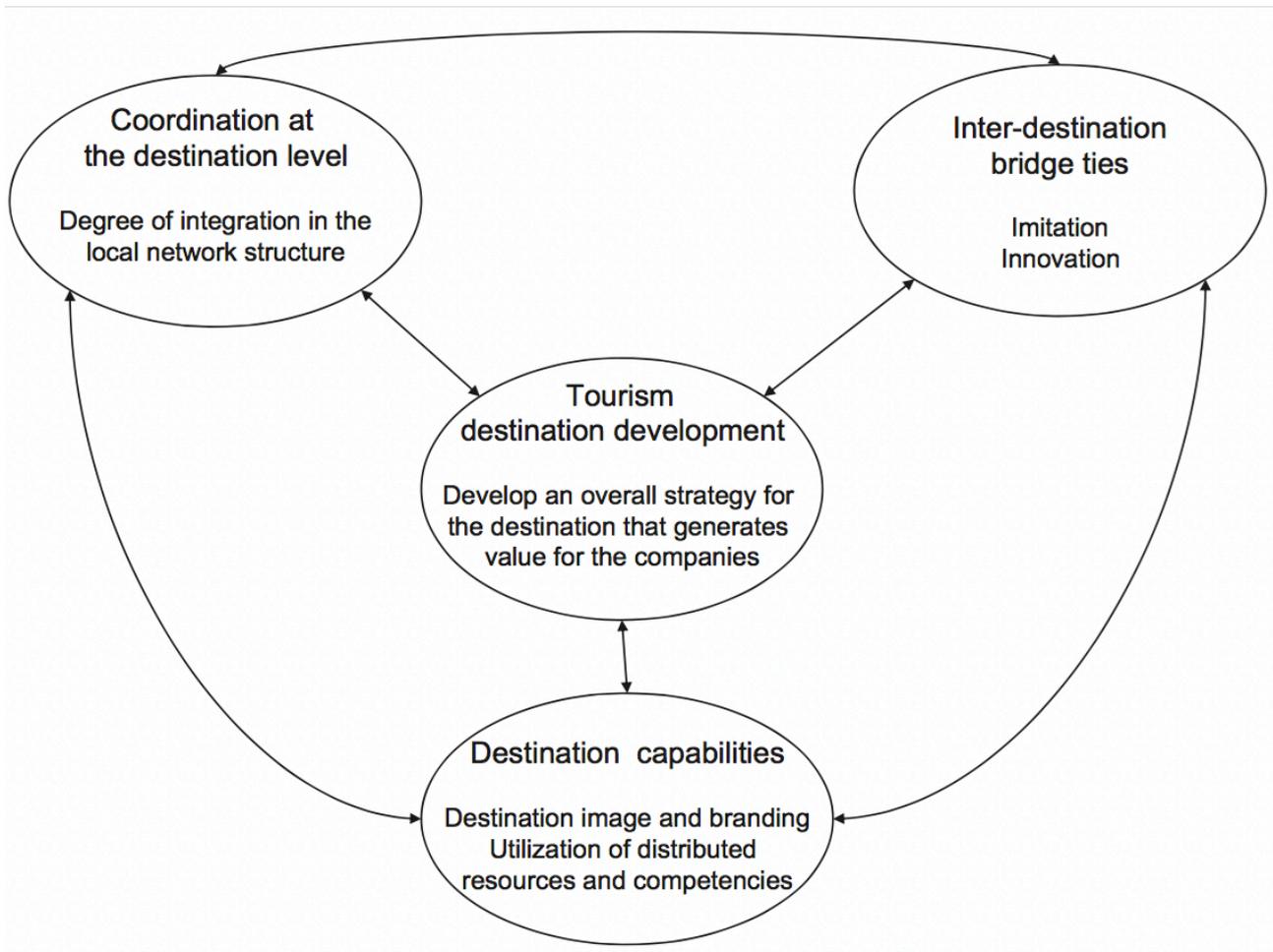


Figure 1 A framework for tourism destination development (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad, 2010: p. 280)

Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad argues that the result of integrated multilevel strategies, will lead to value for companies. But tourism planning can be a difficult task, and what is even harder is to create a destination strategy that fits all. A reason for a destination strategy might be to gain some sort of competitive advantage over other destinations, by creating a unique product, or a theme for the destination. But at the same time actors within the destination are trying to create their competitive advantage. *“Developing competitive advantages at the destination level is a complex endeavour as it involves a number of different actors. It requires all actors to agree on a set of common strategic goals and to be willing to implement actor-level strategies aimed at achieving these common goals”* (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad, 2010: p. 284).

## Policy instruments to facilitate collaboration

Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad (2005) argues that there is an absent of research dealing with the destination governments involvement in destination partnerships.

Local governments can play an active role on developing collaborations, which is often the instrument being used to develop tourism in a destination. Local governments cannot create specific tourism products, so their task is to encourage and nurture the commercial stakeholders to join in partnerships. Dianne Dredge (2016) has described four different policy instruments that can be used by government, or local governments, to reach a desired outcome:

- **Financial instruments** – *are those that use money to achieve a desired effect. These might include positive fiscal incentives such as subsidies, tax breaks and investment incentives to, for example, attract investment to encourage private sector actors to conserve or protect environmental assets. Negative instruments might include taxes and surcharges and environmental levies, and might be used in an effort to reduce demand at environmentally sensitive sites. In tourism, social entrepreneurship, positive financial incentives, tax breaks and subsidies could be used to create enabling conditions.*
- **Information instruments** - *include information and education campaigns and advocacy initiatives targeted at different actors and collectives, and that are designed to influence behaviour. Information instruments can shape the enrolment of different societal groups and actors in social entrepreneurship and can facilitate cultural change. Voluntary accreditation, award programs and market-based initiatives wherein operators leverage market advantage aimed at shaping behaviour would also fall under this category.*
- **Authority instruments** - *are those that rely on government authority and influence to achieve their desired effect. Laws and other statutory instruments can be used to support and encourage social entrepreneurship, such as legislation that formally recognizes and clarifies its operational environment, financial and taxation responsibilities and reporting requirements.*
- **Organizational instruments** - *Organizational instruments include those initiatives wherein governments create or support the establishment of organizational entities or partnerships to achieve a desired outcome. Destination management and marketing organizations are examples of organizational instruments where they are supported by government.*

(Dredge, 2016: p, 11)

#### Destination partnership and Destination team-building

According to Wilson, Buultjens and Nielsen (2009) there is a lack in research focusing on binding partnership in tourism, between public and private organizations. Binding partnership are categorized as partnerships that are bound either by commercial contracts or legal arrangements (Wilson, Buultjens and Nielsen 2009).

Directly linked to Dredge's (2016) organisational instrument is an article by Morrison (2013), where he defines two types of collaborations which can actively be created by local governments. He describes the difference between *destination partnerships* and *destination team-building*, which are two specific types of collaborations.

**Destination partnership** refers to the idea that standing together is better than standing alone, or as Morrison puts it "*1+1 equals more than two*" (Morrison, 2013, p. 192). An example from of this can be local governments outsourcing the role as DMO, to commercial tourism organisation. In contrast to local governments, these tourism organisations can have paying partners, and these joined resources can then be used to market the destination. These types of destination partnerships can have other obligations than marketing, which for example can be network creation among stakeholders, or product development. This example of a destination partnership is a commercial one, but destination partnerships can also be non-profit, but in both scenarios the arrangement is meant to "*produce benefits for the DMO and its partners that would not be achieved without working together*" (Morrison, 2013, p. 191). Nelson and Zadek (2000) describes partnerships in tourism as: "*Partnerships are made up of people and organisations from some combination of public, business and civil constituencies who engage in voluntary, mutually beneficial, innovative relationships to address common societal aims through combining their resources and competencies*" (Nelson & Zadek, 2000: In Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, 2005: 33).

**Destination team-building** refers to specific activities that a local government, or a commercial DMO, can arrange to create collaboration and partnerships between tourism actors. "*There are so many diverse tourism stakeholders in a destination that the DMO often has to be proactive in bringing groups of specific people together to deal with particular issues or opportunities*" (Morrison,

2013, p. 192). An example of this can workshops that encourage tourism actors to join in partnerships to gain profit for their businesses. The task here is to introduce the tourism actors to each other, and get them to believe in what Morrison argues - *"1+1 equals more than two"* (Morrison, 2013, p. 192).

A tourism destination often involves complex tourism organisations, with different agendas and they can either be public or private. In relation to destination partnerships, Rhodes (1997) argues that the issue is often interactions between public organisations and private ones, when trying to establish collaboration. To successfully establish destination partnerships between public and private tourism organisations, *"implies that neither government nor business is in charge of the process but that the interdependency between them may be crucial. In line with the above argument, governance implies less control and predictability, no self-evident leadership and no given hierarchy"* (Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, 2005: 32). Despite the complications with the establishment of destination partnership, they have *"become a label on ambitions to bring actors together in new constellations for the purpose of joint problem solving and policy-making"* (ibid.).

Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad (2005) has outlined a conceptual framework for analysing destination partnerships. The three areas which must be addressed are:

- ***Inclusiveness*** concerns the capacity of partnerships to widen the range of actors involved in the processing of destination development activities.
  - *Who participates, which roles do they play, and on what basis is access to the partnership decided?*
- ***Accountability*** concerns the location of responsibility and the mechanisms through which decisions-makers may be held accountable.
  - *This is a highly sensitive issue that might threaten the legitimacy of partnerships, and this is where the distinction between public and private is most evident, and also most controversial.*
- ***Coherence*** refers to the ability to gain support for a common outlook on destination development and the mobilization of common resources for implementation of agreed operations.

- *The presence of partnerships does not guarantee that they make a difference, let alone add value to the process.”*

(Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, 2005: 33)

The individuals that are representing their association or organization in a partnership or network, are playing an important role. Selin and Chavez (1994) found during their research about successful partnerships, that personal characteristics were highly important in a collaborative network. Beside the individual characteristics, the unique mix of personalities represented, can influence the dynamic within the network. They further argue that that a strong leader of the group is important with qualities such as: “motivation, commitment, enthusiasm, vision, patience, open mindedness, perseverance, and an ability to get other people excited” (Selin and Chavez 1994: 8). Group dynamics is also found to be an important element relation to success for a partnership. That the individuals are feeling welcomed and are getting along, and there is honesty, directness and no hidden agendas. The group furthermore needs to be able to “adjust to each other, and reach consensus on difficult decisions” (Selin and Chavez 1994: 10).

### Power relations

Actor networks can, as explained in the previous sections, be a highly complex structure with many different kinds of players involved. To understand the complexity of a tourism collaboration and the challenges involved in creating and maintaining it, it is indeed interesting to gain an insight to the power relations between actors within a network.

Through the course of social science history, the definition and influence of the term power has changed several times. Power is a term that that is often viewed as a strong institutional force that is exercised over a weaker body in an almost physical and tangible manner. This, more physical and authoritarian perspective on power, was explored by Max Weber (Weber in: Månson, 2007: 100). Power, according to Weber, is often used in bureaucracy by politicians or government officials to gain influence over others through law-making and policy and “[...] *He who is active in politics strives for power either as a means in serving other aims, ideal or egoistic, or as ‘power for power’s sake,’ that is, in order to enjoy the prestige-feeling that power gives.*” (Weber, 1921: 2).

To further specify the term power and rule and in which forms and situations it is performed or exercised, Weber divided it into three different categories: power, authority and discipline (Månson, 2007: 100). Authority is exercised by higher ranked institutions, entities or persons and is measured in the probability for lower ranked to display obedience to their orders. Power performed through authority is what is seen as legitimate by the society. Discipline is a more schematic and promptly way of showing obedience to commandments issued. Finally, power in any social relation, as explained above, is the ability to enforce ones will even against those who are showing resistance. Weber's thoughts and theories mostly evolves around power in a bureaucratic, governmental or political form where key-points such as rules, laws and regulations are important factors (Weber, 1921).

In the stream of power theory evolving around the more tangible aspects of it, French and Raven (1959) suggested a typology of personal or interpersonal power. The typology, *The Bases of Social Power*, consists of 5 different power structures: Coercive, Reward, Legitimate, Expert and Referent, and *"[...] in this typology, social influence is defined as a change in the belief, attitude, or behaviour of a person – the target of influence, which results from the action, or presence, of another person or group of persons [...]"* (Erchul and Raven, 1997: 138). Thus, the typology is describing five different power structures that each has the potential to make person A change the beliefs and behaviour of person B (ibid.). Person A and Person B is what French and Raven describes as, respectively an influencing agent and a target person.

As opposed to Webers and French and Ravens almost physical and direct definitions of power as something that can be achieved and exercised by individuals or the state, French thinker Michel Foucault presented a radically different angle on the subject. In this definition, power is a ubiquitous phenomenon that affects our everyday lives in ways that we are not aware, and that we often are unable to control (Jiménez-Anca, 2012). Foucault explains power as an unpredictable force that appear in relationships and tensions between individuals, and unlike Webers theories, power cannot be achieved and maintained because of its relative nature (Cheong and Miller, 2000; Jiménez-Anca, 2012).

Previously in this chapter, some of the most important main streams of power theory within social science have been presented. From Weber's power as something concrete and French and Ravens precise definitions of influence factors to Michel Foucault's omnipresent power that influences almost all aspects of life, it has been established that the streams of research in this area represents different starting points. It can be argued that the Foucault presents a more positive view on the concept of power in society, and the fact that it is created through social relations is seen more as an advantage than a disadvantage (Wearing and McDonald, 2010).

The first steps towards research on power relations in networks and between actors and stakeholders and the realizations of the importance these, can be traced back to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the beginning of management theory. Early research was mostly centred around the internal structures of organisations and what internally influenced the power structures and hierarchical foundations, but in the later half of the century more recognition was given to the external drivers that influences the development and sustainability of an organisation. In the late 1970's Pfeffer and Salacnik (2003) suggested that organisations often were entangled in networks of interdependencies and social relations, and that quite a lot of external drivers were decisive for an organisations decisions and development.

Based on network relationships, organisational theory and policy planning, several researchers have since applied and reviewed these aforementioned power theories and typologies in a contemporary tourism context (Cheong and Miller, 2000; Bramwell and Meyer, 2007; Dredge, 2006; Beritelli and Laesser, 2011).

Cheong and Miller (2000) used the theories of Michel Foucault to examine different power levels in tourism, and proposes that Foucauldian power exists in all tourism systems. The tourist, the tourism management organisations and the locals can all both be targets and agents of power, and the level of power relations is dynamic and are under constant change throughout the developing process of a tourism destination.

In the contribution to the understanding of local network management and the blurred line between public and private partnerships, Dredge (2006) applied a Foucauldian perspective on "[...]

*how power relations have been imbedded in the discourses between actors and agencies.” (Ibid.),* and among other points concluded that the power and influence of a stakeholder or actor may vary in accordance to the number of networks they are a member or a part of. Additionally, an emphasis is on “[...] *investigating the ‘softer’ and less tangible social and cultural aspects of networks through in-depth qualitative inquiry.*” (Ibid.)

In continuation of policy networks research and the power relations that lies within, Bramwell and Meyer (2007) examined the tourism policy development and power relations between actors on the East German island Rügen during a 10-year period during the integration to the unified Germany. They argue that “[...] *while power is performed and cannot simply be ‘possessed’, the actors concerned may perceive it to be something that people either have or lack.*” (ibid.) In their research they concluded that actors such as the destination management organisation of the island were not perceived by other actors to be as influential as one might think. Bramwell and Meyer (ibid.) also concluded that some of the most influential actors in the destination shared mutual memberships of organisations or networks.

