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The role of Destination Nord in sustainable development

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Lærke Thaysen

LTHAYS16@STUDENT.AAU.DK

06/10 1992

SUPERVISOR: PETER KVISTGAARD

Abstract

In Northern Jutland, tourism is a very important industry for the businesses both working directly and indirectly with tourists. The land districts are especially dependent on the tourists since many of their jobs are created from the tourism. In 2019 the visitor numbers peaked, but the tourists also started to become more aware of sustainability. This pushed for the governments to act, which was reflected in the last election in 2019. This was also the year where Simon Kollerup, the Danish Minister for Industry, Business and Financial Affairs stated that he wanted Denmark to become one of the world's leading destinations in sustainability. He argued that tourism is a necessity for the businesses in Denmark, and that tourism also brings a lot of advantages for the locals. A project called "Joint Growth" was initiated between the 11 municipalities of Northern Jutland as a response to deviant tourism numbers in 2018. This resulted in a region that worked together in tourism marketing, which arguable helped them during the pandemic, where Northern Jutland had the lowest decline in visitors.

After the travel restrictions has been lifted, the tourism of 2022 appears to be back to the old travel patterns. The Danes had contributed to a high number of tourists around Denmark during the pandemic because they were banned from travelling abroad, however, with borders opening again, the Danes are eager to travel internationally again. These travel patterns have however also been affected by the war in Ukraine, a need for closeness with the family which has been harder to visit during the pandemic, the possibilities of the nearby tourism experiences, and being protective of their money since the rising prices of oil, energy, and groceries.

In 2019, the same year as project "Joint Growth" was initiated, the project Instant Green Tourism was initiated by Destination Nord. The project had the intent to help tourism businesses who signed up voluntarily to get help becoming more sustainable. They could see that sustainability was a new competition parameter in the industry, and therefore needed to work towards the demand of the tourists. The policy perspective has generally been with a focus in growth for many years in Denmark, which is still seen in the marketing campaigns and the statements from the politicians and DMO's. Wanting to expand the destinations for short travels from Aalborg Airport is just one contradicting example of wanting a sustainable development, but still suiting the travel options to the demand of the tourists.

When a critical assessment of the project Instant Green Tourism was conducted, it became clear that no follow up work was done, other than starting new projects with some of the same businesses

afterwards. When comparing the project with the initiatives done by Destination Fyn, there is a big difference in the responsibility taken by the destination organisation. In Destination Fyn, they have made the Sustainability Barometer, which purpose is to align the businesses' work with sustainability to nine of the goals from the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. By doing so, the businesses can better track if their work makes sense to them, be measuring the results of the investments they put in it. The businesses who participated in Instant Green Tourism could have very fundamental issues they needed help with to become more sustainable, whereas others might need the help to communicate the work they were doing already. Although it was great to give the businesses the help they needed, it can be argued whether or not these initiatives would proceed to happen when the project was over, and they were left to find solutions on their own.

As seen in the case with Tornby Strand Camping, this process can be very difficult for business owners who do not know where to seek the information and having the economy of their business as their main priority.

The role as Nanna Bentzen from Destination Nord explained it, was more as a facilitator helping the businesses with the demands they might have. However, getting closer to the sustainability goals for 2030, the DMO might be taking on a different role of creating the framework for how this is done, and take on more responsibility as the organisation having the overview of all the businesses. Therefore, if a DMO takes on the responsibility as seen at Destination Fyn, it can put sustainable development over the priority of growth and give the businesses a reason to keep seeking more sustainable solutions to run their businesses. Many projects are already being played out as we speak, as Henriette M. Hansen mentioned, however, for action to happen, guidelines need to be given to the businesses to make a real difference.

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Introduction

Importance of tourism

In 2019, the Danish Minister for Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, Simon Kollerup, had ambitions to make Denmark one of the world’s leading sustainable destinations. This required that the tourism growth and occupations correlated with the sustainable development being presented for the tourists (Erhvervsministeriet, 2019). Tourism is an industry that has a significant importance to jobs in both the private and public sector. Especially in the land districts, tourism creates many jobs in the local communities, where the retail businesses, cultural institutions, restaurants etc. depends on the tourists (Erhvervsministeriet, 2019). Another point Simon Kollerup makes is that the advantages such as longer opening hours, good trails in the forests etc. created for tourists, is also beneficial to the Danish people (Erhvervsministeriet, 2019).

In Northern Jutland, several strategies have been made for the tourism businesses to stand stronger together in their marketing of the entire region. As a response to receding overnight stays in 2018, the image campaign called “Joint Growth” was funded by Business Region North Denmark, which is a collaboration between the 11 municipalities of Northern Jutland, together with a collection of some of the largest tourism businesses of the region (Frandsen, Vores jammerbugt, 2021). As a result, the overnight stays in 2019 peaked at 5,6 pct in Northern Jutland, whereas the national average were at 4,1 pct. (VisitNordjylland, 2022).

This would also turn out to be important during the pandemic the following year, since tourism plays a bigger part of the social economy in the Northern region, than it does nationally (Frandsen, Vores jammerbugt, 2021). Northern Jutland was one of the regions where the decline in overnight stays where lowest with 7 pct during the pandemic, whereas the average decline in Denmark were at 21 pct. (Axelholm, 2021). However, these data are given by the founder and editor of Turisme.nu, Lars Bo Axelholm, who is also a journalist. The approach to tourism this media has is therefore not given the same reflections as if it had been analysed by an academic of the field. It is a very broad interpretation to the outcome of the pandemic, and therefore does not necessarily give the full picture of the effect Covid-19 has had.

“Joint Growth” is a project initially planned to last from 2019-2021, being operated by Visit Northern Jutland. However, in 2021 it was announced that Destination Northwest Coast would take over the initiative, with a budget of 43 mill. to make a joint marketing campaign of Northern Jutland, with a collaboration between the municipalities of Hjørring, Jammerbugt, Thisted, Lemvig and Holstebro (Hansen, 2021). This was strategically planned in coordination with the restrictions being removed, and thereby an opportunity to attract foreign tourists again. The municipality of Jammerbugt has the second largest number of overnight stays in the region, and therefore has a 25 pct part of the total contribution to Project “Joint Growth” (Hansen, 2021).

Expected tourism in 2022

An article from The Danish Chamber of Commerce expresses a concern for the travel plans of the Danish people in 2022. It appears that most Danish people are ready to return to their old travel patterns from before Covid-19 (Dansk Erhverv, 2022). The approach of the article needs to be put in context of the sender, whose purpose is to be a network for the service industry in Denmark. Because of that, the concern for tourists travelling abroad is understandable since it provides an uncertainty for the Danish service industry. In the article, they argue that Danes fortunately contributed to a boost of the tourism industry by domestic travel during the pandemic when the international tourists were missing. However, a population survey conducted prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine showed that the Danes are willing to use their money on vacations abroad this year (Dansk Erhverv, 2022).

2,6 million of the Danish people expect to travel abroad this year, which is equivalent with the travelling numbers before the pandemic. This is a great development for the travel agencies, whereas the Danish destinations are worried since the international tourist flow is not back to normal yet (Dansk Erhverv, 2022). This might give the Danish destinations a necessity to intensify their marketing towards couples and families, whose number of vacations in Denmark have diminished from 82 pct. in 2020 to 67 pct. this year (Dansk Erhverv, 2022).

A lot has happened in the past few years that has influenced the tourism industry. As previously mentioned, the Danes took advantage of the great nature and experiences Denmark has to offer while the borders were closed for travel, which contributed to a support of the bleeding tourism industry that were missing the international arrivals (Travelmore, 2022). This information comes from an article posted by Travelmore, whose purpose is to inspire Danes for their next vacation, and to enlighten them on subjects relevant to the readers. Therefore, it gives them incentive to have a positive attitude towards the international travel opportunities for the Danes.

Travelmore (2022) have highlighted 4 dominating tendencies that will influence the Danish people's travel patterns in 2022. They have observed people spending vacation with a larger part of their family who they don't vacation with normally, due to the last years with a pandemic and restrictions, making the summer houses extremely popular (Travelmore, 2022). Furthermore, a need for closeness and safety has grown, which can be a dealbreaker to where the vacation might be held. It might also be influenced by the sustainable tendencies and the ongoing war in Ukraine. The Danes has been forced to look inward during the pandemic and has therefore also rediscovered the possibilities their own nearby areas have to offer, which has made active vacations more popular (Dansk Erhverv, 2022). Lastly, economy plays a large role to the travel patterns – either the Danes are ready to use their saved-up money from the previous years of being in lockdown, or they are protective of their money due to the rising prices of oil, energy, and groceries (Dansk Erhverv, 2022).

Sustainable development initiatives

Destination North is the DMO of Frederikshavn, Læsø, Brønderslev, and Aalborg municipality. With a 45 pct share of the total turnover of Northern Jutland, contributing with 10.000 jobs in tourism related businesses, it has been important for the region to recover from the pandemic and be adaptable to the new business terms where the tourists' demand of sustainability is growing (Green Tourism Organization, 2020). This was one of the incentives for Destination Nord initiating Project Instant Green Tourism which was funded with two million DKK from the Danish Business Promotion Board. The tourism businesses would through this project be testing new concepts and business models across the industries of coast- and nature tourism, business- and meeting tourism, and urban tourism (Green Tourism Organization, 2020).

