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Understanding the micro-scale lifestyle entrepreneur: Northern Funen

Abstract

This thesis is a case study of micro-scale lifestyle entrepreneurs. It is interesting to investigate how the demand from tourist for real-life, authentic, nature experiences often are found at small lifestyle entrepreneurs, but at the same time discover a gap of values between lifestyle entrepreneurs and destination management.

For lifestyle entrepreneurs economic value is usually not the primary motivation neither what defines their success – for destination management economic reasons are the primary underlying driver of organisation activities.

This research examines how micro-scale entrepreneurial narratives unfold in value-sets that bases motivation of running tourism businesses in lifestyle and social interactions. This thesis focuses on a qualitative case study of micro-scale lifestyle entrepreneurs in the rural destination of Northern Funen. Narratives and sentiments are firstly extracted through in-depth unrecorded narrative interviews, collected themes are elaborated on in a semi-structured second round of interviews.

It is the understanding of the micro-scale lifestyle tourism entrepreneur that should be the background for corporation with destination management. It is questioned how an understanding between these important tourism stakeholders can be improved and utilized.

The notion of the super local tourism entrepreneur is researched and commented upon in a literature review. Furthermore, the notion of the super local is a caricature of the lifestyle tourism entrepreneur of Northern Funen who is deeply involved in social- and cultural preservation, locally. Strategically investing in a dual understanding between destination management and lifestyle-entrepreneurs is possible through informal mutual willingness and a local involved destination management organisation, who takes stewardship in social and cultural preservation in peripheral voluntary communities.



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Introduction

When tourism is to be valued it is often in term of economic indicators. We see that in the annual reports from governmental institutions, municipality policy makers and nongovernmental organizations, that explains how tourism creates jobs and showcase how monetary goals have been reached nationally and locally.

Rural tourism, the consumption of rural cultures, landscapes, experiences and artefacts has become more attractive in recent years (Halkier, 2013). Rural tourism is associated with a search for authentic experiences, and according to Molz (2009) the increased interest in rural tourism is influenced by the view of modernity and the pace of life that continually increase to a point where the now is already history. It is in the reaction to a paces everyday life rural tourism recuperates positive feelings and set value to moving slow as a more authentic way (Molz, 2010) and as an ethic alternative to city-breaks (Halkier, 2013). For the provider of rural tourism, it is thereby important to present authentic experiences, and to do this to the fullest, they might need to consider other values than the economic ones.

Zooming in on the small lifestyle entrepreneurs we find truly authentic experiences – because here we see that it is people, and not only businesses, that open up to their life and private space and thereby invite guest into an authentic local experience. This shows a potential gab of interest: The lifestyle entrepreneur who wishes to share his/her passion, life, beautiful land etc., versus the success criteria from an institutional point of view of mainly economic values.

And imagine if more values and goals of running a tourism business differs in a matter that makes the relationship between destination management and the lifestyle entrepreneurs problematic, do we then loose overall value for the tourist? If destination management pushes agendas that do not bring any value to the lifestyle entrepreneur -maybe they even annoy them? - how would this affect the general offer of authentic local experiences? Experiences in rural areas that in most literature are of the greatest value for the tourist. Are we missing a great opportunity? This is what this thesis is to unfold done by searching relevant literature, conducting relevant empirical research of a specific case of Northern Funen, and by a thorough analysis.

Problem statement

Understanding the motivation of lifestyle entrepreneurs in a rural destination and suggest a destination management approach: the case of Northern Funen.

- Hypotheses 1: There is a large difference in DMO values and lifestyle-entrepreneurs values.
- Hypotheses 2: The view of success is different seen from DMO versus lifestyle-entrepreneurs and these views cannot necessarily be combined.

The two hypotheses will be investigated hereafter it will be decided if they can be proven or dismissed, and potentially recommendations can be made.

Relevance of the research

In the coming section I will look into the chosen case to support this thesis.

Case: Destination North Funen

The destination of North Funen being the case subject will in this section be described within the relevant perspectives of narratives, demography and scale of tourism's importance in the destination. A netnographical use of secondary data will form the body of this section, narratives of Northern Funen formulated by the local destination management organisation, NEET, and local operators will appear as the most important feature describing Northern Funen as a tourism destination.

Nature is promoted as the most important asset of Northern Funen which is apparent in the narrative around tourism in the region – narratives formulated by DMO and local operators as mentioned. There are good opportunities for being active with outdoor experiences in and around Northern Funen (Visit Nordfyn, 2021). Outdoor activities all depend on three crucial factors; the participant voluntarily engaging in free time activities, an outdoor place for participation and a connection between the natural environment and participants (Kulczycki & Lück, 2009). These are all factors an active outdoor tourist can live out at Northern Funen.

Maritime experiences such as Sea kayaking, (kite-)surfing, stand up paddling and sailing can be tried at the northern coast and in the main fjord and two commercial outdoor tourism actors operate at North Funen offering maritime sports paraphernalia. The northern coast is highlighted to be one of the best places to exercise the hot and trendy stand-up paddle. Other popular outdoor activities in Northern Funen is hiking, mountain-biking, horseback riding and cycling. These outdoor experiences are considered to be “soft” outdoor tourism activities arbitrated by the amount of risk involved in the activity and the experience needed to be able to participate (ATTA, 2010).

Quoting the municipality of North Funen and their document: “Outdoor Strategy”:

“The natural and cultural environment at North Funen are our pride and are an invaluable source of experiences. Experiences that gives value to lots of different people in a lot of different ways”
(Nordfyns Kommune, 2015 (2020)).

The Outdoor Strategy passed the city council in 2015 (revised 2020) is an action plan to upkeep and develop the natural environment to support the experiences in nature for local citizens and tourists. The Outdoor Strategy forms a synergy with the city council's branding strategy “Fri.Luft.Liv” (a Danish word game of the meaning of

¹ Translated from: “Naturen og kulturlandskabet på Nordfyn er vores store stolthed og en uvurderlig kilde til oplevelser. Oplevelser der giver værdi på mange forskellige områder og for mange forskellige mennesker.”

‘Outdoor Life’) which basis of existence is to attract both tourists and most importantly to attract newcomers to move permanently to the area. Because when destinations are in a competitive state attracting tourist they are just as much in a competitive state attracting new residences. Creating a strong narrative on an active use of nature could possibly do both. At least this is the idea and hope for Northern Funen.

Accommodations in North Funen are primarily based on camping (47 %) and holiday houses (38 %) along the North Coast (Cowi, 2013). Six campsites varying in size, services and prices are operating in the destination. 2.109 holiday houses are located in North Funen which makes them the largest contributor to bed nights capacity in North Funen (Holmgaard et al, 2018). The capacity utilization of holiday houses calculated by Statistics Denmark (Danmarks Statistik, 2021) reports to 10 %, that is however, in my view inadequate because it is based solely on commercial rental bureaus reporting, and thereby does not include holiday houses rented out privately though for example Airbnb or equivalent. Even despite this a total of 318.447 bed nights in 2020 were recorded which makes North Funen the number one destination in the total region of Funen concerning bed nights (Destination Fyn, 2021).

The economical perspectives of tourism in Northern Funen is that 450 people have a year-round full-time job within the tourism sector across businesses. The yearly turnaround in the tourism sector in the destination is 231 million kroner (Nordfyns Kommune & N., 2015).

This thesis will feature an interview with the destination management organisation of Northern Funen, NEET. The tourism strategy of Northern Funen from 2015 to 2020 is now outdated and NEET are facilitating the formulation of a new strategy at this time. In my interview with NEET they express their desire to involve tourism actors in the process by saying;

“It is important for us to involve all actors, who see themselves as relevant in some way or another, within tourism. I am having personal conversations with the biggest stakeholders in tourism now. Coming January, we facilitate a workshop where we invite everyone. Everyone.” (second round interview with NEET)

Everyone in this statement is all stakeholders that have an interest in tourism, shop-owners, gas-stations, supermarkets, B&B owners, attractions and so on. Referring back to my research question, researching tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs could draw up an understanding of how to include this stakeholder group in for example a strategy formulation process.

² Translated from: ”Det er vigtigt at få inddraget alle de aktører der selv ser at de er relevante på en eller anden måde, inden for turisme. Jeg er ude personligt at snakke med de største interessenter i turismen lige nu. Til januar holder vi en workshop hvor vi inviterer ALLE, alle.”

Literature review

The literature review of this thesis unfolds the theoretical framework which I will use to answer the research question, I will use literature on rural tourism, introducing theory on the subject that I find relevant in relation to my research. Furthermore, I elaborate on micro-scale businesses and entrepreneurship and the challenges these stakeholder groups have in the tourism market. Lastly, I look towards literature that identify what makes a lifestyle-entrepreneur and build upon my interest on lifestyle-entrepreneurs meaning for a rural destination such as Northern Funen. This is relevant for the case because the destination is home to many micro- to small-scale businesses for whom lifestyle and business interact. Being a destination with many Small- and micro-scale businesses do have an influence of the destination management organisation and how to operate within the landscape.

The literature review will start with rural tourism, hereafter micro-scale tourism business and entrepreneurship will be unfolded. Challenges for micro-scale businesses and lifestyle-entrepreneurs in the tourism market will then be looked upon followed by lifestyle-entrepreneurships role in a rural destination. The rural destination in this thesis is as mentioned Northern Funen why so this is the focus the literature review. Lastly voluntary commitment as a lifestyle will be investigated to fully understand the stakeholders represented in this research.

Rural tourism

This part of the thesis explores research in rural tourism, I do this to create an understanding of the complex nature of it. Setting Northern Funen in the context of rural tourism has several aspects to consider, Northern Funen do not only consist of rural areas. However, the cities of Northern Funen are Otterup (5.227) Bogense (3.976) Sønderød (3.2.19) Morud (1.828), relatively small city scrapes. Thereby seen as in opposition to what it is not, urban/city tourism, Northern Funen can at least be considered as tourism in a rural environment. Meanings of the word “rural” has undergone multiple transformations. Traditionally, rural equalled agrarian but research literature has used rural in a social, cultural and economic context (Okech, 2012).

Overall, literature researching rural tourism consider four fundamental features cogitated in rural tourism literature:

“(1) Location is of utmost importance, most commonly understood as a geographic and social perspective; (2) Sustainable development is a core value of RT; (3) The role of indigenous communities is preponderant to manage RT; (4) RT should provide rural experiences. (Rosalina et al, 2021)”.

Rosalina et al (2021) discusses rural tourism research literature using a systematic literature review method. Rosalina et al (2021) reveals the four above areas in which rural tourism is discussed to be the most prominent in literature on the subject. Therefore, these areas will in this thesis be discussed to describe rural tourism. The section will throughout consider Northern Funen in the context of the theoretical discussion.

(1) Location

Location is not surprisingly a major theme in labelling rural tourism. Several different approaches to define rural tourism from a geographical perspective have been proposed. For example; following indicators commonly used by the Eurostat and OECD, a destination with less than 100 inhabitants per one square kilometre can be considered as a rural destination (Šimková, 2007). Considering this argument Northern Funen as a collected unit is a rural tourism destination, hence the inhabitants per one square kilometre is 65 (Danmarks statistik, 2017). Usually, rural areas have few areas of comparative advantages other than immobile activities such as farming or natural resources, and in a tourism context, areas of recreation and outdoor activities. Advantages of the rural location is that it is immobile (Wiggins & Proctor, 2001) (Okech, 2012). Nature and landscape is importantly vital to tourism especially in a Northern and Scandinavian context (Baldacchino, 20015).

For rural tourism research location refers of cause also to the quality of the landscape, subjective as it might be, different measures have been developed to research the perceived quality of landscapes. Theoretical measures of landscape quality are as diverse as the landscape and activities the landscape invites to. For example, Dahl and Dalbakk (2015) investigate the motorists experience of scenic roads in Norway and the perceived quality of two compatible routes. As an example of landscape quality research their article have an activity specific methodology asking research participants if driving was about the journey or the destination (Dahl & Dalbakk, 2015). Traditional satisfaction questions are utilized by Denstadil & Jacobsen (2011) also to leisure motorists in Norway. Traditional satisfaction questions such as their likelihood of recommending the route to friends and family, likelihood of returning to the route and of cause their overall satisfaction (Denstadli & Steen Kacobsen, 2011). What I want to highlight is that the quality of the landscape is both subjective and activity specific. One motorist on the scenic roads of Norway might have had a great trip in the landscape, he might also have passed a mountain-bike tourist that found the hills to high and slopes to dangerous. It is the multiple activities that the landscape invites for that is the important subject in literature on location of rural tourism.