Based on research conducted on a tourism network in an alpine tourist destination Beritelli and Laeser (2011), suggested a typology of power dimension that can be applied when investigating the perceiving of influence reputation among actors in a network. With inspiration from literature within the field of network and organisation theory and existing power relations theory, Beritelli and Laesser (ibid.) presented a typology consisting of four different dimensions of power that can be valuable when investigating relations between actors in a tourism network. The four dimensions; ‘Hierarchy’, ‘Process power’, ‘Knowledge’ and ‘Assets’ each represent areas in which the actors perceive each other’s influence reputation and power in the network.

- The hierarchical dimension represents a belief that the higher a stakeholder or actor is placed in the hierarchy, the more power and influence they have.
- Process power is a variable that takes into consideration an actor’s “[...] *position in a specific process/mechanism [...]*” (ibid.: 1302) that other actors in a network might not possess, thus placing them higher on the scale of influence reputation.

- The knowledge dimension leans a little toward the process power, with the exception that it based more on the expertise, skills and knowledge of individual in a network.
- The last dimension, 'Assets', is the most tangible one in the sense that it is measured on an actor's possession of assets such as; land, properties and financial state.

In their case study on actors' perception of each other's influence reputation in the alpine tourist destination they used the four power dimensions in qualitative interviews. Respondents were asked to identify the most important and influential actors in the network, and was furthermore asked to name the power dimension or dimensions that were crucial to their choice. Beritelli and Laesser (ibid.) concluded that knowledge was the most dominating power dimension in the destination, because respondents valued the importance of other actors' ability to contribute to tourism development and innovation in the destination.

Another possible way of measuring an actor or stakeholders power level and influence in a network are by looking at the level of threat they expose to the network (Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005). In Sheenan and Ritchies (ibid.) study, a more tangible and 'hard' definition of power is used and actors/stakeholders with more assets and key-resources are seen as a bigger threat, and thus have more power, than the smaller ones within a network.

During the last couple of decades, the concept of power has become an increasingly important subject in tourism research and further within the concepts of network relations, policy and development. Especially a Foucauldian view of ubiquitous power creating in social relations has gained recognition and acceptance among tourism researchers (Dredge, 2006; Bramwell and Meyer, 2007; Cheong and Miller, 2000; Wearing and McDonald, 2010).

In this thesis, power relations theory will be used to gain an understanding of relations between tourism actors in the municipality of Slagelse, the LTO's, the local government and their positioning in relation to each other, the tourism associations and the local government. The Foucauldian view of power will be taken into consideration when looking for underlying meanings and the *"[...] way different players construct and communicate their own and others' positions and the way in which power relations have been embedded in the discourses between actors and agencies."* (Dredge,

2006: 273). Furthermore, by applying the thoughts and ideas behind Beritelli and Laesser's (2011) power dimension framework, we might be able to gain a more thorough understanding of how the actors and LTO's perceive each other, and especially, how they perceive the bigger tourism network facilitators such as Slagelse municipality and VisitVestsjælland and how these power dimensions are influencing the development of tourism collaborations.

## Analysis

The purpose of the following chapter is to present to the reader the analytical findings that has been derived from the qualitative empirical data collection. As presented in the methodology chapter, the qualitative data has been collected through an observation study of a municipal tourism workshop and seven semi-constructed interviews with actors across the destination. Based on the theoretical considerations presented in the previous chapter, the empirical results will be put in a relevant theoretical perspective in order to gain an understanding of how tourism collaborations are understood and used in the municipality of Slagelse and why previous attempts have been unsuccessful.

The analysis structure is inspired by Dredges suggestion on how to approach and understand a network (Dredge, 2006. P. 271-274). **Firstly**, the interesting main tourism actors in relation to the research question and their strategies are looked in to. **Secondly**, the focus will be at the collaboration between these major tourism actors, and how their approach is in relation to collaboration in general. **Thirdly**, it will be interesting to investigate how collaboration between these actors are influencing collaboration in the rest of the tourism network. **Fourthly**, in the discussion, the findings and implications will be further discussed in relation to the theoretical field.

### The approach to tourism collaboration from national level to local level

The first part of the analysis will present to the reader a look at how tourism collaborations are a part of the tourism strategies from the national level to the local level. For the further analysis, by drawing on a theoretical field within policy planning and stakeholder networks, it is relevant to investigate how the concept of tourism collaborations are encouraged on a national level, and how it is further incorporated and carried out at destination level to the local level.

Collaboration can be on many different levels (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad, 2010), and can come in many different forms. This section intent to gain an understanding, of how and if the national tourism strategy is can be argued to be a part of an interceded multileveled strategy (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth & Aarstad, 2010: p. 274-280). This is done in relation to what stated before, that collaborations are on many levels, and is therefore interesting to see if the national

tourism strategy can be seen through the system, all the way to the small destinations at the local level.

Firstly, this part of the analysis will start from the top level with the national tourism strategy, and then move on to KL – Kommunernes Landsforening (Local Government Denmark), which is an organisation formed by all the municipalities in Denmark. This will give a foundation of knowledge to further understand how the concept of tourism collaborations are incorporated in The Municipality of Slagelse's tourism strategy.

#### The Danish Government's tourism strategy

Danish and international tourists spend around 95 billion Danish kroner in 2014, and fulltime employed around 115.000 people, which means tourism has a massive effect on the Danish economy. The Danish government published "Denmark in Growth – The National Tourism Strategy" (appendix J) in September 2014, which is the national strategy on how to develop the Danish tourism industry.

What the government has set as Denmark's strength positions when it comes to attracting tourists, is coastal and nature tourism, urban tourism, meeting and business tourism.

The National Tourism Forum is a tourism organization, which board members are leading stakeholders in the Danish tourism industry, is one of the initiatives from the strategy. In the strategy, The National Tourism Forum's responsibility are described, and they can be perceived as a national DMO, with the purpose of leading tourism development from the national level. Their responsibilities are being described as:

*"The National Tourism Forum will strengthen the coordination of public tourism development, and cooperation between VisitDenmark and the three tourism development companies. With a focusing on developing coastal and nature tourism development, urban tourism, business and meeting tourism in Denmark, will lead to benefit for the total growth in Danish tourism"*

(Appendix J, Denmark in Growth – The National Tourism Strategy – 2016. P. 7)

The primary responsibility in relation to tourism development and marketing, is carried out by tourism organizations, which are financially supported by the government. This is what Morrison (2013) terms *Destination Partnerships*, where tourism stakeholders join together in a partnership, because as he puts it “1+1 equals more than two” (Morrison, 2013, p. 192). One of these is organizations created from a partnership is VisitDenmark, which main objective is to attract international tourists. VisitDenmark has many smaller partners at the destination level, for example VisitVestsjælland, which can be categorized as one of the DMO’s in the municipality of Slagelse.

The national tourism strategy emphasis a lot on public/private collaborations. *“Clear priorities and enhanced cooperation between public actors and private tourism companies, should promote synergy and efficient use of resources, and increase the public tourism development’s relevance for private tourism companies”* (Appendix J, Denmark in Growth – The National Tourism Strategy 2016: 6). Different scholars have also mentioned how development emerge by join resources and competences in collaborative networks (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Lankford and Howard, 1994; Gray 1989; Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Morrison, 2013).

Relevant to this section of the analysis is the government’s view on collaboration from the national level to the local level. This is what Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad (2010) describes as multi-levelled strategy, where the strategy can be seen through the whole tourism system.

*“Coordination of public tourism development efforts has been strengthened with the establishment of the National Tourism Forum, and the three tourism development companies. But there is still potential in improving and focusing cross-border cooperation between state, regional, municipal and local actors, e.g. through the establishment of binding partnerships, so there will be achieved the greatest possible effect of the deposited funds. It is also central that public/private partnerships are continuously developed and innovated”.*

(Appendix J, Denmark in Growth – The National Tourism Strategy 2016: 29)

KL has a central role in implementation of the Danish tourism strategy at the municipality level, and is the link between the government and the local governments, so the analysis of strategies will now continue by looking at KL’s perception of how collaboration should influence tourism development.

KL – Local Government Denmark

As argued by scholars such as Long, (1994) Elliot, (1997) Godfrey, (1998) and Hall (1998), local governments are becoming more and more involved in tourism planning and development. This is also the case at the local government of Slagelse, but before touching upon the destination level, a closer look at a report made by KL is relevant. KL is a Danish interest organisation, which is a collaboration between Denmark's 98 municipalities. The organization's mission is to support the common interests of the municipalities, and to contribute in helping the municipalities solve administrative and political task in the best possible way. Furthermore, KL is playing the role as negotiator between the local governments and the Danish government, where economic negotiations are the primary focus (kl.dk, 27/4-2017).

KL is making analyses and suggestions on many areas that are of interest to local governments, and tourism is one of these areas. In September 2016, KL published an article concerning how collaboration in the tourism sector is necessary to gain success.

*“Growth in Danish tourism demands that we strengthen public-private cooperation. We need to be better at coordinating and linking our investments so that we make the most of the funds we each invest in creating attractive offers for the tourists.”*

(kl.dk, 27/4-2017).

Following the article came the report, *Attractive Destinations – Tourism Policy Suggestions for Local Governments* (Appendix K, *Attractive Destinations – Tourism Policy Suggestions*), which lists six different suggestions on how local governments can boost tourism at the destination level.

1. **Strong destinations** – *“Collaborate on supporting tourism initiatives and invest in the strong Danish destinations.”*
2. **New opportunities for coastal and nature tourism** – *“To make use of the new opportunities in the law to improve the quality of the coastal tourism products in close cooperation with local actors.”*
3. **Digital tourist information** – *“Marketing is based on the destinations attractions and is closely coordinated with the tourism industry”*

4. **Culture and events as drivers of growth** – *“Linking cultural institutions' experience production with product development in private tourism companies and do joint marketing”*
5. **Competitive companies** – *“Collaborate across using business tourism to strengthen the competitiveness of Danish strength positions, focusing on attracting international investment and labour”.*
6. **Strengthen collaborations with the tourism industry** – *“Set goals for the physical development of the Danish destinations in cooperation with the tourism industry. Work on developing cooperation between municipalities, landowners and professions that can increase investment and thereby lift the tourism product”*

(Appendix K, Attractive Destinations – Tourism Policy Suggestions)

This is a very brief resume of the six suggestions, but what is interesting is the underlined keywords. These words like *collaborate*, *cooperation*, *coordinate* and *joint*, gives a strong indication that collaboration and partnerships is a concept which benefits are well recognized from high up in the tourism organization system. The question is whether or not the national level understands what it requires from the destination level to carry out these well-meaning strategies and suggestions, because it is easy from the national level to advocate collaboration in such an unspecific manner, without a concrete implementation strategy.

The six suggestions span wide in range in relation to focus and strategy, but they have all in common that they can boost tourism. Morrison's (2013) suggestions on where collaboration and partnership will value a destination, links closely to these suggestions as well. He argues that marketing, product development, planning and community relations, all can gain from working together and coordinate (Morrison 2013: 193). Jamal and Gertz (1995) also argues that when a tourism strategy focuses on involving local stakeholders, both private residents and business community, it can contribute to better public/private relationship, and make the development process at a destination go easier (Jamal & Gertz, 1995).

Collaborations and partnerships are being taken seriously by the Danish local government organisation, KL, so what is now interesting to investigate is how collaborations and partnerships is approached by the local government of Slagelse.

## The local government of Slagelse

*“Local governments in many countries are becoming increasingly involved in a variety of activities to boost tourism, including destination marketing, strengthening local tourism industry networks, and offering incentives in order to attract investment in new tourism development”*

(Long, 1994; Elliot, 1997; Godfrey, 1998; Hall, 1998: In Dredge, 2001: 356)

A local government has the responsibility of many elements regarding a destination, which includes many departments within the local government (Dredge, 2001). It is only one department within the local government of Slagelse, the Culture, Leisure and Tourism department, which directly has tourism as focus area, but tourism development demands cooperation among almost every department. This, of course, makes the tourism planning and development a complex task, and do call for successful collaborations to reach objectives. The Culture, Leisure and Tourism department, will from now on be referred to as the *tourism department*, since that is the department within the department that is working with tourism related projects.

VisitDenmark is, as mentioned in the national tourism strategy, a national partnership created by the government, to do tourism development at the national level. A destination partnership, as Morrison (2013) calls it, is also established on destination levels all over Denmark, and Slagelse is not an exception. VisitVestsjælland ([visitvestsjaelland.dk](http://visitvestsjaelland.dk), 28/4-2017) is a partnership between the three municipalities of Slagelse, Kalundborg and Sorø, which primary responsibility is to lead the tourism development. The local government of Slagelse is paying 4 million Danish kroner a year to VisitVestsjælland, which is described as binding partnerships in the Danish tourism strategy (Appendix J, Denmark in Growth – The National Tourism Strategy 2016: 29). According to the 2017 agreement between the three municipalities and VisitVestsjælland, it is expected that VisitVestsjælland takes on the following tasks:

- *“To facilitate the meeting across actors and partners, to develop products and package tourism products*

- *To undertake all external marketing of the total destination*
- *To support professionalization of the actors and commercialization of the products in the destination*
- *Providing an attractive, inspiring, user-friendly and updated platform (visitvestsjælland.dk) available to actors, tourists and potential tourists*
- *Being a trustworthy partner for tourism associations, city offices, tourist inspections and relevant local networks*
- *To be a part of the marketing of single and recurring events, that can attract participants or tourists from a larger geographical area*
- *Being the common knowledge resource regarding tourism*
- *To participate in relevant national and regional collaborations and networks”*

(Appendix H, Agreement with VisitVestsjælland: 1)

An organization like VisitVestsjælland has, in contrast to a political organization like a local government, the possibility to have paying partners/members. Both the national tourism strategy and the tourism development suggestions by KL, is advocating the need of joining resources to stand stronger, and to quote Morrison (2013) again – “1+1 equals more than two” (Morrison, 2013: 192). By having VisitVestsjælland’s partners contribute to a joint marketing collaboration, the marketing effort is much more likely to reach far, and attracting more tourists to the destination.

The three local governments do also have responsibilities in the partnership with VisitVestsjælland:

- *“To actively participate in joint ownership and contribute to strengthening and cooperation*
- *To support the efforts and objectives of the VisitVestsjælland's strategy*
- *To act as a link between the local actors and the company.*
- *To support all parties' understanding of responsibility distribution*
- *Encourage actors to use Kultunaut (kultunaut.dk) as a common platform for all events”*

(Appendix H, Agreement with VisitVestsjælland: 1)

VisitVestsjælland has in the beginning of 2017 published their strategy, and the four main focus areas of the strategy is:

- *“Better collaboration in the destination across tourism actors and municipalities*

- *Network, business and product development in the industry in line with the destination brand*
- *Better utilization, increased capacity and quality of the accommodations*
- *Branding and marketing of the total destination”*

(Appendix L, VisitVestsjælland - 2017 Strategy: 8)

The Development Department within the local government of Slagelse has developed a four-year plan, regarding Tourism Policy Consideration (Appendix M, Tourism Policy Considerations). The report’s objective is to determine what tourism initiatives is relevant over the next four years. This cannot be categorized as a tourism strategy, but it is more functioning as a statement of intent. The reason that a report like this is made in political organisations, is that future project is much more likely to be approved by the city council, if the city council earlier has accepted a report, arguing that these initiatives might be relevant in the future.

*“The coordinated efforts and cooperation between tourism actors in the municipality must be strengthened. This means that effective value chains must be established between transport, accommodation, dining, trade, attractions and events. These value chains are embodied in business concepts that can create comprehensive package solutions for tourists. In 2016, the municipality of Slagelse has initiated the growth initiative "coastal and nature tourism" to strengthen that tourism segment.”*

(Appendix M, Tourism Policy Considerations: 5)

The Tourism Policy Consideration report is not official yet, but it has been approved by the City Council of Slagelse, and will be officially published in August 2017. Again, the collaboration between public and private actors is a key element, as we saw in the national tourism strategy, KL’s suggestion on tourism development, and the destination partnership (Morrison, 2013) between the three municipalities and VisitVestsjælland.