An article from Kanal Frederikshavn (2020) interestingly shows how the Instant Green Tourism project was supposed to result in a reinforced sustainability mindset, but also contribute to an increased tourism revenue and more competitive products. The project had the intent of helping the tourism businesses across Northern Jutland, however, expecting that many years of working towards an incline in tourists may contradict with the wish of enhancing sustainability. Since 2013, the number of overnight stays has only been growing steadily up until 2019, however, in 2018 the numbers were deviant (VisitDenmark, 2019). The founder of Turisme.nu, Lars Bo Axelholm, posted an article in 2019, stating that the tourism would break the record of 2018, and mentions how positive the growth in tourism numbers is for the employment in the Danish cities and coastal areas.

In this article, VisitDenmark is quoted saying that this is a good development, leading to a greater economy with more direct routes from the airports and a larger hotel capacity (Axelholm, 2019). In Northern Jutland, they experienced a big request for short vacations in 2019, which made the DMO of Northern Jutland investigate the opportunities for expansion of five European and overseas destinations. The distance was not an important issue for the Danish tourists, rather the travel time and convenience of their travels (VisitNordjylland, 2022).

Problem formulation

Project “Joint Growth” is an example of Destination Nord having a desire to attract more tourists to the region. This policy perspective of growth shows that the Destination Nord desires tourist numbers to get back at the same level as in 2019, which was a year where the overnight stays in Northern Jutland did very well compared to the national numbers. However, when Destination Nord initiates a project as Instant Green Tourism, the discourse of sustainable development occurs, which shows the paradox experienced in the tourism industry. This leads me to ask the question:

Which role does Destination Nord have in the contribution to sustainable tourism development of the region when the policy perspective is focused on both growth and sustainability?

Literature review

Public policy and planning

At the heart of tourism policy, ‘temporary mobility’ is found, according to C. Michael Hall. The classification of the temporary dimensions are the ‘daytripping fields’, the ‘tourism field’, and the ‘migration field’. Tourists were divided into these categories to improve the collections of statistics (Hall C. M., 2000). The boundaries of the temporary mobility in space and time are increasingly fluid, since people are able to travel faster and further due to improvements of technology, better accessibility for travelling, and an increase in personal wealth. Hall C. M. (2000) argues that the temporary mobility is very attractive to countries, regions and destinations since the people who are voluntarily mobile have the greatest social and economic capital, which therefore can contribute more to the development of the destination (Hall C. M., 2000). Therefore, when destination organisations argue to be competitive, as it is seen in the region of Northern Jutland currently, Hall C. M. (2000) argues that this actually means maintaining or increasing the number of temporary mobile people who spend the most money per person, which therefore can have a big impact on the sustainable development of the destination.

Professor C. Michael Hall is a well-respected professor in tourism, who describes the complexity of how tourism planning, and policy operates. He believes that “conceptualisation and the analysis and application of planning tools need to go hand in hand” (Hall C. M., 2000). Moreover, sustainable development is hard to achieve according to him since planning is “irrational, complex, political, value laden and, often, frustratingly incomplete” (Hall C. M., 2000, p. xiii), as the goal of temporary mobility display. At the heart of governmental activity, public policy is found but has in tourism hardly been studied (Hall & Jenkins, 1995). Studies of public policy should involve more than descriptions of what the governments do. Instead, Hall & Jenkins (1995) argue that there are three reasons to study public policy:

- First, to study for *scientific reasons* where the main objective is to get an understanding of the causes and consequences of policy decisions, and thereby get knowledge about society. Public policy can with this perception be viewed either as an independent or dependent variable. As an independent variable, policy is seen as something that affects society, the environment, and the political system. As a dependent variable, policy content is by inquires viewed as being shaped by the socioeconomic, environmental, and political forces (Hall & Jenkins, 1995).
- Second, to study public policy for *professional reasons*, with an aim to understand the consequences of policy, which can be done with knowledge from social science to solve practical problems (Hall & Jenkins, 1995).
- Third, it can be studies for *political purposes*, to “ensure that the nation adopts the “right” policies to achieve the “right” goals”, which can raise the question of what is ‘right’ and by whom this should be determined (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 2).

Public policy will never be value free and can therefore not be taken out of context from the political process in a country. Values are described as “ends, goals, interests, beliefs, ethics, biases, attitudes, traditions, morals and objectives that change with human perception and with time, and that have a significant influence on power conflicts relating to policy” (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, s. 35). Environmental policies are a result of these political processes, which is affected by “the *values* of individuals, groups and organizations in the struggle for *power* through human interaction relative to the decision” (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 33). Because of this, the implicit or explicit choice of value determines which resources to be used within the public jurisdiction (Hall & Jenkins, 1995).

In social science, values and facts are often treated as two sepeerate entities. However, to understand the outcome and impacts the policy process have on people affected by government decisions, it is

unrealistic to separate them. Therefore, public policies are representative of the value choices. This is also seen within organisations, where they have a so-called 'organisational culture' based on shared values, norms, and procedures (Hall & Jenkins, 1995). The values and culture of an government or organisation can thereby effect how they work with sustainable development. Values can also be described as an ideology, which can be constructed by philosophers or by the media (Hall & Jenkins, 1995).

Political agendas

Overtourism is a discourse which has happened over time, dominated by the neoliberal ideology which is characterized by ensuring a good business and investment climate, where the civil society reacts to injustices that may occur. This means that the government seeks the tourists to spend money and make the economy flourish, while in the case of overtourism, the locals pay the price and have to find solutions to resist (Higgins-Desbiolles, Carnicelli, Krolikowski, Wihesinghe, & Boluk, 2019). The issue with a society build up on profit is the problems it gives the DMO's making any real sustainable changes to their destinations, because growth always will be the main objective.

Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.* (2019) describe tourism as one of the key pillars of the capitalist economy, meaning that the marketing strategies in the industry will use tourism as a 'fix' where the economy and environmental issues needs to be postponed. The capitalist economy will always seek new destinations and experiences which can help boost the economy. The purpose for marketing of tourism is to exploit people's need of escaping their daily life and need for seeking new experiences. This is what the industry make money off and therefore makes them agree for pro-growth policies in their governments (Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.*, 2019). It can therefore be argued to be a paradox when a DMO argues for sustainable development without taking any active part of doing so.

The environmental focus often gets postponed until it becomes a demand from the public, as it was seen at the latest election for the Danish Parliament in 2019. Here the Danish Society for Nature Conservation took on an active role in the election, trying to convince the Danish people that politicians need to take responsibility for our children and grandchildren's future (DR, 2019). Surely, as an organization as this, they have always had a priority of preserving our nature and will therefore naturally use the election as an attempt to put pressure on the people and politicians. The politicians will always have economic growth as a priority for their country but can be forced to advocate for sustainability if it becomes a priority for the people. As the DMO works together with the local municipalities, the politics of the country are still an important factor for the DMO's agenda.

Marketing in tourism

It has previously been seen that DMO's uses certain rhetoric when making tourism campaigns by claiming to be responsible regarding the challenges of sustainability (Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.*, 2019). It is not likely to see a DMO advocating to degrow tourism when many thousands of jobs depend on the industry. Therefore, even though a marketing campaign expresses a desire to focus on locals co-existing with tourists, the main objective is still to attract tourists. Therefore, the goals of a DMO wanting to shift from a selfish perspective to an equity focus is admirable and ideal, but it is a paradigm that is hard to change, because it all comes down to money and overnight stays. An example of this is seen in the marketing campaign from Wonderful Copenhagen, where Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.*, (2019) mention a contradiction between claiming to value human relations higher than the number of overnight stays, but still having an emphasis on the potential of growing new markets such as the cruise ship industry. Because of overtourism in other European cities the DMO of Copenhagen responded with a strategy that would involve the citizens and make them more engaged (Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.*, 2019).

The number one mark of success for the Wonderful Copenhagen marketing strategy was a revenue target of DKK 49 million, which showed that the purpose with the strategy was highly focussed on a economic revenue and not a socio-economic revenue (Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.*, 2019). By measuring the local's attitude towards the visitors, the DMO could furthermore analyse the support of the growth, which could confirm their narrative of locals and visitors co-existing in Copenhagen. Thereby, the DMO could make the local citizens believe that the purpose of the marketing campaign had a focus on equitability, but really, they had a more economic focus by making the industry grow. This is the perspective given by Higgins-Desbiolles *et al.* (2019), whose backgrounds comes from School of Management, School of Business, and a Faculty of Applied Health Sciences. The author Freya Higgins-Desbiolles' work focusses on human rights and social justice issues in tourism, hospitality, and events, and is a lecturer who contributes to this project with a critical understanding of the tourism development, with an innovative agenda (University of South Australia, 2022).

Local investment

To accomplish making destinations more sustainable, it is argued that a redefining of tourism is necessary. It will be a good idea if the interests of the local community is included in the political process. Higgens-Desbiolles *et al.* (2019) argue that this could be done with locals taking the initiative by inviting, receiving and hosting visitors for limited amount of time in a way which they can benefit from. However, this does not change the amount of tourists at a destination, or the environmental footprint they leave. Therefore, another approach to prioritizing the locals of a destination is through degrowth. A model for degrowing tourism was made by Higgens-Desbiolles *et al.* (2019), showing which mechanisms that is centred around the local community, which will be important for tourism (Figure 1).

