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The Role of Stakeholder Collaboration and Local Community Participation in the Development of Codes of Conduct as a Visitor Management Tool

– a case study of The Wadden Sea National Park



Nadja Kristoffersen & Simone Hanfmann

Aalborg University, CPH, MA in Tourism 2021

Abstract

Increasing tourism in nature has led to a higher demand on protecting and preserving nature and its resources. Especially visitors unaccustomed to nature are to a greater extent moving outdoors and visiting places like national parks. This has led to a need for visitor management tools to guide and educate visitors on proper behaviour in nature, to create the lowest negative impact possible. As a response to this development, The Wadden Sea National Park has developed 19 codes of conduct for visitors and users of specific recreational activities in the national park. Now they are going to be implemented, but the Secretary has raised some concerns on how certain stakeholders want to participate in the implementation of the codes. Before going into the implementation of the codes, it has been found relevant and interesting to take a step back and analyse the process of the creation of the codes from the beginning. Moreover, who has been involved in this process.

Therefore, this thesis aims to investigate the process of the creation of the codes of conduct, including involvement of stakeholders and their influence on the process. To explore the research aim, several research methods have been used. Both desk research, asynchronous interviews, informal meetings, and an interview with representatives from the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park were conducted. Moreover, non-participatory observations and a field trip to The Wadden Sea National Park were conducted to uncover the aim of this research from multiple points of views.

In the research several discoveries were made related to how the codes have been selected and what the codes consists of, who has been involved in this process and that several stakeholders have not been involved in the creation but are planned to become part of the implementation.

To conclude, several important findings were analysed. Firstly, it was identified that the codes are a soft approach, and thereby planned to educate the visitor rather than regulating their activities. Furthermore, the codes are analysed to be teleologically formulated, meaning they will advocate good behaviour by being explanatory. Regarding the stakeholders being involved, it was identified that several stakeholders have contributed to the process of the creation with resources such as network, financial and knowledge contributions. Moreover, several relevant stakeholders being end-users and implementers of the codes, have not been actively involved in the creation. Consequently, several conflicts were found related to diminishing local community participation and ownership of the codes. These were selective participation and nonparticipation, lack of interest and tension within local stakeholder groups. Evidently, the case of The Wadden Sea National Park analysed in this thesis contributes to show that stakeholder involvement and local community participation plays an important role in the creation of a code of conduct.

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1. Introduction

The Wadden Sea National Park was established in 2010, as one out of the current five national parks in Denmark. Covering 146,600 hectares, The Wadden Sea National Park is the largest national park in Denmark (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021a). According to The Wadden Sea National Park, the vision is to be internationally recognised as an outstanding marshland, est, and tidal zone of world-class standard. The national park aims to be enjoyed, protected, and developed in a sustainable interaction between nature and people. Furthermore, their mission is to enrich the natural and cultural values of the Wadden Sea (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021b).

The Wadden Sea was selected as a national park by the former Minister of Environment of Denmark based on several features, such as the area's unique marsh and tidal area of international importance; its dynamic landscape and ecosystem, which reaches across national borders, and it is vital for millions of migratory birds, fish, and marine mammals. Moreover, the area has a rich history of culture with land reclamation and dike construction (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021c).

In 2014, the Danish part of The Wadden Sea National Park became a part of UNESCO's World Heritage list, joining the Wadden Sea area in Germany and the Netherlands which became world heritage in 2009. UNESCO is an UN Agency which aims to protect and preserve cultural and natural heritage worldwide (UNESCO, 2021). With this status came a demand and need for The Wadden Sea National Park to build strategic considerations, actions, and partnerships towards a sustainable development with focus on both preservation and visitation, all elements which are still relevant. Today, The Wadden Sea National Park is forming part of a more than 40 years-old partnership between Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands to use and protect the Wadden Sea (Det Fælles Vadehavssekretariat, 2014).

However, as many other tourist destinations, The Wadden Sea National Park has experienced an increased number of visitors throughout the recent year (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). Especially the year of 2020, with the COVID-19 outbreak, has according to the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, brought more visitors outdoors with less knowledge about nature. They further raise the concern that visitors with less knowledge about nature can have an increasing negative impact on nature and animal wildlife (see Appendix 1). As a result, The Wadden Sea National Park experienced a need to implement a new tool to manage visitors. As there is a right to roam in Denmark, anyone has free access to nature (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). Therefore, managing visitors and their behaviour becomes challenging, as it is hard to regulate when there is free access to nature. Another feature of Danish national parks is that they are inhabited, which is also the case in The Wadden Sea National Park (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). Thus, it is not only visitors who are involved with the nature of the national park, but also the local community who is also potentially impacted by visitor management tools.

1.1 Problem area

Relating to how The Wadden Sea National Park handles an increasing number of visitors and thereof how they try to manage these, the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park has stated:

“We have developed the 19 codes together with the other Danish national parks, the Outdoor Council and a selection of nature user groups and organisations. Now the codes are going to be implemented. However, do the tourism actors want to be part of it? Does the tourism industry see themselves as part of this development, or do they just want to lean back and only use nature for profit? How can we get them onboard?”¹ (see Appendix 2, p. 4)

Due to the increased visitation, The Wadden Sea National Park has created 19 codes of conduct to communicate appropriate behaviour for visitors in nature. The codes have been made in collaboration with other National Parks in Denmark, the Outdoor Council, and user-organisations related to recreational activities in nature (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019). Now The Wadden Sea National Park is investigating how to effectively implement the codes of conduct in collaboration with their stakeholders and partners in the national park.

However, as stated in the above quote it seems that not all relevant stakeholders have been involved in the creation of the codes, and therefore the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park is questioning if these stakeholders want to take ownership and participate in the implementation of the codes.

With this information, the authors of this thesis began to wonder how the process has been of the creation of the codes, who has been involved, and how have they participated. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the process of the creation of the code of conduct. Moreover, who has been involved in this process from creation to implementation, and how have these participated.

This leads to the following research question:

How has stakeholder collaboration and local community participation played a role in the creation of codes of conduct, taking point in departure of The Wadden Sea National Park?

This research question has further led to the following sub-questions:

1. What characterise the created codes of conduct?
2. Who has been involved in the creation of the codes and conduct and how?
3. What role do stakeholders play in the implementation of the codes of conduct?

¹ “Vi har udviklet disse 19 codes of conduct sammen med de andre danske nationalparker og Friluftsrådet samt en række naturbrugerorganisationer. Nu skal de ud og leve ... Vil turismeerhvervet være med i det? Ser turismeerhvervet sig som en del af den kabale og indsats eller læner de sig tilbage og nøjes med at bruge naturen og så score profitten? Hvordan kan vi få dem med?”



2. Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 presents an introduction to the case of The Wadden Sea National Park.

Chapter 2 provides an introduction of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 3 presents the case of The Wadden Sea National Park and examples of visitor management in other national parks.

Chapter 4 explains the research aim and scope, the methodological framework, including applied triangulation, data collection methods and quality assessment of the data collected.

Chapter 5 introduces relevant literature within visitor management, codes of conduct and nature management, stakeholder theory, and community participation. Moreover, the chosen theory applied in the analysis is also defined.

Chapter 6 presents the analysis and findings within the following: managing and guiding visitors in national parks, the creation of the codes of conduct in The Wadden Sea National Park, involvement, and collaboration in selecting the codes for The Wadden Sea National Park, and implementation of the codes of conduct in The Wadden Sea National Park.

Chapter 7 discusses two topics related to the findings in chapter 6. These are 1) the conditions and format of national parks in Denmark and how this challenges codes of conduct in practice, and 2) the importance of stakeholder involvement and local community participation in the creation of a code of conduct.

Chapter 8 elaborates on findings and conclusions from the analysis and discussion in chapter 6 and 7.

Chapter 9 reflects on questions which have occurred during the research and analysis. These are related to the stakeholders who have not been part of the creation but are planned to be part of the implementation and whether these want to participate. Another question raised is how The Wadden Sea National Park is going to monitor and evaluate the codes of conduct.



3. Case Presentation

3.1 Cases of visitor management in national parks

In Denmark, there are a total of five national parks: Thy, Wadden Sea, Mols Bjerger, The North Zealand of the Kings, and Skjoldungernes Land (Miljøstyrelsen, 2021).

National parks in Denmark are permitted by law and are funded by the Danish government, whereas a nature park is formed locally or regionally, and is not funded by the government.

For a natural area to become a national park in Denmark, the nature area should be characterised by unique and distinctive nature, which can be both on land and water. A national park is created in close cooperation between the board of the park, the Ministry of Environment, municipalities, local communities, and organisations (Danmarks Nationalparker, 2021a).

The operation of national parks differs highly from each country and to each part of the world, which also applies to the culture and landscapes within the national parks. To illustrate the different kinds of operations, some examples are presented below.



Cairngorms National Park.²



Bavarian Forest National Park³

United Kingdom's biggest national park, located in the Scottish Highlands, **Cairngorms National Park** has managed to protect one of the rarest species of birds, by focusing on developing attractive paths around the bird's preferred home area and thereby avoid them to be disturbed daily. Through funding, the maintenance of these paths is prioritized, and visitors are automatically guided around the rare species (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). In the **Bavarian Forest National Park**, visitors are channelled through zoning instead of path systems. More than ⅔ of the national park is left to itself, and therefore the park chose to make a leisure zone. Here, two visitor centres, short attractive path systems, tree top climbing, a playground and cafes have created an attractive environment in the middle of nature that reduces the number of visitors in the more fragile areas (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). A national park in **Antarctica** chose to communicate what serious consequences harmful tourism behaviour can

² By Alan Findlay, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=14563805>

³ By Rosa-Maria Rinkl - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=79316855>

have, instead of focusing on communicating how the tourists should behave responsibly. This has shown a natural change to tourists' behaviour. However, it turned out only to be effective to those who prior to their visit had a certain pre-knowledge (Mason, 2005). At the **Great Barrier Reef Marine Park**, the same method was tried, however the lack of pre-knowledge of the visitors showed that if it is not existing, visitors can hardly imagine the effects and are less concerned about the consequences of their behaviour (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).



Great Barrier Reef Marine Park⁴



Fulufjället⁵

Amongst national parks in the Nordics, Denmark is the only country having residents in all their national parks, whereas the countries Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and Finland do not have any residents at all in their national parks (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). Regarding The Wadden Sea National Park which also stretches beyond German and Dutch borders, these parts of the national park are also inhabited by residents (Ecomare, 2021a) (Ecomare, 2021b). As an example of visitor management in one of the Nordic national parks, the Swedish national park **Fulufjället** has worked with zoning as well with an activity-based approach. To let locals who had been using the park for fishing or hunting prior to its establishment as a national park, four zones have been created, each for individual activities that can be performed in the park. These zones have been made by marked trails and paths and handing out free information to visitors, all supported by locals. In this way, visitors gain an increased knowledge on behaviour and behave more responsibly in the visited area (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). The common goal for all national parks in the Nordics remains the same, which is to protect natural and cultural heritage, making visitors aware of the value of nature and possible experiences it offers, and finally supporting local development (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

⁴ By Wise Hok Wai Lum - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=48845870>

⁵ By Paulius Malinovskis from Uppsala, Sweden - Some reflection, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=70753054>

Alongside these focus areas, several challenges are present according to numerous national parks. The national parks aim to protect and preserve the nature and animals in the park, while welcoming visitors at the same time (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

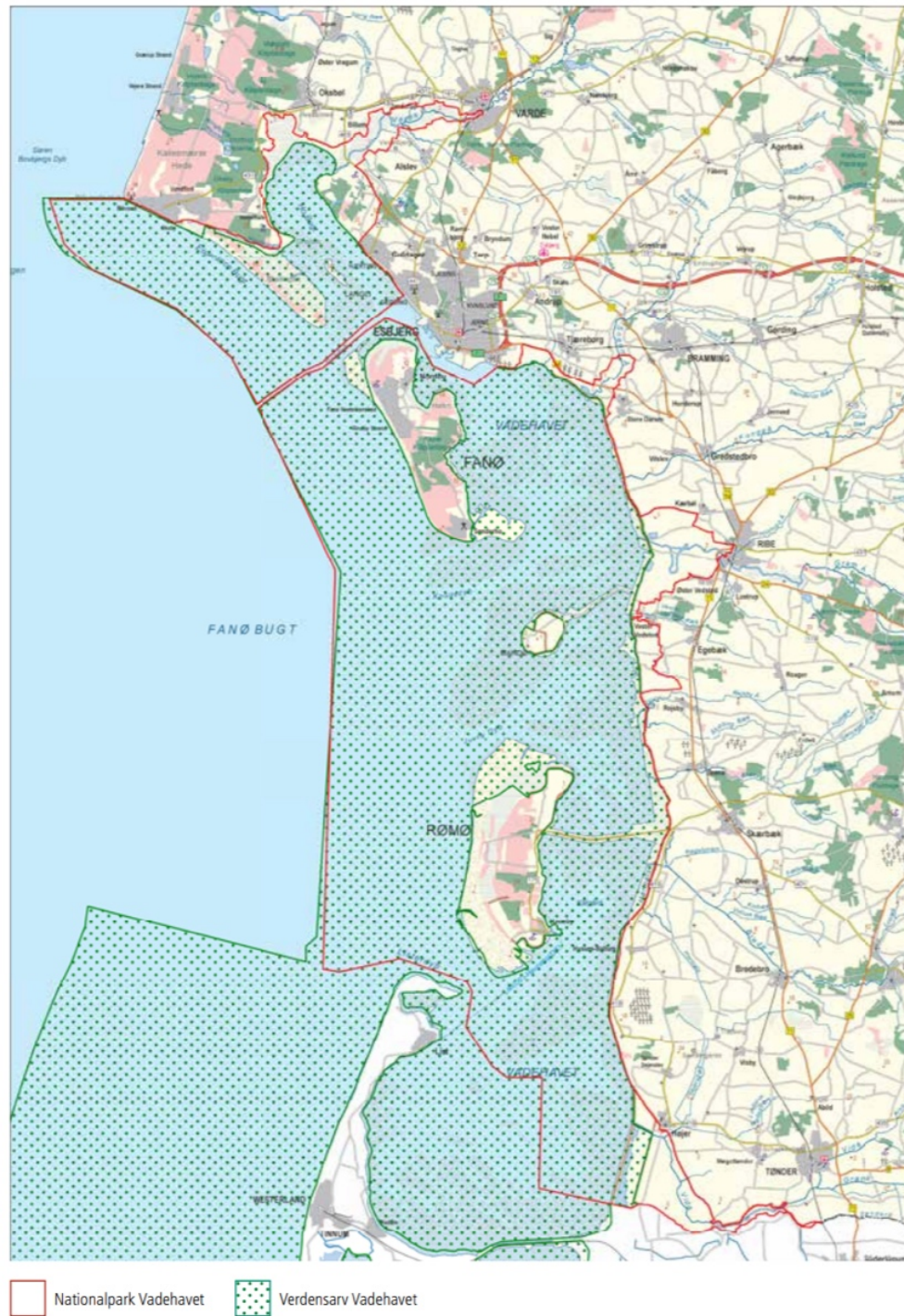
In general, visitation is increasing in the national parks which has put visitor and capacity management on the agenda. Moreover, specifically in Denmark, outdoor tourism is the largest type of tourism compared to city and business tourism. This is measured on the number of both international and domestic tourists and tourism revenue generated within these three types of tourism. Thus, outdoor tourists have a big potential influence on nature in Denmark (VisitDenmark, 2019).

In relation to this, more Danes are now using nature and doing outdoor activities, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its restrictions (Naturstyrelsen, 2020). According to Peter Saabye Simonsen, Head of Secretary at The Wadden Sea National Park, this is resulting in an increasing number of visitors from urban areas. These visitors are potentially unaccustomed to nature, meaning they have a lower pre-existing knowledge to nature. Therefore, The Wadden Sea National Park has an important task and role to convey to visitors how to act and behave in the national park without compromising its nature, environment, and animal wildlife. At the same time cooperate with their partners and stakeholders in this process (see Appendix 1).

3.2 The Wadden Sea National Park

Covering 146,600 hectares, The Wadden Sea National Park is the largest national park in Denmark and includes the Wadden Sea, the Wadden Sea Islands, Skallingen, Varde Ådal, the Marbæk area, and some parts of the marshlands such as Tjæreborgsmarsken, Rivemarsken, Margrethekogen and other kogs in Tøndermarksen, which are land reclaimed from the sea.

