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The rhythms of canal tourism: Synchronizing the host-visitor interface

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A B S T R A C T

This article examines how rhythmanalysis can expand understanding of the spatiotemporal features of the host-visitor interface, examining the Telemark Canal region in Norway and its rural development and heritagization processes. Part of the heritagization of the Telemark Canal is to utilize the potential of the canal as a tourist attraction in order to generate economic, social and cultural value in the broadest sense within nearby local communities. By investigating the rhythms and polyrhythms of hosts and visitors of the canal, and revealing a significant arrhythmia, we demonstrate that there is an unfulfilled potential in how travellers along the Telemark Canal contribute socially, culturally and economically to local development. The key to local economic as well as social and cultural development from tourism is in enhancing the connections between visitors and the canal's host communities. We argue that intervening through rhythms at the *interface* between hosts and visitors might be the key to utilizing more of the potential of value creation from canal tourism.

1. Introduction

> Alliance supposes harmony between different rhythms; conflict supposes arrhythmia: a divergence in time, in space, in the use of energies (Lefebvre, 2013, p. 78).

We organise our lives and our society through a range of different temporalities closely entangled with the spaces and places we dwell in or move through. Observing these, Lefebvre (2013, p. 25) argued that "where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is a rhythm" – and he proposed *rhythmanalysis* as a conceptual and methodological approach for analysing these spatio-temporal connections. As part of the "mobility turn" which has highlighted temporality as vital for social and material practices (e.g. Adey, 2010; Cresswell and Merriman, 2011; Sheller, 2014; Urry, 2007), rhythms have been studied in various contexts by scholars in recent decades (Edensor, 2010b; Henriques et al., 2014; Mels, 2004; Smith and Hetherington, 2013).

While Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis has been criticized for not presenting a complete analytical framework (e.g. Reid-Musson, 2018; Simpson, 2012), we agree with Edensor (2011) that it nevertheless provides a useful conceptual model for thinking about rhythmic relationships in society, and is sufficiently open to adapt to various empirical cases. In this paper, we use rhythmanalysis to study the interlinked processes of visitor mobility and cultural heritagization along the Telemark Canal in Norway, and the challenges and opportunities these raise for local development. Despite the canal's attractiveness for tourists, a major challenge along the waterway is for communities to create local economic and socio-cultural value. Taking into account the rhythmic nature of both canal travel and local community development, a key research question guiding our work was how the different rhythms at play along the canal, and their interrelationships, influenced, improved, or limited the potential of the Telemark Canal as source for creating local and touristic value.

Thus, in this article, we analyse the rhythms of tourism along the Telemark Canal. We follow canal boats upstream from the coastal town of Skien to the village of Dalen, about 100 km and eight locks inland, examining the rhythms of the canal tour itself and the polyrhythms that occur at the interface between visitors to the canal and the rural host communities. Conducting interviews and writing field notes to identify patterns in both tourists' movement/rest and community planning/response, we analysed these data for rhythmic qualities including timing, emphasis, pattern, circularity, and discord, we then interpret these within Lefebvre's concepts of polyrhythmia and arrhythmia (Lefebvre, 2013; Reid-Musson, 2018). This article argues that the arrhythmia of the host-visitor interface might significantly limit the canal's potential, and we discuss the possibilities of reducing this arrhythmia toward more synchronized temporalities through what Lefebvre (2013, p. 77) terms "intervention through rhythm".

2. Conceptualising rhythms

Rhythm linguistically means "regular flow or movement" (Caprona, 2013), and while we may not always be attentive to them, rhythms

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surround us in all aspects of our lives. With his book *Rhythmanalysis*, Henri Lefebvre (2013) introduced ideas that have paved the way for a range of studies detailing time-space relationships involving the temporal organization of space and highlighting rhythm-making processes in both society and nature. Rhythms include socially produced patterns and non-human rhythmic patterns (such as climate and weather changes, animals' migration patterns and tidal movements). Music, dance, and nature-based seasonal or circadian rhythms mostly have an underlying metrical level of equal units, while other timed sequences accumulate and intersect in variable linear flows. Rhythms can interact across the nature-society divide; for example, people's circadian patterns depend on natural patters of lightness and darkness. Mels (2004, p. 3) emphasises that defining rhythms "with dogmatic epistemology easily misses its objects", underlining the idea that Lefebvre's writings open up a myriad of paths to approach rhythmic assemblages. Rhythmanalysis is an approach to social science that sees beyond individual objects, images or actions to reveal their interplaying elements.

Isorhythmia is, in musical terms, a technique developed by medieval composers that consists of a repeating rhythmic pattern (*talea*) throughout the composition, accompanied by variations of melodic and harmonic features (*color*). For Lefebvre, isorhythm is a core element of rhythmanalysis as "a rhythm falls into place and extends over all the performers" (2013, p. 78).