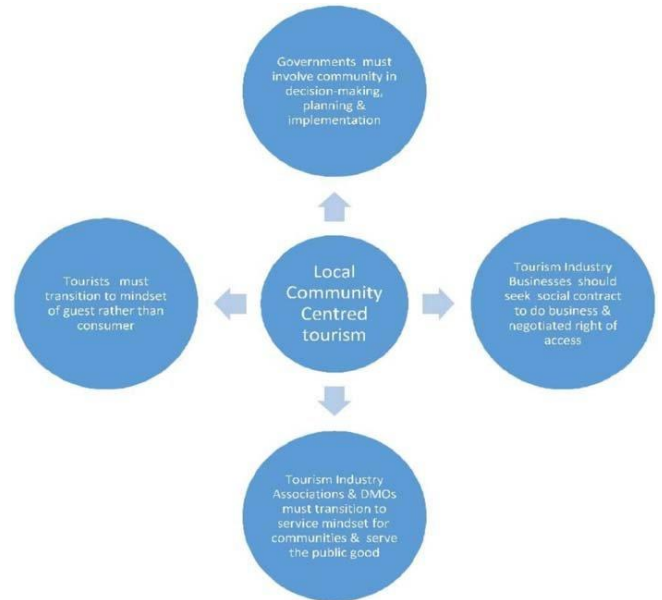


Figure 1. Community-Centred Tourism Framework as a mechanism for degrowing tourism (Higgens-Desbiolles *et al.*, 2019, p. 1937).

The characterization of these authors discourse is that a continuous economic growth will make it impossible for a destination to reach a sustainable development. Therefore, the focus need to shift on to the rights and interests of the local community, and change the tourists mindset from consumer to guest. By ensuring a stabilization of livelihoods and environment, the sustainable degrowth will instead protect from a collapse of the revenue (Hutchison, Movono, & Scheyvens, 2021). Higgens-Desbiolles *et al.* (2019) argue that facilitators of the social tourism such as the International Bureau of Social Tourism are good examples of how tourism should be, where the human needs are prioritized higher than corporate profit and growht agendas. The International Bureau of Social Tourism, later named the International Social Tourism Organisation (ISTO), is an international non-profit organisation. Their ambitions is to promote tourism for all and make holidays accessible to the greatest number of people, and to support tourism that benefits the local communities and areas through responsibility and solidarity (ISTO, 2022).

This leads to the concept of inclusive tourism which is described as “transformative tourism in which marginalized groups are engaged in ethical production or consumption of tourism and the sharing of its benefits” (Hutchison *et al.*, 2021). This approach recognize as a distincton to the Community-

centered tourism that people can be both consumers and producers of tourism. Hutchison *et al.* (2021) believe it is important to critically view who is involved in tourism and how, with a desire and benefit from being a producer or consumer of tourism. However, as previously mentioned, the DMO's can also include locals in their marketing campaign with the immediate intention of equitability, but still have a focus on growth. The claims of the DMO' therefore need to be critically assessed when they are being analyzed.

Sustainability in the tourism industry

A report from 2021 made by Destination Fyn shows the results of an area working together and sharing knowledge to become firstmovers in sustainability. The DMO has the objective to make Fyn and the nearby islands leading in sustainability, since it has an importance to the settlement, employment and growth of the area. Therefore, it is important for Destination Fyn to find a sustainable solution for the future generations to benefit from as well (Destination Fyn, 2021). The report is very interesting for this project, since the DMO takes on a role as a facilitator of the sustainable development. This responsibility is up to discussion, meaning that each DMO has their own way of seeing the role they have in the sustainable development.

The report from Destination Fyn explains the various barriers the tourism industry typically experience when companies attempts to become more sustainable. The most common barriers the companies experience are lack of ressources in terms of time and employees with the right knowledge and skills (Destination Fyn, 2021). Another barrier that rates high amungst the companies is a missing overview or knowledge of possibilities and potential gain from the sustainable solutions (Destination Fyn, 2021).

15 pct. of the tourism companies on Fyn answered in 2021 that their investments in sustainability payed off, which was a growth from 5 pct. in 2020 (Destination Fyn, 2021). In general, the report shows a positive attitude towards sustainability from the tourism companies of Fyn, where more than half of them expect to invest even more in the sustainable business solutions throughtout the following 1-2 years. Furthermore, the report shows that for companies to develop the sustainable business solutions, it is important to communicate with each other, gather inspiration, develop competences etc. (Destination Fyn, 2021). The report shows that for companies to succeed with sustainable solutions, it is important for them to know how.

The report shows a barometer used to indicate to which degree the tourism companies on Fyn are sustainable in their business solutions. It is based on the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals,

and contains questions related to climate and energy, climate change mitigation, work environment and social responsibility (Destination Fyn, 2021). This approach holds the companies accountable for their actions, which will be necessary when Denmark have to reduce the CO2 emissions with 70 pct. by 2030 (Horesta, 2021). This work with the local companies is a unique initiative that makes it interesting to look at why Destination Nord have not done the same in the attempt to argue for the sustainable development.

Resetting tourism

“We can’t return to normal, because the normal that we had was precisely the problem”, was a message written with graffiti on a wall in Hong Kong (Benjamin, Dillette, & Alderman, 2020). Around 50 million jobs have been lost to the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, which made the affected people in tourism industry hope it was possible returning to normal once the pandemic would decline or eventually level off (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020). However, the pandemic contributed to a new way of perceiving the tourism industry, along with an opportunity to reform it. The question was therefore no longer when it could return to normal, but rather how the industry would take advantage of the many adjustments and regulations already being made and use them to a reformation of the industry.

The pandemic has been a contributor in exposing to which degree the destinations have been dependent on money earned from tourism for far too long. The culture of many destinations relies on the tourists and is therefore a discourse which is hard to change (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020). Students, entrepreneurs, and faculty view tourism as beneficial to their respective destinations, however, COVID-19 changed this due to the travel restrictions and social distancing (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020). This abrupt change in behaviour let the world witness how sites as Venice suddenly was cleared of pollution and waste. This was a large contrast to the mass tourism allowed for centuries, and made people question whether it was ever beneficial for the destinations. The travel restrictions also allowed people to rediscover the concept of slow tourism, where their eyes were opened to the domestic travel and instead started enjoying the journey not the destination (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020).

Benjamin *et al.* (2020) believe that the pandemic has given the industry an opportunity to reset the global tourism industry, which need new measures for it to work. The scholars claim that the previously initiatives such as to “select hospitality and tourism businesses and destinations to limit plastics, increase recycling, and provide counter-narratives and experiences” (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020, p. 479) are not enough. Instead, the future tourism should be guided not by tourist demand, but rather

a culture of caring in correlation with social and environmental justice (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020). This means that the destination will have to move towards a marketing plan which encourage 'slow' and 'local' tourism, instead of focussing on the large marketized experiences.

Encouraging tourists to reflect on their travel patterns when it is possible to travel again is another way of changing the discourse of mass tourism. Tourists will then not be shown travel offers to the fragile destinations known for mass tourism, but instead recommended choosing a local owned vacation rental in the less profiled destinations. The time spent during the pandemic has given an opportunity to reconsider these traditional travel patterns and can hopefully make the wellbeing of the planet, people and places a priority (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020). By looking at the industry as a social force it allows the opportunity to shift from a selfish tourist perspective to an equitable focus. It gives tourists and, corporations and educators a view of a common responsibility for the development of the tourism industry (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020).

Theory of science and methodological reflections

Paradigms are described as "basic belief systems based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). When identifying the paradigm for an inquiry, the 'worldview' needs to be defined, since it exposes the researchers view upon the 'world' and which role the researcher holds in it. In the search of answers for the inquiry, it is necessary to distinguish the nature of one paradigm from another to establish what characterizes them, to see "what falls within and outside the limits of legitimate inquiry" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). Finding the most relevant paradigm for the inquiry is done by asking the three fundamental questions regarding the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. When answering one of these questions, the answer will reflect on the others, meaning they are interconnected and thereby reflect the basic beliefs of the inquiry paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Theoretical paradigms of science

Up until the 1970's, the paradigm of social science had not been characterized or labeled, and therefore the scientists' beliefs and practices that guided their work had not been questioned. Only when qualitative research got renewed attention, the dominant paradigm was challenged and provided with the label of a positivist paradigm together with a summary of what it included (Morgan, 2007). This paradigm had been a dominating discourse for four hundred years in the physical and social science (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), which made the nature of research itself an issue up for debate (Morgan, 2007). The advocates of an alternative to positivism recognized anomalies in the findings

of the existing paradigm by questioning the failed predictions or observations incompatible with that same paradigm (Morgan, 2007).

Social science has previously been referred to as “soft,” because it is less quantifiable than in physics and chemistry. The positivist paradigm, however, seeks to verify or falsify a priori hypotheses often in the context of “hard” mathematical propositions or other propositions which can be researched through formulas, and has therefore in many years been seen as the dominant paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, critiques against positivism have occurred over time, claiming that the quantitative approach was “context stripping,” meaning that only selected variables will be taken into consideration, since other variables might alter the findings. This makes it easier for a researcher to generalize and use the results in other contexts. The critiques illuminate the importance of the qualitative data, which can give rich insight into the human behaviour (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

To establish the ‘basic beliefs’ within a given paradigm, it is necessary to define the ‘worldview’ by answering the three questions concerning the ontological, epistemological, and methodological question (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The *ontological* question gives an answer to the nature of reality, and what there is to know about it. This question is concerned about whether there is a reality existing independently of human conception and interpretations, or if there is a shared social reality, or only experienced in specific contexts (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2013).