As mentioned above, one of the focus points over the next two years is the coastal and nature tourism project, launched in 2016. It is the tourism department that are working with this project, with Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal as project leader. As a side note, the coastal and nature tourism project is where Christoffer (one of the researchers) is employed as a part time student employee.

The coastal and nature tourism project's vision is to communicate the many experiences the 180-km long coastline provide in municipality of Slagelse. The goal is to create collaboration and development across tourism actors and activities, that will end in bookable experiences that easily can be communicated to the potential tourists. The project runs over a 3-year period, and was launched in 2016. Puk and Christoffer became a part of the project from the start of 2017.

The five main themes of the project are:

- Nature experiences
- Body and mind
- Culinary experiences - locally produced food
- Active holiday
- The sea and the coast

(Appendix N, Coastal and Nature Tourism: 1)

As a department within the local government, the project cannot create commercial tourism products, but the strategy is to create partnerships and collaborations between *“large, as well as small tourism actors, and must help create cohesion in the tourism industry. A connection that is expressed in the way The Municipality of Slagelse is marketed as an active and scenic tourism destination”* (Appendix N, Coastal and Nature Tourism: 8).

Most of the work done with this project can be seen as what Morrison (2013) describes as *Destination Team-building*, because what Puk and Christoffer is doing are facilitation of meetings and workshops, where the objective is to create the right environment for tourism actors to cooperate and create partnerships. The specific initiatives done through the Coastal and Nature Tourism-project will be analysed later.

Tourism associations within the destination of Slagelse

VisitVestsjælland is a commercial organisation with paying partners, who does tourism development and tourism marketing for their partners. What can be argued to be a side-effect of that partnership between the local government and VisitVestsjælland, is that VisitVestsjælland mainly are working for their partners, meaning that you must be a partner to get the benefits of promotion to potential tourist.

Within the municipality of Slagelse there is three tourism associations, which each are a network of tourism actors in Slagelse, Korsør and Skælskør. These destination partnerships (Morrison, 2013), are run by volunteer tourism individuals, who all are using their free time to try and better the collaboration in their local destination. They can be categorised as a LTO, local tourism organisation, which is a term used by Dredge (2013) to describe a local tourism development group. Each of the tourist associations has the disposal of tourism funds given by the local government, and has the responsibility of granting tourism initiatives a financial support.

Many of the board members of each tourist associations are pensioners, which means that the average age is quite high. This may be influencing the level of collaboration between the three, as many of them was also members before the merging of the three old municipalities in 2007. This is subject of interest that will be touched upon and examined later in the analysis.

Even though they might not see themselves as direct stakeholders in tourism, the business associations in Slagelse, Korsør and Skælskør, does also play a role as non-profit tourism organisations. They are the voice of the local business owners, but most the of businesses are not directly involved with tourism. This can influence their willingness to cooperate, since they might have difficulties seeing how tourism can contribute to generating growth, which also in the end affects them.

The strategy from Business Slagelse, which is the business association in Slagelse, does touch upon tourism and collaboration.

- *“We ensure growth in Slagelse city and in The Municipality of Slagelse, by attracting customers/traders and guests/tourists to the area*
- *We optimize cooperation between companies, organizations, schools, associations and Slagelse Municipality”*  
(business-slagelse.dk, 2/5-2017)

Sub conclusion – Official tourism strategies from the nation level to the local level

Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad (2010) argues that there are three main levels, the actor/local level, the destination level and the larger geographical level, and for that reason it is important to incorporate an integrated multileveled strategy (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and

Aarstad, 2010). Through the above run-through of strategies from government tourism strategy, KL's tourism strategy and the local government's strategy, there is a red line in relation to partnerships and collaboration.

According to Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad (2010), tourism must be approached differently at different levels, and when looking at the strategies they become more specific, the closer to the local level it gets.

One of the common themes when looking at all the strategies is collaboration and partnerships. Both the government strategy and KL's strategy are stressing the importance of destination partnerships (Morrison, 2013) and binding partnerships, which has become a part of the strategy from the local government of Slagelse, by co-creation VisitVestsjælland. The partnership is what Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad (2010) terms *inter-destination bridge ties*, since it stretches across the municipality border by being a partnership with the municipalities of Sorø and Kalundborg. KL suggest that joining resources in a partnership like VisitVestsjælland, will make the destination stand stronger in a competitive tourism market.

Coastal and nature tourism seems to be where the government and KL sees potential, and this strategy is adopted by the local government of Slagelse. Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad (2010) argues that by incorporate a destination image and brand, and channelling distributed resources and competencies towards a destination's strength positions, it will lead to destination development.

Through the coastal and nature tourism project, the local government of Slagelse is trying to coordinate tourism initiatives at the destination level and the local level. The strategy is to integrate local actors in networks, which then can lead to tourism products for the tourists.

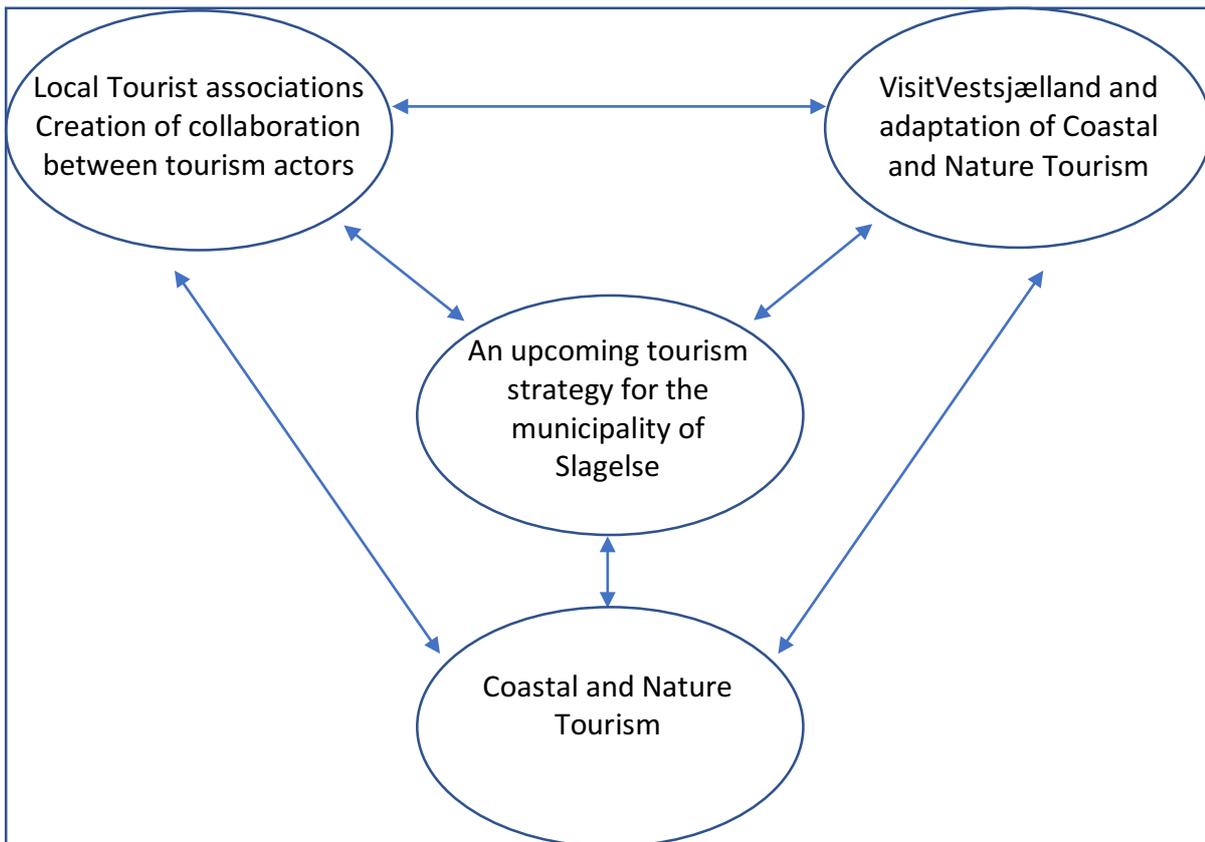


Figure 2 Integrated multileveled strategy (Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad, 2010: p. 280)

As mentioned, the local government of Slagelse does not at this point have a tourism strategy for the future, but do have tourism policy consideration concerning what to focus on. As seen above however (figure 1), tourism development is going on at different levels, where the tourism initiatives have inter-destination ties to both neighbour municipalities and national tourism strategies. The three tourism associations have created local collaboration networks, and collaboration between local actors is a focus area within the coastal and nature tourism project.

Tourism collaboration seems to be of great importance for both the local government, VisitVestsjælland, the tourist associations and the business associations, but what is now interesting to investigate is how well the coordination and collaboration is between these organizations. The collaboration between these can influence how tourism actors perceive the tourism development within the destination.

The next section will look at the initiatives done by the local government of Slagelse, especially the coastal and nature tourism project, to encourage collaboration between tourism actors, both public and private.

### The tourism department's approach to encourage tourism collaboration

In this part of the analysis, a closer look at the methods used by the tourism department to create collaboration among actors, will be presented. Through semi-constructed interviews with actors in the municipality, and an observation study of a workshop, we have gained insight upon how the tourism department are attempting to raise the level of collaboration between tourism actors and what instruments (Dredge, 2016) they are using in the encouragement process. Morrison (2013) argues that *"there are so many diverse tourism stakeholders in a destination that the DMO often has to be proactive in bringing groups of specific people together to deal with particular issues or opportunities"* (Morrison, 2013. P. 192).

#### Workshop – Observation study

On March the 24<sup>th</sup> 2017, the tourism department of Slagelse's coastal and nature tourism project, in collaboration with Landudvikling Slagelse (LAG) and the three tourism associations, facilitated a tourism workshop. The working title of the workshop and the main theme was "How do we create better conditions for tourism in the local area through collaboration?", and it was attended by 82 guests representing different actors coming from various places in the municipality. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the actors represented at the workshop was mainly centred in and around the three largest cities in the municipality: Korsør, Slagelse and Skælskør, and with a few coming from outside those areas.

#### **Timeline and interesting observations**

The flow and timeline of the workshop was following a tight schedule, with the chairman of Landudvikling Slagelse, Troels Brandt as a moderator. He started the workshop by holding a speech about the tourism situation in the municipality and which direction Landudvikling Slagelse want it to go. He spoke about the funds that actors in the municipality have the opportunity to apply for, and informed about the more technical details of the application process. Most interestingly he

emphasised that he prefers to be working with smaller grassroots projects in tourism, rather than “big and shiny tourism plans”. It seemed like he tried to start off on a good note, and by providing the service by explaining the application process, and showing his interest in the smaller tourism actors present, to show them that LAG sees their place in the *“collective responsibility for the ongoing direction of the destination”* (Gray 1989: 236).

The first part of the workshop was dedicated to the presentation of new initiatives and projects which all have received funding from Landudvikling Slagelse. Jamal and Stronza (2009) argues that *“identifying and sharing future collaborative interpretations; appreciating a sense of common purpose”* (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). Also presenting was the coastal and nature project from the municipality of Slagelse which was presented by project leader Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal. She made a brief presentation of the thoughts and ideas behind the project, and encouraged the actors at the workshop to support it, and that they were welcome to contact her if they had any questions concerning the project. She furthermore emphasised, that in order to reach the tourism potential of the destination, actors must unite in collaborations that is not only limited to local areas, but also reaches beyond these. As she described in the interview, she saw different purposes with the workshop, and one of them was to communicate the coastal and nature tourism project to the tourism actors (Appendix G. Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal, Project leader – Coastal and Nature Tourism, 00:04:44.01). She thereby used the workshop as an information instrument (Dredge, 2016).

Following the presentation by Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal, the acting director of VisitVestsjælland, Anette Moss, asked permission to speak. She explained that VisitVestsjælland were there for the actors, and that they will do what they can to help make them more visible. She spoke in a low and nervous tone and people present were complaining that they could not hear what she was saying. Anette Moss did not present anything new initiatives or projects, but instead used her time on speaking about the importance of creating growth in tourism in the destination, and that if the tourism actors have any good ideas, they are always welcome to contact VisitVestsjælland. That last remark interestingly seemed to provoke some deep sighs among some of the audience in the room. Jette Søndergaard, the owner of Hotel Postgaarden in Skælskør, who were sitting opposite us at our table were also shaking her head quietly at the last remark. Important in relation to these nervous

and poorly communicated inputs from Anette Moss, is it to say that VisitVestsjælland are at the moment licking their wounds after a rather turbulent time. The director of VisitVestsjælland over the last couple of years, had been absent for the few last months of 2016, and was dismissed in December 2016. Anette Moss then became the temporary director, a role she clearly does not feel comfortable in. It has also coursed VisitVestsjælland to neglect some responsibilities in relation to their partners, which could be seen in the way some of the tourism actors responded to the presentation.

Following the speech by Anette Moss, three other tourism actors each presented their Landudvikling Slagelse funded projects:

- Gerlev Park have invested in making shelters for bicycle tourists, and they were encouraging other tourism actors to book these and make use of them.
- Guldagergaard spoke about the Ceramics Festival in Skælskør that they have been facilitating for the last couple of years. The festival has been an unexpected success, and is growing bigger each year.
- Ninjaland is a facility for children and childish souls.

The representative from Gerlev Park was the only of the last three project-presenting actors to include the subject of collaboration. Maybe because of this, Troels Brandt of Landudvikling Slagelse after the last presentations briefly mentioned the importance of contributing and sharing in a network.

During the last presentations, it already seemed as if several people in the audience was beginning to lose interest or focus, and was instead looking at their phones or whispering with each other. The planned half hour break at this point therefore seemed to be welcomed by many of the attendees.

After the break, it was time for the last six project presentations:

- Ostebørsen is a farm and dairy in Vemmelev which is specialising in using local products of the best quality.
- Dybkærsgaard has a farm shop that is selling locally produced goods and from their own foundry. They are also renting out bicycles to tourists.

- A very enthusiastic marine biologist from Korsør presents a project where tourists get the opportunity to get a hands-on experience with the wild life of the Great Belt.
- Winter bathing Festival in Korsør. As the name implies, this is a festival for winter bathers and they are hoping to have more tourists visiting.
- Agersø Cultural Centre is presenting the new plans for guided tours on the island of Agersø. The presenter is thanking Landudvikling Slagelse for the funds and for the easy applications process.
- Puk Hvistendal from the municipality is again speaking, and this time more concretely about a project called Bed and Bike. A bicycle route that is running through a large part of the municipality.

A lot of time was used on these presentations of LAG funded tourism actors, which Per Thuesen from the tourism association of Slagelse clearly did not like: *“Then it turns out that a fourth of the meeting is used on presenting the funded projects from Landudvikling Slagelse!? What the hell is that? So, it ended up with 2 x 20 with the workstation rotations where the actors could talk with each other”* (Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association: 00:22:39.00). He felt that the presentations took too much of the time that could have been used on creating collaborations between tourism actors. Per Thuesen saw the workshop as an informational instrument carried out by Landudvikling Slagelse and the tourism department, but has originally hoped it as an organizational instrument (Dredge, 2016). If we link that to what Jette Søndergaard said:

“Well, you get the opportunity to go to regional meetings and workshops for free, and gain access to new information on the tourism area. But I really miss some sort of headline for these meeting - often they just say something like ‘feel free to bring along new ideas and suggestions’, but nothing ever comes out of this.”

(Appendix A, Jette Søndergaard, Postgaarden: 00:19:14.05)

Firstly, this link to Jamal and Getz argument about *“Collaboration for community-based tourism planning will require a perception that decisions arrived at will be implemented”* (Jamal and Getz, 1995: 198). Secondly, the presentations were inspiring and they showed how tourism ideas can become a reality. It also gave some sort of guidance to the workshop, by the presentation from Puk

Kirkeskov Hvistendal telling the audience about the coastal and nature tourism project. It is understandable that concrete collaborations do not emerge from sitting and listening to presentations, but inspirations is much needed in a destination that so strongly need to learn how to collaborate.