Access to the rural destinations is a main issue. Müller & Jansson (2006) describes as the main threshold in rural tourism and formulates a major disadvantage for businesses located in the peripheries. Compared to urban spaces accessing is often more challenging as it often requires a car. Additional time is required to reach rural destinations and transport is usually more expensive. In the case of Northern Funen, no trains are available, regional busses departs from Middelfart and Odense to Northern Funen and a network of local public busses cover most of Northern Funen commune. An issue with public transport touched upon by research is that public transportation service is often designed to support citizen commuting from one town/city to another, and peripheral rural destination tourism generates the least attention in the public transportation design (Halkier, 2013) (Müller & Jansson, 2006). As a consequence, is it only more difficult to reach the destination, it is also difficult getting around once there.

(2) Sustainable development

Sustainable development is discussed in 41 % of the literature reviewed by Rosalina et al (2015) equally issued in a developing and a developed context. In the reviewed literature almost equally consists of three subcategories within sustainable development in rural tourism. *“Subcategories related to the expectation of positive outcomes: to provide economic development (39.76%), to maintain social and cultural preservation (30.12%), and to ensure environmental conservation (30.12%) (Rosalina et al, 2021)”*. The distinction made by Rosalina et al (2015) between a developed and a developing context aims to research if the economic status of the destination influence challenges and view on rural tourism. The division is based on the economic situation at the destination, and an example of a developed destination could be Germany and a developing example could be Zimbabwe. And while economic sustainable development is predominant in the developing context, then environmental conservation and social/cultural sustainable preservation is dominant in the developed context (Rosalina et al, 2021). We need to remember that this distinction is solely formulated from an academic angle and tells us what scholars have researched and, in their world view, found interesting/problematic. In conceptualizing rural tourism Northern Funen is of course present in the developed context where, according to researchers, social-cultural and environmental sustainable concerns are predominant. However, it is with the developed context this thesis will move on to discuss social-/cultural sustainability.

While many small rural towns are facing problems in sustaining communities then it is often tourism entrepreneurs that can be opportunistic and endorse and sustain a vibrant community in small towns (Mottiara et al, 2018). Mottiara et al (2018) argued:

“...the importance of “innovative, committed and risk-taking entrepreneurs” for destination development”

in the role of developing a sustainable rural destination in the transition from agricultural to tourism (Mottiara et al, 2018). However, discussing entrepreneurs as risk-taking individuals who seek market opportunities and as a group actively searches for innovation (Moscardo, 2014) will be disputed in this thesis. And therefore, the role of sourcing community well-being as influencers in the community will be discussed.

(3) Community-based aspects

Community-based aspects of rural tourism literature includes the notion of rural tourism to be anchored locally, with a greater inclusion of communities and small-scale stakeholders. Research also tend to characterize rural tourism to be small-scale in general and traditional (Rosalina et al, 2021).

(4) Experiences

Rural tourism should provide rural experiences from the broad spectrum of experiences linked with rural tourism. Experiences is the fourth most prevalent

theme in rural tourism literature especially physical experiences is linked with rural tourism but also social and psychological experiences is linked with rural tourism (Rosalina et al, 2021).

Authentic tangible tourism experiences are thematically linked to rural tourism.

Authenticity in terms of tourism is a desire to experience the real, the original and the traditional. To tap into a modern type of traditional rural tourism, culinary tourism is part of traditional rural tourism which can act as a medium to a deeper authentic relationship to the rural destination culture and traditions by serving traditional local dishes (Sasu & Epuran, 2016).

Experiences in a rural destination is linked to the quality of landscape as mentioned. Different landscapes invite for different outdoor activities and it is the utilization of landscapes for suitable activities that makes the tourism product. Often it is the destination management organisation that works as the enabler for tourism experiences in the landscape by for example constructing scenic walking trails or promoting and marking good angling spots.

By this literature review we now know and understand more about rural tourism, and that the case of Northern Funen can be treated as such. Now a review of literature facing the entrepreneurs will be conducted.

Micro-scale tourism businesses and entrepreneurship

As mentioned the destination of Northern Funen is recognized by few big-scale tourism businesses. However also recognized by a large number of small-scale tourism businesses and these small-scale businesses is of the interest of this thesis. They are so, because I believe that this stakeholder group, is often overlooked by destination management organisation and because the destination management organisation expresses an ambition to incorporate the thoughts of this stakeholder group in the creation of a new tourism strategy for the destination of Northern Funen. Hence, it can be of great value to look further into this.

To draw attention back to the definition of rural tourism, rural tourism destinations are largely shaped by small-scale businesses. This section of my thesis will capture the theoretical understandings of this stakeholder group.

Theoretically micro-scale businesses are referred to in tourism literature as businesses that employ less than ten (or four), but they are however more often family run or one-man businesses (Oliver & Jenkins, 2003) (Blichfeldt, 2009) which is also the case for the participants in the empirical work of this thesis.

I am interested in investigation the motivations behind these small- to micro-scale tourism businesses, when an understanding of this stakeholder group is established in the context of Northern Funen. Then we can try to see if there is a value gap between destination management and small- to micro-scale businesses that prevents fruitful collaboration.

While running or starting a business is often referred to in a narrative of earnings, growth, self-realisation or prestige there might be a different narrative to be told about small-scale business owners also in the tourism sector. I will in this section discuss tourism business entrepreneurs broadly and specifically lifestyle-entrepreneurs that make it their business to live life.

Beginning from the bottom:

“Understanding lifestyle-entrepreneurs and digging beneath the issue of profits (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011)”

is the title of Marchant and Mottias (2011) article, it captures the essence of this section. Marchant and Mottias (2011) see lifestyle-entrepreneurs in opposition to traditional entrepreneurs who desire to see their business grow and become a medium or large sized company. Lifestyle-entrepreneurs’ desirers is in the survival, making the business successful means to make enough money to survive and primarily to maintain a certain quality of life and lifestyle (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011). Additional literature conceptualizes tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs as

“tourism business owners who are actively pursuing a different lifestyle (Dias et al Á. &-R., 2021)”

the two articles agree upon how tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs theoretical differentiate themselves from traditional entrepreneurs in a monetary financial aspect. Dias et al. (2021) calls tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs an essential contributor to destination competitiveness due to their representativeness and due to their potential to generate innovation (Dias et al Á. &-R., 2021) a factor that is debated by Hjalager (2015) and Blichfeldt (2009) which will be commented upon later. Tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs values quality of life and share a connection to the local community, the desire to live in the destination/location trigger a need for self-employment as the rural destination lack opportunities (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011). The community connection we see from tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs positively affect the willingness to stay in the location and according to Dias et al. (2021) also positively affects self-efficacy and innovation. Additionally, because they are embedded in the community and the way of life they will have an interest in preserving the culture and environment of the destination in which they do their business (Dias et al Á. &-R., 2021).

The lifestyle motivations and business goals for running a business for these tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs might change over time. At start-up the business model might be centred around the lifestyle element but over time change to circumstances or chance. The empirical work by Marchant & Mottiar (2011) provide evidence of how motivations for tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs businesses can change over time. Changes occur when a business has success and grows, changes can occur for personal reasons, exemplified for one lifestyle-entrepreneur in their study who

became a father, changes can occur for health reasons, and changes can occur for a variety of different and unique reasons (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011).

“Overall it is clear that a combination of changes in personal life and changes in the market have resulted in these entrepreneurs altering their level and type of involvement in the business and the key objectives that dominate. It is apparent that rather than entrepreneurial and lifestyle motives being static they can change considerably. (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011)”

Research done by Getz & Carlsen (2000) confirms the family and lifestyle first approach. By stating that their empirical work shows that:

“Living in the rural environment plus family and lifestyle considerations were significant for almost everyone (Getz & Carlsen, 2000)”.

They do however, also argue that these family and lifestyle motivations are changing over time, and that motivations shifts from lifestyle to family evolutionary as business owners age.

Utilization of the entrepreneurs' home is common among lifestyle- entrepreneurs, which we will also see among respondents in this thesis. When tourist enter the intimate zone of the hosts home these interactions are an intense host-visitor experience for both guest and host (Janjua et al, 2021). Hosting not only in your business but in your home is a lifestyle choice (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013).

The tourism industry is home to many small/micro-scale businesses of which the majority is started by lifestyle-entrepreneurs that hardly show “typical” entrepreneurial attitudes (Peters et al, 2009), attitudes that is described as the Schumpeterian entrepreneur. Schumpeter (1883-1950) introduced the term entrepreneurship, he saw entrepreneurs as the driving force for creating growth and delivering innovation and technological change (Block et al, 2016). Personal characteristic traits from entrepreneurs can be observed in literature such as risk-taking, innovativeness and pro-activeness (Peters et al, 2009). These personal characteristics are represented in tourism lifestyle-entrepreneur literature, however, the primary personal characteristics used are different in tourism literature compared to literature on “classic” entrepreneurship.

Challenges for micro-scale businesses and lifestyle-entrepreneurs in the tourism market

“The tourism industry has proven to be a fertile environment for family businesses as well as for lifestyle-oriented entrepreneurs. Shaw & Williams (1998) identified both 'non-entrepreneurs' (i.e. (semi)retired in-migrants to the destination) and 'constrained entrepreneurs' (i.e. younger entrepreneurs constrained by minimum business skills and shortage of capital)” (Blichfeldt, 2009).

Blichfeldt (2009) uses this line of argumentation to say that small and medium sized tourism entrepreneurs lack the ability to be innovative. She argues that the lack of resources, both financial and in term of man hours are some of the main reasons fuelling the innovation gap in rural tourism that Hjalager et al (2018) describe.

While lifestyle-oriented entrepreneurs in the tourism industry are widely present in rural areas and contributes to development and attractiveness also in a Northern Funen context they also represent organisational vulnerabilities.

Ioannides & Petersen (2003) provide insights to key issues for small to medium size enterprises (SMSE) in the tourism industry. Their study case is comparable to Northern Funen in its demographic attributes. The issues they see is that SMSEs lack important resources in terms of skills, education, funds and knowledge. This have according to the two researcher's implications for the competitiveness for the destination, where Dias et al (2021) calls tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs an essential contributor to destination competitiveness, Ioannides & Petersen (2003) argue that the lack of resources held by lifestyle-entrepreneurs or SMSEs weakens the competitive environment at the destination. The main arguments found by Ioannides & Petersen is that the lack of skills, knowledge, investment funds and education limits product and process innovation which they refer to as "the neglect of innovation" (Ioannides & Petersen, 2003). I should rightly point out that Dias et al. (2021) studies lifestyle-entrepreneurs and Ioannides & Petersen studies SMSEs, lifestyle-entrepreneurs are always SMSEs but SMSEs is not always lifestyle-entrepreneurs. It is also a factor that while lifestyle-entrepreneurs enhances the competitiveness of the destination - the competitive situation between SMSEs within the destination can be insufficient.

Lifestyle-entrepreneurships role in a rural destination

The role of entrepreneurs in a rural destination is according to Komppula (2014) largely underestimated in literature and models of destination competitiveness. She argues that:

"without innovative, committed, and risk-taking entrepreneurs no destination will flourish.
(Komppula, 2014)".

It is interesting to research this binary between entrepreneurs and lifestyle-entrepreneurs, because on one hand literature argue that no destination can flourish without innovative entrepreneurs and on the other hand rural destinations lack innovation even though these destinations are conceptualized with a large quantity of micro-scale lifestyle-entrepreneurs.

"we might rethink entrepreneurship in this setting to mean the strategic investment of all forms of capital, whether human, social or financial, in the pursuit of planned business development goals. Moving away from a single-minded view of profit-driven entrepreneurship brings the important features of networks, community and embeddedness more centrally into our understanding of a tourism entrepreneur (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011)".