Figure 1: Map of The Wadden Sea National Park



Source: (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2018)

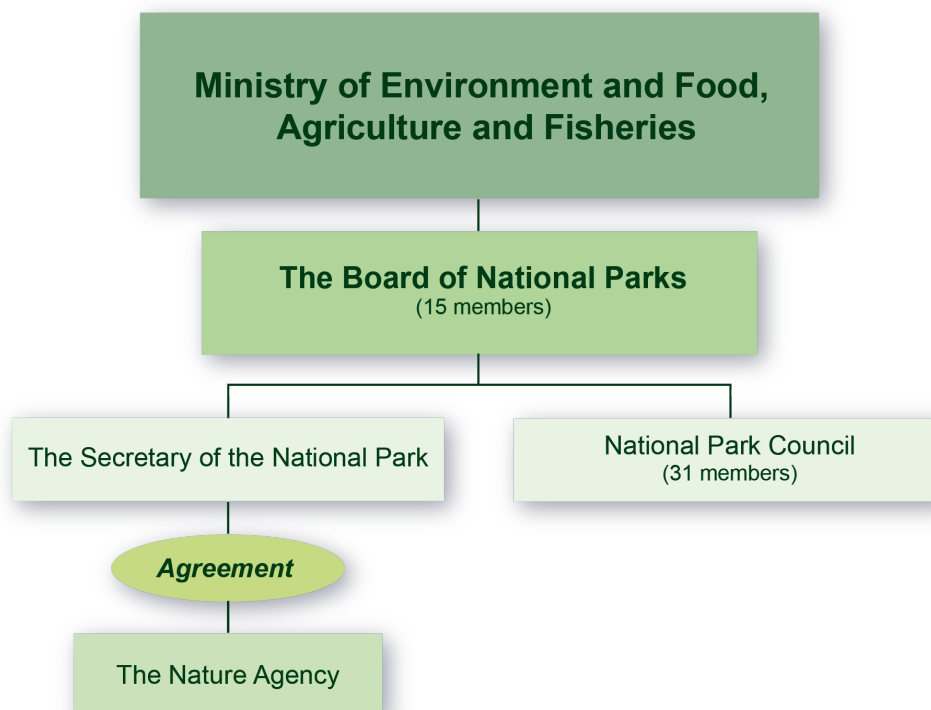
The Wadden Sea National Park yearly welcomes 10 million overnight guests and 30-40 million daytrip visitors, generating an estimated turnover of 3-5 billion euro yearly (Det Fælles Vadehavssekretariat, 2014).

Tourism in the Wadden Sea area is officially and primarily organised and marketed by public entities consisting of the local municipalities and the tourism organisation Destination Sydvestjylland. Moreover, local public and private tourism attractions and accommodation places make the foundation for the unorganized tourism handling (Goldberg & Jacobsen, 2018).

3.2.1 Stakeholders of The Wadden Sea National Park

There are multiple stakeholders of The Wadden Sea National Park. To begin with, the organisational structure of The Wadden Sea National Park consists of both public and private stakeholders, which are mapped out in the diagram below:

Figure 2: Organisational structure of The Wadden Sea National Park



Source: Own creation inspired from (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2018)

The members of the Board of the National Park and the National Park Council range from several organisations, municipalities, educational institutions, and local residents' representatives, which are mapped out in the table below:

Table 1: Members of the Board of National Parks and the National Park Council

Members of the Board of National Parks:	Members of the National Park Council:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairman, selected by the minister Danmarks Jægerforbund Danmarks Naturfredningsforening Danmarks Sportsfiskerforbund Dansk Landbrug Dansk Ornitologisk Forening Digelagene Friluftsrådet Naturstyrelsen Municipalities: Tønder, Fanø, Esbjerg, Varde Two representatives from the National Park Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representatives from: Aarhus Universitets, Bioscience Business Region Esbjerg Danmarks Fiskeriforening Dansk Botanisk Forening Destination Sydvestjylland Det Rådgivende Udvalg for Tøndermarsken Det Rådgivende udvalg for Vadehavet Forsvarets Bygnings- og Etablissementstjeneste GEUS LAG Fiskeri-LAG Lokalarkiverne Museerne i Vadehavsområdet Region Syddanmark Vadehavets Bådclubber Vadehavets Formidlerforum Vadehavskunstnerne Selected representation of local residents from selected local areas: Fanø, Mandø, Marbæk area. Masken omkring Snerum Å, Ribemarsken, Rømø, Skallingen, Ho og Oksbøl, Tøndermarsken, Varde Ådal

Source: Own contribution inspired from (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2018)

Other stakeholders of the national park are the local community consisting of local residents, and various types of businesses, networks, and organisations. Now, there are around 5.000 residents living in the national park (Goldberg & Jacobsen, 2018). In addition, more than 200 businesses, institutions, and actors are located in one of the four municipalities. The businesses and organisations are related to events, intermediation, outdoor life, accommodation, businesses and producers, education, and world heritage partnerships (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021d).

3.2.2 Vision, Mission and Objectives

According to the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, their vision is to be internationally recognised as an outstanding marshland, estuary, and tidal zone of world-class standard. Furthermore, the national park states that it will be enjoyed, protected, and developed in a sustainable interaction between nature and people (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021b). Additionally, that their mission is to enrich the natural and cultural values of the Wadden Sea, which consist of the following values that are created together with the trilateral Wadden Sea collaboration with Germany and the Netherlands:

- to cultivate nature and culture values in the Wadden Sea
- to protect, strengthen and develop nature, landscape, the geological values, and the cultural history
- to strengthen the opportunities for experiencing the values of the area
- to support research, education, and communication
- to be beneficial for the local community and local businesses
- to work focused on developing the collaboration with Germany and the Netherlands about the Wadden Sea and its world heritage (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021b)

The above values are according to the Secretary of the national park, how they are working to obtain their vision. Furthermore, The Wadden Sea National Park has 12 objectives which are based on the Danish Law on National Parks and the executive order on this specific National Park. The objectives are the following:

1. The most essential nature types (shallow sea areas, tidal channels, mudflats, high sands, estuaries, marsh and beach meadows, shores, and dunes) should be preserved, and their quality and diversity to be strengthened.
2. Culturally created areas such as fresh meadows and burrows should be preserved, and the quality and diversity strengthened. Furthermore, to preserve and develop farming which will ensure the landscape and species.
3. The characteristic landscape and geological formations shall be preserved and made visible.
4. Cultural environment and cultural-historical elements, which represent the Wadden Sea should be preserved, made visible and available, including hunting, fishing, and recreation as examples.
5. The opportunities for recreational activities, nature and culture experiences should be strengthened.
6. The development of recreational activities and tourism must be made on a sustainable foundation and in collaboration with the local community, the tourism industry and the area's dissemination institutions.

7. Specific vulnerable natural areas should be protected from wear and tear and disturbance through communication, zoning, and paths.
8. Nature guides and communication of the landscape, nature and cultural-historical values, and recreational opportunities should be strengthened and developed in collaboration with local actors through coordination of activities and establishments of service functions and facilities.
9. Research should be supported and educated through the establishment and facilitation of activity offers, that promote nature, culture, and environmental knowledge for youngsters.
10. The development of the national park must be made in interaction with the surroundings.
11. The national park must be developed in collaboration with the Trilateral Wadden Sea corporation.
12. The development of national parks must be followed up upon and evaluated (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021b)

The creation of the codes of conduct are an initiative related to some of the above objectives, as the codes aim to develop sustainable tourism and educate visitors, protect nature and animals in collaboration with local actors. More in-depth analysis about the codes, their creation and who has been involved is analysed in chapter 6.



4. Methodology

This chapter will present the research aim and scope, the methodological framework, including triangulation, data collections methods, and quality assessment of the data collected.

4.1 Research aim and scope

Based on previous projects made during the master program, a natural interest for outdoor tourism, nature, and the challenges within these topics have emerged. From this, a preliminary research started through desk research on the desired topics. Immediately it was found that The Wadden Sea National Park was currently working with the challenge of increased visitation while trying to preserve the park's nature. Based on this, the National Park was contacted by email to investigate a potential collaboration and to gain more insights into the National Park's current situation and challenges.

In an email correspondence, where two challenges were presented by The Wadden Sea National Park, a match was found between the desired field of interest and one of the National Park's current challenges. This resulted in an online meeting with Head of Secretary Peter Saabye Simonsen and Event & Development Consultant Bettina Munch both working for the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park. This meeting was an in-depth presentation of the challenges mentioned in the email correspondence and was a starting point for the collaboration and setting the direction of the focus of this thesis.

After a counselling session with our project supervisor, the problem area and research question were refined and then presented to The Wadden Sea National Park. It is, however, important to note that in the beginning, the focus of the research aim was to examine the end-users' attitude to a code of conduct, and their change in behaviour because of the codes.

The first impression from research indicated that the codes were already implemented, but further inquiry showed that they were not. So, the research aim was refined and changed during the research process.⁶ As a result, the research aim of this thesis is to explore the process of the creation of the codes of conduct, and the stakeholder involvement and local community participation within the development of the codes.

The scope of the research field has been broadened for this thesis. First, the thesis has been made in collaboration with the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, because they are the main initiators of the codes of conduct project. Thus, the main focus of the research has been to retrieve as much information about the Wadden Sea National Park's processes and to gain knowledge of the creation of the codes.

As a result, the viewpoints of the Secretary have been highly included in the analysis. Due to the limited timeframe given to complete the thesis, and that data was collected in a time of lock-down during the

⁶ See appendix 3 for more elaboration on the authors' process of the thesis writing

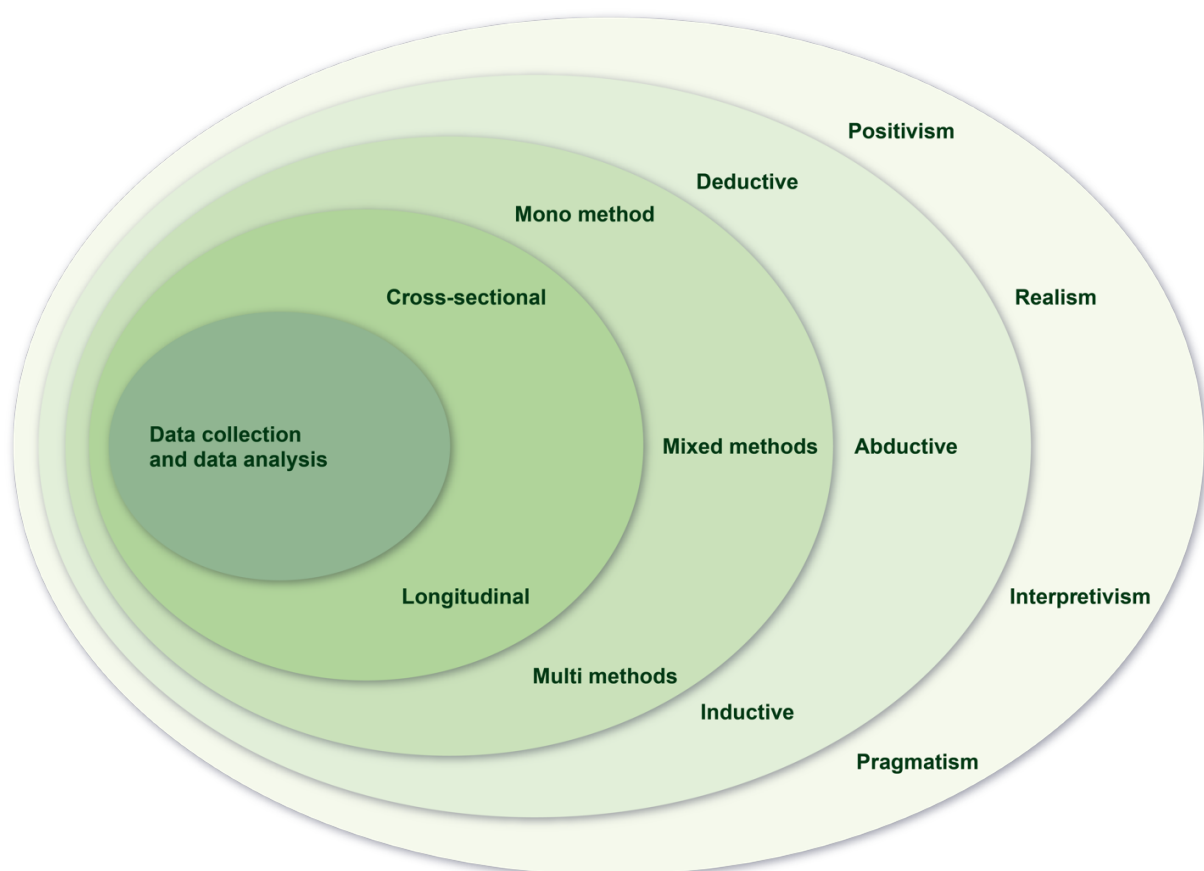
COVID-19 pandemic, it was too circumstantial to collect first-hand data directly from the other involved stakeholders in the codes of conduct project.

Furthermore, the codes of conduct have only been developed in Danish. Hence, a natural scope was set to focus only on Danish stakeholders. However, it is noted that The Wadden Sea National Park is part of UNESCO's world heritage status and a trilateral collaboration between Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany, but the involvement of these stakeholders were not chosen to be researched.

4.2 Methodological framework

The following section will explain and argue for the chosen methods and the methodological steps that have been reviewed in this thesis. The process is taking inspiration from Saunders et al. (2016) research onion, as this model provides an in-depth explanation and justification of each methodological decision taken and provides a structure for our methodological considerations (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). However, as it is a model, there is a risk of it being static and it was therefore adjusted to the authors of this thesis' needs. It has been adjusted in relation to the authors' own thoughts and processes but is still taking the reader through each relevant methodological step that has been completed for this project.

Figure 3: Research onion of methodological steps



Source: Own contribution inspired from research onion in (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016)

The research was chosen to be **exploratory**, as the purpose is to explore the role of stakeholders in each part of the process during the creation of the codes of conduct in The Wadden Sea National Park. As argued by Saunders et al. (2016), an exploratory purpose of research is used when a certain issue or phenomenon must be analysed thoroughly. Furthermore, exploratory studies are more flexible and adaptive than descriptive, explanatory, or evaluative research methods. Descriptive purpose is only used to describe a certain phenomenon but are not analysing on the “how” which is needed for this research, in an explanatory purpose there have been identified difficulties of obtaining final and conclusive answers due to only shaping the base of further research, and evaluative research purposes are having different focus points not being applicable to this study. Furthermore, exploratory research can use a wide range of data sources. These include desktop research and published literature as well as case studies, interviews, observations, and discussions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

To explore the problem area, a **pragmatic** philosophical approach has been taken. Taking on a pragmatic approach, concepts are defined relevant for the research when they support a specific action. In other words, theories, concepts, and research findings are not considered abstractly, but rather their role and practical consequences in the specific context they are found and applied (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). A pragmatic approach has been recognized as the most valuable approach to justify the use of quantitative and qualitative data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016) (Pansiri, 2005). Following this approach, it also provides the fundament for how the research is proceeded: Firstly, a problem area was decided on in collaboration with The Wadden Sea National Park, whereafter different data collection methods and academic literature were collected and researched upon. All methods are leading to both understanding the challenge in practice from different viewpoints, and practical solutions and outcomes of the problem area, by working with different types of knowledge, data, and methods (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

Following the philosophy of a pragmatic approach, an **abductive** approach was taken.

When exploring the research question, it is pursued to find the ‘best explanation’ of the case, which is a key characteristic of the abductive approach. As a contrast to the deductive or inductive approach which seek to prove that ‘something must be’ or that ‘something is’ (Walton, 2005). Taking on the **mixed-methods** approach to data collection, which is related to the pragmatic philosophy, there has been a use of both numerical and cognitive reasoning. Both quantitative and qualitative data was used to explore the most efficient exploration of the research aim, meaning to use information and facts to draw conclusions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Furthermore, Triangulation is used for the data collection design to approach the research from various points of view. Data on The Wadden Sea National Park and its stakeholders has been collected, and due to the scope of the thesis, several different types of data collection methods are relevant. These are further presented in section 4.3.

4.3 Triangulation

Triangulation is a well-used approach to mixing methods, that urges to research a certain behaviour from more than one standpoint with several methods, to obtain a deeper understanding and a more detailed and balanced picture of a certain area (Feldman, Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 2018). The in-depth and detailed qualitative obtained data are brought together with observed trends and generalisations of quantitative methods (Creswell, 2006). Concurrently, it is possible to collect and analyse the different data sets separated and independent from each other. However, if the quantitative and qualitative results do not correspond, triangulation can require additional data sets and be difficult to resolve. Triangulation has four different variants. For this research, the convergence model has been used which is the traditional model of mixing methods. Here, the data has been collected and analysed separately for the same aim, where after the results were compared, contrasted, and brought together to validate the process of the codes of conduct (Creswell, 2006). However, it can be difficult to merge two sets of very different data, why it is of high importance that both qualitative and quantitative data address the same phenomenon. Triangulation has been necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the involvement of stakeholders in the process of creating the codes of conduct in The Wadden Sea National Park. Due to the scope of the research, it was found important to use multiple data collection methods to validate data of desk research and expand the results of the researchers' findings with the collected qualitative data. The used data collection methods will be further explained in the coming section.

4.4 Data collection methods

The following section will present and describe the chosen data collection methods, where a mixed method approach was chosen. As mentioned above, a triangulation of different methods was applied to enhance the validity and gain an intensified in-depth understanding of the research aim. Firstly, secondary quantitative and qualitative data were retrieved from various official websites and publications. Moreover, both asynchronous interviews through email correspondence, informal online meetings, and an interview with the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park were conducted. Finally, both non-participatory observations of an online partner event as well as a field trip with observations in The Wadden Sea National Park were also made.