After the presentations, it was time for the workshop participants to be divided into five groups with five workstations, spread even out in the outer edges of the room. The five groups would then be given 15 minutes at each workstation before rotating on to the next. There was only planned a half hour, so tourism actors had only time to attend two of the workstations. The themes of the five workstations were:

- Local food
- Art crafts
- Active holiday
- Coast and water
- Local hospitality

During these rotations, instead of attaching ourselves to just one group, we decided to divide and follow different groups so we could get a feeling of the atmosphere among the different actors. We noticed how some actors was a bit more concerned and critical of the tourism situation in the region than we initially thought when the workshop began. At one of the workstations a group was discussing their concerns about the increasing digitalisation of the tourism infrastructure in the region. They were talking about how websites and mobile-apps have become prioritized in favour of the physical and tangible brochures, and how they feel that the municipality is neglecting this part. During the workstations, Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal talk to some ladies about the benefits of TripAdvisor, and how it is a good platform for tourists to look up an attraction or an accommodation. The ladies, who were around their sixties, did not know TripAdvisor, but did at the same time not at all see how anyone one would be using it, since they did not know it themselves.

During the presentations in the first part of the workshop there was not much interaction between the actors, and even though the moderator on many occasions encouraged the participants to ask

questions, most of them did not say anything. Therefore it was interesting to notice how many of them opened up and showed to have some strong opinions and ideas for improvement and development in the tourism area. There was lively discussion about everything from how to improve the visibility of the smaller shop at the destinations, to how local artisans and food producers can be more involved in tourism.

It can be argued that the workstations were opening up too many areas to focus on, for the tourism actors to channel their collaborative thoughts. By having 5 workshops dealing with widely different areas to create collaboration around, may have resulted in sporadic ideas from different actors. Maybe by having a narrower focus point, it could have simplified the collaboration process.



*Picture 2 Tourism actors gathered at one of the workstations during the rotations. (Source: Own picture)*

At another workstation, we witnessed a heated debate, where the chairman of a local angler association in one of the three bigger cities seemed to be quite hot-headed about something. As

mentioned in the methodology chapter, we spoke with a government official during dinner who informed us that the chairman of the angler association was having another agenda than tourism development. He wanted the municipality to be member a fishing organisation that also operates within the field of angler tourism. As a member of this organisation, the municipality would be committing itself to keeping a high standard of its rivers and streams and thus improving the conditions for anglers. The chairman also argued that the fishing organisation would be able to do marketing for angler tourism in the municipality, whereto the government official noted, that such a marketing agreement is already in place with VisitVestsjælland. The official implied that the chairman was only seeking membership of the fishing organisation, because it would improve the angler fishing conditions for the locals.

According to the government official, it is not uncommon that the agendas of some of the actors are more concerning local interests and beneficial development for the locals, and that at workshop is sometimes, for some, seen as a good place to do some lobby activity in that direction.

Morrison (2013) describes the importance of tourism planners involving the local community in the planning process, because it will result in less issues with the community. This argument can also be turned around, because the local community can also have their own reasons, outside the official agenda, for taking part in in planning, as shown in this example. This also tells us something about the *"[...] complex relationships between local government, LTOs, industry and the community."* (Dredge, 2006: 279) and that stakeholders can have memberships of more than one network (ibid.) In this case the relationship is even further complicated by an actor with an agenda not related to tourism, but instead might be exploiting the development of tourism collaborations to gain benefits for his own organisation.

The workstation rotation rounds were the last event of the workshop, and dinner was served after that. After dinner, chairman of Landudvikling Slagelse and moderator of the event, held an ending speech where he thanked the participating tourism actors for a good and profitable workshop. His speech ended with him saying *"[...] the ball is now thrown onto your half of the court."*, thus indicating that it was now up to the tourism actors to build on the collaborations and relationships that had been created during the workshop. *"Feel free to bring along new ideas and suggestions', but nothing ever comes out of this"* (Appendix A, Jette Søndergaard, Postgaarden: 00:19:14.05), as

Jette Søndergaard said. These comments coming from the primary tourism stakeholders, can give the tourism actors the feeling that they from now on are responsible for bringing new ideas, but as Per Thuesen argued, 2x20 minutes cannot change the tourism actors' competences. Jette Søndergaard further described her feeling about these workshops:

*"I participated in a meeting that VisitVestsjælland had arranged for the tourism actors in the region, and we did not receive any "concrete information" at all. Instead they wanted us to write down inputs, but inputs for what?! It was one of these meetings that I would call a 'nonsense meeting' where nothing concrete comes out of it."*  
(Appendix A, Jette Søndergaard, Postgaarden: 00:40:44.00)

According to Jette Søndergaard, this is exactly what always happens at the meetings or workshops – they are filled with good intentions and the participators are bringing up a lot of ideas, but they are never followed up by anyone, thus they are starting over at each meeting. This leads back to what Jamal and Getz (1995) argues: *"Collaboration for community-based tourism planning will require a perception that decisions arrived at will be implemented"* (Jamal and Getz, 1995: 198).

#### Outcomes of the workshop

This part of the analysis section will analyse upon the outcomes of the tourism workshop described above. As noted in the above section, we observed how the actors in different situations interacted differently, and especially during the workstation rotations, dialogue between them was lively and a lot of ideas for improvement and new initiatives was written down on the whiteboards. But one thing is the good intentions and ideas, another thing is how the outcome is, and if it in reality creates collaboration among the actors. According to Morrison (2013), the tourism workshop can be categorised as a measure in internal destination teambuilding. A development initiative like that, should often be carried out by a strong DMO, with the ability to encourage partnerships and collaborations among actors. Through the interviews with actors in the destination, it became clear that there are widely different attitudes towards how such workshops could benefit the destination.

A tourism actor who find herself benefiting from the workshops is Susanne Andersen from Dybkærgaard, who showed a remarkably more positive attitude towards the than Jette

Søndergaard. At Dybkærgaard they have just recently, during the last couple of years, begun to engage themselves in tourism activities and as she explains:

*"[...] because as a newcomer in tourism, it is nice to have some guidance. And the workshops have also been good for us... we have been getting inputs and gotten to meet the others, and it gives you network."*

(Appendix E, Susanne Andersen, Dybkærgaard: 00:09:01.21)

Susanne Andersen thereby sees the workshops and meeting as a welcome opportunity to meet other actors and learn from the more experienced ones. But they have also been successful in using the workshop to establish a collaboration with other tourism actors. During the interview, Susanne mentioned that they at Dybkærgaard are in the process of developing collaborations with other actors in their area:

*"[...] and I am going to have meeting with others in the area, St. Galla and Den Blå Café to develop ideas... something like 'If you rent a bicycle here, you can go visit there or there'. For example, Trelleborg... it is not that far away, and maybe we could mention that in our brochures. We are providing suggestions for tours to the tourists. Maybe they could drive their rented bicycles up to Lisbeth and see her beautiful cows."*

(Appendix E, Susanne Andersen, Dybkærgaard: 00:06:00.19)

On the question of these collaboration initiatives are something they have engaged in by themselves or if they have been encouraged by the local government, Susanne Andersen answered:

*"Yes, it has been with the help of the municipality of Slagelse. It all started with that we were attending a tourism workshop in March. Branka from St. Galla came over to me, and we began talking about making something together. We talked about these tours for example. And since then we have held meetings and developed ideas. And at one of the meetings we had Mie from VisitVestsjælland joining in also."*

(Appendix E, Susanne Andersen, Dybkærgaard: 00:07:27.27)

Here, Susanne Andersen is specifically mentioning the workshop in March as an example of how collaboration have been created between tourism actors.

The interviews with the two actors, Jette Søndergaard and Susanne Andersen, have shown that there are widely different opinions on the usability and outcome of such a workshop. But an interview with Per Thuesen from Slagelse Tourism Association also revealed that the workshop had not been executed and facilitated the way it was intended to be, as briefly touched upon earlier. As the chairman of Slagelse Tourism Association, he was among the initiators and initial entrepreneurs behind the tourism workshop, and initially wanted it to be focused around collaborations between tourism actors. On the day of the workshop Per Thuesen was surprised to see how the time allocation to collaboration activities had been planned. According to him, way too much time was being given to Landudvikling Slagelse and their projects, and as he with a considerably angrier tone explained:

*“[...] fast forward to Gerlev at the workshop in March. Then it turns out that a fourth of the meeting is used on presenting the funded projects from Landudvikling Slagelse!? What the hell is that? So, it ended up with 2 x 20 with the workstation rotations where the actors could talk with each other. That is how little time that was used on the future tourism collaborations in the municipality of Slagelse. And us smaller tourism associations, what did we get out of it? Absolutely nothing!”* (Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association: 00:22:39:00)

As it turns out, it was not a part of the plans that Landudvikling Slagelse should be taking up so much of the time at the workshop. And during the interview with Per Thuesen, it is not difficult to sense that he feels that the workshop was taken over by bigger stakeholders for self-promotion, instead of helping the smaller tourism actors in the municipality. He initially wanted the local government to be the main facilitator for the workshop, and he wanted the mayor to be involved so that actors could feel that tourism is an area that are being supported and listened to from higher instances also:

*“In the beginning, I was saying that it should be the local government who should start it up. I wanted the mayor to be involved also, but then he was late at the workshop, and then I knew that he was not really interested. Tourism is a big business, even in the municipality of Slagelse, and the mayor is like a CEO of that. So, I thought that he should be involved. I had wanted him to say a couple of words. Instead it ended up with*

*being a kind of sales campaign for Landudvikling Slagelse, which is fine, but not at a workshop like that. We need to plan these workshops better.”* (Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association: 00:30:25:07)

In general, Per Thuesen also had a wish that more regular tourism actors had attended the workshop and that there were more “[...] *theorists than practitioners.*” (Ibid.: 00:37:17:28). It is interesting to notice how Per Thuesen is using the term ‘theoretical’ and ‘theorists’ in relation to the tourism meeting and workshops. The ‘theorists’ in his definition in this context, are someone “[...] *placed at some shelves above us where we apparently do not belong.*” (Ibid.: 00:25:58:23). Here he is specifically referring to the tourism department, VisitVestsjælland and Landudvikling Slagelse, who are the ones responsible for making new strategies, allocating bigger funds, and who, according to him, are mostly sitting in offices and rarely taking a hands-on approach to get a feeling of what is really going on with the tourism actors in the municipality.

Per Thuesen’s view on the workshop and the outcome of it, is representing a different approach than that of the two formerly cited tourism actors. Through his work as a chairman of the tourism association in Slagelse, he is representing a link between the slightly higher instances like the tourism department and VisitVestsjælland, and then the smaller tourism actors. He was also a part of the initial planning process of the workshop, and therefor became a witness to how the process slowly was being taken over by what he calls the ‘theoretical’, until eventually under the workshop itself, to be taken over by Landudvikling Slagelse who, in his opinion, used it as a kind of marketing tool to promote themselves.

#### Tourism stakeholder network

In the planning process of the workshop, Puk Kirkeskov Hvisendal from the coastal and nature tourism project, facilitated a meeting where tourism associations, business associations and VisitVestsjælland was invited. Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad (2005) argues that all destination planning and development must include all key public and private tourism actors to be efficient, so it was interesting to investigate Puk Kirkeskov Hvisendal’s reason behind including these in the planning process:

*“That workshop had different purposes. First of all, there had been a longing wish from the small tourism associations to be involved because they felt that they had been kept outside. So that is why they were at the meeting. The workshop was also held so everybody could be informed at once about the new project, but also to bring a message about that the local government really want to do something about tourism now. The reason why VisitVestsjælland was at the meeting was of course because they are our marketing partner.”*

(Appendix G. Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal, Project leader – Coastal and Nature Tourism, 00:04:44.01)

Linking her response to collaborative theory is quite interesting, since she mentions the benefits the other stakeholders being involved in the planning process, but it seems like it is only for their sake. Jamal and Getz (1995) argues that stakeholders must feel that they have some kind of saying in the planning process, but that was not the case during the meeting. Per Thuesen from the tourism association in Slagelse even complained about how he felt the workshop was going in a different direction, compared to what he originally had plan, because as he said:

*“The idea of this network workshop comes from me, because I thought that we needed something like that. So, we held a meeting to plan the workshop. During the meeting after a short time, I had to stop and say that 'this is becoming too academic now'. That was not the plan at all - I wanted to plan a network workshop and instead we ended up hearing about strategies. And that is fine, but for another meeting.”*

(Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Tourism Association of Slagelse, 00:22:39.00)

Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal’s reason behind involving the stakeholders was exactly how Per Thuesen experienced the meeting, but unfortunately that was not positive. Per Thuesen had hoped to reach solutions to the different agendas, *“by dealing constructively with differences”*, and a *“joint ownership of decisions is involved”* (Gray 1989: 236).

Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal showed though the interview that she strongly believes that the other stakeholder groups should be a part of planning network, but it seems like it is more the purpose of informing them, rather than letting them be a part of the planning process.

According to Puk, *“there is no doubt that there is a distance between the work that we and VisitVestsjælland do, and then what the tourism associations are doing”* (Appendix G. Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal, Project leader – Coastal and Nature Tourism, 00:10:25.06). Rhodes (1997) has touched upon this subject, and describes how issues often emerge when public stakeholders and private stakeholders are joining in networks. Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad *“implies that neither government nor business is in charge of the process but that the interdependency between them may be crucial”* (Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, 2005: 32). Other scholars (Gray 1989; Lankford & Howard, 1994; Waddock, 1989; Jamal and Getz, 1995) has also talked about the interdependency between actors, and it might be here the leading stakeholders is lacking. VisitVestsjælland are commercial and their goal is to financially profit, and the tourism and business associations has the interest of their local community to represent, and the tourism department has a long-term objective.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May, Puk and Christoffer facilitated a follow-up meeting in relation to the workshop, where the outcome of the workshop was discussed. Besides evaluation on the workshop, new initiatives from the coastal and nature tourism project was discussed. As Puk described it with the first meeting in March, this meeting was also used to inform the other stakeholders about what is going on, rather than including them.

Even though Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal and Per Thuesen does not completely agree about the purpose if these stakeholder network meetings, and one is having long-term objectives and the other having short-term objective, it appears that both sides see the benefits of the network. Puk can involve the stakeholders in the coastal and nature tourism project, even though they have little to say in relation to discussion-making (Gray 1989). It is the idea that the tourism and business associations, VisitVestsjælland and the tourism department shall meet a couple of times a year in the tourism stakeholder network, and discuss the ongoing tourism development

To analyse this tourism stakeholder network further, Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad’s (2005) framework will be used. It contains three aspects of a partnership, but can successfully be adapted to a collaborative planning and development network as the one analysed in the section. The first aspect is *inclusiveness*, which look at the stakeholders involved and the role they are playing, and

why they are a part of the network. The second is *accountability*, which focuses on what responsibilities each stakeholder has, and finally it leads us to the last one, *coherence*, which is the stakeholders' ability to collaborate, and relates to understanding of inter-dependence (Jamal and Getz, 1995) and recognition of common issues, and the benefit of sharing resources. As Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad argues, *"The presence of partnerships does not guarantee that they make a difference, let alone add value to the process"* (Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, 2005: 33).

### **Inclusiveness**

As emphasised both in the national tourism strategy and in KL's tourism suggestions for municipalities, collaboration between tourism and the business society must be strengthened, and by including both tourism associations and business associations, the tourism stakeholder network can ensure that they at least communicate. What is interesting here is where the line is between tourism and business actors. For example, all the restaurants in the centre of Slagelse are not considered a part of the tourism actor network, but during the summer a significant amount of revenue comes from tourism. Hopefully by joining the business and tourism associations, the gap between them can be narrowed. Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal's reason behind involving these associations is to communicate the work done through with her project, since the associations is the communication channel to the local actors.