The *epistemological* question refers to ways of learning and knowing about the ‘world.’ It focusses on how we learn about the world and the conception of reality. One way to acquire knowledge is with the inductive approach through a ‘bottom-up’ process, where observations of the world is made, and thereby patterns are identified. In other words, evidence is collected first, and from that, knowledge and theories are built. The other way to acquire knowledge is with the deductive approach through a ‘top-down’ process, where propositions or hypotheses are assessed against observations. This means that evidence is gathered to confirm or reject a given hypothesis (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The *methodological* question seeks to find out which method will be appropriate for answering the inquiry, based on the answers to the two beforementioned questions. The appropriate methodological stance will according to Morgan (2007) be dependent on whether the approach is qualitative, quantitative, or pragmatic. The qualitative approach will be inductive, which as priorly mentioned is characterized by the ‘bottom-up’ process of gathering knowledge, with an aim to identify patterns and context. The quantitative approach has a deductive approach to the data with a ‘top-down’ process, with an aim to generalize.

Lastly, there is the pragmatic approach which have an abductive reasoning, which means that the research process can move between induction and deduction. The purpose with this approach is to evaluate on inductive results of a qualitative approach and be used as inputs to the deductive goals of a quantitative approach (Morgan, 2007). Ormston *et al.* (2013) argues that there also is a retroductive approach to the way of learning about the world. This research strategy “seeks to devise a possible explanation for patterns in the data and identify the structures or mechanisms that might have produced them, trying out different models for ‘fit’” (Ormston *et al.*, 2013, p. 6).

Theoretical perspectives of science

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant, wrote in 1781 *The Critique of Pure Reason*, where he argued that there were other ways of achieving knowledge of the world, outside of direct observation. He believed that by trying to understand the world by reflecting on what happens, a knowledge can be acquired (Ormston *et al.*, 2013). This inquiry aims to understand the paradox of how Destination Nord will succeed with both attracting more tourists through campaigns to the region, and at the same time enhance the sustainable development. This phenomenon requires an understanding of the human world because it depends on the opinion of the people working with tourism, and on the people working for Destination Nord. My inquiry will therefore be embedded in the human science paradigm of interpretivism (Paterson & Higgs, 2005). The research strategy will therefore aim to get a thoroughly analysis of the collected data and its’ context to understand the dilemmas occurring in the tourism industry and how the marketing campaigns can influence the behaviour of the tourists. When selecting this paradigm, it can “focus on uncovering contextualized, professional craft knowledge, personal experiential knowledge, and understandings about the phenomenon” (Paterson & Higgs, 2005, s. 342) that is being analysed.

Ontology

The interpretivist thinking argues that a study of the ‘lived experiences’ within historical and social contexts of people’s lives, will give a proper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The research should through ‘lived experiences’ seek to “reveal the connections between the social, cultural, and historical aspects of people’s lives and to see the context in which particular actions take place” (Ormston *et al.*, 2013, p. 12). Since the social world is researched through human behaviour and not through laws and regularities, researchers may aim to be neutral in their assumptions, while others might become more personally engage and be obviously subjective to the research (Ormston, *et al.*, 2013). The aim with this inquiry is to observe in which manner the current measures of Destination Nord are making the tourism industry of Northern Jutland more sustainable when they

also want to attract more tourists. Therefore, it is important to understand the context of how this is being done, and which factors that effects the outcome.

Epistemology

Since the world view of the examined inquiry are interpretivist, the epistemological question will answer the nature of ways we can learn about this world. The research strategy for this inquiry is being managed through the logic of retroduction, which involves an identification of structures or mechanisms which may have resulted in patterns in the data. However, the complexity of the qualitative research is argued by Norman Blaikie, Former Professor of Sociology, who mentions that there is no such thing as ‘pure’ induction or deduction when generating and interpreting data, since it cannot be done with a ‘blank mind’ (Ormston *et al.*, 2013). In the same way, the research strategy of this project will not be purely deductive, but will also be inductive, since behaviours and campaigns are being observed, and a need is therefore occurred to understand these.

Methodology

The relevant methodology for this inquiry has been determined from the answers given to the ontological and epistemological questions in the interpretivist paradigm. The research design used for this project will therefore be qualitative since it focusses on “the interrelatedness of different aspects of people’s lives . . . psychological, social, historical, and cultural factors are all recognised as playing an important part in shaping people’s understanding of their world” (Ormston *et al.*, 2013, p. 13). In this project, the qualitative research will consist of conducted interviews, findings of relevant data, and theory (Ormston *et al.*, 2013). The research approach for the analysis will be hermeneutical, since the interpretative paradigm in which the research question is related, seeks to interpret the respondents’ understanding of sustainable growth within the tourism industry (Paterson & Higgs, 2005).

When using a hermeneutic research approach to create knowledge, there are three philosophical assumptions:

- “Hermeneutics refers to the shared understandings that we already have with each another and this sharing occurs through language” (Paterson & Higgs, 2005, s. 343). Therefore, the interpretation of a phenomenon is created through a dialogue and gives a shared understanding.
- Knowledge is therefore constructed through dialogue between the inquirer and the text. The dialogue has an open nature, which means we return to the object of the inquiry over and over

again, each time with a new understanding and thereby a new interpretation (Paterson & Higgs, 2005)

- The ‘hermeneutical circle’ is a metaphor used “to describe the experience of moving dialectically between the parts and the whole’ (Paterson & Higgs, 2005, s. 343)

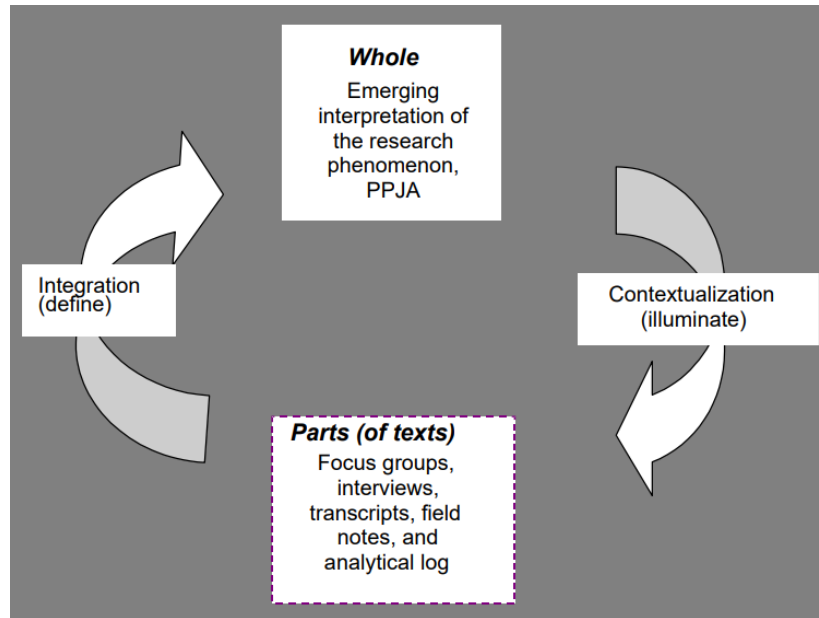


Figure 2: Example of how to use the Hermeneutic circle (Paterson & Higgs, 2005, p. 345).

The “hermeneutical spiral” is a result of these three philosophical assumptions, where a holistic understanding of the ‘whole’ is the goal. The phenomenon is understood as a whole by being put into context, finding an example to illuminate and analyse the phenomenon which then can lead to a component which then adds a new understanding to the ‘whole’ (Paterson & Higgs, 2005).

Theory

The frame used for the theoretical approach will be based upon the theories of C. Michael Hall, to conceptualise the field of which tourism planning operates in. The complex, political and value-laden process of tourism planning determines the use of political instruments which will affect the sustainable development in society (Hall, 2000).

Sustainable development

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world, which was made clear during the last two years where Covid-19 put a stop to many jobs directly and indirectly related to the tourism industry. The Brundtland report from 1987 stated that “sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (WCED, 1987, s. 34). The interpretations and operationalizations of this statement led to discussions

regarding planning and policymaking (Hall, 2000). The report outlined five basic principles of sustainability, which described the importance of a holistic view on planning and strategy-making along with preserving and protecting ecological processes. Furthermore, human heritage and a need for sustaining productivity for future generations were outlined, and finally a focus on “balance fairness and opportunity between nations” (Hall C. M., 2000, p. 4).

These original concerns from the Brundtland report required new ways of thinking about political, environmental, and economic policies. However, many of the statements in the report were described very broadly, e.g., “destabilisation of global environmental features such as climate patterns and the ozone layer must be prevented” (Hall C. M., 2000, s. 5). The concern of the report is to secure a better life for people in the future, not only in the present, and how we use the world’s resources with an equitable distribution of these (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005). This concept evolved over time after an action plan was developed during the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992 and after the World Summit on Sustainable Development resulted in a plan of implementation in Johannesburg in 2002 (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005).