How rhythms delimit and shape peoples' practices and experiences have been studied by a number of scholars, addressing topics as diverse as the city as workplace (Nash, 2018), human and non-human interactions in Norwegian landscape management (Flemsæter et al., 2018), youth mobilities (Marcu, 2017), and the rhythms of sleep and seasonality in nature-based tourism settings (Rantala and Valtonen, 2014). Examples of conflicting rhythms – those between pedestrians and cyclists (Hornsey, 2010; Spinney, 2010), homeless persons and urban managers (Hall, 2010), asylum seekers and consumerism (Colon, 2010) and night-time economies (Schwanen et al., 2012) – are also illustrative. A powerful aspect of rhythms is their temporal and spatial synchronicity: some rhythms are synchronous, while others are asynchronous.

The combination of differently-timed elements nested within a temporal pattern is described by Lefebvre (2013) as polyrhythmia. In music, polyrhythmia refers to the combination of diverse or contrasting rhythms that together form a whole (in this paper, "the whole" is the host-visitor interface along the Telemark Canal). How polyrhythms shape experiences has been studied in contexts such as urban spaces (Cronin, 2006; Edensor, 2010a; Kärrholm, 2009), commuting (Edensor, 2011), tourism (Edensor and Holloway, 2008; Küpers and Wee, 2018; Sarmento, 2017; Terkenli, 2005), identity and sensing places (Bunkse, 2004; O'Reilly, 2004), domestic interactions (Power, 2009) and cultural and seasonal landscapes (Jones, 2006; Pungas et al., 2005; Vergunst, 2012). These studies demonstrate in various ways that the polyrhythms of places and spaces are fine-tuned assemblages, sometimes fragile and sometimes robust, of nested rhythmic elements. The alteration of even one element produces a new totality – a new polyrhythm – which brings about new sets of potentialities for the involved actors. Such alterations can result from rhythms adjusting to other rhythms without a view to the totality, but alterations can also be purposely brought into being by actors, with an aim of influencing the whole in order to improve or benefit from the polyrhythmia of a place.

This deliberate act, executed by stakeholders in power, of adjusting rhythms to establish 'better' synchronized polyrhythms is what Lefebvre (2013, p. 77) terms "intervention through rhythm". He argues, "in arrhythmia, rhythms break apart, alter and bypass synchronisation", and to avoid the state of arrhythmia "interventions are made, or should be made, through rhythm, without brutality". While researchers have analysed polyrhythms to identify relations between different rhythms in terms of patterns of synchrony or asynchrony, there are fewer studies that have discussed what Lefebvre (2013, p. 78) called "rhythmanalytic therapy". In this article, we utilize rhythmanalysis as an analytical framework to discuss the potential for interventions through rhythms for strengthening rural development based on heritagization and tourism.

3. Rural development, heritagization and tourism

The effects of modernity and globalisation have generated profound economic, technological, cultural, and demographical changes in rural areas. Introduced several decades ago, the term "rural restructuring" (Marsden et al., 1990) conceptualizes the impacts of these processes as different from gradual rural changes. Rural areas and rural society have been, and are, continuously changing. Thus, the dichotomy often referred to between the dynamic, changing and threatening present and the stable, romanticised rural past is too simplistic. Historically, there have been changes on a far greater and more disruptive scale than those experienced today. Further, recent rural change is, according to Woods (2005), characterised by two specific features: the pace and persistence of change, and the totality and interconnectivity of change. Rural restructuring and the re-resourcing of rural areas has entailed a change from production to consumption of material and immaterial resources and profound changes in socio-cultural arrangements (Halfacree, 2007; Rønningen and Flemsæter, 2016). This has also affected how we think about cultural heritage, in which rural practices and artefacts are mobilised as resources for rural enterprises' capitalisation of people's desire to consume 'the rural' (Frisvoll, 2013).

The emerging post-productivist characteristics of rural economies entail a stronger instrumentalization of heritage in which the meanings of heritage are closely tied to various cultural, social, political and economic practices and aims of the present. Ashworth (2011) has labelled this shift *heritagization,* as heritage increasingly is given meaning as a resource for contemporary purposes, followed by many expectations in both the private and public realms. While heritagization opens up opportunities for broader societal involvement, numerous stakeholders may be involved and perspectives that once diverged must now be aligned (Timothy, 2014).

Heritagization, and commodification processes more broadly, often imply that dominant or powerful groups in society redefine the purpose of particular resources. In this process, diverse interests do not only pertain to relations between stakeholders or other actors within the local or regional public, but may also involve relations between visitors and residents (Besculides et al., 2002; Murphy, 1985). Divergences, controversies and conflicts that arise from different interests and perspectives are often related to different modes of engaging with, valuating, using and moving through natural and cultural landscapes (Frisvoll, 2012; Macleod and Carrier, 2009). The extent to which these divergent modes are perceived as problematic is likely to vary with the kinds of heritage in question and the goals local communities have for development.

