



The Femern Belt Fixed Link: Mega Construction and its Social Impacts.



PRESENTED TO

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A REPORT BY

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*How is the ongoing infrastructure development of the Femern legitimized and perceived by
local populations and stakeholders in Rodby?*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Some abbreviations are used in this report, and this is the presentation of those abbreviation used with their full forms. Likewise, for making the research reader friendly, this section also includes the list of some Danish & Polish words that includes the special characters of Danish & Polish language like Ø, Å, Æ, Á, É, Ó to their literal English Translation or a closest English match.

| Acronym | Full Form in Simple English | Danish Spelling |
|----------------------|--|---------------------|
| AAU | Aalborg University | Aalborg Universitet |
| DSB | Danish State Railways | Danske Statsbaner |
| FBL | Femern Belt Tunnel | Fehmarn Bælt Link |
| PEI | Prince Edward Island | |
| | | |
| Danish Spelling | Simple English Translation used in this research | |
| Kommune | Municipality | |
| Kontanthjælp | Cash Assistance | |
| Kørsør | Korsor | |
| Nykøbing | Nykobing | |
| Ørestad | Orestad | |
| Øresundsbro | Oresundbro | |
| Smørrebrød | Open Sandwich | |
| Sous Chef | Manager | |
| Stiftsmusset | Stiftsmuseum (Maribo County Museum) | |
| Transportministeriet | Ministry of Transportation | |
| | | |
| Polish Spelling | Simple English Translation used in this research | |
| Próchniak | Prochniak | |
| Pérez | Perez | |
| Suárez | Suarez | |

ABSTRACT

An efficient mega-structure is both a prerequisite and a vital component of development. A few initiatives generate a positive rate of return, but all should have positive non-economic effects and contribute to societal benefits. The social influence of decisions or activities that lead to development is considered as a result or effect. It can also be seen as a societal result of progress. The fundamental problem with social costs and benefits is that they are difficult to anticipate and quantify and are viewed differently by authorities, decision makers, and project developers. This research aims to investigate Femern Belt Fixed Link efforts related to social mobility in Rodby and Rodbyhavn to improve the community. A semi-structured interview using a qualitative inductive method is used to acquire data. Interviews were conducted both in person and through digital platforms. According to the findings, the Femern Belt Fixed Link is portrayed as a highly creative and long-term link connecting Scandinavia to the rest of Central Europe. Many positive changes are projected in surrounding regions. Residents are optimistic that the infrastructure would spur development in the town through mobility, tourism, commercial and economic activities, employment opportunities, and so on despite the possible downsides of such chances.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For a long time, tourism and megastructure have been linked with each other. Mega constructions have played an essential part in the flow of tourists in a location for the ages. Whether in deserted gulf countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, China's numerous abandoned cities, or semi-urban areas with various architectural monuments, megastructures have always played an essential role in drawing tourists during and after construction.

In Europe, various infrastructures and megastructures have been a hot cake, and a key reason for tourism such as education, job recreation over the past, and the list of such attractions is growing day by day. Historical monuments like the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Disneyland in Paris, and other castles built by various emperors, have played a significant part in drawing tourism to their respective regions. Projects such as the Oresund fixed link between Sweden and Denmark, Milan's Malpensa Airport, the Betuwe railway line connecting Rotterdam to the German border, and the Cork-Dublin-Belfast-Stranraer railway axis in Ireland, among others, are attracting the attention of the tourists.

These mega projects have been linked with tourism development and have been a significant factor in increasing tourism in the region, ranging from education, employment, and recreation. On one hand, mega infrastructure projects have transformed the perception of a tourist location from a place of nothing to a place of affluence. One of the most apparent instances in this scenario is Dubai, transforming from a barren desert country with no chances into a wonderland, a fascinating tourist destination, and a global commercial powerhouse. This has aided in the enrichment of the locals through economic surpluses from tourism and people's movement for various reasons ranging from work to education. On the other hand, expensive megastructures

have been a curse as well. Such as the world's largest "Ghost city" Ordos, Hellinikon International Airport of Athens which has been closed after building Athens International Airport, the aquatics stadium, which was constructed for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is now abandoned and in poor condition, where Olympians formerly swam, huge, now remain filthy puddles (Street, 2020; "Welcome to Ordos, China: The world's largest "Ghost city"," 2016). Similarly, in Prince Edward Island (PEI), the opening fixed link has connected this island to Moncton. The provincial government and retail sectors expected that many islanders would use the quicker transportation connection to drive to Moncton for many large items purchases. However, big box retailers have led the opening or expansion of major stores, such as a future shop, Home Depot, and Walmart, which had swiped out smaller and family-owned businesses in PEI (Godfrey, 2004).

Even though big construction projects have significant negative aspects, the positive effects of such initiatives cannot be underestimated. As a result, various players in the mega constructions sector, take on the challenges and the risk of creating something unique that involves a large time and monetary investment. The Oresund bridge connecting Denmark and Sweden is an excellent example of a similar investment project. With the construction of several smaller bridges earlier and later in the 90's with The Great Belt Fixed Link, Denmark started the venture of mega construction connecting the two regions within its national territory. Similarly, the construction of the Oresund Bridge enhanced Denmark's road connectivity with Sweden and Norway. According to the Oresund Community Figure (Businesswest, 2022), the building of the Oresund fixed link connecting Sweden and Denmark resulted in a national economic gain of €8.41 billion due to more significant cross-border commuting stimulated by lower commuting costs. Following these successes, and with the bigger goal of connecting Scandinavian countries to the rest of Europe and

vice versa, the Femern Belt Tunnel project ultimately began its construction in 2021 in the bordering region of Denmark and Germany (Lolland & Femern respectively).

Lolland is a socioeconomically underdeveloped and sparsely inhabited town in Denmark. Lolland municipality has been facing a declining population for a long time. The government of Denmark has started to implement its plan of constructing a tunnel that connects the northern part of Germany with Lolland via Rodby, hoping to address the declining population in the region. The construction of this tunnel is expected to reduce the transportation time connecting Germany and Denmark from 40 /45 minutes to 7/10 minutes which will further aid in connecting central Europe and Scandinavia in a short travel time.

We three MA Tourism students from Aalborg University, campus Copenhagen, have had a significant interest in this field since the beginning, revolving around these reasons. As a result, we decided to conduct additional research into one of the world's largest megastructure construction projects at the time, The Femern Tunnel Project. On the surface, this is just a project that connects Denmark and Germany, but in a larger sense, this is the world's longest undersea tunnel, which is finally being built after years of planning and negotiations and is a vital connection in connecting the Scandinavian countries to Central Europe. In this research paper, we are particularly interested in learning more about the social mobility of people in the Rodby region, where the construction site is located. As the Femern Belt tunnel is a decade-long mega project, we look forward to exploring how the people react to this big change, how they position themselves, prepare and invest in what they perceive, and map the possible conflicts. We will furthermore investigate how this megastructure can contribute to a sparsely inhabited area with negative population growth and low liveliness to become a prominent tourist attraction and a responsible region for attracting people during and after the megastructure is built.

1.2 Femern Belt Tunnel

The Femern belt link is a submerged tunnel that will run 18 kilometres across the Baltic Sea, connecting the Danish Island of Lolland with the German island of Femern (Fehmarnbelt tunnel, 2022). It is one of the world's longest undersea tunnels and serves as a vital link between Central Europe and Scandinavia. Because of this construction, travel time between Lolland and Femern will be reduced from 45 minutes to 10 minutes by car and seven minutes by rail. The tunnel will be one of the world's longest tunnels once complete. The cross-border tunnel consists of a two-lane motorway in each direction and a double-track railway for high-speed trains.

Figure 1 FBL Construction Site

The upcoming Femern Belt Tunnel will shorten the distance and travel time between north Germany and Lolland in Denmark. This undersea tunnel is another mega infrastructure after the Oresund bridge to connect Denmark to central Europe. It is also



expected to impact the integration of Scandinavian and German regions economically and politically (Guasco, 2015). The upcoming Femern Belt Tunnel is a priority project of the EU's TEN-T, which is the European Commission-approved aid for financing the planning phase of the Femern belt fixed link project. There were objections from different companies such as Scandlines Denmark APS, Scandlines Deutschland GmbH, Danish ferry association and other so many companies and organisations until 20 March 2020, when Fehrman A/S finally got authorisation to start the project (European Commission Transport Committee, 2019-20). There have been distinct

refusals and criticism of these projects from different stakeholders. Some identified stakeholders who have criticised and supported the Femern project are listed below:

Figure 2 Overview of Stakeholders Who Support and Criticise the Femern Project (Witz et al., 2021)

| | Stakeholder group | Declared reason for support/opposition | Acceptable compromise |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| <i>Supporters</i> | Project developer DK | Better connection between Scandinavia and rest of the EU | Narrow space for further compromise due to actions by opposition |
| | Danish environmental NGO | No significant environmental impact from tunnel | Happy with current design |
| | GER planning authority | Boost for regional development | Happy with current design |
| <i>Opponents</i> | Ferry operator | State dumping (unfair business advantage) | State guarantees dropped or reduced to fair levels; equality of connecting infrastructure |
| | German environmental NGOs | Irreversible damage to valuable sea biotopes | Drilled rail only tunnel |
| | Affected German municipalities | Insufficient noise protection | ICE connection uninterrupted and maximization of noise protection |
| | GER local citizens protest associations | Damage to local character, jobs and businesses (tourism in particular) Environmental impact and lack of economic viability of the project | In favour of 0 variant (keeping the Jutland route only) Some members might tolerate scaled-down drilled rail only tunnel |

The primary purpose of the Femern Belt Fixed Link project is to improve the conditions for the transport of passengers and goods between Nordic countries and Central Europe. The Femern Belt Fixed Link project is expected to have several impacts in terms of environment,

employment, regional development, improvement of trading conditions, and a general strengthening of the transport sector (European Commission, 2020).

The FBL comes with dreams and ambitions for the future. For instance, the European Commission expects the project to improve one of the important land-based transport corridors connecting Scandinavia with central Europe (European Commission, 2020). Lolland municipality's mayor Holger Schou Rasmussen believes that the Femern belt project is the most extensive growth and development initiative in Lolland and is expected to create around 22,000 jobs annually (Iotkovska, 2021). However, Megaprojects will create negative impacts for some stakeholders, and they may perceive megaprojects as intruders causing disruption, lasting damage, or misery and may take active measures to oppose the project (Witz et al., 2021). Despite the positive motive of connecting two nations, it will always have social and economic impacts on the land where the infrastructure is built. So, in this research paper, we will explore the impacts of constructing the Femern tunnel on the Danish Island of Rodby.

1.3 Brief History of Rodby

Before looking into its present situation, it is crucial to understand how it came to this situation for this research and the researchers' understanding. It has a long history of trading between Denmark and Germany, dating back to the mediaeval period. Rodby originated around 1200 on the bottom of Rodby fjord on the shortest route across the Baltic Sea to Femern. The town became a market town in 1682 with privileges for trade with Germany, but a considerable storm surge hit the whole of south eastern Lolland in 1872, and the drying up of the fjord was then accelerated. After the massive storm led to the growth of an entirely new urban area with some industry by the harbour and a national railway connection with new fishing and traffic port, Rodbyhavn was inaugurated and flourished as an independent urban site. After a few years,

shipyards cracked, Rodby and Rodbyhavn stagnated for a period and did not lead to any significant growth except traffic to Germany. However, a ferry connection to Puttgarden in 1963 and the establishment of the holiday destination Lalandia in 1988 boosted the city and received the most remarkable recovery with many tourists and overnight stays. Nevertheless, people still have had to emigrate to neighbouring municipalities or countries to seek opportunities and employment. The decreasing number of agricultural, manufacturing, and public administration jobs has also affected people's social lives. Thus, the population has been dropping over the previous two-three decades, and the city has lost its administrative status, resulting in incorporation into the Lolland municipality centered in Maribo. Even after the reform, Lolland-Falster, among other marginal areas of Denmark, has experienced a decrease in the number of jobs in public sectors, especially jobs requiring higher education, compared to the larger cities of Copenhagen and Aarhus (Holmager et al., 2021).

1.4 Motivation for the study

Lolland-Falster is a powerhouse for international coastal tourism in Eastern Denmark, and the Femern belt connection has the potential to make tourism a driving force for further sustainable growth. There are various opportunities to boost the economy in this area, such as Lolland Falster airport- near Rodby, which is popular with gliders, parachutes, and motor aircraft. The landscape around Rodby is flat and characterized by fields, dunes, meadows, and beaches, and close to the coast where we can find several bathing beaches, surfing conditions and cottage areas (Rodby - Den Gamle Købstad, 2021)¹. According to the mayor of Lolland, Schou Rasmussen (Femern Development, 2021), it is expected to attract more public and private investments and improve the area's infrastructure, experiences, and accommodation capacity. That being the case, it will be

¹ Rodby – The old Market Town (direct translation)

interesting to explore how an ongoing FBL will uplift the socio-economic status of Rodby and Rodbyhavn positively, negatively or remain constant in the future. The fixed link opens opportunities for further development with a range of different activities, some of the most promising opportunities are construction jobs which will be boosted during the construction phase, and other side-job opportunities will be created. In the context of Rodby and Rodbyhavn, Danish welfare policies, including tax-paid unemployment benefits, free education, and health, have not been able to contribute to the inequalities generated by macroeconomic changes (Holmager et al., 2021).

As a result, we are motivated to delve deeper into the untouched regions of the future megaproject connecting Denmark to Germany and its potential overall implications.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

From an academic standpoint, this is a relatively new study site; therefore, there are a lot of untapped areas, such as social mobility and the project's long-term impacts on society and business. Big infrastructure can bring various changes in society (both short & long terms). It is crucial to understand and discover more about the ongoing effects or the societal shift that might occur during the construction period or even after for a more extended time. The extensive infrastructure brings hope to people, whereas the situation may or may not be as hoped. Constructions of such projects bring massive mobility, affecting the lifestyle of existing society in various ways. The societal and infrastructural changes that occurred during the construction period may cling and become permanent changes. Thus, this study investigates potential consequences or societal changes that could result from this infrastructural development. Since the Femern Belt tunnel connects a key metropolitan area of Scandinavia with central Europe through a pathway running through northern Germany, (comparatively) it will be easier to travel between these two

towns and more accessible, affecting the tourism sector of Rodby and extending the Lolland-Falster region as well. The project is expected to create new jobs during the construction phase and will help strengthen the region's tourism business. Therefore, this research aims to study the key rationales and how different stakeholders frame FBL to legitimize the project and the potential consequences for the area and the residents.