Based on these historical events, the approach of three dimension ‘pillars’ of sustainable development were recognized:

- Economic sustainability, which means to ensure a successful economy at the various society levels and make sure that all economic activities are cost effective. It is generally about ensuring the survival of enterprises to make sure they can be maintained long term.
- Social sustainability, ensures equal rights for all in society, meaning equal distribution of benefits and a focus to minimize poverty. The local communities must be protected by supporting and maintaining their life support systems with a respect to their cultures.
- Environmental sustainability makes sure to protect and conserve resources, especially the non-renewable resources which is crucial for life support. It is therefore necessary to “minimize pollution of air, land and water, and to conserve biological diversity and natural heritage” (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005, p. 9)

These three pillars are interdependent, which means that they can reinforce each other or be in competition. Therefore, a balance is obtained through sustainable development. As Hall (2000, p. 5) argues, “economic development is dependent upon the continues well-being of the physical and social environment of which it is based”. If society is built up solely on economic development, it will be at cost of the environmental and social environment. Furthermore,

economic data does not mention anything about the environmental or social cost that might have occurred due to the economic growth (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005). Tourism is however still an important industry that contributes to both the possibilities of economic growth in many countries and areas. Since the industry has a large connection between the consumers(visitors), the environment and local communities, it has led to three aspects:

- *Interaction* which happens between the host communities and the tourists who wants an experience of seeing new destinations. These interactions with the local environment can happen both direct and indirect through the delivered experiences.
- *Awareness* of environmental issues can happen through tourism when people experience new nations and cultures, which can result in a change of attitude and concern for sustainability.
- *Dependency* describes how the industry depends on the attractive environments needing to stay intact and clean, since the industry depends on them (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005).

The sustainable development depends on these very close relationships between tourists and destinations, which therefore can contribute with both a positive and negative influence. On one hand, tourism can boost the employment creation, and secure support of even remote communities. It can also support the conservation of destinations with support from both tourists and from the local communities. Furthermore, it can lead to a better understanding of different cultures (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005). On the other hand, some of the damage tourism can make is putting a pressure on fragile ecosystems resulting in a disruption to the wildlife or dislocate the host community due to a large pressure. Tourism can also be a significant contributor to global pollution, e.g., by competing for the natural resources of the area. The industry is in many destinations seasonal, meaning that the income for local businesses is very unstable and sensitive to perceived changes to environmental and social conditions of destinations (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005).

An example of a destination living with both positive and damaging consequences of tourism is the case of Venice, which had to survive having no tourists during the pandemic in 2020. “It is better than ever. And it is worse than ever”, an Italian hotel owner replied in an interview (Gøttske, 2020). The pandemic forced the city to restrict tourists from entering the city, however, as the hotel owner mentions, they cannot live without them either. Normally they have up to 80.000 visitors a day and up to 30 mill a year. Around 80 pct. of the people in Venice have a livelihood that depends on the tourists, who normally contributes with around three bills. euro a year (Gøttske, 2020).

The Policy Environment

The public policies of tourism are an ongoing dynamic process which gives governments struggles in comprehending its impacts and thereby how they should intervene (Hall & Jenkins, 1995). Public policy is “influenced by the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of society, as well as by the formal structures of government and other features of the political system” (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 5). Policies is therefore a result of the political environment and the leading ideologies and values at the time and can be described as actions “governments choose to do or not to do in respect to tourism” (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 8).

In the 1990’s, the literature of tourism policy went from an approach focussing on the conception of government to that of governance (Hall C. M., 2011). Up until 1985, the government had a large involvement in tourism marketing to increase the potential of tourism earning. After 1985, tourism continued being an instrument for development but also increased the focus on environmental issues. The governments reduced their involvement, and the tourism infrastructure therefore became a partnership between public and private companies and industry self-regulation as it is seen in the current Danish society (Hall C. M., 2000).

The tourism involvement of governments was after this development often entrepreneurial, trying to increase the economic contribution of tourism to government income. Therefore, the governments have still taken part of destination marketing or development of tourist attractions in collaboration with the private sector (Hall C. M., 2000). However, Saarinen, Rogerson , & Hall (2017) argue that there is not a big difference from the corporatized public planning approaches of the public and private partnerships than of the private sector. Therefore, they argue that the balance between reaching sustainable and environmental tourism with the focus on growth and development has never been further away, despite of several strategies and interventions through the years (Saarinen *et al.*, 2017).

The conception of sustainability is to maintain an environmental- and social capital, which has a component of equity. Hall C. M. (2000) states that we need to look with a broader view on capital in order to include the value of nature and the preserving of it. Natural resources has otherwise been transformed into “goods” and thereby commodities has been exploited by the tourism industry (Hall C. M., 2000). Two principles elaborates on this dilemma: the ‘intergenerational equity’, which means preserving just enough ‘capital’ to the next generations in order for them to produce welfare that at least is equivalent with current terms. The other principle ‘biophysical capacity’, explains how some

functions of the environment are limited, and therefore “social and economic activity should be managed at least to conserve such ‘critical environmental capital’” (Hall C. M., 2000, p. 6).

These interpretations explain how the idea of growth are important for the outcome of policy and planning. By maintaining the environmental capital, growth is not necessarily limited, but it is implied that the nature of growth must respect the needed constraints in order to maintain the environmental capital (Hall C. M., 2000). This has however been impossible to achieve for the governments where the political agenda has been to maintain or develop economic growth. It has been difficult due to the fact that sustainability is a concept that is hard to specify, is hard to understand, and deals with time horizons which are not normally taken on (Hall C. M., 2000). Even though the policy goal is hard to define, it is still very critical to assess to develop more sustainable forms of development.

Values in tourism policy-making

The core of public policy, and thereby tourism policies, is based on the current values of the political arena. The political process that effects the environmental policies, is based on “the *values* of individuals, groups and organizations in the struggle for *power* through human interaction relative to the decision” (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, s. 33). Decisions are therefore being based on both values and policies, however, the marginalized values decides where the resources will be prioritized (Hall & Jenkins, 1995). Facts and values have in social science research often been viewed as two different systems. Hall & Jenkins (1995) believe however, that this is an unrealistic approach to tourism research, if it is desired to learn about policy processes and the impacts they might bring to the people affected by these. They believe that all decisions made by governments reflect on the values they possess.

Depending on the ideology of the government, values can be seen represented in the key issues they operate within. In 2019, Denmark had the last general election where a socialist government was elected. A democratic socialist government wants to ensure equality for all, solidarity and freedom. This includes social, environmental and economical sustainability (Jensen, 2015). The journalistic researcher Mads Eberholst did a lot of research surrounding the election in 2019, concluding that the focus of the election campaigns has shifted. Further back in history, the focus was typically on economic policy, which in recent years has shifted to a focus on value politics. He mentions that it was anticipated the election would be about healthcare and retirement, but at the election, the votes showed a change in priorities (Kallestrup & Eller, 2019).

Election researcher Kasper Møller Hansen of Copenhagen University has written a book about the “Climate election” of 2019, which was an election characterized by a slowly exploding agenda of the voters (Ritzau, 2021). He mentions that 55 pct. of the voters stated that the climate was their top priority, which according to Kasper Møller Hansen can be argued by four possible reasons. First, the teenage activist Greta Thunberg was visible in the medias for protesting against world leaders to take action against global warming. Second, the various organizations had started to take more initiatives towards saving the climate. Third, the elderly generationz were concerned for the future of the young generations, and fourth, many medias started talking about the climate due to demand from the voters (Ritzau, 2021). Ideologies are “a system of belief about some important social area or issue that has strong effects in structuing and influencing our thought” (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 35). With the growing influence of the medias, the ideologies can therefore be constructed from these as it was seen at the latest election, instead of growing from a consensus of tradition or philosophers.

We are not always aware of the values and ideologies represented in our society. As an example, the leisure and tourism industry in the Western society, is pertrayed as something to be ‘consumed’, and tourists therefore feel entitled to persue having fun and being entertained. The result of this “consumer sovereignty” ideology leads to a public policy where there should be no interference with leisure (Hall & Jenkins, 1995).

Tourism Planning Approaches

The way sustainable development is prioritized in the tourism industry, is also a result of the tourism planning approaches. There are five approaches, also called policy traditions, which explain how problems of tourism planning are perceived through research and planning assumptions, methods, and models (Hall C. M., 2008). The first approach is ‘boosterism’, where the assumption is that tourism is good and beneficial to the host community, and that the goal is to attract as many tourists as possible. The resources are seen as objects to be exploited for the advance of the tourism industry. The residents of these areas are not involved in the decision-making process and might be seen as negative if they do oppose to the development (Hall C. M., 2008). The second approach is the economical, where tourism is seen as a tool to be used when the government wants to achieve certain goals of “economic growth and restructuring, employment generation, and regional development” (Hall C. M., 2008, s. 55). Within this approach, the government argues tourism can be a means to promote growth and development at certain destinations. The third approach is the one of land-use/physical/spatial, which is concerned with the ecological carrying capacity of an area. The tourism

planning needs to ensure a decrease of the impact tourism can have on the physical and social carrying capacity of an area. Management, or manipulation, of visitors can be a tool used to ensure these travel flows in e.g., national parks where only certain routes are allowed.