Bosworth and Farrell (2011) research small tourism businesses with an emphasis on in-migrant entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs who move to rural destinations with a desire to operate a small tourism business. The perspective of neo-endogenous development, which is the idea of two different types of resources, internal local embeddedness and knowledge and external expert knowledge from different non-governmental or public organisations, which should provide the entrepreneur successful development (Adamski & Gorlach, 2007). The neo-endogenous perspective has a special important value to in rural destination because there is value for tourism entrepreneurs to have a corporative relation to destination management organisations and policy makers (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011). This opens up for the important role of the destination management organisation in facilitating flourishing entrepreneurial development in the rural destination. And the position of the two researchers is that policy makers should build on local identity and promoting the image of the region

“...rather than introducing something new (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011) “.

Business owners is more likely to be engaged in cultural life and environmental conservation (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011).

Hjalagers innovation gap

Even though this is not an innovation project, I am convinced that Hjalagers (2018) article on innovation gaps in rural tourism has some very interesting views on both the tourism entrepreneurs and their role in rural tourism.

Based on research done by Dias et al (2020), tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs are considered in a degree to which they are innovative. Tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs embedded in the rural “backwardness” sense of the history, the authentic and nostalgia are debatably able to harness local knowledge or place attachment and deliver innovation (Dias et al Á. D.-R., 2020) (Hjalager et al, 2018). Three types of tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs is identified by Dias et al. (2020) according to their capacity to transform knowledge into innovate in the rural environment. This is interesting for this thesis when having the opportunity to visit a number of tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs and talking with them also about motivations for opening up tourism businesses and talking with them about how they see development for their business.

According to Hjalager (2018) the rural tourism product appears to be insufficient due partly to what she calls the innovation gaps. Hjalagers research identifies five gaps as follows: (1) the portfolio gap, (2) the policy departmentalization gap, (3) the knowledge gap, (4) the change motivation gap, and (5) the resource interpretation gap (Hjalager et al, 2018). It is interesting to also use the research of this thesis to further research this theory. The innovation gaps research by Hjalager is based on trends in tourism markets and demands, thus, viewed from the customers perspective. Analysing markets from a customer perspective do have a traditional

marketer sense and might not embrace the business approach lifestyle-entrepreneurs have.

Voluntary commitment as a lifestyle

NEET make use of volunteers to deliver service to tourists in Northern Funen, this is a common practice among tourism management organisations across destinations (Holmes, 2014).

This thesis will undertake an interview with a voluntary organisation called The Friends of Tourism (Turismens Venner), therefore, I find it relevant to identify important literature within volunteering in tourism. The literature in this field works with four core elements of volunteering to understand why people engage in voluntary work these are:

“...free will, availability of rewards, formal organisation and proximity to the beneficiaries (Lockstone-Binney et al, 2010)”.

These overarching variables are seen holistically of voluntary work in all settings, and the individual reasoning for working voluntary might be placed in one or several of the elements. Volunteering in tourism takes place throughout the spectrum of tourism host activities, and could for example be in museums, visitor information centres, conservation and events (Lockstone-Binney et al, 2010). It is interesting to talk with The Friends of Tourism in Bogense about how they are engaged and how they see their role in tourism in Northern Funen.

As of the case of lifestyle-entrepreneurs motivation are interesting for the study of volunteers in tourism. When utilizing the voluntary workforce, it is important to be able to motivate them to do the “job”. The subject is discussed in literature both on a general level and in the context of tourism, and the notion is that:

“Volunteers are rarely altruistic, that is, willing to offer their services for no personal gain. Rather, volunteers expect to benefit in some way from their activities (Lockstone-Binney et al, 2010)”.

In regards to these benefits that the volunteer expects, then they can be both intrinsically and extrinsically for the volunteer when for example being committed when expecting to add value to the CV (intrinsically) or expecting to add social benefits being part of a volunteer community (extrinsically) (Lockstone-Binney et al, 2010) (Hongxia Qi, 2020). As of everything in this thesis I look towards lifestyle and how choices are affected. Holmes (2014) quantify a traditional, classic base of volunteers that are continuously committed to an organisation and base their work in the identification with the organisation and a traditional cultural identity, this is seen in contrast to a volunteer development that increasingly is episodic and uncommitted to organisations (Holmes, 2014).

This thesis will not go into depth into voluntary commitment, it is however important for me to understand the field, and the possible motivation behind voluntary commitment in tourism. I will use this knowledge in my conversation with The Friends of Tourism organisation.

Destination management organisation (DMO) theory

A review of literature review on the subject of destination management organisation theory provides knowledge for this section. I will demonstrate the most important approaches DMOs take to legitimize their existence.

“[...] it is possible to define destination management as the strategic, organizational and operative decisions taken to manage the process of definition, promotion and commercialization of the tourism product [originating from within the destination], to generate manageable flows of incoming tourists that are balanced, sustainable and sufficient to meet the economic needs of the local actors involved in the destination (Presenza et al, 2005).

The simple, but well formulated, quote above presents an easy to understand definition of a DMO legitimization. The power of the DMO in this definition exceeds formal power hold by for example NEET. The first part of the definition:

“it is possible to define destination management as the strategic, organizational and operative decisions taken to manage the process of definition, promotion and commercialization of the tourism product”

refers to a management organization with the legitimate power to define tourism in a region. The various organizational structures held by different DMOs, at all levels (national, regional and local), make it impossible to make an all-inclusive definition of the powers held by DMOs generally. However, Hiroaki and Ruhanen (2017) indorse Presenza et al (2005) and argue that the DMOs legitimate power stem from being:

“The peak industry body for tourism”

Legitimate power can be exerted by using the formal position in tourism to arrange seminars, conducting promotional campaigns, events or formalising cooperative private-public networks (Hiroaki & Ruhanen, 2017) (Presenza et al, 2005) (Niekerk, 2017).

“Stakeholder collaboration is acknowledged as an important part of tourism destination planning and management. (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017)”,

there is just a difference in the level of power and influence held by different stakeholder groups.

Since small- to micro-scale business entrepreneurs are the interest of this thesis and that stakeholder collaboration in a participative process to reach common objectives is a core principal in sustainable destination management (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017) I will in the analysis of my qualitative data discuss possible collaborative approaches. Since Northern Funen is shaped with many micro-scale tourism businesses with a possible different perspective of active engagement in collaborative processes furthermore, all entrepreneurs could have motivations in running their business that

enhances or weakens dialog and inclusion in collaborative processes (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017). For Hjalager et al. (2018) it is a barrier for innovation that micro stakeholders are absent in stakeholder collaboration (Hjalager et al, 2018). It is the absent of collective knowledges and knowledge sharing that act hampering on micro-scale businesses (Kotey Sorensen, 2014). The motivation for small- and micro-scale businesses in cooperating is embedded in the ultra-local, in relationships and between friends basically it is in the informal practice of networks (Yachin, 2020).

“[...], to generate manageable flows of incoming tourists that are balanced, sustainable and sufficient to meet the economic needs of the local actors involved in the destination.”

This second part of the Presenza et al (2005) quote presents a softer valued vision of destination management and aspect related to internal destination development. This is a symbol of how the acronym DMO has undergone a transformation where it has evolved from a meaning of a marketing- to a management organization. Indicating sustainability is more than the welfare of nature and climate, internal destination development is also a claim to community welfare, by for example protecting cultural identity and as they state to ensure tourism can meet the economic needs of local tourism actors in the destination (Presenza et al, 2005).

Research design and methodology

This methodological chapter of the thesis follows Rienecker and Jørgensens (2010) approach to what such a chapter should contain. I will hence in research design and methodology describe which methods I will use to come from my starting problem statement ending up in conclusions in the end, the sub-segments will provide the reasoning for choice of methods. I will describe how methods are utilized in data collection, with a review of advantages and disadvantages for the utilizations of chosen methods (Rienecker & Jørgensen, 2010). Furthermore, I will reflect on how unfolding methodological methods unfold new opportunities throughout collecting data. Firstly however, I will reflect on the philosophy of science behind this thesis.

Philosophy of science

The analytical framework, concrete methods and theoretical concepts I use in this thesis is rooted in my philosophy of science, the purpose of my research and the subjects researched.

My knowledge interest is to understand the role of and motivation of small- and lifestyle-entrepreneurs of Northern Funen. I am motivated by a humanistic approach to research, and I will be using methods that can bring me to an understanding of the underpinning reasoning for being and behaving in the tourism market of Northern Funen.

Social science should be rewarded. I share the views presented by Bent Flyvbjerg (2006) that social science should not be presented as natural science. This means that the cumulative and predictive arguments that follow natural science have little

resonance in social science even how much social scientists tends to try to simplify findings into easily understandable predictive theories. However problematic, social science in the epistemic model uses an approach idealised by natural science by applying social theories to solve social problems. The epistemic model of social science is used to make social science relevant for public interest, but this model has been proven wrong in relation to actually solving social illness in society (Flyvbjerg, 2005). On the other hand, social science in the phronetic model make social science relevant for the public by being:

“...Producing reflexive analyses of values and interests and of how values and interests affect different groups in society (Flyvbjerg, 2005)” and “produce food for thought for the ongoing process of public deliberation, participation, and decision making (Flyvbjerg, 2005)”.

It is from Flyvbjerg (2005) and the phronetic social science model that the mythological narrative from our Aalborg University arrive. This thesis will take point of departure in the following four questions:

- (1) Where are we going?*
- (2) Who gains and who loses, and by which mechanism of power?*
- (3) Is this development desirable?*
- (4) What, if anything, should be done about it? (Flyvbjerg, 2005)*

This thesis uses concepts of rural tourism, stakeholder values and destination management. For the participants among stakeholders in destination Northern Funen these concepts might have different meaning, because the meaning of words and concepts have individually perceptions depending on life-/world-views and background of the individual. Therefore, it is the job for the researcher to analyse data within the understanding of the research subject. This view on the research subject suggests a social constructivist approach. More about that in the following section.

Social constructivism

This thesis wants to go into a deep understanding of the stakeholders. Therefore, I will work around the notion that the reality for them is social constructed. Contrary to critical theory, social constructivism proclaims a normative point of departure, it does not research and define how the world should be arranged. The social constructive view is that knowledge is constructed by discourses, contemporary historical understandings and relationships, creating a view of truth (Pedersen & K. Bransholm, 2012), again emphasised by Flyvbjerg (2005), who states that:

“...the socially and historically conditioned context – and not the elusive universal grounding that is desired by certain scholars – constitutes the most effective bulwark against relativism and nihilism” (Flyvbjerg, 2005).

Over a period of time the perception created between people through social interaction becomes the truth – and becomes the structural norm that we act within, until the perception changes (Pedersen & K. Bransholm, 2012).

The social constructed reality (or truth) is relative in a variety of concepts as norms and perspectives is different in the field of communities (Holm, 2016). This thesis conducts research in a field with stakeholders being a part of different communities in Northern Funen. Therefore, I need to be aware of which field I am venturing into and try to recognize the level of knowledge, power and status for each stakeholder. However, as the social constructed reality is individually formed, as mentioned, by discourses, contemporary historical understandings and relationships, it is up to me as researcher to uncover and try to understand the participants reality through our conversations and rely on stakeholder theory.

As a researcher I am part of the knowledge production, working with my collected data, my chosen methods and my concepts, which I will interpret and then represent as findings (Veal, 2011). These findings in a social constructivist vision are not findings which necessarily is reproducible as the findings are my interpretation of data. Another researcher might interpret the data differently, in addition another researcher would not be able to produce the same dataset nor would he/she in the field see the same social construction as I did as it is ever changing. This suggests that the method do not present reliability in the sense that the study can be reproduced and the same finding be represented. However, the validity of the research and the findings in this thesis is not endangered it is simply a snapshot of the present. And as Flyvbjerg (2005) argues this social research should be food for thought and not used for predictions.

My role as a researcher

As a researcher I have no intentions of affecting the answers of any of my respondents in the data collection, however, I believe that it is important to be aware of my role as a researcher in the process. As a social constructivist it is however inevitable as a researcher to not be affected by my own personal understanding of the world and the area and topics I research (Holm, 2016). There is no doubt that I as a researcher and as a person has influenced the answers given by respondents. It is important to reflect on the bias that could be present in the data collection process.