Studies of visitor impacts of tourism development address these issues by analysing observable changes in community life and residents' attitudes toward tourists, tourism development, and their perceptions of the acceptability of growth impacts (Franzidis and Yau, 2018; Strzelecka et al., 2017). But these studies usually ignore the perspectives of visitors, and rarely contextualize findings within broader local and regional systems, though exceptions may be found in studies of rural amenity migration (Krannich et al., 2011) and second home development (Armstrong and Stedman, 2013; Farstad, 2011; Kaltenborn et al., 2009; Pitkänen et al., 2014). A systems view in which tourists and community members are seen as interdependent partners in improving community quality of life (King and Lulle, 2015; Uysal et al., 2016) is promising for focusing on the interactions of hosts and guests that could be addressed within the interlinked rhythms of local tourism development processes.

4. Canal tourism

In the early 1900s, travelling by boat along the Telemark Canal was part of the fastest route between Norway's two largest cities, Oslo and Bergen, and the canal was therefore a vital resource for local

communities along the waterway. Currently, tourists take the same boat trip as part of a contemporary slow travel experience. The Telemark Canal is thus one of many old transportation routes that have recently been transformed into "heritage routes", commodified and re-established as a resource for local development though tourism (e.g. Boughey, 2013; Conzen, 2001; Donohoe, 2012; Lennon, 2017; Mason, 2009; Olsson, 2016). Canal tourism is an emerging academic field and scholars have engaged with motivational and cognitive characteristics of canal tourists (Mehran and Olya, 2020; Mehran et al., 2020), spatial-temporal habits of tourists' leisure boating practices (Kaaristo and Rhoden, 2017), the role of water as actor in the assemblages of boating tourism (Rhoden and Kaaristo, 2020), effects on residents' everyday lived experiences (Pinkster and Boterman, 2017) and canal tourism projects' capacity for regional destination development (McKean et al., 2017).

Fallon (2012) explicitly connects canal tourism to the slow tourism/slow travel literature (Fullagar et al., 2012). Slow tourism is a term used to illustrate the nature of some transportation modes as well as the quality of the tourist experience in which the journey becomes an aim in itself (Adey, 2010; Cresswell, 2010). The modes and (relatively) slow speed of travel can inspire broader, deeper experiences of places and landscapes, including heritage and cultural environments. The ethos of slow travel is moreover seen as providing opportunities to rebalance the power-relations between tourist and destination (Dickinson et al., 2011; Fullagar et al., 2012). As Cresswell (2010, p. 19) explains, "Slowness is more than anti-speed, (…) slow is embodied in the qualities of rhythm, pace, tempo and velocity that are produced in the sensory and affective relationship between the traveler and the world". Such experiential and moral interpretations of slow travel open up possibilities for more nuanced approaches to understanding visitor experiences and community practices in contexts like the Telemark Canal.

5. The Telemark Canal

The Telemark Canal and its chain of locks was completed in 1892, and links the inland community of Dalen and the coastal town Skien 105 km further south-east (Fig. 1). A second branch of this canal system starts at the world heritage site of the town Notodden. While the Telemark Canal used to be the main transportation route between coastal and inland areas for people, cattle, goods and timber, it is now a tourist attraction and destination. The canal system connects several different heritage sites and cultural environments.

