

## **Rural Outskirt Mobilities**

*A Case Study of Nationalpark Thy*

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A CASE STUDY OF NATIONALPARK THY

BY  
MARIA QUVANG HARCK VESTERGAARD



AALBORG UNIVERSITY  
DENMARK

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2016



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## RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

*Vestergaard, M. Q. L., Laursen, L. L. H., Jensen, O. B., & Lassen, C. (2011). Mobility Challenges in the Region of Northern Jutland, Denmark. Paper presented at XXIV European Congress for Rural Sociology, Chania, Crete, Greece*

*3rd Pan American Mobilities Network Conference in Raleigh, USA – March 16th 2012 – March 18th 2012 – Presented the paper "Virtual Mobility in Rural Denmark" that I developed together with Michael Jensen.*

*Forskningens Døgn on Læsø, Denmark: Mobilitet i udkantsdanmark – April 19th 2012 – presented my research in an open event where Læsø Municipality had invited all residents on the island to participate*

*Visionsmøde om udkantsdanmark [Vision meeting on "Udkantsdanmark"] on Tunø, Denmark, arranged by Netværket – Ø & Land – May 25th 2012 – May 27th 2012 – arranged a workshop for the participants (politicians, local residents and unions) and participated in a panel discussion.*

*4th PanAmerican Mobilities Network Conference in Montreal - May 8th 2013 – May 12 2013 – presented the paper "Differential Mobilities in Rural Outskirts" that I developed together with Claus Lassen*

Parts of the material have been use directly or implicitly in this thesis.



# ENGLISH SUMMARY

This PhD was initiated from the many discussions on “Udkantsdanmark” that gained speed throughout 2010 and onwards. The discussion was grounded in the challenges that came from the fact that public services (e.g. hospitals, public administrations and education) was centralised in the cities and left the rural areas with depopulation, and more and more decoupled from economic growth. This further lead to a number of challenges e.g. empty houses and closing of shops and schools and further a number of mobilities challenges like longer distances, less foundation to maintain the infrastructures and public transport services and too few market forces to roll-out a proper broadband connection. An area that contain all these elements is Nationalpark Thy, which therefor, and from the fact that it also holds some potentials from the nomination as Nationalpark, has been chosen as case area. When reviewing the research within rural studies two conclusions were very clear: the lack of Danish cases and the lack of articles concerning mobilities.

Besides the discussion on ‘Udkantsdanmark’ the PhD was initiated from a growing research field of mobilities studies – ‘the new mobilities paradigm’. The essence of ‘the mobilities paradigm’ is to understand the production and reproduction of society through mobilities optics and further to investigate *“how mobilities produce and re-produce norms, meanings and cultures”* (Jensen, 2010b). Also ‘mobilities’ are not understood in a singular form, but instead in a plural form as ‘Mobilities’, which imply that the new mobilities research field particularly considers how various forms of physical, virtual and experienced mobilities interact and affect the development of societies. As mobilities perspectives is lacking in rural studies so is the rural perspective lacking in mobilities studies. Phillip Vannini (2011) writes how there seems to be 100 studies on the city for every 1 on the non-urban and a review of the journal “Mobilities” showed a similar but not as extreme conclusion.

With only little existing knowledge about Rural Outskirts within the research field of mobilities and only few studies of Mobilities in Rural studies the objective for this thesis has been to approach the Rural Outskirts and the challenges that they are facing from the cross disciplinary mobilities perspective. This has guided the thesis to be centred on the following research question:

## **What does mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area?**

- **Which objectives does the new mobilities paradigm contribute with in the understanding of Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area?**
- **What role does mobilities identities and –culture (software) and materials (hardware) play for Nationalpark Thy and its users?**
- **How are the mobilities practised by both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, on which basis and what does it mean to them?**
- **How can this knowledge be used in the development of Nationalpark Thy and other Rural Outskirts?**

The broad research question, the little knowledge on mobilities in rural outskirts and the little use of rural outskirts as research area within mobilities studies sat the foundation for a cross disciplinary approach and a “Mobilities Assemblage” served as the theoretical framework. The mobilities objective includes a relational understanding of the world which, together with a cross disciplinary approach walks hand in hand with the pragmatic view point of the world. The investigation has been assembled by bits and pieces of different elements both the tangible stuff like number of inhabitants and car ownership but also the things that can be difficult to measure and that only comes forward in in-depth conversations with people living there as e.g. the affection of wind and other weather impose issues like snow clearing - the non-representational issues you could say. This inclusion of both the respondents’ life world and materials like wind, weather and the layout also fits very well with a pragmatic approach and has also influenced the mixed-method-design.

The knowledge gathered through the mixed methods design in a case study of Nationalpark Thy was analysed using the Mobilities Assemblage as a framework. The answer to the research questions can be summarised in the following conclusions:



**1. Mobilities Bring New Perspectives on Rural Outskirts.** Such a theoretical approach has made it possible to see how the different modes of mobilities influence each other and interacts, how differences is experienced in the case area and how elements of the mobilities culture -the software- can help overcome some of the challenges from the materials (or lack of such) – the hardware.

**2. Physical Mobilities are Vital for Nationalpark Thy.** Physical mobilities is very much part of what defines the rural outskirts and as expressed by several interviewees in Nationalpark Thy physical mobilities are vital for them. When asked what physical mobilities mean to them it is the one thing they would not live without – it is what makes life in these areas possible.

**3. The Combination of Virtual and Physical Mobilities Makes it Possible.** Virtual mobilities makes it possible for the residents in Nationalpark Thy to keep in contact with friends and family living further away and it might compensate for some of the large physical distances. However the large contact with the surrounding world also increases the need for the physical travel to those places and thus it is very difficult to think that virtual mobilities will be the solution to all the problems in this area. However the analysis showed how much these new possibilities means to the interviewees and they both indicate that it has eased their lives in these areas and has increased the possibilities. Thus the virtual mobilities compensate for some of the large physical distances that is in Nationalpark Thy.

**4. Proximity to Assets Trivialise Long Distances.** The perception that the long distances and the location far away from the larger cities should be a problem for the residents living there turned out not to be the case. And though they agree that these things are far away, they believe that the most important elements are in close proximity to their home being e.g. the nature and the cohesiveness. And though they sometimes have to leave their local area for one reason or the other and though they believe that they then have to travel long distances most of them agrees that distance does not matter that much. The interviewees believe that distance is a self-imposed factor and it is just something to get over with – and further they associate this distance with car driving and further most agree that they enjoy the car driving time.

**5. The Residents in the Rural Outskirts are Not a Uniform Mobilities Group.** Throughout the analysis it was shown how mobilities is a resource that is distributed unequally among the mobile identities in Nationalpark Thy. As this case study exemplifies the car is a very important object in this mobilities culture, some interviewees think that it would be impossible to live in this area without access to a car. But on the same time the car becomes a differentiating object since a little group of residents is excluded from the possibilities this object give. In the same way virtual mobilities created a differences in Nationalpark Thy with a risk of a 'digital divide' (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011) between different population groups within the rural outskirts, meaning that for some the virtual mobilities eases the life and enhance the possibilities whereas it might have the opposite effect for other groups. These differences between the mobilities groups are crucial to include in the planning for these areas.







# DANSK RESUME

Denne Ph.d.-afhandling blev igangsat med baggrund i de mange diskussioner om 'Udkantsdanmark', der vandt frem i 2010. Diskussionerne bundede i de udfordringer, der kom fra, at offentlige institutioner (så som hospitaler, offentlig administration og uddannelse) blev centraliseret i byerne, og som efterlod yderområderne med affolkning og afkobling fra den økonomiske vækst. Dette medførte endvidere en række udfordringer som eksempelvis tomme huse samt skole- og butikslukninger og en række mobilitetsudfordringer så som længere afstande mellem funktioner, mindre skattegrundlag til at vedligeholde infrastruktur og opretholde kollektiv transport og for få markeds kræfter til at sikre udrulning af en ordentlig bredbåndforbindelse. Et område, som er påvirket af alle disse udfordringer er Nationalpark Thy, som derfor, og ud fra at nomineringen til nationalpark givet nye potentialer, er blevet valgt som case-område. Ved at gennemgå forskning inden for yderområder stod to konklusioner klart frem: Manglen på danske cases og manglen på videnskabelige artikler der omhandler mobilitet.

Ud over diskussionen om 'Udkantsdanmark' blev denne ph.d.-afhandling også initieret i et voksende forskningsområde omkring mobilitetsstudier – det 'Nye Mobilitetsparadigme'. Essensen af det nye 'mobilitetsparadigme' er at forstå produktionen og reproduktionen af samfundet igennem en mobilitets optik endvidere at undersøge, hvordan mobilitet producerer og reproducerer normer, betydninger og kultur (Jensen, 2010b). Desuden forstås mobilitet ikke i ental men i stedet i flertal – som 'mobiliteter' – hvilket betyder, at mobilitetsforskning specielt sætter i fokus, hvorledes fysisk, virtuel og oplevet mobilitet interagerer og påvirker udviklingen af samfundet. På samme måde som mobilitetsstudier mangler i forskning af yderområder, er perspektivet omkring yderområder også fraværende i mobilitetsstudier. Phillip Vannini (2011) forklarer, hvordan der virker til at være 100 studier om byen for hvert ét studie om det ikke-urbane, og et review af artiklerne i tidsskriftet "Mobilities" viste en lignende men knap så ekstrem konklusion.

Med kun en begrænset viden om yderområder i mobilitetsstudier og kun få studier af mobilitet i studier af yderområder har formålet med denne afhandling været at tilgå yderområder og de udfordringer de står over for fra et tværdisciplinært mobilitetsperspektiv. Dette har guidet afhandlingen til at være centreret omkring følgende forskningsspørgsmål:

## **Hvad betyder mobilitet for lokale og turister i Nationalpark Thy, et yderområde?**

- **Hvilke perspektiver bidrager det nye 'Mobilitets paradigme' med i forståelsen af Nationalpark Thy, et yderområde?**
- **Hvilken rolle spiller mobilitetsidentitet og –kultur (software) og mobilitets-materialer (hardware) for Nationalpark Thy og dens brugere?**
- **Hvordan er mobilitet praktiseret af både lokale og turister i Nationalpark Thy, på hvilket grundlag og hvad betyder det for dem?**
- **Hvordan kan denne viden blive brugt i udviklingen af Nationalpark Thy og andre yderområder?**

Det brede forskningsspørgsmål, den begrænsede viden om mobilitet i yderområder og den begrænsede brug af yderområder i mobilitetsstudier grundlagte beslutningen om en tværdisciplinær tilgang og en 'Mobilitetsassemblage' blev anvendt som teoretisk ramme. Mobilitetsperspektivet inkluderer en relationel forståelse af verdenen, som, sammen med en tværdisciplinær tilgang, går hånd i hånd med en pragmatisk epistemologi. Undersøgelsen er blevet samlet af brikker af forskellige elementer – både det håndgribelige så som indbyggertal og bilejerskab, men også af elementer som kan være svære at måle, som kun træde frem i dybdegående interviews med beboere, så som vindens betydning og andre vejrpåvirkede faktorer som snerydning – de ikke-repræsentationelle elementer kan de kaldes. At inkludere både respondenternes livsverden og materialer som vind, vejr og layout passer også rigtig fint til den pragmatiske tilgang, og dette har også påvirket den flermetodiske tilgang.

Den viden, der er samlet igennem den flermetodiske tilgang i et casestudie af Nationalpark Thy blev analyseret ved at bruge en 'Mobilitets Assemblage' som ramme. Besvarelsen til forskningsspørgsmålet bliver opsummeret i det følgende:

**1. Mobilitet giver nye perspektiver på yderområder.** En sådan teoretisk tilgang har muliggjort at se, hvorledes forskellige mobilitetstyper påvirker hinanden og interagerer. Herudover hvorledes forskelle opleves i caseområdet. Og endelig hvorledes elementer af mobilitetskulturen –softwaren- kan bidrage til at overvinde nogle af de udfordringer fra kommer fra materialerne (eller mangel på sådanne) – hardwaren.

**2. Fysisk mobilitet er altafgørende for Nationalpark Thy.** Fysisk mobilitet bidrager i høj grad til at definere yderområderne, og som flere interviewpersoner tilkendegiver, er fysisk mobilitet altafgørende for dem. Ved spørgsmålet, hvad fysisk mobilitet betyder for dem, er det i høj grad den ene ting de ikke kan leve uden – det er det der muliggør livet i disse områder.

**3. Kombinationen af virtuel og fysisk mobilitet gør det muligt.** Virtuel mobilitet muliggør, at beboere i Nationalpark Thy holder kontakt med venner og familie, der bor længere væk, og det kompensere muligvis for nogle af de lange fysiske afstande. Den store grad af kontakt med den omkringliggende verden betyder dog også, at behovet for fysisk at bevæge sig til disse steder stiger, hvilket gør det svært at se virtuel mobilitet som løsningen på alle problemer i sådanne områder. Analysen viste dog, hvor meget disse nye muligheder betyder for interviewpersonerne og de indikerer både, at det har lettet deres liv og forøget deres handlemuligheder. På denne måde kan virtuel mobilitet kompensere for nogle af de lange afstande der er i og ud af Nationalpark Thy.

**4. Nærhed til aktiver ligegyldiggør de lange afstande.** Forestillingen om at lange afstande og placeringen langt væk fra større byer skulle være et problem for beboerne viste sig ikke at være tilfældet. Og selvom de er enige i, at disse ting er langt væk, mener de at de vigtigste elementer er i tæt nærhed til deres hjem som eksempelvis naturen og det stærke sammenhold. Og selvom de nogle gange er nødsaget til at forlade deres lokalområde af den ene eller anden årsag, og de så må rejse lange afstande, er de fleste enige om, at det ikke betyder så meget. De mener, at afstand er en selvpålagt faktor og blot noget, der skal overstås – og desuden associerer de denne faktor med bilkørsel, og de fleste nyder faktisk bilkørsel.

**5. Beboerne i yderområder er ikke en ensartet mobilitetsgruppe.** Igennem analysen blev det vist, at mobilitet er en ressource som ikke er fordelt ligeligt imellem de mobile identiteter i Nationalpark Thy. Som casen eksemplificerer, er bilen et meget vigtigt objekt i denne mobilitetskultur, nogle interviewpersoner mener, det vil være umuligt at bo der uden en bil. Men på samme tidspunkt bliver bilen et differentierende objekt, da en lille gruppe beboere er ekskluderet fra de muligheder, dette objekt giver. På samme måde skaber virtuel mobilitet differentieringer i Nationalpark Thy med en risiko for et ”digital divide” (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011) imellem forskellige befolkningsgrupper i yderområderne. Dette betyder, at for nogen letter virtuel mobilitet deres liv og forøger deres handlemuligheder, mens det kan have den modsatte effekt for andre grupper. Disse forskelle imellem mobilitetsgrupperne er vigtige at inkludere i planlægningen af disse områder.



## MY OWN STORY

*I look up at the clock in my parents' kitchen - 7.04 - now I really need to hurry to make it in time. I grab all my stuff and throw them into my backpack, brush my teeth, drag on my boots and grab my coat as I am halfway running out of the door. I look at my wrist watch, 2 minutes left - I am going to make it - because luckily I am one of those living in the village where the bus stops. It is raining and I am walking fast to reach the bus stop which is just outside the local grocery store. The store is still closed and won't open until 7.30 and there is no shelter, so I (and the other young people on their way to school) am standing in the middle of the rain waiting for the bus to come. Finally it is here. A lot of people are using the bus today, and I can't find a seat for myself, so I have to share one. My coat is soaked and my hair is dripping - I once heard that black people think white people smell like dogs when they are wet and I think I agree, for sure the niff is heavy. Half an hour, and maybe 30 stops along the route, later the bus has made it to the end stop - the town. Here I need to change bus to the one that will take me the last 5 km to my high school, and when the bus arrive I will hurry out, since it always arrives two minutes after the high school day begins. 17 km completed in 49 minutes as most days (except for the days with slippery roads or snow), and this is the good route. When I get off in the afternoon and needs to get back home the busses do not fit together and it takes me around an hour and a half to get home - that is if I make it to the first bus on time. A stop for an ice crème or staying a little longer to chit chat with my friends would often mean hours of delay, because the busses only depart once every second hour - and that is in rush hour.*

# PREFACE

I am one of the young people from the statistics who left the place that I grew up (in the Rural Outskirt areas in Denmark) after turning 21. I moved to the city to have an education, or at least that have always been my excuse to leave the area. And it is partly true. The closest university from my home village is one hour of car driving, and there I wouldn't be able to study at the education which has lead me to the place I am today. However, I guess the absolute truth is that I would have moved anyway, even though I loved (and still love) the area and the people surrounding me. I felt imprisoned by my mobilities restrictions. As I hope the story in the text box gives an insight to; my everyday was so timetabled that there were no room for doing anything impulsive and just a short delay would mean hours of waiting time. A trip to the movies or theatre with my friend would have to be planned in advance to make sure one of us could have our parents drive us or borrow their car, because public transport in the nights and weekends hardly existed. Very often we wouldn't even check if the busses would go – we just imagined they wouldn't. And then again I was one of the lucky ones living in a village with a local grocery store, where I had a spare time job the last years I lives in the area, so for that I didn't have to commute. There was also a sports hall in my home village where I played handball and coached a team of children, and luckily that was just my type of sports, if I had wanted to play baseball or do figure skating I probably would have to have my parents drive me at least 30 km.

It was also in a time where virtual mobilities still wasn't that used. I still remember my parents 128 Kbit/s phone modem, where it took 10 minutes to connect to the internet and 20 seconds to open a webpage – at that moment they were placed too far away to be able to have broadband. Some things have changed in these areas which might make it easier to live there, but the busses do not run more often – on the contrary.

Today I am educated as an Urban Planner; I live in Denmark's fourth largest city, work as Team Coordinator of the ITS Team (Intelligent Transport Systems) at the local municipality and have made this PhD-thesis about mobilities in these rural outskirt areas in Denmark where I grew up. It is through the Mobilities studies and this way of viewing the world that it came to my attention why I moved – I guess I always knew, I just couldn't put word on it. With my PhD thesis I have moved to the other side of the table investigating other peoples' mobilities in these rural outskirt areas and through the use of different methods I try to capture their stories. Having lived most of my life in a small village in the rural outskirts of Denmark but lived the last ten years in a city makes me a hybrid between a rural and urban resident which of course have influenced this thesis. I am a cultural hybrid between “tractor pulling” and “local theatre” as one noticed about my person in a seminar at some point. I know both the urban and rural contexts in good and bad and can view both sides in a discussion. In that way I often found myself defending the rural outskirts (which I wanted to leave so bad as a teenager) in discussion during my time as a student. Yes, I agreed that in the urban context it could make sense to restrict or limit the use of car by e.g. higher taxes or more expensive fuel because there were alternatives but making this a national initiative would make it almost impossible to live in rural outskirt areas, that depend so much on the car. I also believe that growing up in the rural outskirts have helped my data collection in the talks with the residents, both in asking the right questions but also to establish a trustworthy environment by being “one of them”.

Having grown up in a Rural Outskirt area but lived in a city for the last ten years initiated some musings in the beginning of my time as a PhD-student:

- How come all the young people living in my home village did not experience the same “mobilities restrictions” as I did, also causing them a desperate wish to move away?
- How come my mobilities patterns change whenever I return to the rural areas compared to my everyday life in the city?

I own a car and to my surprise I actually use it a lot. But in my everyday life I would never use it to go to work, to do groceries, go to sport or visit friends. I am not even considering it; I always go by bike or by feet for distances below 10 km. But at some point I noticed that my mobilities patterns changes whenever I am in another setting. I started noticing how I, from time to time, would use the car to go to the sea side to check the windsurf conditions when visiting my parents in law's summer cottage – a distance of only 1.3 km by car or only 800 meters by bike or foot. Later I noticed how I would rather borrow my parents' car to go from their home to the local sports hall to see or play a handball match than borrow a bike or go by foot – a distance of only 800 meters or only a bit more than 700 meters by bike or foot. And the same would be the case to go visit my friend at her parents' house – a distance of 2.4 km.

These musings made me wonder if mobilities are affected by socially embedded habits in oneself, if it is the culture in the area where you are, the geographical surroundings or the materialities affording different kinds of mobilities. These musings was in many ways the starting point of the PhD and in some ways worked as initiating questions until my research design was established. In general of course my own story have influenced my motivation to do this study and my entire research design in order to delve into the details and to elaborate on the stories behind all the statistics and make the rest of the country and the academic community aware of the everyday mobilities in such areas and the challenges and potentials waiting to be addressed and investigated. Therefore, the purpose have been to contribute to both the academic community and the Danish planning practice with an innovatory and informative story about rural outskirt mobilities. A subject that has been ‘understudied’, so to speak, within mobilities studies. This study will however exemplify how present and vital mobilities are for the life in rural outskirts and this argument will be substantiated throughout the thesis.

Furthermore having this broad cross disciplinary mobilities perspective with focus on different forms of mobilities and the interplay between them brought forward new perspectives on rural areas. A number of conclusions have been put forward as well as some recommendations for future development that hopefully will be used by national, regional and local governments. E.g. in discussions on roadpricing and other car reducing initiatives at national level, it is important to include the perspectives that some areas and residents are dependent on the car. At regional level there are strong arguments within this thesis to keep on with the role out of broadband that has begun in some regions – further to focus on the skills necessary to use virtual mobilities since this can ease the life in these areas as well as increase the opportunities. Locally, it is to expand focus on the assets that attract locals and tourists to the rural outskirt areas as well as paying attention to the mobilities challenges in these areas.

Furthermore, I hope that the rural outskirt residents who have either read parts of my thesis or heard me present parts of it think it helps explain what mobilities mean to them and that they can use this information in the future development of their local areas. I remember this one example where I gave a presentation at “Forskningens døgn” [Day of Science]<sup>1</sup> on Læsø (a small island in Kattegat) around 1 year into my PhD. I had to stay on the island since the last ferry had left when I finished the presentation. On the ferry the next day I heard one of the local people who heard the presentation referring eagerly to my arguments in a discussion with another local person. It made me feel so content to hear that my arguments were travelling around already (literally speaking).

This example is just one of many where other people have contributed to my thesis, with feedback, new ideas or critique. During the five years I have spent on making this PhD I have had extremely many inspiring conversations and discussions both privately and professionally with family, friends, colleagues, contacts, interviewees, people who heard me present my thesis etc. And of course, the thesis would have been less reflected if it was not for all these contributions, and therefore I owe a tremendous “Thank you”! Without you my thesis would not have ended out like this, however all critical aspects are the responsibility of the author alone.

Especially I want to thank Mette Olesen, Cathrine Borg, Ditte Bendix, Simon Wind and the other PhD-students at Institute for Planning and Institute for Architecture, Design and Media Technology who have had to lay ear to and comment so many ideas, questions, frustrations etc. A special thank you also goes out to first and foremost my two supervisors Claus Lassen and Ole B. Jensen for their massive feedback and inspirations, the PhD Lab at department of Architecture, Design and Media Technology for so many great discussions, C-MUS Younger Research Network, Mimi Sheller for an inspiring research stay at the mCentre in Philadelphia and Andrea Cuman who I had many discussion with during my stay at mCentre. For my research I would like to thank Michael Jensen who contributed to the analysis in chapter 10 and my two research assistants Mikkel Elkær Ibsen and Rikke Schmidt Petersen for helping me transcribe my interviews and key in the questionnaires. A large thank you also goes out to Mette Olesen, Gustav Friis, Anja Wejs, Anne Juel Andersen and Gunvor Riber Larsen who contributed with the final proof reading and to Elias Melvin Christiansen for helping me with the layout of the thesis.

I would like to thank Nationalpark Thy and especially the director Else Østergaard Andersen for both providing me with information, and funding of the investigations, the North Denmark Region for funding of the thesis, Otto Mønstedts Fond and Cowi Fonden for financing my stay at mCentre. Furthermore, I want to thank friends and family, no one mentioned no one forgotten, for giving me pep talks and motivation when it was most needed. Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my husband Jørgen. Finishing a PhD, having a full time job, renovating an old house and raising a small boy is not something you do single-handed – without him and his support this thesis would never have been completed. Thank you!

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1. A day where researchers are invited to many different events all over the Country to give open presentations on their research.



The thesis is divided into four different parts, one that sets the scene, one that will provide a theoretical and methodological framework for the understanding, an analytical part and finally a concluding and reflective part. Each chapter will begin with an outline of the content and the rational of the chapter. Furthermore, Appendix A contains a more detailed reading manual.

I hope that you will have a good time reading the thesis.



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# **PART 1**

## **Introductions**

## MY OWN STORY

*Let me first of all clarify that I love the rural outskirts of Denmark, not as a phenomenon or literally speaking every square meter but I believe that some of the most beautiful and stunning places is in the rural outskirts of Denmark – Nationalpark Thy as one example as I will later illustrate and my home town, Røkker Mølle as another one. See Figure 1.1.*

*Some people, who read the preface, would probably think that I am spoiled complaining about a commute of 17 kilometres even though it last 1 hour. And that using “mobilities restriction” as an excuse to leave my hometown is a lame excuse. Of course I know that this seems as very small scale problems compared to places in the world where you have to commute for hours to just visit your neighbour. However the consequences are that people are moving away, institutions are closing, which complicates the life in these areas more and more, and so you can say that the mobilities restrictions are increasing. This also sets the scene for the starting point for this thesis that will be presented in this chapter.*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Part 1 of this thesis and this chapter will set the scene for the entire study. I will begin by giving a short introduction to the case area of Nationalpark Thy and the research question. Next I will show some of the challenges the rural outskirts of Denmark are facing, and how these became so present in the media that the whole discussion had a word connected to it. This is to show the relevance of the study. The chapter will move on to a discussion of the right use of wording and make a geographical definition of both the rural outskirts in general as well as to make a case selection for the present study. This is followed by an introduction to the theoretical approach to these challenges leading on to introduce the research questions. Finally the structure of the thesis will be explained to give the reader an overview of how the chapters fit together. First of all the case area will be briefly presented



Figure 1.1 The lake in Rækker Mølle, the village I grew up in from I was 7 till I was 21 (Own picture)

## 1.1 THE CASE OF NATIONALPARK THY

Nationalpark Thy was the first area in Denmark to be nominated as national park. It is located in the rural outskirts of Denmark in Thisted Municipality (see figure 1.2). Nationalpark Thy will be used as an extreme case of some of the challenges that will be presented later in this chapter. Furthermore the geographical location with the North Sea to the west and the Limfjord to the east and south gives limitations regarding movement to and from the area. All these issues create several mobilities challenges in the area, such as long commutes and difficulties in providing a high level of service for public transport.

Beside all the challenges that the area suffers from that will be presented later the nomination as national park has provided the area with some new potential to develop the area and to attract tourists and settlers.

Both tourists and residents are part of the potentials that the area contain and both groups already use the area today, thus both groups have been included in this investigation in order to gain the assembled insight into the mobilities in Nationalpark Thy.

Nationalpark Thy will be used as an example of a rural outskirts area however, it is not the goal of this study to generalise all the results from this one chosen case to all rural outskirts, and this also affected the case which have been chosen to be “*illustrative rather than representative*” (Bjerg, 2006, p. 23). The purpose has been to give an illustrating and in-depth view into mobilities in Nationalpark Thy as an example of a rural outskirts area. Some analysis have however been made on the general level of rural outskirts as a supplement to the case based approach.

As it will be argued in chapter 3, mobilities perspectives is lacking in rural studies and in the same way the rural perspectives is lacking in mobilities studies. Very early (in 1929) Nels Anderson wrote that mobilities is a characteristic of the city just as stability is one of rural life (Cresswell, 2006). This thesis will however show how present and vital mobilities are for the life in Nationalpark Thy, and this argument will be substantiated throughout the thesis.

By approaching the mobilities challenges and potentials from the cross disciplinary mobilities perspective that is included in the new mobilities paradigm (Urry 2000) new potentials and explanations will be revealed of mobilities in Nationalpark Thy as well as stories of rural mobilities will be told. In order to have this focus, these are the research questions that have guided this proces:

**What does mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area?**

- Which objectives does the new mobilities paradigm contribute with in the understanding of Thy Nationalpark as a rural outskirts area?
- What role does mobilities identities and –culture (software) and materials (hardward) play for Nationalpark Thy and its users?
- How is the mobilities practised by both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, on which basis and what does it mean to them?
- How can this knowledge be used in the development of Thy Nationalpark and other Rural Outskirts?



Figure 1.2 Demarcation of Nationalpark Thy and Thisted Municipality. The four villages Agger, Stenbjerg, Vorupør and Klitmøller and the two main cities in the municipality Hanstholm and Thisted. The Municipality is surrounded by water with the North Sea to the west and the Limfjord to the east and south.

The purpose of this study is to approach the challenges and potentials in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area from a mobilities perspective. The output of this approach will be that new explanations and meanings of the area will appear which can be used in the development of the area. Furthermore, the purpose is to contribute with new empirical knowledge of rural mobilities, within the field of mobilities studies, which previously mainly have focused on urban areas. Thus the purpose is not to generalise the results from this study to all other rural outskirts, but more to contribute with in-depth knowledge and a narrative from the mobilities users in Nationalpark Thy.

The following part of the introduction will contextually frame the case of Nationalpark Thy. This is in order to understand the challenges and themes the case is enclosed with before the chapter is ended by a presentation of the structure of the thesis.

## 1.2 CHALLENGES IN RURAL OUTSKIRT MUNICIPALITIES

In 2008, for the first time, cities worldwide experienced more inhabitants than the rural areas (Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Population Division, 2008, p. 1). This is a clear illustration of the movement from the countryside to cities that have taken place for a long time - especially in the developed countries, where the urbanisation number also is much higher – being 74 % in 2008 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Population Division, 2008, p. 1). In Norway, as an example, almost 80 pct. lives in cities and in 2011 alone, that number grew with 1.5 pct. or 60.000 people (Statistics Norway, 2012). In Denmark less than 13 pct. lives in rural districts and the number is rapidly decreasing (Danmarks Statistik, 2013a) see figure 1.3.

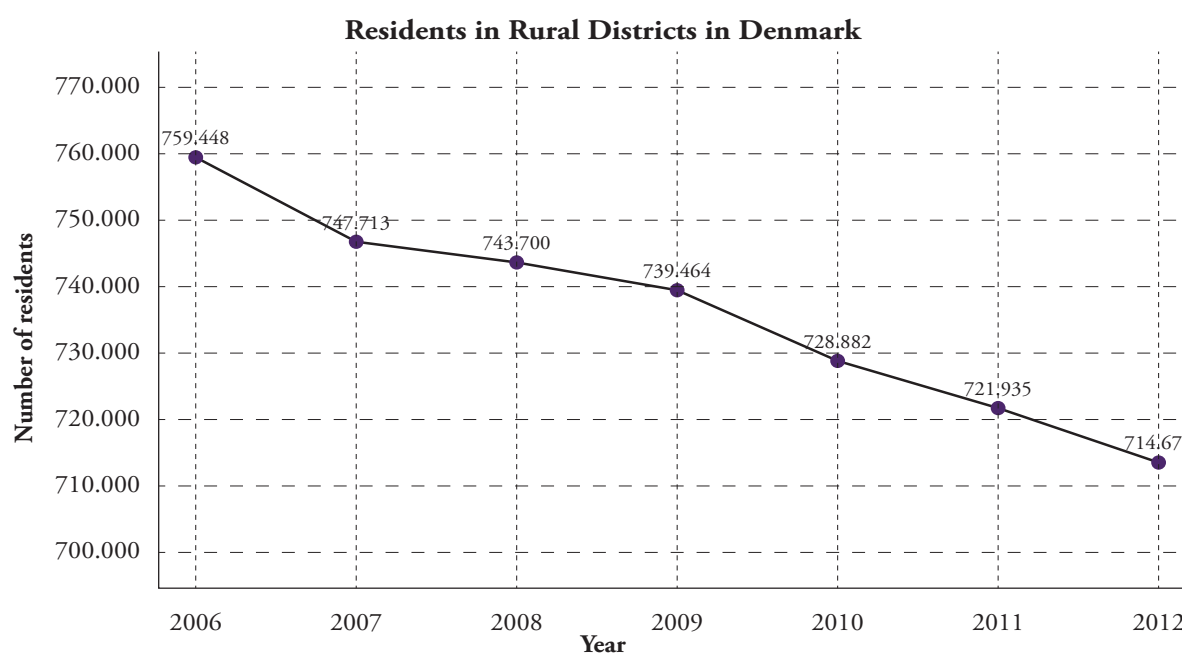


Figure 1.3 Population development in Rural districts [Landdistrikter] in Denmark from 2006-2012 (Danmarks Statistik, 2013a)

As written in the preface I am one of the people from this statistics, who have left the rural areas in Denmark to go to the city with the purpose to have an education. According to Hans Skifter Andersen and Helle Nørgaard (2010) this is also the main reason for the decreasing number of inhabitants in rural areas – young people who move away to have an education. Not many educational offers exist in rural areas, and the centralization that has taken place with the structural reform of Denmark in 2007, and still is taking place, has increased this lack of educational offers, a tendency which might continue in the future (Andersen & Nørgaard, 2010). And even though distance can be overcome, proximity to the functions used in the everyday life is crucial for the rural areas development potential, as exemplified in this thesis.

The fact that public services (e.g. hospitals, public administration and education) are centralised in the larger cities leaves the rural areas with depopulation, and more and more decoupled from economic growth and distanced from the power relations within the network societies (Castells, 2010). This further leads to a number of challenges e.g. empty houses and closing of shops and schools.

### Employment according to Business in Denmark

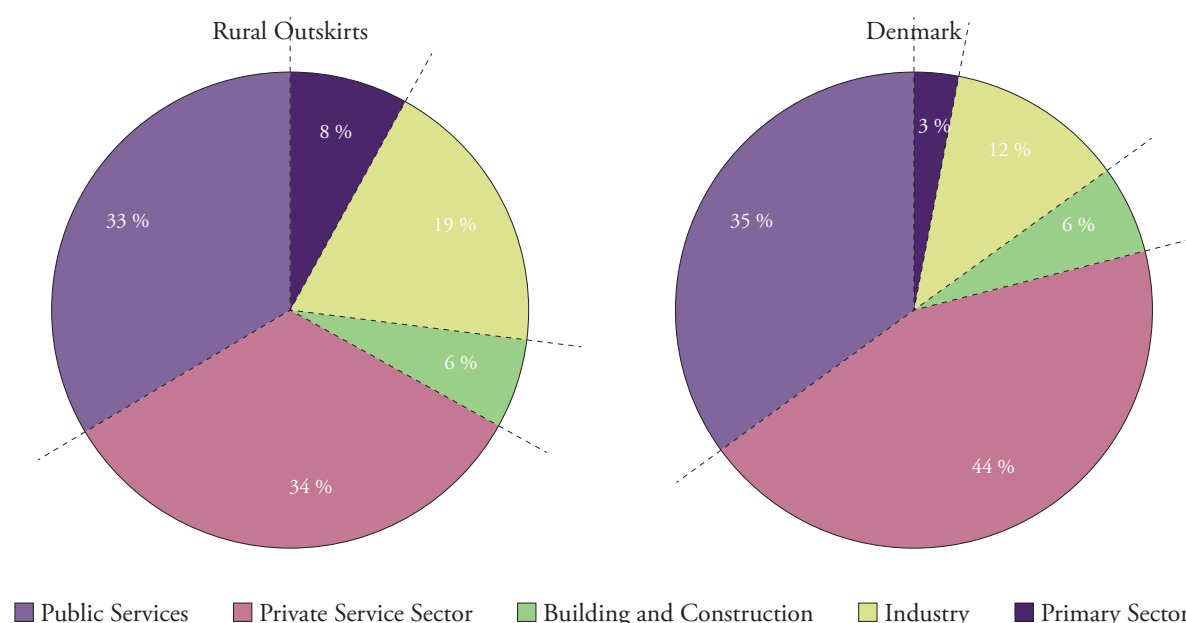


Figure 1.4 Employment according to business in Rural Outskirts in Denmark (Own model using data from (Statistics Denmark, 2013d))

Figure 1.5 Employment according to business in Denmark in general (Own model using data from (Statistics Denmark, 2013d))

The rural outskirts municipalities is furthermore the only place in the county where the employment have decreased from 1996-2009 and when looking at business in the rural areas it becomes clear that more people are employed in the primary and secondary sector of the economy in Danish 'Rural Outskirts' and that fewer are employed in the private service sector (see figure 1.4 and 1.5)<sup>1</sup>.

The distribution of jobs in rural outskirts of Denmark can be a challenge. This is due to the fact that every fourth to and every third job within industry and farming in many municipalities disappeared during the financial crisis. This especially affects rural outskirts municipalities, where a locally based industry can form a vital basis of employment for the population (Local Government Denmark, 2014).

The statistics presented are based on the municipal level but also inside the Rural Outskirt Municipalities there are outskirts problems where the smaller towns and villages in the rural outskirts of the municipality feel slighted by the main cities in the municipality. In these smaller towns and villages the depopulation is even larger than in the general Rural Outskirts. Statistics show that less than every fourth village have had an increase in population from 2006 – 2013 (Danmarks Statistik, 2013b). When it comes to rural districts the number is even lower with less than 6 pct. of rural districts with an increase in population (Danmarks Statistik, 2013a). Furthermore this tendency is not expected to change in the following years as figure 1.6 shows.

The statistic proves a negative development in the rural outskirts. This fact coupled with the closure of institutions and workplaces and a decreasing population then again create a number of mobilities challenges like longer distances, less economical foundation to maintain the infrastructures and public transport services and too few market forces to roll-out a proper broadband connection.

The development makes it even harder to attract new residents and companies, and prevent others from moving away. It becomes a vicious circle, which can be difficult to interrupt (Svendsen, 2013). In April 2010 the discussion and problem had a word connected to it: "Udkantsdanmark" (Rural Denmark / outskirts Denmark / peripheral Denmark or Denmark on the fringe / backward Denmark) and next the background for the advancement of this word will be elaborated.

<sup>1</sup> Primary sector = A & B, Industry = C, D & E, Building and Construction = F, Private Service Sector = G, H, I, J, K, L, M & N, Public Service Sector = O, P, Q, R & S in (Statistics Denmark, 2013d)



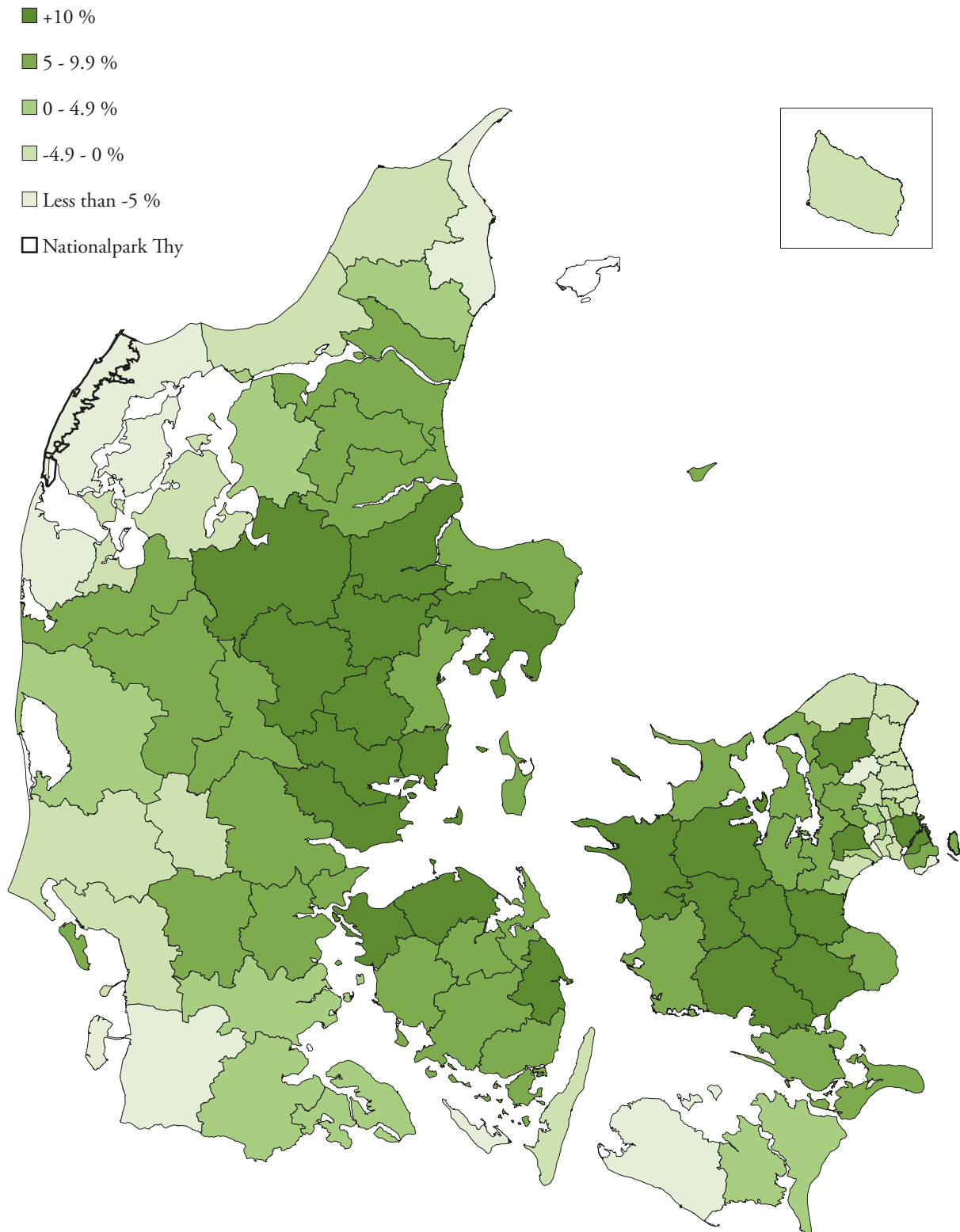


Figure 1.6 Extrapolation of the increase in population from 2009 to 2030 (Gunnensen & Bisgaard, 2010)

### 1.3 'UDKANTSDANMARK'

A few years ago not many people would use the word 'Udkantsdanmark', however it is not a new word in Denmark; it has existed for around 20 years according to Jørgen Nørby Jensen (2010) from Dansk Sprognævn [Danish Language Committee]; however the use of the word grew rapidly from April 2010 and onwards. Thus more than 10,000 articles was published in Danish medias from April to December in 2010 containing the word 'Udkantsdanmark'

and for comparison only 800 articles used that word from the time that the electronic media database was started in 1992 and until March 2010. The word ‘Udkantsdanmark’ was further nominated as word of the year in 2010 by Dansk Sprognævn [Danish Language Committee] together with “ipad”, “Vuvuzela”, “WikiLeaks” and “Askesky” [Ash cloud]. A reason for this explosive use of the word could be that DR [Danish National TV] in April / May 2010 broadcasted a couple of thematic programs under the theme “Danmark knækker” [“Denmark splits in two”]. This rather negative heading and the problems addressed by national politicians, among others, could further be the cause of why a word which could be regarded as purely geographical is wrapped with emotion and negative feelings. With the debate on ‘Udkantsdanmark’ in the spring 2010 an elderly debate and word use of this area burst to life once again – ‘Den rådne banan’ [the rotten banana]. With inspiration from the European Blue banana which symbolized the potential growth areas from London over Brussels and Frankfurt to Milan the Danish newspaper “Weekendavisen” in 2007 created an article series about ‘den rådne banan’ that symbolised the banan-shaped Danish periphery with decreasing population development, see figure 1.7.

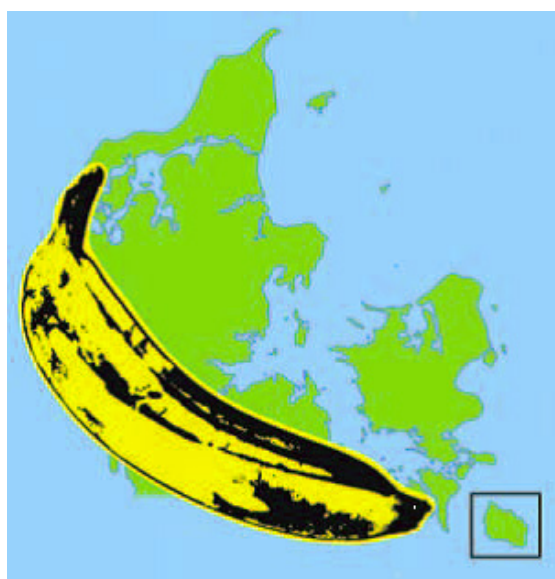


Figure 1.7 "The rotten Banana" as it was portrayed in Weekendavisen (Jensen & Stensgaard, 2007)

The words ‘Udkantsdanmark’ and ‘den rådne banan’ is often used to describe the negative development in the rural areas mentioned previously, including depopulation, closure of shops and schools etc. And with the booming in the use of the negative loaded words Professor Gunnar Lind Hasse Svendsen (2013) investigated if this “negative rural articulation” (Svendsen, 2013) mirrors a size like increase in the negative development in these areas. He shows, that the most negative trends<sup>2</sup> in average have increased with around 30 pct. since 1996, where the negative terminology<sup>3</sup> have increased almost threefold in 2004 and again in 2008 and 2009, and that it has increased tenfold in 2010 and 2011 (Svendsen, 2013). He thereby concludes that a strong negative exaggeration in the media have taken place up through the new millennia and especially the last couple of years. From this conclusion he list four scenarios that this exaggeration can cause:

Scenario 1: Negative media coverage ► Bad Reputation ► Depopulation and poverty ghettos

Scenario 2: Negative media coverage ► Political attention ► Subsidies ► Prosperity

Scenario 3: Negative media coverage ► Backlash ► Self-organisation ► Prosperity

Scenario 4: Negative media coverage ► Status quo  
(Svendsen, 2013)

<sup>2</sup> He investigate nine socioeconomically variables that show a negative development in 16 outskirt municipalities, and from these he chooses the four factors with the highest negative trends which is Municipal liabilities, expenses from placement of children, expense for welfare payments and the number of public schools.

<sup>3</sup> The frequency of which “Landdistrikter” [Rural districts], “landområder” [Rural areas], “på landet” [the countryside], “udkantsområder” [outskirt area], “Udkantsdanmark” and “den rådne banan” used in seven Danish newspapers.



In early 2012 a new story hit the Danish media. A story about how the Danish mortgage providers had a map of the country displaying “black holes” defined as the geographical areas where they did not want to loan money for purchase of a house – the so called “black holes” was especially evident in Udkantsdanmark. At first the Danish mortgage providers repudiated this allegation, but later they told that they had areas in the country where it was difficult to loan money because of the guidelines that the mortgage providers are assigned to follow. In these they have to evaluate the transferability of the property. This means that the property has to be able to be sold within reasonable time and on normal market terms and that the mortgage value cannot exceed the market price as the property is expected to be sold for within a period of six month. The mortgage providers did not want to disclose this information since this knowledge could create an even worse reputation of these areas and by that creating an even more negative impact on property values in these “black holes”. This had the effect that even if people wanted to move to these areas they would not be able to loan money by the mortgage providers and thus the bad reputation from scenario 1 could lead to depopulation and poverty ghettos.

Another example followed in the wake of the debate and media storm about ‘Udkantsdanmark’ in 2010 where different initiatives to secure a development in ‘Udkantsdanmark’ were taken both nationally and locally. Examples of this was a new Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Affairs that was formed after the election for parliament in 2011 which gathered assignments from other ministries in order to create growth and development in the Rural Districts. The Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Affairs has pointed out the following as some of their political results concerning ‘Rural Districts’:

- In order to secure a proper mobile and broadband infrastructure in the entire country the government has enforced at demand to have coverage of 10 Mbit/s in 207 chosen zip codes in connection to auctions of more than 800 MHz-frequencies. The chosen zip codes are those with the highest need to improve the connections. This is the beginning of a process of securing the coverage demand is completed in 2015
- 57 mio. Dkr. has been allocated each year between 2013 and 2017 for improvements of the public transport in rural areas. (Ministeriet for By, Bolig og Landdistrikter, 2013)

These initiatives point to towards an implementation of scenario 2.

Some also believed that a change of wording could be the solution. Thus the Danish newspaper Politikken and the national Danish radio program “Den løse kanon” had a partnership about finding a new word to replace “Udkantsdanmark” in May 2010. Their readers and listeners could send in suggestions and in the end a committee chose the winning word. They received hundreds of suggestions and in the running was “Hjertelandet” [the Heart Country] and “Baglandet” [the Hinterland] with the latter of the two as the winner. Also politician Annette Lind, political spokesman of rural districts of The Social Democrats, made a competition to find a new word to replace “Udkantsdanmark” in the spring 2012. She got around 100 suggestions and chose “Nærværsdanmark” [Intimacy Denmark], “Ressourcedanmark” [Resources Denmark] and “Udsigtsdanmark” [Vista Denmark] as the winning suggestions.

As shown the exact word has had large implications with both positive and negative affects and next I will explain the use of words in this thesis.

## 1.4 ‘UDKANTSDANMARK’ IS ‘RURAL OUTSKIRTS’ IN ENGLISH

As shown above the choice of wording can have large implications with both positive and negative effects and this realisation also affected the choice of wording in this thesis. In my search for the right word I have come across several different suggestions in literature and especially in discussion with other researchers. The list include among others: Rural Denmark, Outskirt Denmark, Peripheral Denmark, Denmark on the fringe, Marginal Denmark and Backwards Denmark. I have discussed this with several native English speaking researchers, both those who speak both languages and know the Danish debate and those who, as a beginning, had no clue of what I was talking about. And the interesting thing was that those who knew the debate would use ‘Udkantsdanmark’ even in the middle of an English sentence, which did not help me much in me search for a right word.

So how should I choose a word that encompasses all the history and feelings that is linked to the word? After my many discussions with native English speakers I got a feeling that ‘Outskirts’ contain some of the same negative vibrations as ‘Udkantsdanmark’ not in the same scale though. Furthermore that it, in the same way as in Danish, the use of the word “outskirts” can be purely a geographical definition as the fringe of something or a transition

area. And that is the reason of settling on this word, though acknowledging and accepting that by using this word alone not everyone would understand the history and emotions in the word, but also deciding that this is not pivotal for the understanding the subject and problem, also since outskirt in many parts of the world are suffering from the same challenges.

However since outskirts is often used to explain the transition area between urban and rural areas and here it is used to explain outskirts in a distance to the urban zone I have attached the word 'Rural' to emphasize that it is outskirts in rural areas. This is further to illustrate that it is not larger cities in the outskirts that is interesting in relation to the problems with sparsely populated areas, lack of economic growth, empty houses and closing of shops and schools. These challenges are most evident in the rural areas and smaller villages. Therefore the word I will use in this thesis to explain the study of object is 'Rural Outskirts of Denmark' – or just 'Rural Outskirts'.

Even though I now settled on a Danish word, 'Udkantsdanmark' and English word, 'Rural Outskirts', these have not always been the words I have used in the field. As shown above so many feelings have been infiltrated in the wording and therefore, I have used the rather neutral word 'yderområder' [remote area] in discussions with residents in these areas, in order not to provoke any feelings in e.g. interview situations. And only when I needed to or after having established a scene with mutual respect I would use the word 'Udkantsdanmark'. To sum up on the use of wording:

- 'Udkantsdanmark' is used when talking about the challenges and the current debate concerning the development and challenges in these areas.
- 'Yderområder' is used when I for some reason or the other would not use the loaded word "Udkantsdanmark".
- 'Rural Outskirts of Denmark' or 'Rural Outskirts' are used when talking about the problem or debate in English.
- 'Rural Outskirt Municipalities' are used when referring to the specific Municipalities included in the definition that will be explained in the next paragraph.

Next I will turn to the geographical location of 'Udkantsdanmark'.

## 1.5 WHERE IS 'UDKANTSDANMARK'?

Though the media and the discussion among the Danish population agree on one word, 'Udkantsdanmark', several different wordings and definitions is used in different official documents often connected to the development effort addressed. It is called 'yderområder' [Remote areas], 'Yderkommuner' [Outskirt Municipality] and 'Kommuner i yderområder' [Municipalities in Remote Areas]. One definition is grounded in a geographical definition with focus on commuting, another is built upon 14 different geographical and economic criteria (i.e. population per square kilometre, workplaces, demography, the importance of agriculture etc.) other definitions are made after special purpose e.g. an announced change in the planning law that concerns periphery municipalities and the addition to the National Budget for 2011 among others concerning municipalities with a large part of the population living in rural areas. (Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, 2007; Velfærdsministeriet & Fødevareministeriet, 2009; Indenrigs- og Sundhedsministeriet, 2011). All the definitions is relevant in relation to the above given problems. In order to investigate which areas in Denmark is denoted 'Udkantsdanmark' and what consequences this has for the areas all the definitions have been plotted into maps in Appendix B and gathered into one map (figure 1.8).

When all the definition is visualised in one map it becomes clear that the different definition depict different areas. This gives a total of 37 of the 98 Danish municipalities that in one or more definitions are denoted rural outskirt area. But it is also obvious that some areas distinct themselves more as rural outskirt areas than others, since they fulfil all the definitions: Thisted, Morsø, Læsø, Tønder, Langeland, Samsø, Lolland and Bornholm. What is further remarkable is that in 4 out of the 5 definition it has positive implications to be denoted outskirt area. They can either apply for funding for different purposes or there are fewer restrictions for them in the Planning Act. Only the definition in the National Planning Report does not provide these areas with new possibilities.

As the Figure 1.8 shows more than one third are 'Rural Outskirt Municipality' in at least one of the definitions. This kind of blurry out the word and concept and makes it difficult to work with all of them, and it can have the cause that there will be different levels of "Outskirtness" among the municipalities. In this thesis I have chosen a case area that fulfils all the definitions and next I will explain the geographical definition in this thesis

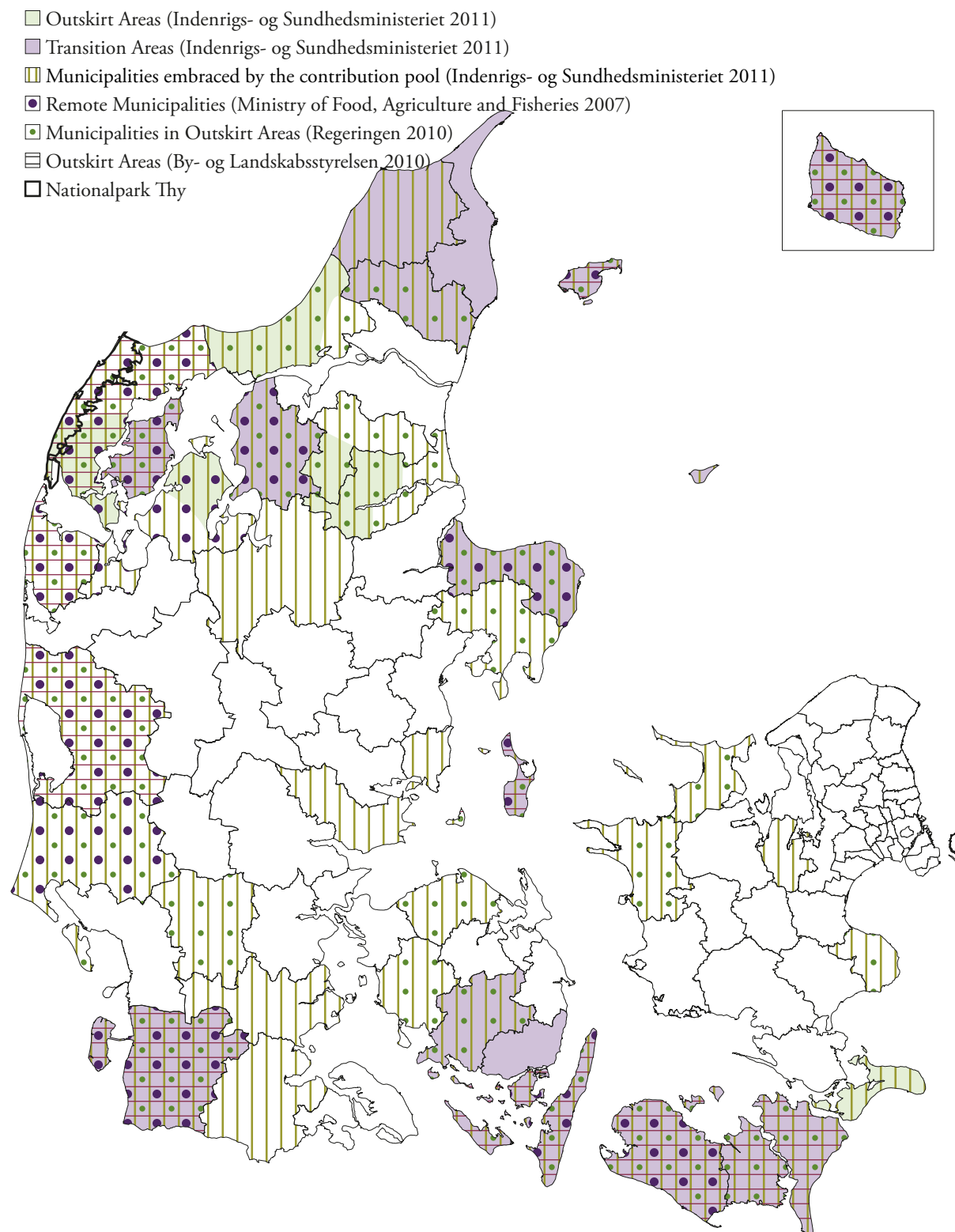


Figure 1.8 All the definitions of 'Rural Outskirts' assembled in one map

## 1.6 GEOGRAPHICAL DEFINITION IN THIS THESIS

When references to rural outskirts of Denmark are made in this thesis, the definition in the “National Strategy for Rural Development in Denmark” will be used since it is the most detailed as it builds on 14 different socio-economic, demographic and urbanisation factors (e.g. density, demography, distance to motorways and taxation base) factors that all is relevant according to the before mentioned challenges. This is also the definition used when the rural outskirts challenges was discussed in paragraph 1.2.