The last tourism stakeholder who is a part of the network is VisitVestsjælland, and their basis for being in the network is their role as marketing organisation. VisitVestsjælland is also touching upon some development areas in relation to tourism, so the network is also functioning as a coordination network between the key tourism stakeholders. As Morrison (2013) describes it:

*"There are so many diverse tourism stakeholders in a destination that the DMO often has to be proactive in bringing groups of specific people together to deal with particular issues or opportunities"*

(Morrison, 2013. P. 192).

### **Accountability**

Without it being official, it appears that the responsibility of the associations is to focus on the short-term objectives that is of interest to their local actors. Puk, and the coastal and nature tourism

project's responsibility is to communicate the what is being work on in relation to the long-term objective, which is sometimes conflicting with the associations because, as Per Thuesen argues, they feel left out. Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad (2005) describes this area *"This is a highly sensitive issue that might threaten the legitimacy of partnerships, and this is where the distinction between public and private is most evident, and also most controversial"* (Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, 2005: 33). This is something that was shown through the interviews with Per Thuesen and Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal, as they did not seem to be on the same page. Even though it courses issues, it is important that both short-term and long-term objectives are being manage at a destination, and it can be difficult for one organisation to be in charge of both. It is there for arguable that the stakeholders involved in this tourism stakeholder network must accept their differences in objectives, and as Gray (1989) argues *"Solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences"* (Gray 1989: 236).

### **Coherence**

In the tourism stakeholder network, it appears that there are two groups. The voluntary business and tourism associations on one side, and VisitVestsjælland and the tourism department on the other side. As previously discussed, one of the reasons are the difference in objectives, but another is the level of resources they possess. The fact that the associations is run by voluntary workers can make it difficult to get them to be 110% involved in initiatives, which is understandable. Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal also mentions these issues when voluntary associations move in to the planning process of a commercial market (Appendix G. Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal, Project leader – Coastal and Nature Tourism, 00:10:25.06).

If all stakeholders could be ensured a financial growth by supporting initiatives, the collaboration might be going easier. Another issue is what Wood and Gray, (1991) is arguing, that stakeholder is autonomous, due to the fact even though they at some level are collaboration in the network, they still have their own interest to care for first.

The tourism stakeholder network is benefitting the collaboration between the key stakeholders at the destination, which hopefully will benefit the collaboration between the local actors. Even though there are issues in relation to objective, it is important for the destination's further

development that the stakeholders are collaborating, and each takes responsibility in relation to their role in the network.

Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal was asked if she felt that tourism stakeholder network was something that should be maintained:

“Yes, because it can help remove the barriers in the different areas of the municipality. Because it seems like the tourism actors know how to collaborate, so the next step is to make the association and organisational level capable of collaborating. So, if you for example make a winter bathing festival in Korsør, then you ask the surrounding areas if they want to join in and maybe you can triple the number of visitors. So, I definitely think that it is something that should be continued. And I actually think that it is something that VisitVestsjælland should be more involved in.”

(Appendix G. Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal, Project leader – Coastal and Nature Tourism, 00:06:02.01)

In this section of the analysis, the instruments used by the local government to encourage collaboration between tourism actors was examined. Two instruments of collaboration encouragement were identified: A tourism workshop and facilitation of tourism stakeholder network for the tourism planning stakeholders on the destination level. These methods were initially thought of as organisational instruments to encourage collaborations, but with the inclusion of Landudvikling Slagelse the instruments were led towards a more informational level with promotion of own projects which. The chairman of Slagelse LTO was particularly dissatisfied with this process and felt that they had moved too far away from the original intentions.

Hopefully by further developing the tourism stakeholder network these misunderstandings of intentions can be limited, and the collaboration in the destination level can strengthened.

### Collaboration in the local tourism actor level

Through our literature review, we have looked at the different collaborations and partnerships there exists within a destination. In this section of the analysis, we want to analyse upon how tourism actors perceive collaboration and partnership initiatives, and how they experience collaboration between tourism actors, tourism networks and the tourism development organisations.

As Dredge (2006) argues, tourism networks, can be hard to identify since they can be both formal and informal, and actors can be part of different networks and collaborations at the same time. The same thing goes with collaborations and partnerships, but by studying the tourism network of Slagelse closely, different kinds of collaboration emerged. When actors are part of different network, it often brings along different interests. An example of this is the angler at the workshop, who clearly, under cover of being interested in angler tourism, lobbied for his own local angler network.

Many scholars have described the benefits of collaboration and partnerships (Dredge, 2006; Morrison, 2013; Jamal and Gertz, 1995; Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad, 2010; Van der Duim, 2007), which can convince tourism actors to join in collaborative networks, but *“evidence is lacking on how actors choose to cooperate”* (Beritelli, 2011: 607). By analysing the interviews with tourism actors, it is hoped to gain an understanding of how tourism actors perceive collaboration.

Two different types of collaborations have emerged through the research: the collaborations actively created by the tourism department or VisitVestsjælland, and the collaborations create by the tourism actors themselves.

#### Networks created by destination team building

Every tourism actor who was interviewed, was a partner at VisitVestsjælland, which means that they are a part of a larger tourism network. Than is purely a quince dense, and not something we had planned for. There were different kinds of tourism actors interviewed, such as hotels, campsites and rental services, so it must mean that VisitVestsjælland has a wide diversity of partners. Boeslunde Camping, Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre and Dybkærsgaard’s perception of VisitVestsjælland’s tourism network, and the perceived benefits of it, was quite positive. Susanne from Dybkærsgaard describes how VisitVestsjælland has helped them as a new tourism actor:

*“It has been beneficial for us. Because as a newcomer in tourism, it is nice to have some guidance. And the workshops have also been good for us. We have been getting inputs and gotten to meet the others, and it gives you network.”*

(Appendix E, Susanne Andersen, Dybkærsgaard, 00:09:01.29)

Susanne's motivation for joining the workshops was the competencies she would get access to from the other attendees as a new tourism entrepreneur, but it was also to expand her network. She further tells us that an employee from VisitVestsjælland gave her the idea to start her bike rental business, and by that helped her to develop her product.

Hans Larsen, from Boeslunde Camping did also mention the benefits of a good network between businesses like his own, a network he got through VisitVestsjælland's workshops. He describes how him and the other campsites in the area are sending tourists between each other, if their campsites are fully booked. He further points out how important that is, because if tourists get the feeling that it is too hard to find a place to stay in the area, then they will not come back (Appendix B, Hans Larsen, Boeslunde Camping, 00:02:40.06). This argument is interesting because it indicates that he and the other campsites are seeing their tourism businesses as a part of a larger picture. He knows that it does not only matter to have a great campsite for tourists, the tourists' overall perception of the service at the destination as a whole, is equally as important.

Tine Jensen from Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre, had a statement that elaborates the point Hans Larsen was talking about. She explains:

*"Right now, through VisitVestsjælland, we are working on improving the collaborations between different actors in the municipality. We need to help each other bringing attention to the different things and places that you can visit and experience in the area. We have a great potential for other actors in the area who can benefit from our visitors for example. For example, there should be no problem for us in advertising for canoe rental or bike rental places, because in the end we will all benefit from it."*

(Appendix B, Tine Jensen Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre, 00:03:41.09)

This is what Gray (1989) lists as one of the criteria for a successful collaboration. He argues that *"the stakeholders must have collective responsibility for the ongoing direction of the destination"* (Gray, 1989: 236), and it seems like Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre and Boeslunde Camping are aware of that. Jamal and Getz (1995) has this inter-actor responsibility as their second proposition on how a collaboration between stakeholders will benefit a destination. *"Collaboration will require recognition of individual and/or mutual benefits to be derived from the process"* (Jamal and Getz, 1995: 197). The problem with interdependent collaborate networks as these, are that the tourism

actors involved cannot be guaranteed that their involvement will benefit them (Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, 2005: 33) . A collaborate arrangement is therefore also a matter of trust, and having the courage to take part in it.

The tourism actors we interviewed seems to appreciate the benefits of being in a larger organised network, as we will categorise VisitVestsjælland's partner-network as. It came as a bit of a surprise that the actors' general relationship with VisitVestsjælland was so positive, since the early stages of research has shown some rumours that tourism actors were unsatisfied with the tourism organisation. The reason for this dissatisfaction should be rooted in that tourism actors did not hear from VisitVestsjælland after they became partners. To this, Hans Larsen from Boeslunde Camping said:

*"I have always gotten the help I needed, whether it was technical support to my homepage, or question about marketing. I think the reason that actors might not feel they receive guidance, is because they are not putting an effort into trying to get answers. VisitVestsjælland has a lot on their plate, so actors cannot expect them to just drop by on their own to solve their problems."*

(Appendix B, Hans Larsen, Boeslunde Camping, 00:06:10.21)

It is hard to find the motivation behind why there perhaps should have been some actors being disappointed with VisitVestsjælland, but his argument about being proactive in a partnership is hard to argue with.

One actor who is not happy about VisitVestsjælland, is Jette Søndergaard from Hotel Postgaarden, but she still chooses to be a partner. *"Right now, we are running with the cheapest partnership "package" from VisitVestsjælland, and I cannot tell if we are getting any value from it"* (Appendix A, Jette Søndergaard, Hotel Postgaarden, 00:15:41.11).

So, Jette Søndergaard does not see the same benefits as Hans Larsen and Tine Jensen, which Gray (1989) and Jamal and Getz (1995) argues must be recognised by actors involved in a collaboration, for them to see the value. We asked Jette Søndergaard what her partnership package at VisitVestsjælland contained, and she said:

*“Well, you get the opportunity to go to regional meetings and workshops for free, and gain access to new information on the tourism area. But I really miss some sort of headline for these meetings. Often, they just say something like ‘feel free to bring along new ideas and suggestions,’ but nothing ever comes out of it.”*

(Appendix A, Jette Søndergaard, Hotel Postgaarden, 00:19:14.05)

The fact that she still is a partner at VisitVestsjælland, but does not see the benefits, is something that unfortunately was not investigated further. The reason could be that she still is a member because of a lack of a better solution. A tourism actor like a hotel does not want to stand alone, and the fact that she is still a part of the largest tourism network gives an indication that she believes in the whole *“1+1 equals more than two”* (Morrison, 2013).

When we talked to Jette Søndergaard she gave the impression that she attends all tourism meetings, workshops and conferences in the destination, but she still has the feeling that she does not get any value out of them. At the tourism workshop, arranged by the coastal and nature tourism project and Landudvikling Slagelse, as mentioned in the observation study, we had the pleasure of sitting at the same table as her. As it was also touched upon in earlier in the analysis, it was noted how she showed almost a resigning attitude and was shaking her head when the moderator talked about how this workshop would generate growth in the tourism destination. It was also interesting to notice if she during the workstation rotations would contact other actors, and actively try to expand her network that could lead to collaborations. This was not the case, and instead she seemed to keep to herself during these rotations.

This behaviour from Jette Søndergaard can be linked to what Hans Larsen was emphasising; You must be proactive in a network, because you cannot expect people to carry you to growth without being an active part of a collaboration.

Her argument about her missing a sort of headline for these meetings is something we have heard before. Waddock (1989) argues that actors involved in collaborations needs clear recognition of issues, for the to collaborate towards a solution. But it can be hard to set a headline for a workshop that does speak to all tourism actors at a destination. Jette Søndergaard told during the interview, that she believed that the destination should be promoted as a Viking destination, H.C. Andersen

destination and Matador destination from the old Danish tv-show. If a headline for a collaborate workshop gets to specific, it can course some actors to stay home because they do not see their business fit in to the program. VisitVestsjælland's workshops, and the coastal and nature tourism workshop, all have carried the same theme; "lets create collaborations", but not a concrete agenda on how to do it.

As touched upon earlier in the analysis, is facilitating a collaboration between Dybkærgaard and Ostebørsen. Susanne Andersen told in the interview that during the workshop, she and Branka Lugonja (a glass artist) from St. Galla Glaskunst, started talking:

*"It started with that we were attending a tourism workshop in March. Branka from St. Galla came over to me, and we began talking about making something together. We talked about these tours for example. And since then we have held meetings and developed ideas. And at one of these meetings we had Mie from VisitVestsjælland joining in also."*

(Appendix E, Susanne Andersen, Dybkærgaard, 00:07:27.27)

She further describes how the partnership is a classic partnership, where tourists can rent bikes at Dybkærgaard and then get a sort of discount at St. Galla and the Blå Café. This is an example of tourism actors being proactive, and getting value out of workshop. The open-minded approach seemed to be more productive than Jette Søndergaard's time on her phone during the workshop. Selin and Chavez (1994) has touched upon individuals' attitude in a collaborative network, and it can easily be adapted to the establishment of it as well. In their research, it was shown that networks with individuals who were motivational, committed, enthusiastic, had patience, were open minded and had an ability to get other people excited, were much more likely to succeed.

The next section of the analysis will be examining the collaborations created by the tourism actors themselves, and how they were created, and how the actors perceive these collaborations.

### Networks created by the tourism actors themselves

Most of the collaborations and partnerships that has been identified, has been facilitated by VisitVestsjælland, through their partner workshops. A tendency discovered is that these collaborations only appears between actors that are geographically close to each other. Of course, that might be for practical reasons, but it can influence the strengthening of the destination as one joint destination. It causes the destination to be divided into many smaller destinations, where the actors protect their own local destination. Another argument could be that the tourism actors does not recognise the tourists' mobility within a destination. Most tourists do not sit in their rented holiday house all week, but seek to explore the destination they are visiting. A more open-mindedness to encourage tourists to reach all areas of the destination, could be done through long distance collaborations.

Interestingly it was found that one of the larger tourism actors in the municipality Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre, found it hard to create tourism partnerships with other tourism actors:

*“Well, you can say that one often meets someone and then we talk about how it could be nice to do or create something together, but it is hard for us to figure out how to do it. Collaborations between actors can often be complicated: Are we allowed to take money for advertising for a canoe rental for example? Do we make a written agreement? Because we of course all want to make a little profit from these collaborations. As I understand it, there are a lot of actors who are interested in collaborations, and VisitVestsjælland makes it easier for us.”*

(Appendix B, Tine Jensen, Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre, 00:05:39.20)

So, Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre is missing some sort of guidance, and VisitVestsjælland is providing the competencies for them to successfully create collaborations. It is again important to remember that you must be, as Musholm are, a paying partner to receive these benefits. It is interesting that Musholm, as one of the larger tourism actors, are saying that they are lacking the competences to create actor to actor collaborations. The lack of competences at each tourism actor, could be the reason why collaboration between actors is not so widespread, and actors may also not recognise the benefits it can bring.

In all of the interviews conducted for this research, Skælskør is always being referred to as a local community who support each other, and where collaboration comes easier than in other parts of the destination. Jette Søndergaard from Hotel Postgaarden in Skælskør, talks about two events, The Pottery Festival and Drengerøvsaften (an event for mostly men, with beers, old cars and bikes, and the shops are open all night), which started out as small events. The two events have grown almost to a too large of a scale for the city, and the reason it has been possible is because *“there are a lot of passionate people in Skælskør who are always willing to help in setting up events and such”* (Appendix A, Jette Søndergaard, Hotel Postgaarden, 00:30:07.28).

As mentioned earlier, we have found that the municipality of Slagelse is divided in to smaller local destinations, which are more or less successful in their tourism development. The initial approach was to look at collaborations in the municipality as a whole, but there is a tendency towards that the cities inside the municipality seem to be working as independent local destinations. The next section will therefore look at these local destinations within the destination, and look at how collaborations are at the local level.

#### [The old municipality borders – local tourism networks](#)

This section will look at the cities of Skælskør, Korsør, Slagelse and Bisserup, since they the interviews has shown that the locals has not forgotten how the they were separate municipalities before the merging of municipalities in 2007. Bisserup, was in fact a part of the old municipality of Skælskør, but is has been discovered that they, maybe because of their geographical location in the outskirts of the municipality, has become their own local destination.