Although, I do not have any personal relation with any of my respondents, it could be noted that personal relationships to respondents could form a bias in interviews (Berger, 2015). Being an insider to the region (I live only a few kilometres from Northern Funen) undoubtedly formed some of my interviews as I could relate to small places and geographical references. Furthermore, I have previously worked with the destination of Funen with 'Destination Funen' (destination management of the entire Funen) and therefor have a big knowledge background of what is going on in the destination. This personal experience (Berger, 2015) also formed my access to the local tourism organisation of NEET as I could refer to my previous work. The conduction of data collection was also biased due to my personal experience, coming into this thesis I had a clear idea of important stakeholder groups that I wanted to

include as I was aware of how Destination Northern Funen is shaped by a large group of micro- and small-scale businesses.

Research design

Looking into the research design, I will unfold different relevant theories in relation with the case study.

Case study design

This segment will in short describe aspects of using a case study approach. A case study can be used to research a general problem statement in a manageable scale. Even though a case study does not seek to generalise, the collected knowledge can still be relevant in the academic field, when looking towards similar cases with somewhat comparable characteristics (Flyvbjerg II, 2006). This research does not try to generalize on motivations from selected entrepreneurs featured in this thesis. This case study investigates locally bound tourism entrepreneurs, however as Flyvbjerg (2006) argues a case study design can be valued in clarifying, for example, deeper motivations of elderly entrepreneurs in a rural destination.

This thesis can be categorized as a case study, because it formulates a field of study “lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs” and test theory and research the literature on the subject in a narrow geographic limited within Northern Funen. My research subject/respondents fit into the case study by being part of Northern Funen commune or destination, and they are all fits into the category of micro-size entrepreneurs of which the thesis interest is.

Selecting respondents

Flowing the geographical limitations of the case study, I have searched for respondents within the destination of Northern Funen with its boundaries equal to the boundaries to the commune of Northern Funen, with one exception which I will comment on later. The primary data collection for this thesis consists of eleven qualitative interviews conveyed during the period of 10th of October 2021 to 14th of November 2021. I conducted the interviews in two separate rounds off interviews.

As mentioned, selecting respondents was limited by geography, in addition, selecting respondents was limited by the size and characteristic of the business. This thesis is in the field of researching lifestyle entrepreneurs, however, lifestyle characteristics is difficult to identify though a netnographical research of small- or micro-size businesses in the destination, as a consequence not all respondents can be categorized as lifestyle entrepreneurs. One respondent is a voluntary organisation based in Bogen.

Firstly, I started contacting possible respondents via email where I in short described my intentions. This is an example of an email to Kunstgården³:

³ Kære Kunstgården
Håber alt er vel hos jer!

Dear Kunstgården

I hope everything is good,

I am writing you because I am writing my thesis for my tourism study at Aalborg University. I live in Lumby, and therefore, I have decided to write my thesis on tourism in Northern Funen. My thesis is mainly about the small actors in tourism at Northern Funen; this is why I stumbled across your farm, which I would love to visit.

For me it of cause is about collecting data for my thesis, but to an equal degree about seeing Kunstgården, informally. I am thinking, to call you tomorrow to find a fitting time where we can talk?

Looking forward talking with you

Best regards

/- Emil Hjortborg

Text box 1 Email to possible respondents (translated)

Of the 13 possible respondents I contacted by email only two declined meeting with me, whose two both declined quickly after retrieving my email.

As I mentioned in the email, I telephoned the possible respondents one day after sending the email. I talked to no one who declined an interview with me.

I need to note that I was surprised by the willingness to participate in my data collection. I did not question this in my interviews, but reasons for taking time to participate could be due to the season was low season for most tourism actors in the region, and that most participants are pensioners both points could leave time on hand to participate. Furthermore, it could be a general interest in the field of tourism that gave me this high commitment rate of respondents. Whatever reason, giving possible respondents a clear timeline of the process and being very clear of what I want from them and what it takes from them work out to be successful. I also consider the choice of informality a key role in the success rate of positive respond. I chose an informal voice both in email and in person, to make them relax, open up and in general be comfortable with the situation. To show a genuine interest, which I possess by being from the area as well as academically interested, also paid off in terms of friendly and reflective responders.

Name of business	Interviewed	Business
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Jeg skriver til jer fordi jeg er ved at lave mit afsluttende speciale på turismestudiet ved Aalborg Universitet, jeg selv bor i Lumby og har derfor valgt at skrive mit speciale om turismen på Nordfyn. Mit speciale handler i høj grad om de "små" aktører indenfor turisme, her har jeg læst om jeres gård som jeg ville elske at komme at besøge.

Det handler selvfølgelig om for mig at indsamle data til mit speciale, men lige så meget om at komme og se Kunstgården, helt uformelt. Jeg tænker at ringe i morgen for at høre hvornår I ville have lidt tid til at snakke med mig.

Ser frem til at tale med dig

Bedste hilsner

/- Emil Hjortborg

Narrative Round		
Kærsgaard Transport Museum	Henri Hage	Museum
Nyt Hesteliv	Janne Junker	Association/Guided tours
Kongsdal Åben Have	Vagn Wizar Jørgensen	Attraction
Mosegaarde	Knud Erik & Kirsten Rasmussen	B&B, Attraction
Klintebjerg Galleri	John Bonnesen Wolff	Attraction
Round Two		
Kunstgården	Tina Larsen & Jesper Larsen	Attraction/museum
Christiansholm B&B	Lars Knudsen	B&B
Veflinge Afholdshotel	Lars Thomsen & Lone Thomsen	Micro hotel
Børges Put and Take	Bente Dryer Mortensen	Attraction
Turismens Venner	Børge Pedersen	Association/Guided tours
NEET	Rikke Lindhøj	Destination Management Organisation

Above is a list of all respondents in my data collection.

Characteristics of respondents

This segment will describe personal and business characteristics of the respondents represented in this study.

Firstly, noted is that eight out of eleven is pensioners. These eight businesses run by pensioners is micro businesses, with a business model that could not sustain a family financially.

The remaining three businesses provides the primary income for one or two persons. Theoretically micro-scale businesses are referred to in tourism literature as businesses that employ less than ten (or four), but they are however more often family run or one-man businesses (Oliver & Jenkins, 2003) (Blichfeldt, 2009) which is also the case for the participants in the empirical work of this thesis. It is also notable that nine out of eleven respondents and their business is based outside the towns of Northern Funen, and of these nine, eight have their business and their private home at the same place, and it could be argued that they are hosting guests in both business and home (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013).

Two rounds of interviews

In my data collection procedure for this thesis I use two rounds of interviews. The first set of data is five narrative in-depth interviews. In a narrative interview attention is paid to the small side stories told by the respondent of which the researcher can probe the respondent to be personal in the story telling.

Narratives are rich in expressing emotions, thoughts and interpretations, and being either fictional or factual they allow researchers to develop meaning out of them letting the narrators' voices speak
(Komppula, 2014).

I use a very personal style of conversations, and as Brinkmann & Kvale (2019) also argue, I needed to probe my respondents by being very personal giving something of myself in the conversations and asking personal questions, without:

“transgressing a line over which only friends and intimates can cross (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2019)”.

For the same reasons I held the first round of interviews without recordings as I felt that I could possibly harm the confidentiality between the respondent and me. Instead of a recording I did a transcript from memory and field notes when returning to my office exemplified in text-box 2 in a short version.

For this narrative round of interviews, I used a simple interview guide. Three topics was noted in my notebook and worked as my interview guide:

- (1) Unfold the business approach.
- (2) Northern Funen as a destination and discussing collaboration with NEET.
- (3) Personal values and motivations.

All of these topics are quite open, and it was the idea with the narrative round of interviews: To let the respondents talk openly and freely. Furthermore, the idea was to let this round of interviews identify topics for the second round of more structured interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2019).

Through the first couple of narrative interviews I learnt that embarking in deep meaningful conversations was more fluent when walking around the respondents' estate, taking the tour of the business. Doing the tours and interview at the same time made the conversation very unstructured as answering interview questions and explaining what we saw overlapped. I believe that giving the respondents the opportunity to express themselves about the things they know deeply simultaneously with answering questions they might never have thought about, and not rushing for answers, gave the respondents the opportunity to talk about questions they do not have an immediate answer for and returning to answering when they have had an opportunity to think about it.

In transcribing these unrecorded interviews, I could start to see recurring themes and topics. Below is an example of the transcription of narrative interviews, here it can be seen that the idea of the narrative interview is, that I as a researcher is given the opportunity to reflect on what kind of person I am talking to, I get close to the everyday life. Writing the narrative transcription when returning to the desk, I used field-notes to reimagine situated descriptions of the conversation. Getting familiar with the everyday life of my respondents contributes to an understanding of motivation and values that the respondent affiliates with the business. This could point towards a phenomenological approach where I as researcher move beyond

clinical use of quotes, but closer to an understanding of the lived life of my respondents (Norlyk & Martinsen, 2008).

Kongsdal åben have (Kongsdal Open Garden)

Kongsdal Open Garden has in 2016 been awarded the Garden of the Year award and has in 2021 been selected by The Danish Club as one of the fifty most beautiful gardens in Denmark. I talked to the owner Vagn Wazar Jørgensen on Wednesday the 13th of October by then the season had ended. The duration of our conversation was 1 ½ hour.

Vagn Wazar Jørgensen is approaching 80 years of age, despite that he alone works in maintaining the four acres of garden.

Firstly, Vagn took me for the big tour of the garden, which was a great conversation starter, not surprisingly Vagn had a lot of stories to tell. He told me about two memorial stones from the 2. World War, he told me about the first tree he planted back in 1970 and he told me about his late wife. I asked him why have an open garden?

"You know what? It was never the intentions to open up the garden to the public. Christine (Vagns late wife) and I loved our garden, - never a day passed by where we didn't walk to the top of the garden hand in hand (...) so when she passed on in 2008, what should I then do? - I wasn't interested in maintaining this big garden for my own sake. So, I opened up for the public."

Right there by a huge North American Tulip Tree I believe that I had uncovered the overriding motivation behind Kongsdal Open Garden. There is no statistical count of incoming tourists to the garden, the main contributions are travel agency busses for whom visits can be arranged directly with Vagn Wazar Jørgensen or through NEET. Vagn reports that he has a great relationship with name given personal at NEET. Vagn is a member of the tourism organisation. However, at one point he was about to opt out due to "unfortunate remarks" made by name given personal at NEET to national television about the destination of Northern Funen.

Vagn and I spend 40 minutes walking the beautiful garden, the main topics of our conversation for these 40 minutes is botany. I believe that me "acting" very interested and being able to ask informed questions (I am son of a gardener) helped me gain trust and opened up for a more sensible conversation. Throughout our walk and talk, several of my questions went unanswered, which for me at that point was frustrating. Half way through the garden, Vagn admits to have reduced hearing due to chemotherapy he had 10 years ago. And by the end Vagn invites me for coffee and cake in the conservatory. However, coffee had to wait till Vagn drove home his neighbour. *"You can just go inside, I just have to drive home my neighbour"*.

When talking about NEET with Vagn, he keeps singling out individuals within the NEET organisation. *"Be sure to talk to the right people in their"* he said. However, the overall relationship with NEET is good. He points out that NEET's organisation of busses visiting the garden is very fruitful. However, as Vagn mentions the relationship to the tourism organisation is not without controversies, and Vagn tells me that he at one point was about to leave the organisation following unfortunate remarks by leading employees in NEET.

When coming into the conservatory, I believed that I had already covered the first and second part of my interview guide: Part 1: Unfolding the business approach and part 2: Collaboration with NEET. I was ready to unfold the 3. And final part: Values. Ask why.

Having already uncovered the overriding motivation behind Kongsdal Open Garden I now wanted to talk to him about visions of the garden and hear how he believed to emotionally affect the guests. What did happen was that Vagn instantly found newspapers articles about the garden to show me, and we talked about the awards and press that Vagn and the garden had received. Our conversation reveals that pride and appreciations of his work is a driving force for Vagn, demonstrated by bookmarked newspapers articles being the first thing to show to me.

Vagn offers me coffee and cake from the local bakery, of which he insists that I eat three pieces. Vagn tells me the story about his commitment to giving back to the community exemplified by how he has been inviting a group of municipal employees in charge of trash collection in the city of Bogense to the garden for a tour, coffee and cake. Just to show appreciation towards this group and their good work. The conversation turns towards Vagns family and his hopes for his son to overtake the maintenance and the ownership of the garden when Vagn at some point in time is unable or dead. The uncertainty clearly is a concern for Vagn.

At the end of our conversation Vagn follows me to my car and invites my children, wife and I to the opening of the garden coming spring, to which I of course accepted.