These municipalities (figure 1.9) cover an area of 10,187.74 km<sup>2</sup> which corresponds to 24 pct. of the total area of Denmark (Statistics Denmark, 2013a). 487,043 people live in these municipalities which are around 9 pct. of the total Danish population (Statistics Denmark, 2013b). There are more inhabitants above 40 years old and less below 40 years old compared to the rest of the country and the average person living in Danish ‘Rural Outskirt’ are 44.77 years old while 40.5 in the rest of the country and fewer working age people lives in these areas compared to the rest of the country (Statistics Denmark, 2012). As a more specific case area Nationalpark Thy was chosen as explained earlier.

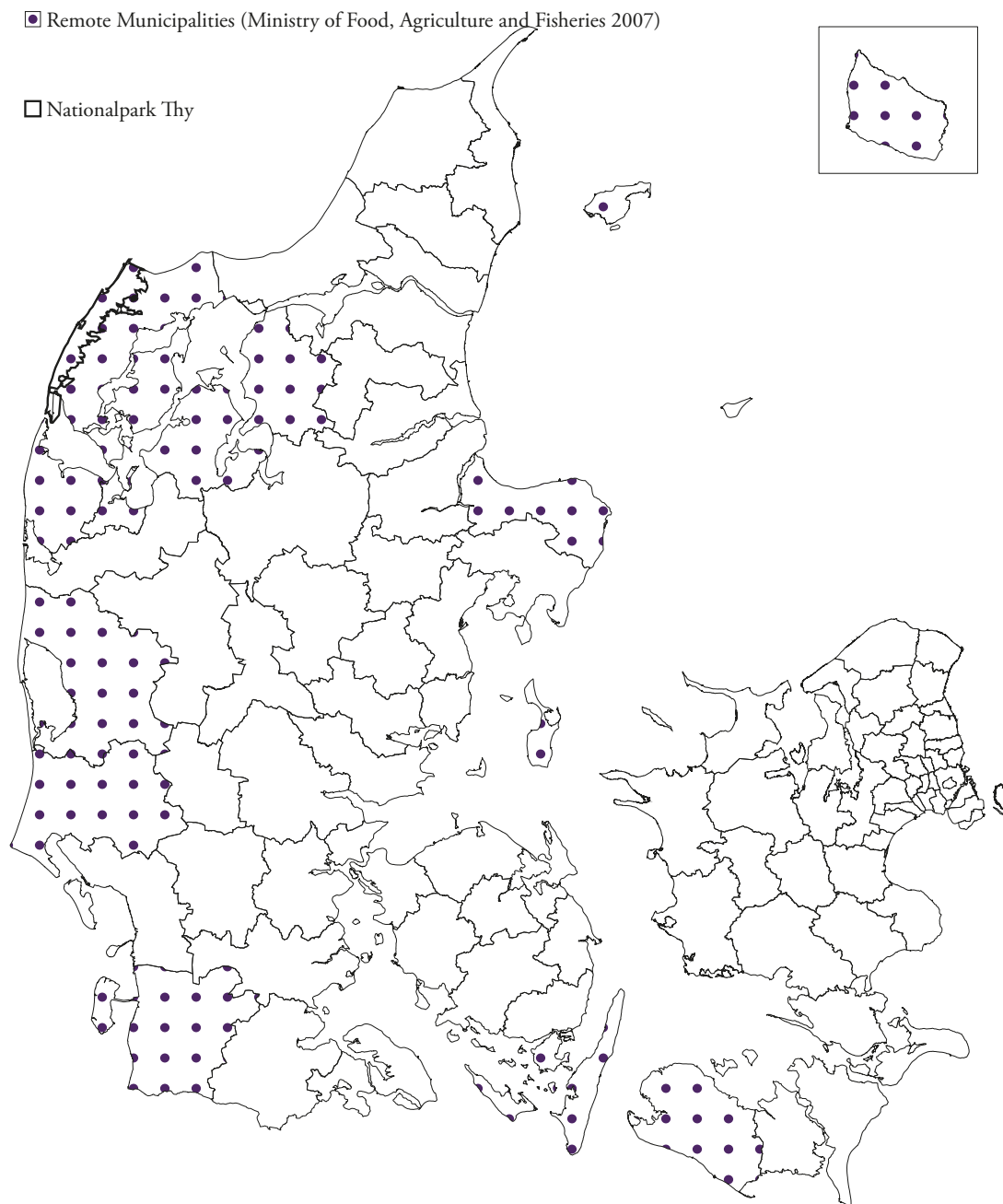


Figure 1.9 The marked areas are municipalities that are denoted "Remote municipalities" in the "National Strategy for Rural Development in Denmark" – own map with information from (Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, 2007, p. 9)

## 1.7 NATIONALPARK THY

Nationalpark Thy is located in Thisted Municipality see figure 1.2, which is characterized as ‘Udkantsdanmark’ (or at least parts of Nationalpark Thy and Thisted Municipality) in all of the definition investigated in figure 1.8 and is therefore a relevant case. Also the area is suffering from all the challenges mentioned earlier.

Nationalpark Thy was opened in 2008 as Denmark’s first national park. It is located as a 12 km broad belt stretching along the west coast from Agger Tange in the south to Hanstholm in the north. It is truly in the outskirts of the country. Thy National Park has an area of 244 km<sup>2</sup> and it holds a broad variety of nature and landscape types, ranging from coastal to agricultural areas, woodlands and meadows, and especially the dune-meadows are a unique type of nature in the park. (Nationalpark Thy - Sekretariatet, 2010).

The area is sparsely populated with around 1 person pr. 0.7 km<sup>2</sup> (Thisted Kommune, 2012) and this is because Nationalpark Thy only covers rural areas. However four villages (Klitmøller, Vorupør, Stenbjerg and Agger) are surrounded by the park, and they are therefore included in this investigation to have both rural districts and villages in the case.

From the description of the challenges in the rural outskirts, the linguistically and geographically definition of ‘Udkantsdanmark’ and finally the presentation of Nationalpark Thy; this chapter will end with the structure of the thesis.

## 1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

### 2. THE HISTORICAL PLANNING APPROACH

To understand the development in the rural outskirts as well as the origin of the problems the historical planning approach is described. This knowledge will also be used in the concluding discussion of future planning in these areas. The chapter will show that mobilities in the ‘plural perspective’ as it will be used in this thesis have not previously been part of Danish planning, however parts of it can be found in almost all periods. This further support the argument that by approaching these rural outskirts challenges from a mobilities’ perspective new explanations and meanings for these areas will appear – and in this case new contributions of knowledge to planning practice.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Studies made within the framework of ‘the new mobilities paradigm’ mainly focus on urban areas. The other way around only few studies have been made of mobilities within rural studies. This chapter will elaborate on the benefits from a joint approach – with mobilities as the view point and the rural outskirts as the case area. It will move on to explain what mobilities are in more detail and how this will structure the framework for the investigation of rural outskirts mobilities using a ‘Mobilities Assemblage’ that will incorporate the physical mobilities, the virtual mobilities, the software in the area and the hardware in the area.

### 4. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will lay out the analytical framework with the different elements that needs to be present in order to understand the Mobilities Assemblage that focuses on rural outskirts. Thus first of all different mobilities activities and practices will be introduced in order to clarify how mobilities is practised by both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, on which basis and what it means to them. Later the other elements in the Mobilities Assemblage, the ‘software’ and ‘hardware’ will be introduced to explain how these afford or prevent the mobilities practices and activities that is taking place.

### 5. METHODOLOGY – A PRAGMATIC CASESTUDY

This chapter will present the general research strategy. First of all it gives an insight to a pragmatic turn on mobilities studies that have been used in this thesis. This includes a presentation of how the thinking of ethnography has been used in this thesis This is followed by a presentation to the use of a case study in this thesis. Finally, the mixed methods design used to gather the empirical knowledge for this thesis will be presented.

## 6. PRESENTATION OF NATIONALPARK THY AND ITS RESIDENTS

This chapter will give a detailed geographical and socio economic analysis and presentation of the case area, Nationalpark Thy, with the purpose to give the reader an insight into the content and diversity of this place. First some geographical facts of the area are described and a short historical analysis is carried out. This is followed by a short analysis of the surrounding area. Finally a socio economic analysis of residents in Nationalpark Thy is carried out. All this to get an understanding of the case area, its history, population and geography in order to describe the life world of the respondents as a basis understanding of their motility and identity formation as part of the mobilities assemblage. Furthermore the purpose is to understand what mobilities mean to locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area.

## 7. SOFTWARE – MOBILE IDENTITY GROUPS AND MOBILITIES CULTURE

This chapter will first of all develop four different mobile identity groups based on the results from my questionnaires and discuss the differences and differential mobilities between the groups. This is to both understand and meet their needs and to use it in the development of the area. There is also a common ground or a common view of life when it comes to mobilities and this is analysed and discussed as the mobilities Culture in the area. This is all to understand the ‘software’ behind the mobilities practices and activities and what this mean to locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy.

## 8. HARDWARE - MATERIALS

This chapter will start by introducing firstly how one get to the region, then Thisted Municipality and finally to Nationalpark Thy and how to move around in Nationalpark Thy. Later a more detailed analysis of the importance of the car will be carried out as well as an analysis of the other mobilities modes. Finally the surface, senses and seasons will be included in the analysis. This is all to clarify what mobilities materials means to the residents and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area.

## 9. PHYSICAL MOBILITIES

The purpose of this chapter is to show how the physical mobilities is practised by both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy and what this mobilities mean to them. This includes an analysis of their actual physical mobilities as well as an analysis of their understanding of distance as this is described as one of the challenges of rural outskirts in general and Nationalpark Thy in particular

## 10. VIRTUAL MOBILITIES

This chapter will show that it is difficult to think that virtual mobility will be the solution to all the problems in the rural outskirts areas due to both access to virtual mobilities, skills to use it and the appropriation (Kaufmann, 2002). However it will show how the respondents seem to have acknowledged the importance of this mean of mobility, how virtual mobilities both eases their lives in Nationalpark Thy and how it has increased the possibilities for those able to use it. The chapter will investigate access, skills and appropriation of virtual mobilities in Nationalpark Thy and further include other rural outskirts in Denmark. Further it will discuss what this means for some of the challenges and potentials in these areas and discuss if there is a “digital divide” (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011) in the area.

## 11. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Firstly, this chapter will briefly and chronologically sum up the main points from the thesis. This will be followed by five main conclusions that cut across chapters and all contributes with valuable insight on what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area. The chapter will further discuss future developments in the rural outskirts. Finally, the thesis will be concluded with a discussion on future studies that can be the next step to contribute with more knowledge on the mobilities in the rural outskirts.







## 2. THE HISTORICAL PLANNING APPROACH

**This chapter will outline the planning approach through history with focus on Rural Outskirts in Denmark - beginning with the industrialization and ending with what has happened in the 00's so far. This is because historical knowledge is important to both understand the mobilities in Thy Nationalpark and other Rural Outskirts and to be able to discuss the future development of these areas. This is followed by an elaboration on the birth of national parks in both a Danish and international context, this is to fully understand the different components that constitute mobilities in Nationalpark Thy.**

### 2.1 A SHORT HISTORICAL OUTLINE

It is difficult to decide where to start a look back in history, but with depopulation in 'Rural Outskirts' as one of the problems initiating this thesis, why not start with the first truly movement from country side to cities in Denmark – the industrialisation. From 1850 and onwards the cities changed their role from being market- and administration centres to being industry centres. The effect of this change was an explosion in population growth from 1850 to 1900 especially in Copenhagen (Madsen, 2009). At the same time the royal borough's monopoly on trading rights slowly faded out which made room for establishment of new towns in the rural landscape, the growth of older villages especially those with co-operative dairies and the establishment of railway cities. In the same period also a folksy movement across the country established village halls and co-operative societies. In the last part of the 19th century the growth in the public transport sector made it possible for the city dwellers to leave the cities on holidays to experience the nature and the more wealthy people started building summer cottages along the coastline that had not yet been protected from building structures (Madsen, 2009). The combination of employment in the industrial sector with a law prohibiting work on Sundays and holidays and the growth in public transport made it further possible for city dwellers to visit the country side for recreational purposes. In the last part of the 1800 the thought of nature protection and preservation started gaining feet partly to protect the nature from the many new visitors and tourists and the new buildings and partly to protect specific species and landscape (Madsen, 2009). The first preservation movements had, however, not focus on public use as it was part of the national park concept and the public forest lands in the US at the same time (Tanner, 1983). The idea of access for the public was first introduced in public debate in Denmark around 1900 but not until 1917 was it manifested in Naturfredningsloven [the Act of preservation of nature] (Madsen, 2009) and the first Danish Nationalpark was opened in 2008 – Thy Nationalpark.

The first true effort to control the development of the cities was made with Byplanloven [the Act of city planning] in 1938. This Act made it an obligation for royal boroughs with more than 1.000 citizens to make a city plan within a period of five years (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 24). This Act did not affect the villages and rural areas much, since it focused on the royal boroughs. The Act in combination with the following circular founded the basis of today's municipal self-governance and the Act stated quite clearly that it was the task of planning to manage common considerations (Jensen O. B., 1999, p. 135). This was followed up by Byreguleringsloven [the Act of city control] in 1949 and an update of Byplanloven that made it possible to control the cities' land use and the main responsibility was placed within the primary municipalities (Gaardmand, 1993, pp. 38-39).

#### 2.1.1 TIMES OF CONSTRUCTION (1960-1975)

The period of 1960-1975 was a period of economic growth and a change from the agriculture business to the business of industry as the generator (Jensen O. B., 1999, p. 136). An illustration of this is a status report from 1970 called "Landsplanlægning, status og fremtidsperspektiver" [Nationaplaning, status and future perspectives] made by Landsplansekretariatet [the National Planning Secretariat] where they forecasted that 150,000 farms would be reduced to 40,000 within a ten year period. The continued movement from countryside to cities through the 1950s and 1960s combined with the economic growth from 1960 and onwards raised new demands on area for housing, business etc. This caused that new cities and quarters rose around 1960.

One example of a new city was the construction of Hanstholm (which is located in Thisted Municipality just north of Nationalpark Thy) where a new city was planned around a new Harbour which was build up through the 1960s and this process was started with a new law in 1960. However, the idea of a harbour and a city at this location appeared already in the middle of the 19th century, and already in 1917 the government passed an Act on support of a harbour construction in Hanstholm and bought up land for the purpose. The vision was a city of 20,000 inhabitants build on ideas from an urban planning competition carried out in 1923. However, the yearly grants were too skimpy and in 1930 the construction was paused. During World War II the Germans used the background of the harbour to

build one of the largest strongholds in Northern Europe and the unfinished harbour dilapidated even more and later as a fear of invasion it was blown up. After the war discussions were carried out on whether or not to rebuild the harbour. In 1960 an Act was passed to finish the harbour and to make it both a traffic and fishery harbour and by that giving support for a regional development in the area (Gaardmand, 1993, pp. 147-148). The city never grew to the envisioned size and today only 2,253 people lives in the city (Statistics Denmark, 2013c) which is only 1/10 of the expected number, further the traffic harbours is closed but it still works as a large fishery harbour.

Planners had agreed on the need of national planning ever since the end of World War II and the booming development in 1960s increased the need for national planning even more to control the development of both urban and rural areas. With the inauguration of Viggo Kampmann as Prime Minister in 1960 the work with national planning started (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 78). Parts of that discussion from end of the 1950s were the discussion of 'det skæve Danmark' [the slanted Denmark] and it started with different publications, among others a booklet "Vestjyllands fremtid" [The Future of Western Jutland] by the director of the chemical company Cheminova. Other contributions focusing on the national level discussed where the future development should be located – in the fast growing urban areas or in the areas with less growth in order to secure development in the entire country. One of the most famous examples of this discussion and one with focus on connections and traffic is the idea of "Det store H" [Capital H] firstly presented by the editors of Byplan<sup>1</sup> (see figure 2.1).

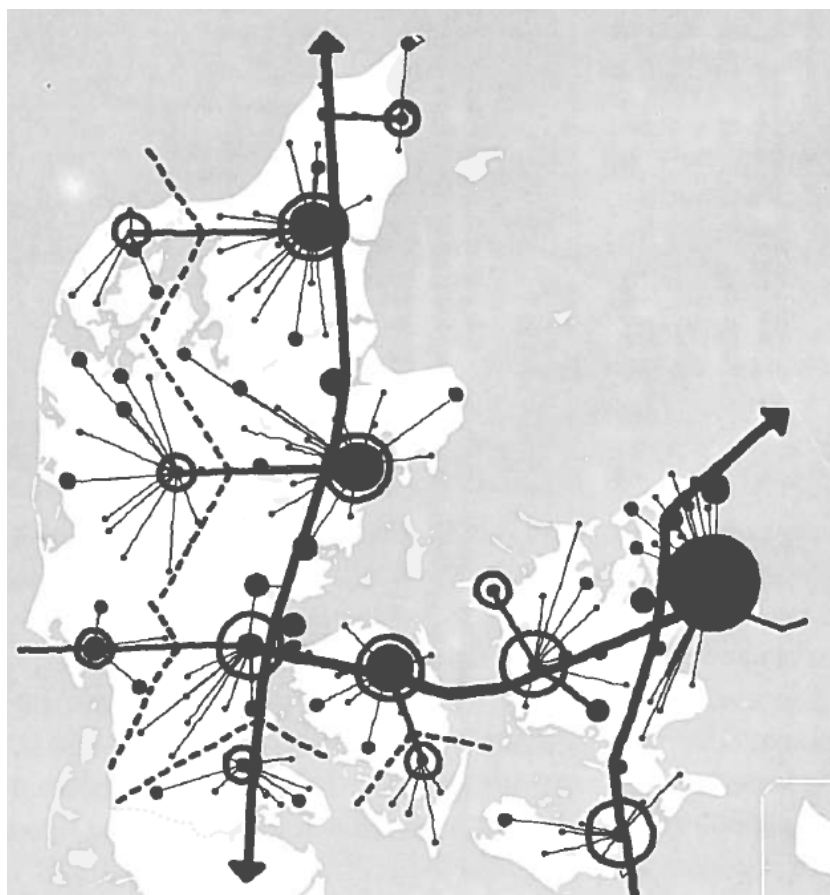


Figure 2.1 "Det store H" [Capital H] – named after the main traffic routes forming a capital H (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 79)

<sup>1</sup> Byplan [Urban plan] is a journal published by Byplanlaboratoriet [The Danish Town Planning Institute] which is a self-governing foundation that was established in 1921 by visionary persons with interest in Urban Planning.

The argument for centralising the development in these lines of traffic was that more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the country's population lived along these lines, the increasing traffic between the different parts of the country took part along these lines, the cities placed at these lines grew with 9/10 of the entire urban growth in the Country and finally no city with more than 25,000 inhabitants was placed outside the lines (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 79). As an opposite proposition to this centralistic growth strategy Johannes Humlum proposed a plan on "Den midtjyske motorvej" [The central Jutlandic motorway] (see figure 2.2)

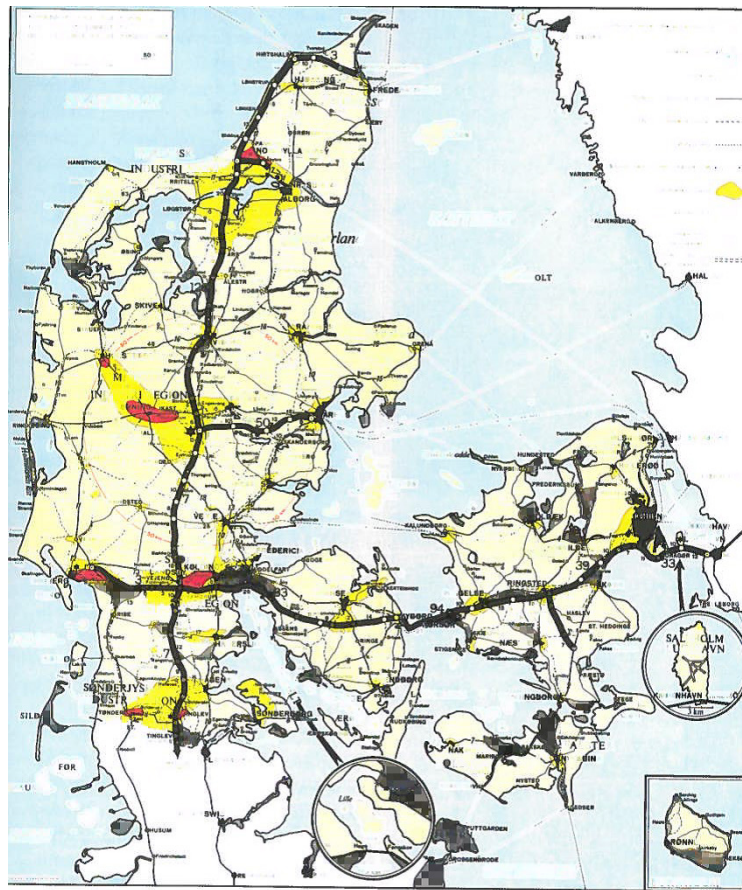


Figure 2.2 "Den midtjyske motorvej" [The central Jutlandic motorway] as proposed by Johannes Humlum (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 81)

This started as a feature in the Danish newspaper Politiken where Johannes Humlum suggested building a motorway in the central part of Jutland going from North to South instead of the East Jutlandic motorway. His argument was that the areas were flat and cheap. Furthermore he argued for creating new large urban and industrial areas in the larger urban regions in the western part of the country in order to drag some of the development to the west. Despite the fact that some national and local politicians supported his idea the government decided in 1965 to construct a motorway along the east coast of Jutland (Gaardmand, 1993, pp. 80-81). However initiatives were also taken to secure development outside the traffic lines. E.g. in 1958, an act was passed through to help productive employment in those parts of the country that was not part of the industrial development. This Act, Egenudviklingsloven [Act of Regional Development], made it possible for new companies in these areas to receive support as technical and economical counselling for preparation of projects and as support for financing of the implementation of projects (Jensen B., 2008, s. 77-78). The financing support was either government guarantee or government loan. In general the planning discussions in these years pivoted around the huge East Denmark < West Denmark and Urban < Rural dilemmas (Jensen O. B., 1999, p. 143) as we have seen again from 2010 and onwards.

The 1960s was also a period of making strategic plans (dispositionsplaner [arrangement plans]) with 2/5 of Denmark included in some plans in the middle of the 1960s. Also regional plans were made in the 1960s with the North Denmark Region as one of the first to present a strategic development plan. Three county councils, a number of Municipalities and the Ministry of Housing in 1963 together supported the process of a regional plan in North Denmark Region with the result "Nordjylland år 2000" [North Denmark Region the year 2000]. In this plan three growth areas was pointed out including Thisted-Hanstholm and with Aalborg-Nørresundby as the regional centre of force. The growth should flow from this centre of force to the three growth areas and from these further into the towns and villages (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 112).

### 2.1.2 THE DECADE OF REFORMS (1970S)

Whereas the 1960s could be named 'the decade of construction' the 1970s could be termed 'the decade of reforms'. Four considerations were crucial for the genesis of the reforms of the planning Acts in the 1970s: a request for recapitulation and simplification, modernisation, decentralisation and the public participation - with the latter two as the new and most controversial. It all started in April 1970 with a reorganisation of the more than 1,000 municipalities into 277 municipalities and the 23 counties into 14 counties plus Copenhagen and Frederiksberg County Municipalities (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 185). By this reform parts of the planning and authority responsibilities was also transferred from the government to the municipalities and the earlier reimbursement scheme was changed into a block grant. Similar the counties came to play a larger and more independent role within themes such as health, education and planning. Also a Planning Act reform was carried out in the 1970s, with the first phase carried out in 1969 with the passing of the By- og landzoneloven [Act of Urban and rural zoning] and Naturfredningsloven [Act of preservation of nature]. The passing in this phase were mainly to regulate rural areas. The second phase was passed in 1973 and included Love om lands- og regionalplanlægning [Act on national and regional planning]. The passing in phase 2 concerned the general planning. Finally phase three with the most important element being Kommuneplanloven [Act of municipal planning] that was passed in 1975 (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 186). The main ideas behind the reforms was that spatial planning should be compulsory in all municipalities, and that the urban sprawl was controlled by dividing the country into three different zones: Urban, Rural and summer cottage zone as it was done through the Act of Urban and rural zoning. It was also to secure a logic and hierarchy between the plans made at national level, regional level and municipal level where the plans always had to conform the plan above and to secure a rolling planning with national plans changes every year and revisions of regional plans and municipal plans every fourth year. Thus the planning system came to look like illustrated in figure 2.3.

The first national plan was passed in 1975 and concerned the debate about 'the slanted Denmark' and regional matters with the purpose of advancement of more equal development in the country, which was also the main subjects in the first regional plans where they wanted to stimulate the employment and service development and the disadvantaged areas of the counties. Here it was stated specifically that the recent shifting of population growth from the capitol area should be continued and that the next biggest cities, Århus and Odense, should not grow (Jensen O. B., 1999, p. 150).



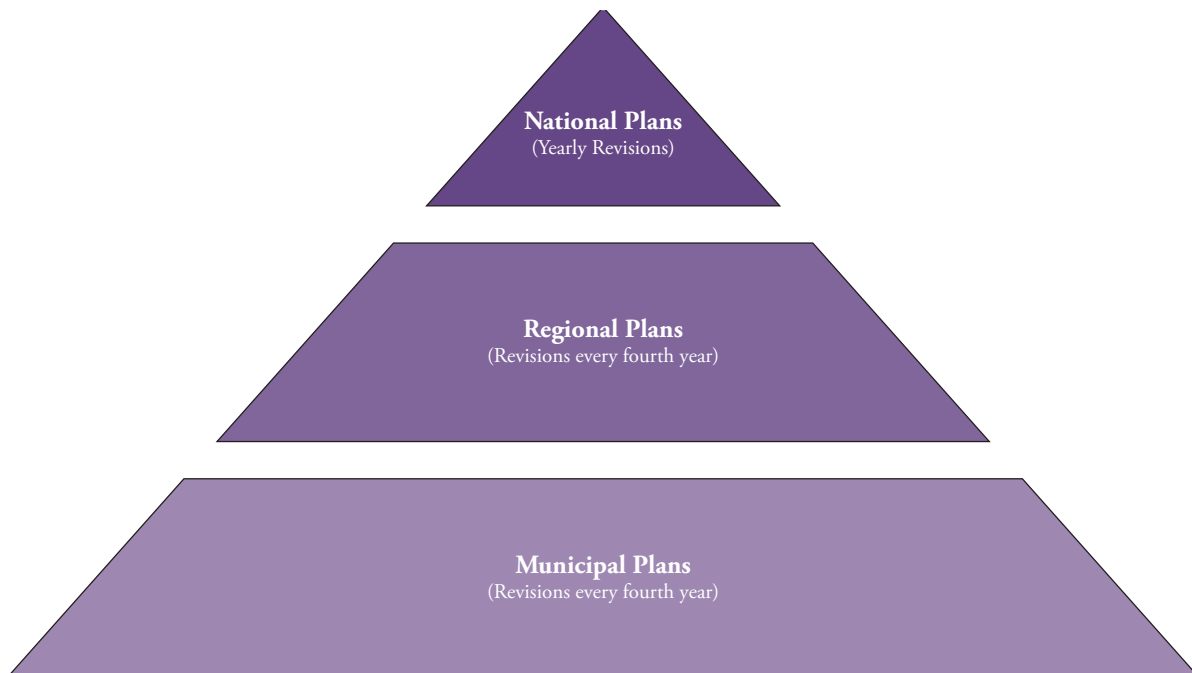


Figure 2.3 The Frame Management Triangle of strategic planning - where each plan needs to conform the plan above

### 2.1.3 TIMES OF CHANGES (1980S)

With a discussion of the 1979 national plan the government prepared the ground for a change of focus away from the smallest villages and built this on some investigations that showed that public transport and thus development of housing, workplaces and service was not appropriate in these areas. This report almost caused a vote of no confidence for the government, but by once again putting focus on the villages, they averted this (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 254). However, from the middle of the 80s and onwards there is a change both in actual movement in the country and in the scope of the national plans. As an example the Ministry of Environment wrote in the 1984 national plan that the depopulation in the larger cities, that was the mark of 1960s and 1970s, seemed to have stopped, which affected the weaker regions (Jensen O. B., 1999, p. 168). The concerns for the smaller towns and weaker regions grew with the structural changes in the farming industry, and in the 1987 national plan it is stated that if the basis of business is not strengthened these societies will soon become suburbs of the bigger cities (Jensen O. B., 1999, p. 172). This concern for the weaker areas is carried on to the 1988 national plan where a discussion on the purpose with national planning is carried out. Here it is stated that “*National planning should contribute to equal development possibilities in all parts of the country.*” (Miljøministeriet, 1988, p. 7 (own translation)). And that “*It is also a main task for the national planning to tie the country together so that people, goods and information can ‘move’ faster and cheaper between the regions.*” (Miljøministeriet, 1988, p. 8 (own translation)). Here we see that the importance of mobilities is mentioned in the purpose with the national planning, however, it is also the last time for several years that we will see the focus on equal development. Already in the 1989 version the focus on equality has changed and so they write in the 1989 national plan “*It is the impression of the government that the development has outrun earlier national planning goals on equality. In the future the guideline for regional political activities should be diversity. Emphasis has to be on taking optimal advantages of the development possibilities in the regions in order to strengthen Denmark’s position internationally.*” (Miljøministeren, 1989, p. 5 (own translation)). In this national plan the focus has instead been put on and international perspectives and to ensure that Denmark do not end up as an outskirt internationally. In practice they suggest to carry out a regional differentiated development policy because of the different life forms in different parts in the country and further that a local identity is important when local development potentials should be utilised (Miljøministeren, 1989, p. 24). This international focused was expanded in the following decade.

### 2.1.4 INTERNATIONALISATIONS AND MODERNISATIONS (1990S)

In the beginning of the 90s a (French) analysis showed that the most prosperous cities in Europa collectively draws a banana shape from London, past Frankfurt to Northern Italy – the “Blue banan” (as mentioned in Chapter 1). As Denmark, or Copenhagen, was not part of this growth band, the Danish Minister of Finance propose to change the development from growth in the blue banana to growth in the green circle that would also include Berlin and

Copenhagen or Øresundsområdet [the Oresund Area], and in 1991 an Act on the Øresund Bridge was passed (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 269). This is an explanatory picture on how the Danish government had started to pay attention to matters outside the country and throughout the 90s national planning moved away from a national affair to a combined national and EU affair (Jensen O. B., 1999, p. 207). Another example is from the 1996 national plan where it is stated that the framework conditions for business development is dominated by two main tendencies. One was globalisation as a cause of the technological development and the second tendency was that the international competition emphasizes each city's, rural area's or region's ability to support the business and to create good local production conditions (Miljø- og Energiministeriet - Departementet Landsplanafdelingen, 1996, p. 11). The name of that national plan also tells a lot on the focus – “Danmark og europæisk planpolitik” [Denmark and European planning policy].

These perspectives were also carried on into the 1992 environment act reform that modernised the Act of Planning. Thus the purpose with the law was to focus on an appropriate spatial development instead of an equal spatial development (Jensen O. B., 1999, p. 180) and by this the government also moved away from “... *the former primarily politically dominated welfare orientation of the Danish territory. The space of politics is gradually being transformed into a space of economics.*” (Jensen et al. 1996a: 14 in Jensen O. B., 1999, p. 181). And though the Environment Act Reform modernized the Act of planning many of the same principles as the 1970s Act of planning was kept. Five acts on planning was consolidated into one Act of planning and two acts was revoked (Gaardmand, 1993, p. 284) but there was still the same hierarchy in the Frame Management Triangle and the country was still divided into zones, however it was made more clear that the urban planning was a municipal affair and the rural planning was a county affair. In this Act it was further decided that the national plans should no longer be made every year but only following an election.

### 2.1.5 CENTRALISATIONS (00S)

In the year 2000 National planning report, there is focus on the relationship between city and country side, and so there is in the rest of Europe, and the debate centres on the development of urban and rural municipalities (Miljø- og Energiministeriet, 2000, p. 4). In this report new regional centres is appointed and the cities should work as the engine for development in the region (Miljø- og Energiministeriet, 2000, p. 5). Before the following National Planning report Denmark experienced a change of government and for the first time we see a naming of different parts of the country – the country is divided into ‘storbyoplande’ [metropolis catchment area], ‘Mellemstore byers opland’ [medium cities catchment area] and ‘småbyoplande (yderområder)’ [small cities catchment area (outskirt areas)] and it further include a discussion of the more weak development possibilities in the outskirt areas. And the new government had more changes coming.

At the opening of the parliament in October 2002 Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen heralded the appointment of a commission that should discuss alternative models for the handling of public tasks. In January 2004 the commission presented their report, this was sent into public hearing for three months and only three weeks after this public hearing the government published their proposal for a municipal reform, and a couple of month later the government, supported by their supporting party, could present a political agreement on the reform. The counties were to be abolished, and replaced by 5 regions. Municipalities should be consolidated into units of minimum 30,000 inhabitants, and the Municipalities should make voluntary agreements to solve this. The result was a decrease from 271 to 98 municipalities, from which five smaller municipalities kept their own boundaries including three island municipalities. The average size was now 50,000 inhabitants in each municipality. The case area Nationalpark Thy used to be part of three different Municipalities: Hanstholm in the north, Thisted in the middle and Sydthy in the south. Today all three municipalities have been merged into one: Thisted Municipality. The former three municipalities used to be part of Viborg county and thus finding their bearings to the south, today they are part of North Denmark Region and thus have to find their bearings in a new direction - to the North and East.

Beside these geographical changes the reform entailed revisions of 48 main laws with appertaining adjustments in other laws. What further changed was the status of the regional plans, which used be binding planning documents, but now were a vision- or strategically documents without regulating the land. Another change is regarding the responsibility of landuse, where the municipalities used to be responsible for the land use in the urban areas and the counties used to be responsible of the land use in the rural areas. After the municipal reform the municipalities were given all responsibilities of land use in both urban and rural areas. (Østergård, 2009).

The Municipal Reform became effective on January 1st 2007. However, the amassed municipalities and the large units threatened one of the most important characteristics of municipal self-rule which is the consideration of local

conditions (Jensen h. T., 2009). Also (Jensen h. T., 2009) explains that the changes are a possibility of centralisation of the physical regional planning from the regions to the state. Finally (Jensen h. T., 2009) elaborate how the centralisation caused longer distances between the resident and the administration, distances that are not custom in Denmark, and he questions whether these longer distances will be neutralized by higher quality in the services.

In the wake of the municipal reform a much discussed National Plan report were published. In this a new map of Denmark is presented (see figure 2.4).

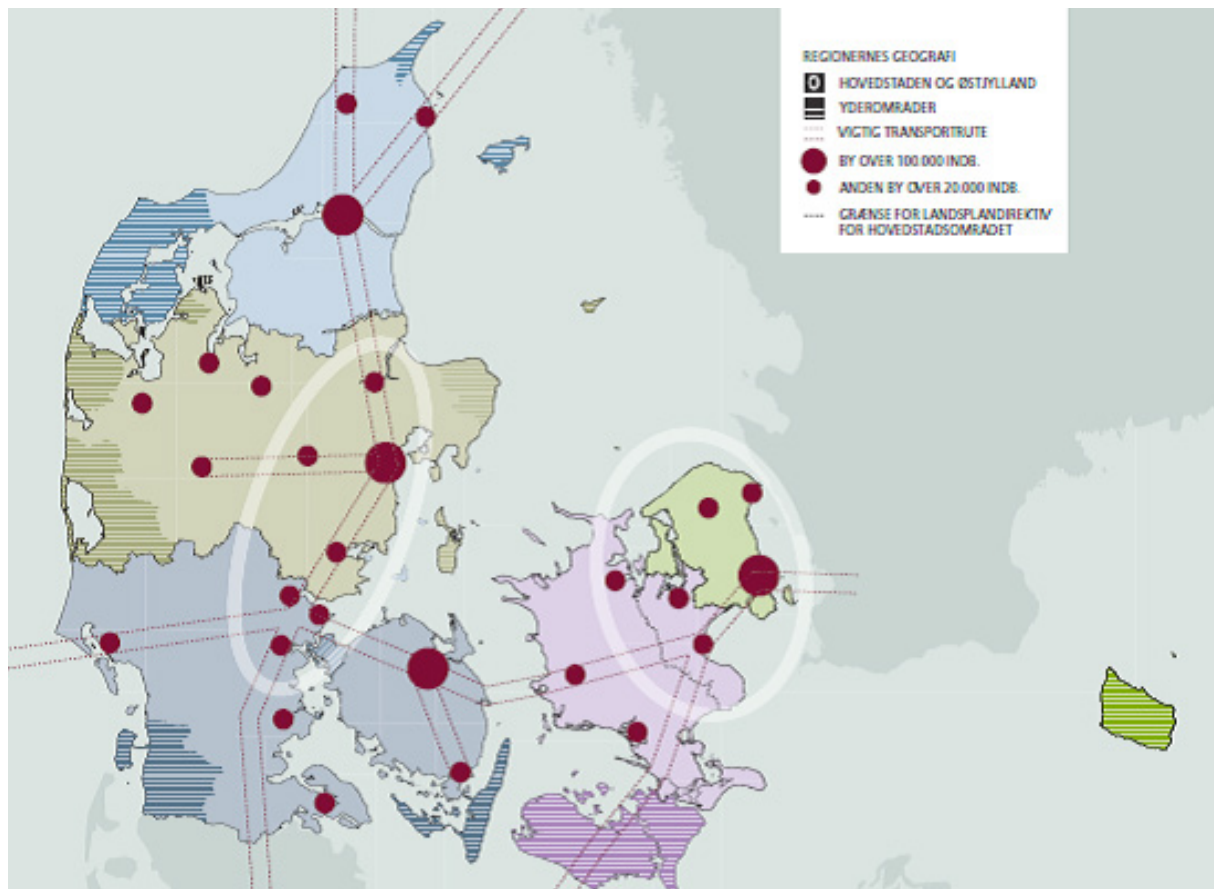


Figure 2.4 new map of Denmark is presented in the National Plan report of 2006 – the hatched areas marks the outskirts areas (Miljøministeriet, 2006a)

Though it is stated that there should be development in all parts of the country, the areas outside the capital area and outside the ‘east jutlandic urban belt’ felt neglected and we see ‘Yderområder’ [Outskirts Areas] as a category in the legend of the map. It is also specifically stated that “There should be a difference between countryside and cities” (Miljøministeriet, 2006a). This follows the same ideas as the municipal reform - to centralise the development in urban areas.

From this focus on urban areas and the build environment I will turn to a focus on the space in between.

## 2.2 IN-BETWEEN SPACE – NATIONAL PARKS

As previously written the concept of national parks can at least be dated back to the nomination of Yellow Stone National Park in the US in 1872 (Tanner, 1983), and the first European national park was established in Sweden in 1909 (Miljøministeriet, 2006b). However, from that time it would take almost 100 years before the opening of the first Danish national park. The many years as well as national legislation etc. also affect different designs of national parks all over the globe. Some areas in desolate places with no settlements have earlier been nominated a national park and thus stand out in the same way today with a more wild landscape (Tanner, 1983) whereas others like in the Danish cases exist of both of buildings and roads because of the nomination after settlements in the area

and are therefore more a cultural landscape. What seems often to be a common denominator is the location in the nature often far away from the cities and therefore a considerable amount of transport time is often necessary to visit them (Tanner, 1983).

### 2.2.1 THE CREATION OF DANISH NATIONAL PARKS

Even though Thy Nationalpark was opened as the first Danish national park in 2008 the process of getting there started long before that. The thought was introduced several times throughout the years including the 1967 white paper by Naturfredningskommissionen [commission of nature preservation] (Miljøministeriet, 2006b). But it was not until several years later that there was sufficient support of the idea. The fear was that it could weaken the nature protection and that farming and other traditional businesses would be impossible within the national park territory.

The situation changed gradually and in the period with Svend Auken as Minister of Environment (1993-2001) the work with national park legislation was started. What might really have put focus on the project was an OECD report from 1999 *“Environmental Performance Reviews Denmark”* where it is pointed out that Denmark has no national parks and that *“...it was found necessary to increase the priority given to nature protection in general and to provide new guidelines for future efforts.”* (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1999, p. 115). More specifically it was recommended to investigate the possibility of establishing a network of national parks (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1999). Based on this report Svend Auken appointed Wilhjelmudvalget [a committee] with the purpose to propose a solution to the OECD report. In November 2001 the committee published their report *“En rig natur i et rigt samfund”* [A rich nature in a rich society], which expressed that the quality of Danish nature and biodiversity never before had been so poor and they expressed a concrete goal of the establishment of 6 national parks (Wilhjelmudvalget, 2001). At the same time a change of government took place in Denmark and the report was paused. However, the interest in Environmental protection still increased in the general population and the new government brought the report forward again in 2003. In 2004 *“Den Nationale Følgegruppe vedrørende nationalparker”* [the National advisory group concerning national parks] was established. This group should put forward models of administration and legislation of national parks in Denmark and propose recommendations for appointment and establishment of Danish national parks. This resulted in 7 pilot projects that all had to hand in a report. Though, in several of these projects there were no local agreement on the project and they were later sorted out. In the early summer 2007 the OECD recommendation, the recommendations from the national advisory group as well as the experience from the pilot projects had the result that the Danish Parliament passed the law on national parks that made it possible to establish national parks in Denmark (Hansen & Ovesen, 2011). On June 29th 2007 Thy was nominated as the first Danish national park and it opened in August 2008. In January 2008 Mols Bjerger, Vadehavet, Skjern Å and Kongernes Nordsjælland was also nominated as national parks, however Skjern Å never opened as national park and the last one is still in process.

### 2.2.2 LAYOUT OF DANISH NATIONAL PARKS

The Danish national parks vary in size and content and they can cover land and sea; as well as containing valuable landscapes, small villages and urban communities (Naturstyrelsen, N.D.). Thy National Park contains small villages whereas the larger villages and towns in the area are not part of the national park territory. The land in Thy National Park is not owned by the national park and the national park has no legal effects for the plot owners, the municipality, the region or the state. Furthermore, the national park foundation has no competences of authority; this means that plans that need realization have to be done through volunteer agreements with the plot owners and in co-operation with the public. (Nationalpark Thy - Sekretariatet, 2010).

The law of national parks from 2007 defines the purpose and the overall rules for the development of national parks in Denmark (Velfærdsministeriet & Fødevareministeriet, 2009). Within the national park law the structural organization is defined and this means that all national parks have a decentralized management, consisting of a board, a national park council and a secretariat (Naturstyrelsen, N.D.). In Thy National Park the board consists of 14 members mainly local representatives representing a broad range of societies relevant to the national park and each member is elected for a period of eight years.

The main goal of establishing national parks in Denmark is to strengthen and develop the nature and landscape in areas of national and international importance (Velfærdsministeriet & Fødevareministeriet, 2009). The Danish national parks contain some of Denmark's most unique and valuable landscapes and are areas which have already been nominated as international nature protection areas (NATURA 2000 areas) (Naturstyrelsen, N.D.). The establishment of national parks in Denmark happens in accordance with European policy for the protection and



development of valuable cultural and natural landscapes. Furthermore, the goal of the national parks is to promote nature experiences and outdoor life; strengthen the cultural heritage and support a development useful for the local community (Velfærdsministeriet & Fødevareministeriet, 2009). Thus, the purpose of establishing National parks in Denmark and specifically National Park Thy is first of all to preserve, secure and develop unique nature, landscapes and cultural heritage. Secondly, it is to create better opportunities to move around in nature and experience it fully. And finally, Nationalpark Thy is thought of as a contributor to regional economic development (Nationalpark Thy - Sekretariatet, 2010).

### 2.2.3. NATIONALPARK THY<sup>2</sup>

The manager of Thy National Park, Else Østergaard Andersen, describes Thy National Park as a network-organization where everything is developed through voluntary agreements (Andersen E. Ø., 2011). She points out that people in the beginning had difficulties in capturing what the national park was – because it is a specific area on a map, but it is not demarcated by a fence or similar, because the wildlife shall be able to walk around freely. So what is then new in being appointed as a national park? – for manager Else Østergaard Andersen the appointment of the area to national park have given the area an opportunity to benefit from the landscape potentials and look at the territory in new ways – now it is the landscape that are in focus whereas before it was more the towns and villages of the area. These different viewpoints have once been described by Calvino (1974): *“‘Bear with me,’ that man answered. ‘I am a wandering herdsman. Sometimes my goats and I have to pass through cities; but we are unable to distinguish them. Ask me the names of the grazing lands: I know them all, the Meadow between the Cliffs, the Green Slope, the Shadowed Grass. Cities have no name for me: they are places without leaves, separating one pasture from another, and where the goats are frightened at street corners and scatter. The dog and I run to keep the flock together.’ ‘I am the opposite of you,’ I said. ‘I recognize only cities and cannot distinguish what is outside them. In uninhabited places each stone and each clump of grass mingles, in my eyes, with every other stone and clump.’”* (Calvino, 1974, pp. 152-153).

Else Østergaard Andersen explain how the view point of the Thyboere [the residents in Thy] now moves from the latter to the first of the two viewpoints described by Calvino: *“For a large part of Thyboerne this area has been nothing, it has just been all that in between, and that which have been something was the villages: Klitmøller, Vorupør, Stenbjerg, Agger. That ‘in-between’ have not really been in focus, but now it gets in focus and now the villages is moved outside the frame [the framework of the national park area]. Of course the village is in relation to the frame because they are located so close to [the national park], but focus has been put on this place, the nature.... I believe that a large number of Thyboer is now proud of the area that they just used to cross through.”* (Andersen E. Ø., 2011). Before the appointment as national park the area was for many just an in between space you should go through in order to come from one village to another, but now the focus is much more on that in between space and the towns and villages are beginning to relate to it exploiting its potentials both as an experience in itself and a brand but also in addition to developing products that relates to the national park. Thus, Else Østergaard Andersen perceives the national park as a frame – a field of possibilities- through which the territory can benefit (Andersen E. Ø., 2011).

In Nationalpark Thy, Manager Else Østergaard Andersen states that at the beginning the local people were sceptical about the possible follow outputs; but with time there are starting to come a follow effect with different businesses popping up with relation to the national park. As an example of the disappearing scepticism the grocer in Agger previously have been in doubt about what should attract tourists should it be “*fun*” activities like fun parks or go-kart but now she is not in doubt – it is the nature in the national park that shall attract people (Andersen E. Ø., 2011). Altogether there is a positive feeling that there are more tourists in the area than previous even though the area have lost many tourists due to the closure of the ferries in Hanstholm from Norway, as well as ferries to Island and the Faeroe Islands.

Of businesses that use the national park in their products, there is the story of the butcher in Vorupør which have begun to sell products from the national park and which could do even more if he also branded his meat as meat from cattle grassing in Thy National Park. The same story is also evident at a local farmer who breeds the cattle that the local butcher sells – he also delivers milk to a specific Thy cheese made at the Thiese dairy and sells his meat at the IRMA supermarket in Copenhagen. (Andersen E. Ø., 2011).

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<sup>2</sup> Parts of this paragraph was developed in an earlier version as part of the conference paper “Mobility Challenges in the Region of Northern Jutland, Denmark”.

There is also the story of a farmer that has a small production of ice-cream – Thy øko-is. In their production they have ice-cream flavours which is made with ingredients from the national park; Sea-thorn, blue berries, raspberries etc. Further, there is the story of Thylandia distillery that creates snaps where the herbs used for flavouring the snaps are picked in Thy National Park. And finally there is the story of Stenbjerg Inn that brand themselves as being situated in the national park and who uses ingredients from the national park in their menu - among others in their Thy National Park cold collation. This has given more business to the Inn and the owner have employed two more employees. (Andersen E. Ø., 2011).

As an overall initiative to promote specialties from the area and brand local products the initiative Smag på Thy (taste Thy) have been launched by the national park council. Here they arrange different events like a gourmet dinner made with ingredients from the national park and cooked by famous Danish chefs and a web shop where you can buy different products made in Thy (<http://smagpaathy.dk/>).

Even though it was a slow start and people were sceptical there are now coming new food and products from Thy National Park and the tourism industry in Thy are beginning to brand themselves as part of the Thy National Park; using the national park as a tourist attraction. And even though it is in the small scale there seem to be an effect of the Thy National Park as a way of creating new businesses in an outskirt region by using the potentials of landscape and the local place-based in the development of the area - this will be elaborated in Chapter 7.

## 2.3 SUM UP

For a large part of the Danish planning history the rural outskirts have actually been in focus. However, several times the discussion on whether to focus on East Denmark or West Denmark, the Urban or Rural, have been present and as explained in this chapter an effort to turn focus away from the smallest villages to the urban areas almost caused them a vote of no confidence. Though focus in these periods was very much on creating a balanced Denmark one initiative was carried out in the 1960s that still affect the mobilities in some of the rural outskirts today, and that is the decision on the Eastern Jutlandic motorway instead of the Midjutlandic motorway. Even though it seems very banal, this motorway is what connects Denmark with Germany (and later Norway and Sweden) and together with the transversal motorway what internally connects the country. The rural outskirts of especially Jutland is very distant from this important network. Since this first construction a couple of east-west motorway lines have been constructed (and are under construction) – the southern east-west line from Kolding to Esbjerg, the midjutlandic east-west line from Århus to Herning. However, the wishes for a Midjutlandic North-South line never disappeared and are still brought forward from time to time.

From the middle / end of the 1980s and onwards there is a change both in actual movement in the country and in the national plans. Focus was turned away from internally creating a balanced Denmark to securing external competition – away from equality and towards diversity and development possibilities. Globalisation had hit Denmark. This development was speeded up with the latest centralisation, and all of this has caused the situation we are facing today with several mobilities challenges in the rural outskirts.

One initiative that has been carried out that gives the rural outskirts new development possibilities is the establishing of national parks in the Danish territory. Here focus has been to move around in the nature and experience it fully and to benefit from this as a contributor to regional economic development.

As this chapter has shown the planning approach is influenced by different tendencies partly related to the trends in the different time periods and partly related to the changing governments where the left side mainly focused on the urban areas and the right side mainly focused on the rural areas. This is also visible today with the previous Danish government, a left wing government elected in the fall 2011, who has removed the focus on rural outskirt in both the Finance Act as well as the national planning report. And the present Danish right wing Government that once again has put the Rural Outskirts into focus with the relocation of some public administrations outside the main cities.

All the changes throughout the historical planning process influence the conditions and mobilities to and within Nationalpark Thy today. As an example the layout of the main infrastructure in the country means that today Nationalpark Thy is located far away from the larger infrastructure network. Also the discussions between preservation and usage of the nature have formed the unique landscape and villages and summer cottages areas in Nationalpark Thy. The geography, infrastructure, materials, local culture and mobile identities in Nationalpark Thy will be investigated further in the analysis, also how the mobilities is practiced by both locals and tourists and what all of this means to them. Next I will layout the theoretical framework under which this will be investigated.





# **PART 2**

# **Frameworks**



### 3. RURAL OUTSKIRT MOBILITIES - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this thesis a broad definition of mobilities will be used, a definition that has gained acceptance the last 15 years as an understanding of the production and reproduction of society through mobilities optics – ‘a new mobilities paradigm’. This definition will include more than just transport and different branches have different understandings of this concept: *“When a geographer refers to mobility, he/she is not speaking of the same thing as an engineer or sociologist who borrows this concept, which makes dialog between their respective branches difficult. The bottom line is that when we refer to mobility, we do not know precisely what we mean; it all depends of the branch of study we are in.”* (Kaufmann, 2002, pp. 35-36).

By using this broader definition, the knowledge produced can also contribute to a new understanding of rural outskirts. However, studies made within the framework of this new ‘mobilities paradigm’ mainly focus on urban areas, and only few studies have been made of rural outskirts. The other way around, only few studies have been made of mobilities within rural studies. This chapter will elaborate on the benefits from a joint approach – with mobilities as the view point and the rural outskirts as the case area. It will move on to explain what mobilities are in more detail and how this will structure the framework for the investigation of rural outskirts mobilities. With the broad definition of mobilities and a definition that incorporates several different branches, an all-embracing framework is necessary; one that both incorporate the geographer’s view of the geographical layout, the sociologists’ view of the people in the area, the designer’s view of the materials, the planner’s view of the traffic and urban planning in the area. The pieces will be brought together by a ‘Mobilities Assemblage’ that sets a tension field between the physical mobilities, the virtual mobilities, the software and the hardware in the area. By bringing all this elements together the area will be viewed through a whole new set of glasses

#### 3.1 RURAL STUDIES

Research in rural areas is not a new phenomenon. In fact, up until mid-1950’s the study of both historical geography and the geography of contemporary conditions were centred around rural studies (Cloke 1985) this was among other things caused by the dominance of agriculture in the economic sector (Cloke 1985). In the following period, the studies of urban geography were in focus with both theoretical and methodological steps taken, and the rural studies were neglected for a time (Cloke 1985). In this period, rural geography was still tied up to agricultural studies, but from the beginning of the 1980’s the perspective of rural geography was broadened. Michael Pacione was one of the first to acknowledge this “multifaceted phenomenon”, he says that this phenomenon: *“...interacts with a host of other subdisciplines within geography and has a strong lineage with related fields of interest in economics, sociology, politics and planning”* (Pacione 1983, p. 1). In the light of the declining importance of agriculture a new set of problems occurred which called out for a new type of planning. A discussion of these problems as well as an incorporation of the multidisciplinary approach was the goal of the “Journal of Rural Studies”, launched in 1985 by Elsevier, providing a publication forum open to international and interdisciplinary discussions of rural research, planning and policymaking (Cloke 1985). As the first journal that still operates with this international and interdisciplinary field this should be the one that provides the best overview of the development within this field of research.

By reviewing papers accepted in “Journal of Rural Studies” from the launching of the journal in 1985 to the beginning of this thesis in 2011<sup>1</sup> it becomes evident that the content has shifted from focusing strongly on agriculture to a more broad focus with articles concerning tourism, food and windmills, etc. as well as sociological perspectives like gender and demography. Besides this, two things were striking: The lack of Danish cases and the lack of articles concerning mobilities which is the exact focus in this study. The results from the literature review are available in Appendix C. When turning to the few articles dealing with mobilities in Journal of Rural Studies it is clear that most of them are concerning transport issues (Gray et al. 2001; Starkey et al. 2002) and migration (Thissen et al. 2010; Hanson & Bell 2006) and not this broader focus of mobilities that this study contain. One of the researchers that several years ago tried to put focus on mobilities in rural areas is David Banister who also contributed to the before mentioned book edited by Pacione. He, however, also focused on transport and accessibility (Banister, 1983) and

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<sup>1</sup> All abstracts from the launching of the journal in 1985 and until 1995 have been read. From 1995 and until the beginning of the project period the headlines have formed the basis of the review. From 1998 and until the beginning of this thesis only Volume 1 in each issue have been included in the review (See Appendix C).

thus only the physical aspect of mobilities. However, this thesis deals with a more broad perspective on mobilities as the next paragraph will elaborate on.