Research Question:

How is the ongoing infrastructure development of the Femern legitimized and perceived by different stakeholders in Rodby?

The above research question is broken down into two sub-questions to unfold it. The accompanying sub-questions can lead to a comprehensive answer to the primary research topic. The first sub-question will support the idea that it is vital to investigate the strategies used by the major stakeholders in effectively campaigning for Rodby to become a welcoming new alternative for expats to reside with good living conditions. Likewise, the second sub-question will address potential positive and negative impacts of the mega construction from the eyes of the residents.

Sub Question:

- 1. How do central stakeholders behind the FBL promote and legitimize the construction of a tunnel between Rodby and Femern Island?***
- 2. What consequences and reactions are being observed locally as a result of the FBL's planning and construction?***

The outcomes to the above two questions will pave a good path for answering the primary research questions. Hence when these two sub-questions are addressed and will aid in getting a good insight into this research paper's primary objective of finding the impact of the megastructure construction in terms of mobility in a sparsely populated city like Rodby.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This research paper will be divided into mainly five chapters. The first chapter of this research paper will provide a background summary of the topic. This chapter will provide the readers with a basic overview of the subject, define the problem, and provide the research goal. The introduction chapter and the research question provide the reader with a clear picture of what will be covered in this research paper. Chapter two of this paper will be the literature review where previous research papers, journals, books, studies, and other works by scholars and authors will be reviewed. This chapter will provide the readers with an overview of what previous researchers have done or studied on related research questions. Similarly, it will provide the authors (*researchers of this paper*) an understanding of the existing research and debates to particular areas of study.

Chapter three of this research paper will contain a methodology. The methodology chapter provides information on how data is gathered, and the process involved in deciding the method to collect data. This section will explain why the chosen strategy was selected despite numerous other options. The data findings analysis, and discussion will be included together in chapter four. The finding and analysis chapter will describe what has been found in data collected. The findings will be analysed simultaneously based on the literature review. The discussion part will show the authors' understanding of the subjects and the study material throughout the study tenure and the thesis writing period. The discussion part will be followed by chapter five; conclusion, and

recommendation. Here, the authors will draw a conclusion based on the data findings, analysis, and discussion. This chapter will also include recommendation section which will lead to new perspectives for further research. References, where a list of the academic journals, articles, and news articles, applied throughout the research paper, will be listed is followed then after. Lastly other relevant materials for this research papers, will be attached in the appendix section.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different types of literature, including scholarly articles, books, and other pertinent sources for this research, will be reviewed in this chapter. Understanding what has been accomplished so far will be made more accessible by reviewing previously researched material on the subject. It will help researchers to understand the topic better and look at it from different perspectives. The literature review will be categorised into three different sections; 1. Development and Conflicts linked to Infrastructure Construction, 2. Hopes and Promises of Mega Infrastructure 3. Impacts on societal change due to mobility. Researchers will be able to clarify the subject and see the research topics more clearly by categorizing the literature. Additionally, it will make it simpler for readers to comprehend.

2.1 Development and Conflicts Linked to Infrastructure Construction

In today's modern era, every voice counts and makes a more considerable impact during decision-making, especially in activities involving or impacting one or multiple stakeholders. The following article - Locating the public interest in mega infrastructure planning: The case of Sydney's WestConnex (Searle & Legacy, 2021), was chosen as it gives an insight into the effects of ignoring the smallest voices raised against the project. Conflicts around transport and megastructures are driven by social and environmental impacts that are increasingly prevalent worldwide. However, environmental influences have received significant attention compared to the social impacts of these projects, which stimulate conflicts (Searle & Legacy, 2021). Differences in stakeholders' perceptions cause conflicts; interests are crucial to conflict resolution. The projects with specific issues, environments and stakeholders' issues are complex and cause

conflicts such as differences in information, interests, needs, valuation, and the existence of interested groups like nongovernmental organisation social structure and one-sided project enforcement (Awakul and Ogunlana 2002; Klausner and Groves, 1994; Minnery, 1985; Naderpajouh et al., 2014, cited in Lee et al., 2017).

Conflicts and responses from people living or encountering are the most common scenario in developing mega infrastructural projects, so it is an essential part that needs to be considered while planning projects. Literature on development and conflict links to infrastructure construction is vital to research who is in line with the projects and how to manage upcoming conflicts and tension in the mega projects. The article (Suarez & Perez, 2018) was chosen because this literature describes the infrastructure development context linked to the construction of transport and water management infrastructure and analysis the relationship between social conflicts and structural violence within the scope of development. Infrastructure development often occurs in complex social settings, so all projects should consider conflict-sensitive analyses as a part of their ex-ante evaluation on the premise that all infrastructure development implies a change to the territory where it takes place (Suarez & Perez, 2018). In conflict-prone areas, conflict-sensitive analysis for the infrastructure development model is used to generate best practices for creating conflict-sensitive approaches for each stage of an infrastructure life cycle. This approach is applied to five life cycle phases of an infrastructure project: assessment, strategy, planning and coordination, building nation legitimacy, project execution and translation of completed projects to host nation control.

In the next literature, researchers will unfold how the availability and quality of infrastructure and service can bring a significant standard of living. Even though the mega project is grounds for conflict in the social context, well-managed projects are critical to the population's

standard of living. Improvements in the provision, availability, and quality of infrastructure and services offered can result in significant changes in the population's standard of living through facilitating access to health, education, other social services, and the labour market (Alonso and Sanchez, 2012, cited in Suarez & Perez, 2018). Infrastructure is especially crucial in connecting rural areas to regional and international networks, as well as in developing urban-rural ties and bringing about an inclusive and long-term change of the production, institutional, and social spheres (Suarez & Perez, 2018).

If viewed every phase of project development through these lenses of conflict assessment infrastructure, a project can be designed to reduce drivers of conflicts and support the peace process. Environmental conflicts are regarded as exceptionally illuminating examples of how relationships between social life and material space can only be theorized through social meditation (Linnros & Hallin, 2001). The development of modern society has taken a wrong and dangerous direction; for example, rapid urbanization and extensive infrastructure investments have led to uneven regional development in areas such as fertile land, forests, the sea, and many natural settings. This continuous development threatens regional and global natural resources and creates an inhuman environment. Several studies by the world health organisation (WHO 2000 & 2005, cited in Busscher, 2014) have emphasized the negative impacts of transport infrastructure on public health, increasing the risk of road-traffic injuries and exposure to noise and air pollution.

According to a study by Yim and Barrett (2012, cited in Busscher et al., 2014), around 3300 people die annually due to long-term exposure to air pollution by road -transportation. On this basis, the European Union has developed an air quality policy for the entire EU and its member states; therefore, any project building new road infrastructure will have to consider the air policy regulation (Busscher et al., 2014). However, this caused severe conflicts in the Netherlands during

mid 2000 when new infrastructure development was put on hold for many months because of their possible contribution to increasing air pollution to levels above the European Union. In planning the megastructure, especially transportation is challenging to implement all the policies and standards regulated by state and government organs because it includes natural settings, the environment, and public interests. This redefining of infrastructure's purpose is a watershed moment for the industry, resulting in a rethinking of how infrastructure is designed and developed to incorporate social, territorial, and sustainability factors. Early in the construction of new projects, to guarantee that the new infrastructure is inclusive, resilient, and climate-change-adapted while also encouraging the transformation of current stock and adapting it to new sustainable development standards.

In response to broadening the scope of project analysis to include topics that are not traditionally among the primary concerns of sectoral ministries, the government should strengthen the institutional framework for managing community dialogue and infrastructure governance in order to address social and environmental issues. "Contestation is often driven by their significant social and environmental impacts, where social impacts get less attention than environmental impacts' (Hossain & Fuller, 2021). The research serves as a means of exploring the conflicts surrounding social impacts through the examples of the WestConnex project; therefore, it is considered while writing this assessment. The articles primarily support the two arguments. Conflicts emerge more because of unequal power relations that shape a sense of unfairness and mistrust than harmful effects or negative community perceptions. Similarly, market-oriented governance dominates the concept of social welfare or 'development,' which limits the scope of the impact assessment process and supports controversial mega-project decisions. Additionally, the article offers the writers insights into the types of power dynamics that support such disputes.

2.2 Hopes and Promises of Mega Infrastructure

With the construction of mega structures, hopes of a better future rise. To understand what it means to build infrastructure and how the future of any town or city is altered, it is essential to understand what it brings to the table. Therefore, the article (Fungeld, 2019) is highly relevant for this research because it explores "how the region's future is envisioned" (p.287) with the infrastructure of connectivity being built. Even though the study is done with Southeast Asia, this article shows how connecting one country to another via infrastructures brings hope to people for a better future. Infrastructures are often taken as a sign of "development". The number of skyscrapers, bridges, roads, tunnels, and train tracks indicates the wealth or development of a country. Such infrastructures are primarily built for people's convenience. However, building or planning building infrastructures (big or small) brings hopes to changes in people's life (esp. financially) even though the primary reason might be other than financial achievement. In addition to establishing physical links over long distances, infrastructures play an essential role in forming political entities, improving commercial linkages, and facilitating service delivery (Funfgeld, 2019).

The author Taylor (2005) explores the idea of border control in migration management in western society. The article is relevant because it helps researchers distinguish between informal and formal migration. While most nations permit non-citizens to enter for brief periods for things like tourism, research, and business, most also make few provisions for these persons to enter and reside on their territory permanently. Only four nations—Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States—have structured universal programs for permanent immigration out of the more than 191 countries in the world. Nevertheless, the citizens of European union member nations can move freely between the countries in search of education, employment opportunities, etc., due to

the EU Free Movement addressed by Article 45 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, 2022). The technological connection between the countries helps to exchange labour for fulfilling the labour market; however, the social inequalities will continue and deepen along with the acceleration of capital mobility. Transborder population movement is driven by more compelling factors than a convergence of interests between workers in one country and employees in another. Therefore, trans-border population movement is seen as cooperation that promotes regional cooperation (Taylor, 2005).

The articles reviewed below are chosen because they give an idea of how the public's interest is treated or taken into consideration in the planning and management of complex mega transport projects. The article mainly surrounds the issues and protests about WestConnex in Sydney, Australia. However, it provides the knowledge behind its politics of it. In western liberal democracies, the public's interest and opinion are highly considered when making any kind of political decision. This article provides an outline of what happens when planners fail to raise extra or new public interest issues or are hesitant to do so. Within liberal democracies, the planning of mega transport infrastructure is guided by public interest and claims are typically expressed through legislation and political voice (Searle & Legacy, 2021).

In order to create jobs and maintain economic productivity, the OECD, the World Bank, and the United Nations have all suggested that governments combat financial and economic crises by investing in infrastructure. However, transport infrastructure and megaprojects face social resistance and public controversy. For instance, the French Italian Turin-Lyon tunnel and Nordstrom experienced violent protests on at least one side of the border. In contrast, other international projects, such as the Danish/Swedish Oresund bridge and the British French channel fixed link, did not get substantial stakeholder criticism or open resistance (Searle & Legacy, 2021).

In infrastructure planning, economic rationality, market logic and public interests are framed concerning more comprehensive economic benefits achieved through project implementation, such as job creation and growth stimulation. Global competitiveness may be at odds with social and environmental goals typically expressed in mega construction strategies or early infrastructure planning to generate projects and lose as the projects (Haughton & McManus, 2019). Numerous countries are planning extensive urban transport infrastructure more than ever, seriously impacting neighbourhoods and creating tensions between locals and planners, which are challenging for project planners. Other challenges to planning include the limits of the rationalist process and technical knowledge, which can marginalize the non-expert's voice in the planning (Klosterman, 1980 cited in Searle & Legacy, 2021).

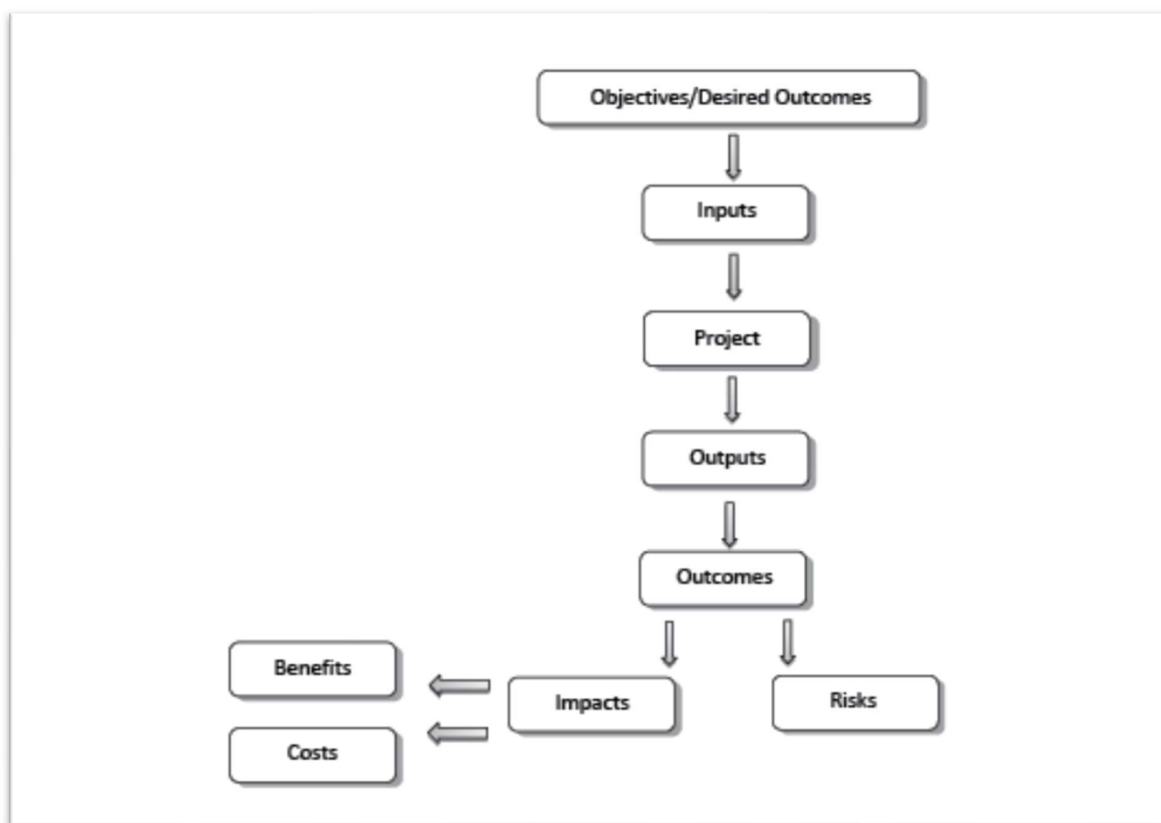
2.3 Impacts on Societal Change and Mobility

The article "the importance of tourism to a destination's economy" (Bunghez, 2016) will be discussed in this paragraph. The article was selected as it provides a breakdown of how tourism affects a destination's economy. Besides that, the paper uses the example of a small town in Romania called Mamaia to explain the concepts of macro-destination and micro-destination. The term "micro-destination" refers to a tiny area of a country, such as a city or a town, as opposed to the entire country or state, which is considered "macro-destination (Bunghez, 2016)." In another circumstance, a city or town may function as a macro-destination in connection to nearby smaller attractions like museums and theme parks. The article exemplifies a macro-destination like the United States of America comprises thousands of micro-destinations, including regions, States, cities, and even numerous destinations inside a single town. According to (Bunghez, 2016), most of the macro-destinations' marketing revolves around the micro-destinations. For instance - The Disney World of Orlando. "Thousands of visitors fly to Orlando and go directly to Disney World

where they spend all their holiday or most of it" (Bunghez, 2016, p.2). "As such, these tourists consider their destination to be Disney World" (Bunghez, 2016, p.2) and use everything in between as transit only.