Text-box 2 Transcription of interview with Kongsdal Open Garden - Vagn Wazar Jørgensen

The idea about conducting two rounds of interviews is to use the first round of interviews as a generator for concepts; to identify and assess potential concept and themes that I could move forward with in terms of answering my research questions. The second round of interviews is conducted in a more traditional semi-structured interview format as described below.

Semi-structured interviews

Deciding using a semi-structured interview formula enables the researcher to ask follow up questions and to the interviewee and challenge the answers. Semi-structured interviews are explained by Brinkmann & Kvale (2019), with emphases on being able to obtain a deep understanding of the life-world as the interviewee sees it. The following Spradley (1976) quote (re-quoted in Brinkmann & Kvale (2019)) worked as an inspiration and clarified the visions I had for my interviews with stakeholders in Northern Funen.

“I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?” (Spradley, 1979, p. 34 in (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2019))

What I want in this thesis and with my qualitative data with stakeholder interviewees is to understand their values. I want to be able to explain how they feel, to re-tell where they want to go and why, knowing that the readiness of the interviewee to answer sensible questions decisively depends on social cohesion created between interviewer and interviewee (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2019). To create a situation where these ambitions will flourish I planned my interviews with small-businesses to be located at interviewees own business or at interviewees home. I openly indicated in my first email approach to interviewees, and the follow-up phone-call, that I was willing and glad to conduct my interview/conversation at their business, which in most cases also meant interviewees home. Theoretically interviewing at interviewees “home-turf” offers a sense of intimacy and friendliness (Herzog, 2012), which synergized well with my formulated intentions with the interviews. Furthermore, if the interview is being made on-site the researcher gains an understanding of the environment in which the interviewee obtains their life-views and values (Chong, 2008).

Critical points towards semi-structured face to face interviews argue that it takes a trained interviewer in order to extract the data available in each interview (Hofisi et al, 2014). One needs to observe that validity and reliability of data is challenged when the interviewer lacks thorough training (While, 1994). However, theory argues that there is only one way to get trained, and that is to practice.

Conducting a sequence of semi-structured interviews is time consuming when compared to sending out questioners, which is another critical point towards my choice of method. The semi structured interview does not give the respondent much time to think and rethink about the questions and answers. If I had used questionnaires the respondents would have had the opportunity to consider and clarify the answers before answering (Andersen, 2013).

Endnotes/reflections on recording interviews

On two occasions the respondent said “*this is said outside the minutes*” and pointed towards the recording computer. These comments are of course not included in the

transcripts. The comments that they did not want to be quoted on where comments on specific people working with NEET, however I noticed that the censored comments were far less controversial compared to some comments in my unrecorded first round of interviews. However speculative, one could think that recording interviews made respondents less outgoing. Or, it could mean that I have created a trusted space, where the respondent could open up for thoughts that they might not share with everyone. Either way it is worth to note, that placing a recorder in front of the interviewee might create some slightly biased answered that should be taken into account.

Interview guide

The intended structure of my interviews was to let them unfold in a way to let my respondent talk about topics that they found interesting. However, to direct the conversation in a for the research, interesting direction I used an interview guide which I divided into seven topics that should be the main focus's (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2019). The seven topics are meant as a tool for directing conversations and not a fact list of topics to cover in all conversations. The topics of the interview guide is as follows:

- (1) Quality. This topic regards both the quality experienced by guests and what it means to the entrepreneur to offer the kind of quality their product represents.
- (2) Motivation for opening up the business. This topic refers to the motivation that originally motivated the entrepreneurs. I wanted to talk about this to understand and analyse how motivation can change over time. And furthermore, to help understand which motivation help potential entrepreneurs to open up business.
- (3) Takeaways from having a business. The takeaways refer to what the entrepreneurs get in return for their work and commitment to having a tourism business. In my conversations with respondents I ask to primary motivations for running a business, and secondary motivation for running a business.
- (4) Future. What are the future dreams of the business? I use this topic in my conversations to understand where the entrepreneurs desire to go with their business is, and to analyse the direction and strategy and future journey for the business.
- (5) Local engagement. I found this topic in literature by for example Dias et al (2021) who argue that lifestyle entrepreneurs often have a high level of local engagement. I found it interesting to analyse how it is manifested in a Northern Funen context.
- (6) Development. Talking to my respondents about development is mostly about listening to the history of the business, both for me to get an understanding of the business and giving the respondents an open topic to get the conversation flowing freely.
- (7) Lifestyle references. Lifestyle is an important topic of this thesis and is implemented in my interview guide but the topic is mostly thought to be revealed through follow-up questions throughout the conversations.

Since my research interest is the entrepreneur's motivation, creating social cohesion doing the conversation is desirable, therefore I take a personal and listening approach to my respondents.

Analysing Qualitative Data

In my interpretation of my data I use coding transcripts as an analytic tool. I use it to define and analyse what the collected data is about (Gibbs, 2007). Coding allows me as a researcher to index passages in the text, by indexing them to themes it is possible to group them together. This thesis uses coding to be able to categorize passages and information through all transcripts/interviews. As I conducted the interviews in a semi-(un)structured approach the respondents often seemed to jump back to previous topics later in the interviews, and by applying codes an overview of themes is easily retrievable in the transcripts.

As mentioned I already had created tree themes coming into the first round of interviews, as I was already aware of topics that I initially found interesting. Every interview in the first round gave me new knowledge, insights and ideas for the coming second round. Based on this I prepared my coding system as seen below. The codes follow seven themes relating to the theoretical framework of the thesis.

Coding Interviews

Here you can see the codes used to analyse the qualitative data and thereby treating it as quantitative data to locate most relevant themes to be able to answer the hypothesis in my research question.

Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Quality for guest experiences- What it means to the owner	Q Q1 Q2
Motivation for opening the business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Life event- Opportunity- For the fun of it	O O1 O2 O3
Takeaways from having a business <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Social takeaways- Economical takeaways- Educational takeaways	T T1 T2 T3
Future <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dreams of the place- Personal dreams	F F1 F2
Local engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Political- Societal- Local association- Open for locals	L L1 L2 L3 L4
Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintenance- Process innovation- Product innovation- Positioning innovation	D D1 D2 D3 D4

Lifestyle references	LR1
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Limitations (implications) with chosen methodology

Using a case study project design are not without validity implications. Critical issues are that data always is case-bound and that knowledge generation in the use of this data may be relevant within the case but not relevant beyond the case level (Blichfeldt, 2009).

I would have loved to interview entrepreneurs new to the destination, newcomers from other areas. The perspectives of Getz and Carlsen (2000) is that:

“Newcomers to a rural area can inject a great deal more than money. They can be leaders, innovators and catalysts for development (Getz & Carlsen, 2000)”.

It would of cause have been interesting to investigate this, however the only possible respondent I found could not participate in my data collection due to illness for one spouse and the other spouse being preoccupied with the present municipal election. Furthermore, there are of cause implications in deciding to conduct a round of interviews without recording and full transcriptions. It is never completely possible to remember a full conversation in detail, therefore statements with a possible use in the analysis might have been lost.

Analysis

In this analysis I will examine the interviews I have conducted with small/micro-scale tourism actors in the destination of Northern Funen. I will do an analysis focusing on the entrepreneurs’ role in the rural destination. Combining knowledge obtained through my interviews with the theoretical knowledge outlined in the literature review I will present an understanding on lifestyle-entrepreneurs in a rural destination. Secondly, with an understanding of the lifestyle-entrepreneurs in hand I will analyse development and innovation from within micro-scale businesses, I will analyse what role a destination management organisation has to play, in order to develop the destination holistically.

Later I will present my interpretation on how the destination management organisation of Northern Funen, NEET, might use an understanding of this stakeholder group. This knowledge might also be transferable to analogous rural destinations.

What do I need to include in the analysis?

- Values in business approach
- Micro-scale mind set and value of lifestyle
- Entry to cooperation with micro-scale lifestyle entrepreneurs for DMOs

Quantitative analysis of transcribed interviews

A quantitative analysis of the interview transcripts is relevant for the further use of the data. I will in short comment on the coding categories and sub categories in the following section of this thesis. Categories in the coding scheme was established through the narrative interviews. The narrative interviews are not represented in the quantitative analysis, but they will be part of the analysis in general. I will use the narrative interviews explanatory to create an understanding of the categories and sub-categories use in the transcripts.

The total count of transcript interviews is five. The matrix below visualizes the counting. The total count is the sum-up of all the times the category is mentioned in all interviews. In bold is the total count, and below is the count for the sub-categories.

Table 1 Coding interviews table

Category and Sub-category	Code	Total count	No. of interviews in which the code is represented
Quality	Q	14	3
- Quality for guest experiences	Q1	11	2
- What it means to the owner	Q2	3	1
Motivation for opening the business	O	6	5
- Life event	O1	1	1
- Opportunity	O2	3	3
- For the fun of it	O3	2	2
Takeaways from having a business	T	17	5
- Social takeaways	T1	8	4
- Economical takeaways	T2	7	4
- Educational takeaways	T3	2	2
Future	F	7	5
- Dreams of the place	F1	5	4
- Personal dreams	F2	2	1
Local engagement	L	13	5
- Political	L1	1	1
- Societal	L2	6	5
- Local association	L3	2	2
- Open for locals	L4	4	3
Development	D	11	5
- Maintenance	D1	3	2
- Process innovation	D2	3	2
- Product innovation	D3	4	2
- Positioning innovation	D4	1	1
Lifestyle references	LR1	9	5

Quality

This theme occurred 14 times in my second round of interviews represented in three out of five interviews. The theme about quality is both about the quality that the respondent offered to guests and about the personal idea of quality: How the respondent identifies with the quality of their product. I saw this distinction in the quality theme visiting Kærsgaard Gods and Transport Museum. The estate owner explained how he was not interested in having visitors visiting the estate unless he could be sure to offer a product that he could vouch for. Which could mean that any lack of quality in his product could reflect back to him. Furthermore, what quality means to the owner is also a question about offering a service and as one respondent mentioned:

“We get to be the service people that we are”.

It is especially in the second understanding of quality that I have an analytical opportunity to create a narrative about motivations and values of micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs.

Motivations for opening the business

This theme occurred six times in my second round of interviews in five out of five interviews. This theme represents an important question in my research. Furthermore, it represents an important question in literature on tourism entrepreneurs. Sub-categories in this theme provides a superficial overview of motivations and represent motivations for respondents in my narrative round of interviews. Although sub-category reasons for opening up a tourism business do not exclude one another and the fact that there might be several secondary reasons for opening up a tourism business, respondents in the empirical work of this thesis always focus on the primary reason. The primary reason always forms big part of the narrative the respondents formulates through an interview. This occurred to me when visiting Kongsdal Open Garden as the owner of the garden formulates it like this:

“You know what? It was never the intentions to open up the garden to the public. Christine (Vagns late wife) and I loved our garden, - never a day passed by where we didn’t walk to the top of the garden hand in hand (...) so when she passed on in 2008, what should I then do? – I wasn’t interested in maintaining this big garden for my own sake. So, I opened up for the public.”.

This represents a very personal life event that the owner (Vagn) had as the primary reason for opening up a micro-scale tourism business.

Takeaways from having a tourism business

This theme occurred seventeen times in my second round of interviews in five out of five interviews. I believe takeaways is a large part of the motivation for continually running a micro-scale tourism business. Takeaways from having a tourism business refers to what the respondent “earnt” from the business, in other words – what is

being given back to them for their efforts. In a Schumpeterian view on entrepreneur's economical takeaways are always in the centre (Block et al, 2016). However, as this thesis has uncovered in the literature review this is not always the case for micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs stated by for example (Dias et al Á. &-R., 2021) (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011). It has also been very clear in the empirical data of this thesis, that there are several other important takeaways from running a tourism business. In my second round of interviews, I uncovered social takeaways to be at least equally important with eight mentions by respondents, against seven mentions of economical takeaways. Thirdly, educational takeaways was mentioned two times and are also part of what micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs earn from running a business. Visiting Klintebjerg Gallery in the narrative round of interviews the owner John simply said that:

“I just want people to come in; I love welcoming people”

which of course tells me as researcher that the social takeaways are important to him.