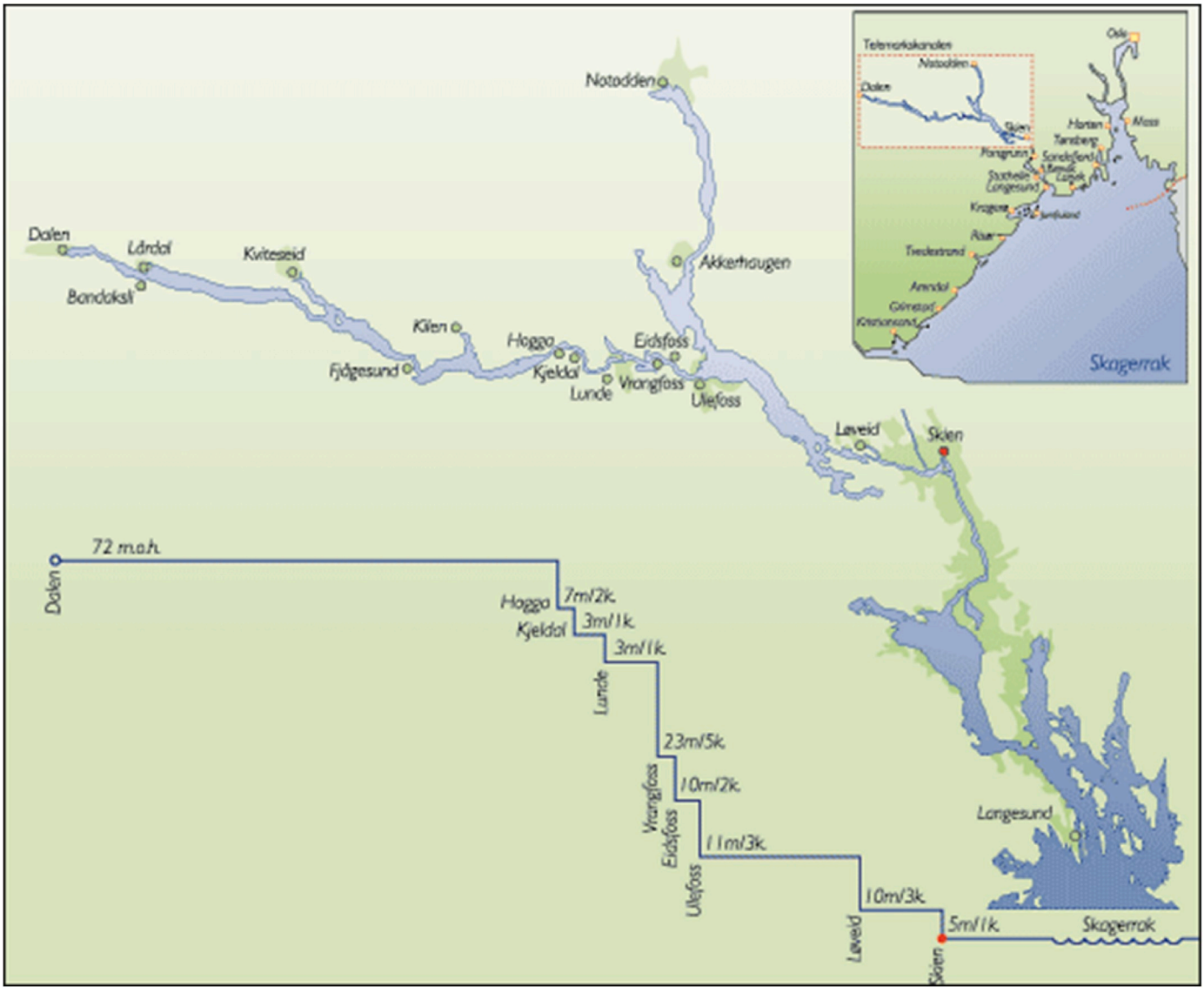

Fig. 1. The telemark canal.
Source: www.mshenrikibsen.no

Today's canal appears more or less as it has in the past, using the same canal lock technology as when it was built. The canal locks represent typical examples of engineering and workmanship produced by Norway's industrial sector during the late 19th century, and these – along with the stone walls in the lock chambers and the giant wooden lock gates – are now attractions that remind tourists of earlier times. The entire canal has the status of a heritage site, a designation tracing back to 2012 when the regional park received financial support through a government value-adding programme for local and regional parks (Swensen and Nomeikaite, 2019). This programme facilitated rural development and sustainable use of areas with unique natural and cultural values. A critical role of the heritagisation of the canal landscape has been to revitalise rural activities and small-scale commercial businesses. Travel along the Telemark Canal is the antithesis of mass tourism, and local communities and business must be attentive to the issue described by Swenson and Nomeikaite (2019, p. 1): "Presenting a variety of cultural events to tourists is no longer sufficient. Satisfying their desire for an experience is the key".

The community-visitor interface at the Telemark Canal, established through heritagization and intended for local development, consists of many rhythmic elements. In the following sections, we explore some crucial aspects of these complex timespaces as exemplified by the Telemark Canal.

6. Methods: studying rhythms along the Telemark Canal

We base our rhythmanalysis on three sets of interview data. First, we carried out 33 semi-structured interviews with travellers on board the three tourist boats operating on the Telemark Canal (some interviews were with groups of 2–5 persons). Potential interviewees were approached on board the boat, and the researchers attempted to select participants from among various countries of origin, age, gender and travel party size. The first half of the interview was standardized with questionnaire items requesting basic demographic information and key information about their journey; the second half introduced open-ended questions related to themes covering crucial time-space relations between travellers and locals. Interview questions also included passengers' motivations for travelling and the experiences they desired and received. Interviewees were also asked about whether and the degree to which they engaged with local people and communities, and how they valued this interaction (or lack thereof).