### 3.2 MOBILITIES STUDIES

‘Mobilities’ is not a new word or a new concept. Already in the seventeenth century the word was introduced in the English language; it referred to the capacity of a person to its body, limbs and organs and in natural science it was used interchangeably with ‘movement’. (Cresswell, 2006, p. 20). The point is further not to say that ‘mobilities’ is a new concept but that there are new elements comprised by the term ‘mobilities’ as Urry (2007) puts forward: *“I have consistently argued against the notion that mobilities are simply new. However, what are new are the following: the scale of movement around the world, the diversity of mobility systems now in play, the especially significance of the self-expanding automobility system and its awesome risks. The elaborate interconnections of physical movement and communications, the development of mobility domains that by-pass national societies, the significance of movement to contemporary governmentality and an increased importance of multiple mobilities for people’s social and emotional lives.”* (Urry, 2007, p. 195). What has also changed is the approach to mobilities and the cross-disciplinarity.

#### 3.2.1 THE NEW MOBILITIES PARADIGM

Up until the millennium ‘mobilities’ was to some extent considered equal with transport or movement in most fields, here focus was on securing as much transport as necessary as well as reduce the risks connected to this transport (Lassen 2011; Beckmann, 2001a). However, in year 2000 the English sociologist, John Urry, introduced another approach to deal with transport (Urry, 2000)<sup>2</sup>. This approach has later been termed ‘The mobility turn’ or ‘The new mobility paradigm’ (Urry, 2007)<sup>3</sup>. However it is not only a new way to approach transport the core of ‘the new mobilities paradigm’ is to understand the production and reproduction of society through mobilities optics (Urry, 2000). Such an approach means that mobilities is not only material, as a number of conventional mobilities approaches within various disciplines often seem to claim, but also, and just as much, is about ‘production of meaning and culture’ (Jensen O. B., 2010b). A key question in such an approach is therefore ‘how mobilities produce and re-produce norms, meanings and cultures’ (Jensen O. B., 2010b)<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, transport researchers are not the only ones investigating ‘mobilities’. It is a more interdisciplinary field: *“Some recent contributions to forming and stabilising this new paradigm include work from anthropology, cultural studies, geography, migration studies, science and technology studies, tourism and transport studies, and sociology.”* (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 207). In a later work, Sheller (2011) emphasises how this cross-disciplinary approach shed new light on the relationship between local and global. *“By bringing together studies of migration, transportation, infrastructure, transnationalism, mobile communications, imaginative travel and tourism, new approaches to mobility are especially able to highlight the relation between local and global ‘power-geometries’ (Massey, 1993) ...”* (Sheller, 2011, p. 3). Further, this cross-disciplinary approach and the many different kinds of mobilities is also why both Urry (2000) and Aday (2010) argues to consider ‘mobilities’ in plural. *“To speak of mobility is in fact to speak always of mobilities. One kind of mobility seems to always involve another mobility. Mobility is never singular but always plural. It is never one but necessarily many.”* (Aday, 2010, p. 18). Here, ‘mobilities’ are not understood in a singular form, but instead in a plural form as ‘Mobilities’, which imply that the new mobilities research field particularly considers how various forms of physical, virtual and experienced mobilities interact and affect the development of societies (see also (Urry, 2007)). Therefore the term ‘mobilities’ in plural will be used in this thesis.

<sup>2</sup> Focus did not change overnight and in different other research environments this cross-disciplinary understanding of mobility started earlier: e.g. new types of Scandinavian transport research with more sociological attention started out before the new millennium (Oldrup, 2000) and in geography studies the same tendencies occurred (Cresswell, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> I will not engage in the discussion on whether to use ‘mobility turn’ or ‘mobility paradigm’. In this thesis the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ will be used when talking about this new approach and understanding of the production and reproduction of society through mobility optics. Though, I acknowledge that it might not be a paradigm in the traditional definition by Kuhn as Jensen (2015) discusses, and by that not as sufficiently modest and pragmatic as the term ‘turn’ would be (Jensen O. B., 2015). I use the term ‘Mobilities paradigm’ to emphasise the new approach and new perspectives this study will bring to the problems addressed in this thesis as well as to highlight how this approach distinguishes itself from transport studies and that it is more than just a new word for the same thing. Altogether, I believe that for the purpose of this study ‘Mobilities Paradigm’ seems more convincing.

<sup>4</sup> This paragraph was developed in an earlier version as part of the conference paper “Mobility Challenges in the Region of Northern Jutland, Denmark”.



Then what are 'mobilities' and this new 'mobilities paradigm'. *"The claim to a 'new mobilities paradigm' is not simply an assertion of the novelty of mobility in the world today, although the speed and intensity of various flows are greater than before [...] nor is it simply a claim that nation-state sovereignty has been replaced by a single system of mobile power, of 'empire': a 'smooth world', deterritorialised and decentred, without a centre of power, with no fixed boundaries or barriers [...]. It is rather part of a broader theoretical project aimed at going beyond the imagery of 'terrains' as spatially fixed geographical containers for social processes, and calling into question scalar logics such as local / global as descriptors of regional extent [...]"* (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 209). And to get back to the discussion earlier of 'mobility' and 'movement' Cresswell (2006) explain how 'movement' is 'mobility' without meaning: *"How, in other words, movement is made meaningful, and how resulting ideologies of mobility become implicated in the production of mobile practices."* (Cresswell, 2006, p. 21).

In this thesis I will use a theoretical approach that is grounded in the new mobilities paradigm. Such an approach will contribute with a mobile and cross-disciplinary view on rural outskirts that will mean that such places will not be viewed as "islands" defined by their relation to a certain centre. Instead, these areas are constituted through different kinds of physical, virtual and social mobilities (see (Urry 2000; 2007)). Thus, I argue among other things in this thesis that in order to understand Nationalpark Thy, we have to understand the different kinds of mobilities that constitute the place. However, there is a need to include a stronger rural perspective than practiced so far within the new mobilities paradigm as I will elaborate on next.

### 3.2.2 A LACK OF NON-URBAN ISSUES IN MOBILITIES STUDIES

Though this 'mobilities paradigm' has developed over the past 15 years (Aday, 2010; Kaufmann V. , 2002; Cresswell, 2006; Urry J. , 2000; Urry J. , 2007; Lassen & Jensen, 2006; Jensen & Lassen, 2011; Jensen, 2013) none of the above mentioned studies, concepts or theories are tailor-made for studying rural outskirts mobilities. Vannini emphasises this lack of studies in mobilities outside the large cities. *"Even a brief glance at journal articles' and books' titles reveals that there seem to be at least one hundred research studies on 'the city' for every one study on non-urban (and non-suburban) issues."* (Vannini 2011, p. 26). I made a short literature review of all the articles accepted in the "Mobilities" journal from the launch of the journal up until the beginning of my thesis, and though the results is not as extreme as Vannini explains the urban bias is clear with only one focusing on rural areas for every six focusing on urban areas (see Appendix C)<sup>5</sup>. This urban bias or this inseparable link between the city and 'mobilities' is also evident in much older work; already in 1929 Nels Anderson wrote that the city *"...is more mobile, mobility being a characteristic of its life just as stability is characteristic of rural life."* Cited in (Cresswell, 2006, p. 18) and later in the book Cresswell continues: *"Mobility is, after all, what separates the city from the country. Mobility is connected to civilization, progress, and freedom as well as deviance and destitution."* (Cresswell, 2006, p. 37).

I do not agree to this separation of mobilities and rurality, or rurality and urbanity, and this metaphor that 'stability' should characterise rural life. If so, what should then connect these urban islands? Instead I look towards Vannini: *"Rather, what I intend to suggest is that we examine cities, rural, remote and island places in relational terms: as complex ecologies of places whose mobilities deeply intersect."* (Vannini P. , 2011, p. 297). I believe that mobilities are just as present and vital in rural outskirts as it is in cities, however probably in another format and definitely with different challenges and potentials than in the cities – but in relation to each other. And this argument will be substantiated throughout the thesis.

### 3.3 A RURAL MOBILITIES APPROACH

Whereas Vannini wants more non-urban perspectives in mobilities studies, Bell & Osti want more mobilities in rural studies. Bell & Osti, (2010) point out the amusing aspect in the fact that sociology of mobilities was only little recognised in the rural studies and mainly accepted in urban studies when longer distances to employment, shopping, socialising, schooling, attending church, seeing a doctor and visiting parks all call out for high mobilities in rural areas (Bell & Osti 2010). This also contradicts Anderson's 'stability' as the characteristic of rural life as previously written. Bell & Osti (2010) consider mobilities studies neglected in rural studies, and think that mobilities perspectives throw new light on rural studies (Bell & Osti 2010). And this last thing is exactly what this thesis seeks to do. To throw new lights on rural areas and bring new perspectives forward. Therefore this chapter propose a framework for studying mobilities in rural outskirts.

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5 The review was a combination of reading all headlines, abstracts and keyword - the result can be found in Appendix C.

A joint approach that investigates mobilities in rural outskirts, where mobilities will be the theoretical approach and rural outskirts will be the empirical field of research, will both bring new perspectives to the field of mobilities studies and new perspectives on rural outskirts areas and the development possibilities of these areas. *“The perspective [mobilities] holds promises for a new understanding of cities, rural areas, and space in general. But in more general terms the turn towards mobilities also has to do with some of the very profound changes within the social fabric leading to new ways of seeing self and other, places and territories, and ultimately the social and material environment of the contemporary world.”* (Jensen O. B., 2009a, p. xv).

In order to analyse the many different mobilities that produce and reproduce Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area, I will need a concrete analytical framework. For this, I will use the assemblage theory that offer a perspective to overcome the conventional understanding of centre-periphery/outskirt relations as something stationary and unchangeable and instead argue that the relationship is relational, dynamical and changeable, and created through a number of complex mobile and relations between subjects, geographies, materials, meanings etc.

### 3.4 MOBILITIES ASSEMBLAGES FOCUSED ON RURAL OUTSKIRTS

In order to identify all the right piece for the puzzle of what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, this chapter will propose the notion of a ‘Mobilities Assemblage’ aimed at rural outskirts. Earlier the concept of ‘Assemblages’ have mainly been used in an urban context, e.g. *“The notion of urban assemblages in the plural form offers a powerful foundation to grasp the city anew, as an object which is relentlessly being assembled at concrete sites of urban practices or, to put it differently, as a multiplicity of processes of becoming, affixing sociotechnical networks, hybrid collectives and alternative topologies. From this perspective, the city becomes a difficult and decentred object, which cannot any more be taken for granted as a bounded object, specific context or delimited site.”* (Fariás, 2010a, p. 2). However, Urry opens up for a broader use of the concept: *“There are thus various assemblages of humans, objects, technologies and scripts that contingently produce durability and stability of mobility. Such hybrid assemblages can roam country-sides and cities, remaking landscapes and townscapes through their movement.”* (Urry, 2007, p. 48). And the assemblage do not just provide one view of a city: *“Correspondingly, it allows and encourages the study of the heterogeneous connections between the objects, spaces, materials, machines, bodies, subjectivities, symbols, formulas and so on that ‘assemble’ the city in multiple ways: as a tourist city, as a transport system, as a playground for skateboarders and free-runners (‘parkour’)...”* (Fariás, 2010b, p. 14). In this thesis, I will analyse different ways the mobilities in Rural Outskirts are ‘assembled’ as activities in order to investigate what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, and thus expect new perspectives. As Fariás state: *“Attending to a shared etymological root of agencement and agency, one should note that urban assemblages enable new types of activity and agency (Muniesa et al 2007). Agency is thus an emergent capacity of assemblages.”* (Fariás, 2010b, p. 15)

#### 3.4.1 DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF ASSEMBLAGES

Mikkelsen, Smith, & Jensen (2011) gives a more detailed description of assemblages with their biking assemblage. *“So we would claim that there exists such a thing as a ‘biking assemblage’ comprised by multiple social interactions, bodily sensations, material systems, solid objects, and infrastructural networks [...] It is important to understand that ‘scale’ is not an inherent and fixed dimension to a network, but a socially variable construction enforced by the various engagements that social agents afforded by the system. This furthermore means that a ‘biking assemblage’ also includes cultures, values, and norms.”* (Mikkelsen, Smith, & Jensen, 2011, p. 6). This definition inspired the work of Vestergaard, Laursen, Jensen & Lassen (2011) who made a working definition of a regional mobilities assemblage: *“...the regional identities and the perceptions of the places are made up by human and non-human elements that at times are confined by fixed boundaries and at other times flows in what for the lack of a better term may be thought of as in ‘global space’. The mobility challenges of North Jutland must therefore be understood beyond simple dichotomies such as local/global, nature/culture, society/technology and rather be seen as an assemblage transgressing these notions.”* (Vestergaard, Laursen, Jensen, & Lassen, 2011).

Many different notions have been used to explain something quite similar as the ‘assemblage’ or this way of viewing different elements or layers. Castells’ ‘space of flow’ is a combination of at least three layers of material: A layer *“constituted by a circuit of electronic exchanges”* e.g. telecommunication and computer processing (Castells, 2010, p. 442), a layer *“constituted by its nodes and hubs”* (Castells, 2010, p. 443) and a layer of *“the spatial organization of the dominant, managerial elites”* (Castells, 2010, p. 445). However, in this Castells does not explicitly include the relation between materials and meaning as the Assemblage Theory does. Elliott & Urry (2010) talks about an assemblage that mainly focuses on the social aspects: *“This discussion of the intersections between mobile*

*worlds and mobile lives serves as the conceptual backcloth for new ways of thinking about how people's mobile lives are assemblage.*" (Elliott & Urry, 2010, p. 8). They further elaborate on the content of such an assemblage: *"But this assemblage of mobile life is not the product of human agency. Mobile lives are rather the outcome of complex configurations of rationality, affect, desire, socialities, systems, states, regional organizations and global institutions."* (Elliott & Urry, 2010, pp. 13-14). But the materialities are not present in this notion.

I am looking for the notion that the assemblage theory provides by capturing the tension field between the human and non-human and to understand Nationalpark Thy in its mobile complexity – as Jensen (2012a) puts it: *"It is the assemblage of material and immaterial, human and non-human that needs to be understood in relation to the flow and friction it affords."* (Jensen O. B., 2012a, p. 61). Vannini (2012) moves from Creswell's (2006) definition of 'mobility constellations' to 'mobility assemblage' in his research of ferries in British Columbia: *"It seems useful, therefore, to extend Creswell's definition a bit and conceptualize a mobility constellation as an assemblage. Simply put, an assemblage is a composition of things that are believed to fit together. The systematic ensemble of ocean routes, ships, passengers, scheduled sailing, terminals, fuel, islands, and many, many more social and technical components make up what we might call a mobility assemblage."* (Vannini, 2012, p. 129).

### 3.4.2 MESHWORK OR ASSEMBLAGE

Ingold (2011) believes that the notion of assemblage put too much focus on the nodes without paying attention to the life along the lines that connect the nodes, he proposes instead: *"The lines we might draw to represent this contact are not ones along which anything moves or grows. They are lines not of flight, but of interaction. I use the term inversion to refer to the operation that wraps lines of flight into bounded points. The chapters making up this part are dedicated to undoing this inversion, and thereby to revealing, behind the conventional image of a network of interacting entities, what I call the meshwork of entangled lines of life, growth and movement. This is the world we inhabit. My contention, throughout, is that what is commonly known as the 'web of life' is precisely that: not a network of connected points, but a meshwork of interwoven lines."* (Ingold, 2011, p. 63). In his work the organism is the main character, but it should not be understood as *"... a bounded entity surrounded by an environment but as an unbounded entanglement of lines in fluid space."* (Ingold, 2011, p. 64). And he continues: *"Action, then, emerges from the interplay of forces conducted along the lines of the meshwork. It is because organisms are immersed in such force fields that they are alive."* (Ingold, 2011, p. 64).

However it might become too narrow to focus on the meshwork lines. To see the whole picture it might be useful to both incorporate the analysis of nodes and points as well as the interwoven lines. Furthermore to view it all as being 'alive'. The mixed notion of a 'meshwork assemblage' as Vannini propose might therefore be the most useful: *"...meshwork assemblage...Such an assemblage would be built on the basis of a profound understanding of their users' basic needs – rather than from the distant, centralized perspective of an ignorant corporation."* (Vannini, 2012, p. 155). However for the simple reason that the name would be very long 'Mobilities meshwork assemblage' I will leave out the 'meshwork' but still keep in mind also to focus on the entanglement along the lines as well as the organic 'alive' perspective.

### 3.5 THE USE OF MOBILITIES ASSEMBLAGE IN THIS THESIS

As explained in this chapter rural studies have so far not incorporated the mobilities focus and mobilities research has an urban bias and thus not much focus on the rural outskirts. The hypothesis is that a joint approach of mobilities studies and rural studies, with mobilities as the framework and Rural Outskirts as the case area, will shed new light on these areas that can be used in future studies and highlight new development possibilities in the areas. And, as argued in this chapter mobilities is vital – also to the residents and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, as an example of a rural outskirts area, an argument that will be substantiated throughout the thesis.

The theoretical approach for this thesis has its foundation in the new mobilities paradigm. This will bring a mobile and cross-disciplinary view on rural outskirts giving that such places will not be looked upon as "islands" defined by their relation to a certain centre. Instead, these areas are constituted through different kinds of physical, virtual and social mobilities. Thus I argue among other things in this thesis that in order to understand Nationalpark Thy, we have to understand the different kinds of mobilities that constitute the place.

In order to analyse the many different mobilities that produce and reproduce Nationalpark Thy, the assemblage theory will be the starting point. Assemblage theory argue that the relationship between places is relational, dynamical and changeable, and created through a number of complex mobile relations between subjects, geographies, materials, meanings etc.

Jensen in his book 'Staging Mobilities' works with the notions of 'Hardware' and 'Software'. First: *"The systems and socio-technical networks that 'host' contemporary mobilities are complex and large material environments where technologies, humans, software, codes, semiotic and communicative systems, objects, and artefacts are assembled in a specific combination facilitating and affording certain practices and restricting or preventing others."* (Jensen O. B., 2013, p. 63). And later: *"The bodily appropriation of the built environment by means of different mobility practices means that the subject is immersed not only in material hardware and infrastructures but also that 'mobile subject types' (Jensen & Richardson 2007, Richardson & Jensen 2008) are being created as imaginary entities within various policy and planning frameworks (staging from above)."* (Jensen O. B., 2013, p. 100).

These notions from Jensen (2013) are used in the definition of a Mobilities Assemblage for this thesis. The definition is: **A Mobilities Assemblage that focus on rural outskirts will be comprised of 'hardware' such as materialities and geographical layout and 'software' such as identities and culture in order to explain how these afford or prevent the mobilities practices and activities taking place.** This will be used to investigate what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirt area.

The content of such an assemblage will be elaborated in the following chapter by first describing the different mobilities practices and activities and afterwards the 'software' and 'hardware' that afford or prevent these practices and activities.





## 4. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK - MOBILITIES ASSEMBLAGE

In order to identify the mobilities actions in Nationalpark Thy and the different elements that affect the mobilities actions, a Mobilities Assemblage has been proposed as the analytical framework. This chapter will complete the analytical framework with the different elements that needs to be present in order to understand the Mobilities Assemblage focusing on the rural outskirt area Nationalpark Thy. Thus, first of all different mobilities activities and practices will be introduced in order to clarify how mobilities is practised by both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, and on which basis and what it mean to them. Later, the ‘software’ and ‘hardware’ in the Mobilities Assemblage are introduced to explain how these afford or prevent the mobilities practices and activities taking place.

### 4.1 MOBILITIES ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES

As previously mentioned, the cross-disciplinary approach that mobilities contain will shed new light on rural outskirt areas. Further, this cross-disciplinary approach and the many different kinds of mobilities are also why both Urry (2000) and Aday (2010) argues to consider ‘mobilities’ in plural, implying that the new mobilities research field particularly considers how various forms of mobilities interact and affect the development of societies. More specifically, Urry (2007) identifies five different mobilities modes with this internal influence on each other:

- The *corporal* travel of people for work, leisure, family life, pleasure, migration, and escape, organised in terms of contrasting time-space modalities (from daily commuting to once-in-a-lifetime exile)
- The physical movement of *objects* to producers, consumers and retailers; as well as the sending and receiving of presents and souvenirs
- The *imaginative* travel effected through the images of places and peoples appearing on and moving across multiple print and visual media
- *Virtual* travel often in real time thus transcending geographical and social distances
- The *communicative* travel through person-to-person messages via messages, texts, letters, telegraphs, telephone, fax and mobile” (Urry J. , 2007, p. 47 italic in original)

Urry continues by emphasising the interconnections between these as well as how one mobilities mode can be prioritised above others: *“this new paradigm by contrast emphasises the complex assemblages between these different mobilities that may make and contingently maintain social connections across varied and multiple distances... It focuses upon the interconnections between these five mobilities, as well as the discourses that may prioritize one or other such mobility.”* (Urry, 2007, p. 48). In this thesis, they will be grouped into two mobilities actions: one that focus on the physical mobilities of both people and objects – from now on called ‘Physical mobilities’, and one that focus on the non-physical mobilities including both imaginative, virtual and communicative mobilities – from now on only called ‘virtual mobilities’.

Among researchers it is often discussed if the different mobilities modes will substitute each other and for example make virtual mobilities replace some of the physical mobilities. However, several studies have shown how this is not the case (Jensen M. , 2011). It is more often the other way around: *“While virtual movement may complement physical mobility, physical mobilities can in turn enhance and lead to even more virtual movements. Transport and telecommunication mobilities increase, it seems, at the same time as each other. As Graham summarizes. ‘Overall, transport and telecommunication actually feed of and fuel, more than simply substitute, each other (Graham 2004a: 254).”* (Aday, 2010, p. 211). In this thesis the relationship between physical mobilities and virtual mobilities will be investigated.

### MOBILITIES AND PROXIMITY

Urry (2002) derives five social obligations: social obligations, time obligations, place obligations, live obligations and object obligations (Urry J. , 2002, p. 269) as the explanation of why people move physically even sometimes despite large geographical distances: *“Indeed all forms of social life involve striking combinations of proximity and distance, combinations that necessitate examination of the intersecting forms of physical, object, imaginative*



and virtual mobility that contingently and complexly link people in patterns of obligation, desire and commitment, increasingly over geographical distances of great length.” (Urry J. , 2002, p. 256). However, he further states how virtual mobilities has become something in between “As virtual travel thus becomes part of everyday life, so it produces a life that transforms what we think of as near and far, present and absent.” (Urry J. , 2002). He still argues that not many social obligations are replaceable by virtual mobilities. These obligations requiring proximity or bodily presence<sup>1</sup> will in the rural outskirts with large distances lead to long commutes and by this, mobilities can become differentiating: “For many social groups it is the lack of mobility that is the real problem and they will seek to enhance their social capital through access to greater mobility.” (Urry J. , 2002, p. 264). Thus, the perspective of potential mobilities, as an influencing factor on social capital will be elaborated next.

#### 4.1.1 POTENTIAL MOBILITIES

In the optics of Vincent Kaufmann (2002), mobilities consist of two parts: potential mobility and actual mobility. He therefore proposed the term potential mobility as a way of exploring the underlying motivations of mobilities and to approach mobilities as a possible new factor of social differentiation (Kaufmann V. , 2002). Kaufmann defines potential mobilities as “the capacity to be mobile, or more precisely, as the way in which an individual appropriates what is possible in the domain of mobility and puts this potential to use for his or her activities.” He moves on to define this mobility potential as ‘Motility’: “The term motility refers to the system of mobility potential. At the individual level, it can be defined as the way in which an actor appropriates the field of possible action in the area of mobility, and uses it to develop individual projects” (Kaufmann V. , 2002, p. 1).

The concept of motility is mainly used to study the corporal travel of people most probably due to the origin of the word in a study of the ability of animals to move (Kaufmann V. , 2002). As stated above, Kaufmann (2002) believes that some of the other mobilities modes should be included and in a later article Flamm & Kaufmann (2006) recommend that other aspects of motility should be made operational. This includes ‘Virtual mobility’: “In view of gaining a better understanding of the motility of individuals, with respect to the organisation of their daily mobility, two additional aspects of analysis appear absolutely essential to us. First, the appropriation of the built environment through shaping one’s personal activity space, and also the appropriation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to create ‘virtual contiguities’, or in other words, to access forms of ubiquity (with the aid of mobile telephones, technologies for working at home, etc.).” (Flamm & Kaufmann, 2006, p. 183). Kaufmann (2002) lists a number of elements that has an influence on the motility and arrange them in three categories:

- **Access** is the range of possibilities in a place and exists of both options and conditions – where options are the features available and conditions refer to the accessibility of the features (Kaufmann V. , 2002).
- **Skills** refer to the abilities of the person including physical abilities, acquired skills and organisational skills (Kaufmann V. , 2002).
- **Appropriation** is how the person interprets and evaluates the available access and skills and is shaped by the individual’s strategies, values, perceptions and habits (Kaufmann V. , 2002).

However, Kaufmann (2002) stresses that all these factors combined as potential mobilities are not necessarily transformed into actual mobilities. It can also be a non-used potential and it can be transformed into physical mobilities and other mobilities modes: “One aspect must nonetheless be stated clearly: motility does not necessarily have to be transformed into mobility. It can also be transformed into the use of means of telecommunication, with all that this implies given the importance of copresence for social insertion.” (Kaufmann, 2002, p. 46).

Motility can also play a differentiating role. Urry (2007) puts it this way: “High motility provides opportunities for circulation, enhancing the capital for those with high motility and worsening it for others.” (Urry, 2007, p. 52). In Nationalpark Thy this for example could be access to a car, where people who have access to a car would use this for physical transportation instead of the bus and thereby enhance their capital. The result of fewer bus passengers

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<sup>1</sup> Urry stresses the need for mobilities from a set of obligations necessitating mobilities. He divides these obligations into six different obligations (Urry 2002): Legal, economic and familial obligations to either specific persons or generic types of people, Social obligations, Time obligations, Place obligations, Live obligations and Object obligations. As Urry imply the different obligations make mobilities necessary in the contemporary society. This stresses the need to investigate this in different contexts.



is fewer departures, providing less optimal conditions and decreases the possibility for people without a car to enhance their capital. This ability of motility to enhance the capital is the reason of why Kaufmann, Bergman & Joye (2004) talks about motility as a form of capital.

### MOTILITY AS CAPITAL

Some oppose the use of other forms of capital but economic capital because social inequality is rooted in the lack of financial capital and that financial capital can be exchanged for many other social resources like education, health etc. Using physics as an example, potential energy can be transformed into kinetic energy. In the same way Kaufmann, Bergman & Joye (2004) believe that motility can be exchanged with other types of capital and they argue that it even brings a another vertical quality from spatial constraints and other contexts: *“In line with these arguments, we propose to consider motility as a form of capital. In other words, motility forms theoretical and empirical links with, and can be exchanged for, other types of capital. Beyond the vertical or hierarchical quality that all forms of capital share (i.e. a distribution from low to high), motility has an additional vertical quality in that spatial constraints and other contexts impose a more differentiated perspective on this form of capital.”* (Kaufmann, Bergman, & Joye, 2004, s. 752)

In a later work Flamm & Kaufmann argue to add motility as a capital to other known capitals (e.g. the ones presented by Bourdieu in his work (Bourdieu, 1984)): *“In general, our article suggests that motility does indeed represent a form of capital similar to economic, social and cultural.”* (Flamm & Kaufmann, 2006, p. 184)

In the same way Urry (2007) seeks to add a capital to the ones known from Bourdieu, however he focuses not on the actual or potential mobilities as he believe the mobilities in itself do nothing but instead he focuses on the *“social consequences of such mobilities”* (Urry J. , 2007, p. 196) and terms these ‘Network Capital’: *“What I propose here is that the various aspects of access set out earlier should be (loosely) reconceived through analysis of the forms of capital that Bourdieu sets out, but that there is a major extra form of capital that he neglects and this is what I term network capital.”* (Urry, 2007, p. 194). He explain further his thoughts behind ‘Network Capital’: *“Network capital is the capacity to engender and sustain social relations with those people who are not necessarily proximate and which generates emotional, financial and practical benefit (although this will often entail various objects and technologies or the means of networking).”* (Urry, 2007, p. 197).

The concept of ‘potential mobility’ will be used rather than ‘network capital’ in the investigation because the purpose is an analysis of the potential and actual mobilities and not what social relation this makes possible. Also ‘potential mobility’ seems to have more open categories which will be useful when it is ‘translated’ into virtual mobilities. Next, I will turn to the two mobilities modes or mobilities activities.

#### 4.1.2 PHYSICAL MOBILITIES

*“For present I consider some of the socio-spatial practices involved in travelling, especially as in many cultures travelling appears to be ‘always necessary’ for family life, leisure and friendship, as well as for work and security.”* (Urry J. , 2000, p. 50).

Not many would contradict the above statement. Almost everyone would practice some kind of physical mobilities every day whether it is walk to post a letter, bike to the local gym, go by bus to school, by train to work or by car to shop. But physical mobilities or transportation is also, as previously written, what most people associate with the term ‘mobilities’. However, physical mobilities can also have a more recreational perspective, thus, the different situations where the individual chooses mobilities are influenced by the purpose of the trip, whether it is ‘bounded’ or ‘unbounded’ (Næss & Jensen, 2005) and in an example of walking (Krizek et al. 2009) differs between ‘walking for transport’ and ‘walking for recreation’. It has become difficult to have an everyday life without some kind of physical mobilities: *“Spatial mobility has become so crucial that it has become an established ideology, putting pressure on individuals to expand their mobility and be able to adapt to spatial changes of living and working conditions (delocalisation of jobs, closing of local public services etc.) In this context, the capacity to be mobile, or the notion of motility, is a deciding factor of social integration.”* (Flamm & Kaufmann, 2006, p. 167). Different transportation modes have caused these spatial changes in our society. First it was shown how the railway ‘democratized’ long distance travelling (Urry J. , 2000), linking multiple places in advanced systems and creating new places along the tracks. Later, the car provided the driver with more flexibility and freedom (Urry J. , 2000) and this changed the land use even more both the everyday activities like jobs, shopping facilities were dispersed, but also weekend or holiday activities changed with the possibility now to visit the ‘wilderness’ and national parks (Urry J. , 2000). Later Urry (2007) specifies this: *“Automobility divides workplaces from homes, producing lengthy*

commuters into and across the city. It splits homes and business districts, undermining local retail outlets to which one might have walked or cycled, eroding towns-centres, none-car pathways, and public space. It separates homes and leisure sites often only available by motorized transport. Members of family are split up since they live in distant places involving complex travel to meet up intermittently. Cars are a major 'convenience device' of contemporary society, devices that make a complex, harried patterns of social life just about possible, at least of course for those with cars; a complexity that the car itself generates." (Urry, 2007, p. 120). This does not mean that mobilities is a choice: "The assumption of car ownership in the United Kingdom has resulted in both a culture and a landscape in which mobility is both expected and necessary to participate in society." (Aday, 2010, p. 86). This is also the case in the rural outskirts: "And social capital in rural areas is even more dependent upon extensive automobility." (Urry J. , 2002, p. 264). Therefore physical mobilities in the rural outskirts will be investigated in order to explore what this mobilities activity means for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy. Furthermore, the potential corporal mobilities is investigated. Here are some examples of what will be included:

- Access: Access to a car, access to a bus and frequency of bus departures.
- Skills: Possession of a driver's license, ability to walk and capability to read and understand a time table for public transport.
- Appropriation: It could be that you will only use public transport and not the car for ideological reasons or that you have access to your car and thus believe that it is the easiest means to combine more activities.

#### 4.1.3 VIRTUAL MOBILITIES

*"The development of electronic communication and information systems allows for an increasing disassociation between spatial proximity and the performance of everyday life's functions: work, shopping, entertainment, healthcare, education, public service, governance, and the like."* (Castells, 2010, p. 424).

As stated in the previous section, the development of different transportation modes have caused spatial changes with dispersed activities and institutions and in this quote Castells suggest that the development of information and communication systems can facilitate this increasing disassociation between spatial proximity and the performance of everyday life's functions (Castells, 2010). This might make it possible to live in rural outskirts areas while e.g. having a job further away and thereby reduce some of the problems with longer distances in rural outskirts such as Thy Nationalpark. Kesselring (2006) states that *"Information and communication technologies enable people to decentre themselves spatially and socially in complex networks of mediated and face-to-face interactions."* (Kesselring, 2006, p. 270). This could give the rural outskirts areas new development possibilities. Gordon and de Souza e Silva (2011) also highlights how it is possible to be global locally: *"The provinciality of the small town, physically isolated from the rest of the world, is potentially cosmopolitan because of the integration of information into its streets."* (Gordon & de Souza e Silva, 2011, p. 3). Sheller (2011) has the same thought, but she talks about the urban / rural relationship: *"...but also should not leave out how new mobile technologies might reconfigure connections within and between nonurban and 'peripheral' localities (Sheller, 2009; Vannini, 2011)."* (Sheller, 2011, p. 8). From this it seems as these new information technologies or the 'Information Age' (Castells, 2010) can ease the living in the rural outskirts. But is that the case? And will it be so for everyone? Or would it have the effect that entire areas get decoupled from the development and thus be a case of 'differential mobilities' (Frith, 2012) and suffer from a 'digital divide' (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011)?

*"The digital divide is commonly understood as the gap between those with the most and least access to ICTs, which is usually described in terms of computer access and Internet use [...] The greater societal concern is tied to the notion that lack of access to computers and the Internet exacerbates other forms of social, economic, and political marginalization."* (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011, pp. 2-3). This show how 'digital divides' can cause other forms of marginalization and thus make people even more disconnected. This will especially be the case with the development taking place that more and more public service and public participation take place 'online'. As an example, the Danish Authorities are aiming towards a 'Digital Denmark'. From November 1st 2014 all citizens had to have a digital mailbox and from 2015 80 pct. of all communication with public authorities would take place online. This can have some side-effects: *"The increasing use of ICTs in these domains threatens to further disadvantage poor people, for example, by increasing the minority health care gap, continuing to decrease their participation in the decisions that affect their lives, and limiting the effectiveness and efficiency of social service programs."* (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011, p. 3). This, however, is not only the case with poor people; also elderly who might not have the skills to use a computer. This further raises the question if access is the only factor that can cause 'digital

divides'? The same question do Gilbert & Masucci (2011) ask, and they "...argued in our prior work that the digital divide is too narrow a conceptual framework from which to consider more nuanced aspects of information use, such as information sharing and dissemination, collaborative and community use of information, information privacy and safety, and information ethics..." (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011, p. 24). Also Gordon & de Souza e Silva (2011) broadens up the notion of 'digital divide': "What we see taking place in neighbourhood networking is more aligned with what Henry Jenkins (2006) calls the 'participation gap', where it is no longer a matter of simply having the technology, but knowing what to do with it. Actively participating in a net locality means being privy to the rules. It means knowing the best way to connect with neighbours and to consult politicians. It means not just having access to a communication tool, but knowing how best to use it for political and social gain." (Gordon & de Souza e Silva, 2011, p. 111). In these two examples also the skills to use technology is included, but another couple of elements are further necessary according to Gilbert & Masucci (2011): "Few would argue that overcoming the digital divide could have been accomplished without addressing infrastructure and training needs. But this approach overlooks the complex ways in which individuals experience and navigate the emerging digital society. Moreover, the broader structural processes shaping the daily lives of individuals [...] are poorly reflected in the responses to digital inequalities." (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011, p. 22). With this inclusion the definition gets very close to Kaufmann's notion of 'potential mobilities' and by combining the two approaches 'Access' becomes the range of possibilities for virtual mobilities, 'Skills' become the abilities of the person to use virtual mobilities and 'Appropriation' become the interpretation and evaluation of the available access and skills. Developing them in more detail gives the following examples of element that will be included in the analysis of potential virtual mobilities<sup>2</sup>:

- *Virtual Mobilities Access*: The themes in the 'Access' category needs to reflect the individuals access to different features that are necessary to have as part of a virtual mobilities this include both hardware and connection. This could e.g. be: Access to computer, Access to internet and type of internet, Internet speed, Access to smartphone, Access to internet on mobile phones, Internet speed on mobile phones and Mobile phone coverage.
- *Virtual Mobilities Skills*: The themes in the 'Skills' category could have been very specific like different computer programs and different web functions e.g. text processing, skype and Facebook, however, with the speed that new programs and web functions are developed one program may very well already be replaced with another. Another problem could be the overlap to 'Appropriation' where it might be a choice not to use e.g. specific webpages and not a lacking skill. Therefore general themes could be own impression of IT-skills in general<sup>3</sup> and Activation of NemID<sup>4</sup>.
- *Virtual mobilities appropriation*: This category is more open since almost all parts of their life in one way or another could influence their appropriation. It could be how global oriented they are and thus a need to follow what is happening around the world, it could be if you have lived elsewhere and thus have a need to be in contact with people from that place or just a general need to be in contact with friends or family in other places.

According to Gilbert & Masucci (2011) not many empirical studies analyse the geographical patterns of inequality. This thesis will focus both on the new possibilities that virtual mobilities might give the rural outskirts, but also on the risk of 'digital divides' that might be an effect of this; and finally what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirt area.

This section has had the mobilities activities in the rural outskirts in focus in order to clarify how mobilities is practised by both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, on which basis and what it mean to them. Next, I will turn to another element in the Mobilities Assemblage, the 'software', in order to explain how this element afford or prevent the mobilities practices and activities that is taking place.

2 These categories were developed in an earlier version as part of the conference paper "Virtual Mobility in Rural Denmark".

3 Of course the respondents subjective evaluation of own skills is not an objective valid parameter; however, it still provides insight into their own impression of their IT-skills and indicates how likely they are to use virtual mobility.

4 NemID is the new digital signature that will accelerate the Danish vision of one login for public and private services on the Internet. Your NemID login remains the same regardless of where you use it. The way you log in will always be the same, whether you are accessing your online banking service, e-Boks or the local public authorities' self-service or whether you are checking your insurance or retrieving your tax return from the Danish tax authorities, SKAT." (Digitaliseringsstyrelsen, N.D.). Of course, this is not a totally valid indicator; but as previously stated because of 'Digital Denmark' it can very difficult to be a citizen in Denmark without NemID and it is thus assumed that everyone who has the skills would activate their NemID.

## 4.2 MOBILITIES SOFTWARE - MOBILE IDENTITIES AND CULTURE IN RURAL OUTSKIRTS

In order to understand the ‘software’ behind the mobilities practices and activities and what this mean to locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy; this section will lay out a framework to analyse the mobile identities and mobilities culture behind these mobilities<sup>5</sup>.

Different writers and researchers have tried to label the identities in the rural outskirts. The most known example in a Danish context is probably Thomas Højrup who has created different ‘livsformer’ [life modes]. Højrup, first of all, distinguishes between the urban and rural life mode, and from a case study in Thorup Strand he divides the rural life modes into three different sub-modes and discusses the culture within these ‘rural life modes’ (Højrup, 1983). Another example is the Danish writer and debater Knud Sørensen who discusses identity and culture as an antithesis and thus talks about a ‘udkantkultur’ [Rural Outskirt Culture] and a ‘storbykultur’ [metropolis culture] (Sørensen 1994 in Jensen O. B., 1999). However, none of these identities or cultural formations has a focus on mobilities.

Elliott & Urry (2010) <sup>6</sup> argue that “*The paradigm of mobilities, we suggest, is becoming increasingly central to contemporary identity formation and re-formation*” (Elliott & Urry, 2010, p. 7). This means that in contemporary societies, mobile identities are not only shaped by physical mobilities, but also by the various virtual and experienced forms of mobilities and through the interaction between these. The mobile identity groups and mobilities cultures are inseparable from the materialities and geographical layout from the hardware. In order to understand the software behind the mobilities practices and activities. In this thesis, I will not focus on the individual identities, but on mobile identity groups in the rural outskirts and the mobile culture that all these groups share.

### 4.2.1 MOBILE IDENTITY GROUPS

One of the most important contributions to the identity question comes from Giddens (1996). Giddens argues that in a post-traditional society, self-identity becomes a reflexive organised necessity. People are constantly confronted with multiple choices and therefore forced reflexively to take a number of concrete decisions that give lifestyle a particular importance as a reference framework of meaning for these choices (Giddens, 1996). Reflective organised life planning is therefore a key feature of the structure of self-identity. Lifestyle options and life planning are not just a part of the social agents' everyday life, but also represent the institutionalised framework that helps to shape their actions and practices (Giddens, 1996).

Through the notion of ‘mobile life’, Elliott and Urry (2010) explore the new mobile patterns of identities of ‘globals’ situated in the broader context of changes to nations, economies, identities and cultures. This mobile life in the fast lane especially relates to private, exclusive, and luxurious spaces (e.g. five-star hotel, private jets, playgrounds of private islands, penthouses, global consumption etc.). Across rich societies, Elliott and Urry also identify a number of institutional processes that facilitates the global mobile life. This include provision of digital infrastructures for global communication, creation of communications ‘on the move’, new global business models for the provision of discount travel, movement of people for work throughout the global economy, family and friendship, emergence of global networks and new types and forms of life politics that involve personal autonomy and self-actualisation (Elliott & Urry, 2010, p. 88).

However, this focus on the ‘globals’ and the life in the fast lane might not cover all populations, and this might especially be the case in the rural outskirts which are located far from the dynamic centres. This might both be a question of the level of independence in the ‘reflexive choice’ as well as other parts of the ‘Mobilities Assemblage’ that could affect this. According to Elliott & Urry, “... *mobile lives and mobility systems, we have argued, operate as assemblages that move both subjects and objects around.*” (Elliott & Urry, 2010, p. 155) And they stress that “...*assemblage of mobile life is not the product of human agency. Mobile lives are rather the outcome of complex configurations of relationality, affect, desire, socialites, systems, states, regional organizations and global institutions*” (Elliott & Urry, 2010, pp. 13-14). Several researchers use an opposite category to the globals and thus operate with two different poles in the question of mobile identities.

5 This paragraph was developed in an earlier version as part of the conference paper “Differential Mobilities in Rural Outskirts”.

6 Life modes and identity formation are overlapping but not the same concept. When Højrup discusses life modes it is more similar to what Giddens would name lifestyle patterns which emphasises that there are uneven access to self-realisation and power reinforcement in the modern society. The concept identity is – though Urry and Elliott are not necessarily using it that way – often connected with choices that can be viewed as equal for everyone. This will be explained further later in this chapter.



In his analysis of the 'network society', Castells (1996) recognises the shifts towards greater reflexivity, but highlights, as a reply to Giddens's theory of self-identity, that reflexive life planning is only a possibility for the 'elite' (Castells 1996). However, many people will experience their space as 'place-based': *"Indeed, the overwhelming majority of people, in advanced and traditional societies alike, live in places, and so they perceive their space as place-based. A place is a locale whose form, function, and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity."* (Castells, 2010, p. 453). Bauman (1999) also shows, the production and consumption of mobilities is highly differential. Bauman identifies a new hierarchy of mobilities, which sets the scene for modern life in the age of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000). There is a big difference between being in the top and bottom of the hierarchy (Bauman, 1999). The yardstick that decides the top and bottom of this hierarchy is people's ability to choose their own placement. For those at the top (the global mobile) space has lost its restrictive nature and can be easily crossed in both the 'real' and 'virtual' version. At the bottom, the locally bound people are unable to move, and therefore they passively have to put up with the changes applied to their locality (Bauman, 1999). Bauman describes metaphorically these two groups as tourists and vagabonds. 'Tourists' are the cosmopolitan businesspersons, the global cultural leaders or the academics who travel or stay, depending on how they feel. 'Vagabonds' are travellers who are prevented from the right to be real 'tourists'. These notions seem very black and white and thus not useful for an analysis. What seems to be common in all these different metaphors of describing mobile identities is whether the person is living a local life or a global life, and the level of choice and the potential mobilities seems to be alluded.

However, as Bauman also stresses a number of mobile identities and mobile strategies exist in-between such two poles. In the 'mobilities society' a number of different mobile positions and mobile identities exists for individuals, highlighted by Fotel (2007). Through her work with children's mobilities, Fotel identify four different coping strategies of mobilities. These four ideal types are metaphorically defined as 'Navigatoren' [the navigator], 'Den Dynamiske' [the dynamic one], 'Den Rolige' [the steady one] and 'Den Låste' [the locked one]. The positions express different levels of mobilities capital and degree of individuality (Fotel, 2007). By that, the link back to Kaufmann and his 'mobility capital' or 'potential mobility' is clear and even strengthened by the highlight that people do not move in the same way: *"Means of transport and communication procure not only speed but also increase the means of being mobile: more modes of transport, more destinations and more itineraries are now available. Access to these different possibilities and the way they are used by actors now become potentially important factors of differentiation and social distinction."* (Kaufmann 2002, p. 19).

In this thesis, mobile identity is understood as reflective organised mobilities planning as a key feature of the structure of mobile-identity. However, this will not be investigated on the individual level, but in mobile identity groups. Further, the process of individualisation is not being seen as a pure product of human agency, but it is highly assembled. This means that various forms of mobilities, places, global processes of change, new opportunities for creation of reflexive identities and life styles, infrastructures, history, objects, mobilities, modes of transport as well as national-regional-local networks and settings make up the realms of possibilities for people's formation and reformation of mobilities identities in Nationalpark Thy. However, there is not the same access to such possibilities for all groups of residents. This theoretical frame will in combination with an analytical investigation, create a tension field in which the mobile identities groups will be identified. The potential mobilities and the local-global feeling of the individual will hold the span of the tension field. These are the two factors shown as the main characteristics in the former used mobile identity groups. From this tension field four mobile identity groups will be defined and used for an analysis of mobilities in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area. The approach of this will further be elaborated in the next chapter. Characteristic of the different groups as well as the differences and differentialities among the groups will be analysed in chapter 7. For the common attributes among all mobile identity groups the term 'mobilities cultures' will be used.

#### 4.2.2 MOBILITIES CULTURES

*"The first main point to observe is that even if we study the physical movement of objects like people, cars, bikes, or goods we are simultaneously dealing with social issues of norms, power, identity and Cultural formation. It is fairly evident that mobility as a specific social practice may be related to cultural norms and regulations (as for example in the case of traffic regulations or local customs of movement). One might also think of mobilities as determined by cultural contexts. However, more importantly, mobilities and culture are not external to each other. Rather the performing of mobilities is culture."* (Jensen O. B., 2009a, p. xv)

As the quote above shows, mobilities deal with cultural formation and relate to cultural norms and regulation, but mobilities also produce culture. To understand what mobilities facilitate, an analysis of what role mobilities culture play for Nationalpark Thy and its users.

Culture is a very diverse phenomenon and can have many different meanings. Often people would start thinking about ‘high culture’ like the ballet or art museums, cultures in relation to nationality or traditions, or a sub group of people that form a culture like the ‘hipsters’ culture these days. No wonder people get different associations in relation to the word ‘culture’ since Kroeber, Kluckhohn & Untereiner (1952) identifies 164 different definitions on the word ‘culture’. Vannini (2012) also highlights this, emphasising the mobile perspective in culture: *“To a lot of people culture is synonymous with traditional values and beliefs, with community-based historical customs, and with people’s ethnic roots. But roots are not everything; change, movement, and routes matter just as much.”* (Vannini, 2012, p. 13)

The most known example is probably the ‘car culture’ (Cresswell, 2006; Beckmann, 2001b; Bauman, 2000; Urry, 1999). However, there are also studies of the culture in other modes e.g. walking (Vestergaard, Olesen, & Helmer, 2014). In this thesis, I will not focus on a specific mobilities mode, but on the mobilities in a specific area – and thus a ‘mobilities culture’ in Nationalpark Thy. Jensen (2009a) defines mobilities cultures like this: *“There are ways of acting that could be seen as more or less explicitly articulated cultures. Such ‘mobility cultures’ are linked to official and legal sanctions and mobility regulations. However, they are also embodied as tacit mobility cultures. Some are more global generic mobility codes, whilst others are locally anchored and as such they are expressions of local mobility norms and customs.”* (Jensen O. B., 2009a, p. xvi)

This understanding of mobilities culture will be used in this thesis, and more specifically, culture will refer to the way of life or a collective set of values. Values, norms, identities and mentalities can become a cultural basis when they are shared by many (Miles, Hall, & Borden, 2004, p. 53). Hansen (2011) also calls attention to the fact that a culture is not static; new cultures emerge and change over time, and likewise our interpretation of culture changes (Hansen, 2011). Mobilities culture can also contain some subcultures that can ease the understanding of the main culture. Vestergaard, Olesen & Helmer (2014) for example identifies a subculture about ‘walking for recreation’ in their analysis of a Danish pedestrian culture, and by understanding why people would walk for recreation it contributes to the general knowledge on walking.

These mobilities identity groups and mobilities cultures will be pieces in the puzzle that will contribute to the understanding of what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy a rural outskirts area, however, as previously argued the mobilities assemblage needs to capture both the ‘software’ and ‘hardware’ - both the human and non-human, the material and immaterial. Next, I will turn to the ‘mobilities hardware’.

### 4.3 MOBILITIES HARDWARE – MATERIALS

*“Such new aesthetics of mobility paves the way for an understanding of the potential of armatures to be appropriated by social agents creating alternative meanings, cultures and identities.”* (Jensen O. B., 2009b, p. 153)

As another part of the mobilities assemblage, I will turn to the mobilities hardware – or the ‘armatures’ as Jensen (2009b) state above. For this section I will use Ingold’s (2011) term of ‘materials’. Ingold argues: *“My plea, in arguing for a return to this world, is simply that we should once more take materials seriously, since it is from them that everything is made.”* (Ingold, 2011, p. 31). Others have used the term ‘materiality’ for this discussion; however, Ingold strongly disagrees with this notion and questions why agency should be added to objects. He proposes instead to follow active materials instead of consider them dead and thus have to add agency. He uses the wind and stream as an example. The wind does not blow, but the wind is the blowing, in the same way the stream is the running water. He summarises the discussion like this: *“What academic perversion leads us to speak not of materials and their properties but of the materiality of objects?”* (Ingold, 2011, p. 20). He explains how materiality is the agency and materials something physical, that can be touched – you cannot touch materiality. And human beings are not outside the world of materiality – we live in a world of materials. And the objects do not gain human agency as Latour would argue and thus makes them quasi-objects; and humans do not neither become quasi-objects (or subjects) (Latour 1993 in Ingold, 2011), but instead undergo a never ending formation of different materials (Ingold, 2011). What are ‘materials’ then?

Ingold answers this question quite simple: *“I begin with materials. They are what things are made of.”* (Ingold, 2011, p. 16). By this, Ingold does not just think of the building materials that would often be what comes into mind; like rocks, wood etc., but he also include the elements: *“In place of the material world, populated by solid objects, our eyes are opened to a world of materials, including earth, air and water, in which all is in flux and transformation.”* (Ingold, 2011, p. 16). So, if turning from the materiality of objects then, what are the properties of materials? Ingold explains how they are processual and relational: *“And as the environment unfolds, so the materials*

*of which it is comprised do not exist – like the objects of the material world – but occur. Thus the properties of materials, regarded as constituents of an environment, cannot be identified as fixed, essential attributes of things, but are rather processual and relational. They are neither objectively determined nor subjectively imagined but practically experienced. In that sense, every property is a condensed story. To describe the properties of materials is to tell the stories of what happens to them as they flow, mix and mutate.” (Ingold, 2011, p. 30).*

Take a road as an example. Everyone, who has either tried to drive by car or bike and especially to roller blade on a road, knows how important the texture of the asphalt is. If it is rough or even a bit rocky, it will be a vibrating experience to drive, bike or roll along it – for the latter, it might even become impossible to carry out the act. It is also known that the properties of the materials in the road change over time and throughout the seasons. In summertime, the asphalt get extremely hot, this makes it impossible to walk barefooted on it. On a rainy summer day it will send out that familiar moist that in Danish have been named ‘summer rain’ but which is actually the smell of water evaporating from the surface of the road. In wintertime, the road in a combination with the frosty and moisty air becomes slippery and any movement can become a challenge.

Jensen (2013) moves away from the properties of the materials to talk about what activity they ‘afford’: *“The assembled infrastructures modifies and interact with the human body and sensations as the person moves and thus affords particular motions, directions, speeds, modes, temporalities, and routes.”* (Jensen, 2013, p. 32). Jensen’s notion of affordance is inspired by Gibson, and so is Ingold. Ingold explains how Gibson’s argument is concerned with what an environmental object hinders or facilitates in relation to a current activity and he quote: *“But, actually, an affordance is neither an objective property nor a subjective property; or it is both if you like. An affordance cuts across the dichotomy of subjective-objective and helps us to understand its inadequacy. It is equally a fact of the environment and a fact of behavior. It is both physical and psychical, yet neither. An affordance points both ways, to the environment and to the observer.”* (Gibson 1979 in Ingold, 2011, p. 78). If returning to the before mentioned example of the materials of the road, you could say that a hot summer road do not ‘afford’ people to walk barefooted and they would probably instead prefer the sandy or green verge. The other way around a smooth surface would indeed afford roller blading. The road, so to say, undergoes a constant formation and is not just of one material: *“In reality, of course, the landscape has not already congealed from the medium. It is undergoing continuous formation, above all thanks to the immersion of its manifold surfaces in those fluxes of the medium that we call weather – in sunshine, rain, wind and so on. The ground is not the surface of materiality itself, but a textured composite of diverse materials that are grown, deposited and woven together through a dynamic interplay across the permeable interface between the medium and the substances with which it comes into contact.”* (Ingold, 2011, p. 130). Ingold further explains that ‘texture’ enables us to tell what it is a surface of. That the weather is included in this talk of texture and materials is a quite new thing in anthropology however it do to a high extend affect our movement: *“Thus, far from inhabiting a sealed ground furnished with objects, the animal lives and breathes in a world of earth and sky – or becoming earth and becoming sky – where to perceive is to align one’s movements in counterpoint to the modulations of day and night, sunlight and shade, wind and weather.”* (Ingold, 2011, pp. 87-88). The Danish anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup is not talking specifically about the elements, but of seasons, and how people would do different things in different seasons, because the relation between people is mediated by the physical world that alternating hinder and enhance social contact (Hastrup, 2010, p. 60). Even though Ingold talks about elements and Hastrup about seasons, it is with the same purpose: *“To the first, we might respond that human beings collectively comprise a species of nature. They are terrestrial animals whose lives and livelihoods are necessarily bound to the potentials and constraints of the material world.”* (Ingold, 2011, p. 113). Of course, the combination of weather, and seasons have an effect and it can affect places differently. Take an autumn storm as an example; the combination of season and wind makes it an extreme weather phenomenon, and it would affect places differently. In the sparsely inhabited countryside with fewer buildings and constructions and therefore not much to break the wind and to give shelter, you might feel it more extreme. In a city, on the other hand, there are lots of buildings and other facilities breaking the wind and providing shelter. In the same way, the urban heat island effect makes the city very hot in summer time because all the buildings absorb and release the heat during the day; a phenomenon that you will not encounter in the countryside.

In the examples used in this paragraph, I explain a piece of infrastructure and larger areas like cities and this can also be used to explain the span in ‘hardware’ because it is everything from the network of infrastructures and cities to the smell of the road on a summer day. Infrastructure is not just one thing either; it is also assembled: *“... how infrastructure projects are assembled by multiple layers of physical as well as communicative networks.”* (Jensen O. B., 2012a, p. 67). With this large span of focus it will be impossible to incorporate everything into an analysis, and I will therefore focus on things that become visible through my data collection.



#### 4.4 THE THEORETICAL MODEL OF UNDERSTANDING

In this study mobilities is understood as the production and reproduction of society through mobilities optics and the plural name covers various forms of physical and virtual mobilities that interact and affect the development of societies. Furthermore, it is not just the mobilities that interact, but mobilities, individuals, materials, cultures, identity groups, infrastructure etc. that in a relational interplay affect each other and the places they inhabit – it all comes together in the Mobilities Assemblage focused on the Rural Outskirt as is illustrated in Figure 4.1. The model tries to capture the ‘tension field’ rather than ‘either or’ logic between the virtual and the physical, and between the software and the hardware. Seeing mobilities in the rural outskirts through the eyes of this model means realizing that mobilities are assembled on multiple scales and within networks of multiple modes of movement. The model also contains human and non-human elements, and both physical and virtual dimensions. This includes an infinite list of elements that affect this rural outskirt mobilities e.g. broadband, bus routes, car sharing and online social networks.