4.4.1 Desk Research

Firstly, a thorough desk research was completed. The benefits of secondary desk research are, amongst others, that it requires less resources than collecting primary data, and that it can potentially uncover new discoveries which were not found by the original source or authors (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill,

2016). Moreover, in a time of a pandemic it has been very helpful to retrieve data from various online sources, which requires no physical contact or meetings to collect the data. Information on The Wadden Sea National Park's web pages and various publications on current actions, visitor challenges, code of conduct and responsible behaviour in nature were collected. During the desktop research process, several documents and reports from The Wadden Sea National Park were received directly from the Secretary. These included their own data collection on visitors, different relevant numbers, background information on the creation of their codes of conduct and several additional documents of importance for the research. Many of these documents and reports were also published online, however it was at times difficult to understand the order and when the reports were created and published regarding the creation of the codes of conduct. Therefore, by having the Secretary to send a selection of these reports and putting them into a context independently from own desktop research, a better understanding of the data collected was created. One of the disadvantages with secondary desk research, compared to collecting primary data, is that the original data has been collected for a different purpose than the research aim and objectives for this thesis (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Thus, other data collection can be required to obtain the data needed, which is also one of the reasons for the chosen mixed methods for data collection and triangulation. Therefore, the initial desk research, email correspondence and sharing of documents have been an important and valuable part of the research and data collected.

The desk research and shared reports were also used as the foundations to justify the need for more information to gain further in-depth insights through interview and observations.

The email correspondence also functioned as an asynchronous interview, where initial questions were asked throughout the correspondence (Bampton, Cowton, & Downs, 2013). Asynchronous interviews are a method of information exchange by email that takes place over time. This method offers flexibility compared to a face-to-face interview, as the interviewees can address the questions in their own time, thus answers can be sustained by a series of emails (Golding, 2014).

These could be questions that needed clarification for the authors to gain a better understanding and to continue the research process, when an in-depth interview was not needed yet. However, asynchronous interviews lack the live interplay and can potentially result in shortened answers as the participant due to time limitations does not write out sufficient answers (Bampton, Cowton, & Downs, 2013) (Golding, 2014). To meet this challenge, informal online meetings were also conducted to retrieve elaborated answers.

4.4.1.1 Source criticism

During the desk research, several wonderings occurred when looking deeper into the data collected.

Another disadvantage with using secondary sources from desk research is that the researcher has less

control over the data quality (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). According to Wernicke (2014) official entities, provide data of higher quality and transparency (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

As The Wadden Sea National Park is organised under the Danish government, a high level of transparency is demanded. As a result, their own publications also represent opinions of their partners and stakeholders involved as well.

Besides the information retrieved from the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, other sources of data were also collected. This data is from publications by various other official sources are also found to be representative and valid from the other stakeholders' point of view. Involvement and opinions by other stakeholders are presented in the data. By doing so, the subjectivisms of the viewpoints from the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park is being decreased, as the research does not only rely on their judgement (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

Despite this, the data quality from these entities still needs to be assessed. It was found that some of the data in certain publication received from The Wadden Sea National Park, were questionable in quality and representativeness. The report "*Sårbare naturtyper og dyrearter i Nationalpark Vadehavet*" from 2015 written by COWI and published for The Wadden Sea National Park, presents recommendations for developing the codes of conduct. In the report, data from 2003 and 2005 was used to represent numbers of visitors and seasonal activities on Rømø. However, it is questionable whether such data were still relevant and sufficient to be a foundation for creating codes of conduct in 2015. Especially, since tourism in Denmark has been increasing for more than the past 10 years, which also applies to the area of Rømø (VisitDenmark, 2019).

Moreover, a partner survey was made in 2020 by the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park "*Partnerundersøgelse 2020*" concerning the partners satisfaction in the partner program of The Wadden Sea National Park. This partner survey aimed to investigate partners attitudes towards the partner program established by the Secretary. At that time of conducting the survey, the partner program consisted of 206 partners. However, only 73 partners did respond to the survey, which gives a response rate of 36%. Therefore, the representativeness of all partners in the data was found to be low. Due to the scope and delimitation of the thesis presented in section 4.1, the data presented in the partner survey did show some useful insights and indications, which is also the reason for why it was chosen to be used in the analysis as the partners point of view.

4.4.2 Interview

Besides the email correspondence, two informal online meetings have been held together with the two contact persons from the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park: Peter Saabye Simonsen and

Bettina Munch. During these meetings questions have been asked and information has been shared spontaneously, which has been both part of narrowing the problem area and specifying the research question, but also part of the preparation for the formal interview and data collection process (see Appendix 4).

However, it was found useful to set up a formal interview once a more complete overview of the information from the desk research, email correspondence and online meeting was retrieved. Most of the insights retrieved from the informal meetings presented information about the national parks background, processes, and analysis made in the creation of their codes of conducts. Furthermore, collected and received data and publications was studied thoroughly to make sure to prepare for the formal interview.

4.4.2.1 Format of interview

The purpose of the interview was to gain deeper insights on how the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park originally initiated the codes of conduct project, the background of their creation of the codes of conduct, on which premises and thoughts these were designed and what the future objectives were for the codes. The interview format was carefully considered and designed to gain more in-depth insights on how the National Park is operating and their processes. A semi-structured approach was chosen, to be able to have open-ended questions that could give the possibility to gain in-depth knowledge and information by the interviewees. Using a semi-structured approach, the questions were formulated open-ended to lead up to further discussions and to potentially uncover new information that was not found in secondary or primary desk research data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Preferably in-person interviews were made, however due to the COVID-19 situation, including its restrictions, it was chosen to do the interview online. As a result, the interview was conducted via Microsoft Teams, a communication platform for business purposes developed by Microsoft where meetings can be conducted in a virtual environment (Microsoft, 2021). The interview was recorded by the authors and hereafter transcribed by using the Microsoft Transcription program. The sections of the transcript which were used as quotes or data base for this research were rewritten by the authors. It is important to notice that it has been researched not to affect the results of an interview to conduct these digitally (Nield, et al., 2017). Pre-interview six questions were created, all of them structured open-ended. The questions were formulated in Danish, and the interviews were also held in Danish as it is the mother language of both the interviewees and the interviewers.

The following questions were sent to the interviewees Peter Saabye Simonsen, and Bettina Munch from the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, prior to the interview:

1. Background of the codes of conduct

Question 1.1 From our own research and especially taking point in departure of your report '*Sårbare naturtyper og dyrearter i Nationalpark Vadehavet*', which amongst others, created the foundation for the specific themes in your codes of conduct, we would like for you to elaborate more about the initial processes when starting to create the codes.

Can you elaborate on what were your initial thoughts about the codes when you started the project? Moreover, it is mentioned several times in the before mentioned report, that increasing tourism is a threat to national parks. What has been your parameter for deciding that now it is the increased tourism, which has had a negative impact on the national park?

Question 1.2 Are there any specific areas in the national park, where you experience that tourism has had a particular negative impact?

2. Implementation of the codes of conduct

Question 2.1. Have you had a specific plan on how to implement the codes of conduct, If yes, what was the plan?

Question 2.2 Besides the codes of conduct being available on your website and several videos compiled, what are you currently doing to communicate the existing codes of conduct? Including the role of nature guides, intermediaries and volunteers in the national park, and on-site communication.

3. Future focus and monitoring the effects of the created codes of conduct.

Question 3.1 What were your future thoughts and plan on the implementation? In the report published by the Nordic Council of Ministers (2019), it is among others stated that besides the created codes of conduct for specific recreational activities, another set of codes will be developed for more general guidelines that are not activity specific in The Wadden Sea National Park. Is this still the plan? If yes, how far along is the process?

Question 3.2 How are you evaluating the existing codes of conduct? Are they being monitored? Especially, having in mind new data and development in tourism. For instance, some of the data and knowledge that your code of conduct is based on, make use of data from 2003 on the number of visitors on Rømø.

The interview questions were sent to the interviewees in advance, for the chosen representatives to prepare and reflect carefully on the given questions (Dialsingh, 2008) (see Appendix 2).

At the time when the questions for the interview were formulated, the authors of the thesis had the impression that the codes were already implemented to some extent. However, the interview uncovered that they had not been implemented now. No challenges occurred during the interview, which lasted for about one hour. Due to the semi-structured format, several follow-up questions arose during the interview to either elaborate on already answered questions or to gain more insights. The full transcription of the interview can be found in Appendix 1.

4.4.2.2 Ethical considerations for the interview

By the time of the thesis writing and conducting research, the COVID- 19 outbreak has been present for almost a year. As a result, online interviews are considered to be the most responsible way of conducting interviews and has become an integrated part of daily study and work routines. Furthermore, in the time of the thesis being written, the Danish Health Authorities recommended meetings to be conducted digitally and most employees being furloughed made it the most responsible solution (Sundhedsstyrelsen, 2021). Moreover, employees have been used to do online meetings for almost a year during the confinement, thus people are more used to handle digital setups (Danmarks Statistik, 2020).

4.4.3 Non-participant observations

During the desk research phase, an online recorded partner event was held by the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, where the codes of conduct also were presented.

According to Smith (1981) collecting data by video recording brings a new type of flexibility into research methods. It is possible to derive both quantitative and qualitative data from video observations and to have different focus points. Furthermore, a video record provides the possibility to revisit data for further analysis, clarifications or analysing on a different basis (Bowman, 1994).

This partner day event was observed after it had been live and revisited several times. It contributed with information about the process of the creation of the codes, useful statements from various stakeholders and further thoughts on implementation by the Secretary.

4.4.4 Field research through observations

To get a better understanding of the national park itself, it was chosen to visit the park on a three-day observation trip on the 25th-27th of March. One of the authors had prior knowledge and multiple visits to the national park due to close family living in one of the areas of The Wadden Sea National Park. The other author had limited knowledge about the national park and had never visited the area before. Therefore, it was found relevant to do an open field research on an observation trip to get a better understanding of the area of the national park, its nature and the people living there and the visitors.

Observing is part of everyday life, and anything can be observed at any time. Observations can be used as a scientific data collection method, despite these can be more time consuming and costly. Observations can enable the researchers to gather enough information to describe a current situation or if additional understanding is needed for a situation (Boxstaens, Blay, Pereto, & Decarpes, 2015). Bryman (2012) has identified six major types of observational research, where one dichotomy is the structured vs. the unstructured observations. Structured observations are more systematic and are followed by a pre-built schedule and investigation process. The unstructured observations were chosen to be suitable for the authors of this thesis, as it is an open observation without a scope and therefore as much data as possible can be collected. The observations then take departure in a general idea that seems relevant to a better understanding of the given topic in a research question (Boxstaens, Blay, Pereto, & Decarpes, 2015). This data collection method enabled the authors to see The Wadden Sea National Park from a broad perspective.

During the three days, three different areas of the park were visited: Marbæk Plantation, located in the Municipality of Esbjerg, and the islands Fanø and Rømø.

At the time of the field trip, Denmark was currently in lock-down due to COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that tourist attractions were closed, and international visitors and tourists were most likely not present due to travel restrictions. Moreover, it was the weekend before the Easter holiday in Denmark, therefore domestic tourists and visitors were also few in numbers. However, stores, restaurants, supermarkets, and the like were open for visitation.

On the first day, a long walk was taken on Marbæk Plantation, a nature area north from Esbjerg with a huge variety of terrain. On the second day, a trip to Rømø was taken, where the Secretary of The National Park of the Wadden Sea is located. Here, several walks in the different plantations were made, the village located on the island visited and a trip to their famous broad beaches at Lakolk was taken. On the last day, Fanø was visited. Once again, long walks in the characteristic nature of plantations were taken, a forest playground and the different neighbourhoods and small cities were also visited.

During the three days, observations were noted and documented through taken notes and pictures using own mobile phones. Prior to the field trip, preparations were made about which places to visit. The Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park also provided recommendations about places which they knew were used by locals and visitors that time of the year and during the lock-down.

As it was difficult what to expect during times of a pandemic and moreover lock down, it was not planned to directly approach locals and visitors. Observing the places visited overall and on-site

communication about nature, animal wildlife, guidelines etc. became the main focus for the observation.

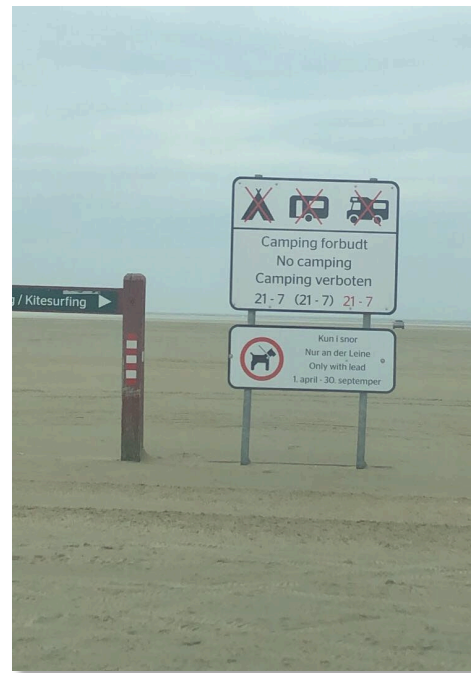
Various observations and findings were made. Firstly, the number of visitors was looked at. As mentioned before, the time of the field trip was off-season in a time of restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, people and visitors in general were limited, and often seemed to be locals living there. During walks at the various plantations only a few people were observed. The same as for when visiting the beach Lakolk, only a few cars were to be seen. Lakolk is one of Europe's broadest sand beaches, and highly popular as it is possible to be visited by car (Visit Rømø & Tønder, 2021). Therefore, it was not sufficient to interpret from visitors' or locals' behaviour when being in the different areas of the national park. The places visited with the most people were a forest playground and in the centre of the villages. Yet again it seemed to be locals spending time outside during their weekend.

Fanø tourist agency



Source: Authors' own picture

Lakolk beach, Rømø



Source: Authors' own picture

Furthermore, observations were made at the national park through the eyes of a visitor. The authors' kept in mind the following questions when visiting as visitors: 1) Whether signage and guiding was sufficient when walking on plantations and other protected areas, 2) if info stands or front desks are easy to find, 3) if information is needed or wanted, where it can be found, 4) considering the number of visitors, how convenient is the park.

At the various nature attractions and places visited, some signages were observed:

Fanø, information board



Source: Authors' own picture

Welcome to Lakolk Beach



Source:: Authors' own picture

The main takeaways of the field trip and being visitors in The Wadden Sea National Park were first and foremost getting a better sense of the national park area. Moreover, the varying type of nature and understanding the potential touchpoints for visitors to gain information during their visits. Despite knowing that the codes of conduct are not currently implemented in the national park, it was interesting to see what current on-site communication and signage were present to educate and guide behaviour, and where it was located in the national park. Moreover, one of the first impressions and observations as a visitor was that it is not visible when you are either entering or are within the national park area. At some locations, small signs were present to welcome the visitor to the national park and thereby informing the visitor that now they are visiting the national park.

Fanø



Source: Authors' own picture

Rømø



Source: Authors' own picture

Fanø



Source: Authors' own picture



5. Literature Review & Theory

To gain deeper insights on the problem area and research aim, various relevant concepts and theories were identified and explored. Firstly, visitor management as a concept is presented. Hereafter, theories on codes of conduct as a nature management tool is explored. As the research aim for this thesis was to analyse the involvement of stakeholders in the development process of codes of conduct, various literature on stakeholder theory was found highly relevant to gain deeper insight on as we... Lastly, theories on community participation and tourism development are also included to further analyse stakeholder participation.

5.1 Visitor management

Introduction to the field

As part of preserving nature in the context of a national park, the concept of visitor management is relevant to review. Moreover, the codes of conduct made by The Wadden Sea National Park is also categorised as a tool of visitor management. Thus, to better understand the thoughts and processes behind these, theory and literature on visitor management has been explored. The impact of increased visitation on sensitive areas such as local communities, historical sites and nature and animal life has made many actors raise the awareness of protection and preservation. As a result, several guidelines, and practices for development of sustainable tourism and its impact have emerged (Bramwell & Lane, 2010) (Saarinen, 2013).

Relevant theories

According to the Nordic Council of Ministers (2019) *“Visitor management is a key tool in improving the recreational carrying capacity of the Nordic national parks. A more strategic and collaborative approach to visitor management can help protect and develop the parks in a sustainable way, preparing them for growing visitor numbers.”* (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). Regarding protection and preservation of natural resources like national parks, visitor management has been a policy tool used for many years to limit the negative impact of visitors (Eagles, McCool, & Haynes, 2002).