Second, 10 open-ended qualitative interviews were conducted in person with key stakeholders in the tourism industry and destination development across the region. Informants were selected from a list of key actors provided by the staff at the Telemark Canal Regional Park. Because these are small communities with a limited set of potential participants, we selected from three local communities of interest (Dalen, Lunde and Ulefoss) and actors at the regional level (e.g., the Telemark Canal Regional Park; the destination developer Visit Telemark). We asked these informants about the organization of the tourism sector in the region, cooperation across entities, and the involvement of local communities and small businesses in destination development. Finally, we completed 19 semi-structured phone interviews with owners or managers of local businesses generally connected to the Telemark Canal (hotels, shops, restaurants, grocery stores, taxi, etc.), using a list of enterprises from the Telemark Canal Regional Park. These interviews focused on spatial and temporal aspects of the relationships between their businesses and visitors travelling along the Telemark Canal.

In addition to the interviews, two of the authors and one research assistant travelled in-person several times on the canal, taking field notes, observing the same boat trip at different times and talking with crew, guides, visitors and representatives from the host communities.

An initial inductive thematic analysis of each of the three interview data sets was conducted to derive and consolidate codes. From this initial analysis a thematic framework was developed. Aided by the qualitative data management software (NVivo), cross-sectional indexing was applied to the content of the three sets of interview data. In this way, similar to Marcu (2017), rhythm-related mobility themes were identified, and crucial for our research question, we were able to detect the degree to which different rhythms and mobilities were in synchronicity, as well as interpret how (a)synchronicity affected the Telemark Canal region's local development potential.

7. Empirical analysis: rhythms of the Telemark Canal

The Telemark Canal is a complex spatiotemporal landscape connecting people within and across communities, reinforcing local identity, and contributing to cultural meanings. Water flow is controlled by the locks, which are operated only during the summer season, and in this period three boats bring tourists up and down the waterway. M/S "Victoria" has been in nearly continuous operation on the Telemark Canal since 1882, and is owned and operated by a company owned by Telemark county and four of its municipalities. M/S "Henrik Ibsen" is a boat owned by Telemarkskanalen Skipsselskap, a company owned and managed by the owner of the Dalen hotel, a high-end, historic hotel located at the upper end of the Telemark Canal. Both boats operate along the entire canal from Skien to Dalen. A third boat, M/S "Telemarken", is owned and operated by the Nordsjø Hotel, located near the Nordsjø lake. This boat only travels the middle part of the canal between Akkerhaugen and Lunde, where the most famous locks are located (Fig. 1). Though it is possible to travel by private boats along the canal too, this article focuses only on those travelling along the Telemark Canal by the three canal boats (Fig. 2).

Along the Telemark Canal, a bus service operates between the most popular landing quays; this is closely timed to the arrivals and departures of the boats. Thus, travellers can make daytrips by leaving their cars at one place, travelling by boat, and catching a bus back to the starting point. In this way, it is possible to experience desired stretches of the canal in just one day, or even a few hours.

We will now take you on a journey upstream along the Telemark Canal from Skien to Dalen, highlighting the spatio-temporal patterns of the Telemark Canal from the visitors' perspective. Along the way we "stop" at the three local communities of Ulefoss, Lunde and Dalen (see Fig. 1) to also obtain the perspectives of host communities, drawing attention to the spatio-temporal patterns of community meeting points (or lack of these), and the juxtaposition of visitor and host experiences. This "slow tourism journey" provides data, analysis and interpretation supporting our rhythmanalysis of the Telemark Canal region.

7.1. Setting off from Skien

Every morning during the summer season, either M/S Victoria or M/S Henrik Ibsen leaves the quay in the centre of the town of Skien and begins the approximately 10-h long journey to Dalen at the other end of the waterway. While some passengers will travel all the way to Dalen, others go only halfway, to Lunde, where a bus waiting at that quay will return them to Skien. Though the timetable and route are the same every day, each journey has a different quality. The isorhythms of the canal depend on several factors, including the number and kind of travellers embarking the boats, the weather, the staff, and the many small or bigger incidents and happenings that occur along the way. We experienced ourselves how the journey was different each time we travelled.

After about 30 min, the boats reach the first locks at Løveid. These are the only locks along the canal that are modernised and electrified. Though the Løveid locks are impressive engineering works cutting through a rocky hill, the site is not considered to be as "authentic" as the locks further upstream where the gates are operated manually, exactly as they were 100 years ago. Therefore, the Løveid locks receive little attention in the canal's marketing material, and informants representing the tourist industry clearly downgrade Løveid compared to the other parts of the canal. Yet, Løveid was the first locks site to be finished in 1882, and for many tourists, it is their first encounter with these systems.

Fig. 2. Canal boats. From the left M/S Henrik Ibsen, M/S Victoria and M/S Telemarken. Source: www.visittelemark.no.

Our interviews showed, however, that tourists do not consider these locks to be a central part of their canal experience.