The fourth approach is the community-oriented planning approach, which is concerned with the community's attitude towards the tourists. The locals need to be the focal point of the tourism planning exercise and involved in the process of development. The process is therefore described as a 'bottom-up' process, where development happens *in* the community rather than *to* the community. The fifth approach is the one of sustainable planning, where the social, environmental, and economic values are prioritized. One of the difficulties with this planning approach is to achieve "policy and administrative coordination in and between the public and private sectors" (Hall C. M., 2008, s. 54). The sustainable planning approach would optimally require an infinite time horizon, whereas being able to make decisions and set goals requires a finite horizon (Hall C. M., 2008).

These four approaches to tourism planning might overlap, meaning that one does not exclude the other. However, identifying which of these approaches the government or an organisation use, helps to determine how they perceive problems of tourism planning and which methods and models they then use to solve them (Hall C. M., 2008).

Data collection

Primary data

Primary data is collected to elucidate a specific inquiry (Svendsen, 2015). The way of generating data in a qualitative research design is often done by semi-structured and in-depth interviews, which will be the primary data used in this project, to ask open-ended questions such as 'what', 'why' and 'how' rather the question of 'how many', which is often used in the positivistic paradigm with a purpose to generalize (Ormston *et al.*, 2013).

For this inquiry the primary data consists of a semi structured interview with the lecturer and strategic planner John Hird, who is one of the people responsible for facilitating the Instant Green Tourism Project through the consultant firm Kvistgaard + Hird. Another semi-structured interview was made with Henriette Mølgaard Hansen, who is a Senior Analyst and Development Consultant at the Danish Coastal and Nature Tourism agency. The purpose with these interviews is to get knowledge of the dynamics experienced within tourism organizations in Denmark, and how much the sustainable development is prioritized in their work. An interview-guide have therefore been prepared in advance to ask the respondents formal questions which give the interview a structure, but also allows to probe

with follow-up questions (Appendix 1 and 3). This gives the respondent an opportunity to express what *they* believe is most important (Long, 2007). Furthermore, an e-mail correspondence has taken place with the Project Manager of Destination Nord, Nanna Bentzen, who had inside knowledge to how the organization worked with the Instant Green Tourism project, and which role they generally play in terms of sustainable development as a DMO (Appendix 6).

Secondary data

Contrary to the primary data, the secondary data has already been collected by other researchers for their own research and is therefore collected prior to the current inquiry (Svendsen, 2015). There are two forms of secondary data: the primary literature also addressed as intern resources, which can be e-mails, correspondence, or PhD and doctoral dissertations. The secondary literature also called extern resources, can be books, articles, blogs etc. (Svendsen, 2015).

The primary data collected for this project is a case presented through an interview with the owners of Tornby Strand Camping, Morten and Tove Jensen (Appendix 7). This interview was conducted for my semester project last fall, concerning the issues of a Danish camping sites trying to become more sustainable with the help of nudging.

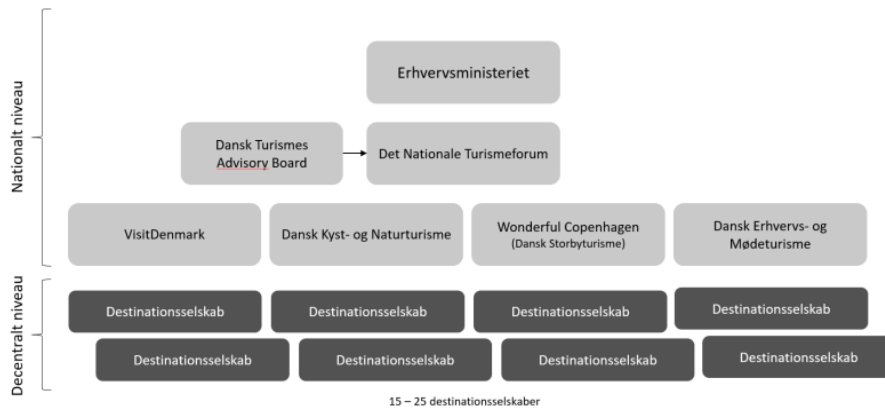
The secondary data for this project consist of three books written by C. Michael Hall. He is a professor who has been in the Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship since 2007. He is a highly respected professor, who also has been awarded with an honorary doctorate from the Faculty of Social Science at Lund University (Lund University, 2015).

Limitations

National strategy

Currently, a new national strategy for Danish tourism is about to be released. The national strategy is meant for the public and private actors to work together in solving challenges that may occur in the Danish tourism industry and embrace opportunities and tendencies. As the Ministry for Industry, Business and Financial Affairs argues, tourism is a growth industry, which in 2017 created a revenue of 128 DKK Bill. and 161.000 fulltime jobs (Erhvervsministeriet, 2022). The latest national strategy of 2016 had following focus areas: “More effective marketing targeted relevant audiences”, “Better accessibility, internet, and signs”, “Better tourist experiences in Denmark”, ”Modern planning act and increased tourism capacity”, and “Competitiveness and good framework conditions” (Erhvervsministeriet, 2022). The organizational work with the national strategy is listed below (Figure 3), showing the levels of responsibility in the Danish tourism industry.

ORGANISERINGEN AF DEN OFFENTLIGE TURISMEFREMMEINDSATS



MARTS 2019

Figure 3 Organisation of public tourism promotion efforts (Erhvervsministeriet, 2022).

Three goals were set in the national strategy of 2016 which were supposed to be pointers towards 2025. The three goals were with a policy perspective of growth: first, that Denmark would have 17 mio. more overnight stays by 2025. Second, that the turnover should reach 140 DKK bill. by 2025 which would be a growth of 45 bill. compared to 2014. Third, the foreign tourists should be at least as happy for their stay in Denmark as in the average of Northern Europe (Erhvervsministeriet, 2022). However, the Danish election in 2019 which had a focus on sustainability has changed the policy perspective through the last couple of years. The covid-19 pandemic contributed to a bigger focus on sustainable development, which has only speeded up since the pandemic started.

As Henriette Mølgaard Hansen mentions, the national strategy has gone from a focus only on growth, to a strategy being released this year with a focus on sustainability, which they have been waiting for in a long time now (Appendix 2). This strategy gives the directions to how they should work with sustainable development at destination level, also called the decentral level (Figure 3). Therefore, the work with sustainability can change amongst the DMO of the various regions, which I therefore not will account for in this project.

Extra qualitative data

To make a proper representation of how Destination Nord works with sustainability, a more in-depth interview would have been preferred. This would have given a better understanding of their argumentation to why they engage with projects such as Instant Green Tourism. Furthermore, a more in-depth interview with them, could explain why they do not make the same initiatives as seen with Destination Fyn, who has initiated the project “Barometer of Sustainability”. It would be interesting to hear, how they perceive this work, and the responsibility Destination Fyn takes.

Tornby Strand Camping is not a part of Destination Nord, but instead a part of Destination Nordvestkysten. Therefore, it would be interesting to also have had an interview with more tourism businesses from Destination Nord and see if there were a difference in their work with sustainable development.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to talk with participants of project Instant Green Tourism and get an understanding of where they are in their work with sustainability now. As Nanna Bentzen mentions, they do not follow up on the businesses work with sustainability but do however keep collaborating with them on other projects, and therefore indirectly follow up on them (Appendix 6). Therefore, it would be interesting to know if the businesses would need help reaching the goals of EU for 2030 for reducing the Co2 omission, or if the help they got was enough.

Analysis and discussion

This analysis and discussion chapter will be based on the previous theories explaining the political environment in which DMO’s function, and the value-laden complex planning of sustainable development. The analysis will give a critical assessment of the initiatives and statements by Destination Nord. Furthermore, a comparison to Destination Fyn will be made, to see how their work with sustainability are different from the work of Destination Nord. Finally, the analysis will discuss the case of Tornby Strand Camping, which is an example of how the roles of DMO’s ultimately can affect the work of tourism businesses.

I will approach this by using inspiration from a conceptual framework for studying tourism public policy, consisting of four methodological elements: First, analysing public policy at micro, middle and macro level over time and space. Second, a consideration of previously “decisions, actions, procedures and programmes” is necessary since short term findings might be misleading. Third, a case study, which can bring both opportunities and constraints to a study. Fourth, a linking is made

between “description, theory and explanation, and the explicit recognition of ideology and values” (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 95).

The role of DMO's

The role of a DMO is to ensure environmental, economic and social sustainability in society and more specifically in the destination they are responsible for. However, the way these responsibilities are interpreted is quite different. Nanna Bentzen, Project Manager of Destination Nord explains that “Our role as a project organization is not to create change, but it is to act as sparring partners and knowledge sharing in relation to what we are good at” (Appendix 6). The responsibility as a DMO is therefore according to Nanna Bentzen to be sparring partners and sharing of knowledge. Destination Nord's newest released strategy for 2021-2023 shows a focus on primarily economic tourism planning approaches (Destination Nord, 2021). Examples of these are seen in an article written about their strategy, where the focus is on the usage of tourism to create jobs. The article uses an economic perspective to argue how the tourism of Northern Jutland generates DKK 17 bill. and 21.000 jobs, which have been reciding compared to the rest of Denmark (Destination Nord, 2021).

In the strategy for 2021-2023, the focus on sustainability is only represented as one of the themes binding the destination together, giving a impression that it is not prioritized higher than economic growth. They mention three parts which the tourism and experience economy are dependend on, and which the strategy is based upon. These can also be argued as the planning approaches they choose to focus on. The first mentioned approacah is the economical, where the focus is on the importance of various jobs which the tourism industry creates directly and indirectly. An example of this is mentioned with some companies making 100 pct. of their earnings through tourism, where for other companies it is just a part of their customer base (Destination Nord, 2021).