Various approaches and tools to visitor management have been suggested by several researchers. Eagles et al. (2002) identified approaches being: regulation of access by area; visitation by visitor type; entry fees; programs and facilities; visitor behaviour including codes of conduct; and allowing accredited organisations to bring visitors (Eagles, McCool, & Haynes, 2002). Similarly, to Eagles et al. (2002), the Nordic Council of Ministers (2019) also suggest seven solutions to visitor management divided into two approaches, which is about 1) to change visitor behaviour and 2) solutions which lay the foundation for changing visitor behaviour. More thorough explanations of these are presented in the following:

Solutions to changing visitor behaviour:

- **Adaptive management** which is a solution that focuses on visitor traffic using strategic placement of popular or attractive activities and services. Moreover, prioritizing path maintenance and zoning in the national parks for different types of activities. The aim for this approach is to shield vulnerable areas from the visitor traffic and to make 'local goodwill' by allowing certain types of activities, such as hunting and fishing (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019)
- **On-site communication and guides** involve primarily the use of guides and front desk as an important part of on-site communication. The guides can vary from professional guides or patrols to local volunteers as hosts. The benefits from this approach besides the job creation and strengthening ties to the local community when mobilizing non-local and local guides, they can create high-quality experience through the personal encounters (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).
- **Online communication and PR** consist of communicating online and through PR to educate visitors which also leads to spreading the awareness of the national parks and if used strategically, can help create local ownership (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

Solutions for laying the foundation for changing visitor behaviour:

- **Site-specific guidelines and codes of conduct** can be used in areas that have a certain vulnerable nature or cultural heritages in which a particular behaviour is required for protections of these areas. The Nordic Council of Ministers (2019) found that when the guidelines have been developed in close cooperation with key Actors such as end-users, tourism actors and researchers, the impact will increase (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).
- **Quality standards** have different purposes, and according to the Nordic Council of Ministers (2019) one of them can be for communication. Certifications can build awareness but can also be used for safety or as warnings in areas where visitors should be highly aware of certain danger or safety procedures (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).
- **Local stakeholder partnerships** are, suggested by the Nordic Council of Ministers, an important part of creating sustainable visitor management. Moreover, that the outcome of the efforts to include the local stakeholders through informing, educating, and involving them can help support and build the local ownership, pride, and sense of responsibility regarding the value of the national park, which eventually can reflect positively on the protection of the areas and visitor experience (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).
- **Monitoring** is according to the Nordic Council of Ministers (2019) not a final solution to visitor management. Nonetheless, the systematic collection to enhance knowledge on important

elements such as nature, visitor traffic and behaviour, and local attitudes can help to build the foundation for effective and sustainable approaches to visitor management. Besides being valuable to managing the national park, the Nordic Council of Ministers (2019) also suggests that it can direct political attention to the value created for the local community (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

These approaches are created based on applied tools to visitor management in national parks in the Nordic countries, which make them more reliable and applicable to the context of The Wadden Sea National Park as a contrast to the suggestions by Eagles et al. (2002) which is more generic in context and setting.

Furthermore, it was identified in Chapter 3, that The Wadden Sea National Park in Denmark operates differently and has other prerequisites than other Nordic national parks and The Wadden Sea National Parks in Germany and the Netherlands. Therefore, it has been considered important to further review literature on why some approaches to visitor management differ in national parks.

Kuo (2002) evaluated different strategies to visitor management and divided these approaches into two categories: 'hard' and 'soft' approaches. The hard approach focuses on physical and regulatory management, whereas soft approaches use education and interpretation (Kuo, 2002).

Table 2: Hard and soft approaches to visitor management

Hard approaches to visitor management	Soft approaches to visitor management
<p>Focus and aim: regulating visitor activities</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictions on visitor access to specific activities, such as fences, path and animal watching platforms • On-site security personnel such as park rangers and police • Rules and regulations • Entrance fees • Zoning 	<p>Focus and aim: educating visitors</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information and environmental interpretation through signage • Guidelines and codes on conduct • Marketing for visitor groups • Interpretation and educational programmes

Source: Authors' own contribution based on (Kuo, 2002)

The focus and aim of the application and impact of the two approaches differ, and Kuo (2002) argues that hard approaches to visitor management should not be applied alone, as these cannot achieve a long-term effect. The researcher suggests also applying soft approaches, when choosing a hard approach to visitor management. Interpretation is a key part of the soft approach, and according to Kuo (2002) interpretation plays an important role in the visitor experience, as tourists visit a specific site to gain a closer contact with the resources. Hence, knowledge and interpretation can create value and enjoyment for the visitors which soft approaches can contribute to while also preserving the resources and managing the visitors (Kuo, 2002).

Application of theory

Some of the suggested tools to visitor management by the Nordic Council of Ministers (2019) have been applied when analysing the involvement of stakeholders in the creation of the codes in The Wadden Sea National Park in section 6.3. Furthermore, the categorisation of soft and hard approaches to visitor management by Kuo (2002) has been used in section 6.2 to identify which of these approaches that Secretary of the Wadden Sea has applied.

5.2 Nature management and codes of conduct

Introduction to the field

In general, a national park is an organisation operating and managing a protected nature area. The way national parks are managed are not streamlined and in fact very specified from park to park. The type of approaches can include different approaches, management tools, and focus areas, despite all have the same vision of protecting and preserving their given nature area. The way visitors are managed by National Parks, also highly differs in relation to the location of the parks (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). Especially in Nordic countries, the concept of right to roam, which means everyone has a right to access nature for recreation and exercise, is playing an important factor and especially in times of a pandemic, it is a free activity everyone can access, that made outdoor activities increase in popularity (Naturstyrelsen, 2020).

As the aim of this thesis is to explore the creation of codes of conduct as a tool to preserve nature in national parks, it is of high importance to investigate academic literature on codes of conduct and their way of involvement by participants. Codes of conducts are an increasing tool being used as part of implementing ways to improve visitor's behaviour (Mason, 1997).

The exact origin of codes of conduct is difficult to obtain. Different sources claim that codes of conduct either have their origin in military training or in governmental relations in terms of codes of ethics.

Codes of ethics are a broader definition of codes of conduct and gives a person a general impression of

accepted behaviour and decisions. Codes of conduct however defines specific ways a person should behave or act in a specific action (Mason, 1997).

The first global set of code of ethics for tourism was introduced in 1997 by the world tourism organization of the United Nations, UNWTO (UNWTO, 2021). These were created to promote responsible, sustainable, and universal accessible tourism and the codes covered economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects of travel and tourism. As a result, countless organisations within tourism have drawn inspiration in developing more precise codes of conduct for their destinations to minimise the negative impacts on their environment (UNWTO, 2021). Despite these global sets of codes being introduced in 1997, code of conducts was already created prior to this in a tourism context, where to a reasonable extent some research has been made upon as well.

Relevant theories

Cole (2007) is amongst the researchers who have done the first attempts to review the effectiveness of codes of conduct in a visitor context. In her research *“Implementing and evaluating a code of conduct for visitors”* she presents several challenges that are faced when introducing codes of conduct for visitors (Cole, 2007). Her research was done two years after a set of codes of conduct were introduced in a mountain region in Indonesia, to evaluate the effectiveness of these. The results varied broad between being effective and others directly violating the local cultural norms of behaviour.

Furthermore, it was concluded that visitors are more likely to accept a set of codes if these are officially accepted by a higher institution. However, which body to accept is yet to be clarified, like obtaining knowledge on which further actions can encourage participation of a visitor. In general, there is an inconsistency in how visitors say they behave and how they actually behave. Few tourists aim to harm nature; however, Cole found them ignorant towards the effects of their actions. Therefore, observations are highly important and essential when evaluating the actual effects of codes of conducts and the behaviour of visitors in real-life settings (Cole, 2007). As the codes of conduct have yet not been applied in The Wadden Sea National Park, inspiration from Cole’s (2007) approach was taken by making observations on the current elements of the codes in The Wadden Sea National Park, see section 4.4.3.

Another scholar who has researched upon codes of conduct with a different objective, is Peter Mason (1997). In his article on *“Tourism Codes of Conducts in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic Region”* he points out the differences between regulations, guidelines, and codes of conduct. While regulations have some sort of legal status, codes of conduct, codes of practice and guidelines do not have the same standing, even though they are created to regulate tourism (Mason, 1997). Stonehouse (1996) in Mason (1997) argues that the difference between guidelines and codes of conducts lies in the different focuses towards different areas regarding the end-goal (Mason, 1997). While guidelines are usually based on

well-considered rules, indicating specific actions to be followed to achieve or solve something, codes of conduct are a set of rules focusing on the behaviour in specific situations. Furthermore, codes of conduct are a voluntary set of rules, which are self-imposed and self-regulated, as they are not part of a law or legal status, meaning they would not result in any sort of fines or penalty when not being followed (Mason, 1997). Mason & Mowforth (1996) in Mason (1997) have identified four challenging areas within the use of codes of conduct. Firstly, many sets of codes seem to be poorly implemented which makes it necessary to evaluate effectiveness by monitoring, observing, and reporting effects manually. Consequently, it is highly important to include human resources even though these can be costly. Secondly, the codes of conduct are often seen to be used as a marketing tool rather than having a focus on implementing these effectively in the given area. Thirdly, coordination between various kinds of actors, such as organisations, groups and individuals who aim to protect the environment is essential. Despite having a fellow goal of protection, these actors could possibly end up harming nature rather than protecting it, as they have too many different plans, objectives, and concerns. Lastly, Mason & Mowforth (1996) identified a clarification whether the codes should be self-regulated or external-regulated (Mason, 1997). Several authors have had different opinions on the lastly mentioned issue. While other researchers outside the arctic claim that external regulation seems to be far more effective, Mason and Mowforth (1996) argue that self-regulation is motivated by the tourism industry to appear more responsible upon imposed regulations (Mason, 1997).

In *“No better than a band-aid for a bullet wound - the effectiveness of tourism codes of conduct”* (Mason, 2007), Mason, Black and Crabtree in Mason (2007) discuss the meaning of the various terms being used to impact and manage tourism, the different attempts of codes trying to manage tourism, and the challenges with the use and effectiveness of codes in the tourism industry throughout the years. Tourism regulations, self-regulations, guidelines, and codes of conduct might have a common goal, however major differences lie within these terms. Regulations have a legal status, while different sets of codes and guidelines start where the law ends, and therefore are seen as voluntarily self-regulated (Mason, 2007). As presented in Mason (2007) UNEP, the United Nations Environment Program, identified five objectives which codes of conduct should contain: Firstly, codes should be intermediaries between the government and bodies in tourism, secondly create awareness in government and industry on environmental needs and management amongst visitors on appropriate behaviour, thirdly include and educate hosts and destinations on how to protect the environment, and lastly to unite government, destinations, the industry and NGO's (Mason, 2007). In many ways codes of conduct are described as a continuation of regulations, where not only provision and rules are involved, but also the behaviour of visitors. This makes codes having a rather ethical dimension, which is about choosing and acting in a reasonable manner (Mason, 2007).

Mason et. al (2007) in Mason (2007) identified different target groups for tourism codes of conduct, being the visitors, the tourism industry, and members of host communities. However, the visitor is the most important one, being responsible for the execution of the given codes. In contrast to Mason et. al (2007), Garrod and Fennel (2004) in Mason (2007) chose to categorise the codes instead of the target groups of these. The codes were divided into deontological and teleological codes. First mentioned includes ethical perspectives being rules-based based on actions and duties such as "Please do not step on the grass". Teleological codes advocate good behaviour by statements or an explanatory guideline such as "Do not step on the grass, as it harms the freshly sown grass that will otherwise not be able to grow to the full extent and provide a living and nutrition for animals living in the park" (Mason, 2007).

In terms of the effectiveness of codes of conduct, several questions have been raised. Despite the four major challenges suggested by Mason and Mowforth (1996) further up in this section, a further issue was raised by Garrod and Fennell (2004) in (Mason, 2007). They argue that ownership of the codes plays an important role for the user to accept these and to follow them. This is achieved by giving the intended user groups of the codes the possibility to participate in the creation of the codes. In this way, codes are created with a tone and format that is understood by the user groups and are more of guidelines than actual instruction. This leads back to the mentioned teleological and deontological codes, meaning teleological are once again suggested to be the most effective ones (Mason, 2007).

Application of the theory

The identified theories will be used in the following ways throughout the analysis: Mason (1997; 2007) is used to discuss the different target groups codes of conduct approach and what effect it has, that the codes are being self-regulatory. Too see further, see section 6.2.

Garrod & Fennell (2004) are used to discuss the acceptance and effectiveness of the codes of conducts and the factors of it regarding the involvement of stakeholders. Moreover, the foundation of participation from ownership in the creation and implementation of the codes is identified through the theory of Garrod & Fennell (2004) and is applied in section 6.3. To identify the categorisation of the codes itself, Garrod & Fennell (2004) theory of whether codes are deontological or teleological formulated has been applied in section 6.2.

5.3 Stakeholder Theory

Introduction to the field

The Wadden Sea National Park has various stakeholders who are supporting the national park in different ways. As stated in section 3.2.1 many different public and private stakeholders represent The

Wadden Sea National Park, which are relevant to identify in the creation of the codes of conduct.

Moreover, due to stakeholders being a part of the research question, various literature of stakeholders in a tourism context has been found relevant.

Relevant theories

Freeman (2010) defined a stakeholder as *“any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of a corporation’s purpose”* (Freeman, 2010). These stakeholders can be anything from suppliers, stockholders, environmentalists, locals to the state, and have a big impact in supporting or damaging the business. This also counts for the created codes of conduct, as both creation and implementation are dependent on stakeholder’s involvement and participation. Freeman (2010) argues that the objectives of an organisation to a stakeholder should produce strategic, political, and moral conceptions through negotiation and communication. Stakeholders have an important role as ambassadors for the codes of conduct by The Wadden Sea National Park, but it is important to investigate their willingness and objectives of becoming involved. Moreover, their willingness to support a long-term sustainable development and preservation or to only profit from nature is a factor that should be revisited. About whom and how stakeholders’ profit, Ackoff (1994) recognizes that a stakeholder’s objective most often is profit related (Ackoff, 1994). Ackoff (1994) thoroughly describes how a stakeholder views a company. He uses the example to describe a stakeholder as a *“visitor to earth who is sent down to another planet to find out what a business enterprise is here”* (Ackoff, 1994). It is always knowledge or a physical product that is exchanged for money one way or another between the stakeholder and the company. Whether it is a supplier supplying goods in return for money or a customer receiving these in return to pay the company, it is always an exchange that gives money to one of the parts (Ackoff, 1994). As mentioned in chapter 3, several stakeholders to The Wadden Sea National Park, provide accommodation for tourists. Thereby, these support the increasing number of tourists in the area which increase spending. In this way wealth is distributed and one stakeholder affects one another in a bigger system as being part of the same area.

In the case of The Wadden Sea National Park, it is important to identify which stakeholders have been involved and how, and what influence these have had on the implementation of the codes of conduct. For this, inspiration from Pajunens (2006)’ *“Stakeholder Influence Identification”* matrix was used (Pajunen, 2006). The two main elements of Pajunens (2006) original model contain *“resource dependencies”* and *“network positions”*. Firstly, mentioned defines stakeholder’s structure based on the influence of a company’s dependency, and lastly mentioned is used to define the stakeholders influence of their network. The model represents a matrix of 9 boxes where stakeholders can be positioned, according to three scales of low-moderate-high on two axes. Stakeholders are rated subjective and result in three groups; 1) Stakeholders with no influence as ambassadors, 2) Stakeholders who might

have an influence and 3) governing stakeholders with direct influence as ambassadors. To identify the most influential stakeholders, Pajunen (2006) has created the model that recognizes the dependence of the relationships between the organisations and its stakeholders and network. Pajunen (2006) related his model to identify the most influential stakeholder during a crisis (Pajunen, 2006). However, in this research the use of this theory has not been applied to a crisis, but in a current development project. Moreover, as a model can be static, this has further been modified in the application of the theory in the analysis of this thesis. Resource dependencies and network dependencies have for the case of The Wadden Sea National Park been adjusted to financial, network and knowledge resources. This way, the most influential stakeholders to the development process of the codes of conduct have been identified. The definitions of whether a stakeholder has low to high influence, have in the analysis been adjusted to the types of resources they have contributed with, and the influence of these on the creation of the codes.

Application of the theory

To identify the stakeholders of the codes of conduct project at The Wadden Sea National Park, Freeman's (2010) and Ackoff's (1994) definition and characteristics of a stakeholder have been applied in the analysis in section 6.3.

The modification of Pajunen's (2006) ranking of stakeholder influence based on the resources of finances, knowledge and network have been in section 6.3 as well.

5.4 Community participation in tourism development

Introduction to the field

As mentioned by literature in the above section 5.2 on codes on conduct, the tourism industry and local host community are target groups of the codes (Mason, 2007). Moreover, The Wadden Sea National Park is inhabited by local residents, and several local businesses and tourism operators (see Chapter 3). Therefore, theory on involvement of the local community has been found relevant for this thesis to explore further how these local stakeholders have been involved in the process of creating the codes of conduct.

Community participation has been an important focus in tourism planning and development projects for many years and has over time led to several types of definitions and participatory approaches (Shani & Pizam, 2012). Common for all is the inclusion of the resident, community, and public in policy planning, however the level of inclusion might differ. In Shani & Pizam (2012), Class (1979), Rifkin (1988) and Bracht & Thourus (1990) define community participation as simply giving the opportunity for the local community to be involved (Shani & Pizam, 2012). Whereas Arnstein (1969), Brager & Specht (1972) and

Willis (1995) state explicitly the involvement of community participation. In this, it aims to create a shift in power and empowerment from those who traditionally make the decisions to those who normally are not (Shani & Pizam, 2012).