Future

This theme occurred seven times in my second round of interviews in four out of five interviews. The relative high age of the respondents in the narrative round of interviews affected to some degree talking about the future. It often became a conversation of what should happen when the owners are not able to run business anymore due to age. Visiting Mosegården, Knud-Erik said quite melancholic:

“As you can see I am quite old, the farm has been a family estate since 1777, but my wife and I have no heirs. I just hope that someone with a sincere interest in the place will take over when we die”.

This personal statement both represents a personal dream and a dream of the place. For the second round of interviews talking about the future was the least popular subject which can be seen in the table above.

Local engagement

This theme occurred 13 times in my second round of interview in five out of six interviews. Dias et al (2021) have found that tourism entrepreneurs have a high level of local engagement (Dias et al Á. &-R., 2021). The empirical data in this thesis confirms this as it is widely represented in both the narrative round of interviews and in the second round of interviews. From the narrative round of interviews, I found a high variety of local engagement and I based on that, I created four sub-categories under local engagement. The political (1) sub-category is represented in the second-round interview and refers to involvement in local/municipal politics. Furthermore, the only decline to participate I received was due to the, at the time, ongoing municipal election campaign in which they were involved. The societal (2) sub-category covers engagement in local society related voluntary work in which five out of six second round interview participants was involved. Visiting Nyt Hesteliv I saw

a very high degree of engagement into one specific cause, taking care of horses in neglect. The owner of Nyt Hesteliv was engaged to an omnipresent level to the cause and used tourism as an enabler to the primary cause. The sub-category local association (3) refers to involvement in for example local sports-associations. Lastly, being open to locals (4) is mentioned by three out of six respondents, this sub-category arose in my conversation with John at Klintebjerg Gallery, who arranged film-nights and mentioned that all local was more than welcome to arrange film-nights using his cinema equipment for free:

“...as long as I am invited too 😊”.

And coming into my second round of interviews I found that local engagement has many focuses and is manifested in a large variety of different interests.

Development

This theme occurred eleven times in my second round of interviews in five out of six interviews. Sub-categories follow a classical division in business development. My literature review argues that there is an innovation gap in rural tourism (Hjalager et al, 2018). Hjalager (2018) delivers five reasons for this innovation gap, and I wanted to investigate which of those reasons I could find evidence for in the empirical work of this thesis, if any. Visiting Kærsgaard Gods and Transport Museum I witnessed a museum that has not changed since the opening 30 years back. When asking the estate owner, Henri, how he saw the development of the museum, he told me that:

“I cannot fit any more horse carriages in here, so, I do not know”.

Here social constructivist research is important, as it is important to listen to what respondents say, and here it is also important to notice what they do not say. In the eyes of Henri development of a horse carriage museum is more horse carriages, which hardly classifies as product innovation. However, later Henri told me he was very interested in attending a mediator cause, in order to enhance his ability to deliver the good stories there where to be told in the museum.

Lifestyle Reference

This theme occurred nine times in my second round of interviews in five out of six interviews. Lifestyle references in the narrative round of interviews were rich and the business model of the entrepreneurs were in close relation to their interests. In the interviews I did not ask question directly regarding lifestyle to the respondents, but through the conversations I was able to identify references to lifestyle. However, as I have already mentioned, this is only this researcher's interpretation of both the lifestyle of the respondent and the interpretation of the comment I labelled as lifestyle references.

Qualitative analysis

An understanding of rural micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs

The empirical data obtained for this thesis will in this section unfold to an analysis of values, motivations, perceptions and challenges for micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs presenting tourism at the destination of Northern Funen.

Micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs, mind-set and business approach

As expressed by Bosworth and Farrell (2011) micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs do not have the traditional approach to business, this is expressed in their low pursuit in economic growth. These business owners are not particularly focused around expanding the business for an economic gain. This notion is well established in the literature review and further recognized in the data collected with micro-scale entrepreneurs on Northern Funen.

“The economic focus for me is that I do not lose money doing this, I just need to cover my expenses and then I am fine with that. And should there be a little left for me, then it is fine”. (Narrative interview with Kongsdal Open Garden)

By this notion, the respondent shapes an understanding of being a lifestyle-entrepreneur. The economic focus for him is to be able to maintain the ability to invest in flowers and plants for his garden. The business approach is centred around his passion for his garden and the ability to create a cash flow that allows him to upkeep it with no personal expenses. Furthermore, this entrepreneur is firmly dedicated to maintaining the garden, he for example keeps the garden closed three days a week;

“I have been encouraged to be open more, but then what? When will I have time to upkeep the garden? I think opening hours is good enough as they are”. (Narrative interview with Kongsdal Open Garden)

Therefore, this entrepreneur might not share the same ideas about monetary goals as stated in Northern Funen Tourism Strategy (2015):

“The strategic goal is to create cooperation throughout, experience cohesion, better visibility, stronger attraction muscles and thereby more revenue” (Nordfyns Kommune/Nordfyns Turistforening, 2015).⁴

While the local destination management organisation focusses their areas of actions towards monetary goals. On the other hand, it can be examined to what extent

⁴ Det strategiske formål er at skabe samarbejde på tværs, oplevelsesmæssig sammenhæng, større synlighed, stærkere attraktionskraft og dermed meromsætning i turisterhvervet og samfundet på Nordfyn.

lifestyle-entrepreneurs who, in line with the entrepreneur quoted above, run their business as an extension to their lifestyle and hobbies, share this version. This is providing evidence for Dias et al (2021) whom states that, lifestyle-entrepreneurs are less focused on expanding monetary opportunities, but rather focused on their way of life shaped through their lifestyle (Dias et al Á. &-R., 2021). However, identifying a bias between the strategic goals of the destination management organisation and lifestyle-entrepreneurs might not be surprising, rather, finding similarities in some common goals namely, attracting guests is equally important for lifestyle-entrepreneurs exemplifies common ground:

*“We do it mostly to have a vibrant house, to have people to talk to. We are located far in the countryside, even the postman doesn’t come in anymore.”*⁵ (second round interview with Christiansholm B&B)

This quote from Christiansholm B&B makes it clear that for them the guests are their primary reason to operating their B&B. And this Christiansholm-quote do not stand alone but are supplemented by six corresponding quotes from my second round of interviews (see table 1 for social takeaways). Including:

*“We are the kind of people who likes to meet other people”*⁶ (Second round interview with Vefling Afholds Hotel)

And in my narrative round of interviews:

“I just like to have people here” (narrative interview with Klintebjerg Gallery)

The social takeaways are important for the entrepreneurs represented in the data of this thesis. Social takeaway include as the quotes above indicates, the interaction with visiting guests. Social takeaways are for some of the entrepreneurs in this study, the primary motivation for opening up businesses, as can be seen in the above quote from Christiansholm B&B. However, when asked about the reason for opening the answer where opportunistic.

*“Well I also hold this place dear, but we do think that it is very big for two people, right! And we had a barn where there was a garage and a workshop and such. But it was half-timbered and in a bad condition, it was about to collapse. So, either we built something up or tiered it down. And then we built two vacation units in there”*⁷. (Second round interview with Christiansholm B&B.

⁵ Translated from: ”Vi gør det lige så meget for at have noget liv i huset, for at snakke med nogle mennesker T1. Vi ligger jo langt ude, posten kommer jo ikke ind længere ☺ det bliver bare lagt i kassen derude.”

⁶ Translated from: ”Vi er typerne der godt kan lide at møde andre mennesker”

⁷ Translated from: ”Altså jeg holder også rigtigt meget af stedet, men vi synes jo det er så stort jo, til to mennesker ikke også! Og så havde vi en længe derover hvor der var garage og tidligere karlekammer værksted og sådan noget. Men den var i bindingsværk, og havde det meget dårligt, den var ved at synke sammen, så enten skulle der bygges noget op eller også skulle den rages ned. Og så indrettede vi to ferielejligheder derover”

The estate of Christiansholm is a classic farm with four buildings around a yard. Formerly agriculture was the primary business of the place. Now most land is leased out to a farmer nearby.

The interpretation of the above quote for me is that, the two owners of Christiansholm B&B being in their 80'ties needed a new utilization of their estate. And while the new utilization was the primary incentive to create a B&B business, now the primary motivation for the owners is social: Having a vibrant house and have people to talk to as they said. From the literature review evidence of how motivations change over time is delivered by Marchant & Mottiar (2011). Research done by Getz & Carlsen (2000) confirms the family and lifestyle first approach. By stating that their empirical work shows that:

"...living in the rural environment plus family and lifestyle considerations were significant for almost everyone (Getz & Carlsen, 2000)".

They do however, also argue that these family and lifestyle motivations are changing over time, and that motivations shifts from lifestyle to family evolutionary as business owners age. The Christinasholm B&B owners share the consideration of living in the rural environment with a love for a farm on which the husband grew up. However, Getz & Carlsen's (2000) evolutionary change in motivation from lifestyle-oriented motives to family-oriented motives is not shared by data in this thesis.

From both my narrative round of interviews and my second round of interviews I experienced how respondents had anecdotic stories of guests, stories that all reflect on very positive personal interactions between host and guest.

"He (the interviewees husband) has an example of one boy who, on his first visit here, could not kill a fish; he could not even touch a fish, he could not do anything. And now he is the best one in the group at fishing and shows the other kids in the group how to handle their fish. He really got a personal victory from coming here"⁸. (Second round interview with Børjes Put and Take)

The quote above tells about personal empathy as a part of the owners' interaction and is an embedded part of interactions with the guests. A part of the lifestyle references is nested in how the entrepreneurs in this study interact with guests and provide personal service aligned with their lifestyle. The above quote from Børjes Put and Take is presented to me by a passionate scout. She tells me how the family for years and years have been active in the Danish Scout Association where educating young ones in making duo in nature is a core element. Clearly one can understand how the story about this kid has become a dinner table story, when it can be delivered as a support to existing lifestyle choices. Another meaningful discussion

⁸ Translated from: "Han har sådan et eksempel med en dreng der som første gang han kom her ikke kunne slå en fisk ihjel og han kunne ikke røre en fisk han kunne ingen ting, hvor han nu er den i gruppen der er bedst til at fange fisk og viser de andre børn i gruppen hvordan de skal håndtere deres fisk. Han har virkeligt fået en sejr ud af at komme her."

these narrative expresses is the entrepreneurs' affiliation with local association, a theme this thesis will dive into later.

*"Here we emphasize the personal service. We are good at reading people, to see if they want to be left alone and have a good time on their own, or they want to have a talk and have some good stories about the place. We can do that because we only have two rooms".*⁹(second round interview with Veflinge Afholds Hotel)

And is furthermore shown here:

*"We get to be the service-people that we are. There was a lady here who was overly excited because she could have beer porridge with wiped cream for breakfast. Then I stood there making beer porridge with wiped cream."*¹⁰
(second round interview with Veflinge Afholds Hotel)

Here this thesis gets a true evidence of how a lifestyle-entrepreneur directly utilizes personality in running a micro-scale business and in that having ambitions to provide excellent service. Getz & Carlsen (2000) provides evidence that:

"providing excellent customer service"

is the main business goal for micro-scale entrepreneurs (Getz & Carlsen, 2000). On the contrary personal circumstances and personal choices of the individual entrepreneur can limit the service provided for guests. One B&B respondent in my second round of interviews said regarding breakfast at their B&B:

*"I need to sleep in, I do not want to get up early to serve breakfast. Maybe I would have twenty years ago".*¹¹ (second round interview with Christiansholm B&B)

Also, in my narrative round of interviews I visited Mosegård and their business philosophy was quite another:

"It is what it is"

was said again and again. What is it then? It is a farm which have been in the family for more than 300 years consecutively. It is a put and take lake, six vacation apartments, a party premises, a 'krolf' pitch and a caravan campsite. All of this in a rustic state of maintenance. The couple owning this farm was slightly above eighty and clearly motivated by profits and local embedded esteem. The following text piece

⁹ Translated from: "Her er det jo den personlige service som vi går op i. Vi er gode til at aflæse hvad folk gerne vil have, om de gerne vil være lidt alene og sidde og hygge sig sammen eller om de gerne vil snakke og få nogle historier om stedet. Det kan vi jo her fordi vi kun har to værelser."