It must be recognised that the communities still feel a strong connection to how they used to be independent municipalities, and it is therefore interesting to investigate how it affect tourism collaboration. Both in relation to how their local tourism community is functioning, but more impertinently, how collaboration between the cities is affected by the merging.

## Skælskør

The city of Skælskør has been mentioned as a textbook example of how community based tourism should play out. Jette Søndergaard from Hotel Postgaarden has, as before mentioned, describes how the local community is supporting initiatives, and how she *“on a drive through, came across this little wonderful place called Skælskør. It had a lot of interesting and charming features for the tourists, such as a cosy harbour in the middle of the city, and had a lovely beach not far away from here with a fantastic view to the small islands, the Great Belt Bridge and the ships passing by”* (Appendix A, Jette Søndergaard, Hotel Postgaarden, 00:01:27.19). The scenery, and the fact that there was an abandoned building right next to the harbour, convinced her to start her hotel.

The area around Skælskør is something special, and the tourism experience is a lot different than going to a larger city like Slagelse. It is a more rural tourism area, and promote a more relaxed atmosphere as Susanne from Dybkærgaard also points out:

*“Henrik (husband) and I was in Skælskør two days ago - when you arrive in the city... the culture, landscape and nature invites a certain kind of people. And they have great natural light in Skælskør - that is really something an artist is appreciating. So of course, they have a lot of artists in the city. There are no concrete housings or big main roads.”*

(Appendix E, Susanne Andersen, Dybkærgaard, 00:02:08.23)

As mentioned by Susanne Andersen, Skælskør has many artists among their residence, and their galleries are attractions in themselves. These actors have created a network (kunstkit.dk), to join their resources in a stronger attempt to attract art-interested tourist to the local destination.

The fact that the area is quite unique, compared to other areas in the municipality, can be an explanation on why their internal collaboration are so successful. They have something valuable to protect, and their rather small size might make initiatives easier to manage, since there are not so many stakeholders involved. Jamal and Getz (1995: 197) talks about how stakeholders need to recognise the benefits from developing community based tourism, and how the local community play an important role. Jette Søndergaard has mentioned how local residents are supporting initiatives, but different interest groups are also collaboration and joining resources. An example of this, is the newly launched website (skonne-skaelskor.dk, 19/5-2017), where residents and tourists

can get information about shopping, restaurant, events and so on. They even created an app for mobile users, and it is all created and financed by local businesses and associations. Skælskør as a city has their own specific site on VisitVestsjælland's website, but apparently, that was not enough. It can also be seen as way for Skælskør to be independent, and not has to rely on destination tourism organisation. This again shows the strength of the community in Skælskør, and how tourism actors and the business community can work together. Something that was mentioned in both the national tourism strategy and KL's tourism suggestions, as way to boost tourism.

It almost seems like that the community in Skælskør are so proud of what the relatively small community has established in relation to events and activities for tourists, that they see themselves as "better" than the other parts of the destination. They rely so much on tourism, and it appears that they do not trust the destination level tourism organisation's ability to lead their development, so they have taken the responsibility by creating so many local initiatives. This course the local destination of Skælskør to drift away from the idea of Slagelse being one joint destination.

Per from Slagelse Tourism Association was asked about merging the three tourism associations, and in his answer, he described how well the tourism community in Skælskør is functioning, which is the result of a partnership between the tourism association and the business association. In some way, it seemed like he envied the way the community in Skælskør is so well-functioning. According to Per Thuesen, the fact that the community in Skælskør are so coordinated in relation to tourism development and supporting each other, is one of the reasons way he does not see Skælskør ever want to merge with the other tourism associations (Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association, 00:52:40.16). At the rate collaboration is emerging within Skælskør, it is understandable that they do not what to get closer to Korsør, since they might fear that Korsør's lacking ability to collaborate can influence what Skælskør has established.

#### Bisserup

In Bisserup, Toni Andersen from the town council was interviewed, originally to investigate why none of the tourism actors from the area attended the tourism workshop. What was surprisingly found, was a well-functioning small town with a thriving tourism life. They have an active harbour, an inn with accommodations, a campsite, two restaurants, a fish shop who deliver smoked fish to

the most prominent restaurants in Copenhagen, and a very well-functioning local community with 550 residents.

The town council which Toni Andersen represents arranges many events throughout the year. According to Toni, the tourism actors in Bisserup have a healthy relationship, and are coordination events together, but she would not describe it as a tourism network (Appendix D, Toni Andersen, Local Council Bisserup, 00:15:18.09). It appears that the town council is partly a tourism network, and that might be enough considering the town's relatively small size. It was learned that Bisserup is under the Skælskør Tourism Association, but they are not engaged in any active communication or activities together. We believe that the lack of communication between Bisserup and the tourism association in Skælskør, is due to the fact that both towns are more interested in protecting their own local destination. The two towns are also quite similar in relation to their tourism product, which might have coursed some competition between the two.

Toni described how attractive Bisserup is for tourists, which causes the town to be packed with visitors during the summer. An outcome of this has been that they in the community feel that they actually have too many tourists, as Toni Andersen explained:

*“Yes, I actually believe that. Personally, I do not go to the beach here in the summer months, and I know that others stay away from there too. There are simply too many people.”*

(Appendix D, Toni Andersen, Bisserup Town Council: 00:08:27:12)

Jamal and Getz (1995) has this as one of their propositions for community based tourism:

*“Tourism development that exceeds the carrying capacity of the economic, natural, and sociocultural environment will impact negatively on the overall tourism industry of the community, due to the close interrelations of the elements within the community's tourism system.”*

(Jamal and Getz, 1995: 197)

Tourists interferes with the everyday life of the residence, and it seems like a bit of a dilemma for them. As Toni describes, they are clearly proud of their ability to attract tourists, and in a small

community like theirs, all the wonderful restaurants and shops could not survive without the many visitors during the summer.

We told Toni about how VisitVestsjælland market the destination to potential tourists, and if they were being marketed. She answered: *“I think we should be a little careful because we are a small place - careful not to be too visible”* (Appendix D, Toni Andersen, Local Council Bisserup, 00:13:48.19).

After the interview, Christoffer grabbed the opportunity to talk to her about a summer calendar Puk and Christoffer are trying to create. They are collecting events from all over the municipality, so the tourists know what is going on during their stay. In context to Toni’s earlier answer about being careful, she told Christoffer that she could not give that information before consulting with the rest of town council.

Bisserup is without a doubt a well-functioning local destination, which exactly receive the right number of tourists each year, maybe even too many – and they are actively trying not to promote themselves further. A reason for their strong community could come from the merging of municipalities, since they originally wished to be a part of Næstved, instead of Slagelse. They are geographically a long distance from Slagelse, and do not, according to Toni Andersen, feel a part of the municipality of Slagelse. They actually feel in-between two municipalities, which have forced them to create their own strong local community. If it is the general perception in Bisserup, they have found common ground, and are now working together to solve jointly recognised issues.

#### Korsør

It has been hard to really get to the bottom of the tourism situation in Korsør. From other parts of the municipality we have heard that Korsør is perceived as the ugly duck of the three cities of Slagelse, Korsør and Skælskør, in relation to collaboration with the goal of develop tourism. This view that Korsør does not wish to be part of a major tourism cooperation, is rooted in that their tourism association is not willing to attend meetings, or participate in strengthening collaboration between the municipality and tourism associations. As touched upon in the methodology chapter, we have tried to get an interview with the chairman of the local tourism association in Korsør to give his side of the story, but he has not responded to our mails or calls.

Susanne Andersen from Dybkærsgaard had an interesting view on why collaborations in Korsør is hard to establish:

*“It has always been that way in Korsør. It is divided in to Korsør and Halsskov. There is the beautiful side of Halsskov and then the more boring and bleak side that is Korsør - and you have to pay attention to both of these sides when you want tourism to grow.”*  
(Appendix E, Susanne Andersen, Dybkærsgaard, 00:03:05.03)

Korsør used to be two separate towns years back, but got merged in to one city – Korsør.

Per Thuesen from the tourism association in Slagelse also had something to say about the situation in Korsør:

*“There is also a problem with Halsskov and Korsør - they are almost enemies, and when you cannot even unite a city, how hard will it then be to unite a municipality?”*  
(Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association, 00:52:40.16).

The fact that Korsør used to be two cities is influencing their motivation to collaboration, which seems quite silly to be honest, but the same thing goes with the old municipality borders as will be analysed later.

The LTO – local tourism organization as Dredge describes, are the peak body of a local tourism destination. They should be the link in-between actors and the link between private tourism actors and the public tourism department (Dredge, 2006: 270). They should encourage openness and collaborations, but it seems like they are doing far from that. Jamal and Getz are arguing the same thing:

*“A convener is required to initiate and facilitate community-based tourism collaboration. The convener should have the following characteristics: legitimacy, expertise, resources, plus authority, and may be derived from a government agency, an industry firm, or group such as the local Chamber of Commerce, or the local tourist organization”*  
(Jamal and Getz, 1995: 198)

The chairman of Korsør Tourism Association is in fact a member of the local government's city council, so the fact that he does not support tourism collaboration and development, even become more absurd. Puk and Christoffer does also have problems getting him to attend tourism strategy meeting with the tourism department and the business associations, so it is not only actors he neglects to collaborate with.

## Slagelse

When we look at Slagelse as a city, tourism has not been a priority for the businesses. Slagelse has a well-functioning business community, and that might be the reason why tourism has not been prioritised. Of the three larger cities in the municipality, it is Slagelse there has the fewest amount of actual tourism actors, like museums and hotels, but has more cafés, restaurants and nightlife. If we look at Skælskør and Bisserup, the revenue tourism brings to the community is why there is so many businesses that can survive, which contributes to the quality of the everyday life of the residents. Slagelse is not dependent on tourists, or they might not recognise how many tourists taking daytrips to the city from other areas of the destination. Per Thuesen from the local tourism association argues that they, in relation to tourism development, *"[...] have the hardest conditions for tourism because we have not been that used to it before"* (Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association, 00:09:29.01).

Per Thuesen seem to be a man with his heart in the right place when it comes to tourism development, and it is evident that he is putting a lot of time and effort in to supporting the tourism network of Slagelse. We told him about the national and KL's tourism strategy, and how they both stressing the importance of tourism actors collaborating with the business community. We asked him what his thoughts were on that kind of collaboration:

*"To be honest, it works like shit. There I said it. We tried to sit down and talk with Business Slagelse. They want to open a new business office somewhere here in Slagelse - and I also want to open a new tourism office, and that is totally dumb that we are going to sit in two different places. The customers are almost the same, because the businesses in the city are also benefitting from the tourist who buys their products. So why don't we combine these things?"*

(Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association, 00:18:25.08)

The tourism association in Slagelse is one of the reasons why tourism in the city of Slagelse, and the whole municipality, is moving in the right direction. Per Thuesen as chairman is without a doubt the main reason that the tourism association is having a good relationship with the actors, due to the time he is putting in to it. Everyone we talked to during our research, mentioned him in one way or the other. Susanne from Dybkærsgaard described how much she appreciated the collaboration with him:

*“Yes, he was one of our very first contacts, which other actors are also saying. He is very good, and has a great approach. We met him one time in Sorø, at a meeting that VisitVestsjælland was facilitating in 2015. A short time after that, he came to visit us here at Dybkærsgaard. He came in and we had a cup of coffee and he just was so down to earth.”*

(Appendix E, Susanne Andersen, Dybkærsgaard, 00:18:18.02)

She further said that she did not understand how he can put so much effort in to a voluntary task. Per Thuesen is equerry for the royal family on Copenhagen, so he must have a busy schedule. After Per Thuesen became the chairman of Slagelse Tourism Association, he established a mentor arrangement for the tourism actors. Each of the board members is paired up with a few tourism actors, so the actors always know who to contact in the case that they need some guidance. Linked to what Susanne Andersen said above about Per Thuesen being down to earth, she also described how difficult it is for a new tourism actor to figure out who to contact, and who has the responsibilities of what areas - local government, VisitVestsjælland or the tourism association (Appendix E, Susanne Andersen, Dybkærsgaard, 00:20:17.11).

The mentor arrangement from the tourism association can be linked to what Jamal and Getz (1995) calls a *tourism convener* (Jamal and Getz, 1995: 198), a person who has the competencies, knowledge and authority. Of course the board members from the tourism association does not possess any authority, but they can help guiding in the right direction.

## Collaboration between the four cities

The tourism associations play a central role in the overall tourism network of the municipality of Slagelse. They are each representing the interest from the local actor level, and are the connection to the tourism department, by being a part of collaborative networks with both the tourism department and the three business associations and VisitVestsjælland.

Unfortunately for the development of collaborations across cities, (666) it seems the relationship between the three cities of Slagelse, Korsør and Skælskør are not that good, and Jette Søndergaard from Skælskør are even describing the relationship between Skælskør and Korsør as a rivalry (appendix A, Jette Søndergaard, Hotel Postgaarden, 00:27:26.23).

Per Thuesen from the tourism association in Slagelse explained his thoughts on why there is the problematic relationship between the cities, when we asked him if he could still feel the old municipality borders and how they might affect collaboration:

*“Yes, indeed. One must acknowledge that. They are still there. I think that Skælskør and Korsør have been seeing Slagelse as the big brother who has taken it all now. All that they had been building up through decades has now been removed because it has become a "greater municipality". And then there are these, may I say, "older gentlemen" who have a hard time letting go of it.”*

(Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association, 00:09:29.01)

The fact that most of the board members in the three tourism associations is around 65, might be the reason why they are having trouble seeing the municipality of Slagelse as one coherent tourism destination. The lack of collaboration between the tourism associations is also recognized by the tourism department. Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal describing how she does not feel that they are collaboration, or even communication (Appendix G, Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal, Project leader Coastal and Nature Tourism, 00:11:55.24).

We (Søren and Christoffer) were talking about the merging of the municipalities in Denmark in 2007. We are both around 30, and cannot really remember how it was before the merging. We also concluded that we both lived in a municipality which did not change name, but just became larger since other municipalities merged with it. This is perhaps why Per Thuesen from Slagelse seems to

think that it is a bit silly to have conflicts about it, because he is from the municipality which just became larger in 2007. But he does, to some extent, understand how the other two old municipalities might feel that Slagelse has become the “big brother” in the relationship.

Per Thuesen himself is reaching his retiring age, so he is a part of the “old gentlemen”, but it seems like he is trying to unite the three tourism associations.

*“Last year I got an invitation to visit the vintage bus museum in Skælskør. I was very exciting, and the mayor was there. I was very impressed. Troels from Landudvikling Slagelse was also there, and we all talked. This resulted in that the year after at the Viking Festival in Trelleborg, we got these vintage busses to drive instead of the regular busses. By that we are indirectly supporting the tourism in Skælskør.”*

(Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association, 00:10:29.12)

Per Thuesen is describing how the associations in Slagelse receive 225.000dkr, Korsør 150.000dkr and Skælskør 75.000dkr, and how Skælskør felt that they were not getting enough.

*“This is where I have chosen to open up, because we cannot live in a municipality with three large tourism associations that are going in completely different directions. So, I arranged some meetings between us. Skælskør was quick to back it up while it has been a bit slower with Korsør. Sometimes they are not answering our requests.”*

(appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association, 00:10:29.12)

So, Per Thuesen is actively trying to reach out and starting collaboration network between the three, but as we have seen before, the tourism association in Korsør are not willing to attend these network meeting. As the example with the busses above, the tourism association in Slagelse are financially trying to help Korsør with a ballet event this summer. Per is describing it as “a kind of flag waving from our side” (Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association, 00:10:29.12).