Relevant theories

The definition of community participation becomes important when understanding the approaches taken to involve the community, and as a result, the level of involvement or power which is created. Derived from participatory approaches in development projects, several classifications of types of community participation are presented, such as by Arnstein (1969) and Choguill (1996) who both suggest an eight-step hierarchy. Arnstein (1969) rates the type of participation on degree of citizen power, degree of tokenism, and nonparticipation (Arnstein, 1969). Choguill (1996) classifies participation on the concepts of support, manipulation, rejection, and neglect (Choguill, 1996). In a tourism context, Tosun (2011) suggests a more 'adaptable and flexible paradigm, with a simpler yet in-depth classification of community participation in tourism development. Tosun (2011) proposes the following three types to community participation, which is also considering some of the same characteristics as Arnstein (1969) and Choguill (1996). These are 1) **Pseudo**; 2) **Passive** and 3) **Spontaneous community participation** (Tosun, 2011). The characteristics of the three categories are summarised in the table below:

Table 3: Types of community participation

	Pseudo	Passive	Spontaneous
Level of community participation	Non-participation of the host community	Host communities are decision-takers (decision-implementers) not decision makers	Active participation by host-community
Objective of community participation in tourism development	To enable power holders to educate host community, hence host community is not enabled to participate in the process	Contribution of host communities to tourism development is limited to their performing assigned tasks. It may refer to a kind of host community participation in implementation or the ratification of decisions already taken by external bodies	Motivation and needs of the host community are key drivers for the tourism development

Decision-makers	External players such as governmental entities, tourism operators or tourists	External players such as governmental entities, tourism operators or tourists with some influence by local/host community	Host community or selected leaders of the host community and external bodies in collaboration/ partnership
Main focus for development	Development is mainly driven by central decision makers rather than the needs of the local community	Mostly, host communities take part in tourism development issues but not experiencing personal, face to face interaction with decision-makers	Development is highly driven by the inclusion of host community
Approach	Top-down, indirect which does not require the participation of all members, but local leaders might be consulted to reduce the socio-political risks to tourism development	Represent some form of a top-down, indirect approach. Systematic community consultation activities such as open public meetings and forums are performed through an appointed task force. It creates an opportunity for host communities to convey their feelings and opinions regarding tourism development issues indirectly to decision-makers	Bottom-up, direct face-to-face communication with host community
Empowerment of community	Low, some decisions might be meeting the basic needs of host community	Low, but higher than Pseudo as community is giving an indirect platform of sharing their opinions and needs	Higher than pseudo and passive, as local community is actively involved in most of the process and influencing the decision-making

Source: Authors' own contribution based on (Tosun, 2011)

The above table presents the characteristics and differences between the different types of community participation by Tosun (2011). Pseudo community participation being the type with less community

involvement and empowerment. On the other end of the scale is the spontaneous types, which Tosun (2011) divides further into three categories:

1) Direct host community participation, which is characterized by face-to-face communication between the decision-makers and the local community who are going to be affected by the tourism development. The local community is given the opportunity to directly raise their opinions and emotions, yet it does not delegate decision making power to the local community. Thus, the outcome for this type of community involvement is depending on how the local community can express their needs and how the decision-makers respond to these (Tosun, 2011).

2) Active community participation is a step closer to more active participation and empowerment in decision making of the local community compared to 'direct host community participation'. In this type, community participation is based on achieving the development and goals of the needs of the community without external pressure. This level of community participation also requires a financial and personal commitment to tourism development with a long-term perspective and projects. The local people also participate in the entire process of tourism development, which includes the decision making, implementation, sharing of benefits, monitoring and evaluation of the tourism development. Nonetheless, it does not require participation from all, but rather participation of key people with different types of skills and knowledge (Tosun, 2011).

3) Authentic community participation is the closest to full active community participation, however Tosun (2006) argues that this type rarely exists. In this type, local community participation is not 'a means, but an end itself'. The local community can enter a partnership in which they can negotiate and engage in trade-off with the traditional power holders and decision makers. The objectives are achieving power and meaningful participation in tourism development. However, Tosun (2006) argues that the end itself can be hard to determine, as it consists of qualitative processes to reach the objectives (Tosun, 2011).

Tosun (2011) identified the different elements to be present to categorise different types of community participation. Similarly, Botes and van Rensburg (2000) also identified common 'plagues or challenges leading to conflicts within community participation and involvement. As a contrast to Tosun (2011), Botes and van Rensburg (2000) do not categorise the outcome of level of community participation but rather the challenge which often occurs in the processes of involving the local community. They identified nine common challenges, which are the following:

1. ***The paternalistic role of development professionals:*** Botes and van Rensburg (2000) claims that most of the development projects made are started by outsiders of the local community in which the development project is aimed to take place. This often leads to the professional outsider dominating the decision-making and facilitation of the processes in the development projects. Thus, empowerment of the locals is not created, and participation processes often begin after the projects have already been designed (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).
2. ***The role of the state:*** Botes and van Rensburg (2000) found that there were several cases of the local and national government using community participation simply to maintain power relations that already exist or to maintain social control. Moreover, in these cases, the benefits from community participation highly depends on the political interest that is involved in the development projects (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).
3. ***Overreporting of development success:*** The authors also found the issue of successful outcomes being more quantified, documented and being communicated more than project failures. Consequently, a lack of understanding and communication of project failures are created which might become a barrier for improvement and transparency (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).
4. ***Selective participation:*** Botes and van Rensburg (2000) states that they often are the most vocal, visible, wealthy, and educated local groups who are being heard by the development professionals. Furthermore, the local groups who end up being involved in the development process might not represent all interests of the community. Consequently, other local groups and voices are potentially excluded from the development process. Botes and van Rensburg (2000) argue that it is one of the biggest challenges to make sure people who do not have the capacity, nor desire to participate, are involved in the process (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).
5. ***Hard-issue bias:*** 'Hard' issues such as technological, financial, physical, and material are often perceived as more important in the implementation of the development projects and its success than 'soft' issues. The soft issues include community involvement, decision making procedures, social compacts, and empowerment. Botes and van Rensburg (2000) found that due to the assumption that the soft issues are more intangible and time-consuming, hard issues are easier to manage. This results in technical bias, where social and cultural elements are being neglected (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).

6. ***Conflicts within local interest groups:*** As various people's needs and voices are to be included in the development projects, there is a potential risk of conflicts between different local interest groups. In development projects, benefits and inclusion are possibly being distributed unequally. Thus, some local groups might end up feeling neglected and conflicts can occur from this (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).
7. ***Gatekeeping by local elites:*** In projects where there is a community leadership, which is in favour of the project, the chances for a successful outcome of the development and its processes are more likely than when the local leadership are opposing. In some cases, local elites will place themselves in between the development professionals and the end-beneficiary community. Botes and van Rensburg (2000) found that there is a potential risk that the local leadership might feel threatened regarding their control, and therefore do not wish to engage with end-beneficiaries. As a result, they might try to block relations to development professionals (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).
8. ***The excessive pressure for immediate results:*** The focus on the anticipated results were often found to be short term, which evidently created tension between the product and the process, yet also cost of time and the value of the involvement. Consequently, Botes and van Rensburg (2000) argue that the pressure for quick results, which also is focusing on the product, can eventually undermine the attention to the approach of community participation. This can somehow also be related to plague five, with bias on hard issues rather than attention to the soft issues (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).
9. ***The lack of public interest in involvement:*** Like some of the challenges mentioned in plague number four on selective participation and plague number six about conflicts within local interest groups, Botes & van Rensburg (2000) found that it can be a great challenge when the local community is simply not interested in being involved and participate in the development processes (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).

To sum up, these nine challenges have been identified by Botes and Van Rensburg (2000) in tourism development projects that have approached local communities. As these challenges were found in a specific context, not all might be identified or applicable to the context of The Wadden Sea National Park and their development of the codes of conduct.

Application of the theory

The types of community participation by Tosun (2011) have been applied when analysing how the local community, represented by local residents and local businesses, as stakeholders of The Wadden Sea National Park, have been involved in developing the codes of conducts. See section 6.3 for application. Some of the challenges stated by Botes and van Rensburg (2000) have also been found in the process of creating the codes. Therefore, Botes and van Rensburg (2000) have been applied in section 6.3 and 6.4 to identify the potential consequences and impact of the stakeholder involvement in both the creation and implementation of the codes.

5.5 Concept definitions

To provide a clear understanding of the concepts used throughout this thesis and analysis, the following terms were decided to be defined:

Codes of conduct:

A set of guidelines for visitors' behaviour in specific settings. Codes of conduct are self-imposed and self-regulated, and do not underlie a law or legal status (Mason, 1997). The codes of conduct will also be referred to as the "codes" in this thesis.

National Parks:

In a Danish context, national parks are permitted by law and owned by the Danish government. For a specific area with nature to become a national park in Denmark, the nature area must have certain characteristics of unique and distinctive nature, which can be both on land and water. A national park is created in close cooperation between the board of the park, the Ministry of Environment, municipalities, local community, and organisations (Danmarks Nationalparker, 2021a).

Visitors:

It was chosen to define visitors as anyone visiting The Wadden Sea National Park as a visitor. Regardless being local or as an outsider to the area (UNWTO, 2021).

Visitors unaccustomed to nature:

This type of visitor has vague or low pre-existing knowledge on how to behave in nature, and is to a higher degree disconnected from the nature (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

Stakeholders:

A stakeholder is any type of group or individual who can impact or be affected by the achievement of an organisation's purpose (Freeman, 2010). In this thesis, stakeholders include everyone being involved or potentially impacted by the codes of conduct created by The Wadden Sea National Park.



6. Analysis

The following chapter will analyse and present how to manage and guide visitors in national parks, the creation of the codes of conduct in The Wadden Sea National Park, stakeholder involvement and collaboration in selecting the codes for The Wadden Sea National Park, and the implementation of the codes of conduct in The Wadden Sea National Park.

6.1 Challenges in visitor management

Visitor management has been an important factor in various tourism contexts since the first problems and conflicts have arisen due to increased tourism (Candrea & Ispas, 2009). This has made several destinations rethink the way visitors are managed and, as a result, multiple approaches have been created. Visitor management instruments and tools can be anything from concrete tools and channels for changing visitor behaviour to approaches laying a foundation to change the visitor behaviour (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

Prior to analysis of the specific codes of conduct by The Wadden Sea National Park, other forms of visitor management have been presented. Codes of conduct is one way to manage visitors, however various other forms have been used by national parks as well.

The main reason national parks need better visitor management, are primary due to the following challenges:

1. Increasing numbers of visitors which result in increasing pressure on environmental, social, and local resources
2. Low knowledge on behaviour and attitude of visitors in nature
3. Increased number of visitors is hard to handle, as national parks have public right to roam
4. self-organized user activities and experiences, and the possibility to easily promote remote places via social media channels, that creates increased pressure on specific attractions and sights through new forms of communication (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

Actions taken to manage visitors are done in a manner that does not affect the uniqueness of the nature and landscape, which visitors are coming to explore.

Visitor management approaches differ in between soft and hard management approaches. To recap, soft approaches lead up to modifying visitor behaviour through guides, codes of conduct, advice, and suggestions. Hard approaches to management are more directly communicated by rules and restrictions, or using gates or access fees (Mason, 2005). However, lastly mentioned is hard to implement in national parks in the Nordic countries, as by law every individual has the right to roam in public national parks due to them being state-owned. Public access is also deeply rooted in Nordic traditions and values, in the sense that nature belongs to everyone (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

Additionally, to balance out the hard and soft approach, the Nordic Council of Ministers has suggested an adaptive approach to visitor management. Here, the approach is used as a tool to nudge visitors to behave in certain ways by either spreading, centralising, or modifying the moving patterns of visitors. The combination of soft and adaptive approaches is therefore seen as a preferred approach for Nordic national parks (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

However, effective visitor management has been found to be related to the stakeholders. Whether it is the state, the visitors, the locals or destination management organisations, a broad stakeholder involvement is valuable to succeed and make visitors aware of their responsibilities (Mason, 2007).

6.2 Creation of the codes of conduct in The Wadden Sea National Park

The process of creating, developing, and implementing the codes of conduct by The Wadden Sea National Park, will be analysed in the coming section. First, in section 6.2.1 the need for the creation of the codes will be identified. Hereafter, the chosen codes of conduct will be analysed regarding their aim, elements, and types to understand how the codes are supposed to approach the visitor. Following this, the involvement and collaboration of the stakeholders and local community will be analysed.

6.2.1 Identifying the need

It is more important than ever to secure the territory's social environment by making sure that the users and their behaviour do not affect the nature and local infrastructure in a negative way. Furthermore, to maintain the sustainable balance between the economic, environmental, and social conditions of protected regions (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019) (Arni & Khairil, 2013). As proposed by the Nordic Council of Ministers (2019), site-specific guidelines and codes of conduct are a useful tool in vulnerable nature where a behavioural change is needed in order to protect vulnerable areas (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). National parks, such as the parks of **New Forest** (UK), **Weerribben-Wieden** (Netherlands) and **Jotunheimen** (Norway) have guided and managed their tourists by being on-site and communicated information through guides, information stands and brochures and having staff present at actual attractions or front desks for a certain time already. However, **Svalbard** (Norway) has implemented a web page where visitors must register if leaving a zone. In return, one-to-one information, guides, and codes of conduct for the specific areas are given. According to Peter Saabye Simonsen, not only are visitor numbers increasing, but the visitors are also more urbanised than ever, and therefore do not know how to behave responsibly in nature (see Appendix 2). He further claims:

“Many Danes are so urbanized, that they do not know how to get out in nature, how the nature works, how to behave and act in a responsible way. Therefore, a need for more guided behaviour and attitude is needed, to protect and preserve nature.”⁷(see Appendix 2)

To create the codes of conduct for The Wadden Sea National Park, originally this task has been assigned to a higher political level. But with the establishment of the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park and their appointment as a part of UNESCO World Heritage, it was decided by the Ministry of Environment of Denmark that the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park should take lead on the creation of codes of conduct. Furthermore, it was decided these should be applicable for the other Danish national parks to establish a common ground for communication on a national level as well. According to Peter Saabye Simonsen, the creation of codes of conduct is a:

“Mix of needs that has been around for decades, but no one has ever solved the problem or taken the responsibility. And when the organisation in The Wadden Sea National Park (red.) was established, it finally made sense to assign the task to them.”⁸ (see Appendix 1, p. 2)

As part of the above-mentioned objectives and management of The Wadden Sea National Park in section 3.2.2, the initiative of creating a code of conduct to manage visitor behaviour has been part of the planning for many years. However, according to the Secretary, the decision of who was going to be responsible for the creation of the codes has changed over time. After several attempts, the project ended up being the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park to become responsible

“An organisation came to life and a whole new way of organizing the National Park (red.) that had not been present yet. Furthermore, not to forget, implementing new measures requires resources and costs money. And the municipality would not take the task. And the Nature Agency did not take it either. And they were the ones in the first case who should have done this long ago, and in a friendly manner gave the task as a constructive task to the Secretary... However, it must be stated that with an organisation as the Secretary coming along, it only made sense to impose the task to an organisation that works out

⁷ *“Men rigtigt mange danskere er så urbaniserede, at de reelt ikke ved hvordan man kommer ud i naturen, hvordan naturen fungerer, hvordan man gebærder sig på en hensigtsmæssig måde, så der er brug for hjælpe dem til gode oplevelser, sikker færdsel og hensynsfuld adfærd.”*

⁸ *“Derfor er det en blanding af et behov, der har været der i flere årtier. Der er nogen, der ikke har løst opgaven. Og så kommer den organisering, hvor det giver mening.”*

from protection and partnerships, and through these had resources to create the Codes of Conducts.”⁹
(see Appendix 1, p. 2)

Thus, due to the structure and position of The Wadden Sea National Park with their objective of preserving nature when developing tourism, the creation of codes of conduct became their tasks and responsibility.

6.2.2 The chosen codes of conducts

From reports, workshops, and collaborations the following codes of conduct were created. These codes of conducts consist of 19 different activities which appear in the national park and focus on proper behaviour. These activities are the following 1) bringing dogs, 2) biking, 3) horseback riding, 4) hiking, 5) hunting, 6) bird watching, 7) staying overnight, 8) collecting in nature, 9) visiting the beach, 10) being active on the beach, 11) windsurfing, 12) paddle sport 13) photographing, 14) sailing, 15) fishing, 16) collecting oysters, 17) watching the ‘sort sol’ phenomena, 18) watching seals, and 19) watching the dark sky at night time (Nationalpark Vadehavet, et al., 2020).

Codes of conduct are a soft approach within visitor management, meaning they use education and interpretation (Kuo, 2002). Within the above-mentioned activities, specific behavioural, season based, and recommendations are given in form of the codes of conduct (Nationalpark Vadehavet, et al., 2020). In this way, visitors can get specified codes in relation to their activity and will not have to deal with multiple codes that are not relevant for their visit. However, they are still welcome to read these, as all codes have an educational element that might be interesting for learning purposes, but with only focusing on their specific activity, all relevant information will be received. The initiators, the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, have been aimed to create codes which are easy, manageable, and understandable, which means every person with common sense will be able to follow these (see Appendix 1). As mentioned in section 5.1, choosing a soft approach to manage visitors, supports a focus, and aim of educating visitors instead of regulating their activities by restrictions. To recap, Kuo (2002) states that soft approaches are more likely to reach long term effects than hard approaches, as it changes visitor’s behaviour while educating them and lets them create value and enjoyment while gaining a deeper understanding of the actual resources, they are being active in (Kuo, 2002).