¹⁰ Translated from: "Vi kan få lov at være de servicefolk vi nu engang er. Der var en dame der var helt oppe at køre over at hun kunne få øllebrød med flødeskum. Så stod jeg og lavede øllebrød med flødeskum"

¹¹ Translated from: "Jeg har brug for at sove længe, jeg gider ikke stå tidligt op for at lave morgenmad. Måske for tyve år siden ville jeg have gjort det"

is from the transcription of my narrative round interview with Knud Erik at Mosegård:

“Knud Erik suddenly ask me the question “*Is it normal for an 80-year-old to pay 20.000 in taxes every month?*”, I thought it as a humoristic question an answered “*That’s how it is, isn’t it*” – Knud Erik “*Is it!? – I do not know anybody else in their 80ties paying that much*”. It was clear to me that the question was an attempt to emphasize that they do actually earn money, and an attempt to establish them in a certain social-class”

I of cause later got a tour of the farm and the lakes, and through my conversation with Knud Erik I learnt that the primary income comes from leasing out vacation apartments to foreign craftsmen – not to tourists. It was clear to me that this couple at Mosegård contradicted many of the thoughts I had earlier on about micro-scale entrepreneurs. This being the last interview in my narrative round of interviews. Actually, having a negative attitude towards guests, I did not see that with other respondents at all. As I have written earlier the entrepreneurs told stories that all reflect on very positive personal interactions between host and guest. Here the focus was primary negative on for example online reviews, which to be honest was really bad on for example google. I have included this section to demonstrate both that even though the sample group of micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs on Northern Funen is quite small there is a large variety in personalities within this group and secondly to demonstrate that lifestyle references for this group plays a significant role in running a quality business. Because, as mentioned, Mosegård runs a put and take lake of which the quality does not compare with the rustic maintenance state of the other estates on the premise; this lake is known for clear water, big fish and carpe-fishing. It turns out that lake fishing is Knud Eriks big interest. He tells me how important it is to him that guests at the put and take lake have a good experience. This is of cause interesting because it is the special interest in lake fishing that make the crucial difference in ambitions of quality at Mosegård and time and output is focused on this leg of the business. It clearly shows that the passion of the lifestyle entrepreneur is very closely related to quality.

To briefly sum up this section of micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs’ mind-set and business approach, I’ll say that although I encountered a large variety of different personalities the vast majority is indeed lifestyle-entrepreneurs. Typically, a hobby is something you do because it brings you some kind of joy doing it, and this is also the case for a lifestyle-entrepreneur in this study. This making money from a hobby (Tew & Barbieri, 2012) both applies well in the thoughts of running a business based on thing the entrepreneur loves to do, but as I will analyse on below, making money from a hobby might not be an adequate summery after all.

Digging beneath the issue of profits (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011)

Tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs theoretical differentiate themselves from traditional entrepreneurs in a monetary financial aspect (Dias et al Á. &-R., 2021). Lifestyle represents a non-economic motive for tourism entrepreneurs on Northern Funen,

this could prove challenging for cooperation with destination management organisation as the traditional institutionalized motivational stick of economic rewards is ineffective. However, this section will analyse to what extent tourism entrepreneur respondents in this thesis are above or beneath the issue of profits.

In my interviews with nine micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs I saw divagating explanations in regards to the issue of profit. I found at one visit a lifestyle entrepreneur, whom I will classify as being the most focused in virtualizing her lifestyle of all in my two rounds of interviews:

“We work on a wide range of areas to help horses in neglect and inform about horse welfare”.

(Narrative round of interviews with Nyt Hesteliv)

To sum up the conversation with Nyt Hesteliv: We talked a lot about horses. Realizing that horses is her big passion and her motivation for everything she does, that is indeed heart-warming. Talking about the tourism offer at the horse farm, I was told that inviting tourist for tours and informational meetings were motivated by three aspects: (1) Tell guests about horse welfare, informing guests about horses and presenting them in a good environment. (2) Visualize the work done by the association rescuing horses in neglect, and (3) to promote the work of the association and increase visibility for people who know of horses in neglect. In my interview I also asked her about what future aspirations for the tourism activities she had. And I believe that I here met the arch typical lifestyle-entrepreneur according to my literature review; because she was talking about how they moved to Northern Funen to open up this horse farm, and how their aspirations whit tourism activities where to slowly and steadily upgrading visitor facilities to be able to attract more guests. A typical bootstrapping method in entrepreneurship, where you build business in your own pace and where the income generated should be the finance source for future investments as seen here:

“I would love to open up for more visitors, however investments need to be made, we love to upgrade our facilities, add more, but we need more time” (Narrative interview with Nyt Hesteliv)

We here deal with an entrepreneur who come into the destination and ventures into the tourism market with ambitions as well as seeking opportunities too. It was clear to me that even though the three motivational aspects are in place and well defined, I am also told by her that there are financial issues in running Nyt Hesteliv and a big part of selling guided tours and inviting tourists into the farm is as a revenue generator. Importantly it is my clear perception that it is not a search for personal wealth but a search for resources to help horses. A goal of doing good and living your passion.

The Nyt Hesteliv visit support a narrative about a lifestyle-entrepreneur who uses tourism to support a certain lifestyle as discussed by Dias et al. (2021) and Marchant & Mottiar (2011). Where monetary motivations are downplayed, this entrepreneur

found it much more interesting to talk about her interest in horses which she turned into a lifestyle and furthermore a way to make a living.

Another respondent, Veflinge Afholds Hotel, is self-proclaimed non-profit as they spend all profit on renovation and maintenance of the micro-scale hotel:

“For us it is all about having a good time, it needs to be free of costs, and if it gives a little profit, then we can renovate. But it is mainly about giving the guests a good experience”¹². (second round interview with Veflinge Afholds Hotel)

Digging further beneath the issue of profit:

“We are the kind of people who likes to meet new people, and we are very outgoing. Therefore, it is much more about meeting people – it is kind of ingenious because we do not need to travel to meet people, people come to us. Ingenious, right?”¹³. (second round interview with Veflinge Afholds Hotel)

Being both self-proclaimed very outgoing service people and non-profit, this early-retired couple owning the micro-hotel are motivated by social interactions with guests to whom they want to deliver good quality. Again, the narrative here is equivalent to that of Nyt Hesteliv: We see a tourism-entrepreneur who moved to the destination and based on opportunity opens up tourism activities to support a lifestyle. Profit has for the couple become secondary, and they have chosen to list their two vacation apartments for a low price in order to achieve a steady supply of guest.

In my second round of interviews, I uncovered social takeaways to be at least equally important to economical with respectively eight and seven mentions by respondents. Still economical takeaways are mentioned in four of six interviews the same as social takeaways. This means that quantitatively economic takeaways are present in the same number of respondents, at the same level as social takeaways. And I need to weigh comments and quotes to analyse the prioritization in interviews where both takeaways are mentioned as in the case of Nyt Hesteliv and Veflinge Afholds Hotel.

Many more quotes that supports the literature review on micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs could be presented, however it is already clear that the pursuit for a certain lifestyle are dominating over the pursuit for monetary profit (Dias et al Á. &-R., 2021) (Dias et al Á. D.-R., 2020) (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011) (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011) in this case study. However, exceptions occur in the collected data, with for example Mosegårds who weigh monetary profit highest of all respondents.

¹² Translated from: ”Ja, for os er det som sagt hyggen, og det skal løbe rundt. og må gerne give et lille overskud så vi kan renovere. Men det er hovedsagligt at vi kan give dem en god oplevelse for gæsterne.”

¹³ Translated from: ”Nej, vi er typerne der godt kan lide at møde andre mennesker, og er meget åben ud af til. Derfor så er det mere for at møde andre mennesker, det er jo på en måde genialt, fordi vi behøver ikke rejse for at møde mennesker, folk kommer til os. Genialt ikke ☺”

For two entrepreneurs in this study increasing monetary profits is equivalent to more work, in which they are not interested. In relation to this I believe that there is a gap in research on lifestyle-entrepreneurs that should create a deeper understanding of elderly entrepreneurs in the tourism market. This thesis has with no intentions to do so, interviewed tourism entrepreneurs where 70 % were pensioners. This might have an influence on monetary contra social motivation, as pensioners are secured a primary income from the government and/or savings and thereby is in a situation where they both have time and some kind of money and are therefore not as depended on making an income as others might be. However, evidence of such statements must be researched more deeply.

Local affiliations, the super local

What I found in my research that surprised me the most was the connection to local communities that many of the entrepreneurs had. It should not have been too surprising because the literature review did tell about local commitment and about an interest in social- and cultural preservation of the communities. The surprising aspects was the level of engagement, and the level of positive sentiments towards local activities. Coming into the narrative round of interviews I did not have a focus on the theme as I did not expect to retrieve information toward answering my research question. However, through the narrative interviews respondents talked about community welfare and how the super local associations worked in the preservation of social- and cultural heritage. The sentiments were that there is a constant threat in loosing activities locally caused by a decline of voluntary commitment within a broad spectrum of activities.

I have talked about the scout association, as well as super local residents' associations, sports clubs and also the tourism association 'Turismens Venner'. These are examples of local associations that the respondent supported voluntarily. The common sentiments were that there constantly is an insufficient flow of volunteers joining the work. This threatens the stability of the local culture that these associations foster. In worst case the insufficient flow of volunteers can endanger cultural sustainability and cause a decline of social cohesion locally. Although separated from the tourism business that qualified the respondents to this thesis I found the theme interesting and I added talks about local engagement to the second round of interviews.

What I saw in the second round of interviews was that five of six respondents were committed to voluntary work in local associations. Knowing that:

*“Volunteers are rarely altruistic, that is, willing to offer their services for no personal gain
(Lockstone-Binney et al, 2010)”*

I learnt that the motivations for doing voluntary work were twofolded; one is the social interactions emerged between volunteers and with beneficiaries, secondly and equally important is doing something good for the community. Being an active volunteer involves respondents in local informal networks between fellow volunteers who share interest in the given activity for the association and with other local

association with whom an informal corporation finds place (Lockstone-Binney et al, 2010).

Knowing that cultural sustainability in rural communities are an interest for lifestyle-entrepreneurs and that cultural resources constitutes a competitive advantage for a destination (Komppula, 2014) the interest in community welfare and wellbeing could be considered twofold for a tourism lifestyle entrepreneur in a rural destination which is also supported by the dataset of this study.

Discussion

One of the goals for this study was to be able to suggest an approach for destination management organisations to understand the micro-scale lifestyle-entrepreneur and thereby be capable of engaging the stakeholder group in collaborative destination development. To do so this thesis has worked on creating an understanding of a peculiar stakeholder-group within tourism. A stakeholder group that represents authentic local experiences driven from a personal passion. As my conversations with micro-scale businesses unfolds in the analysis presented above, multiple topics have drawn the attention, and some of those are interesting to discuss in the process of answering the research question and prove and/or dismiss the hypotheses.

As described in the case presentation, the process of formulating a new overall tourism strategy for Northern Funen is facilitated by NEET. They have a pronounced ambition to include all stakeholder who finds themselves:

“relevant to tourism in the destination of Northern Funen.”

They would like to invite all to participate in formulating this strategy. Indeed, the stakeholder-group researched in this thesis find themselves relevant to tourism, and all of the respondents to this thesis are therefore considered important in the strategy formulation process.

The process for creating a new strategy NEET employs has described to me is as follows:

- Personal meetings with key tourism-industry actors.
- Inviting all tourism stakeholders to a strategy workshop
- A second workshop, where all with an interest to join is welcomed
- Formulation the strategy in collaboration with city hall business and tourism committee

To be able to discuss a destination management approach I firstly need to discuss the status quo of relations between NEET and the micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs in my case.

In all my interviews I discussed sentiments towards destination management with the respondents.

For two respondents the response to collaboration with destination management organisation were mainly positive. The common denominator for those two is that NEET arrange, to an important degree, incoming guests by arranging tourist busses to the destination, who visit these respondents' businesses among others. However, the two entrepreneurs do not emphasize the supply of tourists as reason for the good relationship to NEET. What they primarily emphasize is the personal relationship they have established to the NEET employee who is in charge of arranging the busses. The personal relationship with this NEET employee has according to the two entrepreneurs developed over several years, with reoccurring in person visits, coffee-meetings and dialog suggesting the informal structure of networking to be efficient/sufficient (Yachin, 2020). For these two respondents can be said that their businesses are both attractions. The one represents a classical static museum, meaning that the exhibition is never changing, and when asked how he dreams the exhibition to develop, he told me he had no plans to develop it further.