The relationship between Skælskør and Slagelse is strong, but according to Per Thuesen it is Korsør who is blocking an overall collaboration between the associations. Tine Jensen from Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre, which is just outside of Korsør, describes how she could feel on the locals that they see themselves as “from Korsør - you are not from the municipality of Slagelse”

(Appendix B, Tine Jensen, Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre, 00:10:35.17). If the general attitude in Korsør is as such, collaboration between Korsør and the rest of the municipality can be hard to establish.

As discovered, Skælskør and Bisserup have created something special for themselves, but when they are strong local destination, it damages their willingness to involve other areas in their development. The local community in the cities appears to affect the ambition of a joint collaborative destination, and the locals' protection of their "old municipality" in some way causes them to compete with each other.

### Power relations among actors, LTOs and DMOs

This part of the analysis will, through the data collected from the semi-constructed interviews with tourism actors and the observation study, investigate the power relations that are influencing and maybe even hampering the development of tourism collaborations in the municipality of Slagelse.

As it was presented to the reader in the theory chapter, inspiration taken from the framework of the four power dimensions, proposed by Beritelli and Laesser (2011), will be taken into consideration as well as Dredges (2006) thoughts on the complicated relationship that can arise between tourism department and LTO's. By analysing which dimensions are dominant in the municipality, a further understanding of the challenges of a tourism collaboration may be achieved. The following part will analyse upon the interviews and the observation study, and attempt to determine which power dimension are the most dominant.

#### **Hierarchical power**

During the research, there has been few indications of hierarchy as being an important influence factor among tourism actors in the municipality. Interestingly it seems that the hierarchical power dimension is a dominant factor between the LTO's, the tourism department and VisitVestsjælland. Per Thuesen, chairman of Slagelse Tourism Organisation, was several times during the interview hinting at a possible hierarchical structure that, to some extent, is hampering the development of tourism collaborations in the municipality. When describing the work that Slagelse Tourism

Association are doing, and how they are trying to make collaborations between the smaller actors, Per Thuesen said:

*"[...] they are small businesses and instead of them individually fighting for new costumers, they should market themselves together with others to create a bigger market. And if that does not work, then we must find some other ideas. And this is perhaps the part where I think this whole collaboration thing is lacking - us, the grassroots in tourism associations against VisitVestsjælland, there are no support at all. They are sitting 'up here' and we are all the way 'down here'." (Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association: 00:07:34:22)*

The last remark about VisitVestsjælland being 'up here' and the tourism association being 'down here' is particularly interesting in relation to a power dimensional aspect. It indicates that Per Thuesen considers the hierarchical position of VisitVestsjælland, as someone placed above them, to be a constraint in the development of tourism collaborations for the smaller actors. Later in the interview the local government is also the target of the same hierarchical criticism. When speaking about his disappointment of the execution and outcome of the workshop, and how the tourism associations was not enough involved, he said:

*"[...] the local government does not understand it at all. And it is the same with VisitVestsjælland. They are placed at some shelves above us where we apparently do not belong. I can work on that level too, but that it not what I am hired for. I am hired to take care of and help actors who maybe are having trouble at getting themselves established or things like that." (Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association: 00:25:58:23)*

He is thereby indicating that the local government and VisitVestsjælland, because of their higher positions in the hierarchy, are not capable of satisfyingly working in the interests of the tourism actors.

### **Process power**

Process power involves the control over resources or workflows that other actors in a network might be dependent on, but none of the interviews with actors, nor the LTO in Slagelse has directly given

the impression that it is an important power dimension. It can be argued that Per Thuesen indirectly are implying that the local government and Landudvikling Slagelse are important because they are responsible for allocating funds for tourism projects. The allocation of funds itself, can to some degree be interpreted as a process power, and it can also be argued that strategies and collaborations thereby can be influenced by it.

### **Knowledge power**

Both Per Thuesen of Slagelse Tourism Association and Susanne Andersen from Dybkærsgaard sees knowledge as an important factor in the development of a tourism collaboration. Per Thuesen states several times during the interview that he, in terms of tourism experience, is still a beginner that has much to learn in that field, and thus hints that he sees actors with knowledge within the field of tourism as influential.

### **Assets power**

When being a tourism actor or LTO in the municipality of Slagelse, it seems that it can be easier to gain influence if one is controlling more financial resources than another. According to Per Thuesen's remarks about Landudvikling Slagelse and their activities at the tourism workshop, where he criticises them for overtaking the agenda to promote their own business and interests, it seems that they are in a position to do this because they are in a financial strong position because of the EU-funds they are managing. It must also be noted that the only tourism actors who had speaking time in front of the assembly at the workshop, were those who had already been awarded with funds for their projects. This allows Landudvikling Slagelse to promote projects that are in their interest, and they are thus in a position to steer tourism development in the municipality in certain directions and gain influence upon how tourism collaborations are formed.

### **Relations between local government and the LTO's**

During the research, it was noted how the LTO's in the three big cities of Slagelse, Skælskør and Korsør are having a notably complicated relationship with each other. Per Thuesen mentions how the two other tourism associations have felt that the money from the local government has been distributed unfairly:

*“These funds have been divided into a three-two-one ratio, where Slagelse gets three, Korsør gets two and Skælskør gets one. And you could feel that they thought they were not getting enough.*

*This is where I have chosen to open up, because we cannot live in a municipality with three large tourism associations that are going in completely different directions. So, I arranged some meetings between us. Skælskør was quick to back it up while it has been a bit slower with Korsør. Sometimes they are not answering our requests.”*

(Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association: 00:10:29:12)

This feeling of being treated unfairly by the local government might be traced back to the merging of the three old municipalities. And according to Per Thuesen, the two others have felt that Slagelse has been prioritised at the expense of them:

*“I think that Skælskør and Korsør have been seeing Slagelse as the big brother who has taken it all now. All that they had been building up through decades has now been removed because it has become a "greater municipality". And then there are these, may I say, "older gentlemen" who have a hard time letting go of it. And the problem is that Slagelse, which is the biggest (also economically), we also have the hardest conditions for tourism because we have not been that used to it before.”* (Ibid.: 00:09:29:01)

The strained relationship between the cities can also be heard in Jette Søndergaard's story of her hotel and the pride that the local society takes in it. Here it becomes obvious that there is almost a type of competition going on between Skælskør and Korsør, and that there almost is a kind of local patriotism among the residents in Skælskør:

*“Just before we opened, I got nervous that we would not be able to sell our rooms and that tourists would not like the place - I guess I was a bit careful back then. But today, Hotel Postgården seems to be a popular place in our local society and people seem to be very proud of the hotel. And people are not hiding their pride of Hotel Postgården, especially towards Korsør with whom we have a bit of a rivalry because they are like*

*an old enemy.*" (Appendix A, Jette Søndergaard, Hotel Postgaarden Skælskør: 00:27:26:23)

Tine Jensen from Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre also confirms that in Korsør, the old borders are inducing the same kind of local patriotism. When questioned about her perception of, if the municipality is functioning as a coherent destination, she answered:

*"I know that the municipality, if you ask Puk (project leader at the municipality), she would say that it is one big unit. I am not originally from this area, so maybe I see it differently, but my experience is that you are from Korsør - you are not from the municipality of Slagelse. There are definitely still some signs of the old borders."* (Appendix B, Tine Jensen, Musholm Holiday and Conference Centre: 00:10:35:17)

Looking at these statements from the different respondents, it can easily be interpreted as if both Skælskør and Korsør are immune to communication and collaboration proposals. But Per Thuesen explains that Skælskør has begun to soften up, and that they are showing signs of willingness to collaborate with the LTO and the tourism department. On the other hand, Korsør are apparently much harder to convince, even with a careful approach:

*"Then we have Korsør. They have this big event this summer with the royal ballet, where they have to use a lot of money. And there are trying to see if we can help with a small amount of money, which we do not have that much of, but you can see it as a kind of "flag waving" from our side. To show them that we are willing to help if they want our help, because they are seeing us as something else, as someone who "takes it all". But that is the old municipality borders speaking, whereas it has become much better with the relation to Skælskør."* (Appendix F, Per Thuesen, Slagelse Tourism Association: 00:10:29:12)

Again, it is worth to mention that, according to Per Thuesen, the reasoning for this unwillingness to collaborate from Korsør's tourism association is because of the remains of the old municipality borders.

From the interviews conducted, there is a general point towards hierarchy as being perceived as the most influential power dimension among tourism actors in the municipality. The LTO's and the actors seem to be working on a similar power level, while the tourism department and VisitVestsjælland are perceived as being in a stronger influential position mostly because of their higher placed hierarchical status. The power dimensions of assets and process power are also being deemed as important, and these two dimensions are in this case in some ways interconnected. The allocations of funding seem to be the main reasoning behind and an important factor for some actors.

#### Individual power relations

It is interesting to notice how respondents are often naming other actors individually instead of naming the businesses and instances. This gives the impression that there are some specific power relations between individuals that are also influencing the ability to create tourism collaborations. As it was touched upon earlier in this part and in the methodology chapter, several attempts were made to get in contact and plan an interview with the chairman of the LTO in Korsør. Beforehand, Christoffer was warned by colleagues and had himself experienced how hard it was to get in contact with the chairman, and that he rarely participates in tourism network meetings. So, in this case it can be interpreted as if the chairman of the LTO in Korsør are having a higher level of power and influence than the association which he is a part of, because his personal lack of commitment to his position as chairman is blocking collaboration. The same can be said about Per Thuesen from the LTO in Slagelse. As it was seen earlier in the analysis, he, as a chairman, is very much involved in many initiatives related to tourism, and he is mentioned quite a few times by other actors as someone who are having a true commitment to developing tourism in the municipality. The fact that he is mentioned by name more times than the Tourism Association of Slagelse itself, tells something about a relatively high level of power he as an individual has destination tourism network. Beritelli and Laesser argues that in destination planning, power in networks is not only related to organisational structures but *"[...] is also the expression of individual perceptions, recognizable to the stakeholder group an individual belongs [...]"* (Beritelli and Laesser, 2011: 1307).

The level of individual power relations suggests that the success of the LTO's and their ability to collaborate and create collaborations, are very much dependent on the individuals who are acting as their external presence. Similarly, the chairman of the angler association who was attending the workshop with a questionable agenda, was also an influential individual that should be noticed. The way he spoke out loudly and his almost aggressive appearance at the workshop, and the way that the government official talked about him, gave an impression of an individual with power rather than an organisation with power.

### State of collaboration in the municipality of Slagelse

Through this analysis we have look at different elements in relation to how collaboration is at a destination, and how it is influenced by national strategies. Lastly it has been shown how local tourism actors are influenced by collaboration in the destination level, or the lack of it.

As Wilson, Buultjens and Nielsen (2009) argues, earlier research is lacking in area of public/private collaboration, and especially partnerships between voluntary associations and commercial tourism organizations. What this analysis has offered is a look at how collaborations between local government, commercial tourism organizations and voluntary tourism association, can be challenging to establish, due to the different objectives that these stakeholders have. It has been discovered, in relation to Martin Sandback's argument about recognizing the commercial actors' short-term objective and tourism developers' long-term objective, that there is a need for more research about how to manage these differences in objectives, to successfully involve different stakeholders in the developing process of a destination.

The methodical approach used in this research allowed a qualitative understanding of how local tourism actors perceive the planning and development carried out by the destination level stakeholder, such as VisitVestsjælland and the tourism department. Tourism actors are the ones how are in contact with the tourists on a daily basis, and this analysis showed that there is a need for a coherent strategy for them to follow. The absent of a well-functioning destination level network, have coursed the actors to lose trust in the key stakeholder organizations, and a general confusion was found in relation to who tourism actors saw as the driving force when it comes to tourism development. The roles between VisitVestsjælland, the tourism associations and the

tourism department has not been well communicated, and it appears that their current roles are overlapping. This insufficient use of resources, both in terms of finance and competences, causes a slow tourism development, which is a shame since many passionate and enthusiastic tourism actors were found during the collecting of interviews.

An issue that was unfolded during the analysis was the conflict between cities within the overall destination, which has created small local destinations within the destination. What was found to be the cause of this, was the fact that the municipality of Slagelse used to be three municipalities before the merging of municipalities in 2007. This is a highly interesting theoretical area, which will be further discussed, since earlier research has not explored how this merging of municipalities affects collaboration in the “new” municipality. This area of research can reach far beyond tourism theory, since it was found that the primary issues were rooted in the residents’ personal values and protection of their own city.

The original point of departure for the analysis was to investigate how destination strategies were influenced by the national strategies, and how they influence tourism actors, but as it unfolded during the research some interesting new questions arose. This is something Murdoch (2006), Law (2004) and Latour (2005) also argue, that studying networks by getting closely engaged in the process, can cause responses from actors to steer the research in a new direction.

These questions will now be discussed, and suggestions on further research areas will be presented.

## Discussion

The analysis sought to investigate how collaboration is understood approached on different levels, with the main focus being on the destination level. Collaboration and partnership is recognised as being an important role of tourism development, both from national tourism organisations and can be traced to the local government of Slagelse's tourism strategy (even though an official tourism strategy is still absent).

The point of departure was that if the term 'tourism collaboration' is deeply implemented in strategies as a keyword from the national level to the destination level, how is it perceived by the actors involved in destination tourism.

For this research, it has not been too relevant to analyse and discuss what an overall tourism strategy of the municipality of Slagelse should contain, but the absence of it has an effect on the tourism actors. The level of collaboration between the tourism department and the tourism actors is suffering, and it seems like the actors have lost trust in both VisitVestsjælland's and the tourism department's ability to lead the tourism development. At the workshop and from some of the tourism actors interviewed, it became clear that too many initiatives have been launched, and the faded away again. Morrison (2013) describes how tourism actors needs a common objective, which can be done by creating an overall tourism strategy for the destination. A strategy that can show tourism actors that the destination as a whole is moving forward, and a strategy which the actors can create and develop their tourism products in relation to.

What was found through the analysis was a divided destination in relation to several aspects. Firstly, from the destination level it was discovered that the actors did not seem to know which organisation is functioning as the overall DMO, and the analysis also showed that there may in fact not be a clear answer to this. It is interesting to discuss the need for clear definition of what roles the main tourism stakeholders should have, in order to create a better organisational structure in the tourism sector, which can help enhance tourism development, and create better trust from the tourism actors. Secondly, what further will be discussed is how long-term and short-term objective are influencing the collaboration and how it is approached, and how the destination level stakeholders might find a solution to this issue.

Thirdly, the distance between local tourism actors and the tourism strategies being carried out by the tourism department and VisitVestsjælland were too far. There is a need for more actor involvement, and need for the actors to feel a part of a coherent tourism agenda. Fourthly, the merging of municipalities in 2007 has had tremendous effect on collaboration within the destination. It has caused the destination of Slagelse to be (remain) divided into destinations with a strong local anchoring and different perceptions of how tourism collaborations should be approached.

### The general confusion – The need for a clear leader/DMO

Through the research it became clear that there is a general confusion from the tourism actors, who are uncertain of who the DMO of the destination in fact is and thereby who are having the leading role in relation to tourism development. Several times it was seen that actors' showed frustrations of being told about different strategic plans, and the many different network meetings and workshops with different themes, was resulting in lack of trust to the tourism planning organisations.

Dredge (2006) argues that *"the roles and responsibilities of local government and the LTO should be clearly focused and articulated"* (Dredge, 2006: 278).

The two organisations with the competences and resources to be the DMO, is the tourism department and VisitVestsjælland. If we look at this from a financial point of view, the local government has originally outsourced tourism development and marketing to VisitVestsjælland, by creating a destination partnership with the municipalities of Sorø and Kalundborg.

VisitVestsjælland's 2017 strategy is to focus in product development, professionalization of tourism actors, and branding of the destination (appendix L). So VisitVestsjælland is officially taking a structural and functional approach to tourism development, which is definitely needed. But what can be seen as an issue is that these benefits are only for the paying partners, which is understandable since VisitVestsjælland is commercial business. With that being said, it still leaves new actors and actors who does not want to be a part of VisitVestsjælland's network, in a stage where they do not have an organisation to guide them and support them.