The way the codes have been formed are identified to be teleological codes. This means the codes are formulated teleologically towards a goal, thereby being more educational and advocating good

⁹ *“Og kommunerne vil ikke tage opgaven. Og Naturstyrelsen stak af fra regningen Det var jo dem, der burde have lavet det for længst. Miljøstyrelsen stak af fra regningen. Og så lød det så pænt at “så kunne nationalparken jo tage det som en rigtig god konstruktiv aktivitet”, og det er jo også rigtigt.”*

behaviour rather than being deontological, which means being rule-based and actual instructions (Mason, 2007). As mentioned beforehand, the objective of the codes is to make visitors behave more responsible in nature, and at the same time educating them about the nature they are using. According to Garrod & Fennel (2004) teleologically are more likely to reach long term effects, as visitors are more likely to follow and accept these if codes are not feeling as instructions and limitations, but rather as suggestions and provides learning value for the recipient as well (Mason, 2007). Deontological codes in the other hand have difficulties to be adjusted and suiting into the individual visitor's perspectives as they are based on rules and absolutes and therefore not as dynamic as teleological codes (Mason, 2007). In this way, the codes could also relate to the purpose of "Vadehavets Formidlerforum", as these are educators and communicators to advocate good behaviour. It is a network and collaboration between the Nature Agency, The Wadden Sea National Park, museum and intermediary institutions, and the Outdoor Council. The purpose of this network and collaboration is to ensure a coordinated and coherent approach to communicating the nature and culture of the Wadden Sea (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021e).

The codes of conduct are further supported with a seasonal chart showing the time of the year when the nature is most vulnerable, a section explaining how the activity can be performed, linking to sites, or giving tips about how and where to perform a certain activity and a section explaining who and what the visitor will meet when being out in nature. This provides the visitor with a comprehensive explanation of experiences and responsible behaviour in the national park. See example below.

Figure 4: Example of code in code of conduct publication



Source: (Nationalpark Vadehavet, et al., 2020)

However, as argued by Mason (2005), when choosing a soft approach, it is not only the visited environment but also the destination community that should be considered when creating site-specific guidelines. As mentioned earlier, Denmark is the only Nordic country with residents in all their national parks, which takes the community participation to another level, as the locals are directly involved. Hereby meaning that the local residents are impacted by the development of tourism and initiatives such as codes of conducts. Hence, this could potentially influence the local's daily life and living, in comparison to visitors from the outside.

6.2.3 Selection criteria of the codes of conduct

Once it was decided that The Wadden Sea National Park should take the lead on the process of creating the codes, a general investigation on the activities within the park were made. According to Brøgger-Jensen Et al. (2015) in their report about vulnerable nature types and animal species in The Wadden Sea National Park, potential conflicts between the nature and recreational activities in the park were identified and analysed. These were focusing on the vulnerable types of nature and species being impacted by different kinds of activities. This report aimed to be the biological fundament for the creation of the codes of conduct (Brøgger-Jensen, Halvorsen, & Vissing, 2015).

Figure 5: Matrix evaluating the known and potential impacts of nature types, animals, and birds in The Wadden Sea National Park

	Sea	Wade	Beach	Marsh	Dune	Heath	Forest	Wetland	Seals	Colony-breeding birds	Resting wading birds	Resting geese and ducks	Breeding birds on the beach
Beach life	0	0	1	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	1	0	2
Moving by foot/Hiking	N/R	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	2
Cycling	N/R	N/R	0	N/R	1	1	0	N/R	N/R	2	2	2	2
Horseback idning	N/R	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Hunting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	N/R	2	2	N/R
Nature exploration	N/R	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	2
Camping at campsites & shelters	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	1	1	0	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
Car and ATC driving	N/R	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Kitebuggy	N/R	N/R	1	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	2	2	2
Safari	0	0	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	1	2	2	1
Sailing with engine	0	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	1	2	1	2	2	1
Sailing without engine	0	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	1	2	1	2	2	1
Windsurfing	0	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	N/R	2	2	N/R
Kajak og kano	0	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	1	2	2	2	2	1
Freshwater & Coastal fishing	0	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	1	1	2	2	1	0
Fishing at sea	0	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	1	0	0	1	0
Sports flying	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	2	2	2
Airsports	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	2	2	2
Drone flying	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	2	2	2
Kite flying	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	2	2	2	2	2

0 No significant impact

1 Some impact

2 Significant impact

I/R Not relevant

Source: (Brøgger-Jensen, Halvorsen, & Vissing, 2015)

As shown in above figure 3, the activities were grouped by the following criteria: 1) Type of terrain, whether these were widespread on a larger area e.g., the beach or on more specific detached areas such as paths, 2) amount of time spent on the activity, 3) movement, whether it is a still standing, a slow- or fast-moving activity and 4) noise, depending on if the activity is performed with or without an engine (Brøgger-Jensen, Halvorsen, & Vissing, 2015).

The chosen activities were then ranked combined with the different identified terrain types and animal species upon their impact level. For those marked with “0”, it was chosen not to go on with creating codes of conducts, as these activities were stated not to have a negative impact on the specific types of nature and animals. Combinations marked with “1” were considered to not harm nature or animal life in general, but rather to take a closer look on specific cases and hereafter estimate if a creation codes of conduct were necessary for certain situations or seasons. Any combination marked with “2” is determined to need a code regardless of the situation (Brøgger-Jensen, Halvorsen, & Vissing, 2015).

Several activities have not been considered to have specific codes by the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, as their level of impact is not seen as threatening. As mentioned in the report, itself does not have sufficient literature on the different activities regarding vulnerable species and nature. In example it states that “*there is no literature on disturbance of biking and riding on colonial nesting birds*”, meaning that no evidence for the need for codes has been made yet (Brøgger-Jensen, Halvorsen, & Vissing, 2015). The question is whether further analysis would show if it were necessary to identify a possible need of a potential changing behaviour within these activities towards vulnerable species. Therefore, the deselection of several potential codes is not entirely based on facts or an academic fundament, and an unexplored area that could result in new findings. Moreover, as mentioned in source criticism, several data sources used in the report are outdated and do not represent current data. This counts for several data sources representing the number of visitors and the seasonal activities on Rømø, counting data from 2003 and 2005. Consequently, for the selection process of the codes, the data foundation might not represent the current situation and impact of the current activities and visitation.

Nonetheless, following this report the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park identified that several activities to become codes were found relevant for several different types of visitors and users. These were further specified by creating a vulnerability-card based on season-based vulnerable elements. The vulnerability card is comparable to the Danish Centre for Environment and Energy and University of Copenhagen’s national biodiversity-card. The card presents the area's importance for red-listed species on a local scale. If a species is red listed, it is threatened, and its habitat urgently must be as protected as possible to secure its survival. By mapping both activities, user groups and the vulnerability regarding each season, the codes of conduct could be as specific as possible (Brøgger-Jensen, Halvorsen, & Vissing, 2015).

Besides the conflict of interest between nature, animals and activities identified in the above figure 3, the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National has also observed and noted places and situations where there is a conflict between the national park and visitors.

As mentioned by Peter Saabye Simonsen:

“We are trying to look at those places where local and user groups tell us about conflicts. To a larger extent than only coming up with ideas for the codes ourselves, we actually start where the biggest places of conflicts get expressed...Same goes for implementing the codes. We have to test them, make sure they are working, are they formulated the right way and get communicated on the right channels before we

*start to add more codes. It is important whether visitors understand these or not.*¹⁰(see Appendix 1, p. 9)

To sum up, it was identified that the codes of conduct are related to a soft approach, meaning that they are self-regulatory. Moreover, the codes can be related to teleological types of codes which makes the codes having more of an educational element than restrictive. Additionally, the 19 codes have been created based on findings on activities which have been identified to have a significant negative impact on nature and animals in the national park, and where the Secretary sees conflicts stated by the local community.

6.3 Involvement and collaboration in the creation of the codes

As stated in several literature above, local community participation and stakeholder involvement is playing an important role when developing tourism, such as codes of conduct as a tool to manage visitors. Moreover, as stated in the above, The Wadden Sea National Park consists of various stakeholders and local community actors which places further emphasis on the importance of involving actors and the local community.

Therefore, it was chosen to further investigate which stakeholders have contributed to The Wadden Sea National Park in the creation of the codes of conduct, and how these have been involved. When analysing various stakeholders and their participation and involvement, several topics were found in the process of creating the codes. Contributions and influence through resources, local community participation, non-involvement and ownership were the main findings. Each topic is going to be further presented and analysed in the below sub-sections.

6.3.1 Resource contribution

It has been identified that various stakeholders involved have contributed with different resources. The three main types of resources are financial, knowledge and network resources and will be analysed in the following section.

The main contributors of financial resources were identified to be the Outdoor Council and local municipalities of Esbjerg, Fanø, Tønder and Varde, as Peter Saabye Simonsen states the following:

¹⁰ "Altså vi prøver at kigge på de steder også, hvor lokalbefolkningen og Naturstyrelsen, politiet og brugergrupperne fortæller der er konfliktområder... men det er det vi gør nu. Vi er nødt til at få testet dem. Her er vi nødt til at se 'virker det' får vi kommunikeret på den rigtige måde, er de formuleret på den rigtige måde, er det de rigtige medier kanaler, vi arbejder med. Forstår folk det der står."

“Without support and funding from the Outdoor Council, and extra funding from the municipalities of Esbjerg, Fanø, Tønder and Varde, the project would not have been possible” (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019)

However, the level of involvement by the local municipalities in the process of creating the codes has not been discovered in the data collection for this project. But it has been identified that the Outdoor Council together with the other Danish national parks have also contributed with knowledge resources. Firstly, it has been investigated how the other **Danish National Parks** have been involved in the process of creating the codes of conduct. As stated in section 6.2.1 The Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park also states that there has been identified a need for the common approach to visitor management in Denmark and thereof development of the codes of conducts.

This has also been a coordinated process with the remaining Danish national parks but also **the Outdoor Council**. Moreover, the other Danish national parks have also been working with their own projects related to communication of good behaviour and stakeholder collaboration.

The following shows how some of the other Danish national parks have worked with co-creation and collaboration with stakeholders in their own initiatives towards visitor management and codes of conduct. National Park Skjoldungernes Land have been actively co-creating guidelines with their user groups (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). With this approach, ownership is created according to Garrod and Fennell (2004) in (Mason, 2007) because instead of dictating the visitors who aim at different activities on how to behave, to protect and preserve nature, the codes of conduct have been created in collaboration with the user groups. As a result, the national park has gained useful knowledge and the user groups felt to be part of the process, which turned out to benefit both parts. By user groups helping to create the guideline, the implementation process was also easier, as the user groups already felt like ambassadors (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). As an ambassador, user groups feel more ownership of what they are presenting, and they feel like having a voice that can change something towards the better (Mason, 2007). Furthermore, both National Park Thy and National Park Mols Bjerger have made projects related to educating stakeholders on the visitor behaviour and communication to visitors (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). According to Mason & Mowforth (1996) one of the main challenges in the use of codes of conducts, is the coordination between various actors and their own respective ways of operating (Mason, 1997). In this context, different strategies and objectives can potentially end up counteracting each other if not aligned. In this way, the two national parks secure that all stakeholders and ambassadors at Mols Bjerger and Thy have the necessary knowledge and are capable of representing the park and know what it means to be a good host (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019).

According to the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, there has been several projects running concurrently where a task force has made sure of sharing learnings and experiences from these projects:

“We actually made four projects with the Outdoor Council. National Park Thy and National Park Mols Bjerger became responsible for two of the projects (...) We became responsible for the other two projects, where we took the codes of conduct projects on the behalf of everyone. ... We have a task force where we keep each other informed about the projects. Now the task is to go to the Outdoor Council and ask for their experiences and if they can help with implementing the codes through their member organisations.”¹¹ (see Appendix 1, p.10)

Based on this, there has been a knowledge sharing and contribution of both the other Danish national parks and the Outdoor Council. Thus, the involvement and stakeholder collaboration from the above identified stakeholders both consists of a financial resource element and a knowledge contribution. Following to Pajunen (2006) ranking of stakeholder influence based on resource and network power, the Danish national parks and the Outdoor Council have a great influence on the stakeholder collaboration. They both contribute with know-how and financial resources. Moreover, their network position is also found as a resource as shown in the above with a shared task force, and the network of the Outdoor Council. As stated in the quote above related to the task force, it seems that the Outdoor Council is also going to be involved in the implementation of the codes of conduct through their member organisations. Besides the influence and contribution of financial resources, the Outdoor Council also seems to be both part in the process of creating the codes of conducts, but also is an important stakeholder in the plan for implementation through their network.

This is further supported by what the Secretary of the Wadden Sea currently states as next step for the implementation of the codes of conduct:

“Then we are going to the other Danish national parks. How are we going to do this together? Simply to make the best use of resources. We have now used the financial resources, so how can we create the biggest impact possible. And here we need to agree about the plan, and when we have made an agreement with the other national parks, then we are going to the Outdoor Council.”¹² (see Appendix 1, p. 4)

¹¹ “Vi lavede faktisk fire projekter med Friluftsrådet, hvor Thy tog sig det ene, Mols Bjerger, så det andet ... Vi tog så code of conduct projektet på vejene af os alle sammen. Og så har vi så kørt sådan en arbejdsgruppe på tværs, hvor vi har prøvet at holde hinanden orienteret om hvad der sker i de her flere projekter ... Nu er opgaven så og sige til Friluftsrådet kan i hjælpe med det igennem de her organisationer?”

¹² “Så prøver vi at tage de andre nationalparker med nu, og man har nu sagt hvordan gør vi så det her sammen? Simpelthen for at få den størst mulige ressourceudnyttelse ud af det. Altså vi har slugt puljeressourcerne også dermed få størst mulig effekt af det vi gør ... Der skal vi lige være enige om planen, og når vi er enige om den, så snakker vi med Friluftsrådet.”

Now the process for implementation of the codes conducts, as mentioned in the above quote, is to align it with the other National parks before going to the Outdoor Council for further implementation. Altogether, this confirms a high level of involvement and contribution of these two stakeholders (Pajunen, 2006).

Besides financial, knowledge and network resources from the Outdoor Council, local municipalities and the other national parks, other stakeholder groups have also highly contributed with their knowledge. User-groups and organisations and intermediaries have through workshops contributed with their knowledge, which has had an impact in the final codes. More about their contribution and their involvement is analysed in below section 6.3.2. Nonetheless, this indicates that the know-how from these stakeholders has been a resource to the project, but also the network of the different organisations and user-groups. Thus, both resources of knowledge and network have been a vital part of deciding the specific codes of conduct. Therefore, according to Pajunen (2006), this stakeholder group has had a high influence on the project, based on their position regarding knowledge and experiences, but also within their network amongst user groups and organisations.

6.3.2 Local community participation

Coherent with the above subsection about resource contribution it has been identified that different stakeholders have been selected by The Wadden Sea National Park to be involved at different stages of the development of the codes. Moreover, in this process other stakeholders have been excluded from the development process.

The Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park points out that the following three main stakeholders have been collaborating as part of creating the codes of conduct. This is stated in the following:

“After four years of work we have developed 19 codes of conduct for nature-users, which are now going to be implemented in The Wadden Sea National Park. We have developed the 19 codes of conduct in collaboration with the other Danish national parks, the Outdoor Council and a selection of nature-user organisations.”¹³ (see Appendix 2, p. 4)

¹³ “Vi har efter 4 års arbejde udviklet 19 codes of conduct for naturbrugere som nu skal foldes ud i Nationalpark Vadehavet. Vi har udviklet disse 19 codes of conduct sammen med de andre danske nationalparker og Friluftsrådet samt en række natur-bruger-organisationer”

One of the three key stakeholders mentioned by the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park in the above quote are the ***user groups and organisations of recreational activities*** in the national park. When investigating how these user groups and organisations have been involved in the process of creating the codes, it was found that the Secretary of Wadden Sea National Park had facilitated a workshop with some user groups and organisations. These consisted of the following: horseback riders; kayaking and rowing clubs; fishermen both related to pleasure, sports, and business; hunting associations; birdwatchers; and windsurfing clubs (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019).

The aim of the workshop with the user-groups and organisations was to share knowledge, experiences and opinions related to the different recreational activities to formulate the codes for each specific user group and their related activity (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). Moreover, the purpose was to establish small local networks for a continuous collaboration and knowledge sharing, and to create a shared ownership in between the user groups and organisations (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). In addition, as this stakeholder group is a part of the local community of The Wadden Sea National Park, several findings have been made in relation to the theory on community participation by Tosun (2011) and Botes & van Rensburg (2000). The format of the workshop, where the user groups and organisations directly could express their opinions and be part of the decision making of the codes of conducts, corresponds to the objectives and approaches in the spontaneous type of community participation according to Tosun (2011). The objective of this type of community participation is to have the needs and motivation of the local community to drive the development. Moreover, the approach to communicating with the local community is direct face-to-face and mutual (Tosun, 2011).