Their second planning approach used is the physical/spacial, which in the report is mentioned as place-bound capacities. They explain this charaterization as the unique identity of a destination consisting of “natural environments, historical landscapes, routes and coastline” etc. (Destination Nord, 2021, p. 4). The general assumptions in this approach described by Hall C. M. (2008) focus on the necessity to preserve the genetic diversity, and therefore development is defined in more environmental terms. The fourth planning approach observed in the report is ‘community’, or as Destination Nord define it, “pride and identity”. The definition of Hall C. M. (2008) argues that sociocultural terms define development, which means working with community development and making social impact assesment. The problems with this planning approach can be to understand the

community's attitude towards tourism, and understand the full impact tourism has on a community (Hall C. M., 2008).

In the report, Destination Nord argue that tourism help establish the narrative of a destination, and gives incentive to make attractive places for both locals and tourists (Destination Nord, 2021). With that argument, they can justify their need for growth in tourism at their destination. However, Destination Nord also have certain areas they focus on according to their listed initiatives, such as making sustainability a integrated part of their organisation strategies. The organisation is also a part of the GDS index, which gives them knowledge from experts in sustainability and makes them visible internationally (Enjoy Nordjylland, 2022). However, when looking at the report previously mentioned, the strategies they claim to have, seem to play a small role in the overall strategy.

The responsibility of sustainable development is perceived different at Destination Fyn, who since 2020 have explored initiatives to see how these could make a difference, instead of starting with only suggesting a strategy (Destination Fyn, 2021). Their hope is to become first-movers by making tourism the promoter of sustainability. In contrast to Destination Nord, the argumentation for tourism is through the belief of a shared responsibility, which Destination Fyn executes by initiating collaboration between the municipalities, DMO's and inputs from the local businesses (Destination Fyn, 2021). These initiatives developed the basis for their strategic focus areas of 2021-2023 within sustainability, which purpose is to help the 10 municipalities on Fyn. In 2021, the DMO also got a certification as a 'Green Tourism Organization', with businesses in the region scoring high at the GDS scale (Global Destination Sustainability scale) (Visit Fyn, 2022).

Current policy perspectives

As previously mentioned, Saarinen *et al.* (2017) argue that it has never been harder to find a balance between sustainability and growth, despite the several strategies and interventions used previously. The strategy from Destination Nord shows this problematic, that the policy perspective of the DMO will still be to ensure the parts of a destination which directly or indirectly are dependent on tourists. In the strategy for 2021-2023 of Destination Nord, sustainability is not mentioned as more than a theme that helps the destination stand out on the map (Destination Nord, 2021). By mentioning it as one theme out of several, it again shows that sustainability is not the top priority for the destination, eventhough sustainability has been a big issue since the latest election in 2019. As the Project Manager Nanna Bentzen argues, important problematics are often first delpt with when there is a global demand and therefore a reason to react to bigger agendas. She further explains how

sustainability was on everyone's lips before the pandemic began, and that a plan for the businesses and citizens first could be developed when there were more time to focus on it again. (Appendix 6).

On one hand, Nanna Bentzen mentions that they as a project organization try to seek fundings to projects that are in the tourists' interests. This also counts for destination development, where they try to accommodate their business partners (Appendix 6). However, she does not find it a paradox, that Destination Nord has been a part of the project "Joint Growth", which purpose is to attract more tourists to the region. She argues that they are looking into seasonality, trying to encourage tourists to travel outside the main season. Furthermore, she argues that the organization takes many initiatives to give tourists the possibility to make more sustainable choices during their holidays. This is e.g., choosing sustainable overnight stays and restaurants, using public transportation etc. (Appendix 6).

However, it can be argued how high a priority sustainable development is to the agenda of a DMO as Destination Nord, when they are not being as proactive as Destination Fyn. When Destination Fyn mentions they want to be first-movers, they are being proactive as a DMO, which contradicts with the statement Nanna Bentzen made about their purpose as a project organization. She mentioned that their driving force is not the EU demands for 2030, which is exactly opposite of the goals Destination Fyn seeks to achieve through their Sustainability Barometer. One of the purposes with their strategy is to "Ensure effective and fruitful links between the tourism at Fyn and the FYN2030 strategy and the efforts in the DK2020 plan" (Destination Fyn, 2021, s. 3)

Critical assessment of sustainable initiatives

The Instant Green Tourism project initiated by Destination Nord, had the good intentions of kickstarting the sustainable development in the region, in collaboration with around 60 businesses. The consultant firm Kvistgaard + Hird oversaw the project and had the task of collaboration with these businesses. In my interview with John Hird, he mentioned that as a consultant on the project, they almost acted as a 'social workers', which meant that the companies were barely making it through the crisis caused by the pandemic. Here he pointed out, that economic sustainability also was an important factor in their project since the basic need of survival of the companies became a reality (Appendix 4).

John Hird also pointed out, that the Instant Green Tourism project was initiated before anyone knew about Covid-19. One of the problematics he experienced in the project, was how both the pandemic made it more difficult for businesses to attend, and, how the businesses had to prioritize their time, and therefore could not attend either. Despite of these obstacles, he was positively surprised that they

managed to get 60 businesses to attend (Appendix 4). As he further explained, as a consultant firm, they were hired to make analysis and inspire the businesses. From there on, they could only hope that the businesses would use the tools they had been given in the project, and that it would result in a good spiral of more initiatives (Appendix 4).

Even though the Instant Green Tourism project was initiated before Covid-19, it is still being portrayed as a response to the tourists' demand. According to the CEO of Destination Nord, Tonny Skovsted Thorup, Corona had resulted in a sudden change in behaviour of the tourists, which was necessary for the tourism businesses to accommodate. He mentions that it was an urgent demand from the tourists, and therefore the tourism industry needed to meet their requests of more sustainable solutions (Green Tourism Organization, 2020). In the report "Sustainability Barometer" from Destination Fyn, they have also worked with the local businesses since 2020, trying to critically assess their engagement and development with sustainable development.

The difference between the approaches of Destination Fyn and Destination Nord, is that they in Fyn have made the Sustainable Barometer to follow up on the work they do, to give them relevant strategies based on their individual processes and needs (Destination Fyn, 2021). As John Hird mentions in the case of Destination Nord, when their work with the businesses is done, they have no more contact with them, but can only hope for a positive development (Appendix 4). In contrast, the analysis from the Sustainable Barometer is based on 9 questions, which is inspired by the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In 2020, these questions were asked to 73 businesses, which in 2021 had grown to 101 businesses, showing a growing interest in the project. The project evaluates them on questions concerning their level of sustainability, what they believe the purpose of sustainability is for them, what the reward will be for their businesses etc. (Destination Fyn, 2021).

These critical questions force the businesses to reflect on the importance of sustainability and why it is important for them to be a part of the process as being first movers. The report shows that 15 pct. of the involved tourism businesses has experienced a high or super high level of economic gain from the sustainable business solutions (Destination Fyn, 2021). These interviews with the businesses show that investing in sustainability is worth it and has already made a difference for them in one year. This is reflected in the number of tourism businesses who expect to invest in sustainable solutions in the next 1-2 years, where the numbers have grown to roughly the double of the expectations in 2020 (Destination Fyn, 2021).

The report also follows up on which knowledge the businesses are lacking about sustainability, where 49 pct. of the businesses in 2021 answered that their biggest need was to get new knowledge and inspiration, compared to 2020 where only 32 pct. needed inspiration (Destination Fyn, 2021). When this project shows how the businesses attitude towards sustainability has grown since the beginning of the project, it is interesting to imagine if project Instant Green Tourism had had the same approach. It is understandable that the project saw an urgent need of helping the businesses, especially when the consumers started to get involved in the process. However, when looking at the process the businesses in Fyn have been through, it seems a bit optimistic to think that all the work and knowledge they have achieved during the last two years, can be summed up in one project which lasted 10 months a year ago, in the Instant Green Tourism project.

The Instant Green Tourism project would hopefully result in a more “reinforced sustainability mindset, increased tourism revenue and more competitive products”, by making a project consisting of a SPRINT-course, which would lead the businesses through an idea phase and result in a sustainable product or service (KanalFrederikshavn, 2020). As John Hird mentions, it is up to the business owners to move forward with the tools they have been given during the 10 months of the project. Therefore, when he mentions how some businesses only made new menus in sustainable material, it was clear that not all businesses had the same starting point, and some might therefore have far to go after the project ended (Appendix 3).

John Hird mentions, that when we get closer to 2030, the businesses will suddenly need to fulfil the requirements of the sustainability demands of EU. Here he answers that it then might be up to the 18 workers at Destination Nord to help the businesses reach the goals, or the local Business Centre. This will be in contradiction with the purpose of the ‘project organisation’ as Nanna Bentzen calls Destination Nord, where she argues their purpose is not to push for change, but to act as a source to knowledge for the local businesses (Appendix 6). The role of DMO’s might therefore take a different turn when we get closer to 2030. As John Hird argues, it would be an advantage to put the responsibility on the DMO’s, because that could create the framework for a collaboration between the local businesses (Appendix 3).