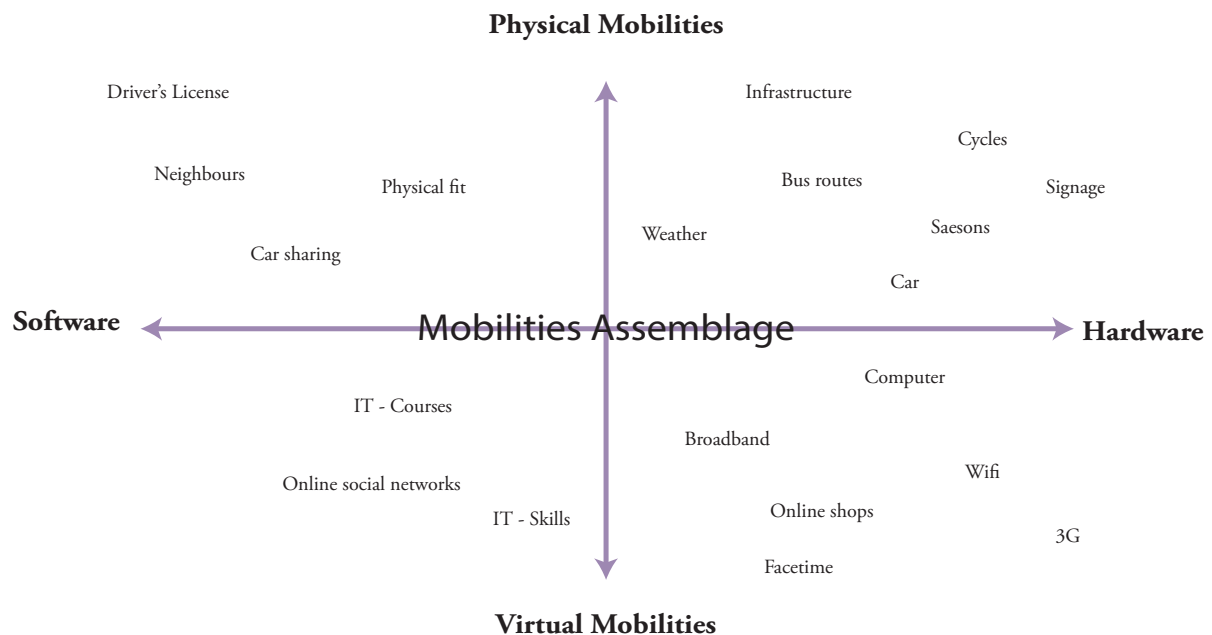


Figure 4.1 Some of the elements comprised by a Mobilities Assemblage focused on the Rural Outskirts - inspired by (Jensen & Lassen, 2011)

Even though all these things are interconnected and affect each other, I try to freeze elements along the way to make them possible analytical objects. Thus, the heading on each axis also illustrate a heading for a chapter in the analysis, though realising that many of the elements that are described in these chapters float between the different chapters and that the division in reality, is not that rigid.





## 5. METHODOLOGY – A PRAGMATIC CASE STUDY

This chapter will present the general research strategy. First, it gives an insight to a pragmatic turn on mobilities studies used in this thesis. This includes a presentation of how the thinking of ethnography has been used in this thesis. This is followed by a presentation of the use of a case study in this thesis. Finally, the applied methods in the mixed methods design will be presented.

### 5.1 A PRAGMATIC TURN ON MOBILITIES IN RURAL OUTSKIRTS

The story in the preface from the time I lived with my family in the Rural Outskirts is an example of the experiences I have had in on my own in relation to problems addressed in this thesis. This knowledge and experiences are of course part of the person I am today and have therefore influenced the before knowledge (or pre-judices (Gadamar, (1975) 1996)) and approach of this thesis. Furthermore, my story is my own “troubles” (Mills, 2002) that has led to the actions that has taken me to the place I am today. However, as I wrote in the preface, “I am one of the young people from the statistics...”. My story and all the other stories about mobilities in the rural outskirts are what cause the “issues” in today’s society. Thus, C. Wright Mills (2002) writes that you cannot understand the life of an individual or the history of a society without understanding both (Mills, 2002). For this investigation, my own “troubles” are also, what puzzled me and caused my musings in the initiating part of the thesis as is all pragmatist studies.

#### A PRAGMATIC SCOPE OF STUDY

Often rural outskirt areas as fields of research have been approached from agriculture or tourism perspectives, or from food, energy as well as more sociological perspectives as explained in Chapter 3. By investigating it from the perspective of ‘the new mobilities paradigm’, it will contribute with new perspectives, and with a new way of viewing and understanding of these areas. The focus is on what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy and thus the respondents’ lifeworld including their practices and meanings is the main field of study. However, the place (in this case Nationalpark Thy) is also part of the field of investigation and I subscribe to Sheller & Urry’s (2004) understanding of places (such as rural outskirt areas): “Places are thus viewed as economically, politically, and culturally produced through the multiple networked mobilities of capital, persons, objects, signs, and information (especially via various globalizing media). Such mobilities move at rapid yet uneven speed, crossing many borders.” (Sheller & Urry, 2004, p. 6). And in a later work they continue to explain how the places themselves are part of this travelling and parts of the network: “The new mobility paradigm argues against this ontology of distinct ‘places’ and ‘people’. Rather there is a complex relationality of places and persons connected through performances [...] Thus activities are not separate from the places that happen contingently to be visited... In the new mobilities paradigm, places themselves are seen as travelling, slow or fast, greater or shorter distances, within networks of human and nonhuman agents.” (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 214). This notion of including both the human and non-human is also present in this thesis; not as ‘non-human agents’, though but I acknowledge the importance materials and objects have for the human life and the mobilities, and therefore I turn to Ingold: “The animacy of the lifeworld, in short, is not the result of an infusion of spirit into substance, or of agency into materiality, but is rather ontologically prior to their differentiation.” (Ingold, 2011, p. 68). That does not mean that I do not find the materials and objects important but that I do not consider them to have agency equally to ‘beings that inhabit the world’ (Ingold, 2011, p. 71). The investigation of practices and the relational understanding of places is both inspired by pragmatist thinking: “Pragmatists emphasises both sides: experimental action, innovation as well as habits, tradition and integrating values that constitute everyday life. And pragmatists are furthermore interested in how human artefacts like architecture, communications technologies or medical technologies influence our everyday life.” (Gimmler, 2013, p. 5). Gimmler continues to explain that in pragmatism artefacts have a large sociological importance in our everyday life. With one example of the technology: “With pragmatic thinking technology comes into focus of everyday life sociology. The products of human activity and creativity are part of everyday life and they have to be incorporated on the level of practices and habits as well as on the symbolic level. Communications technologies like the Internet and since some years also the mobile phone attracted investigations about their influence on everyday life...” (Gimmler, 2013, p. 26). Though these artefacts or technologies influences everyday life the influence is limited – limited to the use of the actors. And thus artefacts do not have a life on their own they are used and implemented exclusively by actors.

#### A RELATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Thus both beings and materials are part of the fields of research - both ‘mobilities systems’ (Urry, 2007) in these places as well as the ‘mobile lives’ (Elliott & Urry, 2010) and especially the interplay between these two elements:

*“Understanding how mobile lives and mobility systems interweave and dislocate is crucial to grasping, as well as confronting, the politics of movement – of people, goods, information and ideas – in the contemporary age. Such interweaving and dislocation of mobile lives and mobility systems, we have argued, operate as assemblages that move both subjects and objects around.”* (Elliott & Urry, 2010, p. 155). This network, ‘assemblage’ or ‘meshwork’ approach also calls out for a relational understanding of the world: *“Across all these fields, proponents of network thinking argue that it encourages us to focus, in the first place, not on elements but on the connections between them, and thereby to adopt what is often called a relational perspective. Such a perspective allows for the possibility that with any pair of connected elements, each can play an active part in the ongoing formation of the other. By way of their relations, it is supposed, things, organisms or persons may be mutually constitutive.”* (Ingold, 2011, p. 70). However, with his meshwork understanding, Ingold argues, *“Things are their relations.”* (Ingold, 2011, p. 70). As argued in chapter 3, I pay attention to both the nodes and the connections. And thus also believe that the relational understanding is to grasp the connectivity between the elements as well as believing that the connection is the relation.

## LIFEWORLD

In addition to the above mentioned, I wanted to get into the lifeworld of the residents living in my case area and the tourists visiting the area. I include both perspectives since altogether their mobilities produce and re-produce norms, meanings and cultures that constitute the area. I wanted to go out in the field and perceive, feel and experience the world. However, I do not only approach the field from the ‘beings’ and from myself, I further wanted to include the ‘materials’ and to see the mobile lives as part of a mobilities assemblage.

The objective of including “Lifeworld” into the approach was to analyse the direct experience as it appears in our bodily consciousness in the life world (Fuglsang & Olsen, 2004, p. 38) or more precisely: *“The focus is towards illuminating details and seemingly trivial aspects within experience that may be taken for granted in our lives, with a goal of creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding.”* (Laverty, 2003, p. 24).

Though you get first-hand knowledge, the knowledge you get is not completely objective. You would assume that what people realise is based on their experiences. Furthermore you would assume that their imaginations of what happens are what founded their ability to perform in the society. They would use this knowledge in relation to others. These individuals of the society have an understanding of the societal condition from the collective relations they are included in (Fuglsang & Olsen, 2004, p. 24). Furthermore, the knowledge you obtain from the ‘beings’ is interpreted and it is communicated to you. The study of ‘beings’ and society presupposes the human context depending self-interpretation and therefor are only as stable as these interpretations are (Flyvbjerg, 1991, p. 65).

A ‘double hermeneutic’ grip will be used to both elaborate these self-interpretations as well as the researcher’s opinion formation. *“The interviewed person certainly meant what she or he said, but the expression nevertheless reflects individual and social values and evaluations – and the same goes for the observation or analysis of the researcher. Life world as an already interpreted world runs down to the very basic level of a human being – an understanding that is vividly present in interpretative approaches and has been reformulated more reflectively by Anthony Giddens as ‘double hermeneutics’ (1976).”* (Gimmler, 2013, p. 19). It is important to understand both the background for the researcher’s opinion formation as well as how it is constantly changed through the meeting with the field of research. You are also not just affected by the courses, conferences etc. that you participate in during a PhD period; you are also affected by the people surrounding you and the habitus you brought into the thesis both personally and professionally. Freudendal-Pedersen, Hartmann-Petersen & Nielsen (2010) states it this way: *“We meet our research problem with knowledge attained from our education, our previous research, from diverse literature, our engagement in society, from the news etc. These preconceptions constitute the basis for the generation of knowledge in the research process.”* (Freudendal-Pedersen, Hartmann-Petersen & Nielsen, 2010, p. 27). This brings me back to the overture of this chapter.

Gadamar ([1989] 1996) uses ‘pre-judices’ to describe what underlie our understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon. But it can be difficult to understand your own prejudices: *“Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live.”* (Gadamar, (1975) 1996, p. 276). A meeting between two individuals is also not just a shallow meeting, the entire history affects it – the meeting between a white and dark American is an illustrating example on how ‘history’ can affect the data collection<sup>1</sup>. In the same way, there are some prejudices and history in

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<sup>1</sup> Jakob Skjøtt Larsen used the example in the lesson on Pierre Bourdieu in the PhD-course Modern Sociological Theory on October 3rd 2012.

my meeting as a researcher from the university with the interviewees – you have your entire ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1984) as a luggage and the opponent has some ideas on who you are and in the situation a construction to find a common ground takes place. Therefore, I had purposely chosen a very personal style, visiting the interviewees at their home ground to make sure they felt comfortable in the situation. Before making the interviews I feared that I would only be perceived as the distant researcher, and by that, because of the sensitive issue, would risk that they would react defensively. This was my reason to focus so much on the atmosphere and my own history as a “former native of the rural outskirts”.

Instead of bracketing my pre-understandings and my prejudices, I pay attention to how these affects my actions as a researcher – to be ‘reflective’ about my own research (Brinkmann, 2010, p. 444). Also, to know what values I bring into the thesis. Often it is assumed that you as a researcher is value neutral, but I agree very much with (Brinkmann, 2010) that it is simply not possible to be value neutral, and I also question what is value neutrality anyway? However, what about political neutrality, Brinkmann (2010) asks. Is that something we should try to strive for? As our research is often used in political debates and researchers are used as experts who will speak about different matters from their research, it would simply not be possible from my point of view to be political neutral. Of course you need to be aware of your own political agenda (if you have one), and be aware that you do not become a political tool in the hands of someone.

### ABDUCTIVE PROCESS

My prejudices will not be stated explicitly in a specific paragraph, but will lie in the stories and narration throughout the entire thesis and incorporated in the reflexions. Furthermore, my prejudices and preunderstanding very much inspired my general musings or puzzlings in the beginning of the thesis as I also explained earlier. These puzzlings are also very much, how a pragmatist would approach a new project as a part of abduction. *“But, what Peirce and his pragmatist followers as well as social scientists today, are interested in is the nature of abduction as a type of reasoning that also helps to cope with those situations where we are confronted with puzzlement and uncertainty.”* (Gimmler, 2013, p. 9). The abductive character has also affected the general approach to the thesis. I started out with a basis in theory where my questionnaire for an example is based on the theoretical notions from my theoretical framework, as it will be elaborated in section 5.3.1. This is also in accordance with the case studies approach which is mainly theoretical grounded; meaning that data collection and analysis is guided by theory (de Vaus, 2004, p. 221). However, I did not want the theoretical framework to take total control over the analysis, but also to give the data room to speak for itself. Furthermore, in between data collections, the results have influenced the theoretical framework as well as the following data collection. An example of this is the mobile identity groups that I will explain further in chapter 7. Thus, I have dribbled back and forth between theoretical framework and data in an abductive way also to create interplay between theoretically and empirically derived conclusions in the analysis.

The thesis further get inspired by pragmatism to finding a practical application of my thesis: *“pragmatism is a theory of practice, so we should expect to think about its practical application and about how, specifically it might influence the development of solutions to real world problems in a range of institutions and at a number of spatial scales.”* (Wood & Smith, 2008). In this, more solution oriented part of the thesis; the abductive approach has also been used.

Finally, my many visits to the area and by that the very bodily experience have been of great importance to the development of both the theoretical framework and the analysis. *“It is his experience and it is experience in the full Deweyian sense of the word: a bodily experience while walking in the streets and standing in urban architecture or the emotional experience while looking at a picture. This type of experience is able to illuminate a different aspect of everyday life, far away from the utilisations of everyday life.”* (Gimmler, 2013, p. 25). It has also been about acknowledging that I, as the researcher, am not standing from the outside looking into the world of observation – that I am part of the world. Ingold explain this: *“First, we are dealing here not with a way of believing about the world, but with a condition of being in it. This could be described as a condition of being alive to the world, characterised by a heightened sensitivity and responsiveness, in perception and action, to an environment that is always in flux, never the same from one moment to the next.”* (Ingold, 2011, pp. 67-68). This has also had the effect that I have approached the problem from an ethnographic perspective, when I wanted to learn about the lifeworld of the residents and tourists, but also participated in the lifeworld from a distance. I have been doing the ‘thinking of ethnography’ (Bate, 1997 in Bjerg, 2006, p. 113).

#### 5.1.2 THE THINKING OF ETHNOGRAPHY

Bjerg (2006), with reference to (Bate 1997), explains how ethnography can both be a way ‘to think’, ‘doing’ and a way of ‘writing’. The traditional methods were you participate on equal terms (Hastrup, 2010) with the study



object, have a longer stay in the field (Yin, 2009) or where you observe specific movement i.e. car driving, have not been methods used in this thesis. The writing has only been small passages – for an example my own stories, but it has not been a consistent writing style – elements of ‘reflexive ethnography’ – (Bjerg, 2006) you could say. Thinking ethnography has influenced the thesis. Aday (2010) frames this very clear: *“From anthropology, ethnographic research methods provide one avenue that seeks to uncover lives as they are lived. Ethnographic research seeks to explore the richly detailed and complex life-worlds of its respondents.”* (Aday, 2010, p. 70). That is exactly the way ethnography has been used in this thesis; as a way to produce and uncover knowledge on what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area, by understanding the lifeworld of the residents, but also of the tourists visiting the area. (Pink in Lashua & Cohen (2010) elaborate on this way of producing knowledge: *“... that view ethnography as more than a method, and instead as a process of creating and producing knowledge-through experiencing, interpreting, and representing cultures and societies.”* (Pink 2007 in (Lashua & Cohen, 2010, s. 84)). Hastrup (2010) elaborates that inside this overall strategy of ethnography you could use many different tactics in your search for knowledge i.e. surveys, interviews, life stories, counts, photo journals etc. All these tactics will form the ethnographical material, that later will become starting point for the conclusions.

Vannini (2012), among others, has initiated talking about a ‘mobile ethnography’ and he describes it like this: *“A mobile ethnography like this – one that views fieldwork not as rooted by the stakes of a tent, but rather driven by the vagaries of the compass and the spirit of wayfinding.”* (Vannini, 2012, p. XIII). Whereas the ‘ordinary’ ethnographers consider a stay in the field and participation the most important methods (Bjerg, 2006; Hastrup, 2010). Vannini writes that: *“Methodologically, we have learned that it is useful to think of ethnography as a way of moving around. Mobile research is less about ‘pitching tent with the natives’ and more about riding along with one another.”* (Vannini, 2012, p. 213). I agree with both perspectives, however, for different reasons, I have emphasised other methods but the observations and field studies. Thus, I have used mobilities journals instead of riding along with my respondents; this from a time perspective, since I found it more valuable to get information from more interviewees during one week, instead of just one respondent in one day. I had stationary activities such as questionnaires and interviews with the respondents instead of walk-along-interviews to put focus more on mobilities in general instead of just one mode. All activities with the respondents have therefore been stationary, whereas I have had the bodily mobile experiences on my own; all grounded in the case study of Nationalpark Thy.

## 5.2 CASE STUDY OF MOBILITIES IN NATIONALPARK THY

In order to understand what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area, a case study has been chosen as the approach or method holding all the other methods together. Methods that each contribute with knowledge which when assembled bring new perspectives and answers to the research questions. A case study has been chosen since it gives an opportunity to *“...close in’ on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice.”* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 236). A case study can help to understand the complex issues investigated in this thesis by having a holistic and thorough approach (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

It has never been the idea to be able to generalise from this one chosen case to all rural outskirts, and this also affected the case which have been chosen to be “illustrative rather than representative” (Bjerg, 2006, p. 23). I will get back to this discussion of generalisation later in this paragraph. To make an illustrative case I have chosen an extreme case. Flyvbjerg (2006) writes about extreme cases that they can either be especially problematic or especially good. In this thesis with challenges in the rural outskirts as the starting point, it has been important for me to choose a case that suffers from all these challenges as mentioned in chapter 1. Therefore, Nationalpark Thy was chosen as a case. Second, the area holds some potential that for example the label as a Nationalpark illustrates, and thus holds potentials for a future development. The thesis also include this perspective. An extreme case is what Flyvbjerg (2006) calls an information chosen case and not a random selection. The reason for this type of case selection is that the aim is not to make a representational study nor to be able to generalise the results, but rather to be able to *“...achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon...”* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229) and he further explains how they *“...reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied.”* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229).

Because I chose to have an information chosen case, I also spent quite some time getting information about different possible cases before I chose Nationalpark Thy. First, I made a quick screening of interesting cases that fulfilled my idea of an extreme case and soon I was down to two possible cases: Nationalpark Thy and Skagen. Then, I spend some time on reading and visiting both places over a span of six months before I made my final choice. Skagen and Nationalpark Thy experience many of the same challenges and potentials like being in the outskirts of the Danish territory and both have a large amount of tourists visiting the area. However, where the nomination of Nationalpark



Thy has put new attention to the area, Skagen has been known for its quality for a long time. I found it relevant to investigate this new perspective further. Though it is one case, it is a quite diverse. I could just as well have chosen the four villages in the area and made a comparison of them, a specific age group or just the tourists. However, this was not the purpose with the study. Instead I wanted to give a broad insight into the meaning of mobilities in an area and for all its users both young and old, local and tourist, villager or countryside resident – once again the all-embracing assemblage approach that finds all the pieces and fit them together in one large puzzle. And as one case, the entire area will be treated as one, and I will not make comparisons within the area. At some points I highlight differences but not direct comparisons.

Even though it is called an ‘extreme case’, this of course varies in the context in which it is studied. When I call Nationalpark Thy an ‘extreme case’ for studying mobilities in rural outskirts, this is an extreme case in a Danish context. Of course it is not very ‘extreme’ compared to for example Australian and Canadian contexts with municipalities larger than the total area of Denmark only inhabited by few residents; but that does not make studies of rural outskirts in Denmark any less relevant. In that way one could say that Danish Rural Outskirts might be the ‘good’ extreme case in a global perspective (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Yin (2009) distinguishes between two different rationales of choosing a single case – it can be critical case in testing a well-formulated theory or the single case can represent an extreme or unique case (Yin, 2009, p. 47). In this case, it is both. Focus is both on applying “the new mobilities paradigm” in a rural outskirts context, to see what new information this will contribute with as well as investigating what mobilities mean to the residents in this case in Thy Nationalpark, as an example of an extreme or unique case of a rural outskirts area.

Case studies are often criticised for not been able to develop predictive theories and for not making generalizable statements. However, Flyvbjerg (2006) justifies case studies for investigating the human world: *“Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is therefore more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals.”* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 224). He also believes that the generalisation is overvalued as the source of scientific knowledge at the expense of *“the force of example”* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 228). Flyvbjerg states that: *“A purely descriptive, phenomenological case study without any attempt to generalize can certainly be of value in this process and has often helped cut a path toward scientific innovation.”* (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 227). Though I agree with Flyvbjerg and that the purpose of this thesis is to show an example, it is expected that some results from the analysis will be able to be ‘analytical generalised’ to other situations or places based on an analysis of similarities and differences between the two cases (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 289) as also Flyvbjerg (2006) and Yin (2009) explains. Yin (2009) explains about analytical generalisation that you expand and generalise theories: *“In analytical generalization, the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory.”* (Yin, 2009, p. 43) and he further describe how you would use some previously developed theory as a template with which the empirical results of the case study can be compared (Yin, 2009, p. 38). I will get back to the analytical generalisation in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

### 5.3 APPLIED METHODS

I have chosen a mixed method design in order to illuminate the matter from different angles as well as to substantiate my conclusions. Further a pragmatic grounded case design builds on a mixed methods research design. Thus, I have used both data triangulation and methods triangulation to conclude with “Convergence of Evidence” where different sources of data points towards the same conclusion as well as conclusions with “Non-convergence of Evidence” (Yin, 2009, p. 117) where the different methods and data contribute to different conclusions.

Data on three different levels have been used. First data of rural outskirts in general this is both document study of different national reports, newspaper articles and academics studies as well as statistical data e.g. from Statistics Denmark. The second level is a questionnaire with all residents and tourists as the target group and finally the third level is interviews and mobilities journals with chosen residents. Beside this, I have also used my own bodily mobile experiences. All the methods from the second and third levels, as well as my own bodily mobile experience, are explained in the following.

#### 5.3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS

In order to gain a general impression of the mobilities in Nationalpark Thy, a questionnaire was created, the first one for the residents living in the area, and later for the tourists visiting the area. A general thing in questionnaires is that everyone is asked the same questions (Bjerg, 2006, p. 31). This is also the case for the locals, however, in the tourism questionnaire; the one in Danish differs a bit from the English and German. For example, the question

of residence is detailed to municipality in the Danish questionnaire and to country in the English and German. The questionnaires were inspired by the theory presented in chapter 3 with focus on the potential and actual mobilities, as well as to get some general knowledge on the resident and the area (the questionnaire is available in Appendix D). To be more specific, there were questions about the residents' access to different kinds of mobilities (e.g. car, public transport, Internet), their skills to use these means (e.g. drivers' licence, skills to use a computer or to read a timetable), questions about their appropriation of these mobilities (e.g. where they would go on holiday as well as more identity questions), and questions about their actual mobilities (e.g. how they would plan a trip with public transport and which means of transportation they would use to different activities). All of these questions were mainly based on Urry's (2007) 'different modes of mobilities' and Kaufmann's (2002) notion of 'Motility'.

The target group for the local questionnaire was everyone living in Nationalpark Thy and the target group for the tourism questionnaire was everyone visiting Nationalpark Thy for a shorter or longer time. This included owners of summer cottages who spend their entire holiday in the area, foreign tourists who spend a week in a Bed and Breakfast, and one-day by passers.

In an effort to include everyone without sending out a questionnaire by mail to all residents, I thought about what they all have in common, and concluded that the common denominator is that they all eat. Therefore, the four local grocery stores in the area (SPAR in Klitmøller, SPAR in Vorupør, EUROSPAR in Vorupør and SPAR in Agger) were used as a base for the questionnaire in the period 30th of November to 21st of December 2011. In that period, the residents had the possibility to answer the questionnaire and return it to the local grocer in a mailbox. In the same period, a link to a web questionnaire was uploaded online, also for the residents to answer. In an effort to let people know about my thesis and to encourage residence to answer the questionnaire, Nationalpark TV made a broadcast with me. This broadcast is available for watching on: <http://vimeo.com/33040293> [only in Danish] and the local newspaper presented an article about my study at both the beginning and end of the questionnaire investigation. (This is further detailed in Appendix E).

A link to the questionnaire was also placed in local Facebook groups and on the webpage of Thy Nationalpark in order to encourage people to fill in the questionnaire. The answers can be found in Appendix F.

23 filled in the questionnaire online. Three people handed it in at SPAR in Vorupør, 18 in EUROSPAR in Vorupør, 32 in SPAR in Klitmøller and 17 in SPAR in Agger. Afterwards, four people contacted me, because they did not return the questionnaire before I collected them; so I further received two questionnaires by mail and two by e-mail (the results from the questionnaire are available in Appendix F). In total, 97 residents in the area completed the questionnaire<sup>2</sup>. 2,326 people lives in the case area as will be described in Chapter 6, which means that a little more than 4 pct. answered the questionnaire.

For the tourism inquiry, the questionnaires were also placed at the four local grocery stores. Besides the stores, they were also placed at the visitors' centre of the Nationalpark in Stenbjerg and at the tourist information in Vorupør. Especially the volunteers at the visitor centre were very helpful to encourage tourists to fill in the questionnaire. It was placed in the case area from July 5th 2012 – September 21st 2012. The questionnaire for the tourists is available in Appendix G and the results from the questionnaire are available in Appendix H. Figure 5.1 sums up the number of respondents in different languages and where they were handed in.

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<sup>2</sup> However of these 97 people, five people only answered parts of the questionnaire, and other respondents skipped one or two questions. Their answers are therefore only included in the parts to which they responded.

	Danish	English	German
Online	12	2	0
Mail	6	1	0
E-mail	1	0	0
Visitors' Centre	110	3	22
SPAR Klitmøller	59	3	43
EUROSPAR Vorupør	13	0	7
SPAR Vorupør	6	0	1
SPAR Agger	17	1	8
Tourist Agency Vorupør	3	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>82</b>

Figure 5.1 Number of respondents in different languages and how and where they were handed in.

In the layout of this investigation, it was very difficult to ensure that the respondents were representative for the general residents and tourists in the area; and it was not the aim to obtain representativeness. Therefore, there is a 'sampling bias' (Bjerg, 2006, pp. 37-38). However, everyone has had equal opportunities to fill in the questionnaire, but probably the people who have done so are not equal. Very often, some groups are left out; like the busy families with children and marginalised groups. This is probably also the case for this questionnaire. In chapter 6, an analysis of the local respondents will be made and the respondents will be compared to the rest of the residents. The same comparison, however, has not been possible to carry out for the tourists. Even though the results from the questionnaire are not representative, they still give an insight into the mobilities in the area and an insight into the general tendencies. The purpose has not been to gain knowledge on each single individual, but to use the gathered results as well as to use the results to create sub-groups – 'mobile identity groups'.

All the respondents were divided into sub-groups (this will be elaborated in Chapter 7 "Software"), and two persons from each mobile identity group were chosen for more qualitative investigations. These interviewees all participated in interviews and kept a mobilities journal for one week. A presentation of these interviewees is available in Appendix N.

### 5.3.2 INTERVIEW

An interview with more detailed, in-depth and clarifying questions has been conducted with each of the eight interview persons. The purpose of the interviews was to gain insight into their experiences of different phenomena in their 'life worlds' (Tinggaard & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 31).

The interviews have been carried out as semi-structured interviews where I, as the interviewer, have made an interview guide with themes and questions, I wanted answers to, but I also made it clear for the respondents that they should just tell everything that came to mind. Often, that had the effect that they had answered questions before I asked them, and in that way it was a more fluent talk instead of a staccato conversation with short replies to my questions. The interview guide is available as Appendix I. For all the interviews, I strived to meet the interviewee in person and in their houses. This was first to create a situation of confidence between the interviewees and me, and second to get an insight into the home he or she lived in. I also met them face to face from the idea that this should be the best basis for an interview, however, St. Pierre questions if that always is the case (St. Pierre, 2008 in Tinggaard & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 36). He explains that the distance to the interviewer might generate more free

answers and that it can be more contemplated answers. That might have been the case with one of the interviewees, who in the questionnaire, answered by much elaborated answers and was very illustrative in his descriptions; however, in the interview situation it was difficult creating a scene for conversation. I also had to do one telephone interview, because the interviewee was busy and a meeting was not possible. However, during the interview, he explained how he likes to meet people online, and chat with unknown people, and the distance through the phone might in that case have created a more open environment for him.

The first round of interviews was just after Easter in April 2013 (the audio files from the interview and transcribed interviews are available in Appendix J). I started each interview in the first round with an introduction to the thesis and presented myself and my background. In this, I explained why I was doing the thesis, what it was about, and why I had chosen Nationalpark Thy as the case. When I presented myself, I explained my educational background and I highlighted that I grew up in a quite similar place in order to illustrate that we had an equal starting point and that I have had some of the same experiences as them. In this first interview, I had much focus on getting to know them and know why they chose to live in that place. I was also very interested in knowing about their everyday life to get a comprehensive insight into their 'life worlds'. And then I turned to the more mobilities oriented questions, with questions about distance, about their use of virtual mobilities and their physical mobilities. Then I turned to talk about the mobilities culture in the area, and moved on to talk about the tourists coming to the area and their own experiences as tourists. Finally, I tried to talk to them about the future; however, that was a very challenging exercise that was re-formatted for the second interview.

The second round of interviews was conducted in the middle of August 2013. The second round of interviews was characterised by a quite different atmosphere since the interviewees had a feeling that now we knew each other. At one place, one of the interviewees had picked some vegetables in her greenhouse for me to bring home. Another one remembered which tea I would like to drink and at another place I stayed to chit chat with the interviewee and his wife for almost an hour after the interview finished. I got the feeling that because of that first visit, they had lowered their guard, and I was now considered more a guest than a stranger from the university. The purpose of the second round was to follow up on some of the conversations from the first interview (the interview-guides are available in Appendix K); to talk about their actual mobilities from their mobilities journal and then I returned to that talk about the future that had been so difficult to grasp in the first round of interviews. I also used this second interview to get some feedback on some of the results from the tourism investigation, to make use of the interviewees' knowledge and use them in the interpretation of the results. Unfortunately, only six respondents participated in the second round of interviews, one dropped out of the investigation and one was on holiday at the time for the second round. The audio files from the second round of interviews are available in Appendix L.

### 5.3.3 MOBILITIES JOURNALS

In order to get an insight into the mobilities patterns of the interviewees, I asked them to keep a mobilities journal for one week in which they should notice all their physical mobilities; all modes of physical mobilities. The Mobilities journal takes point of departure in the 'diary diary' method that originally was developed in the 1970s as a substitute to the participatory observation (Zimmerman & Wieder, 1977). This was both to save time and resources, and to skip the intermediary of research assistants who would conduct the research. Thus the interviewees become "surrogate research assistants" who should notice their own behaviour. In my thesis, I have neither had the time nor the possibility to live in Thy and follow the residents around, therefore this method has been very useful. In this way, it is also possible to get an insight into the interviewees' thoughts and feelings in relation to their behaviour. Aday (2010) also encourages this method to gain insight into the everyday mobilities: "Diaries, informal photos and notes can provide effective ways of representing everyday mobilities." (Aday, 2010, p. 156)

The interviewees have been asked to notice their physical mobilities behaviour for one week, their thought in relation to this behaviour and their rationales behind their behaviour. They were all orally introduced to the method and this introduction was also printed in the journal, in order for them to be able to get back to it. A journal was handed out to each of them containing this introduction, examples on how to fill in the journal, and a number of blank pages for their 'observations'. The interviewees were asked to notice all their outdoor movement outside their property no matter the transportation mode. They were asked to always start by noticing the time, the route and the length. Afterwards they were asked to state the purpose with the trip, why they chose this mode of transportation and who were traveling with them. Finally they were asked to notice if there were anything specific about the trip, if they had any special feelings about the trip or had any specific thoughts or ideas e.g. the weather, if they saw something special, if they were angry from arguing with the husband etc.

The ‘diary diary’ method in the original way is a very narrative sociological description of the everyday-life (Latham, 2003; Zimmerman & Wieder, 1977). In this thesis, though, the method is a mix of keeping a log, where you note your activities and a diary where you include details like emotions; this might make it less narrative. At least, the narrative aspect differs quite a lot between the interviewees as the scanned journals in Appendix M shows.

Instead of a mobilities journal, I could have made observations e.g. static observations on who passes a point in what mode of transport and at what speed. Or I could have made ride-alongs, walk-alongs etc. to participate on a specific trip. However, from the spatial and temporal limitations I chose not to do it in that way. By the use of mobilities journals, I got information on each trip every day in a week for all residents. Observations have instead been used in a much more informal and non-standardized way.

### 5.3.4 BODILY MOBILE EXPERIENCES

I have visited the case area a great number of times. However, I have not made participatory observation, which is an often-used method in ethnographical studies (Hastrup, 2010, p. 71). In this thesis observations have not been used to gather data, but to gain own experiences and to observe how other people practice their mobilities. However, Hastrup (2010) considers the crux of the matter that you will challenge yourself to get to know the world through your own person. She considers this a realisation and theory of science challenge to investigate the world by getting involved in it (Hastrup, 2010, p. 59). I also got involved in the world, however, mainly from a distance. Hastrup also explains the importance of rhythm. It is not enough to move around in the same area, but you have to do so at the same rhythm as the locals, in order to understand the people you study at the places they move. And so I have used many of the same physical mobilities modes as they use – I have travelled around the area by car, bike, foot and bus (but not public transport though). I have used the same mobile signals, and by this, I know where you easily can get a signal and where you should be lucky to get one. I have investigated the area for five years, visited it in any season, and thus, I have experienced the seasonal changes. At a workshop in Aalborg <sup>3</sup>, Vannini emphasises corporality where passion, orientation, moods, emotions, sentiment, enlivening are all reports, in which ethnographic relations are entangled. Further, sensuality where the orientations are intentional, but not always reflexive in a cognitive way – we experience the world through our senses. And I have tried to practice this during my stays in the area. Some of these experiences have been documented through photographs, some, I have noted down in my field notes, and some experiences took some time to digest and thus meanings or conclusions later dawn on me.

These observations are used in many different ways throughout the thesis. Some of them have been used to initiate an analysis and others have been used to substantiate a point or conclusion. It has thus not been used in a stringent way in the analysis; however it still provided some very useful insights.

## 5.4 SUM UP

As explained in the introduction the purpose was to understand what mobilities means for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy – and this mobilities objective will bring new knowledge to the field of rural studies. The mobilities objective includes a relational understanding of the world and a cross disciplinary approach that walks hand in hand with the pragmatic viewpoint of the world. The investigation has been assembled by bits and pieces of different elements, both the tangible stuff like number of inhabitants and car ownership, and the things that can be difficult to measure and that only comes forward in an in-depth conversation with people living there. This could be the affection of wind and other weather impose issues like snow clearing the non-representational issues you could say. This inclusion of both the respondents’ life world and materials like wind weather and the layout also fits very well with a pragmatic approach.

A further approach has come from the thinking of ethnography as a way to produce and uncover knowledge on what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy by understanding the life worlds of the residents. The outcome of the thesis in the tension field between phenomenological values and interests and the pragmatic actions will also be clear in the concluding part of the thesis. In order to specifically be able to produce and uncover knowledge a case study of Nationalpark Thy has been carried out under which a wide selection of methods have been used to be able to assemblage the full picture of what mobilities means for both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy.

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<sup>3</sup> A PhD seminar on Non-representational Mobile Ethnography hosted at Aalborg University on August 22nd 2013 with a lecture by Phillip Vannini.

I have chosen a mixed method design in order to illuminate the matter from different angles as well as to substantiate my conclusions. Further, a pragmatic grounded case design builds on a mixed methods research design. Thus, I have made a questionnaire for both residents and tourists, conducted two rounds of interviews with 6-8 residents, made the residents keep a mobilities journal for a week, and I have had my own bodily ethnographic experiences in the case area.

The data provided through these methods will be structured in relation to the presented analytical framework in chapter 4 in the following analysis chapters in order to clarify what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area.







# **PART 3**

# **Analysis**



## 6. DIVERSITY IN NATIONALPARK THY – INTRODUCTION TO THE AREA AND ITS RESIDENTS

This chapter will give a detailed geographical and socio economic analysis and presentation of the case area, Nationalpark Thy, with the purpose to give the reader an insight into the content and diversity of this place. First some geographical facts of the area are described and a short historical analysis is carried out. This is followed by a short analysis of the surrounding area. This is mainly build on second hand knowledge from the literature study; however the empirical data from this thesis have been used to illustrate some of the points. Finally a socio economic analysis of residents in Nationalpark Thy is carried out. The results from the analysis of the average residents in Nationalpark Thy is compared with the respondents in my questionnaire in order to identify the factors on which the respondents differ from the average.

All this to get an understanding of the case area, its history, population and geography in order to describe the life world of the respondents as a basic understanding of their motility and identity formation as part of the mobilities assemblage that was introduced in chapter 4. Furthermore the purpose is to understand what mobilities mean to locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area.

### 6.1 NATIONALPARK THY

Thy National Park has an area of 244 km<sup>2</sup> and forms a 12 km broad belt stretching along the west coast from Agger Tange in the south to Hanstholm in the north (see Figure 6.5). Nationalpark Thy holds a broad variety of nature and landscape types, ranging from coastal to agricultural areas, woodlands and meadows, and especially the dune-meadows are a unique type of nature in the park. (Nationalpark Thy - Sekretariatet, 2010)<sup>1</sup>. Nationalpark Thy only covers rural areas, however four villages (Klitmøller, Vorupør, Stenbjerg and Agger) are surrounded by the



Figure 6.1 Windsurfers at Klitmøller (own picture)



Figure 6.2 Local fishing boat on the beach in Vorupør (own picture)



Figure 6.3 Old fishing houses in Stenbjerg (own picture)



Figure 6.4 A view over the village of Agger (own picture)

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph was developed in an earlier version as part of the conference paper "Mobility Challenges in the Region of Northern Jutland, Denmark".

park, and therefore they will be included in this investigation. 342 people are living in the Nationalpark area, and including the four villages with 351 residents in Agger, 880 residents in Klitmøller, 162 residents in Stenbjerg and 591 residents in Vorupør the total number of residents is 2,326 (Thisted Kommune, 2012). Figure 6.1-6.4 shows a typical picture from each of the four villages.

The area was originally a fishing and trading community. Between 1660 and 1810 the area was the centre of discharging food to southern Norway and importing timber from Norway. However, when the ocean broke through at Agger Tange in 1862 (The Danish Nature Agency, n.d.), south of the area, an entry to the Limfjord was created and the ship trading slowly moved to that area. The fishing continued through the years where fishermen put out from the small villages, but when a large harbour was created in the 1960s in Hanstholm, north of the area, most of the fishing industry moved here. Today tourism play a large role in the area, and fishing is a side-line. Since the 1980s the coastline and windy position of the area have been known for its great potentials for all kinds of surfing, which has given the area the nick name of “Cold Hawaii” - it is like Hawaii but much colder. This name has in several years been used in the surf community and today “Cold Hawaii” is an official brand of the area. Surfers are coming from all over the world to visit this spot, and the last six years the windsurfer’s world-tour PWA have held competitions in “Cold Hawaii”. Some young families have also settled down in the area because of the surf conditions, and other former tourists have settled in the area because of the nature.



Figure 6.5 Thisted Municipality marked by The dotted line. Nationalpark Thy marked by green. The four villages Agger, Stenbjerg, Vorupør and Klitmøller and the two main cities in the municipality Hanstholm and Thisted. The Municipality is surrounded by water with the North Sea to the west and the Limfjord to the east and south.

Furthermore, in 1970 a group of people who were organised in a society called “Det nye samfund” (The new Society) bought a piece of land in Thy (outside the national park territory) and hosted a festival inspired by Woodstock among others (Knudsen, 2011). Some people never left and the small society, “Thylejren”, still exists today. Around 70 adults live in the in the small society and a number of children (Andersen V. T., 2013). For more than ten years they have taken up the old idea of a festival, and now they have a three day music festival each year with both national and international participants and a number of 1200-1500 visitors altogether (Festivalsen, Thygersen, n.d.). Figure 6.6 and 6.7 show the local shop in Thylejren and the music festival in 2013.

Around the time where Thylejren was first established, “Nordenfjords verdensuniversitet” also called “Æ World University” was established. It functioned as a school existing of minor schools that each practiced their own niche and experimented with the school structure. This institution attracted people from all over the world – even John Lennon and Yoko Ono visited the World University (Nordisk Folkecenter for vedvarende energi, 2008). Æ world University do no longer exist, but one of the outputs ”Nordvestjydsk Folkecenter for Vedvarende Energi” (Northwest Jutlandic Folk-centre of Renewable Energy) do still exist and have played a large role in the development of Denmark as one of the world’s leading countries regarding wind energy.

The history of the area introduced here have contributed to create a very diverse group of people and a diverse identity of the area ranging from the rooted fishermen, who were born in the area and whose ancestors have always lived in the area, to different groups of newcomers arriving at different times in history and for different purposes. When turning to the interviewees in this investigation, there are also large differences in how established and integrated they feel. When asked which geographical term they would use to label themselves, only the interviewees who were born in the area dared to call themselves “Thyboer” [people who live or origin from Thy].

One explains how his geographical identity is met with different perspectives depending on where in the county he is. While he is in Thy he is Randrusianer [a person from Randers] and when he is in Randers he is considered a Thybo (4.2). He adds that though he has lived in Thy for four years, he is far from being considered as Thybo. Another interviewee contributes to that impression. She explains how she is not accepted as Mølbo [person from Klitmøller] even though she has lived there for more than 30 years and grew up close by in Thisted (4.1). She continues to explain that you need to be born in that area, and your parents need to be born there too, to be able to earn that title.

Those who are not born in the area, use a broader definition to explain their geographical identity: Western Jutlander (3.1), Jutlander (1.1) and Dane (1.2), which for all of them is a way to include the different places they have lived.



Figure 6.6 The local shop in Thylejren (own picture)



Figure 6.7 The music festival in Thylejren 2013 (own picture)



## 6.2 THE SURROUNDING SETTINGS<sup>2</sup>

Nationalpark Thy is placed in Thisted Municipality which covers the provinces Thy and Hannæs. The municipality is situated far away from the dynamic centres of Aarhus and Copenhagen, and it is placed in the North Denmark Region (see figure 6.8) which is the smallest population-wise with 0.6 million people living there. The region consists of 11 municipalities and covers a geographical area of 7.892 square kilometres (Region Nordjylland, N.D.). The capital of the region is the city of Aalborg and with its 110.495 inhabitants in 2015 (statistics Denmark, 2016) it is the natural centre of the region.

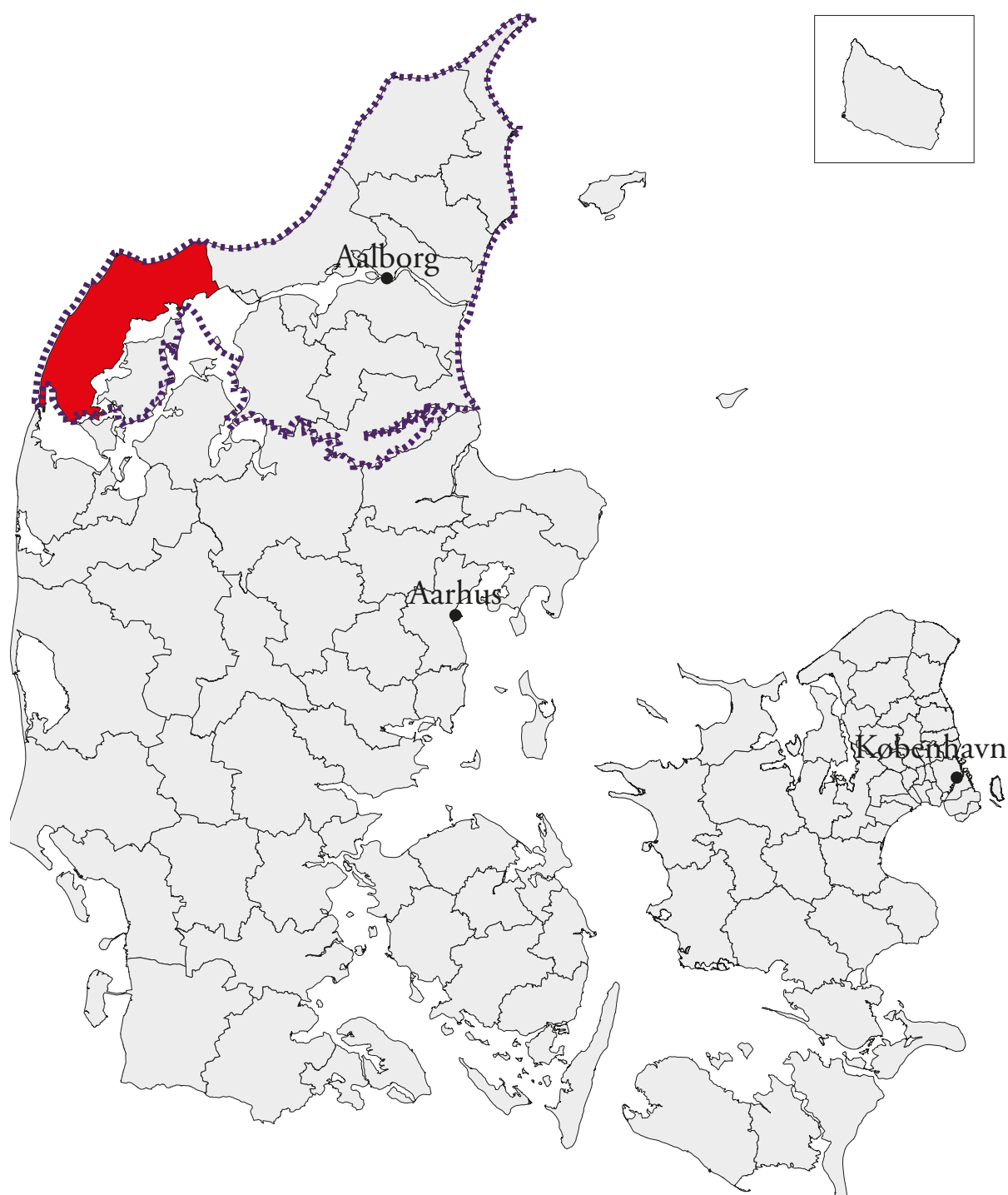


Figure 6.8 To the left Thisted Municipality on the shoulder of Denmark and the purple line marks North Denmark Region.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph was developed in an earlier version as part of the conference paper "Mobility Challenges in the Region of Northern Jutland, Denmark".



Thisted Municipality is one of Denmark's largest municipalities in physical size with an area of 1,068.6 km<sup>2</sup> but it is certainly not the biggest regarding the number of inhabitants. It only has around 45,000 inhabitants and the number is decreasing (Thisted Kommune, 2011). Figure 6.9 shows population development from 1992-2006. It shows that most of Thisted Municipality suffers from great decrease, whereas a few villages and cities experience increase including the area around Thisted and Klitmøller "Cold Hawaii". Particularly the southern parts of the municipality (the former Syddith municipality) are suffering from decline, as the number of inhabitants has decreased with almost 1000 people in the period 1990-2005, corresponding to a population decline of 8 pct. (Ny Thisted Kommune, 2006). The large area combined with a small number of inhabitants gives a sparsely populated territory, with the low density of only 41 inhabitant's pr. km<sup>2</sup> (Thisted Kommune, 2015). Besides this decline in number of inhabitants, a reshuffling of the inhabitants inside the municipality has taken place as well.

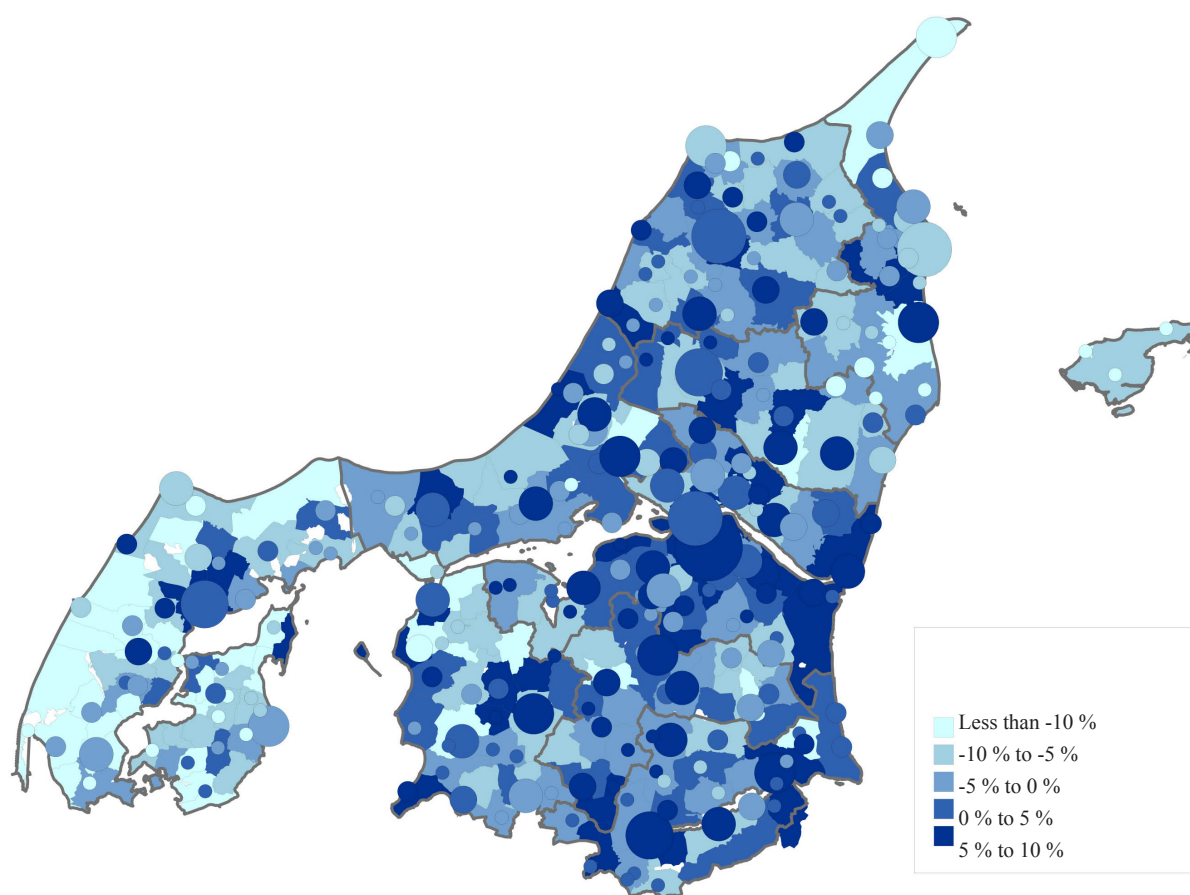


Figure 6.9 Population development from 1992-2006. The three lightest colours show a decrease whereas the two darkest colours show increase. (Region Nordjylland, 2009, p. 7)

It seems that the decreasing population in Thisted Municipality will continue in the following years, the City council is expecting a decrease in inhabitants of 5.6 pct. or from 45,298-42,766 in the period 2010-2023. (Thisted Kommune, 2011).

Thisted Municipality stands out from other North Jutlandic Municipalities since they have a large number of jobs compared with the number of inhabitants (Region Nordjylland, 2011). However from 2010-2025 a decrease in employment of 14 pct. or 4700 people is expected in Thisted and the neighbouring municipality Morsø (Regional Udvikling, 2010).

Due to the location – surrounded by water and with no larger transport corridors connecting the area, Thisted Municipality is also one of the areas with a small amount of jobs reachable within 1 hour of driving as Figure 6.10 shows



Figure 6.10 Reachable jobs within 1 hour of driving (Regional Udvikling, 2010, p. 6)

The amount of jobs reachable with public transport is much less than by car. People without access to cars have significantly less access to jobs in the region than people with a car. An investigation shows that train and bus only reaches between 1/2 and 1/6 of the workplaces accessible by car within an hour of driving. (Region Nordjylland, 2011).

Farming and farming related industries is still an important factor in the business community of Thisted Municipality as well as fishing, where Hanstholm Harbour lands the largest amount of consumption fish in Denmark. The metal industry has grown, and the tree industry is still strong in Thisted Municipality. This is also visible in a figure of employment fields in Thisted Municipality compared to the rest of the country, see figure 6.11 and 6.12. Here especially “Industry” stands out from the rest of the country. Also the tourism industry is employing a lot of people. (Thisted Kommune, 2011). Tourism is one of the fields that Thisted Municipality wants to expand in the future. They want to be known as a great and easily accessible tourist destination all year round, and they expect that Nationalpark Thy among other things can contribute to this by giving the surrounding villages growth potential as attractive settlement areas which again will bring more visitors to the area. (Thisted Kommune, 2011)<sup>3</sup>.

### Employment fields

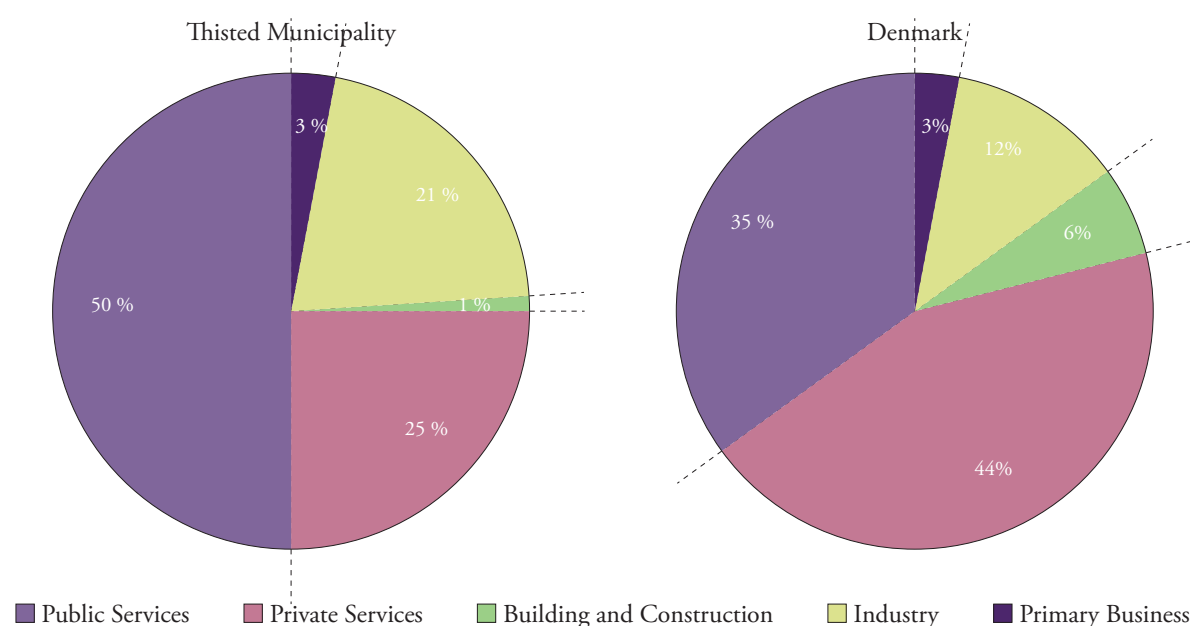


Figure 6.11 Employment fields in relation to business in Thisted Municipality (Own model using data from (Statistics Denmark, 2013d))

Figure 6.12 Employment fields in relation to business in Denmark (Own model using data from (Statistics Denmark, 2013d))

In Northern Jutland in general there are a majority of people employed with primary industries like farming and tourism. These industries in general employ less highly educated people compared to the other regions (Regional Udvikling, 2010). Beside this, there is a tendency for an education and competence gap between the region's centre and sparsely populated areas in the region which moderate the development possibilities in the rural and outskirts areas. (Region Nordjylland, 2008).