Nonetheless, some of the common challenges made in community participation found by Botes and van Rensburg (2000), which potentially diminishes the level of community participation have also been identified in the involvement of the user groups and organisations. There have occurred some conflicts between the user groups and organisations who were involved in the processes of creating the codes. Some of the recreational activities overlap in the use of the same space for different types of activities causing disturbance for each other's experience (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019). Thus, in the relation to the development of the codes of conduct, conflicts between local groups can according to Botes and van Rensburg (2000) also impact the process of community participation and challenge the processes of the project (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).

Moreover, there has been a form of selective participation by the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, which according to Botes and van Rensburg (2000) is an obstacle which is commonly known in projects with local community participation. In selective participation certain local groups are left out, which can eventually diminish the overall level of community participation as some voices are left out

of the participation and decision making (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). First off, the selection of the type of user groups and organisations to include in the workshops were identified above to be related to all the recreational activities performed in the national park. However, not all the user groups of the activities presented in having both a negative impact on nature and animals according to figure 4 and in the final codes have been included in the workshops.

User groups and organisations related to cycling and mountain bikers, photographers and sailing clubs, beach life, moving by foot and hiking, nature exploration, car and ATV driving, and airports and drone flying were not included in this workshop nor the creation of the codes (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019).

Furthermore, another stakeholder group who has been identified to be involved in the development of the codes of conducts are the **intermediaries and nature guides** primarily through knowledge sharing. Intermediaries and guides are represented through the Vadehavets Formidlerforum, which as mentioned before is the network between various actors of the national park that educate and communicate on nature.

In the beginning of the creation of the codes of conduct, the intermediaries and guides became involved through a separate workshop to one made with the user groups and organisations. The intermediaries and nature guides have been found important for the communication to visitors and implementation in practice by The Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019). Through this workshop their knowledge, opinions and ideas were expressed and discussed which indicate a form of involvement. Similarly, to the workshops analysed related to the user-groups and organisations, this can also be related to the approaches taken in a spontaneous type of community participation. It is a face-to-face interaction between the local community group and potential decision makers, which according to Tosun (2011) increases community participation (Tosun, 2011).

Within this workshop several issues and needs were raised in relation to not only to the codes and their implementation, but also the relations and cooperation between the intermediaries, and communication from the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park.

“There is a wish for a more open dialogue and more clear communication from the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park regarding conflict management. Moreover, it is important that there is shown more consideration between the intermediaries, whether they are public or private. Experience from the coordination of ‘Vadehavets Formidlerforum’ indicates that a cooperation of the codes of conduct could help with this issue.” (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019)

The need for more consideration to be shown between the groups of intermediaries, disregarding whether they are public or private, yet also more open dialogue on how the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park works with conflict management, indicates that there is some tension between the different groups of intermediaries.

Tension or conflicts between local groups can challenge the development as participation becomes unequal in the processes. According to Botes and van Rensburg (2000) is important to acknowledge and be aware this obstacle to avoid ended up with being selective in participation of the ones who are the easiest to cooperate with (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). However, it seems that The Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park is aware of this as according to Peter Saabye Simonsen, the cooperation between the intermediaries through the Vadehavets Formidlerforum is an important initiative for the corporation, and something they are cautious about not to take over:

“We, as a Secretary of the national park, have chosen not to have our own intermediaries ... That is because we do not want to cannibalise the ones who do this for a living in the area. For instance, Sort Safari, Oyster King, Tønnisgård Vadehavscentret etc. They are the intermediates, and they have a network across several institutions and organisations ... We support these and help with development of competencies and education, and here the codes of conduct are something they will be educated about. They were there before we became the Secretary of the national park.”¹⁴ (see Appendix 1, p. 7)

Thus, this network of intermediaries existed before the constellation of the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park was made. Despite the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park stating their awareness and role towards the intermediaries, there still are some concerns and conflicts regarding the cooperation on the codes of conduct.

To sum up, the above two stakeholders have been actively involved in the processes of creating the codes, indicating a high influence and level of community participation. However, within these two stakeholder groups some obstacles, which can eventually challenge the participation have been identified. These were selective participation and tensions between stakeholders.

¹⁴ “Vi har jo valgt ikke at have naturvejledere som nationalpark sekretariat ... Og det er fordi vi har sagt, at vi ikke vil kannibalisere dem, der lever af det i området. Sort safari, Oyster king, Tønnisgård, Vadehavscenteret og Naturkulturvarde, ... Det er jer der er formidlere, og de har så et forum på tværs af alle de her 20 institutioner og organisationer. Dem bakker vi så op omkring og hjælper med og kompetenceudvikle, eftervidereuddanne. Og der er code of conduct noget af det de bliver klædt på med ... De havde egentlig lavet et forum selv inden nationalparken kom til.”

6.3.3 Nonparticipation

Besides selective participation within a certain stakeholder, selective participation amongst different stakeholders has also been identified in the creation of the codes.

As a contrast to the above-mentioned stakeholders who have been highly involved in the creation of the codes, other important stakeholders have also been identified to not have been included in the creation but are expected to be part of the implementation by The Wadden Sea National Park. Mason et al. (2007) identified key target groups for codes of conduct in tourism being the visitors, the tourism industry, and members of host communities. However, they also found that the visitors are the most important ones, as they are being responsible for the execution of the given codes (Mason, 2007). This is especially relevant when taking a self-regulated soft approach as analysed above.

Besides the two stakeholder groups – user groups and organisations, and the intermediaries and nature guides - **other local businesses and tourism operators** have also been identified as a local stakeholder. These are going to be actively involved for the implementation of the codes of conduct rather than in the development of the codes.

Regarding partners and local businesses and tourism operators, the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park has a partner program in which they create partnerships with local businesses, institutions, and other actors in the Wadden Sea (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021f). The partners are categorised into the following groups: events, intermediation, outdoor life, accommodations, businesses and producers, education, world heritage partners and others consisting of more than 200 partners now (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021f). Some of the previously analysed stakeholders are also part of this partner program, such as Vadehavets Formidlerforum; the local municipalities of Esbjerg, Tønder, Varde and Fanø, and the Outdoor Council.

It has been identified that local businesses related to some of the most popular recreational activities were part of the initial processes with workshops (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formidlerforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019). But there is an indication that the majority of these have not been represented in this process.

Due to the scope and delimitation of not being able to get all these partners point of view, findings from a partner survey from 2020 made in collaboration with the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park will be used to analyse their opinions about the partnerships and involvement in general within The Wadden Sea National Park. Despite not having the partners point of view represented in this report, there were several interesting findings from the partner survey on the collaboration with The Wadden Sea National Park in general, which can be related to wanting to participate and some related indirectly to codes of conduct practices (see Appendix 5).

First, to be a part of the partner community and to represent The Wadden Sea National Park, were identified to be the most common motives for the actors to enter the partner program (see Appendix 5). This can indicate a sense of ownership of the Wadden Sea and a wish to participate in the joint partner community. Ownership in relation to partners are analysed in section 6.3.4. Secondly, profit and customer related motives were less common amongst the partners, which contradicts with Ackoff's (1994) theory of stakeholder objective mostly being profit related. It could also be an indicator that most of this stakeholder group would consider implementing the codes of conduct from a non-profit aim, which disprove the concerns stated by Peter Saabye Simonsen in the above quote where he raised his concerns whether tourism businesses and partners only want to participate if they can profit. It might also be related to another finding from the partner survey which concerns the objectives for the national park that the partners rate as the most important ones. Here the main chosen objectives are related to sustainable tourism and outdoor life, and protection and preservation of nature and animal wildlife (see Appendix 5). Thus, one could assume that participation and supporting initiatives such as codes of conduct is a project which the partners want to take part in and be supportive of.

Thus, most of the partners and local tourism actors have not been part of the process of creating the codes but are thought to be part of the implementation process.

The above also indicates a willingness by this stakeholder group to support the development and implementation of the codes.

As part of the partner program, the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park is also hosting several events such as their yearly partner day. This year it was held online due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Through this forum partners were informed about the codes of conduct after they have been created. Furthermore, partners could ask questions in an open forum (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021g). This combined with the above analysis of how the participation and inclusion has been limited in the creation, can be related to some of the characteristics of the passive community participation by Tosun (2011). Since most of the local partners were found to be included in the implementation phase, it could seem that they are more decision-implementers than decision-makers, following the theory of Tosun (2011). Moreover, the partner day acts as a forum top-down from the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park in which partners can communicate their opinions and needs to the decision makers in an open forum. According to Tosun (2011), a top-down approach is mainly related to types of community participation with less active participation and involvement. On the contrary, Tosun (2011) states that bottom-up approaches to participation are often related to active participation and a higher level of involvement (Tosun, 2011).

One could also argue that the level of participation has been non-participatory and that the decisions are based on some of the needs of the interests of this stakeholder group, but not entirely, as only a

very limited number of this group have been included. Thus, according to Tosun (2011) characteristics of pseudo community participation does also apply when analysing the process of creating the codes of conduct in relation to participation of this local stakeholder group. This observation is further supported by the fact, that as stated in the beginning of this section, that local businesses and actors in this group have not been part of creating the codes of conduct.

Besides the local partners and tourism actors not being actively participating nor involved in the creation of the codes, two other stakeholder groups have also been identified to have been less or not involved at all in the development of the codes. These are the **visitors** and the residents. As mentioned in the beginning of this subsection, Mason (2007) also identified the visitors and residents as key target groups for codes of conduct besides the tourism industry. However, as expressed by Peter Saabye Simonsen, they are aware that some parts of the national park, especially residents on Fanø, are complaining about visitors and tourists having a negative impact in their daily life:

“Especially on Fanø, I estimate that half of the population have had enough. They think that there are too many tourists and visitors. They have experienced that visitors will drive on closed roads or roads with ‘Access denied’ signs. Mountain Bikers are biking where they are not allowed ... Issues like these have suddenly become very visible.”¹⁵ (see Appendix 1, p. 2-3)

Despite this awareness, the residents have not been involved in the process of creation the codes, as further stated:

“We are interested in hearing what the visitors and the locals have to say, as only a few of them have been part of the creation.”¹⁶ (see Appendix 2, p. 1)

Therefore, the three main target groups for codes of conduct according to Mason (2007) as mentioned in the beginning, have in the case of The Wadden Sea National Park been the stakeholders with the least involvement and participation. As mentioned before, selective participation by leaving out certain stakeholders and voices diminishes the local community participation. Moreover, as this relates to non-participation, it can be identified as the pseudo type community participation according to Tosun (2011).

¹⁵ “Især på Fanø, der er halvdelen af befolkningen, vil jeg tro i runde tal, har fået nok. De synes simpelthen, der er for mange (turister) ... så har de oplevet folk der kører ned ad grusveje, hvor der er adgang forbudt skilte. Folk der kører rundt med mountainbikere, hvor de ikke må køre rundt med mountainbikere ... Det er bare er blevet meget, meget synligt.”

¹⁶ “Vi er nemlig meget interesserede i at høre hvad de besøgende og de lokale siger... Nogle af dem var jo med i processen ”

In this type of community participation, it is the power holder, which in this case the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, who educates the community. Hence, the empowerment and involvement of local community actors is low (Tosun, 2011).

Furthermore, it can potentially become a challenge for the implementation of the codes as key stakeholders who are going to be implementers of these in practice have not been part of the decision making. This also relates to ownership, as according to Mason (2007), there is a higher chance that the end user-groups of the codes who have been an active part of the development are most likely to take ownership in implementation of a codes of conduct (Mason, 2007).

Sense of ownership amongst the various identified stakeholder is going to be further analysed in the below section.

6.3.4 Sense of ownership

As analysed in the above subsections, stakeholders have both been contributing with knowledge, financial and network resources and been either involved or not involved in the development of the codes. In relation to both the development of the codes and how stakeholders are planned to be part of the implementation of them, different conflicts impacting the level of ownership have been identified, which are analysed in this section.

In relation to the ***user groups and organisations***, which were one of the stakeholders who have been actively involved in the development of the codes, it was also found that not all types of user groups and organisations wanted to participate.

It was found that for one specific user group, the dog owners, there seemed to be a lack of interest in participation, which according to Botes & van Rensburg (2000) is also a common challenge for active community participation (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). Lack of interest in participation is an obstacle, as if a local stakeholder does not feel a sense of ownership, they might not be willing to take ownership later in the development process (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).

According to the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, there was a great need to involve dog owners and their organisations, because often there is a conflict between this type of user groups and organisations regarding the dogs' impact on nature and animal wildlife (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019). However, when making the workshops with the user-groups and organisations it was not possible to get this user group to participate, as they did have an interest in the codes of conduct project (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019). Lack of interest also indicates a lack of sense of ownership. In this case, the end-user of the codes created specifically targeting visitors and dog owners, have not participated in the process nor decision making of the codes of conduct. As mentioned before, Mason et al. (2007) argued

that ownership of codes of conducts by the end-users are mostly present when the intended users have participated in the creation, which is not the case here (Mason, 2007). This is also related to the characteristics of both pseudo and passive community participation according to Tosun (2011), in the sense that the level of participation is non-participatory, hence pseudo community participation and that the dog users are now expected to be decision-implementers rather than decision makers, being passive community participation (Tosun, 2011).

Similarly, to the above, a lack of interest or sense of ownership was also found in between some of the **intermediaries and nature guides**, despite this stakeholder group also having participated actively through workshops like the user-groups and organisations.

Related to the implementation of the codes, nature guide and hunter being interviewed at the partner day event, who is part of the Vadehavets Formidlerforum stated that he does not directly or actively will incorporate the codes in his job as a nature guide:

“Directly as a nature guide, I will not use them, but I would like to be part of distributing them to others before they meet me. As a nature guide, we have always had these guidelines with us when we are out guiding and informing people. But it is not everyone who is accompanied by a nature guide, and it is those without in which the challenges lie the most.”¹⁷ (Nationalpark Vadehavet, 2021g)

This statement indicates a disagreement regarding how the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park and the intermediary understand how the intermediaries should be involved in the implementation of the codes of conduct.

This can potentially be related to lack of interest in participation (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). It can also have a connection to ownership. Despite the intermediaries being part of the development of the codes through the workshops, there seems to be a disagreement or lack of willingness to implement the codes. As it seems that the intermediary does not have sense of ownership of the codes actively in his own work and role in the implementation. According to the nature guide, the codes seem to be more as a tool to prepare the visitors prior to their visit. Additionally, in the above statement it stipulates that the codes of conduct will create an overlap or indirect threat to the intermediaries' job of communication knowledge on nature and how to behave in it. The intermediaries are already

¹⁷ [01:42:10] “Direkte som naturvejleder vil jeg ikke bruge dem, men jeg vil gerne være med til at distribuere dem til andre inden de møder mig (...) Som Naturvejleder har vi altid haft de her råd med i rygsækken som vi vejleder og informere folk i når vi er ude, men det er jo ikke alle som har en naturvejleder med når de er ude, og det er jo dem udfordringen ligger mest hos.”

communicating and educating knowledge on proper behaviour in nature when they are doing their guided tours.

As stated by Mason et. al (1997) it is a challenge to align aims and objectives in the context of various actors participating in implementing the common objective of the codes of educating visitors (Mason, 1997). In this case, a common interest is shared to educate and create awareness of visitor behaviour. As identified in section 6.3.2 one of the outputs from the workshop was that the intermediary generally sees a collaboration of codes of conducts to strengthen the relation between them.

Despite this, the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park has stated their precaution of not competing or ‘cannibalising’ the existing intermediary network, and their status as newcomers or ‘outsiders’ (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). Thus, there seems to be some inconsistency in how some of the intermediaries want to participate in the implementation and their sense of ownership of the codes. Moreover, lack of interest (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000) and different aims and objectives between stakeholders in implementing the codes (Mason, 1997) are challenges that can both have a negative influence on the degree of ownership, but also the further implementation.

As analysed in above section 6.3.3, it was also mentioned by Mason et al.(2007) that tourism operators are also key target groups for codes of conducts.

Concerning the **local businesses and tourism operators** within The Wadden Sea National Park, who were identified to not have been involved or actively participated in the development of the codes, senses of ownership to the codes of conduct have not been possible to investigate due to the set scope. However, ownership in general towards the national park and initiatives were found in the partner survey from 2020 (see Appendix 5).

When the partners were asked directly about the sense of ownership in relation to being a partner of The Wadden Sea National Park, most of the partners state that they do feel a sense of ownership. However, some partners also question the meaning of ownership which is reflected in the following comments stated by partners in the survey:

“Ownership is a too strong an expression, it is more a cooperation” and “It is too much to call it ownership. We feel as being a part of The Wadden Sea National Park, in which we can make use of the resources, and we have a duty to work for the benefit of the national park. Both by taking care of the nature and through intermediation.”¹⁸ (see Appendix 5, p. 16)

¹⁸ “Ejerskab er vel et for stærkt udtryk, men vel nærmere medspiller” and “Det er så meget af kalde det ejerskab. Vi føler at vi er en del af Nationalpark vadehavet, at vi kan benytte os af Nationalparkens ressourcer og at vi er forpligtet til at arbejde til gavn for Nationalpark. Både ved at værne om naturen og gennem formidling.”

Thus, the sense of ownership differs in between this stakeholder group. Regarding the community participation, it has already been analysed that local businesses and tourism actors have not been very much involved in the process of creating the codes of conduct. At least less compared to the user groups and organisations, and intermediaries analysed in the above sections. Yet, the local businesses and partners are identified to become an active part of the implementation and communication of the codes of conduct, as planned by the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park.