The article 'measuring the social impact of infrastructure projects: the case of Gdansk international fair co' will be reviewed in the paragraph below. This article was chosen because it fits the aim and objectives of what researchers are trying to explore. The articles successfully portray the concept of the social impacts of infrastructure projects. According to Zamojska & Próchniak (2017), "social impact is considered a consequence or effect of the decision of interventions that lead to development" (p.25). In the value chain of social impact, many issues have social costs and benefits. The biggest issue with calculating social costs and benefits is that different authorities, decision-makers, and project developers may use different metrics to gauge the impact (Zamojska & Próchniak, 2017, p.3). Every project may have different social implications; hence modelling is still an active and crucial study area. However, many of the intended intervention's social effects (infrastructure improvements) may be foreseen. According to (Zamojska & Prochniak, 2017, p.6), "in practice, impacts are usually considered as positive (benefits) or negative (costs), primary or secondary long-term changes, or consequences of decisions taken which led to development". Most of the projects and mega-projects bring many new inhabitants to the community. They have their values, norms, and behaviours; hence the project creates more social values.

Figure 3 Social Value Chain (Clark et.al, 2004, p.7; cited in Zamojska & Prochniak, 2017)



Most of the literature on megaprojects ignores that the negative consequences are primarily felt at the local level, while the positive effects are frequently presented at the national or regional level. The article "The Megaprojects - An Anatomy of Perception" (Delphine et al., 2019) was chosen because the research focuses on local people (residents and communities) to understand better how they perceive megaprojects relevant to this study. Megaprojects are often significant transformational initiatives that touch and involve a wide range of stakeholders with various interests. Globalization is one of the factors that propel megaprojects forward. The article (Delphine et al., 2019), a case study of the Suramadu Bridge in Indonesia, demonstrates how most respondents supported the project, mainly for emotional and cultural reasons. Various stakeholders have varied perspectives on a megaproject based on their expectations and interactions with the project. Residents and locals, who are minor stakeholders with limited influence, may have

positive or negative perceptions of a project depending on their experiences with its benefits and drawbacks. The research work goes into more detail and illustrates how, on one hand, megaprojects help the city welcome financial benefits. Among the main economic benefits covered in the article, are the effects on land value, business, international trade, tourism, employment, and taxation. Another example of how contentious megaprojects are considered beneficial from the locals' perspective is how frequently the organizations behind them promise to deliver some intangible benefits of pride and identity to the locals (people and surroundings). On the other hand, often, the project's undesirable externalities.

Antonson & Levin (2020) argues that the future travel and transport infrastructure for sustainable growth and investment in a sustainable transport system with high efficiency and huge capacity should be designed, function, and help everyone access good service and quality life. Transportation and mobility are critical to sustainable development because they may boost economic growth, improve accessibility, and improve social fairness, health, city resilience, urban-rural links, and rural productivity. New routes or new commuting patterns may harm locals by reducing the number of visitors, and new technical solutions such as tunnels or railways or new bus stops may lead to fear of crime or traffic accidents. At the stage of construction of transport infrastructure, noise pollution and air pollution increase the risk of traffic accidents because construction traffic may use the same road as residents use.

The following article, *Crimes in Border Regions: The Scandinavian Case of Oresund* (Ceccato & Haining, 2004), is also taken into consideration for this report as the two bordering regions have an open border system; there comes the possibility of significant societal impact due to infrastructure investment is a shift in crime geography. As (Ceccato & Haining, 2004) points out, due to the European Union's (EU) enlargement and increased intra-European cross-border

movement aided by enhanced communication systems, crime in border regions could become a hot topic in Europe. New, better transit networks that traverse "open" borders boost mobility, but they do not always lead to a surge in the number of offenders. However, increased accessibility to places may result in new geographic tendencies of crimes by generating new opportunities for breaching in regions that, despite being populated, may lack qualified guardians. The authors (Field et al., 1991; Vagg, 199; Anderson et al., 1995; Hajdnijak, 2002; Wilson, 2003; Junninen and Aromaa, 2000; Osyka, 2001; cited in Ceccato & Haining, 2004) identify several elements that contribute to the susceptibility of crimes in the border region. In terms of location and geography, they argue that the border's regional position and kind, as evidenced by several articles.

Similarly, socioeconomic factors and organizational inequalities, such as salary disparities between bordering nations and unemployment on both sides of the border, may encourage marginalized groups to perceive illicit commerce as a means of survival. Differences in product taxation, tariffs, and laws between neighbouring nations may increase the possibility of smuggling. Human trafficking and prostitution could be facilitated by cultural and gender disparities on both sides of the border. Political divisions and mutual rebellion may open the door to criminal activity. Similarly, differences in legislation and law enforcement and a deficiency of harmonization of statutory provisions could result in a disparity in the level of risk for an offender. Inconsistencies in law-enforcement regimes (particularly cultural differences) add to or encourage this, making it difficult for cross-border police to collaborate daily. Finally, when discussing the adverse parameters for criminal activity, the author discusses the collaboration among different types of cross-border crimes, such as smuggling, drug-related offences, and money laundering, and the

offender's perception and attitude of the border, such as having a good understanding of the local area.

2.4 Sub-Conclusion

Mega-infrastructure projects are essential for the future of cities, states, and people's way of life. The issue is that these initiatives frequently overrun their budgets, schedules, or both. Large infrastructure projects can also have a revolutionary impact on the economy. The mega-projects create jobs, generate income, increase the flow of people, and give a new identity to the construction area. Nonetheless, every coin has two sides, and so do the mega-projects. Every mega-construction comes with a fair share of positive and negative impacts. Positive impacts boost the morality of all the connected stakeholders, whereas, on the other side, the negative ones question the rationale and necessity of the project. In the context of FBL, a new and ongoing decade-long project, a few pieces of research have been carried out by limited scholars, environmentalists, engineers, local authorities, and government agencies. They understand the changes it would bring once the tunnel is completed or before the construction begins.

Nonetheless, most research is based on the environmental and engineering impacts that construction would carry along the tunnel. Much of the research is done with the future in mind. For instance, what will this tunnel bring after the project is finished? The FBL tunnel is a decade-long project, and the impacts it will have during the construction period cannot be overlooked. Therefore, this research aims to fill the gap in the literature and explore different implications the ongoing construction will have on the various sectors of society, such as mobility, population, tourism, employability, real estate market and local businesses.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

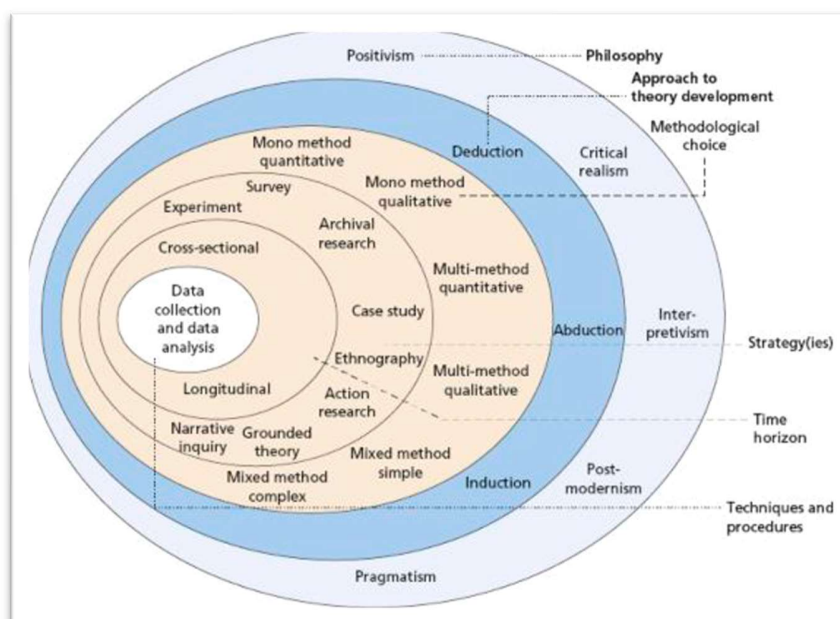
This chapter gives the reader an outline of how the research for this paper is carried out. This chapter explains how researchers chose a specific method for collecting and analysing data and what processes and theories were examined during the decision-making process. It is crucial to describe the process involved in choosing suitable methods of collecting and analysing data because it provides the reader with a framework and explains the writer's perspective on the research.

FBL is a long-term ongoing project aimed to be completed in 2029. Writing this research paper about a project that will take around a decade to complete is challenging and a balancing act (Rokicki, 2009, p.4). The reason is whether what has been written about the project and what will be written would be speculative work. Therefore, it requires carefully selecting methods to collect and analyse data. The methodology guides any researcher to know how knowledge should be gathered (Al-Saadi, 2014). It is a collection of methods of telling us 'What' kind of information is gathered and, more specifically, 'how' those data are gathered. In addition, methodology explains how the researchers decided to use a particular method of gathering and analysing data.

One such framework for creating a strong research technique is the "research onion", which enables us to make a series of choices that enables methodical study. Our research philosophy was founded on three presumptions: ontological, epistemological, and axiological. When choosing the method, the research onion developed by Saunders et al. (2007) is the most suitable for this research project.

The research onion can help us comprehend the various procedures and stages of research to make the best methodological decision. Its versatility for practically any research approach and capacity to be applied in several

Figure 4 Research onion (Saunders et al., 2007)



circumstances make it beneficial (Bryman, 2012). According to Saunders et al. (2012), one must move from the outside to the inner layer of the study onion. Each layer of the onion, when seen from the outside, describes a more thorough stage of the study procedure (Saunders et al., 2007). According to Saunders et al., the research process can be compared to peeling back the layers of an onion to reveal the underlying layer. The proper steps must be done to accomplish a goal; in research, this means completing one stage before moving on to the next.

3.2 Research philosophy

Research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about developing knowledge in a particular field. The start of knowledge development may not be as dramatic as a new theory of human motivation, but it addresses a specific problem in a particular organisation or setting to develop new knowledge (Adams et al., 2020). At every stage of research, researchers will make several assumptions which include the realities encountered in research (ontological assumption) about human knowledge (epistemological assumptions) and different ways that

influence the research process (axiological assumption) (Burell and Morgen, 2016; cited in Adams et al., 2020).

In the case of this research paper, the ontological assumptions suggest different viewpoints on how the construction of the FBL in the Rodby area affects society and people from various angles. The project centres around more than one method, and thus it has more than one (many) realities. Similarly, the epistemological assumptions indicate that this research is not restricted to a specific field of study or area. However, it encompasses various theories and knowledge in tourism, social mobility, constructions, mega-constructions, plans, and strategies. These were gathered from various secondary data sources, such as the literature, past study, books and articles, reports, and other similar sources. It was only feasible because of the knowledge gained through the researchers' active engagement and contacts. Finally, the researchers have no prior knowledge of any megaprojects and perhaps even the research location (Rodby Town) in the parameters of this research. Hence, there have been minimal concerns of bias when writing this research paper.

Table 1

Research Philosophy

| Research Philosophy | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Research Approach | Research Strategy |
| Positivism | Deductive | Quantitative |
| Interpretivism | Inductive | Qualitative |
| Pragmatism | Deductive/Inductive | Qualitative and/or Quantitative |

3.2.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is developed as a critique of positivism from a subjective perspective (Adams et al., 2020). Interpretivism argues that human beings and their social world cannot be

studied in the same way as physical phenomena, and therefore, social science research needs to be different from natural sciences. Social science research cannot be experimented with or researched in the same way as natural science research. Social science researchers need to interpret and find meaning in words, such as what is said, why it is said, or the reason behind it. For this research, however, one stakeholder (authorities) has presented the FBL to another (the locals). It is essential to understand where it is coming from; similarly, it is crucial to understand the response they get from the people directly affected by it. Interpretivism argues that knowledge is produced by exploring and understanding, not "discovering" the social world of people being studied, focused on their meaning and interpretation, i.e., meanings are socially constructed by social actors in a particular context (Al-Saadi, 2014). In the case of this research paper, different stakeholders already have their perspectives and opinions about the FBL project. The authors do not need to discover but instead must interpret the meaning of their opinions. The researcher's task is to investigate and comprehend the sentiments, and how that is done relies on the interpretation. As Goldkuhl (2012) explains, the central notion of interpretivism is to work with previously existing subjective meanings in the social world in order to accept their existence, reconstruct, understand, avoid, and use them as a building block in theorising. The Rodbyhavn and Rodby already exist, and so do the stakeholders (authorities, residents, etc.). The researchers must understand the meaning of FBL concerning them and what influences it will have on them. Therefore, interpretivism will be adopted for this research. As interpretive researchers on measuring the social impacts of the Femern Belt Link, researchers are more interested in exploring the practical outcomes rather than abstract results whose presentation and meaning may sound deep only as an idea or a philosophical thought but not have a concrete existence. This research is not only involved in the observed situation; instead, it is characterised as a mere observer of the social world.