To sum up, Nationalpark Thy has a diverse history with very different population groups moving to the area at different times, which has created a unique combination of people and culture in the area today. On the other hand Nationalpark Thy is placed in a challenged municipality in the outskirts of a challenged region, where the rural areas are the most vulnerable ones. This creates some challenges in the area. Finally the nature, which is the reason for the nomination of a national park area, holds both potentials and challenges. In few words this quote from one of the interviewees shows the characteristics of Nationalpark Thy:

<sup>3</sup> Primary sector = A & B, Industry = C, D & E, Building and Construction = F, Private Service Sector = G, H, I, J, K, L, M & N, Public Service Sector = O, P, Q, R & S in (Statistics Denmark, 2013d)

*"The village [Vorupør] started out as a fishing environment, where the fish was sold on the beach and was driven to Hanstholm and sold on auctions. And you can say that the village is still characterised by that. There are lots of anglers, and I have been fishing a lot with my father who is a fisherman. So I tried being a fisherman during my youth. I believe that it is one of the most beautiful spots on the map of Denmark, but of course that is very selective. But I think this is where I have the nature. I have a dog and we like to be in the nature and then just go out and spend the night in "shelters" [primitive wooden open cabins that are free to use for everyone]. That we do like, something that is less planned. It is so unspoilt. Nobody have been here and created a large business. I think we like that, also because we can be ourselves at wintertime. And then there are lots of tourists at summertime, and then there is this span between. But of course, right now, I wish from time to time that there was a larger town close by, one bigger than Thisted. But of course that is what you choose when you live in an outskirt area, then you have to create the opportunities for yourselves." (I1#3.2)*

Next I will move on to give a socio economic analysis of the residents in Nationalpark Thy.

### 6.3 SOCIO ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF RESIDENTS IN NATIONALPARK THY

In this section a socio economic analysis of the residents in Nationalpark Thy will be carried out. This is done to get an insight into some of the basic conditions that can affect the residents' 'motility' (Kaufmann, 2002) and identities formation as explained in chapter 4. The results will be compared to information about the respondents from the questionnaire to be able to also get an understanding of how the respondents differ from the average resident in Nationalpark Thy.

#### AGE

With an average age of 48 years the people living in Nationalpark Thy are more than 5 years older than the average person in Thisted Municipality (Bjerre, 2013) and eight years older than the average Dane. The average age of respondents of my questionnaire with locals was 58.4 years old – see Figure 6.13.

Nationalpark Thy	Agger	Stenbjerg	Vorupør	Klitmøller	Average	Respondants from questionnaire
49	50	53	46	46	48	58,4

Figure 6.13 Average age in Nationalpark Thy (Bjerre, 2013), average age of the respondents (QL:38)

This is probably mainly caused by the fact that no children have participated in my questionnaire, which naturally will higher the average age.

#### SEX AND MARITAL STATUS

The respondents also differ from the average person in Nationalpark Thy by the fact that 73 pct. are married, while only 53 pct. of the inhabitants in Nationalpark Thy are married –see figure 6.14.

Nationalpark Thy	Agger	Stenbjerg	Vorupør	Klitmøller	Average	Respondants from questionnaire
56%	56%	63%	46%	46%	53%	73%

Figure 6.14 The share of residents who are married in Nationalpark Thy (Bjerre, 2013), and the share of respondents who are married in questionnaire (QL: 39)

Furthermore the spilt between males and females in Nationalpark Thy is even with 50 pct. of each, while the female category is largely overrepresented in my investigation with 60 pct. being female – see figure 6.15.

	Nationalpark Thy	Agger	Stenbjerg	Vorupør	Klitmøller	Average	Respondants from questionnaire
Male	83/52%	189/51%	87/54%	302/49%	410/49%	1071	34/40%
Female	75/48%	184/49%	74/46%	317/51%	421/51%	1071	52/60%

Figure 6.15 The share of sex Nationalpark Thy (Bjerre, 2013), and the share of sex in the questionnaire (QL: 37)

By turning to their residence, the share of people living in Nationalpark Thy and Agger corresponds very well with the percentages participating in this investigation. However for Stenbjerg, Vorupør and Klitmøller the percentage of respondents are lower than the actual percentage, and finally a category of people living just outside the national park territory have been included in the investigation – see figure 6.16.

Nationalpark Thy	Agger	Stenbjerg	Vorupør	Klitmøller	Outside Nationalpark territory	Total
158/7%	373/17%	161/8%	609/29%	831/39%		2142
6/7%	16/18%	3/3%	18/21%	25/29%	19/22%	87

Figure 6.16 The geographical division of residents in Nationalpark Thy (Bjerre, 2013), and the geographical division of respondents in and outside the Nationalpark territory (QL:1)

Another parameter that separates the respondents from Nationalpark Thy and many of Denmark's rural outskirts municipalities is political persuasion – see figure 6.17<sup>4</sup>. As figure 6.17 shows, the Rural Outskirts mainly voted for the right wing parties. Contrary to this, left wings got the majority of votes among the respondents (56 pct.). This may reflect the fact that very different population groups have inhabited the place throughout history. No data on the election in general exists from Nationalpark Thy

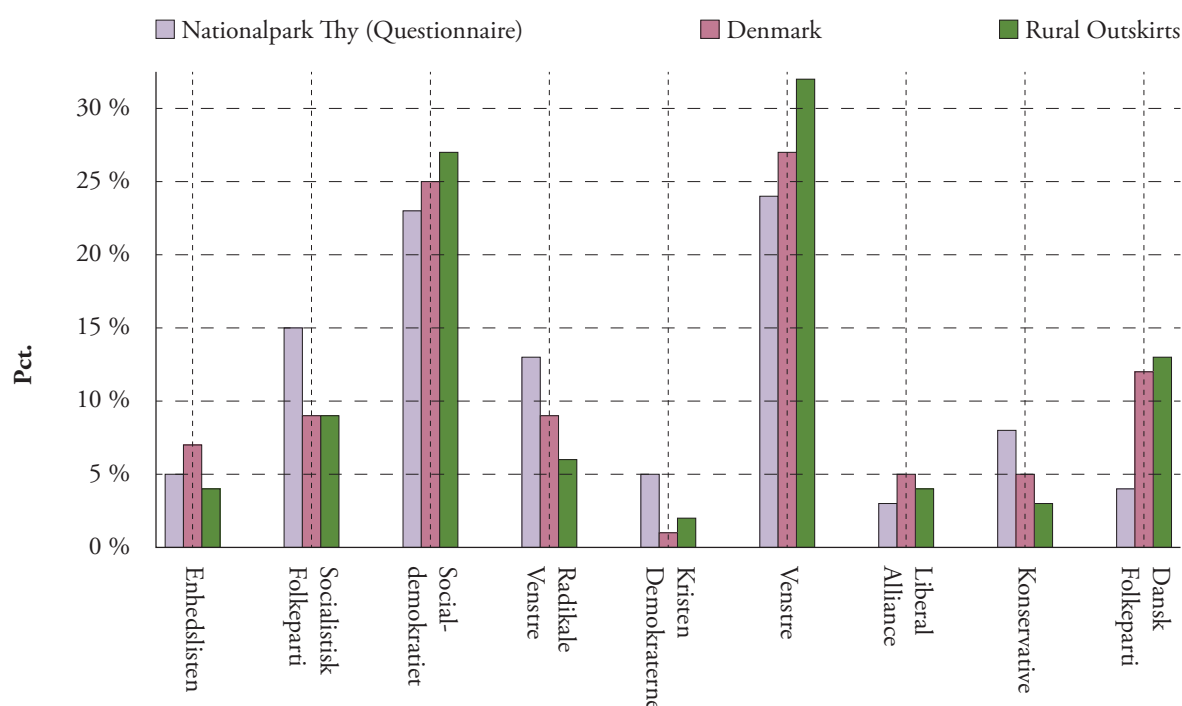


Figure 6.17 Casted votes by the respondents in Nationalpark Thy, Denmark and Rural Outskirts (Statistics Denmark, N.D.). The four parties to the left are left wing parties, while the 5 parties to the right are right wing parties

<sup>4</sup> Rønne Opstillingskreds, Aakirkeby Opstillingskreds, Lolland Opstillingskreds, Tønder Opstillingskreds, Varde Opstillingskreds, Djurs Opstillingskreds, Struer Opstillingskreds, Skive Opstillingskreds, Ringkøbing Opstillingskreds, Thisted Opstillingskreds, Himmerland Opstillingskreds

## 6.4 SUM UP

This chapter elaborates on the diversity in the case area, Nationalpark Thy. It is shown how both residents and newcomers notice the extraordinary nature that earned the area the title as Denmark's first national park. The residents find this desolated nature with much water and few roads an asset, but in the same time the nature creates some challenges. Thus the water creates some borders to the surrounding areas which enlarge the distances out of the area; this was as an example clear when focusing on the available jobs within 1 hour of driving. On the other side these waterways is a great asset in the attraction of tourists to the area. They are attracted by the surf conditions and the possibility just to relax on the beaches.

In the chapter were found a great diversity among the residents both in history and present time and this was portrayed in the geographical identities - some have always lived in the area, others for the last many years and others again have arrived recently. Furthermore it was shown how some of the respondents and interviewees differ from the average resident in rural outskirts areas by some factors like sex, with the females overrepresented in the questionnaire, and by civil status with a much higher number of the respondents being married. This is important to be aware of when considering to analytically generalise (Flyvbjerg 2006; Yin 2009) the results to other rural outskirts areas.

All together this characterises an area which is quite unique and diverse, and it differs on several aspects from the average rural area. Some geographical challenges and possibilities that do not exist elsewhere are connected to the area, and the diversity in population and geography is also quite extraordinary. In the following chapters it will be elaborated how this influence 'software' (being the mobile identities and mobilities culture), the 'hardware' (being the materials) and how the mobilities is practised by both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, elements that all together constitute the mobilities assemblage as introduced in Chapter 4. This is done to finally be able to answer the question what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy - a rural outskirts area.







## 7. SOFTWARE – MOBILE IDENTITY GROUPS AND MOBILITIES CULTURE

In continuation of the previous chapter this chapter will move on to show some of the internal differences in Nationalpark Thy. It will show that the area cannot be understood as a homogenous area when focusing on the mobilities and the residents. Thus I will argue that from the empirical data I can identify at least four different mobile identity groups among the residents in Nationalpark Thy.

The chapter will move on to discuss the differences and differential mobilities between the groups. This is to both understand and meet their needs and to recommend how to use the findings in the development of the area. There is also a common ground or a common view of life among the residents when it comes to mobilities and this is analysed and discussed as the mobilities Culture in the area. This is all to understand the ‘software’ behind the mobilities practices and activities and what this mean to locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy.

The chapter will begin with an introduction to how the mobile identity groups analytically have been developed, and this is followed by a presentation of the characteristics of each group<sup>1</sup>.

### 7.1 DEVELOPMENT OF MOBILE IDENTITY GROUPS

In order to understand the mobilities between the different residents in a rural outskirt area, four ‘mobile identity groups’ have been identified and developed based on the empirical material. These will be used to learn more about the mobile lives and mobile identities in the area. The mobile identity groups have been created in an abductive process between the theoretical frame and the analytical investigation. The theoretical frame have formed the basis of a model in which the two axes span a field of mobilities, where the vertical axis specifies the residents potential mobilities and the horizontal axis specify how global or local orientated the residents are. As explained in chapter 5 these two factors were the main characteristics in the former used mobile identities developed by e.g. Bauman (1999) and Fotel (2007). Altogether these factors will give an impression of the mobile identity of the respondents and further the potentials and challenges these groups contain regarding mobilities. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were chosen as parameters of the residents’ motility and their global and local orientation – detailed in Figure 7.1

Motility	Global / Local
Access to cars (QL: 6)	Number of years they have lived in the area (QL: 2)
Access to bicycles (QL: 6,7)	Having tried to live elsewhere (QL: 3)
Access to public transport (QL: 9,10)	Participate in local activities (QL: 28)
Other physical access (QL: 6)	Satisfaction with the local area (QL: 28)
Access to IT-technologies (QL: 14,15)	What is most important global discussion or actions in local area (QL: 28)
Internet speeds (QL: 16,17)	Where they go on holiday (QL: 26)
Physical skills (QL: 21)	How big a need they have to go travel (QL: 28)
IT-skills (QL: 21)	
Skills to navigate in public transport (QL: 21)	
Driver’s licence (QL: 20)	
Economy (QL: 41)	

Figure 7.1 Questions used to categorize the respondents in the mobile identity groups - (QL6) is Question number 6 in the questionnaire with locals

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was developed in an earlier version as part of the conference paper "Differential Mobilities in Rural Outskirts".

Each respondent had a score between 1 and 5 within each of these categories with 5 being high motility and 5 being very global oriented. In the end a total score within the two categories “Motility” and “Local / Global orientation” was given to each respondent and used for the placement of each respondent within the mobile identity group framework (see Figure 7.2) and by that being categorised into one of four mobile identities groups. In appendix O the evaluation have been made for each question and followed by a calculation for the total score within each of the two categories “motility” and “global / local oriented”. For the divisions into mobile identity groups the y-axis have origin in 16.5 and the x-axis have origin in 36.5. This division is both made from the aim of analysing a specific pattern in the figure and further as an effort to make groups of quite the same size. As seen in figure 7.2, there are respondents present in all the mobile identity groups, however with fewest respondents being categorized as mobile identity group 2. Group 1 is the respondents with the lowest motility and who feels mostly locally oriented. Group 2 is the respondents with the highest motility and those who feel mostly locally oriented. Group 3 is the respondents who have the highest motility and who feels mostly globally oriented. And finally group 4 is the respondents with the lowest motility and those who feels mostly globally oriented.

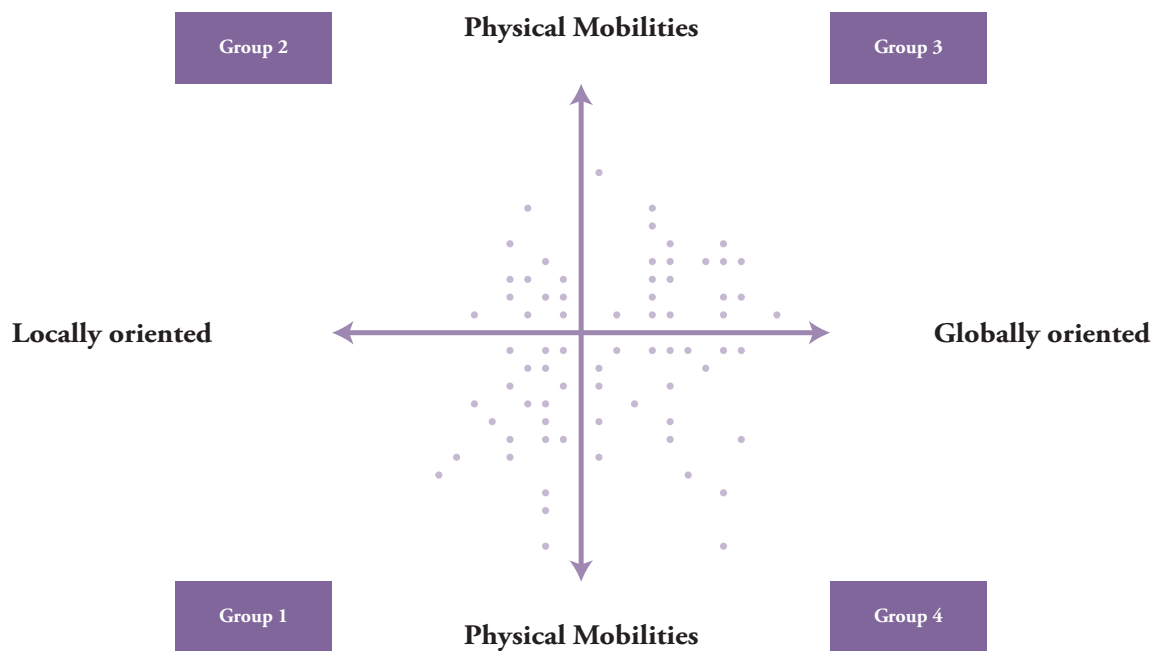


Figure 7.2 Model of Mobile Identities – all the small dots correspond to the placement of a respondent

The names of the Mobile Identities are inspired both by the theoretical framework and the analytical investigation of the persons and can be seen in figure 7.3. Thus “The Cosmopolite” is characterized as being globally orientated and having a high motility and by that having all possibilities to move around in the world, but also having the possibility to stay. “The Placebound” is the person with low motility and locally oriented with few possibilities to move into the outside world and also no spontaneous wish to know more about this. The Glocalist is the group with low motility but very globally oriented. The group has few possibilities to move into the global world towards which they are oriented. Finally, the Locamobilist is the group with a high motility but are very locally oriented and by that mainly use their motility to move around in the local area.

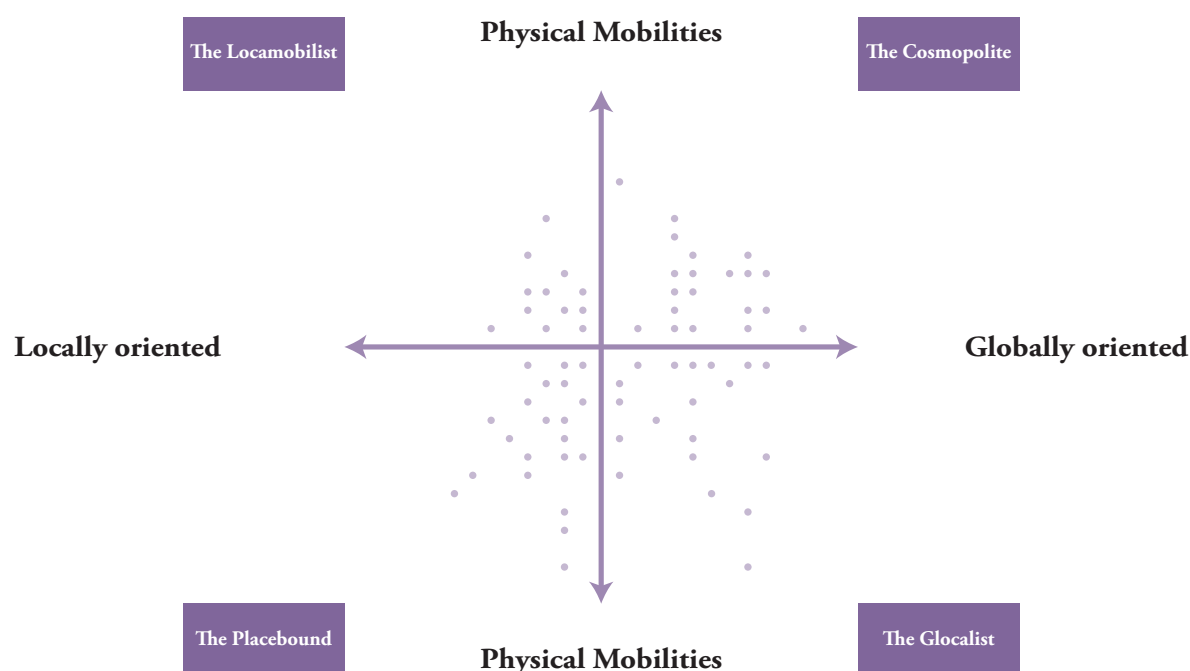


Figure 7.3 Model of Mobile Identities – all the small dots correspond to the placement of a respondent

Two respondents from each mobile identity group were chosen for further analysis see figure 7.4. They participated in two in-depth interviews and kept a mobilities journal as explained in chapter 5.

Respondent number and mobility group	Sex	Age	Geography	Number of years in Thy	Family members () mark children living at home
1.1 / Placebound	Female	50's	Klitmøller	27	Husband + 5 (2) children
1.2 / Placebound	Female	69	Stenbjerg	40+	2 children
2.1 / Locamobilist	Female	60	Vorupør	Always	Husband and 2 children
2.2 / Locamobilist	Male	54	Vorupør	Always	Wife and 2 (2) children
3.1 / Cosmopolite	Male	56	Agger	2	Wife and 5 children
3.2 / Cosmopolite	Male	33	Vorupør	Always	Girlfriend and her daughter (1)
4.1 / Glocalist	Female	60's	Klitmøller	30+	A boyfriend at a distance
4.2 / Glocalist	Male	22	Vester Vandet	3	Girlfriend and a son (1)

Figure 7.4 Facts about the chosen interviewees (QL: 1,2,37,38,40), the numbers in () marks the number of children living at home

## 7.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF MOBILE IDENTITY GROUPS

A characteristic analysis of these mobile identity groups will be carried out in this section. The answers in the questionnaire, the interviews and the mobilities journals have been used in the characteristics of these mobile identities as well as contributed to the analysis of the differential mobilities among the mobile identities and contribute to the discussion of the mobilities culture in Nationalpark Thy that will follow.

### THE PLACEBOUND – LOW MOTILITY, LOCALLY ORIENTED

25 respondents (2 interviewees) are included in this mobile identity group.

Around half of the Placebound have a job, and of the two interviewees one of them is a pensioner and the other raises a foster daughter as her job. The average age among the respondents is 51 which is the oldest group. Less than half of the respondents are newcomers to the area however, both of the interviewees have moved to Thy in their 20's, and they have lived there for a long time – one for more than 40 years and one for more than 20 years. One of the characteristics of the Placebound is that they are very fond of their local area:

*“I feel so much that I get home every time I have been away. I was in Århus yesterday and the closer I get to Thy, whew, then I just relax.” (I1#1.1)*

Another characteristic is that the respondents have a high participation in the local events and activities, and to exemplify this two interviewees mention a knitting club with fellow knitters from the village and another respondent mention that he/she is a host family in ‘Tour de Klitmøller’ [an event where families in an informal network have dinner with each other at host families]. Both respondent hope to participate in more locally oriented activities in the future but they find themselves in a time of unrest and upheaval due to accident, sickness and death in the families.

The Placebound is the group with the lowest IT-skills and the two interview respondents also express how they were late in starting to use IT and how it was a struggle for them to accomplish IT skills. One of them have taken several IT-courses to have the skills to be able to use the internet, but today they are both happy to have learned it, and for them internet means “connection” and “communication”. Even though they are happy to be able to communicate with the family and their grandchildren they lack the sensuous feeling that physical presence provide.

A characteristic of the Placebound is furthermore that the majority do not express a need to travel and to experience other cultures. The two interviewees explain how they mostly experience Denmark e.g. on camping holidays or as the other interviewee puts it as “local tourist” in events like art exhibitions in neighbouring municipalities. Both interviewees enjoy when tourists are arriving to their local area, one of them describe it as “a pleasant break” and they both appreciate that all the shops and boutiques open in the villages during the tourist season. However, both of them also like when the tourists are leaving in the winter. They are pleased with the interplay between the differences in activity in the different seasons.

### THE LOCAMOBILIST – HIGH MOTILITY, LOCALLY ORIENTATED

15 respondents (2 interviewees) are included in this mobile identity group.

Around half of the Locamobilists have not lived any other place but Thy, and both of the interviewees origin from Thy, but one of them have lived shortly in Brøndby. They are however both newcomer in the village Vorupør. The average age in the group is 49 years which is the second highest average age in the four groups and it is the mobile identity group with the highest representation of males. All the Locamobilists work within the local area (less than 30 km from their residence) and the two interviewees are both self-employed – one as the local grocer and the other one with her own cleaning company. They both use their car to move around to their customers, and they both describe the car as essential for their lives and jobs:

*“If I didn't have a car I would feel like living in serfdom. I wouldn't be able to live a reasonable life without the car. We wouldn't even be able to live with just one car... To be mobile with your own car, that is the most important.” (I1#2.2).*

Both of them also utilise most of their driving time for other purposes like phoning and listening to audio books and audio tapes.

None of the Locamobilists think that their IT-skills are poor, and the two interviewees stated their IT-skills as fine without being a geek. One of them think that IT has eased the everyday life and the other do not know if it has eased the everyday life, but that it without doubt has increased the possibilities of living in this area. He further states that connection to the Internet has changed the way of life in rural outskirt areas, as they now feel connected to the rest of the society. On holidays they disagree on whether or not to be connected. One turn off the mobile phone in order for her clients not been able to reach her and the other check his mail several times a day on his smartphone – and before that possibility became available he used internet cafés.

The majority of Locamobilists do not agree that global discussions are more important than what happens in the local area, and in general both interviewees pay much attention to the activities in the local area. One of them are also very active in the association activities in the local area and the other would like to be more active when her work life ends..

*“Now that I am self-employed I work at some inconvenient times, once I stop this I will... There are just some things I will have to save for that time.... I have decided that I want to be a member of Ældresagen [Union for Elderly People] they have several things I would like to engage within... And then I would like to take classes again...” (I1#2.2).*

A large number of the Locamobilists believe that the transformation of the local area to the status of National park have increased the number of tourists in the area. Both the interviewees acknowledge the importance of tourists in the local area. They see tourists as the economic foundation of the village and that without them the 40 businesses in the village would be reduced to one. They both like how the tourist season brings life to the area.

For both of them their work-life is important. One finds it difficult to accept that her work-life period is soon over and the other has many ideas for his future life after ending his work life. Both respondents fear to lose their mobilities, so that they would not be mobile on their own any longer. That is the worst thing they could imagine for the future.

## THE COSMOPOLITE – HIGH MOTILITY, GLOBALLY ORIENTATED

26 respondents (2 interviewees) are included in this mobile identity group.

Most of the Cosmopolites have lived in other municipalities, and that is also the case for one of the interviewees, the other origin from Thy but has travelled the globe for six month some years ago. Both of the interviewees label themselves as “North Western Jutlander”, whereas most other interviewees focus on their more local area. It is the mobile identity group with the highest representation of female respondents and the average age in this group is 47 years old, which is the youngest group among the four groups categorised. Most of the Cosmopolites are also still employed. The two interviewees have both previously been self-employed but today they are salesman and freelancer, respectively. None of the Cosmopolites considers their IT-skills as poor and this is also the case of the two interviewees, for whom IT is very important in their work-life and who still believe that an effort of improving the access to the Internet needs to be made:

*“I wouldn’t be able to have this job and do this job, if we continuingly have to accept very poor phone connections, poor broadband and poor all of that. That is still a problem. Even though one thinks it is under control, it is still a problem.” (I1#3.1)*

Beside the fact that IT is convenient to work life one of them consider IT as the life line to the surrounding world and the other use it to keep informed both locally and globally. The global perspective is very important for almost all Cosmopolites, who believe that in the everyday life global discussions are more important than what happens in the local area.

Both of the interviewees were frequently transported by car in their childhood and for both of them their first car / motorcycle was a huge thing that meant freedom and the possibility to move around freely. Today the car is also an important part of their everyday life, and they both mention how important the car is for rural outskirt areas:

*“If I should mention some problems, I will mention this: that one does not see, that outskirt areas as a matter of fact are depended on some vehicles.” (I1#3.1) and “Because one live in Outskirt Denmark it is nice to be able to drive and have the freedom of movement.” (i1#3.2)*

He further comments how it is a matter freedom to move around in the Rural Outskirts.

### THE GLOCALIST – LOW MOTILITY, GLOBALLY ORIENTATED

22 respondents (2 interviewees) are included in this mobile identity group.

In the Glocalist group the Average age is 47 years, which is the youngest group amongst the four groups categorised. Almost all Glocalists have lived in other municipalities, and that it also the case for the two interviewees where one is a newcomer who has lived in the area for the last three years and the other have returned to the area after having lived on Funen, in Aalborg and in Germany. A relatively large number of the group is without a job, and that is also the case for the two interviewees where one is unemployed and one is a voluntarily retired person receiving a special pension. That most Glocalists are not working also has the effect that they mostly move around in their local area, and they think that there are long distances to destinations outside their everyday life. The majority of Glocalists consider global discussions more important than what happens in their local area and only few do not have a need to go travel and experience other cultures. When it comes to tourists visiting their local area the two interviewees are both sceptical. They agree on the fact that the tourists are welcome as long as they do not take up too much space both physically and mentally and if they contribute to the local area by buying their groceries and use the official accommodations.

Both of the interviewees use the internet for sending e-mails and finding information and one of them has just installed the connection. When it comes to physical mobilities the picture is much differentiated. 23 pct. of the respondents have chosen not to have a driver's license, which is a relatively high number in consideration of the remoteness of the area. One of the interviewees has never owned a car or had a driver's license and therefore she mainly move around by bike or foot in her local area. She is very dependent on the bus or catching a ride if she needs to go outside the local area. The other interviewee owns two cars and drive in his car to all activities in the everyday life. He further states that savings should be made in public expenses on bus routes and snow clearings on cycling tracks and on the other hand taxes should be lowered on cars and especially on four-wheel drive vehicles:

*“Who would cycle in winter time? They use time on snow clearing the cycle paths on Hanstholmvej and salt them, why not save that and say that if you live in outskirts areas then it is cheaper to own a four-wheel drive vehicle, and then not snow clear as often... it is very rare that you see the bus filled with passengers, very often there is only one or two passengers, there is passengers around 4 o'clock when people are off from job, but in the middle of the day there are very few who uses the busses, why do busses run at that time then. You could use that money differently.” (I1#4.2)*

Based on the analysis it is clear to see that differentialities exist among the residents in the four group categorisations. After having identified the characteristics of the four mobile identities I will move on to analyse the differential mobilities among them.

### 7.3 DIFFERENTIAL MOBILITIES

*“One of the most valuable aspects of this focus on mobility has been to show that mobility is a resource distributed unequally among social groups. Much of this research has focused on how certain groups are excluded from forms of mobility, whether through legislative regulation (Massey, 1994, 2005; Lewis, 2006; Drakakis-Smith, 2007), or through modes of transportation (Graham & Marvin, 2001; Wood & Graham, 2005; Hine, 2007). Many of us may live in an increasingly fluid world marked by travel, both virtual and physical, but at the same time there are large groups of people who still cannot find a bus to catch or do not have access to the networks of information flows.” (Frith, 2012)*

This quote shows how differential mobilities, as argued in the introduction, is an assemblage of mobile identities, or social groups, and regional, national or global features including legislative mobilities regulations and different modes of transportation. Below it will be elaborated how different elements of a 'mobilities assemblage' is wedded to social practices and mobile identities in Nationalpark Thy – a rural outskirts area.

In the case area more than 96 pct. of the residents own a car. When asked why, the answers differs between that there is no other option and that public transport is no real alternative. Therefore, it is relevant to notice how the car ownership is divided between the different mobile identities (see figure 7.5).



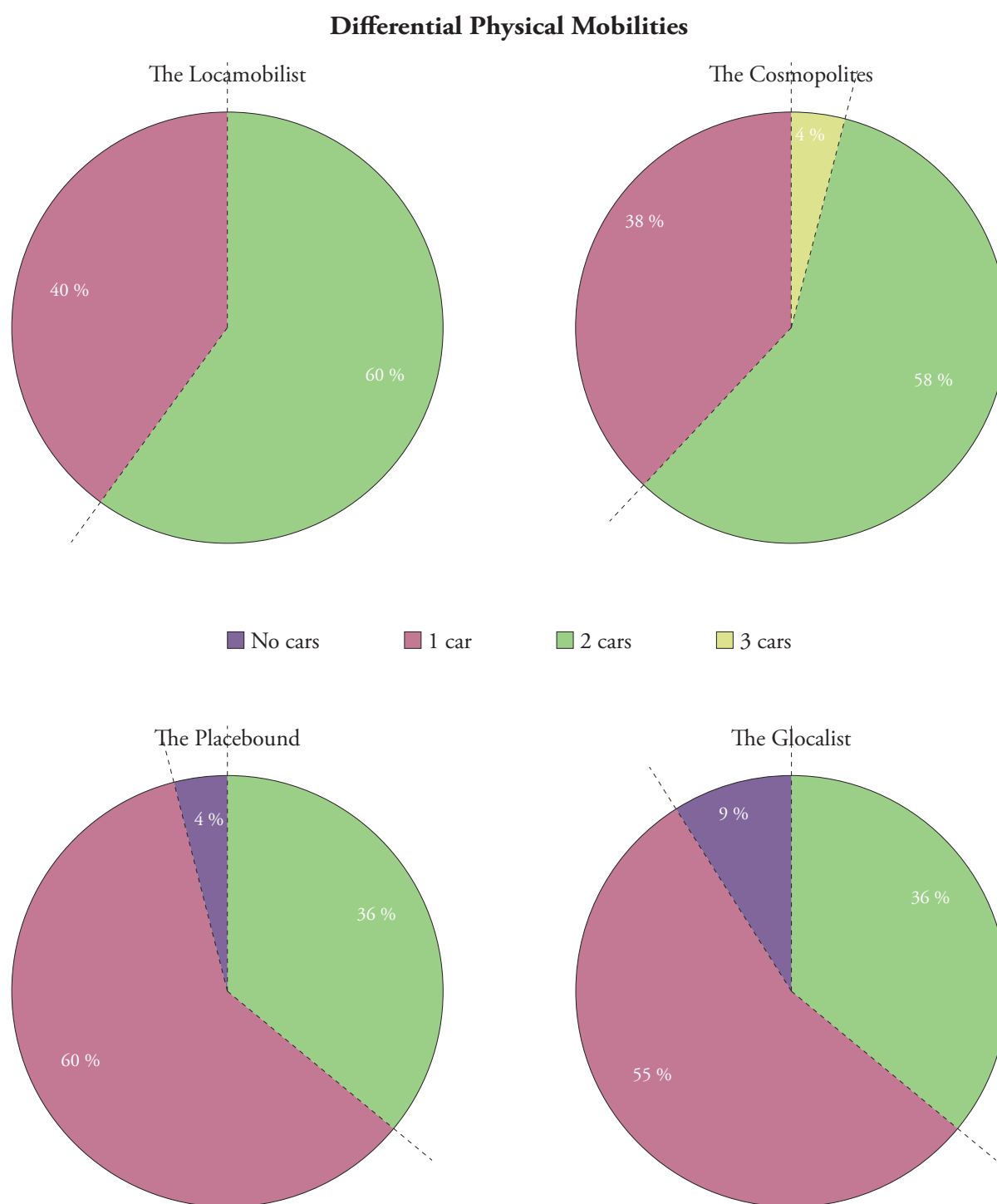


Figure 7.5 The number of cars owned in the households (QL: 6, N:88)

#### DIFFERENTIAL PHYSICAL MOBILITIES

As Figure 7.5 shows most of The Cosmopolites and The Locamobilists have access to two cars in the households and everyone have access to at least one car. On the other side the majority of The Placebound and the Glocalists only have access to one car and it is also in these two groups that the residents without a car is placed. This picture gets even clearer when focusing on driver's licence where all Cosmopolites and Locamobilists have a driver's licence and 23 pct. of the Glocalists and 8 pct. of the Placebound do not have a driver's license. Several of the interviewees explain how they would feel restricted and tied to their home if they did not have the possibility to drive around. This shows a difference in how motility (Kaufmann, 2002) is linked with global views. E.g. the Locamobilists all have access to cars and many to two cars but they are very locally oriented whereas some of the Glocalists do not have access to a car and those who does only have access to one car but still they are very globally oriented.

In 2009 the public transport authority provider in this area (Nordjyllands Trafikselskab) redistributed the resources from the rural outskirts areas to the cities because of the demand. This is another example of the centralisation mentioned in the introduction, and as Olesen & Lassen (2012) mention, this movement towards a Neo-liberal society and market driven planning and development will create physical social exclusion and restricted patterns of mobilities (Olesen & Lassen, 2012). The few Placebound and Glocalists that do not own a car are physically excluded from the places in their local area and beyond that are only accessible by car. The group that find themselves to have high skills in navigating in public transport are the Cosmopolites and the group with the lowest skills is the Placebound. All together these restrictions and skills place these residents in the bottom of the mobilities hierarchy since they cannot move as freely as the rest and can passively set back and see how their motility is being changed from central side (Bauman 1999). An alternative exist to the normal busses which is a concept called a “flexible bus”, where you can be taken from you home to any place you like. You have to order it one day ahead and it can arrive 30 minutes (+/-) from the arranged arrival time. The price is between a normal bus and a taxi. What is interesting here is that the Cosmopolites are the group that have used this Flextur the most and that the Placebound as well as the Glocalists are the groups with the least knowledge of the initiative, though they due to lower car ownership should be more the target group of the initiative. It should also be noted the price of Flextur have increased to more than the double after the answers in this questionnaire, and thus might be even less attractive to the Placebound and Glocalists.

One of the respondents also notices the division between two poles in the area regarding mobilities. He mentions that there are those im-mobile and often elderly people who do not own a car and who only leave their local area once a month by the help of friends or families. Then there are those who leave the local area daily to go to work or other activities. Of course he mentions that that is the two extremes and that the majority probably lies in between. He moreover states that this im-mobile group probably would not have a higher zest for life if there were improvements on the internet connection, because that they have chosen not to use this. Further that if they were to use this they would need guidance. As it will be described in the following virtual mobilities can also plays a differentiating role both regarding access and skills.

### DIFFERENTIAL VIRTUAL MOBILITIES

As the only mobile identity group the majority of Cosmopolites own a smartphone and have access to Internet on their mobile phone / smartphone. Furthermore all Cosmopolites and Locamobilists find their IT-skills as good, whereas 22 pct. of the Placebound and 9 pct. of the Glocalists consider their IT-skills poor. With access and the skills to use virtual mobilities it is possible to be connected to both the local and global world. However, for some of the residents this is a world they do not have access to, since they have no internet access. This ‘Digital Divide’ also “...*exacerbates other forms of social, economic, and political marginalization.*” (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011, pp. 2-3). Many municipality services and public participation is now taking place online and thus this group without internet access and / or skills is cut off from some information and participation that affects their lives as. This clearly shows a bottom and top of the mobilities hierarchy (Bauman 1999). Two interviewees have established an internet connection between having answered the questionnaire and the interview. These two explain how they both felt a need to be online to keep up their daily life.

These descriptions show that the Glocalists have the lowest physical motility and the Placebound are having the lowest virtual mobilities, which indicate that the Glocalists have the possibility to travel globally online but not physical in their local area, and this prioritisation might be linked to their global and local perspectives as will be explained next.

### LOCAL AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

In general all respondents are pleased with their local area but the Placebound is the group that is most satisfied. However, the different groups disagree on the effect of having the area nominated as a National park. The Placebound are not so sure that the status of a Nationalpark has changed the perception of the area, on the other side the three other groups are pretty convinced that the perception of the area has changed. The Placebound is also the group where fewest respondents have changed their pattern of movement in the area. Around one third of the Cosmopolites and the Locamobilists have started to walk, cycle or drive more in the area since the nomination to National park. The nomination as National park have not had that much effect on the Cosmopolites everyday life, since the three other groups have to a higher extend experienced a change in everyday life by e.g. a more frequent use of nature or that more development have been created in the local area. The explanatory factor behind this could be that the Cosmopolites are more globally orientated and thus move more out of the area. If focus is turned to the effect on tourism the picture is turned around, the majority of all identities believe that because of the nomination as National park there are more tourists in the area today, but it is most evident in the Cosmopolite identity. Again might be

affected by the fact that they are more global oriented. When turning to the residents own tourism experiences (figure 7.6) it is shown how influence of how global and local oriented the mobile identity groups are as 70 pct. of the Cosmopolites go on holiday in Europe or outside Europe and for the Glocalists this number is 54 pct. On the contrary 66 pct. of the Locamobilists spend their holiday at home or another place in Denmark and 72 pct. of the Placebound spend their holiday in Denmark or in Denmark's neighbouring Countries (see figure 7.6).

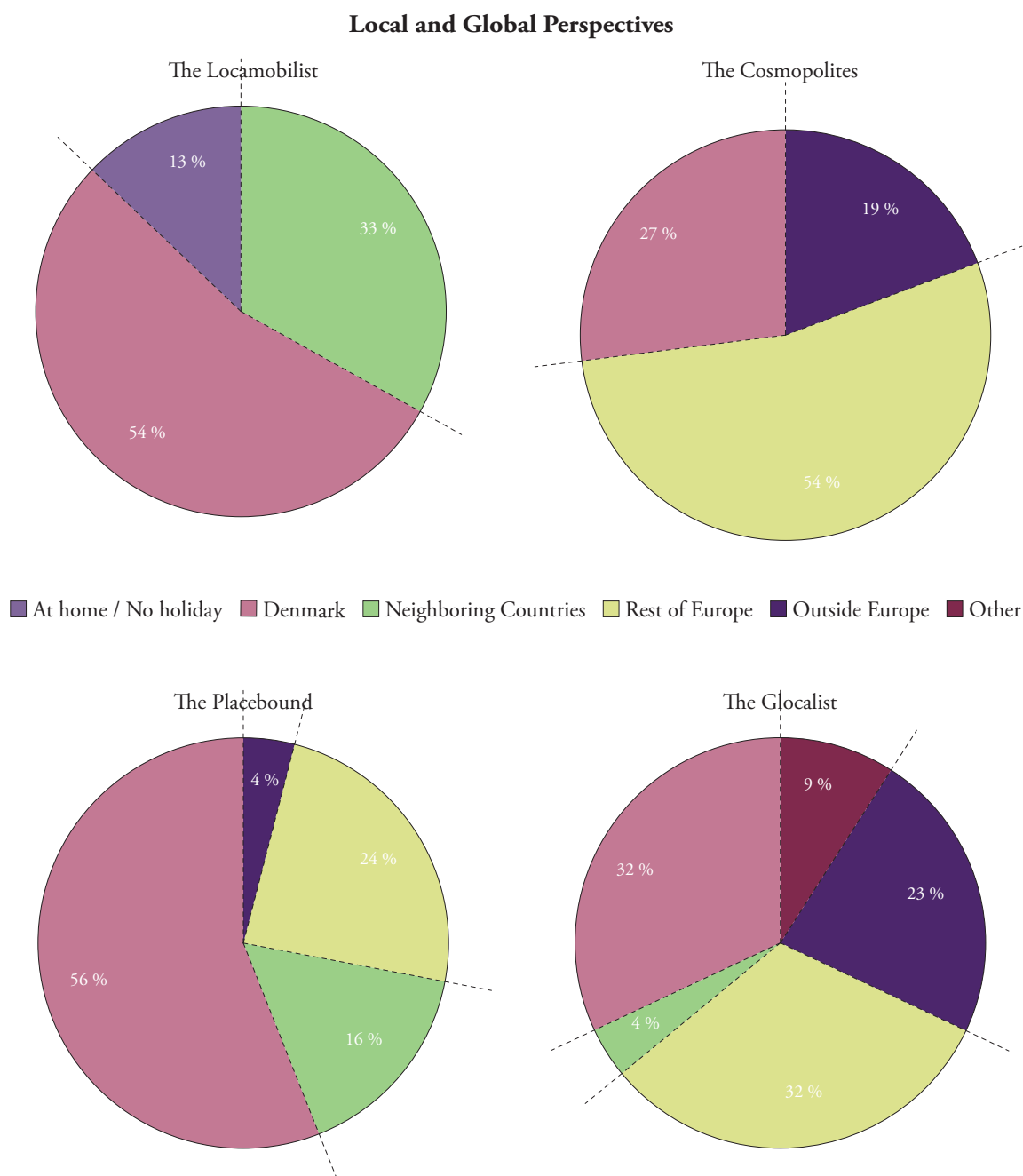


Figure 7.6 Visualisation of where the different identities go on holiday (QL: 26, N: 88)

When it comes to the need to go travel and experience other cultures this difference between global and locale perspectives becomes clear. The majority of the Cosmopolites and the Glocalists have a need to travel and experience other cultures whereas the majority of the other groups do not express the same need. The type of holiday which is preferred in the four groups also differs – relaxing holidays is the most favoured holiday among The Placebound,

The Locamobilist and the Glocalist. The Cosmopolites prefer a mix of different kinds of holiday, such as nature holiday, city holiday and activity holidays.

When turning to more lifestyle oriented factors some differences between the mobile identities are shown. There is also a scale of how much they are concerned with the environment starting with the Cosmopolite as concerned about the environment, the Locamobilists and the Glocalist as concerned to some extent and the Placebound is not very concerned with the environment. The same picture is to some extent visible when the respondents are asked how much they are concerned about keeping oneself fit. The majority is concerned about this, whereas a large group of the Placebound disagree. A surprising result is visible when focusing on what they voted at the last parliament election (which was less than three months before the questionnaire). Here only the majority of the Locamobilists voted for the liberal side of the Danish parties, which normally gain most votes in the rural outskirts. Finally the Placebound and the Glocalists are the most economically aware groups.

This paragraph has shown how the mobile identities have different views on global and local issues, and how this is also practised through their holidays and their views on their local areas. It has also been visible how the consumption and production of mobilities is differential between the mobile identities, and that there are both a top and bottom in the mobilities hierarchy in Nationalpark Thy – none however as extreme as in Bauman's (1999) example of the tourist and vagabond. In the next paragraph it will be analysed how a mobilities culture exists in the area despite the differences between the mobile identities.

## 7.4 MOBILITIES CULTURE

Several interviewees mention that Nationalpark Thy is a rough place and for most of the residents who moved there the first meeting with the nature and culture was rough. Other newcomers mention what seemed to be deserted villages on the way to the Nationalpark without a soul in sight. Another respondent mentions the western-like feeling with a very long main road through the village and finally one mentions how it was far out, how he saw the fishermen at the ocean and how he felt that the society was ingrained. Some of the respondents still have these feelings however, one thing that is common for all the respondents is that they are fond of their local area. Only one person of the 88 respondents is not fond of the area, and all the interviewees mention nature as a positive asset when describing their local area. Several interviewees also mention that if they had to choose between culture and nature they would choose nature, and that the proximity to nature is an important reason to live in this place. Even the newcomers and those having tried to live elsewhere have this prioritisation of nature, and they state that if they have a need for cultural offers they would just transport themselves to it.

When focusing on the local area the respondents also believe that the nomination as national park has brought some positive elements to the area, almost 80 pct. believe that the nomination has brought more tourists to the area. Around 75 pct. believe that the nomination has had other positive effects like more companies, more jobs and larger export and in general they believe that they are met with a larger interest in their local area. Some believe that it means more development in the area and some believe it will mean new residents.

Several of the interviewees furthermore mention the cohesiveness and solidarity between the residents as a main asset of the area - both in relation to how easy it is to meet people, how safe they feel in the area and how easy it is to get help from neighbours. One of the newcomers mention this as a reason of moving to the area and one of those who returned to the area think that it is becoming too fashionable to be a small and carrying society, and she is insinuating that too many move there.

As mentioned earlier most interviewees have chosen the area because of the nature, and so have most of the respondents in the questionnaire. Furthermore several interviewees mention that the area has high ceilings – figuratively speaking:

*“It [her local area] is placed in the open. It is not squeezed. There is air. There is high ceilings and space around. To three of the sides there is country road that lead somewhere and then we have the water on the fourth side. I think this is fantastic. You can say that it is desolate, but I don't think it is desolate. I feel like being in the hub of the universe.” (I1#1.1.)*

Other assets that the interviewees agree upon are the social values of openness and caring for each other:

*“The local area is homely; you get to be close to other people. People are not afraid to stand in their*

*front yard and invite people in. And just to stand and talk. So you get to be close with other people. And everyone knows everyone. If you do something you should not have done you are being told so.” (I1#4.2) and*

*“The values is definitely that we care about each other, we are close to each other, we know each other and we give each other safety. But the other way around I remember when I moved here, I felt that it was close to be snooping and boarding to something uncomfortable. You have to get used to that. I used lots of energy in the beginning to convince myself that it was not curiosity but interest when people looked at me. But in return, when you pass that point it is wholehearted nice.” (I1#2.2)*

These two quotes shows how there are a feeling of being united in the local area and to care about each other. There exists openness towards other members of the local community. However, it also shows that it is something that you need to invest personal resources in achieving and that there are some kind of rules to play by in order to become a member of the community. Even though these two interviewees through their quotes seem to be agreeing there are some differences within the local area.

One of the Cosmopolites who have always lived in the area state how he believes that there is a certain culture in some areas, being that you stay where you were raised. As an example of this tendency he mentions that from his primary school class 8 out of 13 still live in the local area. And one of the Glocalists also mentions this culture where she mentions that it is part of the upbringing in some families and she is of the conviction that it is a shame that all young people are not encouraged to move away from the local area in order for them to develop their own identity. All respondents consider the local perspectives inextricably linked with the global which might support that statement saying that it is important to try to live elsewhere. Contrary some of those who have tried to live elsewhere mentions that it is a bit annoying to have friends and family in another part of the country however, most of them agrees that distance does not matter that much.

One of the interviewees mentions how distance is a self-imposed factor and it is just something to get over with:

*“I could choose to have that approach, that distance was something that I every time should complain about and to say alas about, but what a cranky person I would be then. So distance is just something that is. If I want to go from A to B, then I just have to deal with that, distance that it is, otherwise I would just have to not want to go to B. When I have chosen to live in Thy, that is just how it is, otherwise I would have to choose another place to live, and then I would have other stuff, but would that then be the most important stuff for me? That is the choice that I have to take.” (i1#1.1).*

Others explain that distance means choices you have to make, that they pick the activities that they really want to participate in and sacrifice the rest. Several interviewees further equate distance with car driving and further that they do not mind to drive and that it then just is about making the ride as nice as possible.

That they equate distance with the need to use the car as the primary means of transport is no surprise. When the respondents are asked what would make their everyday life fall apart or what feature they would rather not loose in their life, several interviewees mentioned the car. They further states how dependent they are on the car in their everyday life, and that there is often no other possibilities. For them the car equals freedom. Furthermore, several respondents have two cars. In some cases car number two is a special car e.g. a surf-truck or a four-wheel drive vehicle, which can become very handy during winter. Some of the interviewees mentions how some residents in the area would go by car to everything, even to the local grocer 200 meters down the street, and one of them admit to have used the car to drive to her job that was 2 km away from her home if she was in a hurry or it was a bad weather. The empirical data show that the weather plays a large role for the interviewees' mobilities in the local area. Several respondents mention how they do not like to cycle during winter and the mobilities journals unveil that a short trip to the local grocer could be taken by car. The empirical data proves how the car is often preferred for all daily activities both within the local area and out of the local area.

One interviewee mention how the tourist season change the representation of cars in the area. As an example she explain how she had noticed how the parking lot during the Easter break where tourists comes to the area had been full of fancy expensive cars. A couple of interviewees mentions safety, reliability and practicality as the main features of their car and do not seem to pay that much attention to the look. One newcomer mentions that the norm in the area is to go by car, and furthermore that there is a norm among the locals to use a moped in the local area without a wearing a helmet:

*“The natives that live here. They would rather go by moped than walk around in the village. And I believe that it is out of practical reasons, since you never know when you will receive some goods that you need to tote.” (I1#3.1)*

And he might have a point with 10 pct. of the respondents having access to a scooter or moped and there is moped ownership among all the mobile identities except from the Cosmopolite. It might not be shared by enough to be part of the culture but it is an interesting norm in the area.

Also virtual mobilities are a part of the mobilities culture in the area is the mobile phone (or smartphone). All respondents own either a mobile phone or a smartphone and for some it has developed into a lifeline, a precaution or as company in this quite deserted area.

## 7.5 SUM UP

In the analysis four types of mobile identities in Nationalpark Thy have been identified. These identities were developed in a tension field between a theoretical framework building on mobilities literature and the empirical data. As it was shown in the analysis mobilities is a resource that is distributed unequally among the mobile identities in Nationalpark Thy. As the case exemplifies the car is a very important object in the mobilities cultures of National park Thy. Some residents think that it would be impossible to live in this area without access to a car. On the same time the car becomes a differentiating object since a little group of residents is excluded from the possibilities this object gives. This was only a challenge for the Placebound and the Glocalists which is illustrated by for an example possession of a driver's license where 23 pct. of the Glocalists and 8 pct. of the Placebound did not have a driver's license. In the same way virtual mobilities created a digital divide (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011) in Nationalpark Thy. The analysis showed that 22 pct. of the Placebound and 9 pct. of the Glocalists consider their IT-skills poor and by that are left out from both social communities but also from public services, public participation, information etc. The chapter furthermore showed a bottom and top of the mobilities hierarchy (Bauman 1999) - with The Cosmopolites and the Locamobilists in the top and The Placebound and the Glocalists in the bottom. Furthermore, there is a division between the physical and the virtual motility with The Glocalist having the lowest physical motility and the Placebound having the lowest virtual motilities, which indicate that the Glocalist have the possibility to travel globally online but not physical in their local area, and how this was linked to their global and local perspectives. This view also created some differences. With most of the Cosmopolite and the Glocalists having lived in other places, having a greater need to travel and experience other cultures and in general find the global discussions more important than the local activities. Even between these two globally oriented identities there was a difference regarding tourists coming to the local area, with the Cosmopolites being happy with the tourists visiting the area. The Glocalists accepts the tourists if they contribute to the local area and if they do not take up too much space, and this more hostile view on tourists might be connected to the fact that they not to the same extend have the motility to leave the area and by that getting away from the tourists if they feel a need to. Using these examples it have been argued how mobilities play a differentiating role in Nationalpark Thy, but in the same mobilities also holds potentials for an area like this.

As shown in the analysis some of the assets the residents find in the area is the proximity to nature. This place bound asset is what makes this area unique. In the mobilities culture it was shown that even though one might consider living in the outskirts as being away from most activities, culture and other people, the residents in the area does not find distance an obstacle, for them it is just something they have to overcome. Several residents also mentioned how being able to connect to the outside world online have decreased the perceived distance, since they are now able to talk to the same people, buy the same groceries and do business online. The analysis further showed how another asset for the area is that during summer tourists are rushing to the area. When tourists arrive the distances to many activities and people is shortened since it then pops up in their neighbourhood, and most residents like the time of year where everything is opening.

Finally the chapter showed how the cohesion among the residents is considered a great asset, and this could be a mean to overcome the span between the top and bottom of the mobilities hierarchy. Regarding mobilities this is very bottom up, but there might be some hidden potentials in organising this cohesiveness a bit. These potentials will be elaborated further in the concluding chapter.

The Chapter further showed that from the fact that four mobile identities groups can be identified in the area with the clear differences between them the area cannot be viewed as a homogenous area where one solution will solve all problems for everyone. This is important to acknowledge when planning for these areas.







## 8. HARDWARE - MATERIALS

This chapter will start by introducing how one get firstly to the region, then Thisted Municipality and finally to Nationalpark Thy and how to move around in Nationalpark Thy<sup>1</sup>. Later a more detailed analysis of the importance of the car will be carried out as well as an analysis of the other physical mobilities modes. Finally the surface, seasons and semiotics will be included in the analysis. This comes from the need to include materials (Ingold, 2011) and what practices they afford (Jensen O. B., 2013) into the analysis of a mobilities assemblage as argued in chapter 4. This is all to clarify what mobilities means to the residents and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a Rural Outskirt area.