After Løveid, the boats enter the first of four large lakes, and boat travellers have time to visit the galley or just sit and gaze at the landscape. Here, though, sun and wind conditions can influence the experience of travelling on these lakes. One of the passengers reflected on the canal's isorhythms on a windy day:

> I think this is fine as well (…) with the wind and all … If the water was calm and you could sit back and enjoy the ride, I think it would be different. (Traveler 1)

Sitting on the canal boats over the large lakes reveals how these old boats actually foster a 'slow travel' experience through the landscape. When interviewees were asked for their reflections about the Telemark Canal as a "slow travel" experience, most remarked that the slow speed of the boats, and the activities of sitting and watching as the boat moves through the landscape in a slow, steady pace were very important parts of their experience.

These aspects of the trip gave them a feeling of *being in* the landscape and *being part* of the experience by indulging in the rhythms of the canal, which according to one of the passengers, was substantially different from the spatial and temporal patterns of other tourist experiences:

> I feel like I've been a part of something and not just sitting in a car, stopping once in a while to take pictures before moving on … It's more participatory. It's not like this is an extreme sport or anything, I don't like heights or high speeds, but I enjoy being a part of something and experiencing the mood of it, and it's nice having the opportunity to participate without too much fuss. And it's not very commercial. I'm not a fan of standing in lines at amusement parks. (Traveler 1)

Other passengers emphasised the contrast to the rhythms of their everyday routines where the speed is high and the temporal shifts many:

> I: What do you think about traveling slow?
>
> It's very enjoyable. We don't really travel slow the rest of the year, so it's nice to be able to sit down and not do anything. (Traveler 21)
>
> It's really really important. We travel fast all the time. Turning it down and going slow is excellent. (Traveler 23)

Travelling at a faster speed, however, would have altered the journey and the experience significantly: *It wouldn't have worked with a faster boat. It would lose its charm. (Traveler 10)*. The rhythms created by slowness, together with other rhythmic elements of the journey – e.g. the locks, the landings, the weather, co-passengers, other boats on the canal – aided visitors in experiencing the landscape in particular ways:

> To experience nature and the lake … (Travelers 12, husband).
>
> … all the impressions, sights and smells … (Travelers 12, wife)
>
> The landscape and the canal locks. I've never experienced anything like it, only heard of it. (Traveler 20)
>
> Experiencing nature, traveling slowly and taking in the sights. Listening to the water. (Traveler 23)

What is very clear in the visitor interviews is the importance of nature and nature experiences – not in terms of engaging with nature, but in viewing scenery that reproduces typical tourist images of Norway as the boat passes through the canal and its locks.

Approaching the locks and the quay at the old industrial village of Ulefoss, it becomes clear that for many visitors, this is where the journey really begins.

7.2. Ulefoss

At Ulefoss quay many people embark the boat, while very few, if any, leave. The stretch between Ulefoss and Lunde is often termed the "jewel in the crown" of the Telemark Canal. Ulefoss and Lunde are neighbouring villages in the municipality of Nome, and between these villages, the canal boats pass through impressive lock systems.

During the high season, the quay at Ulefoss is busy every day when the canal boats dock. The quay is located close to the Ulefoss Ironworks, a historic industrial operation on the outskirts of the village. It is also relatively close to the marina for private boats trafficking the canal, as well as the heritage site Øvre Verket, a collection of old workers' houses connected to the ironworks. On a distant hill, the mansion built by one of the two key industrialists forging this company town, oversees the ironworks and workers' housing. The quay has a café that is open during the high season, with the tourist information office located next door. It is a 15-min walk to the centre of Ulefoss and more restaurants and shops. Because there is a car park close to the quay (buses operating along the Telemark Canal also stop here), few canal boat travellers visit the centre of Ulefoss. A small business owner in the centre of the town described this pattern in an interview:

> The tourists traveling on the boat do not have enough time to visit town. It's a somewhat long distance to walk and I don't think they are going to run to the centre of town to shop. (Business #8)

While people travelling with private boats might take time to walk into the centre, those who travel on canal boats are not seen as a source of income to these businesses:

> We do not earn a lot of money from the boat tourists, that's for sure. (Business #8)

Several business interviewees hoped, however, that with better sign posting and information at the quay, more canal visitors would visit the local shops. Still, local interviewees see some major challenges, since

> They park their cars on one end of the canal and ride the bus back. (Business #16)

There are, however, indirect benefits from the canal boats that local businesses in the centre appreciate: the canal and tourist boats also attract other visitors who spent time in the region. Notably, though, it is a lack of accommodation that concerns Ulefoss businesspersons:

> It's really something we need. We never had overnight accommodation in Ulefoss and there is a great need for it. (Business #8)

The limited variety of accommodation was also noted by several visitors. A French family, for example, was very disappointed that the only option they found in this region was a camping site at Ulefoss. Though there are a few other options at Ulefoss, the limited number of places to stay overnight – at this and many other communities along the canal – was also mentioned by representatives from the Regional park as well as those working in regional development and tourism at the municipality. These officials point out that these are small communities and visitors are not numerous, so investing in accommodation development is economically risky.