As discovered during the workshop, some actors have lost trust in VisitVestsjælland's ability to support them, but what is important to remember is the turbulent time VisitVestsjælland has had. It

is arguable that they are not in the position at the moment to be DMO, since a leader should have the abilities to motivate, create commitment and enthusiasm, have a strong vision and an ability to get other people excited (Selin and Chavez, 1994). During the turbulent time in December 2016, the staff members at VisitVestsjælland went from twelve to four, and a temporary director was placed in charge of the organisation.

On the first of August 2016, VisitVestsjælland will have a new director, and the rebuilding of trust and credibility can begin, but that is not something that happens overnight.

The tourism associations, VisitVestsjælland and the tourism department are all working towards the same objective, that is to create growth in the tourism industry. Around five years ago the tourism potential in Slagelse was recognised, which coursed different interest groups to try and develop tourism in the area. But since there was not a joint recognition of issues to address (Waddock, 1989), or a collaborative process to determine what the brand should be, it resulted in a disorganised tourism effort from different groups. Tourism in general has certainly not benefitted from that, but more important, it has confused tourism actors to the extent, that they have become in doubt about who to trust or follow.

Collaboration is lacking between the three, which are coursing actors to not knowing who is the leading force. What is important to notice is the many different organisations and groups working with tourism. If we look isolated at each of them, the destination of Slagelse has many well-meaning initiatives, but it might be beneficial to more clearly divide the responsibilities. The creation of the tourism stakeholder network between the tourism and business associations, VisitVestsjælland and the tourism department, might be the destination level collaboration which has been missing, and as Jamal and Stronza (2009) argues: *“collaboration provides for a flexible and dynamic process that evolves over time, enabling multiple stakeholders to jointly address problems or issues”* (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). The tourism stakeholder network will evolve over time, and project leader in the local government Puk Kirkeskov Hvistendal assured that the network is here to stay.

Another side-effect of the unclear distribution of roles, is that tourism financial resources are not utilized properly. Both the national tourism strategy and KL's tourism suggestions are arguing that joining of resources is a crucial aspect of tourism development, something that scholars such as

Haugland, Ness, Grønseth and Aarstad (2010) and Morrison (2013) also is arguing for. One thing is that the local government are spending four million a year on VisitVestsjælland, but are in fact still doing the tasks themselves, because VisitVestsjælland has not lived up to the agreement lately, but another problem is the time tourism actors have to invest to attend the large amount of meetings. Suanne Andersen from Dybkærsgaard complained about the many meetings she has to go to, and how the same things are being discussed with different tourism developers (Appendix E, Susanne Andersen, Dybkærsgaard, 00:22:28.03). It can be argued that this is also leading to a lack of willingness to support the different networks and tourism planning stakeholders, because the tourism actors feel that the destination level is not coordinated.

There is an implication with the lack of coordination and role distribution between the three primary stakeholders working with tourism development. It is hard to determine who is the DMO, but it is between the tourism department and VisitVestsjælland, and it can be argued that it can be a fine solution, as long as the roles and tasks are clearly divided them. What is interesting to discuss, is how collaboration within the tourism sector of Slagelse can benefit from a more structured approach, so the two organizations can successfully cooperate to be a joint DMO.

A clear definition of role distribution between tourism associations, VisitVestsjælland and the tourism department

The leading forces in relation to tourism development in the municipality of Slagelse, is the tourism department, VisitVestsjælland and the tourism associations - to some extent. Their strategies are overlapping, and tourism actors are confused about who has what responsibilities, as have been discussed above.

In the following section, it will be discussed how the roles can be divided in a way that can ease the confusion on the tourism actor level, as well as on the tourism planning and development level, because it appears that no one truly knows each other's responsibilities.

#### *The tourism department*

What the tourism department possesses, compared to the others, is legitimacy, authority, financial resources and the connection to other departments within the local government, who can affect

tourism development. These attributes are necessary to develop long-term tourism initiatives, which should be the primary focus of the tourism department. But the role of the tourism department should also be to ensure a constant close relation to the business and tourism associations and VisitVestsjælland, by further developing the tourism stakeholder network meetings, as described in the analysis.

As argued by Jamal and Getz, (1995) and Gray (1989), stakeholder groups have to recognize their interdependence, and a continuous sharing of knowledge, joint ownership of decision-making, and a collective responsibility for the ongoing direction of the destination, is something that can be the outcome of a successful tourism stakeholder network. The tourism department must through the tourism stakeholder meetings, convince the business associations of the benefits of joining tourism initiatives.

#### *VisitVestsjælland*

The destination partnership with VisitVestsjælland should be limited to marketing, and the supporting of their paying partners. Their primary role should be to market tourism actors, and communicate the brand that derives from the long-term strategy carried out by the tourism department. Workshops and supporting of actors, is as of now only for the partners, which is understandable since it is a service the partners are paying for. The concern about VisitVestsjælland only markets their partners, has earlier been raised. It is strongly suggested that VisitVestsjælland markets all actors, activities and events, because they are by far the strongest marketing organisation, and they have done a successful job in the past. Actors not being marketed by them, will be left almost invisible in the tourism market of the destination, and it can be hard for new tourism entrepreneurs to attract tourists.

#### *The tourism associations*

To be a member of the tourism associations does not cost anything, which means that they have a lot of the smaller actors in their network. As Dianne Dredge (2006) describes, tourism actors can be part of different networks at the same time, which is also the case here. Many tourism actors, including Dybkærsgaard, are members of both the tourism association of Slagelse, and VisitVestsjælland. The tourism associations main role should be to support and guide the tourism actors that are not a part of VisitVestsjælland's network, to avoid any tourism actors to stand

outside of a tourism network. Their second role should be to represent the local tourism actors' short-term interests at the tourism stakeholder meetings, facilitated by the tourism department. This will ensure a closer link between the local destination and the tourism planning organisation, which Per Thuesen argues are having a too academic approach for the tourism actors to follow. They must encourage their actors to look beyond their local destination, so the continues collaboration process can be supported from the local level, to the destination level. The problem is that the board members at the three tourism associations are all voluntary workers, which means it is hard to demand them to do specific tasks. The lack of Korsør's involvement in collaborations, and the absent of support to their members, must be addressed. Slagelse tourism association carried out a replacement of board members a few years back, which led to a much more productive association. It might be time for Korsør to do the same, and maybe replace the "old gentlemen", as Per Thuesen described them as. The lack collaboration between the associations are influencing their members, so this something that must be sorted out on the destination level. Individuals mind can be easier to changes, than a whole association (Trist, 1979), so by having the right kind of people can greatly influence the network they are in (Selin and Chavez, 1994)

#### Recognition of long-term destination strategies, and short-term local interests

The tourism actors who was interviewed during this research, all seemed to not know much about what is going on in relation to planning and development in the destination level. A few of them had some basic knowledge about the coastal and nature tourism project, but did not feel a part of the project. Martin Sandbach, former head of Research at the British Tourism Authority, has an interesting argument in relation to this:

*"I don't believe we have been honest enough with ourselves in recognising that our commercial partners have a short-term view of the world and we, as NTOs [national tourism organisations] are charged by government to have a medium-term or long-term outlook."*

(Martin Sandbach, in: Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2003)

This argument aligns with what has been previously discussed about the tourism department having a long-term objective, and the tourism associations, whom are representing the local actors, having

a short-term perspective. It is arguable that the reason that collaborations and trust is difficult to establish between the tourism department and the tourism associations, is due to the different timeframes they have set for their initiatives. Dredge (2006) argues that *“local government can only represent what it perceives to be the issues and interests of the broader community”* (Dredge, 2006: 278), which aligns with this discussion’s suggestions on how the responsibilities should be divided, as seen in the previous section. The work carried out by the tourism department may be too “academic” as Per Thuesen argues, but is important for the ongoing development of the destination, that the tourism department as these long-term projects as the coastal and nature tourism project. For destination to differentiate itself on the tourism market, the destination needs some kind of theme that over time will be adopted by the tourism actors. For it to become accepted by the local actors it must be something that they feel the local government are seeing as a long-term objective, and something it is worth to invest in from the local tourism actors.

For the local actors to trust the long-term plan of the tourism department, they must not feel forgotten. As mentioned above, it is here the role of the tourism associations and VisitVestsjælland is important, and here they must take responsibility. They must represent the tourism actors’ interest in the destination planning process, to make sure that their short-term interest is not being overlooked doing the work with a long-term destination strategy.

It must be understood by all members as the tourism stakeholder network, that the long-term and short-term objectives are equally important for the ongoing development. But one organisation cannot be in charge of both, so it is here the members of the tourism stakeholder network are interdependent. Svensson, Nordin and Flagestad, (2005) argues that a problem with a network and getting members of it involved is that they cannot sure that their presence makes a difference. To take that argument a bit further, it is arguable that in most tourism development at the destination level, the outcome can first be seen on the long run, so the associations must be convinced that their presence over time will influence the destination for the better.

### Local anchoring in the old municipalities, and individual power relations

As it was touched upon in the analysis, this research has shown that there is a surprisingly high level of competition between the three big cities in the municipality. The respondents have all, at some level during the interviews, hinted that this competition between the cities can be traced back to when it was still divided into the three municipalities of Korsør, Slagelse and Skælskør. The residents are taking a big pride in their cities and their history - which of course is not unusual, but it has also become a barrier that to some extent is blocking the healthy development of tourism collaboration between the local tourism associations.

In recent years, after the replacement of their board members, Slagelse's tourism association has begun to acknowledge that the collaboration and communication between the tourism association are inadequate and that efforts must be made to build it up. The two other tourism associations, especially the one in Korsør, have been showing a reluctance to create collaborations across the cities. Since it unfortunately proved to be impossible to get interviews with the leaders of these two tourism associations, one can only guess about their motivations behind their reluctance. But it is repeatedly suggested in the interviews that this may be related to a presence of local anchoring and that some of the boards still consist of members who have been sitting since when the municipalities were not yet merged into the current state. It is hinted that the tourism association board in Korsør is consisting of 'old gentlemen' who are not interested in any cross-city tourism collaborations in the municipality. This means that the tourism association in Korsør actually possesses a high level of power because they, with their unwillingness to collaborate, are influencing the development of a more coherent tourism collaboration in the municipality. It can be argued that the tourism association in Korsør could simply be left out of the collaboration, but that is hardly a possibility as it would also leave the smaller tourism actors in the city out. The size and resources of the local government in the municipality are not sufficient enough, that they are capable of reaching all tourism actors without the help of the local tourism association, as previously discussed. In both Beritelli and Laessers (2011) and Dredges (2006) studies of power relations in networks it was argued that the relations between actors, LTO's and local governments in their specific studies could be related to a 'Foucaultian' perspective of power. Here it is argued that power relations are decentralized and is constantly and dynamically changing between actors and individuals. In that

perspective, in this case, it is interesting to see how the power and influence of individuals are both creating possibilities but also impossibilities for tourism collaborations. As Selin and Chavez (1994) proposes, individual characteristics have a significant influence on creating and shaping partnerships in tourism.

As the chairman of the tourism association in the Slagelse, Per Thuesen, is mentioning, they have at their tourism association been trying to reach out to the other tourism associations in the municipality. He mentions that they are assuming a 'big brother' role in the relationship by offering help, both financial and other kinds of support, to both Korsør and Skælskør. As it was touched upon in the analysis, Skælskør has begun to soften up and shows more and more interest in creating collaborations across the cities. On the other hand, the tourism association in Korsør is still very reluctant to attend meetings and preliminary measures for developing collaborations. In this regard, is it interesting to observe how Per Thuesen is taking it as a matter of course that the tourism association in Slagelse has to take the role of the 'big brother' in the municipality.

By assuming this role as the 'big brother' the tourism association in Slagelse may be inadvertently pushing the others, especially Korsør, away because they will then see them as someone who wants to be the dominant factor in the municipality, and as someone who are not working on equal terms with them. In the same manner, the tourism association in Slagelse is also, perhaps unintentionally, placing themselves higher in the hierarchy. Thereby giving themselves the same higher hierarchical status which, according to Per Thuesen, is hampering the collaboration between the LTO in Slagelse and the local government.

In the southern part of the municipality, the town of Bisserup are quietly developing their own small well-functioning local destination. This has happened almost without any support from the tourism association in Skælskør and the local government. Thus, they seem somewhat unaffected by the competition that can be felt between the other cities, as they do not really identify with any of them. Before the merging of the three old municipalities they were under the municipality of Skælskør, but are actually geographically closer to the city of Næstved. This might explain why they are not showing any kind of engagement to the overall tourism development in the current municipality as they might feel themselves too distanced from tourism actors in the other cities. Instead they

actually have a wish to tone down the tourism activities in Bisserup as the city is close to reaching an overcapacity of tourists during the high seasons, and thus they are not, at the moment, interested in being drawn into more tourism networks or collaborations.

Through the analysis, it was found that these local destinations within the destination is rooted in the residents, and their desire to protect their “old municipality”. When it is rooted in values and the destinations is led by tourism association with “old gentlemen”, it is arguable that it will take a long time change these values. A change in perception and value cannot be forced by the destination level, but it is something that should be worked towards. Maybe a better relationship between the tourism associations, can influence the local tourism actors.

How the merging of municipalities has influenced the understanding and approach to tourism collaboration is quite interesting, and this research opens up for a seemingly unexplored field of tourism studies. This might shed a new light on implications that may arise in the creation and development of tourism collaborations on a municipal level. This research has shown how the understanding and use of tourism collaborations in a municipal can be affected and hampered by deeply embedded values and meanings in individuals that stems from their local anchoring and a weak attachment to the present state of the municipality.

## Conclusion

The research in this thesis had the purpose of exploring how tourism collaboration is understood and used in the municipality of Slagelse. When looking through strategies and suggestions from the national level to the local level, it has shown that tourism collaboration is being perceived as a common element in tourism development, but that it lacks a clear specification from the higher levels.

The strategies of the local government and VisitVestjylland are very similar, which leads to a confusion among the tourism actors and tourism association. This was seen during the tourism workshop, and the tourism stakeholder meetings, facilitated by the tourism department. It appears that the difference in long-term and short-term objectives, is hindering the collaboration between the tourism department, VisitVestsjælland and tourism associations, since they all have different interests and expectations of tourism development should be approach. It is recognised that there is a need for both short and long-term tourism objectives, but one organisation cannot be responsible for both. Therefore, it is suggested that the tourism department, with the resources and competences they possess, is responsible for the long-term objectives, and the tourism associations, with their close relation to the local destination level, is responsible for the local tourism actors' short-term interests.

There is a need for a clearer defining of roles and responsibilities between VisitVestsjælland and the tourism department, since the both can be perceived as DMOs. It has been argued that the role as DMO can be divided between the two, as long as they distribute responsibilities between them. The tourism associations are playing an important role, in relation to supporting and representing the local tourism actors' interests in the tourism stakeholder network. However, the lack of coordination of roles on the destination level, combined with the local anchoring, which originates from the old municipalities, greatly affects the tourism associations collaboration with each other. The merging of the three old municipalities proved to have a great influence on how tourism collaborations are negotiated and created in the present state of the municipality of Slagelse.

Power relations among tourism actors, the tourism associations and the tourism department, are largely influenced by social relations between individuals, instead of the instances they are a part of. A successful collaboration between these depends mostly on the individuals who negotiate it, and their approach to their position in their association/organisation are having an impactful effect

on the tourism actors' ability to collaborate. This research, with a qualitative approach, has through its qualitative findings presented a contribution to the understanding of the, what has shown to be a very complex, term 'tourism collaboration' within the field of tourism network and power relations theory. Furthermore, there has been presented an opening to an unexplored field of municipal tourism studies in Denmark and how the now disbanded municipalities are influencing tourism.

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