### 8.1 TO TRAVEL TO THE AREA

#### TO TRAVEL TO NORTH DENMARK REGION

To travel to North Denmark Region several modes of transport are possible (see figure 8.1). The harbours in Frederikshavn and Hirtshals form the North Jutlandic gateway to Scandinavia of goods and passengers (Region Nordjylland, 2008). Aalborg Airport is a valuable asset for the region with several daily departures to Copenhagen and other destinations. Previously there wasn't much international air traffic to and from the region (Region Nordjylland, 2008) but in recent years the airport has expanded with charter routes to southern Europe and a connecting KLM route to Amsterdam. In total they now have up to 16 daily departures to Copenhagen and 39 international destinations (Aalborg airport, N.D.). When traveling North-South to and from the region and inside the region there is a good motorway system (see figure 8.1), however there is a capacity problem at the crossing of the Limfjord at Aalborg with only a bridge and a tunnel available for crossing (Region Nordjylland, 2008). A third Limfjord connection at Aalborg has been discussed for several years but nothing final has yet been decided (Region Nordjylland, 2011a). It is also possible to use public transport, train and bus, to get to and from and around in Northern Jutland. However statistics show an increasing use of cars and a decreasing use of public transport in Northern Jutland (Region Nordjylland, 2008). And residents in North Denmark Region without a car spend 1/5 of all their trips as passengers in cars (car-pooling) (Nordjyllands Trafikselskab, 2009). Public transport in the rural



Figure 8.1 Infrastructure that makes it possible to come to North Denmark Region

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph was developed in an earlier version as part of the conference paper "Mobility Challenges in the Region of Northern Jutland, Denmark".

outsirt in Northern Jutland is being redefined these years where some of the bus routes are being replaced with e.g. tele taxis and private driving (Region Nordjylland, 2008) and in general the resources for public transport are being moved from the smaller and less used routes to the mostly wanted routes (Nordjyllands Trafikselskab, 2009).

### TO COME TO THISTED MUNICIPALITY

Nationalpark Thy and Thisted Municipality as a peninsula is in general, as previously described, surrounded by water to the west south and east and this creates some barriers in coming to the area. However two ferries and a bridge makes passages from these directions possible (se figure 8.2). Thisted Municipality is connected with the rest of the country with a main road from Thyholm in the southern part crossing through the entire peninsula and moving to the east in the northern part of the area. From the middle of the peninsula a main road is going east crossing Mors. From the south it is further possible to enter the area by ferry from Thyborøn and by train from Thyholm terminating in Thisted. Two main bus lines lead passengers into the area from north east and Mors, with both lines ending in Thisted. Previously people could come to Thisted Municipality by ferry to Hanstholm from the western and southern part of Norway, the Faroe Islands and Iceland. However, between 2008 and 2010 all the ferry routes were closed and Hanstholm Harbour no longer receives passengers. There is, however, a small airport in Thisted or maybe more adequately just a landing strip. Previously, there were direct flights two times daily between Thisted and Copenhagen, but this connection has closed down though initiatives are still made to try to re-establish the connection.



Figure 8.2 The main transport options in Thisted Municipality. The boat symbolizes ferry routes, the green line is the railway and the purple lines are the main roads in the municipality (own map with information from Google Maps)

Because of its location, Thisted Municipality realizes that cars and trucks are the most important mode of transport for both passengers and goods in the area. Therefore there is a strong focus on the infrastructure supporting this mode, but also on making alternatives for the none-car users (Thisted Kommune, 2011). However the geography of the municipality makes it difficult to cover the entire area with public transport and more than 50 pct. of the young people in the municipality are not able to reach a youth education program within half an hour of transport time by public transport (Region Nordjylland, 2011b).

### TO COME TO NATIONALPARK THY

If one wishes to go by public transportation from Thisted and to different destinations within the national park territory then there are public bus-services. These bus services operate mainly in the morning and the afternoon when school children travel to and from school. Due to the long distances the number of departures and destinations are sparse. Nordjyllands Trafikselskab is the public transport authority in the case area and the rest of the North Denmark Region. In their “Trafikplan for Nordjylland 2009-12” (Traffic plan for North Denmark Region) one of the initiatives was to increase bus service in areas with high population density and operate less frequent bus services in areas with low population density as previously mentioned. This had the effect that cuts were made in the number of departures in the rural outskirts including the bus lines in Nationalpark Thy e.g. evening, forenoon and weekend busses were cut from Thisted to Klitmøller.

Following these cuts a new service was provided in the entire region – Flextur. Flextur is quite similar to a taxi service; it is possible to go from your home to anywhere in the region. The cost is as a starting point half of a taxi fare – however the municipalities can supplement the financing of the system to make it cheaper in their municipality. You would have to pre-order the service at least 2 hours before the trip and there can be other passengers on the trip.

Figure 8.3 sums up the differences in moving to Nationalpark Thy by different means of transportation. It shows examples on how to come from Aalborg to the four villages that is placed in different parts of the national park area. In all cases it is fastest and easiest to go to these destinations by car as Figure 8.3 shows. However all destinations are reachable by public transport. But, this might not be the case if the destination is outside the villages. For the chosen destinations the connection is quite good with only a large difference in travel time between the car and public transport to go to Agger. If you have to travel at the end of the day, public transport might, however, not be a possibility.

	<b>Agger</b>	<b>Vorupør</b>	<b>Stenbjerg</b>	<b>Klitmøller</b>
Car	128 km <b>1 hour 48 minutes</b>	112 km <b>1 hour 38 minutes</b>	118 km <b>1 hour 40 minutes</b>	103 km <b>1 hour 29 minutes</b>
Public Transportation	3-4 connections + 50 meters of walking <b>3 hours 40 minutes</b>  Departing every hour at the middle of the day, but with the last one around 15.00	2 connections + 200 meters of walking <b>2 hours 30 minutes or 2 hours 50 minutes</b> (depending on the connection)  Departing every hour at rush hour and every 2.5 hour outside rush hour	2 connections + 450 meters of walking <b>2 hours 43 minutes or 3 hours 37 minutes</b> (depending on the connection)  Departing every hour in the middle of the day and every 3 <sup>rd</sup> hour at other times	2 connections <b>2 hours 11 minutes or 2 hours 51 minutes</b> (depending on the connection)  Departing every hour at rush hour and every 2 <sup>nd</sup> hour outside rush hour

Figure 8.3 Schedule of traveltime, distance and connection to go to the four villages in the national park territory from Aalborg. Information from Google Maps on January 15th 2013



## 8.2 TO MOVE AROUND IN NATIONALPARK THY

When moving around in the area it is possible to utilise several different means of transportation. You will find cars, tractors, scooters, mopeds, motorcycles, cycles, rollerblades, skateboarders, busses, fishing boats and surfers etc. in the area.



The buses mainly run from the villages to the towns outside the national park territory, and thus it is difficult to move from one village to the other inside the area. To do so you would have to take a bus to one of the towns and change to another bus line that will take you to the other village as figure 8.4 shows.



Figure 8.4 Public Transport in Nationalpark Thy - the purple lines marks the busses, and the green line the train

This Star structure also causes a very long travel time with public transport between the villages in the area. And as figure 8.5 shows, both the car and bike is faster than public transport when moving between the villages (in this case when moving between Klitmøller and Vorupør).

Means of transportation	Travel time
<i>Car</i>	<i>13 minutes</i>
<i>Bicycle</i>	<i>42 minutes</i>
<i>Bus</i>	<i>Walking and changing bus in Thisted 1 hour 12 minutes (the fastest travel time)</i>

Figure 8.5 Travel time with different means of transportation between Klitmøller and Vorupør. Information from Google Maps on January 15th 2013

Besides being the fastest alternative, cars and bikes are also the most flexible, as they do not have to follow a time table



### 8.3 THE CAR

#### DRIVER'S LICENSE – A TICKET TO FREEDOM

In the questionnaire answered by the locals in Nationalpark Thy 93 pct. have a driver's license for a car. Of the 94 persons who answered this question, one does not have it anymore and 6 people have chosen not to have one. Even though 93 pct. is a large share, it can be a surprise to find anyone without a driver's licence in an area that according to the interviewees is almost impossible to live and move around in without car. I interviewed one of the respondents without a driver's license, and she explained as follows:

*“It would be easier for me if I had a car... But I do not. [And why might that be?] I do not have a driver's license. [And then again, why might that be?] I never got one... for some reason. I tried to shove it... We did not get a driver's licence at home when we turned 18 as some kids do... even though we were never short of any material goods. But we just did not. And then you would have to have the money for it yourself and then you would have to earn the money for it and things like that, and then it has just been pushed away, and I never got one. [But does it annoy you that you do not have one?] Yes, but I only have myself to thank for that... Right... And now I am 60 years old, now I would not do it.” (I1#4.1).*

She thinks it is irritating that she does not have a driver's license, but not so much that she ever did anything about it. She is, however, passenger in a car from time to time (one time during the week where she filled in the mobilities journal) and during the interview she explained an episode where she got stuck in one of the towns outside the territory and had to call a friend to pick her up and thus in some situations is dependent on others. Thus she does not have the skills (Kaufmann, 2002) to carry out the act of driving. Instead she uses her network and friendships with other residents in the villages to carry out the act of driving.

Another interviewee also moved to the area without a driver's license but acquired one after moving to a rural area in Thy outside the national park territory:

*“When we moved from Greenland to Denmark, we moved to Sennels [in Thisted Municipality outside the national park territory]. None of us had a driver's license, so we had to acquire one first, so my husband did that. We lived far out in the country side, so he had to take the car to his driver's licence lessons... He had a Greenlandic driver's licence... Well, that was not optimal, but it was how it was. [...] I got mine [driver's licence] a couple of years later [...] Because it was impractical to live that far into the countryside, and only one of us had a driver's licence.” (I1#1.1)*

One of those who have had a driver's license ever since she was 18 is very clear on how much this means to her:

*“I have always considered the acquisition of a driver's licence as a ticket to freedom.” (I1#2.1).*

This short statement shows how much this plastic card means to some residents. The acquisition of a driver's license and thus the official skill (Kaufmann, 2002) to be able to drive a car provides residents with a new option of movement on their own – and thus a freedom and new range of action. Of course they would also need access to a car to be able to make use of that option.

#### THE FIRST CAR OR MOTORISED VEHICLE

Many of the interviewees also equal a car or other motorized vehicles with freedom; a couple of them describe how it felt to get the first vehicle:

*“It was a blue Ford Escort, I believe... And I was not very old and just had a job, so I needed it to go to work... The bus route out here [Vorupør] was not that good, and it only gets worse and worse... So it was a big thing to have a car... Also because you are freer, when you have a car. It meant something for me. Also because one lives in the outskirts, in Udkantsdanmark [Rural Outskirt Denmark]... It is nice to be able to drive and to have the freedom to move at all times.” (I1#3.2).*



Others had another motorized means of transportation before the car:

*"When I was 15 I got a moped, and I was inseparable with that moped [...] I got my first car when I was 18, or actually I was manager in the store when I was 18, so I had a company car at my disposal... It was my father who owned the store... Of course it gave more freedom than the moped... And a larger comfort... But I have to say that my moped could run 110 km/h, so it was faster than to go by car." (I1#2.2).*

*"It was a fantastic feeling of freedom - that is the first motorcycle that I got. I am from a city [Skjern - on the west coast further south in Denmark] where there were mopeds and motorcycles... And if you did not play sports, which is predominant in that city, which I did not, then you could do nothing. So it was a large freedom to have your moped. The first one I had with a license plate was an English motorcycle, and it was love at first sight, and also problems at first sight, because they do not run by themselves. So it was a really really large and nice feeling of freedom and speed to be able to move around." (I1#3.1).*

The interviewee who never got a driver's license remembers instead when her friends had their first car, and she thought it was cool that she now had an opportunity for a ride.

As many of the interviewees equal the car and driver's license with freedom, one also remembers how it changed her way of movement:

*"Well, it is something to do with that you can get out and experience that landscape you live in, right... Because when you have children, and you also have to bring a baby carriage, then you would take some walks but you do not get to use the area in the same way when you do not own a car. That is actually a point that I suddenly am formulating here: That suddenly we could very easy go to the beach with the children, and we could easily visit people that lived here and there, but on the other side we started doing our grocery shopping non-locally." (I1#1.2)*

So, beside the feeling of freedom and the change of movement it could also affect other everyday activities, in this case grocery shopping, that now could take place outside the local community, and thus the larger radius of action could contribute to some of the challenges in these communities today.

## PRESENT CAR OWNERSHIP

From driver's licence and stories about their first car next focus will be on the present car ownership. 97 pct. of the respondents own a car and 43 pct. own two or more cars. In Denmark in general 59 pct. of families own a car (Statistics Denmark, 2013e). So in general the respondents have a much higher access to a car than the Danish average and also a large portion have access to two or more cars, though some of the interviewees consider two cars a luxury:

*"For long periods we have had two cars [...] but we do not need it anymore, or we do not have a large need anymore. No, it was pure luxury, so that we do not have [...] and with a large income reduction you do not have two cars, or at least we do not." (I1#1.1)*

Others think that two cars is a necessity to secure freedom:

*"We have two cars. And I think it is important when we live in a place like this [Vester Vandet], that we both have a chance to say - now I do not want to be out here any longer, I drive to Thisted or something like that. Instead if you only had one car, then you would be stuck out here, if the other one leaves... And then a bus would depart, maybe every 90th minute... every 90th minute.... And then they stop the departures at five o'clock. So you need two cars when you live out here." (I1#4.2)*

This need to have the car as a mean to escape isolation is also noticed by Osti: *"What is certain in rural areas is that the private car dominates. Ownership of a personal or family car is in general a symbol of freedom and prestige. Moreover, in dispersed rural areas an automobile enables people to escape isolation and deprivation, although some authors maintain that driving alone for long distances is a symptom of low social capital (Putnam 2000; Urry 2002)." (Osti, 2010, p. 301).* However opposite Osti, it seems as if the necessity of the car is more important than prestige at least when it comes to car brands. One of the interviewees explains that the most important elements of the car are that it can drive and that it is safe:

*“When you live where you live, and you have chosen to live where you are dependent on a car, then it is important that the car can start and that it would drive. That is pretty much it. It could also be very cool if I said that it was extremely environmentally friendly and saving all kind of things. It is not. We have an old CV Saab.” (I1#1.1).*

Thus what the residents seem to request is a material (Ingold, 2011) in this case a car that affords (Jensen O. B., 2013) them to move on the long distances in the area. This also seems to be a common thing in the area and could be parts of the mobilities culture as mentioned in the previous chapter. Thus if focusing on the car brands stated in the questionnaire this practical perspective seems to step forward – see figure 8.6.

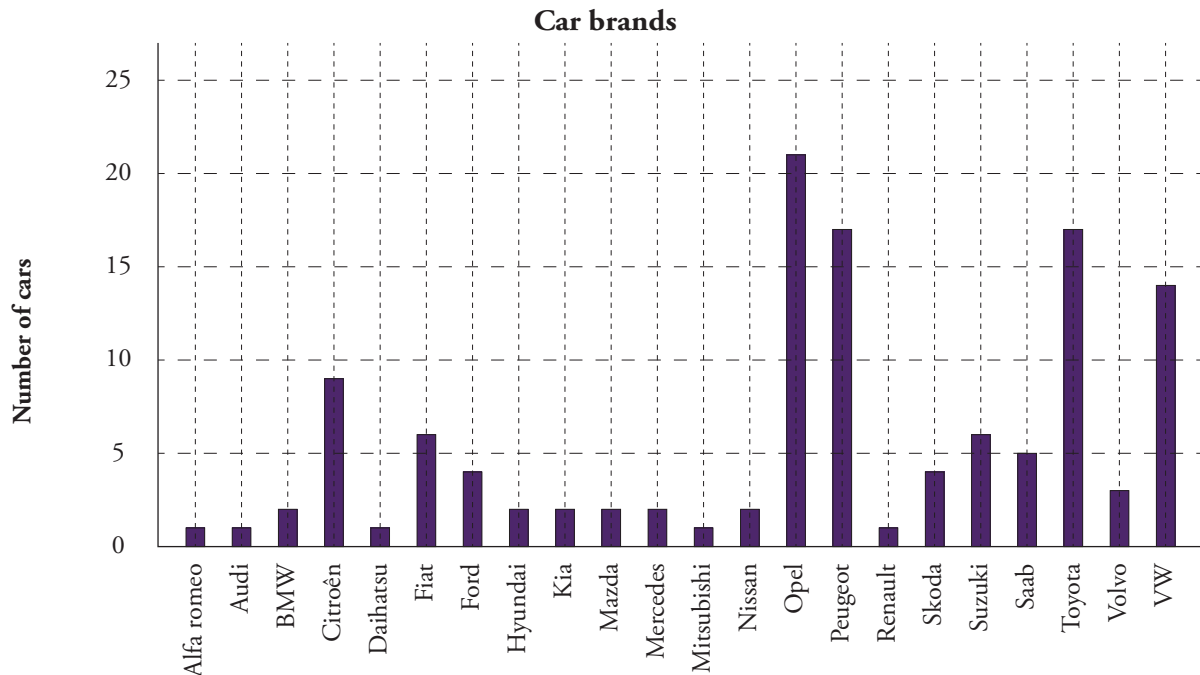


Figure 8.6 Car brands owned by the respondents in the questionnaire (QL: 6, N: 76)

E.g. it is shown that the brands that FDM (Forenede Danske Motorejere) [united Danish motor owners] categorize as luxury brands (Audi, BMW, Mercedes and Volvo) are not that present. Altogether these four brands only account for 6.5 pct. of all the cars. In Denmark in general the account for 8.3 pct. of all cars sold in 2013 (FDM, 2013). Though it is not that big a difference it is also mentioned by the before mentioned interviewee:

*“I do not think you would see a lot of fancy Audis and such out here. There is a few that would drive in such fine cars, but otherwise I mainly believe that people would choose a car that could drive [...] There is a lot who has new cars but it is not the most fancy brands; Audi, Mercedes and what else they are called... No it is more like this – ok, new car... No I do not believe that there is any car snobbishness.” (I1#1.1)*

Another one explains how he sometimes distinguishes from others outside the case area because of his old car:

*“I have a delivery van that I use... At some point I was chairman in Danske Købmænd (Association of Danish Grocers), where we were three partners that owned all parts in Denmark: some German grocer’s, Reinhart-gruppen and then I was there representing Danske Købmænd – I arrived in my van, the other flew in in private planes, the other two... And that was a bit funny [...] But I do not believe that I was less happy than the owner of Rema1000 and the group managing director for the German company even though they flew in in their large planes... and I was driving in my old van... That does not mean that much to me. I do acknowledge that a large expensive car is nice but I would never buy one... That would not be a car that I could use in the national park anyway” (I1#2.2).*

This paragraph shows how important the car and a driver's license is for the residents in Nationalpark Thy, some even believing that you need to have two cars to not be isolated. This shows that access to a car and skills to drive it and thus have this potential mobility (Kaufmann, 2002) as an option for you is extremely important for the life of the residents in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area. Next I will investigate why the other modes cannot be a substitute for the car.

#### 8.4 OTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

Most respondents (87 pct.) have 500 meters or less to the nearest bus stop, which is the distance that often is considered as the one people would walk to catch a bus (Jensen, 2008, p. 87). The fact that they do not consider public transportation a real alternative to the car is probably more due to the frequency of the bus which is shown in figure 8.7.

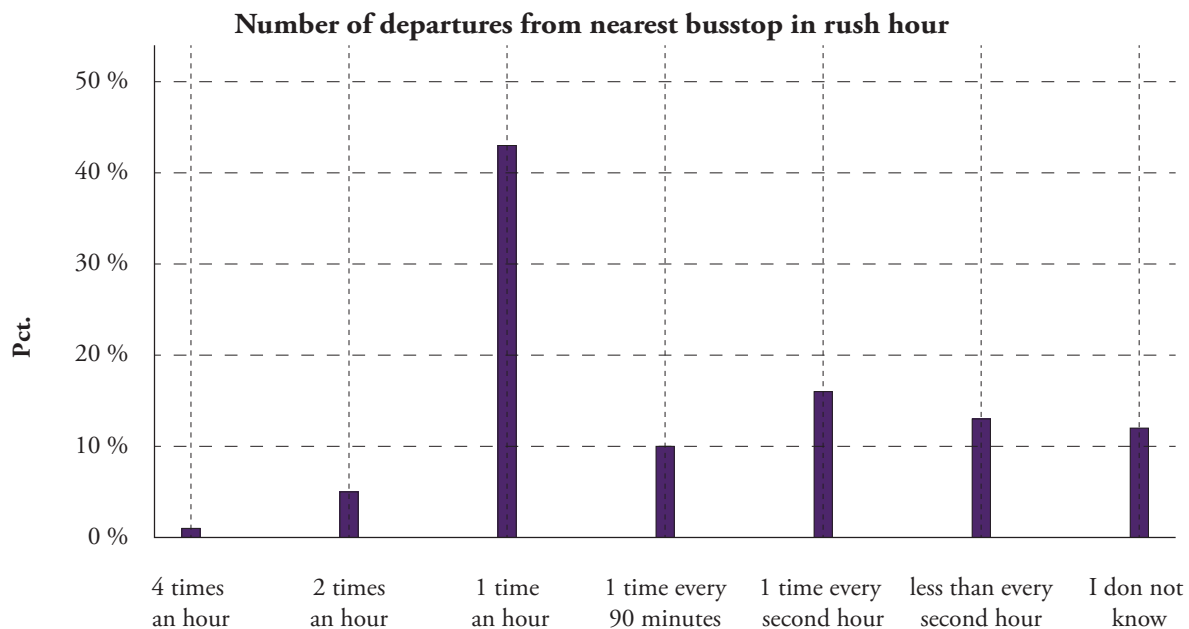


Figure 8.7 Number of departures from the nearest bus stop in rush hour stated by respondents in the questionnaire (QL: 10, N:88)

It is shown that though most people live quite close to the nearest bus stop, the frequency and probably also the destination of the bus has an effect on the choice of whether to use public transportation or not.

A more flexible public transport alternative also exists, Flextur, as mentioned in section 8.1. However the respondents in Nationalpark Thy have not truly started using this option: 50 pct. state that they do not have a need for it, 33 pct. do not know what it is, 9 pct. do not consider the offer desirable and only 8 pct. have tried it a few times and nobody uses it regularly. Even though many were very happy to be driving in their car, it is not so that they do not like to go by bus. Actually several of them would prefer to go by bus, if it was possible. Also the tourists have a wish to use public transport to a greater extent – at least when asked for improvement suggestions in Nationalpark Thy some tourists suggest better public transport, some more specifically for better busses between the cities and villages in the area and one for better public transport between the localities in the Nationalpark area. (QT#23, QT#54, QT#158, QT#243, QT#166, QT#174)

The wish to make a better connection internally in the Nationalpark territory was actually met in the summer 2013. A bus route through the national park territory and the villages in the area was established. It had one daily departure every Tuesday and Thursday in July and the beginning of August, and because of the success and the sold out tickets the period was prolonged. The target group were tourists and you would have to have bought your ticket before the ride and several stops were planned along the route with inputs from local guides. The bus was implemented by Thisted Municipality, Thy Tourist Association, Nordjyllands Trafikselskab and Nationalpark Thy. The route continued the following years and in 2015 it was split into a northern route and southern route.

Another physical mobilities initiative that the nomination as national park gave rise to is the development of a bike path from north to south in the national park – see figure 8.8



Figure 8.8 Bike path running through the Nationalpark territory (Naturstyrelsen, 2010a)

This cycle path has been a wish for a long time in the Thy region but have previously been refused due to too few users. Now with the national park nomination this is something that has been made possible and the possibilities for the soft road users are upgraded. This is also part of the objectives for being a national park which is stated in the Law of National parks. Further one of the goals of National Park Thy is to create better opportunities to move around in nature and experience it fully. This is, therefore, supported by a wish to increase the trails throughout the national park and create a number of trails which make it possible to move using different types of transportation, such as walking, riding on a bike or a horse and also going by car (Andersen E. Ø., 2011).

There are also established trails for hiking and biking from the towns in the area to specific spots within the national park, among others a handicap-trail by the Hanstholm Light house. In addition to the establishment of trails within the national park it is also the goal of the national park that these are connected to already existing trails outside the national park, so that visitors can travel across longer distances (Nationalpark Thy - Sekretariatet, 2010).

However more cycling paths are still on the wish list for a large number of residents in the area. When asked if they have any changing suggestions for the biking conditions, 40 pct. express a wish for more cycling paths. This covers both more cycling paths connecting villages and cities in Thy, more cycling paths along the main roads, more cycling paths within the villages and cycling paths connecting the cities and villages with the nature area in the Nationalpark territory. Also the tourists express a wish for more biking paths when asked for changing suggestions (QG#3, QG#17, QG#181, QT#136, QG#206, QG#234, QG#211, QT#307).

The administration of Nationalpark Thy hopes that visitors will move around in the park in a slow pace; biking, hiking or roller-skating, which with the new trails becomes easier. In order to make the condition even better, the manager of Nationalpark Thy, Else Østergaard Andersen, wishes that with time it becomes possible to rent a bike in the northern part of the national park and then bike throughout the national park and then hand it over in the southern part of the national park (Andersen E. Ø., 2011).

Though there is a wish for better public transport and more cycling paths, and a goal for the national park that visitors should move around at a slow pace, the car is the fastest and most convenient way to come to the area and to move around in the area as previously described.



These paragraphs have focused much on the infrastructure and the potential mobilities, next it will turn to what this infrastructure affords and how this changes over time.

## 8.5 SURFACE, SEASONS AND SEMIOTICS

### TO NAVIGATE TO AND IN NATIONALPARK THY - SEMIOTICS

When driving on E45 through the eastern part of Jutland you can be met with this sign (see figure 8.9).



Figure 8.9 an attraction sign on E45 showing Nationalpark Thy (Own picture)

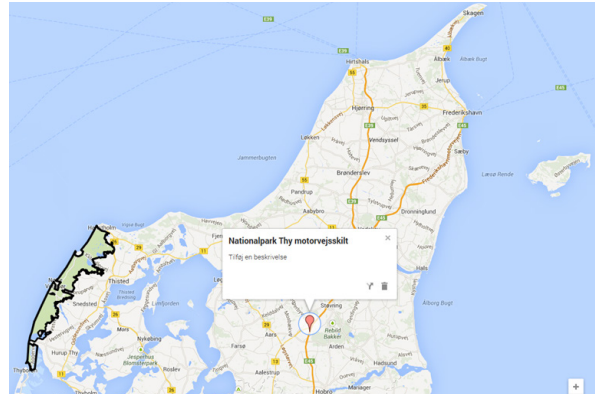


Figure 8.10 shows the placement of the Nationalpark Thy sign and the Nationalpark territory.

Of course it is positive that Nationalpark Thy earned one of the 50 attraction signs that were chosen by Naturstyrelsen [The Danish Nature Agency], Kulturstyrelsen [Agency for Culture] and Visit Denmark in 2012 to be branded for both Danes and tourists on the motorway. However without any direction or distance information you might be a bit confused when taking the next turn and eventually find out that you have to drive more than 100 km to come to Nationalpark Thy (see figure 8.10). Further Nationalpark Thy were only allowed signage at one place, which means that if you come from north you will pass many more obvious and shorter turns before eventually passing the Nationalpark Thy sign.

When arriving to the area you will be met with this sign (see figure 8.11):



Figure 8.11 The entrance to Nationalpark Thy (Own picture)

The small brown signs that are placed at the entrances can easily be overlooked, and the difference to other national parks in the world that was described in chapter 2 is obvious. E.g. when entering Hoge Kempen, that I visited during a PhD course in Belgium you will walk through a large gate stating that you now enter Hoge Kempen and the entire area is fenced in and you further have to leave your car at the entrance. This small sign at the entrance to Nationalpark Thy is in some ways the visualisation of the fact that the national park foundation have no competences of authority as described in chapter 2. The shape of the eastern border of the Nationalpark combined with the main road crossing through further leaves the car traveller with a strange experience, where they enter and exit the Nationalpark several times along the road – which is symbolised by the small brown signs.

It is thus possible to be more distinct with the semiotics both in relation to coming to the area and the marking of the area.

When moving around within the Nationalpark territory it is mainly signage of cycling routes and of MBT-routes that is requested (#t302, #72).

Finally, a woman notices in the questionnaire that the sidewalk in Klitmøller is serving both cyclists and pedestrians. She explains that the children are being told off when cycling on the sidewalk (#92). Therefore a difference in surface texture or a better signage could be relevant to accentuate which kinds of mobilities this place affords. In general a better signage of the area and in the area can be low-hanging fruits, that is fairly cheap and that can serve two purposes: to make the area more visible in the mental maps of bypassers and to make it easier to navigate in the area for new users.

Next I will elaborate on the surface of the mobilities structures in the area.

#### *SURFACE*

*“Because if you take a walk down the main road then it is filled with potholes, but the municipality cannot afford to repair it, and there is no snow clearance and there is no nothing. And you cannot get out of this village in any direction, without using the main road, if you do not have anything that can pull through sand.” (I1#3.1)*

This quote shows quite clearly some of the challenges with the surface in Nationalpark Thy. In this case it is one of the interviewees living in Agger explaining the condition of the road in the village. He further explains that they get even more challenged at winter time because there is no snow clearing in the area. From these things he took the consequence and bought a four-wheel drive to be able to move around at all times.

In the questionnaire the same person states that these challenges also affect the cycle conditions in the area. He suggests better asphalt or another material because of the many potholes in the surface – he further believes that the many gravel roads is a challenge for the cyclists (#26). This is supported by a couple of other respondents who in the questionnaire suggest a better surface (#25) also in Agger and a wish to improve the asphalt on the cycle paths in Vorupør (#t307) and finally there is a wish for asphalt on the cycling paths (#38) in the northern part of the territory. Figure 8.12 shows the cycling path that I believe this last person is talking about.

As Figure 8.12 shows, the cycling path consists of a mix of fine gravel and sand and the path serve two purposes: One half serve as a path for both cyclists and pedestrians and the other half is serving horseback riders. Further this more natural material goes very well with the nomination as national park. However it does not afford the smooth ride that the cyclists ask for. Instead this choice of material for the surface slows the cyclist and might even move the racing bikes to the road instead.

Finally there is also a suggestion to upgrade or improve the roads and sidewalks in Klitmøller to better facilitate cycling (#93). With this wish or need in Agger, Vorupør and Klitmøller it seems that this is a general challenge in the national park territory. With long distances and quite few inhabitants to pay the bill this might not be an easy challenge to solve. Furthermore it was shown that snow clearing is a challenge which can also be due to the long roads and few inhabitants.

Next focus will be on other effects of the seasons and weather.





Figure 8.12 A picture of the bike path along the main road in the northern part of the territory (Own picture)

## SEASONS AND WEATHER

*"I think, and it was actually in December, and I think it was dark and grey and windy, and when you drove through the small villages on Mors, at that time the main road was not constructed, then you drove through Øster Jølby and what all of them was called. It was completely desolate, there was not a soul anywhere, but of course it was December or November, so of course I understand, but I did think it was dismal. But it was nice to get out to the country side; that was something. I still believe that the small villages are extremely dismal, where there are no people so they can be very very dismal. But then it was summer when we moved here and then it was fine. But to drive to Stenbjerg in windy weather, that was the most exotic that I could imagine. The dunes was very heavy, because they were just grey and without any apparent life. I could not see life at that time, we just drove by. I thought it was brutal and the North Sea was brutal." (I1#1.2).*



As previously explained one of the things that this area is known for is “Cold Hawaii” with the famous surf conditions. For this the windsurfers and kite surfers depend on the wind and a stormy day excites all these surfers. However, the windy conditions are not just an asset to the area it can also affect the choice of transport. Two interviewees explain how they like to cycle in the local area but that they would not do it in windy weather. (I1#1.2, I1#2.1). The latter one further elaborates that also cold weather and rain would keep her away from using the bicycle in the local area. The wind does not only affect the mobilities in the area, but is part of the living condition in the area. One states:

*“The first two years, I remember it clearly; I suffered from claustrophobia from that wind. I thought it was awful and I thought that I would never stand it.” (I1#1.1).*

However most of the interviewees state that they eventually adjust to the wind, one says:

*“Well it is always windy, but that is just nice... You have just adjusted to it.” (I1#4.1).*

Another one accepts it as part of her everyday but wants to move away from it in holidays, she states:

*“When we are campers we leave the area, because then we want to go somewhere where the wind do not blows that much.” (I1#2.1)*

Also the weather and seasons has a meaning for the recreational soft mode mobilities, one mentions:

*“This evening it was very nice weather, and now we start to enjoy the light evenings, then we go for a walk.” (I1#2.1).*

Another explains how seasons affect her activities:

*“And then at the same time, or on the same day, take a long walk, or bicycle to the forest and take a walk there... Or when it is season go to forage mushrooms and go and hear bird song.” (I1#1.2).*

The mobilities can also be affected by the time of day, where a few also mentions how they would use the bicycle at daylight but prefers the car in the dark, which is probably linked to the fact that there is only street light in the villages and not in the country side.

## 8.6 SUM UP

As shown Thisted Municipality and Nationalpark Thy is placed on a peninsula and thus not that easy to access from the outside. Further, geographically Thisted Municipality is one of the largest in Denmark, which means that a large infrastructure network is needed to move around in the area. This means quite large expenses on maintaining a well-functioning road network for securing the infrastructure etc. but it also makes it difficult to service all places in the region with public transport. As described in chapter 6, the forecast for the future says that there is going to be less people living in Thisted Municipality as well as a smaller labour force. This means less people to pay for the expenses, which can make it difficult to maintain the infrastructure in the area. Already today the condition of e.g. the road cover and the snow clearing is noticed as a challenge to the area, as well as the frequency of bus departures.

There is no doubt that the car is the most convenient way to both travel to the area and to move around within the area. It is flexible and can take you to the desired destination. Several interviewees associate the car with freedom and a necessity to live in the rural outskirts. When focusing on the other means of transportation, it might be an advantage to differentiate between mobilities used to travel to the area and those used to travel around in the area. From all the villages, a bus service can take you to the larger towns outside the territory (Thisted, Hanstholm and Hurup). However you cannot move between the villages by bus, you would have to change in one of the towns prolonging the journey a great deal, as the bus does not “criss cross” around in the national park territory as one interviewee so nicely describes it. For a long time there have been a wish in the area for a bike path from the north to the south all the way through the national park territory, and with the nomination as national park this upgrade has been carried out.

One of the materials that is a great asset to the area as destination is the wind that attract windsurfers from all over the world, but is also serves as a challenge for the softer physical mobilities modes and thus several interviewees explain

how they would not use the bicycle in windy weather. Thus the wind is one of the materials that plays a large role in defining the life and mobilities in Nationalpark Thy. Especially for the residents who moved there it has played a significant role as something you would have to acclimatise to. The wind in combination with the changes of temperature and daylight that comes with seasons, greatly affect especially the local mobilities in Nationalpark Thy.

Finally, a low hanging fruit could be picked in order to strengthen the semiotics of Nationalpark Thy both as an attraction, as a physical place and in order to navigate more easily within the area. That could enhance the effects the nomination as national park has on the mobilities in the area. Next focus will be on the actual physical mobilities in the area.



## 9. PHYSICAL MOBILITIES

The picture in figure 9.1 shows an actual commute in the national park territory. This day I had the road to myself, and though there are less road users here than many other places, due to the smaller number of residents, it does not mean that physical mobilities are less used or less important. Osti (2010) comments: *“Commuting is not a phenomenon typical of metropolitan areas alone; it is also substantial in poor rural areas. In fact, some of the areas that we identified as marginal or remote in northern Italy recorded a level of long-time commuting similar to that of metropolises like Milan, Venice and Turin.”* (Osti, 2010, p. 300) and continues *“while there are fewer commuters from rural areas, rural commuters will, on average, commute much further than their urban counterparts (as much as 1.6 times further) regardless of whether they travel by car or not.”* (Turner et al. 2007)” (Osti, 2010, p. 300).

This chapter present similar research results. Residents in Nationalpark Thy believe that physical mobilities is what enables their life, and enables them to overcome the long distances that exist both to the activities in the local area as well as to the activities outside the local area. The most important means of transportation is the car and the possibility to move around by car also seems to be what marginalise the challenges that come with the long distances.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how the physical mobilities are practised by both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, and what it means to them. This includes an analysis of their actual physical mobilities as well as an analysis of their understanding of distance as this is described as one of the challenges of rural outskirts in general, and Nationalpark Thy in particular.



Figure 9.1 The lonesome roads in Nationalpark Thy (own picture)

## 9.1 TOURISM PERSPECTIVES – TO TRAVEL TO AND MOVE AROUND IN THY

When investigating how the tourists are arriving in Nationalpark Thy the car is also the predominant means of transportation. All respondents in the English questionnaire arrived by car and figure 9.2 shows how the respondents in the Danish speaking questionnaires and German speaking questionnaires arrived. For both the respondents in the Danish speaking questionnaires and German speaking questionnaires the car is the most used means of transportation to arrive in Nationalpark Thy. In addition in the Danish speaking questionnaire the train (6 pct.), bus (4 pct.) and cycle (7 pct.) are used.

Most of the tourists find the area accessible or very accessible; 94 pct. stating this in the Danish questionnaire, 94 pct. in the German questionnaire and 87pct. in the English questionnaire. Only 1 pct. in the Danish and German questionnaire and none in the English find it difficult to travel to the area. This is probably due to the majority of car users among the respondents in the questionnaire. A few Danish tourists comment on the accessibility to the area by public transport, one states, that she often go there alone from Hinnerup near Århus without a car and that it is quite difficult since the train and busses are not synchronised (#t 155). Another one explains how the travel from Esbjerg over Struer to Hurup was very slow by train (#t 232).

The picture is more diverse, when it comes to how the tourists move around in the area – see figure 9.3.

In the Danish and English questionnaire the car is used for approximately 1/3 of the rides within the area, and the softer modes (walking and cycling) are the predominant modes. A few also uses bus in the Danish questionnaire – this could be an organized coach tour. The German questionnaire shows a slightly different pattern with approximately 2/3 of car use and less softer modes. No tourists find that the local area is difficult to access, however, when they are asked for suggestions for changes four suggest better public transport in the area (#t 23, #t 54, #t158, #t243) .

One of the purposes with establishing Nationalpark Thy was to create better opportunities to move around in nature and experience it fully as explained in chapter 2. In relation to this it is remarkable to find that though most tourists arrive by car, many of them use the softer modes to move around in the area.

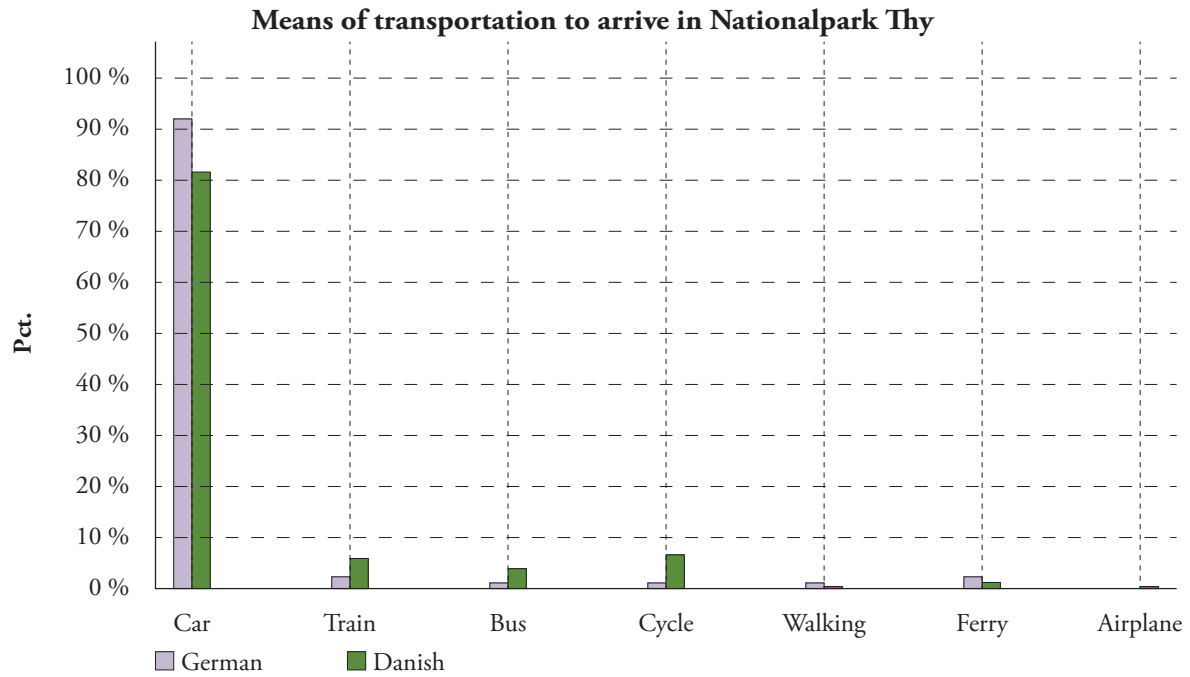


Figure 9.2 Means of transportation to arrive in Nationalpark Thy, German and Danish tourists, respectively. (QG:6 n:84 QD:6 n:221)

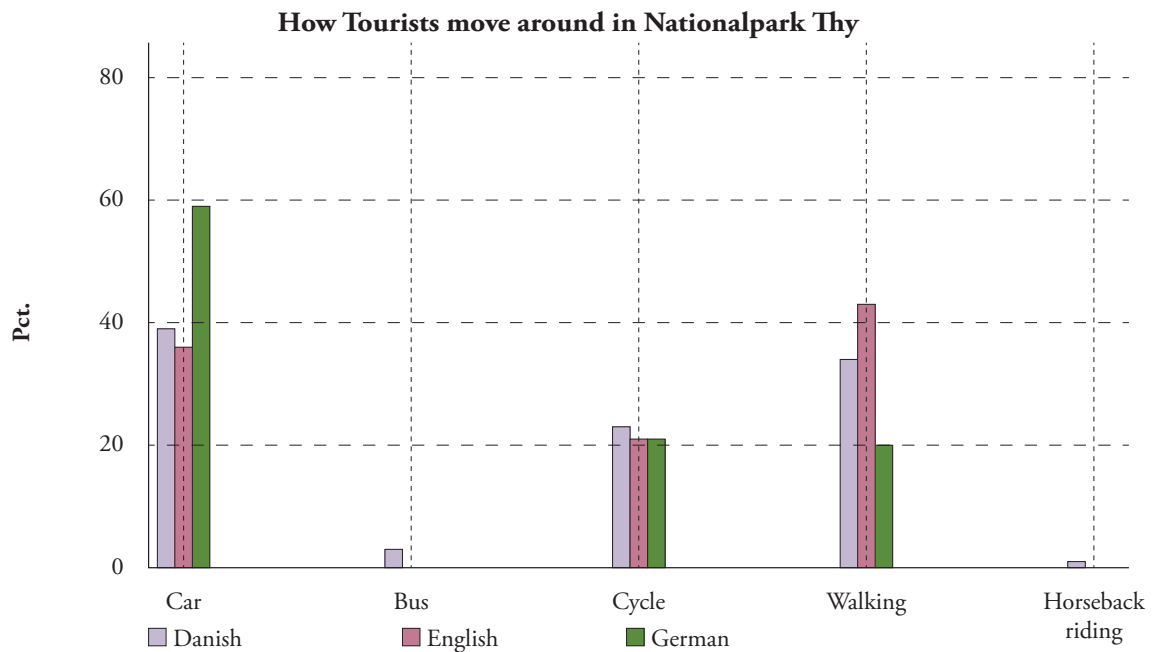


Figure 9.3 How tourists move around in Nationalpark Thy, Danish, English German tourists, respectively (QD:7 n:223 QE:7 n:11 QG:7 n:84)



## 9.2 LOCAL PERSPECTIVES - TRANSPORTATION IN NATIONALPARK THY

When turning to the local respondents a similar pattern is found. Firstly Figure 9.4 and 9.5 show the respondents' means of transportation to work and the means of transportation for commuting in Denmark. The figures show that the main means of transportation is the car, however with a much larger car use among the respondents. Other differences are fewer cyclists among the respondents and a few more bus passengers, these last things are probably due to the long distances in the area that makes bicycling more difficult. When the respondents are asked about the reason for their choice of the car, most of them state that public transport is not an alternative (8 answers), that there is no other option (7 answers) and because of the transportation time (7 answers) – it seems as if the car is more a necessity than a choice.

Also when turning to the mobilities journals the car is the most used means of transportation. This goes from 56 % of all the trips made in a week to 97 % of all trips. However, one person is mainly using the softer modes and public transportation, but she neither owns a car nor has a driver's license, she only has one trip as car passenger during the week she made notes. The argument in the mobilities journals for choosing the car is mainly that it is the easiest solution, the most practical and the fastest - very often it is also described as the only solution. Sometimes the car is also chosen because it is the most convenient solution this could e.g. be because of the weather.

One of the interviewees describes his use of different means of transportation like this:

*"But I almost always move around by car... I cannot remember the last time, I used the bus... I have a bicycle, and when the kids were younger, when they biked, they do not do that any longer, then we would bike together from time to time... In summertime, when I began to feel stressed out, my wife would arrange that we pack our picnic basket and bike to Øster Rennet, that is 8-10 km from here, then we eat our food, drink a small bottle of wine and bike back. That is very "hyggeligt" [cosy] ... So I would have to mention the bike, but it is not used very often... I rollerblade a couple of times every week, but that is not for transportation, that is to have a little exercise... Then I use my car to deliver goods to my costumers, and in general I use the car a lot for meetings... I drive 35.000 km each year... Then I would fly, if I have to go to Zealand or further away... And that is the means of transportation I use... I also have a motorcycle but that is also only for fresh air." (I1#2.2)*

As this example shows the car is the mean of transportation for everyday activities and the softer modes are for recreational purposes. This is also somewhat evident when focusing on other functions in the respondents' everyday life. By e.g. using transport to grocery shopping and transportation to leisure activities as an example (see figure 9.6 and 9.7).

Once again the car is the most dominating means of transportation but not as much as in the previous example. This is probably because of the shorter distances.

Furthermore, many respondents state that in the case of grocery shopping, they would choose one means of transportation, mainly walking and cycling, for local grocery shopping, and use the car when shopping outside the local area because of the distance and because they would make larger buys on these trips. One of the interviewees give an example on how she carries out her grocery shopping locally and some further away – however she uses the car in both cases because of the distance and the fact that she can no longer drag her goods:

*"And then I would drive into the town, if I have to shop... I can go to Vorupør, there is a large grocer's, a EuroSpar, which especially is nice at winter time, because there is no one, except for us locals, so we have a large store with a large selection... And that is around 4 km away, and there I would go by car, because I cannot drag... And then I shop at Hundborg Brugs, 12 km away... And I also do some grocery shopping in Thisted, but that is mainly because we always have preferred organic produce..." (I1#1.2).*

The analysis of the mobilities of the locals show a somewhat similar pattern with the mobilities of the tourists, that the main mode to move out of the area very clearly is the car, and that the local mobilities is more mixed with both the use of the car and softer modes.

Now I will elaborate more on the use of the different modes and the use of recreational modes.

### Means of transportation to work by respondent in Nationalpark Thy

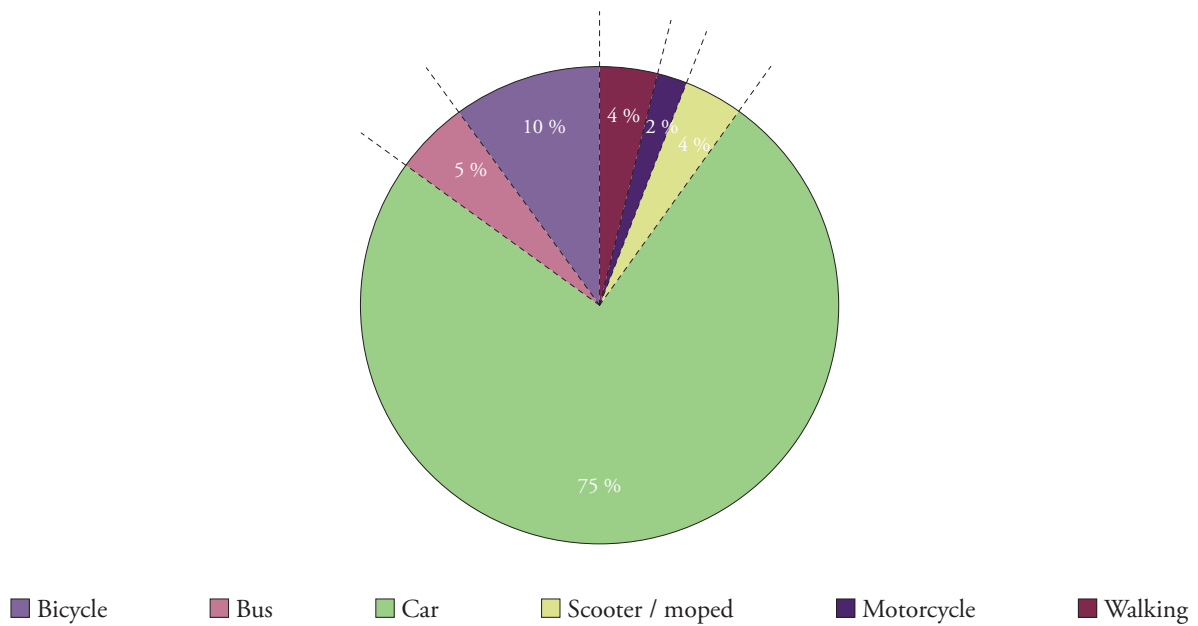


Figure 9.4 Means of transportation to work for those respondents who have a job (some answered more than one thing) (Q:13 n:58)

### Means of transportation for commuting in Denmark

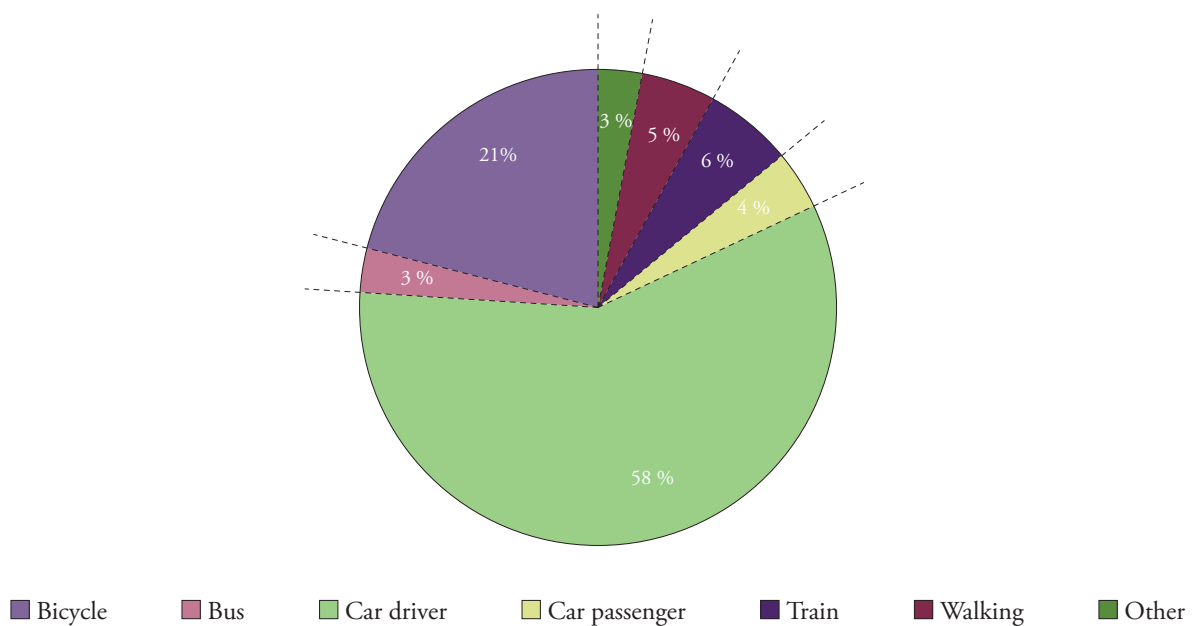


Figure 9.5 Means of transportation for commuting in Denmark in general (Danmarks Tekniske Universitet, 2013)

### Means of transportation for Grocery Shopping

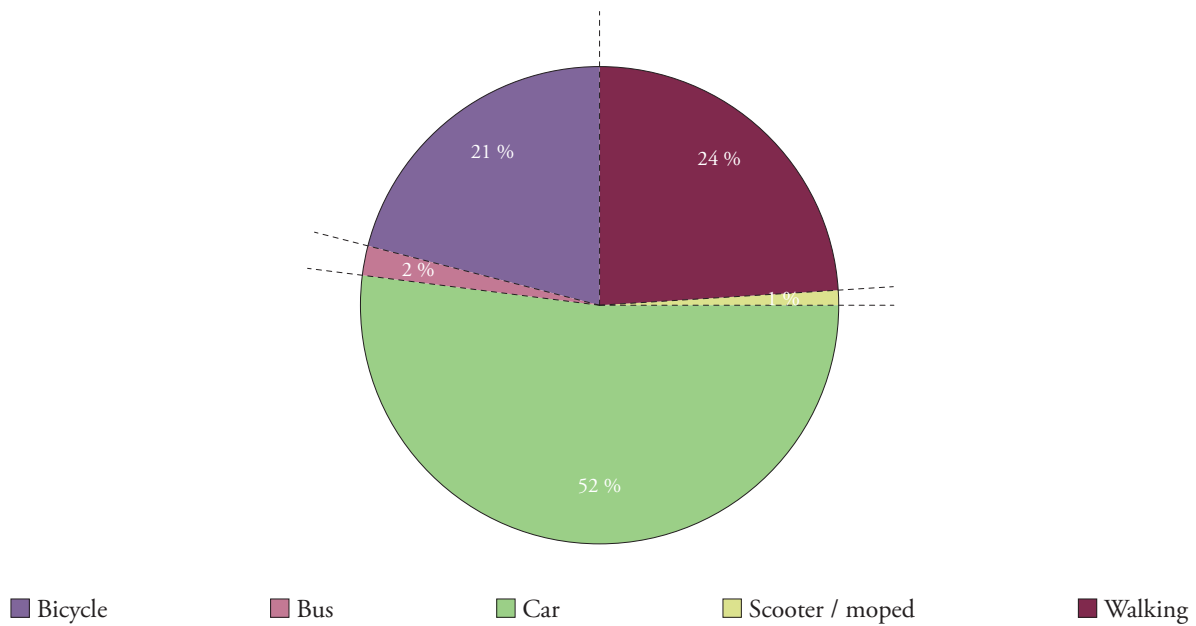


Figure 9.6 Means of transportation to do grocery shopping for those respondents who carry out this activity (some answered more than one thing) (Q:13 n:79)

### Means of transportation for Leisure Activities

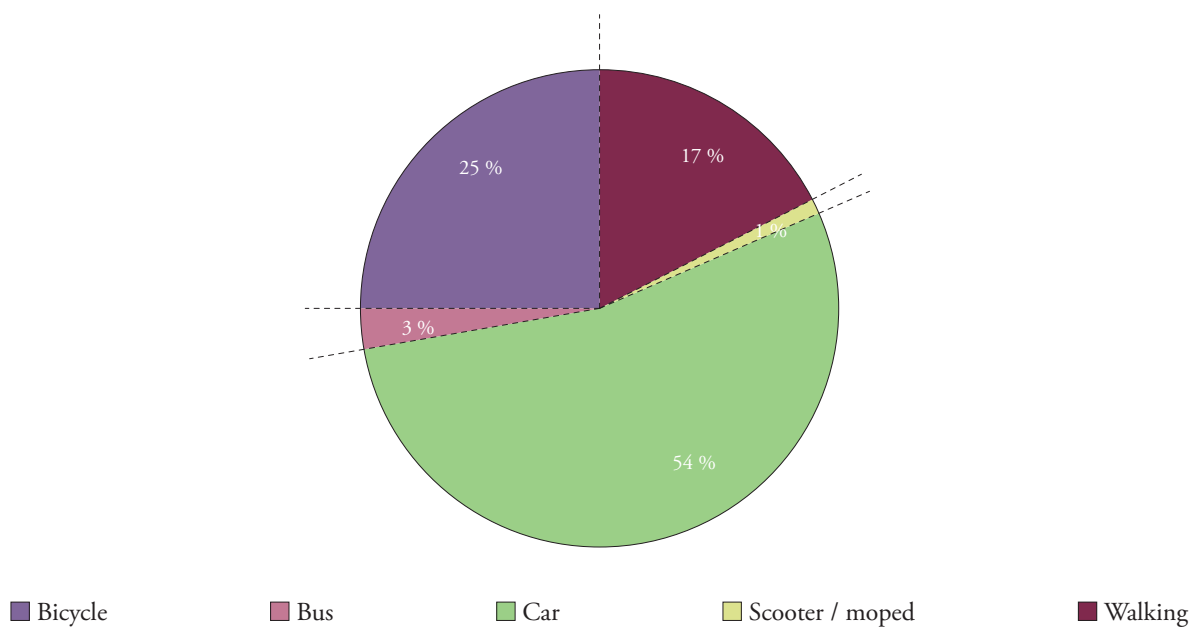


Figure 9.7 Means of transportation to leisure activities for those respondents who have leisure activities (some answered more than one thing) (Q:13 n:65)

### 9.3 MOBILITIES BY CAR

It was shown how important the car is in these areas, both to come to and move around in the area, and it is without doubt the most used means of transportation in the area.