7.3. *The jewel in the crown*

After departing Ulefoss, it does not take long before the canal boats reach Eidsfoss locks. Eidsfoss is a rather remote location along the river, and is not a port of call. However, for those who wish, it is possible to disembark the boat and hike the scenic track along the canal up to the next chain of locks at Vrangfoss. This hike is about 1.5 km along a flat gravel track and takes about 20 min. Passengers have an opportunity to stretch their legs and experience the scenic river and the boat from ashore. On one sunny day when we were travelling by canal boat, about 80 per cent of the passengers made that short hike. People took photos of the scenic landscape, and many used the walking break as an opportunity to socialise with other boat passengers, although it needed to be walk-and-talk since we needed to catch the boat again at Vrangfoss very soon.

Arriving at Vrangfoss locks is an impressive sight (Fig. 3). With its five chambers, this is the biggest and most spectacular chain of locks along the Telemark Canal. The lift of the lock is 23 m. Vrangfoss literally means the stubborn/obstinate waterfall, and got its name because it was so difficult to float timber here. At Vrangfoss there is a café and a number of old houses connected to the canal, including a forge and the lock keeper's house, and there are guided tours for visitors. However, canal boat travellers normally do not have time to attend these tours:

> I haven't had any from the tourist boats yet. I've only had people who came by car themselves. We've arranged our tours according to the boat's schedules. The guided tour starts at 12:00, when Victoria or Henrik Ibsen departs. The tourist has had time to see the locks by then and it's also the time of day with the most people in general.
>
> I: Are there locals as well?
>
> Yes, today it was only locals.
>
> […] We're here to engage the tourists who're not riding the boats, and we're hoping we are able to get more people to spend more time here in Telemark, and that they are able to see more of the region.
>
> I: Are they arriving by bus?
>
> Yes, the last group was a group of camper vans, but we have people who come by bus as well. (Guide, Vrangfoss locks)

Again, it is possible to depart the boat at the bottom lock and embark again 45 min later after the boat has been lifted through all the lock

Fig. 3. M/S Victoria at Vrangfoss locks. Source: www.telemarkskanalen.no.

chambers. Watching the locks in operation and the old boats being lifted through the chambers is an attraction for both locals and visitors. According to several key informants, there has been for many years a discussion about developing more attractions and facilities at Vrangfoss, maybe even a visitor centre. While some argue that Vrangfoss is the most iconic sight of the Telemark Canal and should be addressed accordingly, others counter that the many small local initiatives along the canal should be supported. Even though Vrangfoss is a key spot on the Telemark Canal, highlighted in marketing campaigns and probably the most photographed location, there are few tourist facilities provided there.

7.4. Lunde

The boat continues towards Lunde, a village 12 km from Ulefoss. These two communities are similar in size, but from the boat they look quite different. Along Lunde's waterfront, there are green spaces with trails where people stroll, and park-like surroundings with a permanent outdoor stage next to a seemingly popular café. Almost every day, since Lunde is about mid-way on the canal, the tourist boats meet at Lunde. Therefore, at times the quay is quite busy (Fig. 4).

Many passengers leave the boats at Lunde. One passenger embarking the boat in Skien who planned to conclude the journey at Lunde and return to Skien by bus argued that experiencing certain parts of the canal was enough to get an overall impression of the entire waterway:

> These long lakes are likely similar up stream. After spending four hours on the boat I think I've experienced all of the canal's charm. (Traveller 1)

While some have left their cars at the parking place near the quay, others walk to the bus, which is waiting at the quay to return passengers to Ulefoss or Skien. Some, however, stay over in their camper vans or tents at the camping site located next to the quay.

Local people in Lunde have made strong efforts to connect the community with the canal and its visitors. The area around the quay has been developed attractively to accommodate recreation and cultural happenings, though it is a 10-min walk from the centre of Lunde. In addition to the camping area, a small hostel is available within a 20-min walk, and about 60% of the summer guests at the hostel are canal tourists. Lunde therefore offers accommodations in close proximity to the canal, which is important to the local community:

> [The canal] has been of great importance, especially now with the comping site established in the village. The camping site is a result of the canal … and has a significant effect on commerce in the village. […]
>
> It's mostly the people who stay overnight here in Lund that spend money. And they are all accommodated either at the camping site or the hostel. (Business #2)

Thus, the canal is an attraction that draws overnight visitors while also providing experiences for those who like to camp, as the campground manager explained:

> They don't come here to sleep. They're here to experience the region's nature and atmosphere. There are many excellent hiking spots along the lake and people come here to experience them as well as partake in other activities in the area. However, we are located at the canal lock which has an enormous marketing value with all the attention it gets when the boats are passing by, and people are taking pictures of them and themselves for social media. (Business #17)

Local residents also find the canal, boats and the locks attractive. They use the area for everyday strolls as well as to attend special events on the outdoor stage, such as Sluse Rock, an annual music festival. The Telemark Canal hence becomes an important part of the cultural landscape, providing leisure spaces and facilitating economic opportunities and community interactions.