3.3 Research approach

3.3.1 Inductive Research Approach

The objectives and procedures of broad assumptions to precise methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretations are discussed in this research approach. The selection of the research approach depends on the nature of the study challenge and the data analysis and argumentation method used. It is critical to clearly define a research approach because it will influence the data-gathering options that are made. Therefore, for this research, inductive research will be adopted as there is no prior hypothesis.

“In inductive reasoning, there is a gap in the logic argument between the conclusion and the premises observed, the conclusion being ‘judged’ to be supported by the observation made” (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010 cited in Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016, p.144). Inductive techniques involve developing concepts from research rather than beginning a project with a theory as a foundation. This method is chosen to study otherwise known as an isolated community. In case of FBL and Rodby/Rodbyhavn (an isolated community) there is little knowledge about this community, authors would have to obtain information about it, leading to the formulation of theories. This thesis is purely based on evidence gathered using an inductive research approach. In contrast to the deductive research approach, the researchers in this thesis would work from the bottom up, using the participants' perspectives to develop border themes and generate and test ideas that connect the themes. There are two main reasons for this. The first is due to the structure, plan, and technique of the thesis report, i.e., listening and analysing the views of locals (bottom) and building theory based on findings. The second reason is, as mentioned in the previous section, Rodby is a relatively new study site, which means there are many untouched areas such as social

mobility, long-term implications of the project on society, and business. As a result, it has been tough to test the theories.

Figure 5 Diagram of Inductive Process in Research Approach



3.4 Data Collection Method

3.4.1 Qualitative data

Data collection is an essential tool for understanding the behaviour of an audience or sample group. Unlike quantitative data, qualitative data are descriptive and depend upon context. Qualitative data helps researchers to understand the reasons behind people's opinions. To simplify, qualitative data helps understand the 'reason' behind a person's particular response. According to social constructivism, people's interpretations of the events around them are partially shared meanings and realities. Qualitative data are more likely to be variable, fluid, and complicated than quantitative data since the meanings in qualitative research are based on social interaction (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). When compared to quantitative data, qualitative data is more likely to be defined by its richness and fullness due to its ability to examine a subject in as authentic a way as possible. The 'thin' abstraction or description that primarily arises from quantitative data

collecting and the 'thick' or 'thorough' abstraction or description associated with qualitative data can be contrasted (Brekhus et al. 2005; Dey 1993; cited in Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Therefore, to understand the thoughts and opinions of people of the Rodby and Rodbyhavn area. It will help to understand people's perspectives on constructing the Femern link. Furthermore, it helps to break down why they (the *people interviewed*) have their perspectives and what led them (*people interviewed*) to have such perspectives.

3.4.2 Sample group

A sample group is a collection of individuals, products, or goods chosen for evaluation from a broader population in study. The sample should be representative of the population to ensure that the findings from the study sample may be applied to the complete population. However, because there are no guidelines to follow, determining sample size for qualitative research may be even more difficult than determining sample size for quantitative research. Therefore, a sample group for qualitative research is determined by what information researcher wants to gather, what is aimed to explore, what is considered valuable, credible and what can be achievable in the given period of time with the resources available.

This research aims to understand the implications of FBLs in the Rodby area. Therefore, all the stakeholders that are related (*directly*) to FBL and the Rodby area are a sample group for this research, including the people involved with the project and residents and surroundings. Thus, the residents such as house owners, local business owners, employees of FBL, municipality (extensively government), etc. are a sample group for this project. However, they have different concerns and are affected differently, thus the categorisation. To address all of their (*different*) concerns, interviewees will be divided into two subgroups: a) residents and b) authorities. Stakeholders such as local business owners, residents, and homeowners. will be categorised into

residents and personnel from the municipality, Femern project will be categorised under authorities.

- ***Semi-structured Interview***

Among various methods of collecting data, an interview was chosen as a data collection method. Individual interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via technologies such as mobile telephones, zoom, skype, teams, facetime, etc. Two sets of questions were prepared for the interview. However, occasionally the conversation wandered off-topic, necessitating the use of more spontaneous questions to bring the interview back on track. The division of the sample group was done to understand the interviewees' perspectives in depth. Interviews with the stakeholders who are authorities (*who work for projects and make plans, policies, etc.*) helped to understand the reason behind the construction and the plans/agenda that come along with it. In contrast, residents such as homeowners, local business owners, shopkeepers, realtors, cafes, etc. helped researchers understand the concerns raised due to the construction.

The selected sample had a particular field of expertise, therefore, researchers needed to customise the interview questions based on their field of studies, responsibilities, and experience that is related to FBL. There were a few challenges associated with conducting semi-structured interviews, such as being spontaneous with follow-up questions, taking notes of important topics, not repeating the questions, and asking the related questions without being off-topic, or especially not making the interviewee uncomfortable. It was pretty challenging to notice or see if the interviewees were uncomfortable because most of the interviews were taken digitally as it was quite challenging to read the body language, gestures, or facial expressions clearly, which could have been much more manageable when done face-to-face.

Similarly, how interviewees would respond or answer the question was not in our control. Sometimes questions meant or prepared to ask later in the interview were answered before, and sometimes responses were not specific, where the interviewer had to repeat the question or modify it accordingly to extract the answer the interviewer required.

Similarly, interviewing locals was even more challenging as none of the -authors have any direct connection to the area. Together with that, the lack of private vehicles was another obstacle to the construction site. Therefore, the decision was made to contact residents via social media. The call was made on the local Facebook group ([link](#)) for their involvement in the interview for this thesis was wholly disregarded. It may be because there are so few people in the area, most of whom are elderly. Only one person offered to volunteer for the interview but later vanished and could not be reached for the interview.

Nonetheless, the interviewing locals was successful on the second visit to the place. Instead of trying to contact people via social media or mutual friends, the authors decided to go to the streets of Rodby and Rodbyhavn and try talking to people. To approach the first person was uneasy, as co-authors did not know what to expect. Another inconvenience that could have occurred was the language issue (not being fluent in Danish). Luckily, people were understanding and agreed to interview in English. That is why most of the interviews were conducted smoothly. At times the interviews took a different turn quickly. Interviewees seemed eager to tell their stories rather than answer the actual questions. That is why it was more of a conversation than an interview. Sometimes the authors had to stop the recording in the middle once interviewees started talking about their personal life, such as relationships, pets, etc. but continued with the conversation and resumed once they said something useful for the research. Likewise, interviews taken in local pubs were interrupted quickly by their customers (some of them were drunk too).

3.5 Research Time

A cross-sectional study is observational research examining data on variables collected at a single point across a sample population or a pre-defined subset of the population (*Cross-sectional study*, 2022). The sample group of this research paper is only a set of population studied for once. The progress or change is not followed through over a period of time. Therefore, this research paper is a cross-sectional study. Cross-sectional research does not include executing experiments; however, it is commonly used in the physical and social sciences, as well as many business domains, to better understand outcomes. Even though the future outcomes of the FBL project cannot be predicted, it can be used to identify community features, but it cannot be utilised to determine cause-and-effect links between variables. This strategy is frequently used to infer possible links or collect early data to enable additional research and experimentation. Consequently, this research aims to study the effect of the infrastructure construction in the Rodby area, ergo the cross-sectional study.

3.6 Limitations and Challenges

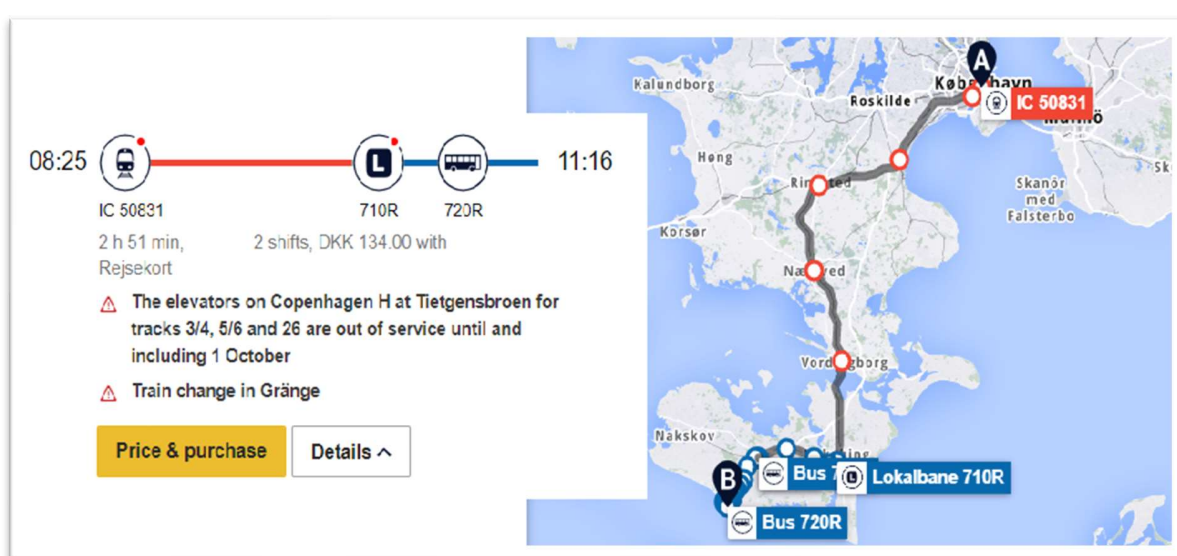
To conduct this research, the biggest challenge was accessibility. Rodby and Rodbyhavn is roughly an hour and a half drive (by car) from Copenhagen and about four hours by public transportation. Another challenge we faced was meeting people because the research was carried out in the midst of the pandemic. We used the virtual meeting platforms to conduct interviews with various stakeholders (esp. authorities) and gather data to mitigate this challenge of accessibility. But interviewing locals was not possible via digital platforms. We made multiple unsuccessful attempts via different media (esp. social media) to reach the appropriate sample group (locals). Thus, we decided to pay a visit to the research site despite the transportation challenges.

Finding a sample group was another challenge. One of the difficulties was selecting an appropriate interviewee from a pool of various stakeholders with the necessary expertise and skills. After deciding to interview stakeholders at various levels, we had to figure out how to contact them. Similarly, some interviewees were very eager to convey their point of view, regardless of whether it was within our area of interest, whilst others find it more complicated to answer the questions. Another issue was scheduling the interviewee meeting, since a few interviewees decided to postpone the interview session minutes before the pre-scheduled time. The lack of private vehicles, longer travel distance, and difficulties setting the proper schedule all contributed to the three delays in the field visit. Nonetheless, we made a total of two visits to the study area and its surroundings. The main goal of those two visits was to have a first-hand understanding of the area, its residents, its businesses, and its socio-physical atmosphere.

On Sunday afternoon, we made the first trip to Rodby and Rodbyhavn. With the help of a friend's ride, we could drive around in a car, which cut down our journey time to around an hour and a half. We observed how quiet and very few people were in the city and the availability of limited shops which were closed, maybe because it was Sunday or was just our perception coming from a crowded city. However, a few foreigners and some locals were spotted both during the tour and in the nearby streets of the FBL exhibition centre. On the other hand, Lalandia's (water fun park) parking lot was extremely crowded, which could be an indication of tourists nearby. We managed to visit the train station, the FBL construction site, Rodbyhavn, Lalandia, vacation rental homes, farming areas, the Lolland-Falster Airport, new upcoming business sites, agricultural fields etc., on that particular day. With its wealth of in-depth information on the city, this trip helped to sustain the motivation for writing this research paper.

On our second visit, we chose public transportation to visit the FBL site and its surroundings. There is currently no direct route from Copenhagen to Rodby because of the FBL construction. It took 3 hours to travel from Copenhagen Central Station to the Rodby Ferry Station by switching from a train to a local line at Nykobing F. Station and then again to a bus at Maribo Station. Similar was the travel duration while returning from the site to Copenhagen.

Figure 6 Public Transportation Route to Rodby from Copenhagen Central Station



The purpose of this trip was not just to go on a field trip, but also to gather information from the locals and obtain more context for the report. This time, we visited Rodby on a Saturday, so there were much more activities in the city. More people were present compared to the prior visit, new business openings, active businesses (such as bars, cafes, and pizzerias), more real estate advertisements, open houses, etc. We started talking to random people walking on the street who were local bus drivers, business owners, and people currently working for FBL, etc. They were all helpful and willing to share information when it came to gathering data. They voluntarily assisted us by responding to the survey questions and sharing their experiences before and during the FBL Construction.

As previously mentioned, Maribo was on the route, we travelled through Maribo to reach and leave Rodby. We instantly decided to tour Maribo while returning from Rodby to visit the newly established international public school. There was an hour difference between each train to Copenhagen, therefore, we took advantage of the waiting time by taking a quick tour of Maribo's surroundings. The region appeared to be relatively lively and the distance between the train station and the international school was only a short stroll. A museum (Stiftsmusset) that provides a cultural and historical experience, as well as a voyage into the living history of Lolland-Flaster, is also located right in front of the train station. By placing a sign in front of the museum, which is direct across from the train and bus station, Maribo appeared easier to navigate compared to Rodby. On the other hand, Rodby, which allegedly draws more international workforce and their families, appears to fall short in terms of offering the fundamental information (signage, location announcement on public transportation in English etc.). Information about the Lolland-Falster Region, the FBL Project, a cross-border guide, and other topics were covered in a few brochures accessible in the Femern A/S Exhibition Centre in different languages (German, English) to Danish. However, not everyone would be aware of this, visit the exhibition centre, or be aware that the brochures would be offered there.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In the last two decades, the socio-economic development in Rodby and Rodbyhavn has been less favourable than the national average in Denmark (Transportministeriet, 2006). Despite its location (Rodby and Rodbyhavn), it is deteriorating. “For many years, Lolland-Falster (the municipality where Rodby & Rodbyhavn is located) has had a horrid image in Danish society” (Dominguez Alcaide, 2016) “This region of Denmark has been considered a socially and economically impoverished place where people are less educated, more often outside the labour market, and mentally ill than the average Dane” (Bodniece, 2021, p.34). Although there are many options for international travel and the region is close to Germany, the tourism industry has not been able to boost the local economy or even aid the local population growth. Not only it is the port for ferries between Germany and Denmark, but it is also the location of the famous tropical vacation spot and water park- Lalandia, which offers a variety of entertaining activities for guests. Visitors from Germany, Denmark, and other countries can enjoy the vast open beaches, holiday homes, and Parachute Club for skydiving.