*“I never use different means of transportation... I use my car, and it is the car I use. I have not used the bus since I was 18, and I have not bicycled since I was 18, almost. I would walk around here [Vester Vandet], but I would not walk to Klitmøller or something like that... That is the car [...] If you stand here and plan that now you would like to go to Thisted, then when you have to return you have to plan for, when the bus departs. That would be around 5 or 6, they do not run very often. It is just very inconvenient - especially with the long distances to everything. That is, I would not be able to take the bus, or I could take the bus from here to Klitmøller to check out the conditions [for surfing], but it would take an eternity, so... Compared to taking the car... So, how I feel about it? It is fine to go by car... It is better than by bus...” (I1#4.2).*

A few of them are further using the car as a part of their job and is thus even more dependent on it, and it is an integrated part of their everyday life:

*“It happens like this, that I drive around to different jobs, that is, I have different clients that I drive to, and then I have a break in the middle of the day... and then I am off again between two or four hours in the afternoon.” (I1#2.1).*

And she enjoys driving her car; she elaborates that she has always loved to drive a car and still does, and the same goes for one of the other interviewees who uses the car in his daily work:

*“... I feel perfectly fine when I am driving; you see I can phone someone, I listen quite a lot to audio tapes, so actually I relax quite a lot when I drive... I do not want to drive all the way to Copenhagen and back in the same day, then I would fly... But that is more because it gets too strenuous to drive 10 hours in one day... But time is no problem for me. I am awful impatient, but when it comes to driving I am very patient.” (I1#2.2).*

He also uses the driving time as an asset, where he phone someone or just relax and in the previous chapter it was shown how mobilities by car is an important factor in the everyday life for the interviewees in Nationalpark Thy. And the car is also mentioned by several as the one thing, if missing, which could make it impossible to be able to live there, and in general physical mobilities are very important:

*“So that about mobility [...] then the possibility to be mobile must be the most important...” (I1#2.2).*

Another interviewee support this statement and she mentions how the car would limit her everyday life, and she replies to my question of what could make her everyday life no longer would work:

*“If I did not have my car, if I could not afford a car... And now it is seven years old, and if it lasts one more year that is fine, and if it lasts three more years that is fantastic. So if I at some point no longer have a car, that would limit me a lot... First of all, because there are not that many busses... And even if you could take a bus from time to time, it only runs to Thisted or Vorupør, well it does not criss crosses, and I cannot get out and visit my friends and acquaintances in this area... It would be difficult to maintain my reading club, unless they always came to me, but it is also nice to get out... I would say that the car is difficult to live without.” (I1#1.2).*

Several of the interviewees spend a lot of time alone in their cars daily and some fill in the time with audio books, music or phone conversations. But several also try to share a car either within the family or with friends or acquaintances and for some this can be quit challenging. One notes a trip in her mobilities journal where she drives to Thisted to babysit her grandchildren. Later she is picked up by her husband because her son in the meantime had picked up the car and drove to their home, later she explains this about the trip:

*“He [her son] might have come from the Danish Emergency Management Agency where he works and picked up the car to go home, maybe he had a day off and drove... no I do not specifically remember it. When we had five children at home, Anita does not have a driver’s licence, but along the way, when we have had five children at home, it was one big puzzle to solve all the driving needs... So I simply just think, that we are used to something gets in the way, and then she needs to be picked up, and the question is: Can we share the car or do we need to drive twice?” (I1#1.1)*

The incident in the journal is not an isolated case, it happens so often that she does not even remember the details. And there is a large benefit from car-sharing, because otherwise it would cost another drive.

This was internally in the family but she also talks about how they organise car-sharing with friends:

*“My husband does that [car-sharing] a lot for activities he participate in. And that is because one of the others also lives here in Klitmøller, but it can also be... he has some friends, and they take turns in being the driver. My husband has a boat with two-three others, and then they will go fishing in Hanstholm, for that they are really good at taking turns, either they would drive by, or he would go and pick someone up, and they would just decide from who has a car, and who would be able to drive.” (I1#1.1).*

For another interviewee car-sharing is not about transportation that need to be organized together, but more an opportunity for a ride that occur:

*“When it is my car, and I have a client or something, then Britta would say, that she would like to ride along if I e.g. pass through a city, where she would know someone, then she would go to visit that person, and that is very spontaneous. It is not something that we talk a lot about before we leave. It is not a question about fitting our mobility together, because we live out here, it is more a question of an opportunity that arises, and then we would use it.” (I1#3.1)*

A difference between these two situations is that the first family owns one car and is present a family of four persons from which three have a driver’s license, and earlier they have been a family of 7 people living together. The second family owns two cars and is a family of two individuals, so their access to a car is much higher.

The interviewee, who does not own a car and has no driver’s license, is dependent on car-sharing for different activities and has used this with varying success:

*“Well, we can be two friends as an example ... and Anne, my really close friend, she does not own a car neither, but she has a driver’s license. And we have another friend, she just had a nice new car, and then we would ask her – Annette, can we borrow your car? – and the reply is – yes, yes – and of course we would always leave money for gas [...] Either Anne would text her, or I would text her, that differs... but you will have to make sure to pay her, because gas is expensive [...] Well I have just been lucky. Because a couple of old men, who also live out here in Klitmøller, and who also is attached to the Nationalpark... Such cranky old men, as men can get, not that I say that they all are... Well I could drive with them, but they could just as well have said – Well, we do not really like it – I do not want that, then they can fuck me... I just know that I have a totally other attitude, if someone needed a ride I would ask that person.” (I1#4.1)*

When I ask her how car-sharing could be arranged she proposes Facebook (though she do not have a profile herself), and she explains that if it is a more permanent car-sharing option it is often noticed at the grocer’s, in the bus sheds or in the local paper, but in general she do not believe that car sharing is used very much.

## 9.4 OTHER MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

*“Purely politically, ideologically, then I believe that public transport must be the only true solution, no doubt about that. And I support highly the work that starts up light rails and tele-busses and small busses, I believe that it is a really really good thing... But then I would have to face inwards and admit that I do not use it much myself. And that is because, well you always have good excuses, but I am actually very fond of going by train, I think it is really wonderful that you would sit down and do nothing but what you want ... But it is difficult to get to go by train, and then you would have to wait on large train stations and wait for an hour... Well, it really is not easy. They do not make it easy, they really do not. We have a connection to Århus that I often use or would like to use. And for that the train arrives at Struer five minutes after the connecting train departed, and then you would have to wait for an hour, and that is just stupid. And that causes that people get so angry, that they would just go by car instead. I am going to Århus this Friday and for that I go by car, because I really cannot be bothered. Vexed, it is really vexed. It would be so nice if you could and ideologically you have to. But it just does not work here in the outskirts, it does not.” (I1#1.2).*

In the same way another interviewee state that she would not own a car if she lived in Copenhagen:

*“Well, I could not dream of having a car, if I lived in Copenhagen, I do not think so. We have talked about, it when we are visiting Copenhagen, it is just so well-functioning all of that public transport, you can jump from one and into the next. I think that is super cool.” (I1#1.1).*

The interviewee without a driver's license often uses the bus, and public transport is her preferred means of transportation due to environmental and social reasons. But though this is her preferred means of transportation she still finds that the connections are poor. Her hope for the future is better connections, but she expects the opposite. She is also very fond of walking and cycling and opposite the other mobilities journals, 91 pct. of her trips are by softer modes – mainly walking. Around half of her trips is mobilities for transportation and the other half is mobilities for recreation. Another interviewee makes this distinction himself:

*“And then I use the bicycle to go for a ride in the nature.... Not for transportation more for entertaining.” (I1#3.2).*

## 9.5 RECREATIONAL MODES – MOVING FOR RECREATION

Whereas the living in Nationalpark Thy, in many ways makes the daily physical mobilities a bit more challenging the picture turns around, when it comes to recreational modes:

*“I live in the nature, I mountain bike and surf a lot, and then I also run in the nature [...] We have a club, where we bike a lot, both mountain bike and racing bike [...] It means a lot to be surrounded by a national park, you can go for a run... you can take a walk in the national park... and you can experience a distinctive nature.” (I1#3.2).*

The recreational modes that he prefers are just outside the door. Another interviewee also uses the closeness to recreational mobilities as the reason for choosing to live in a rural outskirts area:

*“We are not lacking the cultures and all kinds of other stuff; we find that rather easily even though we do not live in a major city. We explore the offers in the area. We go to the theatre, when there is a play in Thisted, we go to a concert, when something interesting is on. Around two to five times a year, we go to some kind of cultural performance. Also a trip to Aalborg, Århus and Copenhagen to see something do not put us off. So we have our needs covered. And then people talk about ‘Udkantsdanmark’... I actually think that we live up to our own ideals, because it is better to have the values of the nature daily, and then we can drive to reach the things that we only need a few times yearly.” (I1#2.2).*

And these recreational soft modes have a large meaning in the life of the interviewees, and when asked how a perfect day would look like several of them mention some kind of soft mode mobilities:

*“But I love to walk... I love to walk in rugged and rolling, terrain, it does not matter. I walk very very much in the reservation and on the heath and in the forests and the beach that is nearby.” (I1#1.1)*



However, the location also has a meaning for this use of softer modes; one explains the difference to her former home:

*"Well, before we moved out here, we lived in a small village more inland, and we agreed that it was not a place for us. When you went for a walk, it had to be along the road... With cars speeding by you. And when our oldest boy started walking, we walked with him holding his hand, then we started to think that it was dangerous, more than it is to walk here. When we just walk down between the buildings here and then cross over, then there is no cars... and you can let the dogs and children run around just as they want to." (I1#2.1)*

One also includes recreational soft modes mobilities in her future plans:

*"But I definitely have a feeling, that I will start to use the bicycle some more, and simply just be more outdoor, now that I have the time for it. I actually have a plan to cycle to the forest to some of all these picnic areas and try to walk all the routes in the forest, there is lots of marked routes. Well I would actually like to walk through all of the Nationalpark territory in that way. Well, some places I would drive to and others I can bike to. I think it is a nice way to see the forest [...] But that is one of my plans and for that it is for an example nice that you can bring your mobile phone." (I1#1.2)*

This shows that recreational soft modes mobilities has a great meaning for many of the interviewees and several of them also use it as an argument for living in a place like this, where they have recreational possibilities in their everyday life. Instead they have longer distances to the things that they would not use as often. In the following paragraph I will turn to their more general views on distance.

## 9.6 DISTANCE OR PROXIMITY

The interviewees view distances in their everyday life very differently. One believes that the activities she wants to do in her everyday life and extraordinary activities is far away, and that it takes some persuasion to carry them out. Another one believes that the distance is long but that it does not mean anything for her to overcome it. A third interviewee states that the activities are extremely far away, and that it means opt-outs. And a final interviewee does not find the distances long at all. Though the different views on the length of the distances they almost all agree that distance is not an issue for them:

*"Distance for Henning and I do not mean that much, we are used to drive a lot." (I1#2.1).*

Another interviewee explains how distance is 'just' something you will have to overcome to carry out your interests:

*"It means that distance becomes less important, when you learn that it is what you have to do to carry out your interests or to do what you like... Then distance becomes less important. It becomes more expensive in the everyday, because it means fuel, and no bus departs from Agger to Hanstholm [...] But then again, distance means that we will have to use the assets we have and learn to take care of ourselves. And mentally distance also becomes a smaller barrier, when you learn that it is just something you will have to overcome. And that is what we do. We do not consider going to Copenhagen and visit our son as distance, and those in Nyborg is also no obstacle, because we would just be seated in our car and drive." I1# (3.1).*

This parallel between distance and car is supported by other interviewees:

*"Last week I was in Århus, because there was something particular that I wanted in Århus, and then I had to drive to get it... Others might think that it is awful, but then I would have to say that it is my choice. Otherwise I should not live in Thy. If I wanted these things all the time, then I should not live in Thy but in Århus or outside Århus. So going to Århus is really no issue for me. Often I become tired, but then I would spend most of a day there, though my appointment is not till the middle of the day, and then I would have dinner with my son and so on. But no, it is all about the attitude. If I have taken a choice there is probably some opt-outs, that is always how it is... additional choices and opt-outs... and then you have to find a balance, and then you would have to say: that you take most choices in places where you have the additional choices I want and then I would have to live with the opt-outs, that is just how it is. It [distance] means out in a car... or on my feet, or what it is about" (I1#1.1).*

The perceived distance is regarded as a self-imposed choice, where the interviewees state that they have chosen the proximity to nature over proximity to other activities. However the interviewee who does not own a car has a somewhat different opinion about distance. For her distance or activities outside the local area often equals waiting time, because she has to wait for the bus, and it annoys her that she could have spent the waiting time on something else. In the same way one interviewee do not consider all distances a choice of his own and thus has a somewhat different view from the other interviewees:

*“Relatively far, yes... If you e.g. have to go to the recycling depot, then you have to drive a bit to reach it... Also just if you have to go shopping, then you have to go to Klitmøller, and that is five kilometres from here, so it all take some time [...] so everything takes time, it is not just something you just do, just five minutes at the grocer's then you have shopped, not at all. And it is really troublesome if we all need to go including the kid, then it takes some more time to get the baby carriage into the car, and everything like that, compared to if you could just walk with the baby carriage. So everything just takes a little longer. [...] yes I believe so [that the distances is long for activities outside the local area] Take my unemployment fund as an example, it is Det Faglige Hus and it is not placed here in Thisted or Thy. And then when I have to go to a three-month-conversation [...] then I have to go all the way to Aalborg [One and a half hour of driving time]. You have to go to Aalborg to talk to some lady for ten minutes and then go all the way back afterwards [...] Sometimes I just believe that it is really annoying and especially that you parents live down there [in Randers], that is not cool... and it is not cool that you have to go to Aalborg in a car that guzzle a bit more petrol than other cars, just to be there for ten minutes and then go back... I think it is a mess... But that is just how it is to live out here.” (I1#4.2).*

This person moved to Nationalpark Thy from Randers (the 6th largest city in Denmark) approximately two years before this interview and as he is the most newly arrived and on the same time the most sceptical about the distance it might be a factor that residents will get used to the distances – as was the example with the wind in chapter 8.

Another interviewee also worries about the costs of the cars but more in relation to increasing levies:

*“We are lacking lots of infrastructure out here, proper roads and things like that, but it is not like that you cannot get around... Well sometimes I wonder... when the government talks about higher levies and more expensive levies on four-wheel drives etc. and out here... I have a four-wheel drive because our roads are not cleared at wintertime, and then we cannot get out of here without a four-wheel drive. And we have to have two cars, me and my wife, just to be mobile enough. So if I have to talk about problems, then I think it is that you do not see that outskirt areas as dependent on vehicles. And the fact that you are ready to charged extra levies on vehicle number two or on four-wheel drives and so on, that is a responsibility that I believe has some problems. Because if you take a walk down the main road then it is filled with pot holes, but the municipality cannot afford to repair it, and there is no snow clearance and there is no nothing. And you cannot get out of this village in any directions, without using the main road, if you do not have anything that can pull through sand. So if that is what we are talking about in relation to mobility, then I have no problem because I have invested in it and I pay expensive money for it...” (I1#3.1)*

Though some of the interviewees think they have long distances both in their everyday life and especially for the extraordinary activities the mobilities means that most of them do not consider distance a challenge – but those with a low motility, in this case the woman without a car and the young unemployed who has to travel a long distance to get his unemployment benefit - both are glocalists, view this in another way. However they all accept that it is one of the parameters that come with living in a rural outskirt area. They have all chosen to live there anyway for the recreational possibilities in close proximity to the area. But there is a fear that expenses on cars and fewer bus departures will make it more challenging to live in these places in the future.

## 9.7 SUM UP

The residents in Nationalpark Thy find that physical mobilities is what enables their life and by this they overcome the long distances that exist both to the activities in the local area as well as for the activities outside the local area. For this the most important means of transportation is the car and the possibility to move around by car also seems to be what marginalise the challenges that come with the long distances. One interviewee without a car feels that distances is more of a challenge than the rest of the interviewees. And several mention that life without a car would

have the consequence that it was no longer possible for them to live there. A couple of the interviewees mention the fear of higher expenses on the use of cars.

This chapter shows that the car, with almost no exceptions, is the mean of transportation that is used to and from the area and in general for longer distances, this goes for both locals and tourists. It was further shown that the softer modes are used to move around in the local area both for the local's activities and grocery shopping and as the main mode used by the tourists in the area. Further the possibilities to use the softer modes as recreational mobilities is mentioned by one of the interviewees as main reasons of living there – the proximity to the nature. Therefore it is important not just to focus on a good road infrastructure between villages, cities and destinations in the area but further to enable materials (pathways, smooth pavement etc. that afford the softer modes in the local areas).

Car-sharing is today little used in Nationalpark Thy, and there might be a potential to systematise the car-sharing in these areas more.

To sum it all up; in short physical mobilities in these areas are vital and contrary to what Nels Anderson wrote in 1929 that the city “...is more mobile, mobility being a characteristic of its life just as stability is characteristic of rural life.” (Cited in Cresswell, 2006, p. 18).

Next it will be investigated if this need to be physically mobile can be replaced by virtual mobilities and in general to investigate what role virtual mobilities play in the rural outskirts.





## 10. VIRTUAL MOBILITIES

This chapter will show that it is difficult to think that virtual mobility will be the solution to all the problems in the rural outskirts areas due to both access to virtual mobilities, skills to use it and the appropriation (Kaufmann, 2002). However it will show how the respondents seem to have acknowledged the importance of this mean of mobility, how virtual mobilities both eases their lives in Nationalpark Thy and how it has increased the possibilities for those able to use it.

This chapter will investigate access, skills and appropriation of virtual mobilities in Nationalpark Thy and further include other rural outskirts in Denmark. It will draw on register data of the rural outskirts in general and use more detailed information from Nationalpark Thy, both questionnaire data from residents and tourists and interviews with residents. Further it will discuss what this means for some of the challenges and potentials in these areas and discuss if there is a “digital divide” (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011) in the area<sup>1</sup>.

### 10.1 ACCESS TO VIRTUAL MOBILITIES

An important part of having access to virtual mobility is ownership to a device that can connect you to the Internet. In Denmark in general 88 pct. of families have access to a computer at home (Danmarks Statistik, 2011) and the questionnaire shows that in Nationalpark Thy 93 pct. of the respondents have access to a computer from home and thus more than the average in Denmark.

The other thing you need to be virtual mobile is internet access. In Denmark almost every resident can have access to broadband <sup>2</sup> and even 99 pct. can have access to 2 Mbit/s download (It- og Telestyrelsen, 2010). The big difference between areas within the country becomes visible when speeds from 30 Mbit/s download and 10 Mbit/s upload and faster is analysed, which are the speeds necessary to work from home, if you have a data heavy job.

Figure 10.1 and figure 10.2 shows that some areas in Denmark have a very good access to high internet speed. This is however not the case in most rural outskirts areas where less than 50 pct. have access to these speeds. The reason for this is that in Denmark so far broadband is expanded through market forces unlike other services like electricity, water supply, roads etc. The market forces have not been strong enough in these rural outskirts areas to secure the roll-out of faster speeds. However at the moment different regional and national initiatives are on its way to close some of the “black holes” in the broadband infrastructure. Furthermore there will often be large differences within the municipalities with the most peripheral places in the municipality having the lowest speed. However both figure 10.1 and figure 10.2 shows that the southern part of Denmark in general has a larger part of the population for whom these high speeds are available, which is because a utility company in the region of Southern Denmark has made a large investment in fibre optic broadband to most parts of the region.

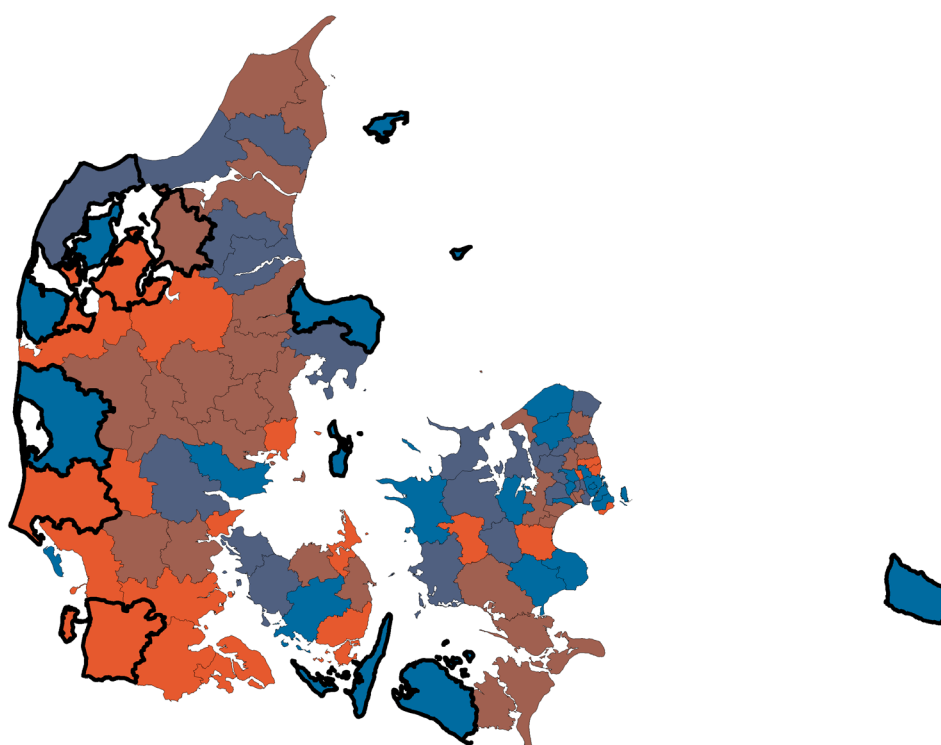
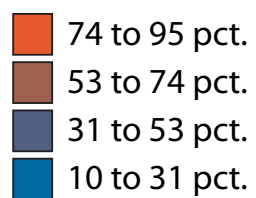
Almost everybody in the Danish population can connect to broadband even though the speeds differ a lot across the country. In Denmark in general 89 pct. have access to internet at home (Foreningen af Danske Interaktive Medier, 2011) and in Nationalpark Thy 91 pct. of the respondents state that they have access to internet from home. Once again this number is higher than the average in Denmark. The explanations of why people choose not to have access to the internet show that, the most common explanation among the Danish population is that people do not need it (61 pct.), they do not know how to use it (15 pct.), they do not want it (13 pct.) or that computer or internet is too expensive 12 (pct.) (Danmarks statistik, 2011). In Nationalpark Thy two respondents mention the price as an explanation, two wants internet but have not made the installation yet and one person have chosen not to have it. This gives a division of people, who have chosen not to have the connection and people, who are forced not to have the connection.

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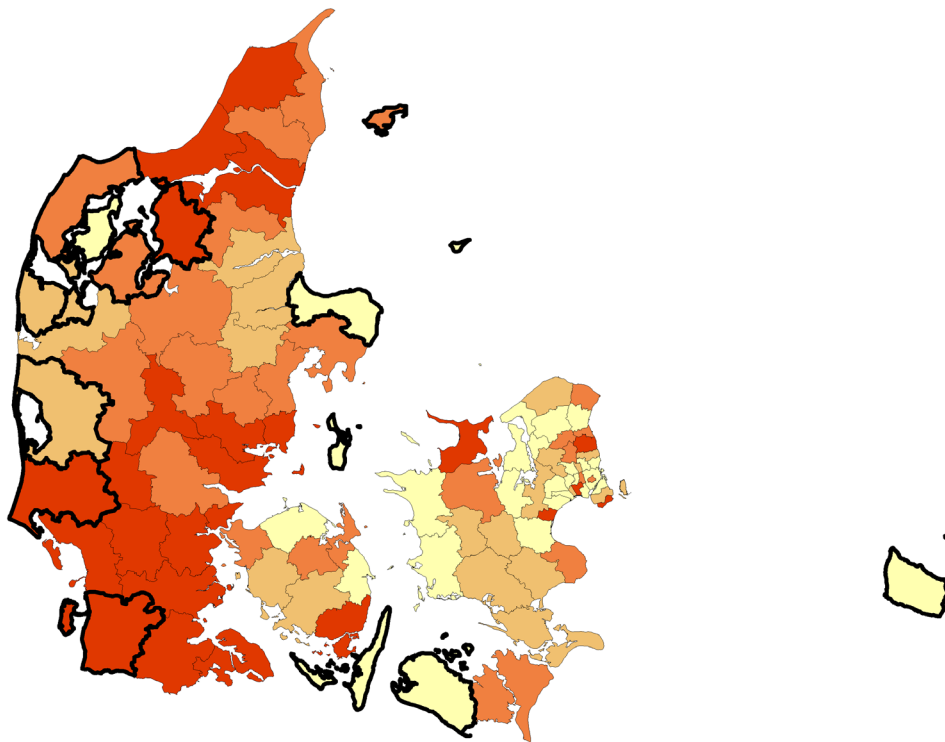
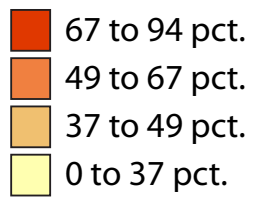
1 This chapter was developed in an earlier version as part of the conference paper "Virtual Mobility in Rural Denmark".

2 Denmark follows the OECD broadband criteria which is defined as 256 kb or faster (OECD, 2010)



**Access to 30 Mbit/s download**

*Figure 10.1 Access to 30 Mbit/s download. The black borders highlight rural outskirts municipalities - developed together with Michael Jensen in 2012*

**Access to 10 Mbit/s upload**

*Figure 10.2 Access to 10 Mbit/s upload. The black borders highlight rural outskirts municipalities – developed together with Michael Jensen in 2012*

### TYPE OF INTERNET

Next focus will be on those with the access and to investigate which type of internet the respondents and Danish people in general can access, this is depicted in figure 10.3.

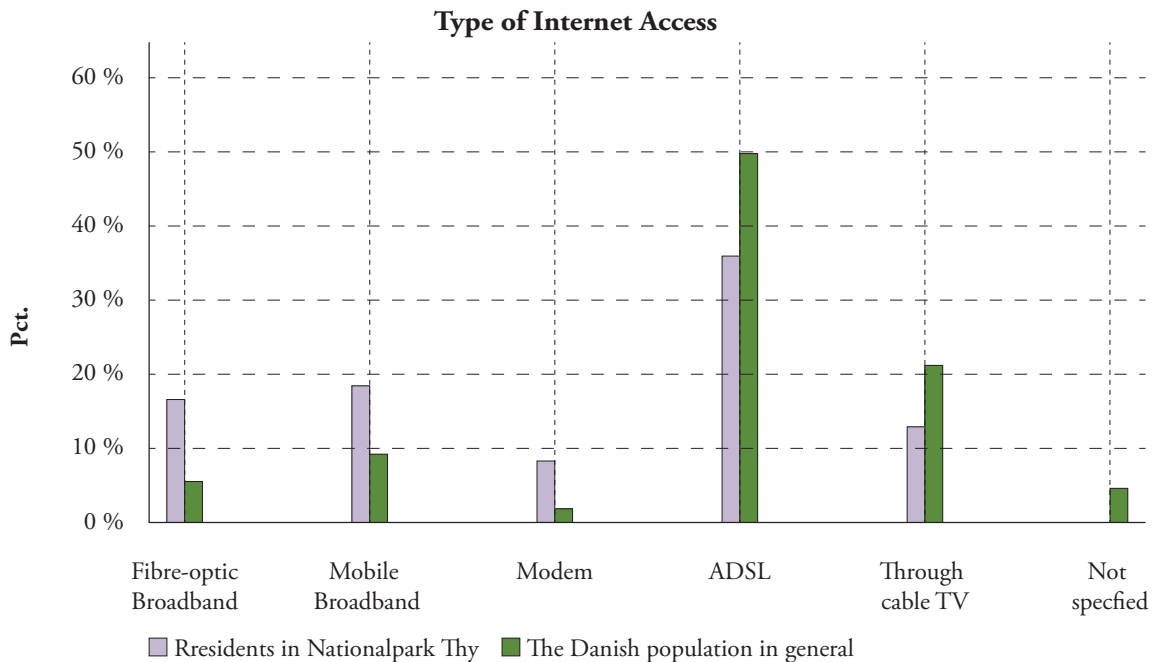


Figure 10.3 Type of internet access among the residents in Nationalpark Thy and the Danish population in general (Statistics Denmark, 2015) (QL: 15 n:88)

On both national scale and among the respondents not that many have access to fibre-optic broadband, even though the respondents have a higher use of this than the public in general. The low access to fibre-optic broadband might be a problem today and will definitely be a problem in the future. The reason is that with a cobber wire connection (ADSL and modem) the distance to the central broadcasting the signal is influencing the speed of the available internet, which is not the case with fibre-optic cables<sup>3</sup>. In the rural outskirts areas where distances are a problem the lacking use of fibre-optic broadband could be a problem, if the request of faster internet increases. It is assumed that this request will increase in the future as the Danish broadband speeds doubles every two or third year, and it is assumed that this trend will keep on with an average need of 200 Mbit/s download in 2020. So the ADSL will soon be insufficient if it is not already today. This leads us to investigate which internet speed is available for people, or which internet speed people have chosen to have access to.

<sup>3</sup> Network specialist Michael Jensen explains in a talk that at 2300 meter distance to the central on cobber wire it is almost impossible to have a 10Mbit/s download and 1 Mbit/s upload connection whereas on a 10 km distance to a central on fibre-optic broadband it is still possible to have 1000 Mbit/s download and 1000 Mbit/s upload.

Figure 10.4 shows the largest group of respondents (26 pct.) have chosen to have a 10 Mbit/s connection, which is also a popular speed for the Danes in general; around 40 pct. have chosen a connection between 4-10Mbit/s in 2010 (It- og Telestyrelsen, 2010). The average internet speed of the respondents' is 11.8 Mbit/s (in 2011). This is a little less than the median speed which was 12.6 Mbit/s downstream in the first half of 2011 (Erhvervs- og Vækstministeriet, 2011).

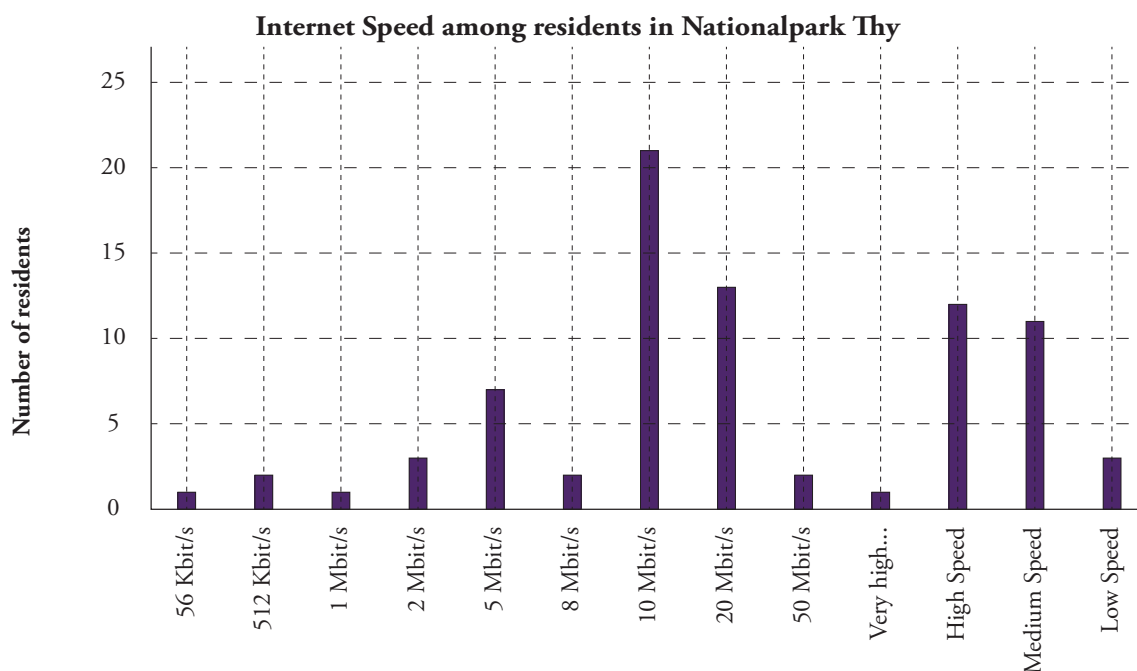


Figure 10.4 Internet speed among the respondents – they could either reply the specific speed or how fast they considered the speed if they did not know the specific answer (some replied both) (QL: 16 n:80)

It is not easy to state the speed which is necessary to be virtual mobile, because it depends on the services that you are using. But for most companies and employees a minimum is the possibility to shop and trade online, to communicate with other companies, public authorities and to register your company data with the authorities e.g. VAT and tax. The very minimum speed you can have and still carry out these tasks is a 2 Mbit/s download and 512 Kbit/s upload. However most companies and employees would need a much faster connection than that e.g. if they have to send or receive large graphical material, have a video conference etc. Also farmers, who are leaders of large industries in the rural outskirts, today request a fast internet connection. For a private person the requested speed can for an example be to be able to watch TV - a TV takes more than 10 Mbit/s to give a proper HD-picture – two TVs take the double.

## MOBILE PHONE ACCESS

Another type of access to virtual mobilities is through a mobile phone and wireless internet. In Denmark 97 pct. of all families have access to a mobile phone (Danmarks statistik, 2011). Among the respondents the number is 98 pct. Once again it is very similar to the Danes in general. This gives the respondents very good possibilities to be in contact with the outside world; that is of course if they can get a signal on their mobile phone. And for some of the residents this mobile phone becomes a life line:

*"Well, the mobile phone I do believe it means a lot to people out here, that is when you walk and move and maybe feel.. you can soon feel very alone out here, you just walk up a sand dune and then you are gone... then I believe that the mobile phone... At least one have heard others talk about, that they carry it along and hope for coverage, at least you will have a feeling that you are more safe [...] Because you can call if you fall and break a leg or is bit by a viper or what you could imagine of accidents.. So it is a good thing, the mobile phone is a good thing up here. Of course it always is but here especially because it is so deserted." (II#1.2)*

Figure 10.5 shows that the residents in general think that there is quite good coverage for mobile phone signals. However 15 pct. think that there is bad or very bad coverage. The 15 pct. who thinks there is a bad coverage is mainly located in the southern and inland part of the national park. Even though it is negative that some parts of the area experience a bad coverage, it is fortunate that it is the inland parts and the southern part where the national park area is very narrow, since installation of any tall facilities including mobile masts in the national park area is not permitted. This means that it will be possible in the future to improve the mobile coverage in the lacking areas like it has been done in Stenbjerg (one of the small villages in the area) which used to have one of the worst mobile phone connections in the country (Nordjyske, 2011). The large differences within the Nationalpark territory are also visible by some of the statements from the interviewees. For one of the respondents the good connection in his village means possibilities and the feeling that they do not live in a rural outskirts:

*"But we have the exact same possibilities. All we need is to activate them. I actually have access to 3G here in Vorupør. It is completely grotesque, that when I play or chat with someone and is driving towards Thisted, when I get closer to Thisted then I cannot chat any more... Because they do not have 3G in Thisted. That we do have in Vorupør, and thus we are actually less 'Udkantsdanmark' than our royal borough." (II#2.2).*

However another respondent, who is living in Agger in the southern part of the Nationalpark territory, have another impression:

*"The everyday life would of course be easier if I had an easier access to digital media. That is if I could make a proper phone call without the system break down. If you do not have TDC out here, than you would almost not be able to talk to anyone. You cannot choose another company; you do not have liberty of choice to pick another company, because TDC is the only one with coverage out here. And broadband... now you can couple up on Altibox, who have decided to roll out fiber optic broadband here, and that is amazing. But it is only because residents in the village have fought to gather citizens to sign up." (II#3.1).*

Some of the tourists staying in Nationalpark Thy agree with this last interviewee. When asking the tourists about their internet habits while staying in Thy, four of them mention that there is a bad coverage and that they would like a better access, even though this is not even the question asked. Again when the tourists are asked to provide improvement proposal for the area, internet access and better coverage was mentioned several times (9 and 5 times respectively). It is mainly the Danish tourists who are asking for better coverage and mainly the foreign tourists who are asking for better access e.g. hotspots and internet cafés, which is probably due to the roaming prices across borders.

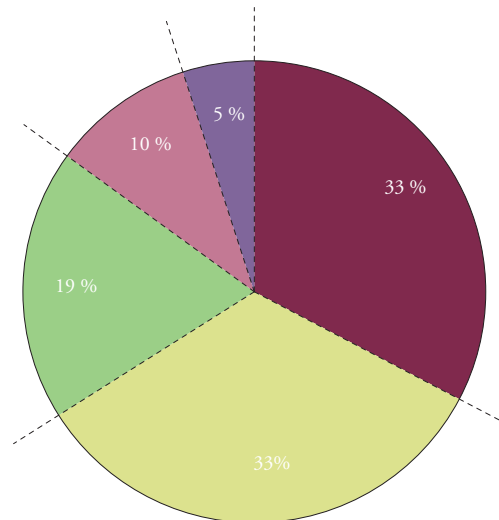
The respondents have a high access to mobile phones, and most people think that the mobile phone coverage in the area is ok. Next focus will be on access to Internet on mobile phones.

Figure 10.6 shows that around half of the people owning a mobile phone have access to internet on the phone (42 of 80 – 53 pct.), and of those most have 1 or 2 Mbit/s.

To sum up it is shown that almost the entire Danish population can have access to internet if they want to and can

afford it. However when it comes to the speeds necessary to be able to be virtually mobile, there is a big difference of access in different parts of Denmark, where it is mainly the rural outskirts areas that are left behind with less access to fast connections. Furthermore in many places, both in Denmark in general and in Nationalpark Thy, the main type of broadband is ADSL which is a cobber wire broadband. With cobber wire the distance to the central that broadcast the signal is very important for the speeds available. With sparsely populated areas and long distances, which most rural outskirts areas have, it is assumed that most people will have long distances to the central and therefore will not be able to have the speeds requested in the future. However access to internet is not enough to make you virtual mobile, you will need to know how to use the access. This is why it-skills are investigated in the next paragraph.

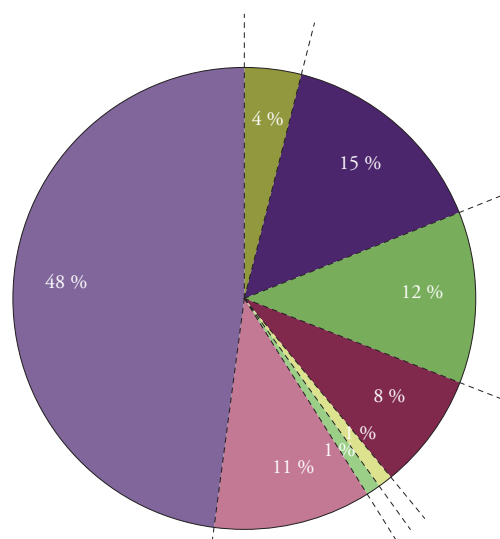
### The respondents' Impression of Mobile Phone Coverage in Nationalpark Thy



Very bad coverage    Bad coverage    Medium coverage    Good coverage    Very good coverage

Figure 10.5 How the respondents consider the mobile phone coverage (QL:18 n:88)

### Internet Speed on Mobile Phone



Do not have internet on mobile phone    Do not know the speed    15 Mbit/s    6 Mbit/s    8 Mbit/s    2 Mbit/s    1 Mbit/s    64 Kbit/s

Figure 10.6 Respondents who have internet access on their mobile phones (QL: 17 n: 88)



## 10.2 SKILLS TO USE VIRTUAL MOBILITIES IN NATIONALPARK THY

No statistics exist about it-skills of Danes in general, the statistics are either very specific on e.g. the ability to use different programs or it is not a general population like only internet users (Danmarks statistik, 2011). Also this knowledge is divided into age groups, sex but not into municipalities which means that the rural outskirts areas cannot be compared to the rest of the country. However one statistic that gives the information requested, is the activation of nemID<sup>4</sup>, which include both skill to maneuver a computer, ability to use the internet and navigate online (all skills that is necessary to be virtual mobile as explained in Chapter 4). From November 2014 this is the only way to communicate with the public authorities (including taxes, apply for different things, information from the public etc.) unless you apply for an exception, therefore it is assumed that everyone who has the skills would use and thus activate their NemID.

Figure 10.8 shows that people with the highest it-skills are centered around the 4 main cities (Aalborg in the North, Århus in the middle, Copenhagen to the east and Odense to the south). The lowest it-skills is found outside the cities and especially in the rural outskirts municipalities. These municipalities are all positioned in one of the two lowest categories. In Thisted Municipality in which Nationalpark Thy is located, they have the lowest degree of activated nemID. However figure 10.7 shows, that in Nationalpark Thy the respondents evaluate their skills as pretty good, since 59 pct. state their it-skills as really good or good, whereas only 9 residents think that their it-skills are bad or very bad. And this is the case despite the fairly old average age of the respondents on 58.4 years.

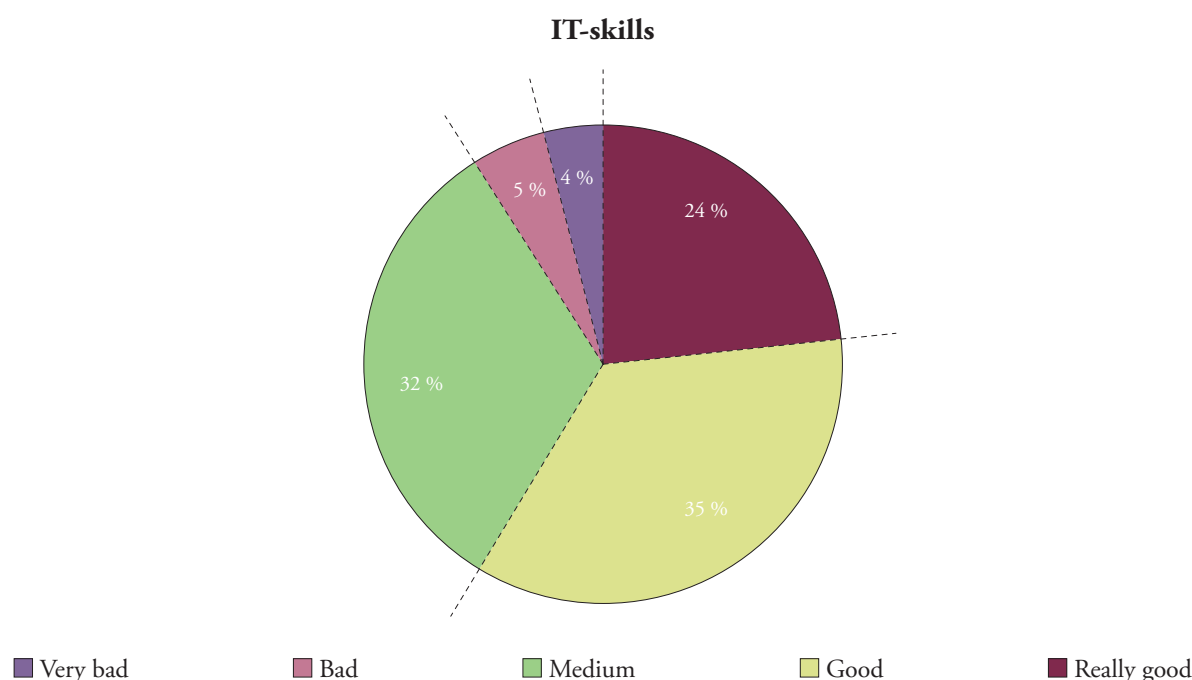


Figure 10.7 The respondents' evaluation of their it-skill (QL:21 n:86)

Most of the interviewees also believe they have good it skills:

*"I do believe that I am quite good at it, I am not a geek but I am interested in IT and I do believe that I use the possibilities available." (II#2.2).*

And two of the interviewees actually work with IT, one as a salesman selling IT-products and another one as one who among other things is a software developer and software architect - both are Cosmopolites. For some, though, the acquisition of the skills, have not been easy, one respondent describes it like this:

<sup>4</sup> "NemID is the new digital signature that will accelerate the Danish vision of one login for public and private services on the Internet. Your NemID login remains the same regardless of where you use it. The way you log in will always be the same, whether you are accessing your online banking service, e-Boks or the local public authorities' self-service or whether you are checking your insurance or retrieving your tax return from the Danish tax authorities, SKAT." (Digitaliseringsstyrelsen, N.D., pp. 0 - own translation)

### Percentage of NemID Activation

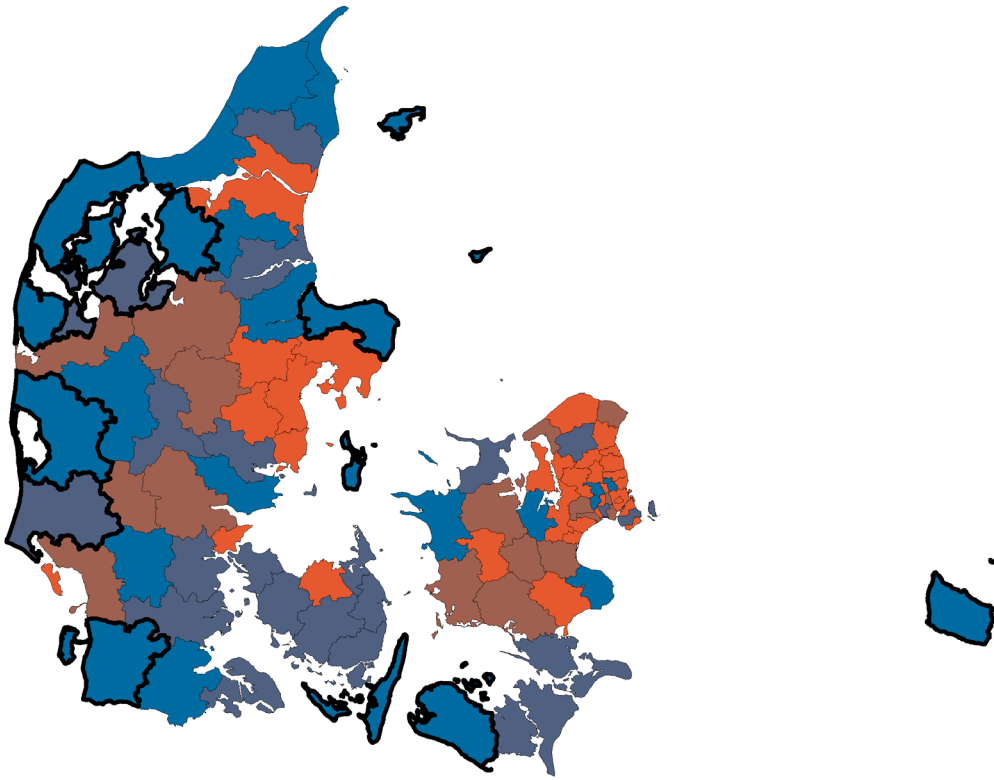
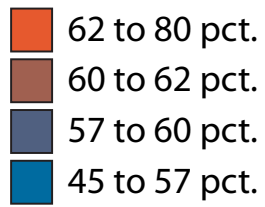


Figure 10.8 Percentage of people who have activated their NemID – developed together with Michael Jensen in 2012

*“I think it has been difficult, I have really... Well, normally I do not consider myself an unintelligent human being, but it truly has been difficult for me to learn the technology... And that Ipad, I just bought, that one I bring when I visit one of my girls, and I always have some questions, and then I count on that one of them will help me. Because I bought that one instead of a Sony or Samsung or others, and that is simply so that they can teach me and explain to me. I believe it is difficult and it has been a struggle for me for years. I have taken a lot of classes, which by the way also have been here in Stenbjerg, there have been quite a lot of IT-courses for people like me. And I have taken those classes for as long as I felt the need to... I am truly truly illiterate on that area, I do not at all speak the language that the computer does. It has been difficult, it has been very very difficult.” (I1#1.2)*

So even though the statistics show that the rural outskirts in general are behind on it-skills, the people living in Nationalpark Thy in general consider their it-skills appropriate. Of course these two parameters cannot be compared one to one, since one is a statical representation of a fact and the other one is a subjective evaluation. However the differences can also be explained by the diverse mix of people living in the area, which was presented in chapter 6, people who might have a larger need to be in contact with the surrounding world. Or it could be the group that chose to answer the questionnaire, because as one of the interviewees explain about the different uses of IT:

*“Then I believe that I am at one end of the scale, but without being a first-mover, and then it goes into the other end of the scale where people do not use it at all.” (I1#2.2).*

This division or segregation could have some consequences in a society more digital in the future. This could be because of the lacking skills but it could also be due to the appropriation of the access and skills.

### 10.3 APPROPRIATION OF VIRTUAL MOBILITY IN NATIONALPARK THY

The appropriation of virtual mobility is defined as the factors which influence the ‘Access’ and ‘Skills’ towards the actual mobility. It is very difficult to generalise into results, because it is very individual what influences this category. It could be how global oriented you are and if you have lived elsewhere and thus need to be virtual mobile with the people living elsewhere. Therefore these results are included as well as some comments from the interviewees.

Among the respondents in Nationalpark Thy 29 pct. have never lived in other areas, 71 pct. have lived in other areas but of these 5 pct. have only lived in neighbouring municipalities. This means that at least 2/3 have lived elsewhere and thus probably have friends or family to keep contact with in other parts of the country or world. And the way they are doing this is most often through phone conversation, Skype or facetime or through messages on e-mail, Facebook or the like.

*“I stay in contact with them. We talk a lot on the phone, and we e-mail a lot. And sometimes we also Skype... And I just bought an Ipad because everyone else also has one, and then it is easy to communicate with them and also with my grandchildren...” (I1#1.2)*

When I chose on my interviewees I chose two individuals who stated that they did not have internet at home. But when I came to do the interview a little more than a year later, they both had a computer and internet. I asked them if they felt they had to have internet or they wanted to have it, and the response was a combination:

*“Both... Well, one of my daughters lives in Brussels, and she has lived 10 years in Vienna. She kept telling me to learn e-mailing so that we could e-mail together and things like that. So it was actually her who got me started. It was easier to call my two other daughters. That is, that it was not that expensive as it is when a phone call crosses the borders. So it was actually because of her... Plus I was curious; I was very inquisitive to see what it was about... So it was both something I wanted and something I had to do. But I have stayed away from things like home banking and NemID, but now I just ordered NemID, and now I also want home banking, because there are just some things which are easier from home. I think that it will be nice.” (I1#1.2).*

The other one explains:

*"I had to. Right. Because everything happens online today, right. Now I do my banking from home and other public services, which no longer have manual service. Well it is a necessity. But I also think it is exciting." (I1#4.1).*

Among the interviewees it is a common thing that they appropriate their access and skills to stay in contact with friends and family, but one also appropriate it to meet new people. He owns a business in the small village and is therefore a very public person and feel limited to what he allow himself to do in the village, and thus he has a wish to open up for someone else:

*"That I have her [a virtual friend he met through wordfeud] is actually a result of that I had a wordfeud friend before who I also got to know everything about. I think it is extremely interesting to get to know new people. And actually I open up in a way different scale than I do with people. It is quite funny and I have thought about investigating if others feel the same way. It is a brand new virtual world. What I get from these two persons is almost something you could develop a professional concept around. How they and I dare to open up. I know nothing about them, how they are in real life. I have seen one picture. ONE picture, and then I know a lot of other stuff. But if they would open up if a stranger came in, I do not know, I know I would not do that. But it is all about the world getting smaller and smaller, it could as well have been someone from abroad. So you do not live in 'Udkantsdanmark' in the same way as you did in the old times." (I1#2.2).*

Here he explains how his behaviour changes when he is divided from the people he communicates with by a screen. Another one also explains how the virtual mobilities differ from reality. She tells how she takes some distance to this virtual world because it cannot give her the same experiences as a walk in the nature could:

*"One thing is to sit there and try to imagine...If you go into Nationalpark Thy [their webpage] and then you can always see the latest... Nationalpark Thy have some broadcasts several times a week. It is easy to find in there [on their webpage] and then I can join the trip. Karsten Bjørnsgaard, who is a nature guide, he had a trip with some children, where they looked at a porpoise, a dead porpoise... well if you had been there yourself... That is not at all the same experience... Then I could both have smelled it and touched it, and seen it in another way." (I1#4.1)*

The interviewees have different motivations for using virtual mobilities and that they have different experiences of it. They all use it, but for which activities?

#### 10.4 ACTUAL VIRTUAL MOBILITY

Next focus will be on the actual virtual mobility that the 'Access', 'Skills' and 'Appropriation' makes possible. Let us also remember from Kaufmann (2002), that not all potential mobility is necessarily transformed into actual mobility. As a beginning the respondents have been asked how they would solve different situations in their everyday life, to see how large a part the virtual mobilities play and to get an impression of how far this can be developed in the future.

When asked how the residents would plan a trip with public transport <sup>5</sup> 65 of them would use the internet, and for comparison only 35 would use the printed timetables and 11 would use an app for a mobile phone (from which 4 also) answered internet. This shows a fairly high degree of virtual mobility with 78 pct. that would use some kind of virtual technology.

When asked how they would seek information to experience their local area <sup>6</sup> 41 would use the webpage of Nationalpark Thy (44 pct.) and 19 would be inspired through Nationalpark television <sup>7</sup> for comparison. 46 would look in printed brochures and 32 would not seek any information, because they do not think they have the need, since they live in the area.

<sup>5</sup> Some answered more than one thing

<sup>6</sup> Some answered more than one thing

<sup>7</sup> Nationalpark TV from Nationalpark Thy is broadcasted on two local television channels 10 times al together every week. But all the broadcasts are also available on their webpage.

When the residents are to plan a vacation to other places<sup>8</sup>, the internet is the most used source of inspiration – this is what 63 uses (68 pct.). 23 are inspired by friends and family, 14 are inspired by television shows, and 30 are inspired by magazines and brochures. Once again the virtual solution is the most used. This corresponds very well with the Danes in general, where 60 pct. uses the internet for services related to travel and accommodation. In two of the three examples the virtual mobilities is the preferred solution, and that the internet in general plays a fairly high role in their everyday life. This is not just the case for Nationalpark Thy, but the use of internet have been manifested in the everyday life of many Danes where 76 pct. of the Danish population uses the internet on an everyday basis or almost every day (Danmarks statistik, 2011). It is not assumed that this trend will change in the near future.

### **VIRTUAL MOBILITIES AS PART OF THE EVERYDAY LIFE**

Virtual mobilities seem to be an integrated part of the everyday life. While listing the activities in a weekday, many of the interviewees mention this. As an example:

*“... then I would sit down and have my breakfast and spend a long time on that, and watch the news and take it nice and easy. Check my computer, mails and the stuff that I would like to follow, news and that...[later]... write, write mail, as previously told I am not that much the telephone type, I am more what used to be the traditional letter type that now is more e-mails.” (I1#1.1).*

Besides being an integrated part of the everyday life, business is also affected by these virtual possibilities. This account in correlation with business both import and export to the area. One of the respondents owns an online tobacco store as part of his grocery store in Thy and see some benefits from the location in the outskirts:

*“I have a web shop, and this part of the shop could be located here as well as at other places. We sell pipes and tobacco... And the tobacco shops at Strøget [the main pedestrian street in Copenhagen] had to close, all of them, because of the large rents over there, but I have a quite reasonable growth, so a location in Vorupør might be better than at Strøget, if you are to sell pipes and tobacco today. Of course I use mails a lot; I have made some commercials about my business on YouTube and on our webpage.” (I1#2.2)*

The other way around one explains how she uses the virtual mobilities to do lots of shopping of things that she cannot buy in the local area:

*“Well it could be anything from... now we are having a new TV because the other one exploded yesterday with fire smoke and everything... A new Iphone to our foster daughter and it is quite a lot of different foodstuffs, the more special food, or it could be, not that I buy a lot of cloth, but it could be cloth, I inherit from my children and grandchildren and is fine about that... Electronics, cd's, everything.” (I1#1.1)*

### **THE TOURISTS' USE OF VIRTUAL MOBILITIES**

When focusing on the tourists' use on virtual mobilities while staying in Thy, the activities is shown in figure 10.9.