To sum up, there has been analysed an active level of community participation in the section above. Nonetheless, the analysis in this section indicates that lack of sense of ownership for the implementation of the codes occur within both stakeholders who have been actively involved in the creation, but also those stakeholders who only are involved in the implementation.

6.4 Implementation

Now the codes of conduct have been created and are going to be implemented. Interesting findings of who is going to be involved and how they have been created, are covered in the above analysis. This has resulted in several findings that shows a) selective participation and non-involvement of end-users, and implementers challenging the implementation, and decreasing the level of ownership and active community participation. b) conflicts within stakeholders - lack of interest and different aims for communicating visitor behaviour through the codes, have created tension in the development of the codes which now impacts the ownership of the final codes of conduct.

As mentioned in section 6.2.1 the need for codes were for the users and increasing number of visitors. Yet, it seems that the need and now the plan and objectives for implementation is contradicting. Besides the majority of the various **user groups and organisations** having actively participated in the development of the codes, they are also intended to be some of the first groups of end-users that the codes should be communicated to and implemented through. According to Peter Saabye Simonsen, the user groups and organisations overall also play an important part in the implementation of the codes of conduct:

“If we could use these organisations, we can gain a big reach because we can communicate through their member magazines, newsletters, Facebook profiles, websites etc.” ... “And I know that you are thinking that these are the hardcore ones who already know the rules. But we must start somewhere,

*and it is easier to start with the ones who are more susceptible, than the ones who are not*¹⁹ (see Appendix 1, p. 11)

Related to the above quote, there seems to be a contradicting element in the sense that the purpose and need of the codes of conduct were meant to especially educate and inform the visitors who are unaccustomed to nature about proper behaviour in the nature, as stated in the beginning of section 6.2.1. Yet, the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park is focusing on communicating to the visitors, hence **user groups and organisations** with high knowledge about good behaviour on nature. This becomes clear in the above quote by Peter Saabye Simonsen specifically when he states that the national park is aware that they plan to firstly communicate the codes to the ones with already existing knowledge about behaviour in nature.

However, it could also be related to what Botes and van Rensburg (2000) argue is the pressure for immediate results (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). Botes and van Rensburg (2000) found that a common challenge in development project is often the focus on short term results that overrule the long-term focus which eventually can undermine the approach to community participation (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). Therefore, the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park seems to prioritize to focus on communicating the codes of conduct to users with already existing high knowledge because it is more manageable instead of targeting the end users who could potentially make the most negative impact due to low knowledge. It also disregards the fact that the user groups and organisations raised the attention for the specific need for communicating to visitors with lower knowledge and new users of nature in The Wadden Sea National Park in the development stage of the codes (Nationalpark Vadehavet, Vadehavets Formilderforum, Friluftsrådet, 2019).

A challenge for the implementation has also been identified. As mentioned in section 6.3.3 on nonparticipation, analysis shows that the Secretary plans to involve local partners and businesses in the implementation of the codes. The Secretary states:

"Of course we are going to implement them (i.e., the codes of conduct) through our partners, which are intermediaries, accommodations and all sorts of partners. It is going to this way that we will distribute

¹⁹ "Og hvis vi nu kunne tage 15 af de organisationer. Så er vi altså langt ude, fordi vi kan kommunikere igennem deres medlemsblade, nyhedsbreve, Facebook profiler, hjemmesider og så videre, forestiller vi os ... Så ved jeg godt i sidder og tænker ja ja ... Det er jo alle de her hardcore som sikkert kender reglerne i forvejen. Jamen, vi er nødt til at starte et sted. Og det er nemmere at starte med dem, som er mere modtagelige end dem, der slet ikke er modtagelige."

*and communicate to both the nature users and those visitors unaccustomed to nature.*²⁰ (see Appendix 1, p. 5)

Thus, it becomes unclear what the implementation plan is because the Secretary wants to involve stakeholders in the implementation who have not been part of the creation of the codes. Yet also the Secretary themselves question how to get the partners onboard and whether these stakeholders want to be involved:

*“Does the tourism industry want to be part of it? Or do they just want to lean back and use nature to make profit? How can we get them onboard? How do we make the tourism industry ambassadors for the local nature?”*²¹ (see Appendix 2, p. 4)

As analysed in the above section about the partners feedback on being part of The Wadden Sea National Park partner program, there is an indication of a willingness by this stakeholder group to support the development and implementation of the codes. As a result, according to The Wadden Sea National Park, most of the local partners are planned to be included in the implementation phase but have not been identified in the creation phase. This indicates that the stakeholders are more decision-implementers than decision-makers according to the theory by Tosun (2011).

To sum up, the identified stakeholders who have been actively involved in the creation of the codes, are also planned by the Secretary to be the first target groups in the implementation. Yet, this plan is found to contradict with the first intended user of the codes, the visitors unaccustomed to nature. Finally, that partners who have not been involved in the creation, are according to the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park also planned to be implementers of the codes. Nonetheless, the Secretary does not currently know whether and how to involve this stakeholder group.

²⁰ *“Og så er det jo klart, at vi jo også implementere det gennem vores partnere også som både er formidlings-og overnatningssteder og alle sådan nogle forskellige partner grupper. Så det bliver også en måde, hvor vi får det ud at leve til både de naturvante og de naturuvante.”*

²¹ *Vil turismeerhvervet være med i det? Ser turismeerhvervet sig som en del af den kabale og indsats eller læner de sig tilbage og nøjes med at bruge naturen og så score profit? Hvordan kan vi få dem med? Hvordan får vi turismevirksomhederne ind og fungerer som ambassadører for den lokale natur?”*



7. Discussion

The main objectives of the research in this thesis were to understand the significance of the role of stakeholder's collaboration and local community participation in the development of a code of conduct in The Wadden Sea National Park.

Literature states several arguments about the elements of codes of conduct and their implications in practice. Researchers state that a code of conduct is a self-regulated guideline without a legal status, which makes it difficult to monitor and enforce in practice compared to laws and regulations. Due to the status of a code of conduct, literature states several challenges in the creation and implementation of the codes. Mason and Mowforth (1996) found four main challenges: 1) poor implementation which requires manual evaluation, observation and monitoring; 2) codes of conduct are often used as a marketing tool rather than actual focus on effectiveness on-site; 3) coordination between various kinds of actors and stakeholders are crucial for the codes to become effective, as different aims and objectives by multiple stakeholders can counteract each other; 4) finally, there is a need for clarification about the codes being self-regulated or external regulated (Mason, 1997).

However, as Danish national parks are owned by the government, organisations of national parks cannot take on certain hard and regulatory approaches (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019) (Kuo, 2002). Due to the right to roam, nature is public property which everyone is allowed to use and therefore no fines can be given by not following guidelines, unless the nature conservation law is not followed (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2019). In contrast, national parks in Germany and the United States of America are privately owned and therefore these have a possibility to regulate tourists by hard approaches, furthermore to close areas at any time if this is evaluated to be needed. Especially during the COVID-19 outbreak which resulted in an increased number of outdoor tourists (Naturstyrelsen, 2020). By using a soft approach as in The Wadden Sea National Park, it is hard to monitor visitor management tools, after the implementation as these cannot be enforced by law and require more resources to be monitored. Moreover, several researchers claim that external regulation is the most effective. Additionally, Garrod and Fennel (2004) indicate that the effectiveness of a code of conduct can not only be decided by their format and formulation, but ownership also plays an important role. Intended user groups of the codes are more likely to distribute and be implementer of these if ownership is being felt (Mason, 2007). This contributes to the findings of this research, where several user groups have been part of creating the codes.

On the contrary Mason (1997) believes that self-regulation and nudging behaviour with an educational element will result in a better attitude. Also, as stated in various literature, Stonehouse (1996), Mason (2007) and Garrod & Fennel (2004), guidelines and codes of conduct are most likely to result in long-term results due to their elements of leading to a feeling of being more responsible (Mason, 2007). Mason (2007) also claims that by giving visitors codes with an ethical dimension visitors will more likely act in a reasonable manner, than when they get their activities implied by rules and restrictions (Mason

2007). Therefore, despite challenges within the soft approach to codes of conducts, this type of visitor management tool has its benefits and creates opportunities for national parks to educate where they cannot regulate.

The research of the thesis confirms how a soft approach such as codes of conduct can be developed, both in collaboration with stakeholders and the given obstacles of implementation related to the difficulties of evaluating and monitoring the codes.

On the involvement of stakeholders in the creation of a code of conduct, several literatures also argue that active participation of end-users of the codes is important in the creation (Mason, 2007) (Tosun, 2011). The higher level of active participation, the higher the change for sense of ownership of the codes which leads to higher willingness of following the codes and implementing them (Mason, 2007). Moreover, literature also states that involvement of the local community is important and beneficial for the processes of a tourism development project (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). However, many tourism development projects trying to create involvement and active participation often end up creating challenges and conflicts, which diminishes the level of involvement and participation of local stakeholders. Botes and van Rensburg (2000) found nine challenges to tourism development projects which eventually impact active participation negatively (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). Therefore, stakeholder involvement and active participation is not a given for success in the projects. How involvement is created is also key for achieving mutual beneficial results in the processes of tourism development initiatives, such as the creation of codes of conduct.

The research in this thesis shows that several conflicts with stakeholders have an influence in both the creation and the implementation of the codes. These conflicts emerged both within the involved stakeholders and with those who had not been involved in the creation. As a result, the research also insinuates which stakeholders are involved, but also the importance of their participation. This contributes to the arguments from literature that involvement of stakeholders and how a sense of ownership and shared objectives are created in the processes, are vital for the creation of codes of conducts.

To sum up, the research of this thesis contributes with insights to the overall discussion on the challenges of a code of conduct being a soft approach and self-regulated, which makes implementation challenging. It also confirms the importance of stakeholder collaboration and active involvement and participation in the creation of a code of conduct. Especially regarding whether the end-users and implementers have been involved in the creation or not, and how stakeholders are participating and have a sense of ownership.



8. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was initiated by the wonder of how the process had been for the creation of the codes of conduct for The Wadden Sea National Park. Furthermore, who has been involved and how the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park has pointed several stakeholders out for the creation, and others for the implementation.

19 codes of conduct were created by The Wadden Sea National Park, due to increased visitation by visitors unaccustomed to nature. However, these codes are yet to be implemented.

To explore these wonders, firstly the codes of conduct were analysed.

In section 6.2 it was analysed what characterises the codes of conduct. It was found that the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park was the main stakeholder responsible for driving the development of the project to create the codes. The codes of conduct were identified, by the authors of the thesis, as a soft approach to guide visitors. This means they are focusing on educating visitors instead of regulating activities in the national park. Thus, the codes aim to change the visitors' behaviour by providing a deeper understanding of the nature they are moving in. Concludingly, this will contribute to long term effects of better behaviour, as the educational element is of high importance and leads to new understandings amongst visitors. Moreover, as the analysis demonstrated the educational element further gets supported by the codes being teleologically formulated. This means that by not instructing or limiting the visitor's behaviour but rather creating learning value and suggestions, the codes created will lead to understandings on nature among the group initially targeted, which are the ones unaccustomed to nature.

This summarises the first sub-question related to the characteristics of the codes of conduct. By identifying that the codes of conduct are a soft approach and formulated teleologically, the codes are created to educate visitors and their understanding rather than regulating their behaviour.

In section 6.3, stakeholder involvement and local community participation were analysed.

It was found that various stakeholders have been involved in the creation and others are included in the implementation. From the analysis, three main themes were found when analysing the stakeholder involvement; 1) resource contribution, 2) different types of active and non-active community participation; and 3) degree of sense of ownership towards the codes of conduct which vary amongst the stakeholders and within stakeholder groups.

First, regarding resources, analysis showed that financial, knowledge and network resources were found to be an important contribution in the creation of the codes. The main contributors of these resources were identified as the Outdoor Council, local municipalities of Esbjerg, Fanø, Tønder and Varde, the other Danish National Parks, user-groups, and organisations of recreational activities in the national park, and intermediaries and guides. All three types of resources were found to be of high influence on the codes of conduct project. Funding, know-how on how visitors are using nature, and the role of the

network amongst the stakeholders for sharing the resources, have been found to be key drivers of the development of the codes.

Secondly, in relation to the level of local community participation, several types of local community participation were uncovered in the analysis following the categorization by Tosun (2001).

These are ranging from spontaneous being the active type, to passive and pseudo being the non-participatory types of community participation. In the case of the involvement of user-groups and organisations, and intermediaries and guides, active participation and high involvement were identified. However, for the remaining local stakeholders, local residents, and local businesses and tourism operators, less or no participation and involvement were found in the creation of the codes. Moreover, analysis also showed that visitors, who are not necessarily local to the area, were also not involved in the creation of the codes.

It was also found in the analysis that selective participation, conflicts within stakeholder groups, and lack of interest were challenges of the process of creating the codes. In brief, these challenges can diminish the level of active participation following Botes and van Rensburg (2000).

Thirdly, relating to ownership, conflicts within sense of ownership amongst those who have been involved were also identified. This was found to further challenge the implementation of the codes. It can be concluded that for the majority of local stakeholder, hence the visitors, the tourism industry, and members of the host communities i.e., local residents and businesses have not been involved in the creation of the codes. However, it was found, according to the plan by the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park, these stakeholders are going to be the end-user and implementer of the codes, making these stakeholders decision-implementers, not decision-takers following Tosun (2011). In brief, it has been analysed that sense of ownership is important for the implementation of the codes.

To sum up, these findings from the analysis answers the second sub-question about who had been involved in the creation and how. More importantly, it also uncovered who had not been involved.

Finally, section 6.4, analysis also showed that the stakeholders who have been involved in the creation and are more accustomed to nature, are the ones that the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park is going to target and communicate the codes to initially. This prioritisation in the implementation further led to the finding that the original need and primary target group of the codes, hence, visitors unaccustomed to nature, are not going to be firstly prioritised as target group in the implementation. Moreover, analysis showed that local partners and tourism operators are also planned by the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park to be implementers of the codes. Yet, analysis also showed that the Secretary does not know whether these partners and tourism operators want to be implementers, nor how to approach them. Concludingly, this contributes to answer the third sub-question about the role of some of the stakeholders in relation to the implementation.

To summarise the key findings highlighted in the above concluding points, the analysis showed that stakeholder collaboration has been of high importance towards the creation of the codes. Several stakeholders have contributed with resources such as network, financial and knowledge contributions which were important for the development of the codes of conduct. Moreover, conflicts were also identified in the creation of the codes. These were selective participation and non-participation, lack of interest and sense of ownership amongst the stakeholders. These conflicts were to a certain extent caused by active decisions from the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park being selective in who they involved, as well as having difficulties with getting other stakeholders onboard. Evidently, the analysis of the case of The Wadden Sea National Park shows that the contribution of stakeholder collaboration and the level of active community participation plays an important role in the creation of a code of conduct.



9. Perspectivation

Further research on the implementation of the codes of conduct by the Wadden Sea National Park could be made. As touched upon in the analysis, implementation has yet not been made, and the process going forward seems to not be entirely settled by the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park. Moreover, through the interviews with the Secretary, some thoughts on implementation and monitoring were explained. The involvement and collaboration with stakeholders in the implementation phase would be interesting to explore, as this has raised some wondering about how the implementation and evaluation of the codes of conduct are going to be made. Regarding the implementation, how will the non-involved stakeholders in the creation be participating in the implementation, how does the Secretary make sure of active involvement and participation, and how do these stakeholders feel about being decision-implementers and not makers. Moreover, concerning monitoring, several literatures used in the above analysis has raised the importance for monitoring. This has also led to further wondering about how the Secretary will evaluate and monitor implementation of the codes through stakeholders, but also the behaviour of visitors when the codes are self-regulatory. Moreover, what the success criteria and objectives of the outcome of the codes are. It would then be interesting to gain information directly from the non-involved stakeholders i.e., the local businesses and tourism operators, local residents and the visitors to get their point of view on how they would understand the codes and how they want to be involved in the implementation.

In the long run, evaluating the codes of conduct and how they have been implemented could also be valuable to the literature to follow up upon. As monitoring the effectiveness and long-term effects of the codes have been found important by various literature as stated in the above discussion. Concerning monitoring the codes, some information was found during the research of this thesis. In the interview with the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park some initial thoughts on monitoring were mentioned. When directly asking the Secretary of The Wadden Sea National Park about how the codes of conduct will be monitored in practice once implemented, there seems to be no clear plan. However, some thoughts were shared, but due to scope and focus of the thesis these were not included in the final analysis. Therefore, it could be interesting to further analyse the approach to monitoring the codes. As analysis showed, there is a right to roam in nature in Denmark, meaning that there is a public access to nature, and everyone is therefore allowed to use it. Moreover, the codes of conduct are not regulated by law but are self-regulatory by the visitor, which can make it challenging to monitor and evaluate impact in practice. In combination with the identified soft approach to visitor management in The Wadden Sea National Park, meaning that the codes focus on educating visitors rather than to regulate their activities, it would be of interest to explore how the national park is going to solve the challenge of monitoring.



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Appendices

See Appendix 1-5 in separate uploaded attachments.