Currently, the FBL - a giant submerged tunnel in the world connecting Germany and Denmark, has gained the attention of numerous people to Rodby and Rodbyhavn. By connecting Germany via an undersea tunnel and the nation's capitals with high-speed rail, it has been proposed a development project to improve people's mobility and enhance Rodby and Rodbyhavn as up-and-coming tourist destinations. As the dreams and future of the local population are linked to and impacted by this ongoing megastructure, it will be interesting for the project's authors to observe how this Fixed Link is perceived locally and how authorities are implementing it in favour of the locality.

This study aims to understand why the Femern Belt Fixed Link is being built in the first place and how the ongoing infrastructure development impacts the people of Lolland. Inductive qualitative methods were adopted to collect the data. Individual interviews were conducted with stakeholders such as Femern A/S representatives, local authorities, residents, business owners, etc. with semi-structured questions. Individual interviews were conducted via zoom, and some were conducted in person. Interviewees were chosen based on their involvement in the project. Authorities such as personnel from Lolland municipality, a spokesperson from Femern A/S etc., were chosen due to their direct involvement in the construction of FBL. Similarly, residents (homeowners) and local business owners were chosen because they are most likely to face the impact of the construction.

Narrative analysis is chosen as the method of analysing the collected data. In this chosen method, the authors rewrite the narratives stated by the interviewees. This method is “appropriate for those who study human experience to use a research methodology that connects with how people construct the meanings of life experiences” (Oliver, 1998, p.245). This analysis helps readers understand or break down the sentiments behind what or why it has been said. This will be handy in analysing the collected data because the narrative analysis does not only narrate what has been brought and what has been said. For the reader’s convenience, interviewees will be categorised in two different categories as mentioned in the methodology chapter, i.e. A) Authorities and B) Residents. Furthermore, in order to simplify, interviewees will be directed by abbreviation given below:

Table 2:*Abbreviation used for authorities*

| SN | Name / Position | Abbreviation Used |
|---------------|---|-------------------|
| Interviewee 1 | Dominic Maher - Principal of Maribo Intl. School | IN1 |
| Interviewee 2 | Henrik Madsen - Lolland Municipality's Sous Chef | IN2 |
| Interviewee 3 | Patrick Jarosczyński - Spokesperson of Femern A/S | IN3 |
| Interviewee 4 | Annija Bodniece - Former researcher | IN4 |

Table 3*Abbreviation used for residents*

| SN. | Name/ Position | Abbreviation Used |
|---------------|--|-------------------|
| Interviewee 1 | Susie - Local resident (mother-daughter) | LR1 |
| Interviewee 2 | Christian - Local bus driver | LR2 |
| Interviewee 3 | Susan - Local resident (Employee with FBL exhibition Centre) | LR3 |
| Interviewee 4 | Bar employee (seasonal workers from Copenhagen) - Name Unknown | LR4 |
| Interviewee 5 | Ulla - Local business owner | LR5 |

4.1 Planning, Construction, and Future

Infrastructure often carry with them promises of progress and development (Corzo & Alejandro, 2019; Bielenberg et al., 2021)

- **Current situation**

In this section, the current situation of Rodby and Rodbyhavn will be dissected according to national statistics, residents' opinions, and researchers collected data. Understanding the current situation is a crucial part of the research as it helps capture the sentiments behind different stakeholders' planning and agendas. As mentioned above, not only Rodby and Rodbyhavn, but the whole Lolland municipality also have their fair share of problems. Such as a declining population, low economic growth, low real estate value, low job opportunities etc.

Rodbyhavn is a small city by the harbour with 1,624 inhabitants. There are few supermarkets, pharmacies, kiosks, post offices, eateries, pubs, and game rooms in Rodby (Rodbyhavn - Byen Ved Havnen, 2021)². Rodbyhavn lies next to the Baltic Sea, close to natural surroundings such as beaches, holiday homes, and ferries that sail round the clock between Lolland and Germany, the neighbouring island of Femern. Big companies such as Scandlines, Kofoedsminde, and Codon medicine are located in Rodbyhavn. While Rodby is a small town with a population of 2,024 (as of 1st January 2021), located on the island of Lolland. Rodbyhavn and Rodby is a centre for the ongoing construction of the Femern tunnel to connect Denmark with Germany. Despite being close to Germany and home to the summer destination 'Lalandia', both of these places are yet to flourish. The young population is leaving the town searching for higher education, better employment opportunities, etc. This small town is becoming home to pensioners, low-income people, and those living on governmental support (kontanthjælp). Most of the houses

² Rodbyhavn – City next to Harbour (Direct Translation)

in Lolland are used as holiday rentals (summer houses) or as flexible houses to resolve the low housing market. Therefore, the ongoing construction of FBL has brought hope to the people. Femern fixed link is taken as a remedy to rectify the current situation of Lolland (esp. Rodby and Rodbyhavn). More discussion on how the decision was made to build the tunnel after many years of talk, and what it brings to Rodby and Rodbyhavn will be discussed below.

- **Agenda, Planning, and Promise**

In this section, the rationale behind the decision to build a tunnel will be analysed. We would like to present the central stakeholders are promoting FBL by restoring the image of Rodby with a hope of population increment linked with employment mobility and economic gain. The descriptive breakdown of the data, particularly concerning the construction of the tunnel, its design, and the integration of locals and foreigners, will be provided to the readers in this section of the report. Additionally, attracting internationals (workers, investors, tourists, students, etc.), relocating them, possibly giving the town a facelift, and cutting the time it takes to travel from the capital to other regions of Europe are all factors to be extracted in this section.

The construction of the Femern tunnel fixed link has promised many things to society, especially to the Danish side. Therefore, in this section different agendas and planning of the tunnel are discussed from the Danish perspective rather than German. Similarly, what promise is made will be looked at and analysed based on the collected data.

The talk of building the tunnel was on hold for many years. Finally, it has been decided, and the construction has started back in 2020. FBL is a mega and complicated project for various reasons, not only because it takes a long time to complete. But according to the spokesperson of the construction (IN3), FBL is a complicated project that will take a decade (if not more) to complete. It is complicated not in the sense that the project takes longer or is a mega project but

also in the sense that there is a societal and cultural difference between Germany and Denmark. According to IN3, *“And when I say it's, it's complicated. I mean, there are a lot of cultural differences between Denmark and Germany, even though there are much more similarities than differences. But there is a lot of differences in mindset. And then there is a lot of political differences.”* Despite being the neighbouring nation, Germany and Denmark have differences and had different takes on the project. While the Danish population is much more open about the project, not so much on the German (at least those of Femern Island) side. To illustrate his point on the Danish population being more optimistic about the project the spokesperson IN3 continues, *“basically there is if you look at if you take it from a Danish perspective, the people see this project, especially in this area as the one chance to get some much-needed progress, investment, and growth into the area. And you can actually see that already happening.”* From this statement, it can be said that Danes or people who are connected to the tunnel (such as people from Rodby & Rodbyhavn) are excited and looking forward to the project, as it was a much awaited with a hope of bringing different opportunities.

However, the spokesperson finds the German side less excited. As per his statement, there are not many people in Germany who know about the project to have an opinion, those who do know are either living in Femern island or connected with the project somehow. He says, *“If you go to the German side, it's a completely different discussion. On the German side, a lot of people don't know about the project, the further you can wave in distance from the island of Femern, the less the people know and care. But for those who know about the project, they oppose the idea”*. That means the tunnel is not as much hyped in Germany compared to Denmark. It could be because the Danish side where the tunnel is being built is in people's eyes due to its bad reputation and needing action to change its face. However, similar enthusiasm is lacking on the German side, and

this could be because they do not need any addition to their town as it does not have problems as in the Danes in Lolland. As mentioned above, not many in Germany know about construction, and those who know are against it. According to the spokesperson IN3, *“But on the German side, and those people who know about the project, they are very, on the fence, ***** [sic.] I felt like, oh, there is so many people on the German side who are opposed to this project, they do not want the link, they hate it for whatever reason.”* Despite the protest, Germans end up agreeing to the project (a reason unexplored by the researchers). There is a different system in Germany – whilst Denmark uses a legislative procedure when dealing with large scale projects such as the Oresund bridge and the Femern belt tunnel, Germany uses a process of authority approval, from the state office of road construction and transport (String,2022). A similar pattern of asserting the government's political decision on making megaprojects is illustrated in the study above, where the public's interests are potentially overlooked. As demonstrated in the instance of WestConnex Australia in the study Searle & Legacy, (2021), the author underlines how the disagreement hampered development in the modern period as every single voice matter, making a larger social impact that is neglected in decision making in comparison to the environment.

The FBL has planned to bring thousands of employees who will work directly and indirectly with the belt. The employees of FBL are (in a way) a promise and hope to the area as they are expected to be a part of the society; they will stay in the area, etc. and be part of society as any regular resident would do. However, from the interview, it was quite a different scenario than the authors identified. It was found that FBL is building its own “village” for the construction (blue-collar) workers. The spokesperson IN3 says, *“I think the latest number I've heard was 1150. So, we're like, not even, we're like [sic.] maybe at a third. And I believe the owner says that will peak around 2024 to 2026 when most workers will be here. So, there's a bit of time, but the housing*

situation has been an issue.” The plan to make a “village” is in place; however, it seems like FBL construction firm is not in a hurry yet. If FBL plans to build a different accommodation centre for construction workers, they might not participate in society’s activity as hoped. This is evident when IN3 states, *“I have the impression after talking to a lot of people that a lot of the workers that are on the construction site have no real interest in joining the society around them.”* He continues further, *“they are here to make a lot of money. I mean compared to what they can earn maybe in their home country because it is a lot of migrant workers, a lot of international workers and they want to work as much as they can sleep as well as they need.”* This means that the construction worker will not be living in the town, instead, they will have their place built by the company and probably near the construction site as well (which most likely will be away from the town). If that is the case, it is unlikely that construction workers will be a part of town/society. This finding contradicts the research by (Delphine et al., 2019), where the megaproject helps the city to welcome financial benefits on land value, business, international trade, tourism, employment, and taxation.

As per the data collected, most of those workers will work two-week shifts, meaning a person or a group will work for two weeks and leave for their hometown, and different groups of people will work another two weeks. To understand more and better, while asking about the accommodation for the employees of construction IN3 mentioned that “the village” construction company is going to make for the construction employees (esp. Blue-collar workers). However, other employees (white-collar), sub-contractors etc. must manage their accommodation themselves, which has already been observed in Rodby and Rodbyhavn. These kinds of positive effects can be addressed via the lens of the Spillover Effect and could be considered both the short-term & long-term effects of development in the region. However, the residents are hopeful for the

time being. He (IN3 - Spokesperson of Femern A/S) says, *“Even though the employees/workers are not in full number yet, they have started to impact the area positively. Especially during the pandemic, when travelling was not allowed, when the service industry/tourism industry was in a declining mode, the hotels and Airbnb in the area were not suffering”* The situation described by the interviewee could be a temporary benefit as it was in the beginning phase when Femern A/S had not built their village for workers. They had no option but to find accommodation in available hotels, Airbnb etc. The situation may flip once the company constructs their private housing village. Similarly, the benefit could have been visible as it was the time when nothing was happening i.e., Pandemic. The benefits described by the spokesperson are only minor changes in the time when nothing was happening. As a result, the situation cannot be precisely supported by the post- pandemic scenario because there is a benefit of the doubt whether it is prudent to be optimistic about a progressive future based on those small changes. The aforementioned description is further confirmed by IN3's opinion, which continues, *“There are not that many hotels, but they have like three different places where they housed a lot of the workers in the beginning when there were no housing facilities for them. Which obviously was nice for a pandemic where the hotels didn't have any tourists.”*

While interviewing stakeholders from municipality and Femern A/S, Maribo International School was mentioned many times. Both interviewees recommended that we contact the school. They took the recent investment or opening of an international public school in Maribo as one of the examples of progress in the region. Many small businesses have been opened after construction started, and many more are on the way. Most of the officials were keen on showing the school as a sign of progress. The spokesperson IN3 views the school as a small but much-needed step. He also sees this step as a reason for locals to look forward to this project, and says, *“it's small steps,*

but it changes the narrative. If you go to the so basically, [sic.] the Danes, and especially in the region, they are looking forward to this project, they are active, they're constructive, they want this, and they're interested in it and very positive." This finding is similar to the study above Alonso and Sánchez (2012, cited in Suarez & Perez, 2018) which explores the fact that megaprojects are a source of contention in the social environment, well-managed projects are vital to the population's level of living. Improvements in infrastructure and service provision, availability, and quality can result in significant changes in the population's standard of life through facilitating access to health, education, other social services, and the labour market.

Similarly, the Lolland municipality is thrilled about the school, because as per their expectation, it will lure other workers and their families to Lolland. The municipality is delighted about the new International Public School on Lolland as they emphasize that the school will help to gain extensive knowledge about Danish culture, and people, become part of the community, and integrate successfully. Likewise, according to IN2 (Sous chef from Lolland Municipality)'s opinion, *"That is the question of white-collar workers, and internationals moving from one project to the others, what do they see? We have created an International School."* From his statement, it can be said that the International School in Maribo is their proud step and was established primarily for white-collar workers in the hope that they would migrate with their families to Maribo or within Lolland. The stakeholders are optimistic and expected a remedy to its declining population because the population of Rodby and Rodbyhavn has been declining and people are moving to neighbouring municipalities or nations in search of education, employment, and opportunities (Holmager et al., 2021).

The FBL is intended as a cure to improve the reputation of Rodby and Rodbyhavn (in the sense that the area is less educated, economically destitute, has a dwindling population, and so on).