Most of the tourists' virtual activities are connected to some kind of contact or communication with people or the life from back home, this includes both working, social media, mailing and reading the news. However a large part of the activities are also focused on finding information on the holiday location. Thus tourists look for both information, navigation, and several mention beside this that they have used the internet to find information on the weather. To know that so many tourists use internet during their stay might be very useful information for the tourism sector, which could gain from a much more dynamic and virtual communication with the tourists. A large part of the tourists is actually using virtual mobilities on their holiday; this is around 60 pct. of the Danish speaking tourists, around 55 pct. of the English speaking tourists and 45 pct. of the German speaking tourists. An even larger amount of the tourists are staying in contact with people from back home during their stay; most people by using their telephone either by calling or texting and around 1/4 is also e-mailing,. The Danish tourists use their phone more than the foreign, and some tourists are still sending postcards to family and friends – especially the foreign tourists. This is valid for around half of the English speaking tourists and around 60 pct. of the German speaking tourists. Only between 8 – 14 pct. of the tourists have no contact with people from back home.

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<sup>8</sup> Some answered more than one thing

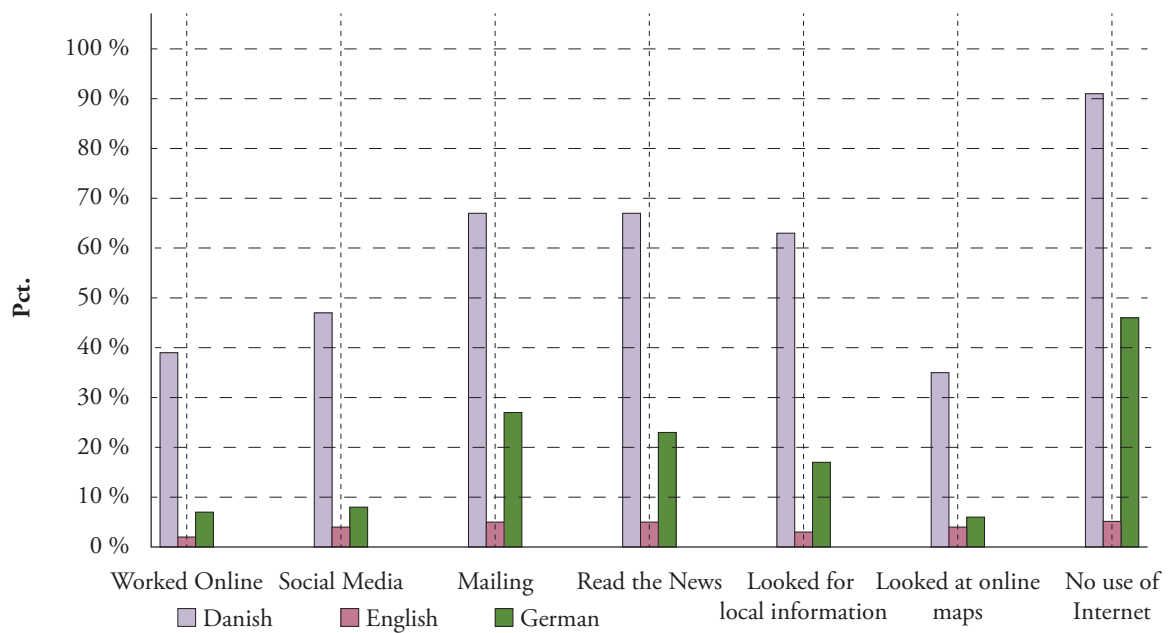


Figure 10.9 Tourists' use of virtual mobilities in Nationalpark Thy (QD: 223n: 15 QE: 15 n: 11 QG: 15 n: 85)(Some answered more than one thing)

To sum up, some uses virtual mobilities as part of their jobs, some to expand their professional knowledge, some to do their everyday tasks as banking and shopping and some as part of their spare time activities e.g. to find a knitting pattern. In general virtual mobilities seem to have gained a footing among the residents and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, and it seems to have become an integrated part of the everyday life and holiday experience. But has this eased the life in these areas, and is it a development which is beneficial for everyone?

### 10.5 DISTANCE OR PROXIMITY

The interviewees explain how much virtual mobilities have become part of and affected the everyday life. Some of them explain how virtual mobilities mean connection to the outside world and a new way to stay more close to friends and family:

*"It truly means a lot, it means incredible much... Also because we can Skype, and you can see each other, and you can see that the cat is walking around, and the grandchildren. You could say that it is a little unimportant, but it is something that enables following each other's everyday life. And when my grandchild lived in Vienna, she could show me how she could skip and stuff. Well, it does mean something that you get that small connection to each other. It actually means that you could be seated on Christiansø and still do a lot because of this technique, it is amazing, truly, wonderful. I think it means a lot when you live in places like this." (I1#1.2).*

Another one also explains how she get to know her grandchildren despite the distance between them.

*"And we skype or facetime with our grandchildren, depending on what system each of us uses. And that is really nice. With the small ones, that is my oldest boy's children who is four and two and my youngest son's child who will be two years quite soon, we are talking to all of them through this system and I think it works, it is lovely. Because we do not see them every day, they are not living next door so they are not coming over all the time, but we actually get to know them, and they know who we are, even though eight days or 14 days passes without us seeing each other [physically]." (I1#2.1)*



Yet another one also explains how it means connection with the outside world, but also how it has increased her opportunities to get products that would normally not be available:

*“Well, it means some kind of connection in some way. Today I find it difficult to understand why I was such a slow starter of using the internet. I was the last one in this family and I was the last one of my sisters. My sister said to me that she would not be able to live without the internet, well she is also a journalist, but my response was that it worked fine for me. But I did not believe that I would know how to use it, and that is no problem. So it means contact, connection that is. It means that I get lots of information which I would not otherwise have received. It would mean shopping opportunities which I would otherwise not have had, exactly because we do not have these specialty stores.” (I1#1.1).*

Just as she mentions that she receive information she would not otherwise have had access to, another one also mentions how she feels more updated:

*“It means that I feel updated. And that is important. Before I got it [the Internet], I would go to libraries and find the newspapers, and now I can do it from home. And all that about mails is also easier.” (I1#4.1)*

Several of the interviewees mention how it has eased their life, but one of them turns it around:

*“I do not know if I can allow myself to say that it has eased the everyday life, but it for sure increases the opportunities. I spend so much time on IT that you could discuss if I have created too high expectations [of what it can do for him] but it does give some opportunities.” (I1#2.2)*

Beside easing the everyday life and enhancing the possibilities it could also ease the business life for some of the businesses in the area, things which could save both time and money. One of the interviewees explains:

*“Today the internet can solve lots of issues. If I think back 20 years, to the time when we had our first cash register system that caused lots of trouble. Every time there was a problem we had to have a technician who came all the way from Århus. It was dreadful. It took three hours before he could be here and it costed the earth. That is not how it works any longer. If we have a problem today, I just call in and they take remote control over the computer and solve the problem just as fast in Vorupør as in Frederiksberg [urban district in Copenhagen]. So the new technology helps a lot.” (I1#2.2)*

Besides easing everyday life and enhancing the possibilities, another one explains how all these technologies have the effects that she never feels alone:

*“When I walk around in the golf club in Nystrup [close by the Nationalpark territory], which is placed really far out, and you put your MP3 player into your ears. Just as soon as you have the company of P1 Morgen [radio show], if it is that. At six o'clock in the morning when I start out there, sometimes half past five, then I have company. At least I do not feel that loneliness, which it could be out in the middle of the forest at pitch black. Well then I am never afraid.” (2.1)*

## 10.6 DIGITAL DIVIDE

However, whereas all this virtual mobilities eases the life or increases the possibilities for some, it might not have that effect for all. One of the interviewees explains how she just moved her father into a nursing home and how some of the collateral tasks were quite difficult. She explains how it was not possible for her to get a NemID in her father's name, and therefore had to travel long distances for the public services, and how it was difficult to find out who to contact. She ended up by saying:

*“I do understand if there are some people much older than me around who gives up on this.” (I1#2.1)*

As earlier explained today most people receive their mails from public authorities online, as well as all other communication with public authorities has to take place online – unless you have been granted an exception. When asked if everybody has access to these technologies, one interviewee explains:

*“I believe that everyone has internet. I cannot really think of anyone who do not have internet. Oh,*

*wait actually I can. There are a few people, older than me, locally rooted, maybe some of those who have children and grandchildren around here. [...] But otherwise I do believe that all most everyone has internet, mobile phone and so on. Well, mobile phones I do believe that everyone has out here, because it gives some kind of security.” (I1#1.2)*

There is a risk of a 'digital divide' (Gilbert & Masucci, 2011) between different population groups within the rural outskirts, as was also shown from the number of residents in the rural outskirts, that had activated their NemID as an indicator of the skills (Kaufmann, 2002) to use virtual mobilities. This means that for some the virtual mobilities eases the life and enhance the possibilities, whereas it might have the opposite effect for other groups, who do not have the skills for online communication with public authorities, and if granted an exception has to travel long distances to communicate with public authorities. However there is also a risk of a geographical 'digital divide' between urban areas and rural areas, where the rural areas do not have access to the same speeds as the urban areas and thus do not have the same development possibilities.

## 10.7 SUM UP

In many places both in Denmark in general and among the respondents in Nationalpark Thy, the main type of broadband is ADSL which is a cobber wire broadband. With cobber wire the distance to the central that broadcast the signal is very important for the speeds available and with sparsely populated areas as most rural outskirt areas are it is assumed that most people will have long distances to the central and therefore will not be able to have the speeds requested in the future. If virtual mobility should be a mean for development in the future, it would therefore be necessary with more fibre-optic broadband in these areas to prevent the geographical digital divide.

When investigating the it-skills the statistics showed that the rural outskirts in general are behind on it-skills. This could be related to the fact that many young people leave these areas to move to the cities and therefore the average age in the rural outskirts are higher compared to the rest of the country (chapter 6). Therefore to some extent the differences could be explained by age instead of geography. The fact that the age could explain the difference of it-skills rather than geography does however not change the fact that there is a large number of people in these areas who are lacking the proper skills to be virtual mobile, and an effort needs to be made. However the picture were quite different among the respondents in Nationalpark Thy; most of the residents considered their it-skills quite high, which holds a potential for this small area and gives an example of an area which has a potential to be virtual mobile.

When investigating the appropriation, it was shown that most of the respondents also had a connection to the surrounding world and therefore a need to be both physically and virtually mobile in the surrounding world: To go on holiday, find information and keep in contact with friends and family living in other parts of the country or world etc. Thus the virtual mobilities will make it possible for the residents in Nationalpark Thy to keep in contact with friends and family living further away and it might compensate for some of the large physical distances. However the large contact with the surrounding world probably also increases the need for the physical travel to those places.

And when this actual mobility was investigated it was shown that in two of the three examples that virtual mobility was the preferred solution, and that the internet in general played a fairly high role in their everyday life. It was further shown that the use of internet for different everyday tasks was increasing and argued that this trend is not about to turn around.

From the analysis in this chapter it seems very difficult to think that virtual mobility can be the solution to all problems in these rural outskirt areas. However, the respondents seem to have acknowledged the importance of this mean of mobility, since they have invested more than the rest of the population in devices which can connect to the internet and faster connections, and have higher skills. This group further used virtual mobility to a fairly high degree in their everyday life and that the use of virtual mobility in Denmark in general has been increasing and it seems as this trend will continue. The interviewees also mention how virtual mobilities both eases their lives in Nationalpark Thy and has increased their possibilities. But this is only true for those who uses it, and there is a risk that the rural outskirts will be more differentiated with an increasing digital divide between the users of virtual mobilities and those who are left out of this mobility mode.

Even though this chapter mainly focuses on virtual mobilities the purpose is not to argue that virtual motilities can replace other mobility modes. Not even if both virtual access, skills and appropriating (Kaufmann, 2002) are improved it will never be able to replace the other mobility modes. As shown in the previous chapter physical mobility plays a very important role in these. Attention needs to be placed on both modes.



# **PART 4**

# **Conclusions**



# 11. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

This chapter will briefly and chronologically sum up the main points of the research presented in the previous chapters of this thesis.

Following this, five main conclusions that cut across the chapters will be drawn, all contributing with valuable insight on what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area. Though the purpose of this study was to serve as a case study and therefore differs from other rural areas on several aspects, it is possible to make ‘analytical generalisations’ based on the study, transferring findings to other situations or places, based on an analysis of similarities and differences between this study and other cases. Furthermore, some of the empirical conclusions can be compared to some of the previously developed theory from the urban context, which was discussed in chapters 3 and 4. Therefore each conclusion will include a discussion on how the conclusions from this thesis can be generalized to other geographical areas and other contexts.

This chapter will further discuss future developments in the rural outskirts. It will take point of departure in some of the problems that was stated in the first part of the thesis and use some of the conclusions from the analysis of mobilities in Nationalpark Thy. Furthermore some of the trends that the author finds in the practicing world will be brought into the discussion.

The chapter will conclude with a suggestion of future studies that could contribute with more knowledge on mobilities in the rural outskirts.

## 11.1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS FROM THE THESIS

A childhood and youth spend in the rural outskirts initiated the mobilities musings presented in chapter 1: why my mobilities patterns change whenever I moved around in the rural areas compared to my everyday life in the city and why all the young people living in my home village did not experience the same “mobilities restrictions” as I did. My personal experience from growing up in an area like this, the musing this initiated, and my concern for these areas, have all influenced the approach within this thesis.

This PhD-thesis was further initiated from the many discussion on “Udkantsdanmark” that gained speed throughout the year 2010 and onwards. The discussion was grounded in the challenges that came from the fact that public services (e.g. hospitals, public administration and education) was centralised in the cities, and left the rural areas with depopulation, and more and more decoupled from economic growth. This further led to a number of challenges, e.g. empty houses and closing down of shops and schools, and further a number of mobilities challenges like longer distances to services, less foundation to maintain infrastructures and public transport services, and too few market forces to roll-out a proper broadband connection. An area that contain all these elements is Nationalpark Thy, which therefore, and from the fact that it also holds some potentials from the nomination as national park, was chosen as case area. Nationalpark Thy only covers rural areas. However four villages (Klitmøller, Vorupør, Stenbjerg and Agger) are surrounded by the park, and they have therefore been included in this investigation, in order to have both rural districts and villages in the case. When reviewing research into rural studies the conclusion was very clear: there is a lack of Danish cases and a lack of research focussing on rural mobilities, as was shown in chapter 3.

Finally, this PhD-thesis was also initiated from the research field of mobilities studies and ‘the new mobilities paradigm’, which is a growing research field, but one that has very few non-urban studies. The essence of ‘the mobilities paradigm’ is to understand the production and reproduction of society through mobilities optics and further to investigate “how mobilities produce and re-produce norms, meanings and cultures” (Jensen, 2010b). Also, ‘mobilities’ is not understood in a singular form, but instead in a plural form as ‘Mobilities’, which imply that the new mobilities research field particularly considers how various forms of physical, virtual and experienced mobilities interact and affect the development of societies. This has also been investigated in this thesis as will be elaborated upon later in this conclusion. Further mobilities studies is not just about transportation as some might think, it also covers areas like anthropology, cultural studies, geography, migration studies, science and technology studies, tourism and sociology.

With only little research on rural outskirts within the research field of mobilities and only few studies of mobilities in rural studies, the objective for this thesis has been to approach the rural outskirts and the challenges that they face



from the cross disciplinary mobilities perspective. The hypothesis has thus been that a joint approach of mobilities studies and rural studies, with mobilities as the framework and rural outskirts as the case area, would shed new light on these areas, which can be used in future studies and highlight new development possibilities in such areas. These frames combined with my own experience and musings has guided the thesis to be centred on the following research question:

**What does mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area?**

- **Which objectives does the new mobilities paradigm contribute with in the understanding of Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area?**
- **What role does mobilities identities and –culture (software) and materials (hardware) play for Nationalpark Thy and its users?**
- **How are the mobilities practised by both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, on which basis and what does it mean to them?**
- **How can this knowledge be used in the development of Nationalpark Thy and other Rural Outskirts?**

The main research question has guided the entire approach as well as serving as a red thread through all chapters. The sub questions have guided different parts and chapters and can to some extend be translated into specific chapters.

Sub-question one has mainly guided chapter 3 and 4 - **Which objectives does the new mobilities paradigm contribute with in the understanding of Nationalpark Thy, a rural outskirts area?** The broad research question, the little knowledge on mobilities in rural outskirts and the little use of rural outskirts as research area within mobilities studies made the foundation for a cross disciplinary approach. Further, the diversity in Nationalpark Thy as case area could bring many different elements in play. In order to meet and incorporate all the different elements from this that would contribute to the picture of what mobilities mean for locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, a “Mobilities Assemblage” was developed as the framework under which to investigate the subject matter. This “Mobilities Assemblage” spans a tension field of physical mobilities, virtual mobilities, mobilities software and mobilities hardware. That altogether incorporates the relevant elements to answer the research question. In order to derive these different elements, a pragmatic case study approach with a mixed method design was chosen – as presented in chapter 5. This approach supported the cross-disciplinary viewpoints from mobilities studies and made it possible to narrow down the relevant data from questioners, interviews, mobilities journals and observations that altogether contributed with the material that made it possible to answer the research question.

Question two have mainly guided chapter 7 and 8 - **What role does mobilities identities and –culture (software) and materials (hardware) play for Nationalpark Thy and its users?** In chapter 7 four types of mobile identities in Nationalpark Thy were identified: The Cosmopolite, the Glocal, The Placebound and the Locamobilist. These identities were developed in a tension field between a theoretical framework building on mobilities literature and the empirical data, and it was used to discuss how mobilities are practiced by locals and tourists. Further, the analysis showed that mobilities are a resource that is distributed unequally among the mobile identities in Nationalpark Thy, which provided them with different bases to practice mobilities on. Finally the mobilities culture in the area showed, among other things, that some of the assets the interviewees find in the area are the nature, the tourists coming to the area at summertime and the cohesion among the residents, where they care for each other. In chapter 8 it was analysed how Thisted Municipality, in which Nationalpark Thy is located, geographically is one of the largest in Denmark, which means that a large infrastructure network is needed to move around in the area. This means quite large expenses on maintaining a well-functioning road network for securing the infrastructure etc., but it also makes it difficult to service all places in the municipality with public transport. This also contributes to the fact that the car is the most convenient way to both come to the area and to move around in the area. It is flexible and can take you to the desired destination. Several interviewees associate the car with freedom and a necessity to live in the rural outskirts. One of the materials that is a great asset to the area as a destination is the wind that attracts windsurfers from all over the world to the Nationalpark area, but at the same time it also serve as a challenge for the softer mobilities modes and thus several interviewees explain how they e.g. would not use the cycle in windy weather.

Question three have mainly guided chapter 9 and 10 - **How are the mobilities practised by both locals and tourists in Nationalpark Thy, on which basis and what does it mean to them?** In chapter 9 it was shown how the interviewees in Nationalpark Thy believe that physical mobilities are what enables their life in the rural outskirts

and by this they overcome the long distances that exist both to the activities in the local area, as well as for the activities outside the local area. Further, there is also a tendency that the car with almost no exceptions was the mean of transportation that was used to and from the area for tourists and in general for longer distances for the locals. The softer modes were used to move around in the local area both for the local's activities and grocery shopping and as the main mode used by the tourists within the case area. In chapter 10 it was shown how the respondents had ADSL as the main type of broadband, where the distance to the central that broadcast the signal is very important for the speeds available, and with the sparsely populated area of Nationalpark Thy it was assumed that most people would have long distances to the central and therefore would not be able to have the speeds that they will request in the future. In general the rural outskirts has less opportunity for higher Internet speeds than the rest of the country. The same was evident regarding IT-skills. It was further shown how the use of virtual mobilities in Denmark in general has been increasing and it is expected that this trend will continue. The interviewees also mention how much these new possibilities means to them and they indicate that it has both eased their lives in these areas and has increased the possibilities.

Finally question four has mainly guided the second part of this chapter - **How can this knowledge be used in the development of Thy Nationalpark and other Rural Outskirts?** Here some concrete development possibilities for Nationalpark Thy will be discussed.

The following paragraphs will summarize the main findings and the central arguments in 5 conclusions that cuts across sub questions and chapters, and they will altogether contribute to answer the main research question.

## 1. MOBILITIES BRINGS NEW PERSPECTIVES ON RURAL OUTSKIRTS

As shown in chapter 3 not many mobilities studies have focused on rural outskirts and not many rural studies have focused on mobilities. This understudied research area and thus no obvious place to start the study was what initiated the broad approach to the research. The assemblage theory made the broad approach possible and enabled the choice of the very diverse case area. This has made it possible to see how the different modes of mobilities influence each other, how differences is experienced in the case area and how elements of the mobilities culture -the software- can help overcome some of the challenges from the materials (or lack of such) – the hardware. As will be shown in in the following it has provided the thesis with some broad conclusions and tendencies.

The fact that ‘mobilities’ is not understood in a singular form, but instead in a plural form as ‘Mobilities’, implies that mobilities research particularly considers how various forms of physical and virtual mobilities interact and affect the development of societies. This approach has enabled conclusion number 3 that will show how a combination of virtual and physical mobilities can ease the living in the rural outskirts as well as enhance the possibilities in the area.

A “Mobilities Assemblage” was established as the framework under which to investigate the subject matter. This “Mobilities Assemblage” span a tension field of physical mobilities, virtual mobilities, mobilities software and mobilities hardware. This framework made it possible to use the elements that were found to contribute with knowledge on the subject matter and deselect others in a pragmatic approach where only relevant information was used. This also opened the possibility to assemble the knowledge in new ways that enable conclusion number four and five that will show how the proximity to assets trivialise the long distances to and in the area as well as show how the residents living there do not form a uniform mobilities group. This approach where everything is subject for investigation if it has any relevance for the results will be very different from case to case, and thus the actual context and elements comprised in the mobilities assemblage in Nationalpark Thy would be expected to be very different in other rural outskirts.

Regardless the many pieces that was assembled in new ways it was still possible to put attention on one single element that also contribute with an important conclusion – that will be conclusion number two – that physical mobilities is vital to the residents in the Rural Outskirts.

## 2. PHYSICAL MOBILITIES IS VITAL FOR RURAL OUTSKIRTS

As expected, mobilities in the rural outskirts were nothing like Nels Anderson wrote in 1929 - that the city “... *is more mobile, mobility being a characteristic of its life just as stability is characteristic of rural life.*” (Cited in Cresswell, 2006, p. 18). On the contrary, physical mobilities are very much part of what defines the rural outskirts and, as expressed by several interviewees, it is vital for them. When asked what physical mobilities mean to them, it is very much the one thing they would not live without – it is what makes life in these areas possible. This will

be expected to be the case of other rural areas, which, like Nationalpark Thy, has sparsely populated areas and long distances between the functions in the area.

With only few daily departures with public transport and long distances between functions in the area, the car is without doubt the most used means of transportation in the area and almost exclusively the only means of transportation to and from the area – and this goes for both residents and tourists. The possibility to move around by car is also what mitigates the challenges that come with the long distances. Thus, the woman without a car also feels that these distances are more challenging than the rest of the interviewees do. And several mentions the life without a car would cause it impossible for them to live there. Furthermore, a couple of the interviewees mention the fear of higher expenses on the use of cars, as this would challenge them because of their dependence of the cars.

Besides being a necessity of everyday life, most of the interviewees also equal the car with freedom. A freedom to carry out spare time activities, freedom to visit whoever you want whenever you want to, freedom to take you out of the area if everything becomes too dreary. Freedom parked in the garage - knowing that you could go somewhere if you wanted to. For some families, one car is also not enough; they want to have one for each adult – some to be able to juggle their jobs and tasks during the day and some to ensure their personal freedom. Others do not have “the luxury of two cars” as they call it, and instead have to juggle the time schedule of the car and share rides with others in order to meet all needs.

However, the softer modes of mobilities also play an important role for local mobilities. It was shown in the analysis that the softer modes are used to move around in the local area both for the locals’ activities and grocery shopping and as the main mode used by the tourists in the local area. Furthermore, the possibilities to use the softer modes for recreational mobility – the proximity to the nature - is mentioned as one of the reasons of living there.

The forecast for the future says that there is going to be less people living in Thisted Municipality as well as a smaller workforce. This means less people to pay for the expenses which can make it difficult to maintain the infrastructure in the area. Already today, the condition of e.g. the cover and the snow clearing is noticed as a challenge in the area, as well as the frequency of bus departures.

### 3. THE COMBINATION OF VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL MOBILITIES MAKES LIFE IN NATIONALPARK THY POSSIBLE

Very often it is discussed whether or not you can substitute physical mobilities with virtual mobilities (Jensen M., 2011). In the rural outskirts this is not the central discussion, as was shown in chapter 10 in this thesis. Instead of an either/or discussion it is a discussion of supplementing the two, and there through creating new possibilities.

The interviewees in Nationalpark Thy explain how much virtual mobilities have become part of the everyday life and how much it has affected the everyday. Some of them explain how virtual mobilities mean connection to the outside world and is a new way to stay in more close contact with friends and family. It enables them to follow each other’s everyday life, for example get to know their grandchildren despite the distance between them.

The interviewees further mention that virtual mobilities means receiving information that they would not otherwise have received and a feeling of being updated. It further means shopping opportunities that they would not otherwise have had – being specialty stores and special produce and ingredients that the local grocery stores does not offer in their selection.

Thus the virtual mobilities will make it possible for the residents in Nationalpark Thy to keep in contact with friends and family living further away, and it might compensate for some of the significant physical distances. However, the substantial contact with the surrounding world probably also increases the need for the physical travel to those places, and thus it is very difficult to think that virtual mobilities will be the solution to all the mobilities problems in these rural outskirts areas. However, the interviewees mention how much these new possibilities means to them, and they indicate that it has eased their lives in these areas and has increased the possibilities. Thus the virtual mobilities compensate for some of the long physical distances in Nationalpark Thy and it could do so for other rural outskirts that also have large distances. However both access to virtual mobilities and competencies to use them need to be present.

Thus the argument is not that virtual mobilities can replace other mobilities modes. It will not be able to replace all physical mobilities in the near future - not even if both virtual access, skills and appropriation is improved. As

discussed in conclusion number 2, physical mobilities is vital for rural outskirts, but in a combination with virtual mobilities, new possibilities for the life in the rural outskirts can be created.

For some tasks the physical mobilities might even be replaced with virtual mobilities. It could e.g. be a distance meeting with the jobcentre for the young employee, so that he could spare the one and a half hour driving time in each direction to Aalborg for those meetings and instead use that time on writing job applications or go physically job seeking. Or an online consultation with the doctor, so that you could save the driving and waiting time in the surgery and instead do the laundry in the waiting time.

This last point was discussed with residents in rural outskirts at different occasions e.g. when I gave a talk and arranged a workshop at the "Ø og Land netværks visionsmøde" [Island and Land network vision meeting] on Tunø in May 2012. I explained how the virtual mobilities could create new possibilities such as visiting the doctor online. An elderly woman questioned this perspective with an argument of physical presence and social contact. I agree with her, but the question is with whom you want physical presence and social contact? Would you prefer the 10 minutes social contact with the doctor followed by one hour alone in the car (for her it could be between 5 and 24 hours travel and waiting time because she lived on an island) or to consult the doctor online and drink coffee with the neighbouring woman for that hour? Essentially the question is whether you prefer to travel the long distances to activities outside your local area, or whether you want to invest your time in the assets that you find locally and travel virtually to the other places.

#### 4. PROXIMITY TO ASSETS TRIVIALISE LONG DISTANCES

As mentioned in Chapter 1 "Introduction" one of the main challenges in the Rural Outskirts is the long distances. It is a problem that few inhabitants have to pay for maintenance of many kilometres of road, that it is difficult to service the area with public transport and that it can be difficult to roll out a proper broadband connection. However the assumption that the long distances and the location far away from the larger cities should be a problem for the residents living there turned out not to be true. And though the interviewees agree that these things are far away, they believe that the most important elements are in close proximity to their home. The conclusion that proximity to these assets trivialise long distances could be interesting to test in other rural areas, also to explore how many and what kinds of local assets a rural outskirts area needs to have to trivialise the distances.

As shown in the analysis, some of the assets the interviewees find in the area are the nature and it is mentioned by all of them as one of the reasons of why they live there. This place bound asset cannot be found elsewhere and that is what makes this area unique. In general the interviewees are very pleased with their local area, and besides nature this is because of the cohesiveness and solidarity in the area. Both in relation to how easy it is to meet people, how safe they feel in the area and how easy it is to get help. Further there is a feeling of being united in the local area and of caring about each other. This means that the residents are open to each other, but also that the local community is something that you need to invest in and that there are some rules to play by.

And though the interviewees sometimes have to leave their local area for one reason or the other, and though they feel that they then have to travel long distances, most of them agrees that distance does not matter that much. They believe that distance is a self-imposed factor and it is just something to get over and done with – and further they associate this distance with car driving and most agree that they enjoy the car driving time. However, those with a low motility - the woman without a car and the young unemployed who has to travel a long distance to get his unemployment benefit view this in another way. They believe that activities outside the local area can be a long distance and especially for the woman without a driver's license it can mean long travelling and waiting time. The young employee is the newest newcomer and at the same time the most sceptical about the distance. Thus distance might be a factor that residents will get used to – as was the example with the wind in chapter 8. However they all accept that it just is one of the parameters that come with living in a place like this, and they have all chosen to live there anyway for the assets in close proximity to the area. But there is a fear that expenses on cars and fewer bus departures will make it more challenging to live in places such as these in the future.

Whereas living in Nationalpark Thy, in many ways makes the daily physical mobilities a bit more challenging, it is different when it comes to the recreational modes. Here recreational soft mode mobilities such as walking, running, biking and surfing in the nature has a great meaning for many of the interviewees, and several of them uses this as an argument for living in a place like this, in their everyday life and instead have longer distances to the things that they would not use as often.

The assets in the area is also what attracts tourists to the area, and in the summertime when the tourists occupy the area, the distances to many activities and people are shortened since then many shops open and there are many more people to engage with in their neighbourhood. Most interviewees like this time of year, where everything is open. However, a few of them would rather want their local area to themselves, and these different opinions through the entire analysis also showed that the residents in Nationalpark Thy are not a uniform mobilities group as will be discussed next.

## 5. THE RESIDENTS IN THE RURAL OUTSKIRTS IS NOT A UNIFORM MOBILITIES GROUP

Throughout the analysis it was shown how mobilities is a resource that is distributed unequally among the mobile identities in Nationalpark Thy. As this case exemplifies, the car is a very important object in this mobilities culture, some interviewees think that it would be impossible to live in this area without access to a car. But at the same time the car becomes a differentiating object, since a little group of residents is excluded from the possibilities this object gives, and is hence physically excluded from the places in their local area and beyond that is only accessible by car. It is also the same group that find themselves to have the lowest skills to navigate public transport. All put together, these restrictions and skills places these resident in the bottom of the mobilities hierarchy, hence they cannot move as freely as the rest, and can passively set back and see how their motility is being changed from central side.

In the same way it was shown how virtual mobilities created differences in Nationalpark Thy. How 22 pct. of the Placebound and 9 pct. of the Glocalists consider their IT-skills poor and by that are left out from both social communities but also from public services, public participation, information etc. There is therefore a risk of a 'digital divide' (Sheller, 2011) between different population groups within the rural outskirts, meaning that for some the virtual mobilities eases the life and enhance the possibilities for some, whereas it might have the opposite effect for other groups. An example is those who do not have the skills for the online communication with the public authorities and, if granted an exception from having to use public services online, have to travel long distances to communicate with public authorities. However there is also a risk of a geographical 'digital divide' between urban areas and rural areas, where the rural areas are not able to have access to the same internet speeds as the urban areas, and thus not have the same development possibilities.

Furthermore, a difference in orientation on global matters or on local matters was shown. E.g. most of the Cosmopolite and the Glocalists, having lived in other places, are having a greater need to travel and experience other cultures, and in general find the global discussions more important than the local activities. However, even between these two global viewing identities a difference regarding tourists coming to the local area was shown, with the Cosmopolites being happy with the tourists visiting the area. The Glocalists accepted the tourists if they contribute to the local area and if they do not take up too much space. This more hostile view on tourists might be connected to the fact that the Glocalists do not to the same extend have the motility to leave the area and by that getting away from the tourists if they feel a need to.

A top and bottom of a mobilities hierarchy have been identified by several mobilities theorists as explained in chapter 4. In outskirts geographically similar to Nationalpark Thy it could very well also be the car and a digital divide that will serve as the yardstick that will divide the residents into a top and bottom of the mobilities hierarchy. However, with the quite diverse group of residents in Nationalpark Thy the division of people in a mobilities hierarchy in another rural outskirts area will probably look quite different.

However, it is important to be aware of these differences. The society has a tendency to view the rural outskirts as homogeneous areas and homogenous people. When discussing future development possibilities – both the challenges and opportunities this give – it is thus very important to be aware of what area and which people you are dealing with.

## 11.2 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL OUTSKIRTS

It is important to state that in "future development" there is not a goal of turning the development around in these areas. There is an upper limit to everything and I do not expect that by bringing a new perspective to the understanding of these areas I will solve all challenges. However, I do believe that by implementing (some of) the ideas presented in this chapter it will ease some of the challenges that come with living in these areas and it could also affect the reputation of the areas. If that could attract new residents, institutions and business life, I would find that a huge plus – but it is not expected. It is also important to state that what will be presented in this chapter is not a complete solution model. Instead it will be presented as possible solution strategies with examples of concrete



initiatives. It is not necessary to implement all strategies and initiatives at once – however some concrete initiatives might depend and benefit from other initiatives.

I will present 5 suggested development possibilities (some short term, some long term), and for each of them I will further discuss what new questions, challenges and dilemmas this future development raises.

## 1. FOCUS ON LOCAL ASSETS

As mentioned in the analysis, the interviewees are very proud of their local area and for most it is the main reason for living there. As argued earlier in this conclusion, the proximity to these assets trivialise the long distances to other things. There could therefore be a development possibility in enhancing the assets and communicating them to outsiders. A way to do this could be to use Nationalpark Thy as a framework to focus the initiatives. As explained in chapter 2 this is also the main purpose of the national park legislation – that the national park should be a frame – a field of possibilities – through which the territory can benefit. And the nomination as national park has provided the area with some new possibilities to develop the area and to attract new tourists and settlers.

So far the respondents believe that the nomination as national park has brought some positive elements to the area, almost 80 pct. believe that the nomination has brought more tourists to the area. Around 75 pct. believe that the nomination has had other positive effects like more companies, more jobs and larger export and in general they believe that they are met with a larger interest in their local area. Some believe that it means more development in the area and some believe it will mean new residents. These things are very bottom up – elements that can contribute to the private development in the area like the farmer who started exporting his meat, including the story that it was cows that have grazed in the national park territory - as explained in Chapter 2.

However the nomination has also contributed with attention from the public sector. An example of this is, that for a long time there was a wish in the area for a bike path from the North to the South, all the way through the national park territory, and with the nomination as national park this upgrade has been established. In general it is important not just to focus on a good road infrastructure between villages, towns and destinations in the area but also to enable materials (pathways, smooth pavement etc.) that afford the softer modes in the local areas as is already much used today.

However, one of the assets to the area is also a challenge for some of the mobilities. The wind that attract windsurfers from all over the world also serve as a challenge for the softer mobilities modes, and thus several interviewees explain how they would not use the cycle in windy weather. A means to overcome this obstacle might be electrical bikes, and as a way to test and disseminate this mean, Thisted Municipality or Nationalpark Thy could facilitate a “bike library” – a place to borrow different types of cycles for a period of time to make it possible for the residents to test them in their everyday and for the tourists to use them throughout their stay.

From developing and improving all these activities within the framework of Nationalpark Thy it is also important to enhance the actual physical place. As explained in the analysis it can be very difficult to know both how to come to Nationalpark Thy from the attraction signs along the motorway, but it is also difficult to notice when you actually enter the territory. A low hanging fruit could thus be to strengthen the semiotics of Nationalpark Thy, both as an attraction, a physical place and to navigate within the area with a clearer signage. That could enhance the affection the nomination as national park has on the mobilities in the area.

A large thing that could put focus on the local assets could be to have a much more dynamic and virtual communication with the tourists. The analysis showed that a very large share of the tourists use Internet during their stay. Thus it is very important to have activities and events online and in other languages than Danish – so that tourists can plan their stay along the way. In general there could be large development possibilities in securing a growth of virtual mobilities.

## 2. A GROWTH OF VIRTUAL MOBILITIES

As explained both in the analysis and earlier in this conclusion, virtual mobilities have changed the life in Nationalpark Thy – now they feel more connected. The interviewees further indicate that it has both eased their lives in these areas and has increased the possibilities. Therefore there could be a large potential in enabling a growth of virtual mobilities.



However, the analysis further showed that access to high internet speed was difficult in many Rural Outskirts, including Nationalpark Thy, and this could curb the growth of virtual mobilities and the development, and further it will be difficult to meet the speeds required in the future.

At the moment broadband is rolled out on marked terms unlike other infrastructures such as power, water and roads where there is a public security of supply. Therefore the easy suggestion would be to encourage the Danish government to include broadband as a necessary infrastructure and thus secure a public security of supply. However, this change of approach does not seem to happen within the near future. Therefore another suggestion could be to meet the market terms and use the cohesion in the area to gather a large share who will implement it at their home - as was the example in Agger as mentioned in Chapter 10.

In North Denmark Region initiatives have been implemented to secure proper broadband in all parts of the region. Thus Business Region North Denmark has started a project where they map the mobile coverage of North Denmark Region and across municipal borders they decide on service goals and procedures to implement more IKT infrastructure. Finally they initiate a close dialogue and possible public private partnership in the places where the market forces cannot secure the roll out of broadband on its own (Region nordjylland, 2016).

After putting attention on the access to virtual mobilities it is further important to put focus on the skills to use virtual mobilities, so that a larger group could benefit from this possibility. As mentioned in the analysis in chapter 10, there is therefore a risk of a 'digital divide' between different population groups within the rural outskirts, meaning that for some the virtual mobilities eases the life and enhance the possibilities, whereas it might have the opposite effect for other groups, who do not have the skills for the online communication with e.g. public authorities. The analysis showed that in general there is a large number of people in the Rural Outskirts that are lacking the proper skills to be virtually mobile, however the picture was somewhat more positive for the respondents in Nationalpark Thy. Even so, the picture in Nationalpark Thy is more positive and an effort still needs to be made to secure a growth of virtual mobilities.

Once again it-courses could be driven by the public sector like the courses described in the analysis that had taken place in Stenbjerg forsamlingshus – this to also make sure that all residents know how to use their NemID as from November 2014 was the only way to communicate with public authorities, unless you were granted an exception. Otherwise it could also be driven by the cohesion in the area where locals with high skills could create courses for those with fewer IT-skills. Or it could be as an exchange of service - a barter deal where young people with high IT-skills but too young to own a car could be buddies with elderly people with access to a car but with low IT-skills. Then the young people could teach virtual mobilities and as exchange the elderly people could provide the young people with a car ride when needed. In that way the elderly help enhance the young people's physical mobilities and the young people help enhance the elderly people's virtual mobilities. This could be a mean to overcome the span between the top and bottom of the mobilities hierarchy.

Once the access and skills is secured, it is interesting to discuss where the actual use of virtual mobilities could grow in the future. One suggestion could be to improve the possibilities for distance learning so that the young people would not have to leave these areas to get an education, which might stop some of the out-migration of the young people that takes place today. This is already today a growing initiative, and thus attention could be put on the elements that you are missing out on from this way of study e.g. social life or study buddies. Another element could be to facilitate more distance working. Today a bottom up initiative have been implemented in Klitmøller with a distance working house that is letting office space to entrepreneurs or people employed far away. An initiative like this could both strengthen the entrepreneurship and those with jobs that cannot be found in the local area. Another idea could be to retrain the people being laid off in e.g. the production sector to e.g. work in a call centre where physical presence is not requested and thereby also avoid that this group move away from these areas.

As discussed in conclusion number 3 it is important to state that virtual mobilities cannot substitute the need for physical mobilities but it can ease life and increase the possibilities, as the interviewees explain. And further, as discussed in conclusion number 3, when physical mobilities are replaced with virtual mobilities like e.g. the suggestion on distance learning, it is important to keep the social relations in mind, but also to discuss what kind of social contacts that are valuable. Finally, while realizing that though I suggest putting focus on the residents' IT-skills, not everyone will have a desire to use virtual mobilities and not everyone will be able to obtain the skills, so it is important to make sure that there will not be too large a digital divide in the rural outskirts.

### 3. SHARING

Several of the interviewees mention the cohesiveness and solidarity as main assets of the area. Both in relation to how easy it is to meet people, how safe they feel in the area and how easy it is to get help. This cohesiveness could be a mean to overcome the span between the top and bottom of the mobilities hierarchy. Regarding mobilities, the cohesiveness and solidarity is today very bottom up and unorganised, but there might be some hidden potentials in organising this cohesiveness in a more structured fashion.

The bottom up sharing that takes place today is e.g. carpooling where residents with a car invites those without a car to have a ride, it could be a group of residents who decide to car share for economical, ecological or organisational reasons, or it could be an opportunity for a ride that occur if someone is going to somewhere outside the area.

In general, sharing, or more specific the “Sharing Economy”, is a growing phenomenon, and as an example within the transport sector car sharing members have more than doubled since 2006 (Haustein & Nielsen, 2015).

Haustein & Nielsen (2015) divide the examples of sharing economy in the transport sector into two groups:

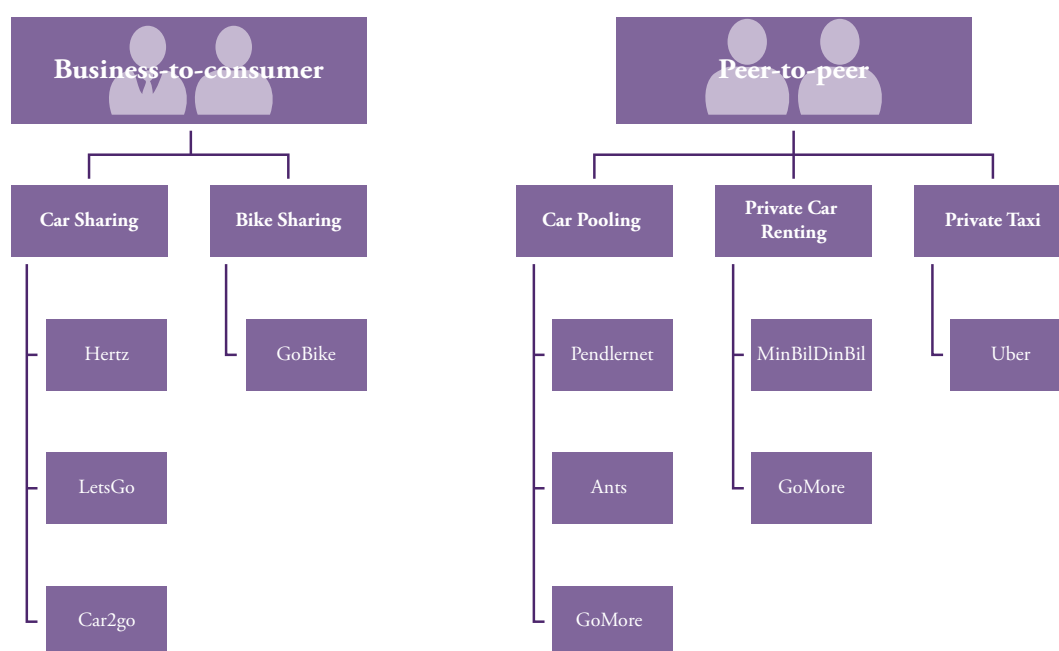


Figure 11.1 Examples of sharing economy in the transport sector (own figure with inspiration from (Haustein & Nielsen, 2015))

Like with mobilities in general, focus has been on urban areas, and this is also the case with studies of the sharing economy. It can also be expected that the Business-to-consumer groups will have more difficult conditions in the Rural Outskirts with a smaller consumer group – however at least one initiative exist with focus on rural areas - “Byens bil” [The town’s car] a car sharing initiative created by some private individuals in the Rural Outskirt with the residents in rural outskirts as the target group. I saw the car parked just opposite my parents’ home when visiting them and later found a flyer with a pricelist at their home: if you are a member (which cost 300 dkr. for a household for a year) it costs 10 dkr./hour plus 2.5 dkr./km. This is a quite cheap offer, and is a beneficial supplement to those with a driver’s license and no car, or as extra flexibility as car number two in a family. However what is common for all the initiatives in this group, is that it is only an offer to those with a driver’s license, so the group of people without a driver’s license, whether it is voluntary or not, is still at the bottom of the mobilities hierarchy – for these individuals the peer-to-peer initiatives might be a help.

The peer-to-peer initiatives can further be divided into initiatives that are centred on sharing the car or sharing the ride. In the former are the different initiatives that all centres on sharing the car. An initiative like “min bil din bil” [my car your car] can easily be transferred to the rural areas if it does not already exist in these areas. Here the

private car owners who want to participate can sign up their car for others to rent when in a need, and thus function as a private car renting company.

In the latter group of initiatives it is instead the ride that is shared. These initiatives are a bit more challenging, as it will need two or more individuals to have the same starting point and the same destination at the same time, and with a low density of people in the Rural Outskirts, this lowers the odds for that to happen. Unless there will be car owners who would take the ride without having a purpose on their own – like the Uber where private car owners can have their own taxi-like company. However, what can be lacking are the flexibility and the safety net that makes sure that you can take both a turn to a destination but also get return afterwards. A public initiative that offers a somewhat flexible ride and a safety net is Flextur that is explained in more detail in the analysis. The challenge here is the price, where it costs 5 dkr/km in Thisted Municipality and thus it very quickly becomes an expensive ride. The analysis further showed that the Cosmopolites were the group that have used this Flextur the most and that the Placebound as well as the Glocalists are the groups with the least knowledge of the initiative, though they might have a larger need for it. Therefore a suggestion could be to combine the private car sharing with the public initiative Flextur. The idea could then be to establish a platform that incorporates both private vehicles who want to participate, and Flextur taxis in the fleet. When someone then needs a ride they could contact the platform (online, via app or phone) and firstly see if they could find any private persons willing to take that trip or otherwise send a Flextur, in that way you both have the cheap private possibility based on the car sharing concept, and at the same time you have Flextur as the safety net making sure that you are able to reach your destination. I have presented this project idea to North Denmark Region and Nordjyllands Trafikselskab [Public transport authority in North Denmark] and they were both very interested in the project and wanted to develop it further. As a beginning they will develop the Danish travel planner “Rejseplanen” into a version only available in Northern Jutland where they incorporate taxi and car sharing.

Haustein & Nielsen (2015) list four motives behind car sharing that have been identified in a Northamerican analysis: economy, comfort, lifestyle and awareness of the environment. In the rural areas the economy could play a role for the car or car ride providers, but it could also be solidarity and concern for the local area, that was not visible in the very urban focus. For the users/buyers it could very much be about moving up in the mobilities hierarchy and increasing the personal potential mobilities.

#### 4. TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the main conclusions was that physical mobilities are vital for the rural outskirts. However, this significant need for physical mobilities especially by car is in stark contrast to climate concerns and environmental considerations that is linked to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The transport sector is responsible for around 1/3 of the Danish CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and from this 3/4 is caused by the road transport sector (Danish Energy Agency, N.D.).

The car industry is also much regulated in Denmark with large levies. For some of the interviewees this is already today a challenge.

It is difficult to know what regulations there will be on cars in the future. One of the things that is often discussed is, that car owners should be charged more for the actual use of the car instead of for the buying – with some kind of road pricing. However, if the system is not designed with specific focus on Rural Outskirts, there is a risk that the long distances can become an expensive obstacle.

Another challenge might be that at some point in the future the world will be out of fossil fuel. Then again the Rural Outskirts will be challenged by the long distances. The interviewees, however, feel very calm on this subject, and they all have faith in the researchers that they will develop some kind of new fossil free fuel.

The residents thus have to be open to the development whenever it hits the market – for the residents to consider the products when buying a new car and for the local authorities to facilitate the establishment of new filling stations, whatever the fuel might be.

Another technological development that is currently growing fast is autonomous vehicles and in combination with the sharing economy they can potentially change the entire way that our society is structured, and affect the challenges and potentials for the Rural Outskirts.

## 5. AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

In the analysis the interviewees talk about the fact that if you live in Thy, the long distances to some things is something that you just have to deal with. They further state that to overcome that distance means out in a car and that it is all about making the trip as nice as possible. By “nice” they probably mean bringing along some snack, their favourite music, an audio book or maybe even phoning friends or family. But what if you could just take a nap, paint your nails or work on-board a self-driving unit while it takes you to e.g. the grocery store? Or what if you did not even have to go to the grocery store because the self-driving unit brings your groceries to you? Or if it is flown in by a drone? Or maybe you could just print it on a 3D printer. It might sound as a far-fetched, both in realism and in time, however (some) researchers believe that these solutions are approaching fast, and car producers are competing on developing different levels of autonomous vehicles right now.

The last year I have heard several different researchers and experts give their view on autonomous vehicles at different events <sup>1</sup> and I have also heard many different time perspectives. Recently at Trafikdage 2015 Bryant Walker Smith from The Centre for Internet and Society at Stanford Law School, California, stated that self-driving vehicles has since the 1950s always been 20 years away – today they are 10 years away. This is not to say that 10 years from now people do not drive our own cars no more, but that an era with some format of autonomous vehicles might have started. This will include different levels of ‘autonomous’ from highly automatic to fully automatic as well as a transition period where there will be both manually driven cars and different levels of autonomous vehicles.

Of course these different levels also bring different perspectives on mobilities in rural outskirts. The highly automatic will make the ride more pleasant, where the car most of the time can drive on its own and thus allow the driver to relax. However, especially the fully automatic vehicles will be a life changer in the Rural Outskirts. Then the driving time can really be made useful and thus no longer be wasted time. If you even have to make the ride. Elderly people will as an example easily be able to have their food delivered to the door, and distance workers can use the car ride to their job (when they have to go to the office) as working time. What of course will be an important factor is how the society will be designed around the phenomenon. Will people own their own self driving unit or would you buy the ride, how expensive would it be etc. At the moment it is very much the car industry in other countries than Denmark that is driving the development and setting the agenda, but it could be very important for the public society to engage with the discussion to make sure that e.g. the perspectives of the rural outskirts are included into such considerations. E.g. it is important to make sure that it will be taken into consideration how it will work in sparsely populated areas where e.g. car sharing like car2go have difficulties in finding a marked. These considerations are to make sure that the Rural Outskirts does not become more outskirt in the future. Further to make sure that there will not be created local differences between the different mobilities groups where mainly the Cosmopolites and Locamobilists have the possibilities to move around if the ride with driverless vehicles becomes too expensive.

The development of autonomous vehicles could be very favourable for the Rural Outskirts where the physical mobilities can be heightened, if they have an interest for it and if it is approached in the right way. But with a car industry stamping ahead, what could the rural outskirts do about it? The lone roads might serve as an excellent test facility and the local authorities could thus be very proactive in having the focus on their areas very early in the process as for example Vesthimmerland Municipality have announced they will be. Further, the residents might have good use of the features that comes with the different level of automatization, like lane control that can be bought as accessories for most new cars now. But what autonomous vehicles can do for the rural outskirts - that alone could be a subject for a whole new study.

### 11.3 FUTURE STUDIES

As explained earlier, mobilities in rural outskirt is an understudied research area and there were thus no obvious place to start. This initiated the very broad approach to the research area and the assemblage theory made this broad approach possible. This has enabled to discover how different genres of mobilities influence each other and how differences are experienced in the case area and how elements of the mobilities culture – the software – can help overcome some of the challenges from the materials (or lack of such) – the hardware. As shown in this chapter, it has provided the thesis with some very broad conclusions and tendencies. In future studies it could be interested to conduct more detailed analysis into some of the conclusions, which will probably contribute with a more nuanced picture: this could e.g. be the following:

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*1 Including Vejforum [Road Forum] December 2014, The Future of Urban Mobility arranged by Transportøkonomisk Forning [Transport Economical Union] February 2015, Trafikdage [Traffic days] arranged by Aalborg University August 2015, ITS World Congress arranged by ERTICO October 2015 and ITS Europe Congress arranged by ERTICO June 2016.*

### **1. The experience of physical mobilities in rural outskirts.**

In this research project the purpose should be to explore the conclusion further that physical mobilities are vital in the rural outskirts and in more detail investigate the use of the different means of transportation, possibly through travel along interviews, where the feeling of the travel will be more present.

### **2. The importance of local assets.**

Another research project could be to focus more on the assets and make an investigation in another rural area to see if they have the same attitude towards distance where local assets trivialise it. Further to investigate what kinds of local assets this takes.

### **3. Sharing economy in rural outskirts.**

Further it could be beneficial to test some of the recommendations for future development that was suggested earlier in this chapter. This could i.e. be to test the proposed solutions of combining the social responsibility of each other with the tendencies of “sharing economy” in an experiment where private car owners can be included in the Flextur service.

### **4. The Outsiders’ perspectives on rural outskirts.**

This thesis focused on the people living in Nationalpark Thy and those visiting the area. One of the conclusions was that proximity to local assets trivialise long distances. It could be relevant to investigate whether outsiders have the same perspective and further to investigate what assets they would highlight. This is especially relevant if there is a goal to attract new residents to the Rural Outskirts.

### **5. Increasing and enhancing virtual mobilities in rural outskirts.**

It was shown how the combination of virtual and physical mobilities makes the life in these areas possible and it could therefore be relevant to investigate whether e.g. a good broadband connection with a high speed and thereby the possibilities for e.g. home offices would be able to attract “outsiders” to these areas.

A more detailed objective as all of these are examples of future studies will of course also bring more detailed recommendations and more detailed conclusions.

In general the final recommendation should be to keep investigating beyond the cities. Though the cities are growing at a rapid speed that makes studies of mobilities in these areas very relevant, the depopulation of rural areas makes mobilities studies in these areas just as relevant – just with other mobilities challenges and potentials. Vannini (2011) states that he hopes that “*future mobility researchers will mind the gap in our knowledge of non-metropolitan practices.*” (Vannini 2011, p. 26). This thesis have thus contributed to the incipient studies of mobilities in rural outskirts areas with an illustration of mobilities challenges and potentials that have not previously been brought forward, and I will reiterate Vanninni’s request and encourage coming mobilities research projects to use the Rural Outskirts as field of study within mobilities studies.







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# APPENDIX LIST

*Appendix A: Reading manual*

*Appendix B: Definition of Udkantsdanmark (pdf) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix C: Litterature review (Excel) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix D: Questionnaire with the Locals (Pdf) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix E: Details on dissemination of questionnaires (Pdf) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix F: Results from Questionnaire with the Locals (Excel) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix G: Questionnaire with the Tourists (Pdf) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix H: Results from Questionnaire with the Tourists (Excel) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix I: Interview guides – Round 1 (pdf) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix J: Audio files and transcribed interviews– Round 1 (WAV and pdf) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix K: Interview guides – Round 2 (pdf) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix L: Audio files from Interviews – Round 2 (WAV) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix M: Scanned Mobilities Journals – (pdf) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix N: Presentation of the interviewees – (pdf) – to be found on enclosed CD*

*Appendix O: Calculation of Mobile Identities (Excel) – to be found on enclosed CD*





## APPENDIX A – READING MANUAL

- *( ) marks references or extra information*
- *[ ] is comments from the author or a translation of the given word*
- *(I1#1.2) first round of interviews with interviewee 1.2*
- *( # 27) respondent number 27 in the questionnaire with locals*
- *(QT#13) – respondent number 13 in the Danish tourism questionnaire*
- *(QG# 26) – respondent number 26 in the German tourism questionnaire*
- *(QL6) – Question number 6 in the questionnaire with locals*
- *N: 88 – 88 respondents have answered the question*
- *”Several” means 2-5 people of the 6-8 interviewees*
- *”Most” means approximately 75 pct. or more*
- *”Some” means 1-3 people of the 6-8 interviewees*
- *”Others” means 2-4 people of the 6-8 interviewees*
- *”a few” means approximately 25 pct. or less*



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