As talked about earlier his ideas of developing his horse-carriage museum, is to bring in more horse-carriages. It is not because he does not have ambitions regarding the museum. He told me that he dreams about passing on knowledge and interest of his passionate hobby to visitors. And he told me he was very interested in attending a mediator cause, in order to enhance his ability to deliver the good stories there where to be told in the museum. So, he really is an ambitious tourism entrepreneur in the sense that he wants to utilize his tourism product to produce knowledge for visitors and preserve the cultural heritage of horse-drawn carriages.

Now, why are his ideas of developing the museum at such a non-innovative level – when he tells me about a good relationship and reoccurring talks with destination management. Have they not talked about this? Does the informal approach limit the talks about development and dreams? Arguments found by Ioannides & Petersen is that the lack of skills, knowledge, investment funds and education limits product and process innovation which they refer to as “the neglect of innovation” (Ioannides & Petersen, 2003). Knowledge of the entrepreneur about developing using a contemporary communication and exhibition methods are clearly not present. And dialog with destination management have obviously not helped the entrepreneur in this regard, which could reveal a potential future opportunity for the DMO – also to offer a service that the lifestyle entrepreneur actually need and can benefit from.

For the Bed & Breakfasts in this research there are a comparable situation present between the two of them. Here the positive sentiments towards NEET are few and far apart. The two B&Bs represented in this thesis have a different background which is represented in the relationship with destination management. The one has been in business for about twenty years and have been a member of the tourism organisation from the beginning. Here is an interesting quote:

“The tourism organisation is not what it ones was, not after it have been merged with the business department. I am not happy about that”¹⁴ - “For me it (tourism management) has moved on to a plateau where it does not belong”¹⁵ (second round interview with Christiansholm B&B)

While this quote is taken from a former conservative local politician and retired farmer, it represents more than traditionalist conservatism. It also represents an entrepreneur who might feel left behind by structural reforms in destination management. By saying that destination management are put at a plateau where it does not belong, can only mean that this entrepreneur feels distanced from utilizing the competences the destination management organisation possesses.

In line with the sentiments of this B&B, the other B&B respondent interviewed in this thesis supports the feelings of disconnection to destination management. This entrepreneur has operated B&B for five years and has formerly been a member of the tourism organisation but has now cancelled his membership. This entrepreneur underlines the economic aspects of being a member of the organisation and state that they have received no guests based on their presence on the organisational website, which dismisses his reasoning for paying for a membership:

“So, why would we continue to pay for membership?”.

Undoubtedly, understandable reasoning. But there is also no doubt that it is a treat to the local destination management NEET if they cannot stay relevant for this type of tourism entrepreneurs as some literature presents how destination management can develop the destination in collaborating with micro-scale entrepreneurs by supporting these actors in knowledge acquisition and better ability to access needed innovation (Ioannides & Petersen, 2003). However, as ironic as it might be, the two micro entrepreneurs interviewed used the same phrase about the destination management:

“Why would they be interested in us?”.

This state of indifference towards the destination management organisation characterizes a bad starting point for collaboration regarding the inclusion process of involving all tourism stakeholders in formulation of the new strategy for tourism on Northern Funen which is the goal of NEET. Furthermore, the one of the above-mentioned respondent has completely stopped reading emails from NEET as he told me they were irrelevant to him.

As discussed in the literature review the motivations of lifestyle-entrepreneurs for doing business is embedded in digging beneath the issue of profit and business growth. It is focused in the success of achieving or sustaining a lifestyle based on social or cultural values (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011) (Dias et al Á. &-R., 2021). Hence, I will argue that destination management need to assist lifestyle-entrepreneurs

¹⁴ Translated from: ”Turistforeningen er ikke hvad den var efter at den blev lagt sammen med det der erhverv. Det er jeg ikke så tilfreds med”

¹⁵ Translated from: ”Jeg synes det, for mig er det kommet op på et niveau hvor det ikke høre hjemme.”

to continue to be lifestyle-oriented, contrary to claiming that success is measured in number of bed-nights, economic gains and growth, and increasing visitor numbers. I found that the stakeholder group I researched are kind of purists thinking business purely as a tool to maintain a lifestyle (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011).

In my interviews barriers of cooperation were commented upon. Returning to the position of Bosworth and Farrell, the two researchers argue that policy makers should build on local identity and promoting the image of the region:

“Rather than introducing something new (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011) “

Following this statement of Bosworth and Farrell (2011) is the following quote from my second-round interview with Kunstgården

“I think it has become to impersonal. They make a business out of destination management. The service toward us is not there, it is not optimal. They use to much energy on making new events and such. And then they neglect to subsidize the local and the attractions which is already there.”
(second round interview with Kunstgården)

This quote from the owner of Kunstgården is a yet another remark of feeling distant from destination management as I have already talked about. Furthermore, we get an introduction to an entrepreneur that feel neglected in the cooperation. Two main barrier themes emerged in my conversation about cooperation with respondents; one was that the entrepreneurs did not believe that the cooperation had any positive takeaways from being featured at visitnordfyn.dk:

“I do not think we received one single guest from them, I do not know what they are doing in there, actually.”¹⁶ (second round interview with Veflinge Afholds Hotel)

And the same was said by another rural entrepreneur:

“I don’t think they are too interested in us. They primarily work with Bogense”¹⁷. (second round interview with Christiansholm)

These three quotes from three different interviews tell the same story. These entrepreneurs feel an alienation towards NEET, they believe that the destination management organisation is not put into the world on their behalf to use their phrase. The sentiment from many of the respondents is that NEET primarily work with tourism in Bogense and for the larger stakeholders at Northern Funen for example the camping sites. Their world view is a construction of what they see and experience.

NEET on the other hand states a goal of:

¹⁶ Translated from: ”Jeg tror ikke vi fik en eneste kunde igennem dem, jeg ved faktisk ikke hvad de laver derinde”

¹⁷ Translated from: ”Jeg tror ikke de er så interesseret i os. De arbejder primært med Bogense”

“Making all actors think in the same direction” (second round interview with NEET)

Thinking in the same direction is for NEET an important ambition when forming the new strategy. However, it is questionable whether the destination management organisation can succeed in motivating the micro-scale entrepreneurs to do that, at least it can prove to be a complex process (Komppula, 2014).

This study shows that they need to find a common ground with the lifestyle entrepreneurs to be able to include them and the benefit from their offers. NEET should understand they need to stay relevant and use the informal relation to offer education, innovation and to learn and understand these entrepreneurs – from there, they can potentially find mutual benefits, as it is not the classical ones that works for this stakeholder group.

Conclusion

Understanding the micro-scale tourism lifestyle-entrepreneur have through the literature used in this thesis base knowledge production on the role of the stakeholder group. What role they play in destination competitiveness are important to researchers (Dias et al Á. &-R., 2021) (Komppula, 2014) what these articles neglect is researching to what extent destination management and destination policy makers acknowledge this contribution micro-scale lifestyle-entrepreneurs provide. Other researchers produce knowledge on micro-scale tourism lifestyle-entrepreneurs with an emphasis on innovation or lack of innovation depending which researcher one follows (Hjalager et al, 2018) (Dias et al Á. D.-R., 2020) (Ioannides & Petersen, 2003). However, this leg in the literature on micro-scale tourism entrepreneurs does not discuss how facilitating policy processes in the destination better include this specific stakeholder group. These gaps in the literature have this thesis looked into.

I have relinquished to provide discussions on variations of lifestyle entrepreneurs because of the relative small sample group and to deliver more simple argumentations in this section.

To be able to conclude anything from this study we should return to our research question. Here two hypotheses were stated, and to be able prove or dismiss them we should hold them against all the findings in the thesis.

The first one being: There is a large difference in DMO values and lifestyle-entrepreneurs values. By going through literature, we found that this is most likely proven to be correct; DMOs, and also the specific one in the case study, NEET, have general goals and success criteria that are centred around economic value: More sales, more tourists, more revenue, growth. Values that for obvious reasons make sense to the governmental interests that lays behind the organisations. Conducting a lot of interviews and collecting a lot of empirical data hold together with literature we found that the values of a lifestyle entrepreneur is quite different. They value social benefits, passion and learning way higher than economic value. Many of them even proclaimed that as long as they are free of costs, no actual profit is necessary. However, it does not mean that number of guests and money does not mean

anything to them – it is simply just not the most important for them. Passion, living your dream and your hobby and gaining social and intellectual profit outweighs the economic desire.

This leads us to the second hypotheses: The view of success is different seen from DMO versus lifestyle-entrepreneurs and these views cannot necessarily be combined. According to the findings in this thesis it can also be proven correct, however there are possibilities in combining the different success criteria if we focus on the spin-off effects by a slightly changed focus and communication strategy conducted by the DMOs.

Some micro-scale lifestyle entrepreneurs feel a kind of apathy toward destination management of reasons directly related to the discrepancy of desires as described in the analysis. Returning yet again to the position of the two researchers Bosworth and Farrell who tell us that policy makers should build on local identity and promoting the image of the region:

“rather than introducing something new (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011) “.

I believe that destination management in Northern Funen should engage micro-scale tourism stakeholder on a personal level. What was found in the analysis was a positive curve of understandings towards destination management with an increased level of personal communication between business owners and destination management. This follows the lines of Dias et al. (2021) who:

“calls for the acknowledgement of informal affiliation, coordination and small-scale cooperation”.

In the case study we saw that NEET has designed a process to engage lifestyle entrepreneurs (as well as others) in their intentions to include this stakeholder group in a strategy workshops. The process as outlined earlier, is quite formal, and hold against the theory combined with the empirical data collected, it might result in at least some of the entrepreneurs to be no-shows at the workshop. They simply do not see the point and value for them, given the difference of values and success criteria.

What I would recommend destination management do to activate the micro-scale tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs' resources under the umbrella of destination development is to engage with local associations in the fields of community welfare; this could be residents' associations found in many small towns, in sport clubs etc. Then the DMO can actively build on local identity rather than building something new, and I see many opportunities in doing so with possible takeaways for both parties. I believe that inviting these local associations to discuss the forthcoming tourism strategy could reduce the feeling of distance between destination management and communities in the destination. Knowing that the lifestyle-entrepreneurs in tourism are active in the voluntary community networks, it could be a shortcut to getting these entrepreneurs indirectly involved. Furthermore, the tacit knowledge held by community organisers/associations should be brought to life and

be exchange in the local community by promoting local moments of conviviality as events, fairs etc. (Dias et al Á. D.-R., 2020).

The leg in the literature who is backing the argument of the lack of business experience among micro-scale lifestyle-entrepreneurs points toward businesses who do not live up to the full potential. But we need to broaden the view of potential. For example: When Kongsdal Open Garden choses to keep the garden closed three days a week, due to maintenance of the garden and to quote the owner "*I need to do my groceries as well*", then the potential is to open up the garden more, and this potential can be reached by adopting a more traditional business approach and hire staff to maintain and host when the owner is elsewhere. Truly there is a potential to invite more guests in. However, potential is more than the business potential for respondents in this thesis. It is potential for self-development, learning something new, engage with new people. Values that all matches the lifestyle entrepreneur, and if the DMOs can find the spin off effect from doing an effort increasing these values, then there is a benefit for the entrepreneurs to join. And the obvious spin off effect being a tourist environment with more lifestyle entrepreneurs offering authentic and local experiences to the visitors of the area.

What I have seen in the data of this thesis is that the lack of knowledge and resources, does not necessary mean that the entrepreneur is interested in educational interventions from destination management. Some are simply not interested in spending time in it, therefore the personal approach is important to assess and identify what could be a benefit for the entrepreneur.

When confirming the two hypotheses stated in the research question we can sum up the conclusion by looking towards Flyvbjergs (2005) four focus areas mentioned in the method section; Where are we going? In this case it seems like the plans as they are now does not change the status quo of the discrepancy of values between DMOs and lifestyle entrepreneurs, and the ones who gains or losses are actually both parties. The DMOs given the fact that they might miss authentic local experiences to be presented to the tourists coming to the destination, but also the lifestyle entrepreneurs, that possibly could gain from knowledge sharing, innovation guidance, etc. From my point of view this development is not desirable, but there are things to be done as mentioned above.

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