From the data collected from different stakeholders, it is evident that stakeholders are seeing changes already in this place and its surroundings. The sous chef of Lolland municipality, IN2 explains *“The first area and the probably the most important is just enhanced activity, more people are buying more stuff they are walking more around the streets, you can actually see it in the urban landscape and you walk down Rodbyhavn you can see that there are more people than there used to be, you can see that there is more activity, there are more bars, more pizzerias, more everything, so that this economic impact is just really, really filled among many people.”* The change in the locality, sous chef is mentioning in the above quotation was noticed by authors as well in comparison to two different visits in duration of 2-3 months. More people were out on the streets, shops were opened and many more news shops, boutiques were to be opened soon. The photo below depicts the soon-to-be-opened shop during the time of our visit.

Figure 7 Upcoming Business



A similar enthusiasm can be seen from the insights forwarded by IN4 (former researcher) *“I can imagine this like if you'd like you said [sic.] the town is so small like the locals are there only what you said and then suddenly it's like double up just international people I mean that is there must be something interesting happening it's not just every day going to the bakery *****

According to IN2, *“there is this optimism, which has been really difficult to find in Lolland for many years. But now there’s a sense that things are moving in the right direction”*. The data above (Figure 8 and 9) aids the reflection expressed by IN2. Likewise, the flow of people in the area, people’s openness to talk and express themselves with the outsiders (with us during the visit), various upcoming business posts on the local Facebook pages & people’s support, etc are some of the indicating factors reflecting the welcoming ness and support for changes in the sentiment of people living in the area. These findings are congruent with the study published by Delphine et al. (2019) on the case of Suramadu Bridge in Indonesia, which shows that the majority of respondents supported the project for emotional and cultural reasons. These arguments were supported by additional benefits such as the financial impact on land value, enterprise, commerce, tourism, and taxation. This is supported by IN2, *“The closer you are, the more the higher part of the activity is from the Femern link. I think the other and perhaps even more important change has to do with mentality, they realize [sic.] really a feeling that things are changing, and they are changing for the better.”* The incoming of people is increasing, and there is significant growth in investment in service, hotel, and real estate. In addition, there are more social activities and movements in Rodby and Rodbyhavn, such as exhibitions and school tours from cities like Copenhagen and Aarhus.

The most notable development is that the tunnel's opening coincides with establishing Denmark’s first international public school, which will serve the children of people who work with fixed links which is perceived as a prominent and affirmative change. The optimism that comes from building megastructures supports the research done by (Funfgeld, 2019) where she describes that people’s hopes rise with construction even though the primary reason to build such mega structures (especially transportation) may be other than financial gain. The reason to build

transportation infrastructure is connectivity between two lands, nations etc. and to make people's life more convenient. Furthermore, large-scale infrastructure projects are often meant to fulfil a legitimizing function of political and economic projects such as the process of nation-building.

According to IN3 (Femern A/S Representative), during the year 2024-2026, a large number of migrant workers would be involved in the construction, and he illustrates “they have *been building more than 1000 housing facilities or rooms at the construction site itself to accommodate blue-collar workers. However, the problem has been with subcontractors and other white-collar workers because they, as far as I have been told they, should not house on the site.*” This means that those engineers, subcontractors, service providers, or workers who relocate alone or with their families need to find housing options outside the FBL village. Those workers who bring their families with children, require schools and other primary services in order to complete their tenure and contractual obligations. IN1 (The principal of Maribo International School)'s statement further illustrates this by stating that “*most of the families coming in with Femern are given five, seven-year contracts; this tunnel is going to take ten years or something. So, they are not here for two years, as many of the positions, same [inaudible.]. So, they know that the family is going to spend a long time here, and these children could possibly grow up here.*” It makes clear that the children of white-collar employees of FBL who would be staying on a seven- to eight-year contract and have the opportunity to live in Denmark in the future are prioritised at Maribo International School. After the Femern fixed link is complete, IN1 strongly believes there would still be a demand for this International School as many Danish parents and expats who work in Copenhagen would want their kids to enrol on an International public school rather than in other parts of the country where the international education costs a huge sum of money.

To support the continuity of international public school for the migrant workers, local citizen Susan expressed her view by stating *“during that period, they are working here and would like to bring their family to come and live here more long term. Because the factory is supposed to continue after this tunnel, there is some possibility that people can stay and continue working with some similar job.”* The necessity for Maribo International School to assist migrant workers and their children in receiving high-quality bilingual education is associated with the Femern contract and other building projects around the municipality of Lolland.

The rise in the housing market is a sign of progress in the town. Therefore, while asked about the current scenario of Lolland’s housing market, IN1 replied that *“private investment is taking place in building new residents and new housing projects. So, there is evidence and signs that things are starting to turn around.”* Lolland is considered one of the cheapest housing markets in Denmark. (Newcomers i Lolland, 2022). The private investment might be increased due to the property prices in Lolland being lower than in many places in Denmark as it is possible to purchase larger residences for less money. As described in the previous section, a similar opinion is expressed by the Sous chef (IN2) that the commercial activity is increasing surrounding the tunnel. This trend is supported by another interviewee LR5 (bar owner) who agreed on buying the bar a few years back due to the news of building FBL.

According to IN1, *“The house prices are very good in Lolland, we’ve seen many of the new families actually choosing to buy if they’re here for five years, then they have seen it more as an investment opportunity rather than the rental”*. To simplify, in his beliefs people are more likely to purchase housing instead of renting if they are living in the country for 5 years or more and no time is better than now. His belief is shared by IN2 *“It’s the right time to move here, it’s the right time to buy a house, it’s the right time to buy a vacation home because there’s just a good vibe*

around the Lolland right now.” These two stakeholders are keen on showing that the current time is better for any kind of investment in Lolland. However, the housing market is booming all over Denmark. There is no such evidence that the real estate investment in Rodby and Rodbyhavn is increasing due to FBL. Nonetheless, we found that some people relocated to the area because of the ongoing project. It is shown by LR3 when she is asked about her purpose of moving to Rodby. She replied, *“I moved to Rodbyhavn eight years ago, partly because of this project.”* Similarly, LR5 (local business owner) replied that *“I moved down here four years ago when I bought this bar. And I bought this bar because I thought it would be a good investment now that the project (Femern Belt Project) is going.”*

● Discussion 1

In this part of the discussion section, we will go over the many rationales presented by the authorities or decision-making body (central stakeholders) in the preceding section. We will discuss the critical rationales of authorities such as Lolland municipality, Lolland international schools, and Femern A/S behind building Femern fixed link. Following that, we will also present our thoughts and reflect on our analysis above. Similarly, we will pave the way for additional thinking and research on the theme or related concepts.

Smith (1994) acknowledged “the role of service infrastructure in creating a product experience by arguing that “service infrastructure is housed within the larger macro-environment or physical plant of the destination” (Seetanah et al., 2011, p.92). He stressed that the level, use of infrastructure and technology destinations (for example, transportation, water, power supply etc.) are also determining features that can enhance the visitors’ trip experience. Other authors (Choy, 1992; Buharis, 2000; Crouch & Ritchie, 2000) are found to support his views on the tourism infrastructure or the role of infrastructure in tourism. Similarly, infrastructure and mega projects

play an important role in solving the needs of people's livelihood, promoting economic and social development, and maintaining the sustainable development of the economy, society and ecology. However, the benefits of such mega-projects are focused mostly on the economy while other issues such as the environment are shadowed. Such cases could be found especially in China (Zheng, 2020).

Urban utopian idea, which help to envision and create better cities, are on a massive scale in today's globalized world to provide cities with a competitive advantage in the global arena. Transforming a utopian concept into a megaproject, particularly in non-western cities, adds new infrastructure, but it can also cause significant social and physical divisions within the city. The socio-environmental effects of large urban developments should also be taken into account due to their size. Every utopia has risks and restrictions, but in the case of urban utopias, it's essential to consider the potential effects on society and the built environment. The argument for the potential change of utopia into dystopia is strengthened by the unpredictability of utopias in connection to big metropolitan developments. A similar mega-project connecting Scandinavia to central Europe is being carried out in the Sjælland region (Lolland). The Femern belt tunnel is under construction between Lolland (Denmark) to Femern (Germany) and is aimed to finish by 2029. This research explores the social impacts of infrastructure projects on the local population. It investigates how authorities are framing the Femern belt link to attract more people to live in Lolland municipality, including Rodby and Rodbyhavn and how locals perceived the project as linked with tourism, job opportunities, investment, and livelihood of the residents.

According to central stakeholders, FBL is expected to bring many changes in society including new jobs, an increase in population, etc. Many new jobs at construction sites also employ subcontractors, and the Femern Belt Project creates at least 5,000 extra jobs every year until 2029.

FBL is expected to attract skilled and professional workers from different countries because local enterprises, job centres and training institutions alone would not be able to meet all the labour needed for the project; therefore, collaboration with regional and across the country is needed, and foreign labour will therefore play a role in the construction of FBL. It is also expected to attract more investment in tourism and leisure activities in Lolland, such as opening new restaurants, fun parks, eateries, wine shops, and many more.

As per the findings, stakeholders such as the municipality are planning to attract more people and activities to Lolland (Rodby & Rodbyhavn) because FBL creates more movement, business and job opportunities for Lolland. However, job-related in the Femern belt are temporary jobs for a few years and are significantly related to construction and engineering fields, and the municipality does not have concrete or long-term investment to attract people in the long run. Without a long-term plan to attract more people it is just a temporary strategy for the FBL project, people from different cities in Denmark will not be able to attract people to Lolland. The Lack of basic facilities such as a high school for young people, transportation facilities to connect Copenhagen, and a bad image as people with social benefits live there make Rodby and Rodbyhavn less attractive for the people who live in big cities of Denmark.

As per the findings, Lolland municipality expects to welcome professional people in connection with the Fehmarn fixed link and needs to attract people to live in Lolland to solve the problem of the declining population. Some initiatives of FBL and the municipality, such as opening international schools and establishing a culture centre to attract them, can be traced from the findings. However, it will also employ about 3000 migrant blue-collar workers, and most of the plans and agenda do not fit the necessity of blue-collar workers. The most significant number of FBL employees will be blue-collar workers. Instead, it seems the focus of central stockholders

is white-collar workers who will not be as large numbers as construction workers. From the findings, the key rational aspect of building the Maribo international school is to support the families and children who come to Denmark in connection with the Femern belt link and other projects who employ foreign workers. Opening an international school in Maribo was the right decision and as described by authorities in a premium location in the middle of the island. In addition, international families live within a 20-kilometre radius of the school and employees who come to Denmark to work in Femern Fixed Link (FBL) have a high priority of putting their children in the first international school. The municipality's agenda is to attract international people to settle in Lolland, which is opposite to the anti-immigrant mindset of the current government. Despite the fact, that the country lacks a workforce in the labour market, the central government is seeking several means to create the barrier for internationals, ranging from the cut of multiple higher education programs taught in English (Rasmussen, 2018). As we saw in the analysis, Lolland municipality is looking forward to attracting more international people with the newly opened International Public School. However, due to harsh and stricter immigration rules, Denmark is looking less attractive to immigrants and facing criticism for international human rights violations. In this case, Maribo International School just seems like an international showcase to attracting foreign workers and a false hope to convince the residents of Rodby and Rodbyhavn. The municipality's vision of welcoming international workers to settle in the region doesn't match the nation's migration scheme. Because migration is not a free-floating, uncontrolled process prompted by the personal needs and aspirations of individuals rather state controls and regulates the process (Koh, 2013). Together with that Danish government does not have any structured migration policy to invite skilled and highly educated people to settle as described by Taylor (2005). The integration of immigrants is determined and calculated based on their economic

interests and political discourse can problematize immigrants as threats (Thapan 2005 cited in Koh,2013). Immigration depends upon the macroeconomic and political interests of the receiving countries which are challenged by several factors such as illegal immigrants, domestic immigration policy, and anti-immigrant groups.

On the other hand, lots of migrant blue-collar workers will be employed by Femern A/S for more than 5 years contracts, and if people working with the fixed link would like to settle in Denmark after 5 years because as EU citizens a lot of workers from Poland and othering European union member can receive the right to permanent residence in another European country after an uninterrupted legal residence for five years in that country. Non-European people also can get permanent employment in Denmark after proving their language and salary requirements in 4.5 years. Spending more than 5 years in a specific country working and paying taxes might influence individuals to live permanently in that country aligned with the study of Taylor (2005). Transborder population movement is driven by more compelling factors than a convergence of interests between workers in one country and employees in another. At the moment it seems like authorities and local policymakers are more interested in attracting white-collar workers with high skills and professional knowledge rather than blue-collar workers who have equal rights to stay in the country after five years of uninterrupted work. The basic planning of hospitals, housing, and schools for their children is not included in any policy of the local government nor in the planning of the Femern belt. Lack of planning to sustain foreign workers and trying to relocate only white-collar workers but employing more than 3000 migrant workers in the project without addressing their possibilities to bring family and settle in Denmark is quite problematic. It could be seen as discrimination against construction workers, leaving them unappreciated which would result in clashes between workers and management. This is relevant to the literature (Klosterman, 1980)

where he highlights that Numerous countries are planning extensive urban transport infrastructure more than ever, seriously impacting neighbourhoods and creating tensions between locals, planners, and workers. During the construction phase of FBL, as it is expected to bring a lot of foreign workers but inequalities in salary and exploitation of labour within the FBL could be seen as obstacles to attracting foreign employers, for example in June 2022 around 3000 polish workers on Femern belt link were in the strike because they are underpaid compared to Danish co-workers (Mathiassen, 2022). These findings are consistent with (Searle & Legacy, 2021) where differences in stakeholders' perceptions cause conflicts, and interests are crucial to conflict resolution. But contradicts the article by (Antonson & Levin, 2020) that future travel and transport projects for sustainable growth should be designed so everyone accesses good service quality and enhances economic growth, improves accessibility, enhances economic growth, improves accessibility, and improves social equity.