Tourism perspectives and their effect on tourism consumption

In the summer of 2021, I spent my internship at Tornby Strand Camping, in Tornby at the west coast. The owners Morten and Tove Jensen had neither experience with the tourism industry when they bought their own camping site years ago. Morten was working in a hardware store, and Tove was

working as a pedagogue. Their initial work when they took over the camping site consisted of damage control, which meant painting surfaces to make it appear more attractive to the tourists. It was often 'learning by doing' that made them succeed along the way, by thinking of efficiency when it came to expenses such as cleaning (Appendix 7).

When asked what they associate with sustainability, they answered ecology and ergonomic footwear, referencing to hippies. Morten mentions that sustainability is probably here to stay and argues that some of the work with sustainability they can manage, and several things will eventually be required of them (Appendix 7). They have experienced that they save water by using sensors on their showers instead of using direct payment, because people then would stay there and get all the water they have paid for. They argue that the improvements of getting a water- and electricity saver has both been beneficial economically and environmentally to them. The problem is that it is not economically possible for them to change everything at once (Appendix 7).

They furthermore explain an example of these difficulties with not knowing how to sort trash at their camping site without the risk of pests, since the information is hard for them to find (Appendix 7). They explain a paradox of the government wanting a sustainable development but are very slow to give out directions for the businesses to act on. This shows that it is a slow process from when the public policies are decided in the government to the point where it is integrated in the businesses. The possibility of growth and sustainability is something Tornby Strand Camping is trying to solve on their own, since they have not been given any helping guidelines from the government yet. So even though the policy perspective is to make the tourism industry in Denmark more sustainable, there is still a lot of responsibility on the individual business owners to take on the responsibility and act on own initiative, as shown in the Instant Green Tourism project.

Henriette Mølgaard Hansen, who is a Senior Analyst and Development Consultant at the Danish Coastal and Nature Tourism agency mentions, that she worked on a project last year where they did a test pilot study, to get knowledge of the barriers around the sustainable solutions on camping sites and holiday homes (Appendix 2). The camping sites chosen for the project were already working with sustainability, their barriers where instead communicating their actions to the tourists. She argues that this can bring out empathy with the guests to let them know which initiatives they are taking, so they know why the camping sites e.g., let their grass grow because of biodiversity (Appendix 2). In the case of Tornby Strand Camping, they also had taken several economically sustainable initiatives, which as a by-project also would be environmentally sustainable. This way of working with

sustainability shows that these tourism businesses still have the economic sustainability at heart, and that the environmental sustainability is a by-product. Therefore, by doing work as Destination Fyn has done the last two years, resulting in their report “Barometer of Sustainability 2011”, they provide the businesses information to why it is positive for a business to work with sustainability (Destination Fyn, 2021).

This project could have been useful for a business as Tornby Strand Camping because they would be helped through the process and could keep their motivation up by be confronted with the positive results it provides. As the project showed, the percentage of businesses wanting to invest more in sustainable solutions from 2020 to 2021 had risen with 29 pct. (Destination Fyn, 2021). The numbers show that the work with sustainability pays off, and that the businesses understand the meaning with the work. For business owners as Morten and Tove Jensen, it might be difficult to see how their economic investments in sustainability will pay off, because, as previously mentioned, sustainability is a broad term, that is hard to understand, and are covering many aspects. Furthermore, Hall C. M. (2000) argues that the time horizons are hard to specify when working with sustainability, which also can make it harder to keep up the motivation when standing alone as a business owner.

As previously mentioned, there is an ideology of “consumer sovereignty” which means that consumers will keep finding excuses to travel, because leisure to them is argued to be consumed, which makes them feel entitled to travel and have fun. However, the leading destination organisation of VisitDenmark are only feeding into this ideology by seeing it as a good development that tourism in 2019 would break the record of 2018. This was however the same year as the Instant Green Tourism project was initiated, and the same year that the Danish election was significantly affected by sustainable values. This shows contradicting policy perspectives in the Danish Government, both encouraging the record high tourism numbers, but also initiating project such as Instant green Tourism, which makes me question how sincere the intentions of the government really is, and how the government and destinations work together even though there is a national strategy.

Furthermore, the DMO’s saw it as an opportunity for growth when short travels became a growing demand from consumers and started to research on expansion of destinations. The distance and travel time was of no concern to the Danes, which shows that sustainability is the last priority when going abroad on vacation. If the DMO can argue for the positive outcome tourism has on employment in the Danish cities and coastal areas, they have an incitement for having a policy perspective of growth.

Henriette Mølgaard Hansen argues that there are many initiatives being executed right now, and projects which are currently in process (Appendix 2). She argues that sustainable growth is not a paradox, since it contains three dimensions: the environmental, social, and economic sustainability. She argues that it is possible to have economic growth simultaneously with social and environmental sustainability. It all comes down to attracting the 'right' tourists, who will stay for a longer period, and therefore spend more money and thereby support the community (Appendix 2). When tourists stay at a destination for a longer period, it is also possible that they will get a larger sense of responsibility to the environment they live in, compared to single overnight stays, and will perhaps learn through their stay, how to sort their trash if this is made possible.

Henriette Hansen mentions how certificates as Green Key is a way to measure the sustainability obligation in the tourism industry. These certifications will be a way to keep an eye on the businesses and see if they follow up on their responsibilities. She argues that this certificate will be as fundamental to the tourists as Wi-Fi, which is expected to be included in their stay. She furthermore believes that social sustainability will become a larger interest for the tourists, with concern of employment welfare and support of tourism from the local community (Appendix 2). Henriette Hansen further argues that there is knowledge sharing across urban, coast and nature tourism which helps making initiatives to sustainable development, to reduce the total co2 omission (Appendix 2). The responsibility will however still be in the hands of the business owners, who can choose to take the knowledge given to them through the work with Destination Nord, or they can choose to postpone it, because they might not feel it is economically possible or worth it.

The problematic is, therefore, how the tourism businesses feel motivated and see the meaning of working with both environmental, economic, and social sustainability, which will be very dependent on the circumstances of the individual business owners. After covid-19, the helping-packages need to be paid back this summer and depending on how well the businesses have made it through the last two years, their prerequisite can be very different, making it harder for some to make sustainability their top priority.

Conclusion

As Henriette M. Hansen argued, the work with sustainable development needs to happen with a focus on both the environmental, economic, and social areas of a destination. However, the Project Manager of Destination Nord, Nanna Bentzen characterizes their role as a DMO to be sparring partners with the businesses, and not having any responsibility for creating change. The sustainable development

they focus most on appears to be the economical, with the example of project “Joint Growth”. They both initiated project Joint Growth and project Instant Green Tourism in 2019, which was an economical good year for the tourism industry in Denmark. It therefore initially seemed contradicting to want a focus on more tourists, while teaching tourism businesses to be more sustainable in their way of working. However, as Henriette M. Hansen argued, it is possible to have growth and sustainability at the same time, by spreading tourism out through the year.

Henriette M. Hansen who works at the national development organization, Danish Coast and Nature Tourism, is hired above the Danish DMO’s, and ensures that the initiative within the national strategy is being executed through the projects they choose to engage in. This organizational distribution of power is not necessary the most constructive way of working with sustainability, because the responsibility ultimately lies at the individual Danish businesses. As the newest strategy for 2021-2023 from Destination Nord shows, the tourism planning approach still has a focus on the economic growth and the employment tourism generates. Environmental sustainability is only mentioned as one out of five themes. This shows that even though sustainable projects are being initiated by Destination Nord, such as Instant Green Tourism, it is still not a main priority to them, but simply one of the contributors to their strategies and campaigns.

A different approach is seen with Destination Fyn, who has implemented a project with the local businesses, which has only become more attractive as the project has moved along the last two years. By having a desire to become first-movers as sustainability promoters, they have succeeded to change the mindset of the business owners whose interest in the project only grew. Destination Nord therefore can do the same and take on more responsibility as a DMO to enhance the progression of sustainable development in the tourism businesses. Nanna Bentzen mentions how Destination Nord seeks to accommodate the businesses, which already can be problematic. The businesses will always have a primary focus on the economic sustainability, to make it through a crisis as covid-19. Therefore, it can be argued that a firm direction and a guidance from the DMO could be necessary to assure change happening. As seen with project “Joint Growth”, the businesses and municipalities are working together, because it can give them an advantage of a stronger positioning towards attracting tourists. Even though Henriette M. Hansen argues that they encourage tourists to take more sustainable choices when visiting Destination Nord, it still does not change their desire of attracting many visitors, which eventually will leave a large carbon footprint anyway.

The Instant Green Tourism project ended as soon as the consultants were done with their project. After that, they were left to use the knowledge they had acquired, instead of working as Destination Fyn, where the businesses are kept under supervision which has made them be more ambitious with their goals. The example of Tornby Strand Camping shows the paradox of how the business owners were missing guidelines to how they should proceed with becoming more sustainable, when there was an environmental political perspective wanting the businesses to be well informed about sustainability. They had the wish to do something, but did not know how, and therefore had to seek options on their own.

The sudden focus on Instant Green Tourism shows that the demand from the tourists has a large effect on how the tourism planning of the destination organizations is characterized. They need to change the values of the organization to accommodate the desire of more sustainable solutions in the tourism industry. Because it is run by demand of tourists, it is questionable how high sustainability will be on the agenda of the tourism organizations now the world has opened again to international travel. Will people still act sensible accordingly to their good intentions? In that case, the tourism organizations will have to keep their promise and stay focused on changing their policy perspective.

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