4.2 Hope, Impact and Consequences

Based on the facts gathered, this section focuses on the probable implications of the FBL's continuing construction. We would show how the people of Rodby and Rodbyhavn idealize FBL without contemplating the repercussions. Furthermore, the section will focus on the hopes, concerns, etc. of the local population in regard to the ongoing construction. This analysis will explore the social context and possibilities of local growth and their repercussions with sound planning and social value. From the interviews, it was retracted, the locals are optimistic for the time being, at least until the project is under construction, despite the uncertainty of the social consequences after the completion of the project and what it would bring along. The findings, and analysis would be backed by the study of various data from local authorities and interviews with locals.

Based on the current census, a small number of permanent residents live in Rodby and Rodbyhavn. These characteristics differ Rodby and Rodbyhavn from big towns where neighbours are unfamiliar with one another. The current social structure is compact but interconnected with many retired people. One of the interviewees, LR1, when asked about describing Rodby and her view on livelihood there, she put forward her view as *"Everyone knows everyone. It is nice. Neighbours will watch your house if you go out, even if you do not ask."* Similar was the view from another interviewee, LR2, who expressed his view about the close bonding with the neighbours and that most people are friendly with each other and rely on each other in need. In a small town such as Rodby where most people know each other by different means, either by their work, commuting patterns, etc. As per LR2 (local bus driver), *"people know me because of the bus. Yeah. And they know us because my mom has been a day-care mum down here for 37 years. So, we are like we know each other."* So, people, for instance, when some of my dogs get out of my house, they called me up and say, *Hey, Christian, your dogs out? Then I can call my mom and she can go fetch them."* The warmth and bonding amongst the neighbours were again further illustrated by another interviewee, LR5, who put forward her view about living in Rodby *"I love being here. The people down here are so different from other places in Denmark, they're very hospitable."* Rodby's prominent identities include proximity, bonding, affection, and local support. However, this bonding could be challenged with the construction and the flow of migrant workers. According to Zamojska & Prochniak (2017), projects and mega-projects introduce many new inhabitants to the town, each with their own set of values, norms, and behaviours distinct from those of locals. As a result, the project challenges social ideals and may alter the town's current character.

The data and information gathered show that the main issue with Rodby and Rodbyhavn is its declining population, empty roads, and abandoned houses because people are moving to other

towns in search of better opportunities, higher education, and job opportunities. Since this FBL had been discussed for almost 20 years, many people were sceptical that construction of a fixed link would begin soon. The link officially began in 2020, bringing many aspirations for progress after years of exercise. Consequently, it should not be forgotten that similar megaprojects in the past have had a variety of undesirable outcomes. As per the data, while interviewing locals, some residents claim that the town was not always as it is now. The population decline is attributed to several factors. According to LR3, *"25 years ago when all the traffic was led across this great Belt bridge. And that meant that the freight trains here, stopped and a lot of jobs and at the same time, the border control and customs also stopped. And so, a lot of within the police, and so we're living here in houses, and they moved away."* This finding is consistent with Antonson & Levin (2020), that new routes or new commuting patterns may harm locals by reducing the number of visitors. The city itself is not a reason for declining jobs related to toll and tariff rather the negative Spillover effects from the Great belt in Rodby and Rodbyhavn caused the omission of jobs related to border control and transportation as they shifted their route via the Great belt.

As stated in several interviews, lack of higher education is considered a significant factor in the declining population in Rodby and Rodbyhavn. The nearest option for higher education is Nykobing Falster or Naksoy. This is stated by LR2, *"this is because we do not have any education down here. So, the younger people, the younger generations move away to get the education, and then they just don't come back."* The Similar sentiment was expressed by LR5 on why young ones leave Rodby *"There is a high school in Maribo. And then there is one in Naksoy and one in Nykobing. That is the only place you can get an education."* So, no significant change has been observed in terms of youth education in Rodbyhavn and Rodby at the moment. The question is, if Lolland wishes to retain their youth, it would have been better to invest in education rather than

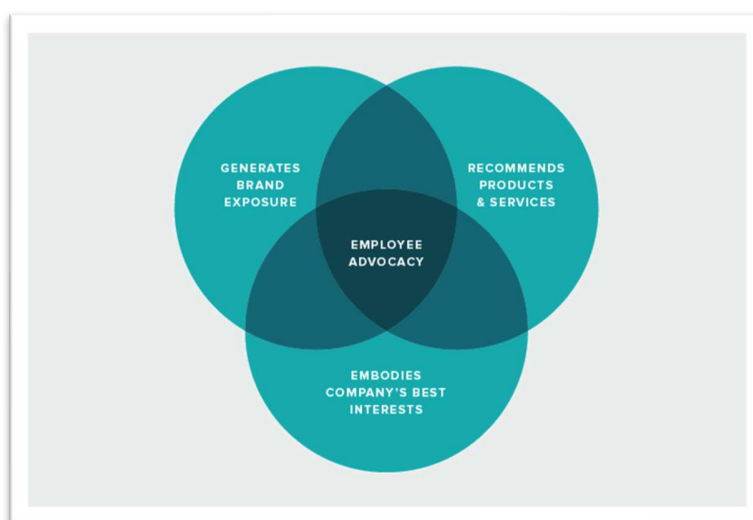
spend millions on the construction project. LR2 is hopeful for greater chances in Femern with the start of the Femern Project, despite agreeing that people left the city in quest of higher education and a better work opportunity linked with their education. LR2 states his views as *"Well, that's right because a lot of people moved away to take further education. And so, it that is [sic.] kind of the issue that the municipality would like people to have moved back and use their education here. But then we need some jobs for people who have taken longer education. So that is, and we see that also now with the whole Femern project here that a lot of people are coming from elsewhere because they do not have the skills here, locally."* Other interviewees also supported the role of locally available higher education in getting more people to the city. The collected data shows that residents are willing to have a school for youth rather than building a Maribo international school for (upcoming) children, which is about 20 km from Rodby for some international children who come to Denmark as temporary workers. He further supports that opening schools will attract more young people to move and live in Rodby. And now, as a tunnel is under construction, people will also have more job opportunities. In contrast, authorities such as the municipality mayor and the principal of Lolland International School support this initiative differently as a benefit to both Lolland and Rodby in the long run.

LR2 defends his idea of stopping the young locals from going away from the region based on a hope of higher education as well as better job opportunities *"If they could get the education down here, and they get the jobs down here, it would be able to make them stay up. Yeah, so instead of like, you know, building International School, yeah. If they had some for higher education like that, we'll have a little bit better use and better help."* Likewise, the Femern project and the Lolland municipality are in a joint plan to bring technical education to Rodby as LR3 says *"They are hoping to also attract some engineering education here, satellite from the Technical University,*

for instance. So, because we need people to also be able to take an education here.” (We assume she meant online education when she says ‘satellite’). From the above statement, it seems that people are expressing happiness that technical education comes in alignment with the Femern projects and continuing its education afterwards. But, as LR2 is also an employee of Femern A/S (an employee of the Exhibition centre), her views on some matters could be argued as brand advocacy (Wasyluk,2015).

Figure 10 Employee Brand Advocacy (Wasyluk,2015)

This might be the reason for her views on opening the technical education in Rodby. However, it is a matter of discussion whether the investment in technical education is a good investment or not because the town itself has significantly less



population to build a technical college in this area. Hence the question raises how many would attend technical education and are interested in moving to Rodby for future education in a town with only a few thousand populations present currently. LR5 also opposes the idea of investing in technical education to bring the people there in Rodby and presents her rationale as *“No. Because you have to keep in mind that there are only about 1700 local people here. So that's so that would be a wrong investment”*. FBL Link will provide some essential job opportunities for the locals but may not be able to stop young people from moving out because young people move out in search of higher study, which is not possible in the Rodby area at the moment.

The data below illustrates that residents are looking forward to having better opportunities (esp. opening new businesses). LR1 states, *"It's okay. I work with food and want to open my own cafe. Yeah. And I just wait for it that is done [sic.] So, I can open. So, I can get more customers."* This reflects that people are desperate to get more customers for their existing and upcoming businesses. Similarly, according to LR3, the project has aided their business to some extent. She says, *"And gradually, because, of course, people here who come to work here, they're buying things in the shops, and they use a bit the restaurants"* She further supports the idea of people moving and settling there by saying *"we get about 1000, I assume. And what you can hope for is that some of them become interested in living here [inaudible.]"* These findings align with University & Mauritius (2011) & Businesswest (2022) that infrastructure development (comprising roads, health safety and public transport) increased revenue significantly.

There has already been a sign of an inflow of new people; lots of movement has been witnessed by local business owners. According to LR5, people of different nationalities visit her bar very often. She says *"so many nationalities. Especially English, Irish and Dutch people are coming [sic.] here in my shop."* In addition, LR3 further elaborates her view in support of tourism and related jobs in Rodby by saying, *"this whole tourism thing that we are developing the tourism will create more tourism-related jobs."* Likewise, local people also welcome the new people, the construction workers with wide arms open as per LR2. He says *"When they come to party, I drink a beer, they get to talk to each other, and we learn a little bit of them and such. But if they're mostly friendly and nice. It's okay. But they're here to work. So maybe, yeah, sometimes I will, I hope that some of them might want to stay because it's nice with new people. Yeah, it is. And also, because of the young people moving away from this place. So, it would be nice to have some new faces."* The Residents that we talked to are mostly optimistic that the infrastructure projects will bring lots

of tourists and new people to this area, which will help to flourish local businesses and provide better opportunities to interact with new people, but it seems that they are less preoccupied with the potential downsides that come with opportunities. There are many examples, such as more concern about affordable housing, poverty, crime and the quality of public schools among the residents. However, infrastructure has brought the quality of living to the residents, such as road infrastructure projects in Kisumu in Kenya and Accra in Ghana, has brought employment opportunities to the residents and small-scale businesses such as welding, vegetables vending, mini markets and grocery store flourish during the process of construction (Khanani et al., 2020).

Despite having numerous positive sides to the movement of the new people to the Rodby because of the tunnel's construction. Still, there are some problems linked with the movement. As mentioned by LR2 *"It is also difficult because some of the kids going there (Maribo International School) cannot communicate. So, one place I had a kid should get off there. She got off at the wrong bus stop. So she could not find the route to get around because she cannot communicate with me."* The foreseeable hurdle of communication, especially among children, older people and differently abled persons, is high even though Lolland Municipality proclaim itself (Contradicts the saying by the Sous Chef of Lolland Municipality) as they are ready to welcome the internationals.

Even though these fundamental problems reflect their insufficient preparation against the foreseeable problems, another prime concern is about public transport. LR5 says, *"One of our biggest problems right now is public transportation. For instance, for Copenhagen, it takes four hours now. When I moved down here, there was a direct train, and it took less than two hours. because of the tunnel, we have so many problems with the traffic."* This can also be accessed based on our experience when travelling to Rodby. After changing multiple means of transportation,

which took approximately four hours each way. The local transportation provider (DSB) is no longer providing service between Nykobing Falster, which has made it more difficult for commuters to reach there from Copenhagen. Furthermore, LR5 also illustrates that people are moving to Copenhagen because of the issues with public transportation. *"Some people used to either study or go to work in Copenhagen, but now they have to move to Copenhagen because of the transportation."* Due to halted transportation issues, it would be almost impossible to work in Copenhagen and live in this area, and people need to relocate to seek jobs and education opportunities.

- ***Opportunities vs Threat***

Femern Tunnel has acquired and is likely to continue to bring a variety of business and employment opportunities that are directly and indirectly related to them. Thousands of construction workers would be arriving, needing decent services for food, laundry, cleaning, etc. The employment opportunities in the service, food, cleaning, and hygiene sectors will eventually rise. Femern fixed link is a hot topic in media all over the world for being the world longest road and rail tunnel so there are lots of visitors, lots of workers at this moment which will bring of course more business and job opportunity but it's a matter of time whether this job and business will sustain after the completion of the tunnel.

In the case of the Femern belt link, connecting to another nation will also help to connect Rodby and Rodbyhavn to the country's capital or it will just remain as an extensive European corridor between Germany and Denmark. Residents also fear that the town will die after completing the Femern tunnel. Some local interviewees like LR3, and LR5 think that after the completion of the mega project, there is a fear of the town just being a transit point. LR5 says *"The people will drive through. Because if you compare it to Korsor, that's what happened with Korsor."*

it died and nobody's stopping. They're just passing." This is further supported by LR3's statement *"we are afraid that when the tunnel comes in that we are going to be a little a bump on the road. So, the people go through Lolland and just go further Long in Denmark to Copenhagen."* While looking at the Great belt link in Denmark has increased growth and mobility. However, only businesses with transport and logistic operated mail service and telecommunication, wholesalers, finance, and insurance sectors have increased their growth, but there was no remarkable growth in the tourism industry (Nauwelaers, Maguire, Marsan, 2013).

At the same time, the long-term benefits of building an Oresund fixed link between Denmark and Sweden have become a hub in labour market integration. Almost 90% of Oresund commuters live in Sweden and work in Denmark. The opening of fixed links accomplished significant infrastructure development on both sides, and new districts were to be developed in the suburbs of Hyllie and Orestad in Malmo with housing shops and offices (Oresundsbro konsortiet, 2019). People living in Denmark have witnessed both fixed link projects, so it cannot be pre-assumed that Femern fixed link would either continue Great belt link trends of drainage in Korsor or the Oresund trend of economic gains due to mobility and tourism when the construction is completed. At the current time, it is a matter of discussion and a wait-and-watch scenario about the excitement seen by the locals in Rodby.

Data collected from residents shows that people are hoping to get more employment and investing opportunities. LR4 is one of the seasonal workers who came from Copenhagen in search of a job. She says, *"We came in with the tunnel. Now there is a lot more touristy stuff. So busier. It is temporary summer work."* This shows the new job opportunity, not only for the residents living in the town but for out comers as well. However, when it comes to recreational facilities to hang out with friends for the younger generation or see new young faces, they themselves would

travel to the neighbouring town Nykobing. She says, *"You can go to Nykobing. Yeah, there is a nightclub where people go."* This could be a sign of an opportunity to invest in new business.

A new business is on the verge of opening every other month based on observations made during the site inspection and information obtained through various social media platforms. The image from below (Figure 11) illustrates this trend. It is witnessed by authors and is further supported by data findings where LR5, a bar owner in Rodby, said that owning or investing in a business is a perfect time in this area. She further explains, *"I moved down here four years ago when I bought this bar. And I bought this bar because I thought it would be a good investment now that the project is going."* LR3 (employee of the exhibition centre) suggests that there are other multiple business opportunities in the city, illustrating some of the shopping options she thinks are must for the city by saying, *"there are still a few missing businesses here locally like the clothing stores, Zara, H&M's, etc. For this kind of service, the nearest option you have is to go to Maribo or Nakskov or Nykobing Falster."* It could be an opportunity, but at the same time, opening such a chain store could be a threat to SMEs. As explained by Godfrey (2004), in the case of PEI, big box retailers have led the opening or expansion of major stores, such as future shops, Home Depot, and Walmart and have swiped out smaller and family-owned businesses.

It is not only about a business opportunity; the real estate industry is also growing. There has been seen a positive change in the local real estate market as well. According to LR3 *"Big, big change, because just a couple of years ago, it was quite difficult to sell a house here. And so that is the big change. A lot of houses have been sold with the purpose of renting [sic.]. But then we've also seen an increase of people wanting to buy holiday homes."* Multiple studies have found that high-capacity transit stops, such as metro or light rail stations, have a significant favourable impact on real estate. However, when residential houses are purchased for holiday rental's purpose, it

tends to increase the housing market at the beginning, then becomes too expensive to afford by local residents. These trends of renting out houses for holiday purposes, sooner or later end up displacing local residents from their own. Similar problems are found in famous holiday destinations such as Rome, San Francisco, Manhattan's lower east side, Sydney, Barcelona, etc. (Butler, 2019).

Furthermore, according to LR3 (resident and employee at Femern exhibition centre) said *"we have a lot of holiday homes over here as well. But now, they are bringing some income, obviously to shops, but we want some big higher spenders, who will stay in hotels and use restaurants, and so on"* This shows the business opportunity according to residents, but Rodby and Rodbyhavn are missing a lot of luxury hotels, restaurants, shopping outlets for high spenders. As per the finding, some residents have expressed high hope for business and employment opportunities, whereas some residents express due to lots of investment such as opening supermarkets at the moment will help to boost the economy but in future, it will become a "ghost town" once the project completed and if by any chance this town remains as a transit point. In this context, LR5, a local business owner, said, *"Yeah, because we've seen this Klondike thing for many in many cities. So, there will be a lot of shops and a lot of bars and a lot of life. And when it goes away, there will be a ghost town."* The fear of upgrading the town with lots of shops, bars, and investment during the construction phase of the Femern fixed link is seen in her statement, where everything might get shut down once the project ends, leaving behind empty shops and restaurants that will turn the town into a ghost town. She points out the negative possibilities of real estate or any such business failure after the completion of the project because she has witnessed the same situation in Korsør after the completion of Great belt fixed links. The link is just a way from commuting between two nations, but it will impact a lot of the residents, and it has already started

draining the workforce from the surroundings, which can be problematic for people who also need service and assistance for the town rather than for the project. The Femern project has taken all the local handypersons or the workforce. This has resulted in some severe problems for the locals. As LR5 says *“here's one thing that's a problem it is that tunnel is taking all the workforce. So, when you need to fix your toilet here. the plumbers are too busy because they need workers. The project is draining the area here for the workforce.”* But on the other hand, this is an opportunity for the outsider looking for both either business and employment opportunities in Rodby.

- **Discussion 2**

Based on the preceding finding-analysis section, we will go over the numerous rationales from stakeholders such as residents, local business owners, employees, house owners, and so on in this section. This will showcase multiple probable consequences on the locals due to ongoing construction to the adjacent areas and their response towards it. Following that, we will reflect on the above data finding and analysis with literature reviewed earlier.

FBL is a decade-long plan and requires a requirement for a massive workforce during the ongoing process. Due to this, as discussed in the above sections as well, there is an ongoing increase in the working population (and their families in the case of many workers) with the flow of construction. The adjacent areas to the construction site are small and cozy, where neighbours know each other, greet each other on the street etc. This kind of friendly environment is possible when there are limited people residing in the area. With construction workers flooding in thousands, the cosiness of the town could be threatened. As described by Zamojska & Prochniak (2017) most of the mega projects bring new people to the community who come with their own set of values, norms. This might shake the existing social harmony. Even though, the residents at present are not worried about losing their identity; rather excited and ready to welcome new people.

However, there is no certainty that the construction workers would be part of society in the way they (residents) expected. As seen in the data analysis (page no.58 above), most of the construction workers (blue-collar) would work and leave back to their home country. There is a probability that other employees (white-collar workers), such as subcontractors, engineers etc. would be living around the area, but it is quite uncertain about their level of integration in society

This kind of change will continue and has started to some extent. They range from opening the first international school in Maribo, approximately 20 kilometres from the construction site, to opening different new businesses (pizzeria, grocery, and cafes). To quote the sous chef precisely on this matter, *"there are more bars, more pizzerias, more everything, so that this economic impact is just really, really filled among many people"* The area's investment opportunities are growing, and activity are expanding. This has created an enormous employment opportunity (not only the construction jobs or their management jobs but also many other supplementary job opportunities have come into light due to the mega construction). This town is welcoming day by day new investors and businesses (talking about only during this report writing period, the authors witnessed the opening of new businesses almost every month. Figure 11. below shows some of the new businesses whose construction was happening almost every month (June, July, September, and such).

Figure 11 Some Examples of Business being Setup almost Every Month in Rødby



If we are to trust direct stakeholders (who are also project advocates), the ongoing projects have already started showing their effect. Depending on that take. We can only imagine how much effect it will have in the next ten years. Let us believe that business opportunities will rise with the increase of construction workers. If that is the case, how about the people who work in newly opened businesses? The town already has a significantly less population, lacking a young

generation (mentioned above), and people mainly residing are pensioner. The people who are coming to the town are there to work on the project. In this scenario, whom they (stakeholders) expect to work in newly opened bars, pizzerias, shops etc. is not specified. Again, to quote local business owner LR5, *"here's one thing that's a problem it is that tunnel is taking all the workforce. So, when you need to fix your toilet here. The plumbers are too busy because they need workers. The project is draining the area here for the workforce."* There is currently a dearth of local handymen who can perform minor repairs. This is because such talented individuals are now directly hired by the FBL project, where they engage fully. The lack of such trained labour affected the locals on the one hand, but on the other, it provided another chance for qualified outsiders to find employment in their field of specialization in Rodby. The increase in business, investments and tourism activities will need more external labour to support upcoming changes. This claim is further corroborated by the interviews with the two bar staff members who travelled from Copenhagen to work in Rodby. For Lolland Municipality itself, this makes a positive impact by showcasing the opportunities for outsiders to relocate to the region for competitive job opportunities, but locals would face the consequence of compromising their quality of life.

As of right now, FBL Construction had already begun to provide Rodby with both concrete economic gains and intangible rewards of the place being, as claimed by many people, which only before a few years was a kind of "ghost town" with no unique identity. This sort of impact comes in line with the article (Delphine et al., 2019), where the writers discuss how the megastructure brings advantages to the city via both economic gains and gain via pride and identity of the city. The labour drainage could be addressed by starting higher education institutes to prevent the younger generation from leaving the town. However, the town's current population is so low that the higher education institution would not survive.

Likewise, the boom in the real estate market, tourism inflow is expected to increase gradually. A home to well-known holiday destination 'Lalandia', holiday rentals are looking forward to have high occupancy. However, with the increase of tourism, if people started renting their house for holiday purposes such as Airbnb, it is likely to displace residents from their houses due to affordability. The displacement of residents from their own home due to Airbnb can be seen in many famous holiday destinations (see page 67).

We would like to argue that the current plans to boost tourism in the area around FBL may only be a temporary strategy that makes Rodbyhavn a transit city for Copenhagen or Hamburg in the long run as was the case with the Korsør of the Great belt bridge. According to the results, the inhabitants and officials of Rodby and Rodbyhavn are quite confident that the tunnel will increase tourism and the area's touristic activity. According to the extensive study done on the relationship between infrastructure development and tourism by Kaul (1988 cited in Seetanah et al., 2011) transportation infrastructure is a key element of a successful tourist destination since it encourages the development of new attractions and the expansion of existing ones. This supports residents of various stakeholders' anticipation that the currently underway project FBL will significantly alter both the local environment and the tourism sector. However, in our perspective, neither the municipality nor the government are doing enough to get the town ready for incoming immigrants or visitors.

The town also has numerous tourist attractions such as Lalandia (waterpark), the skydiving club, the Knuthenborg Safari Park and Femern A/S Information Centre which are not necessarily insufficient but might limit the luring aspects only to visit Rodby and Rodbyhavn. If not, enough attractions are developed or activities are created, Rodbyhavn may end up serving as a transportation stop for other larger cities like Copenhagen or Hamburg. Because a destination is a

product and there are also other products, this adds to the complexity. This finding is consistent with the study of (Bunghez, 2016), where she explores the relationship between two concepts micro and macro-destination. The concept explains how micro-destination such as town or city, or airports, train stations are used as means to reach the macro-destination. In the case of FBL and the town (Rodby and Rodbyhavn) lacking enough tourist attraction, tourists might use that tunnel or city just to travel to Copenhagen.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Infrastructure and megaprojects have been linked with urbanisation and development for ages. Even though the construction has been carried out for making people's life convenient, they symbolise progress amongst nations. The ongoing construction of the Femern Belt Fixed Link is considered a much-needed project to connect Scandinavia with central Europe. However, it is hoped to play a prominent role to boost the socio-economic status of Rodby and Rodbyhavn (with an extension to Lolland). These mega-constructions built to boost the status quo of the area, are known to have their fair share of consequences. Therefore, this study aimed to study the rationale promoted by central stakeholders to legitimise Femern Belt Fixed Link. Furthermore, it sought to evaluate the effects of the ongoing FBL project on the socioeconomic state of Rodby and Rodbyhavn. The ongoing research revolves around mobility, tourism, and migrant labour.

To gain a better understanding and knowledge of key areas of this research, a semi-structured interview was conducted with central stakeholders such as representatives from FBL, authorities, and residents. The data gathered through the semi structured interview, an inductive qualitative research approach, was analysed using the narrative method to get insight into the viewpoints of the relevant stakeholders. According to this research, the key stakeholders frame FBL as having the ability to revive Lolland's image to attract more people with jobs, education, economic gain, social upliftment, etc. The Femern Belt Fixed Link is portrayed as a very innovative and sustainable link connecting Scandinavia to the rest of Central Europe. Many good improvements are expected in neighbouring regions. Residents are enthusiastic that the infrastructure will bring development to the town via tourism, business, and employment prospects, without considering the potential drawbacks of such opportunities.

There are a few examples of such connections throughout the world, as well as within Denmark, where such a megastructure has become only a transit point to connect the two locations, rather than giving the intended benefits to the regions. After fulfilling such massive ambitions, many cities are abandoned and left to rot. On one hand, central stakeholders are marketing the FBL as a magic wand that will solve all of Lolland's issues. This link is being built by authoritative figures as a political decision rather than a social one. Rather than simply resolving the problem, the effort aims to portray the country as progressive and innovative.

On the other hand, residents have no incentive to oppose the idea. The region is already dealing with numerous challenges (described above), which may or may not be resolved by connectivity. As a result, for them, any shift or movement toward change is a sign of hope. Nothing is certain yet, yet there is the possibility of accomplishing the promised prospects. However, the initiative is still in its early stages, and the possibility of undesirable outcomes exists. No one can disagree that there are opportunities for improvement. Still, there is also the risk of negative repercussions such as unaffordability due to mass mobility, holiday rental side effects, etc. A decade is a short time for someone to make plans, hope, and invest, but it is also a long time to expect the precise estimated outcome because the future is always unpredictable.

To summarise, the FBL initiative is portrayed as an innovative activity that is supposed to solve an existing problem and assist the community to thrive. However, the project's repercussions are not taken into account.

Recommendation for Further Research

This study solely dependent on the researchers' viewpoints and the availability of favourable circumstances at a given time. The research results may differ significantly from what is provided in this research due to the passage of time and variable circumstances (sample group, data, researchers, motivation, etc.). This research is completed at the very early stage of the project; thus, everything is predicted but nothing is certain. Assume a comparable study is to be undertaken in a few years. In such circumstance, Rodby has a better chance of having more exact information and viewpoints on social mobility, tourism, infrastructure development, and educational and economic gains related to FBL. This would undoubtedly assist the FBL, the Lolland municipality, and the state in improvising their project completion strategy. As a result, this study opens the door to further research from similar or alternative viewpoints, which would aid in the further discovery of knowledge about FBL, Rodby, and its environs, its residents, mobility, and tourism.

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Appendices

- Sample of Consent Form

1. I understand my participation for this interview is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason/explanation and without there being any negative consequences.
2. I understand, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential and used only in the manner it is intended.
4. I understand the researchers to protect the identity of the interviewees and I understand that my identity will not be linked with the research materials and will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
5. I understand the data collected from me might be used in future research without me being traced back.
6. I hereby confirm that I have read and understood the above and give my consent.

Signature

- **Interview sample question**

1. As the Fehmarn belt fixed link connection is under construction, can you please expand on this development?
2. What is the prime agenda for the construction of the tunnel?
3. Are there any other hidden agendas for this construction?
4. What social impact do you expect in the community during and after the construction of the Tunnel?
5. Do you think the existing basic facilities i.e. health, education, employment would be enough once the construction process begins or do you have plans for updating the service?
6. How is this connection going to affect (either positive or negative) the population of Rødby and Rødbyhavn?
7. Our research until now shows that there is an assumption on the population to be increased, at least during the construction period (family of the construction people moving along) or after the completion of the project - what are the policies of the local government or you as a company to aid in the creation of the local jobs?
8. And do you think the existing accommodation facilities would be enough or how you are planning to accommodate them in the region?
9. Do you think the workers' living standards will be updated with the construction of the project? How will you help in upgrading their living standard?
10. What are the expected pros and cons of the new increase in the local population due to the construction?

11. Are there any political or social organizations within the area or in the country that do not support the idea of the construction?
12. If yes, what are their key concerns? How are you addressing or planning to address their concerns?
13. What are the key environmental impacts that you have considered before, during and after the construction? How are you planning to minimize/eliminate the impact?
14. Sustainability is the key concern in today's era in any of the fields. In this regard, what are the key concerns for the sustainability of the project?