While shop owners at the neighbouring village of Ulefoss were concerned over the lack of places for visitors to stay, several of the local businesses at Lunde reported that the camping and hostel accommodations were important in attracting people to their shops.

> Yes, the tourists staying at the camping site and at the hostel spend their money in the village. Those who stay at the camping site usually stay longer, which makes them more likely to spend money in my shop. (Business #10)

Just like at Ulefoss, several local interviewees mentioned the bus transport of the boat passengers as challenging. Many businesspersons talked about re-organizing bus schedules so that visitors had more time in the village.

7.5. The inland fjords - approaching Dalen

While the boat M/S Telemarken returns back downstream from Lunde, the two other boats, M/S Victoria and M/S Henrik Ibsen, now continue their journeys through the last part of the canal. After leaving Lunde, the boats soon arrive at the one-chamber Kjeldal locks and shortly after that, the two-chamber Hogga locks. After passing these two

Fig. 4. Lunde locks. Photo: Frode Flemsæter (author).

small, idyllic locks, the journey takes a different character. In both time and distance, we are about halfway through the trip, but all the locks are now behind us, and ahead there are three inland fjords, Flåvatn, Kviteseidvatnet and Bandak (see Fig. 1). If we travel with M/S Victoria, the trip will take 40 min longer than on the M/S Henrik Ibsen. This is because the M/S Henrik Ibsen and the Dalen hotel have the same owner, who markets and sells the boat journey and overnight stays at the exclusive Dalen hotel as a package. For his boat, then, it is vital that visitors spend as little time as possible on the last stages of the boat journey, and so the owner has changed its route to not stop at the village of Kviteseid, to the frustration of residents and business owners in that community.

Travelling across the long inland fjords, there was plenty of time for the passengers and the researchers to do interviews while glancing at the remarkable landscapes. Tourists now also had experiences to draw on as in talking about their journey.

What became clear from our interviews is that there are relatively few opportunities for visitors to connect with and engage with local communities if they are travelling on the canal boats. Even though visitors might wish to meet local residents and support local businesses, opportunities are limited and visitors do not necessarily seek out interactions with local people and businesses:

> It differs, we don't usually engage with the locals when we're on the boat. However, we are open to conversations if it feels natural. It's not like we deliberately seek out the locals to talk with them. (Traveller 1)

The "natural occasions" to meet local people were limited. Yet, many visitors would like to engage more with the local communities and maybe stay overnight for an extra day or two. We met several visitors who were frustrated over the lack of opportunities and choices for both eating out and finding nice places to stay. A group of foreign travellers, for example, wanted to experience more of the local communities along the canal, but this was not easy:

> We were going on the canal today and were planning to spend the night by it. It was difficult to find overnight accommodation. Being a group of eight people didn't make it any easier. We tried the website "Visit Telemark" Finn.no, bed and breakfasts, but we didn't find anything. It was frustrating and disappointing. We ended up staying at a cabin by Ulefoss which was the closest option available. (Traveler 3)

Even though many of those interviewed on the boat expressed a wish to get to know the local communities, this was rarely part of their experience. Their journey was more about viewing the natural landscape and the villages from a distance:

> Traveling on the boat is meaningful. Just sitting back and watching the landscape roll by. (Traveller 9)

7.6. Dalen

About 10 h after we embarked from Skien, we reach the quay by the village of Dalen in Tokke municipality. At the quay, two buses are waiting for canal boat passengers. One is the public bus service that takes passengers back to Lunde, Ulefoss or Skien, where they have left their cars or where they can take public transport to other places in the region or the country. The other bus is a replica of an old-fashioned bus used by the hotel to convey guests to the historic Dalen hotel while creating an ambience of times past. The quay is a short walk from the centre of the village, where the hotel is located.

The Dalen hotel is the dominant feature of the village. It is a historic luxury hotel built in 1894 at the first peak of tourism in Norway, when the country was a high-end, exotic destination for Europe's elite and aristocracy. The hotel's architecture is inspired by stave churches and old Viking houses (Fig. 5). The hotel has served many prominent guests during its history, though the economy of the hotel and the region has had its ups and downs. The current owner has invested heavily in the hotel and bought the MS Henrik Ibsen canal boat in 2009. That boat is now an integrated component of the hotel business:

> The canal is very important for the hotel. We call it "the vein" of the hotel. Mostly because of the marketing it provides. Everyone knows the Telemark Canal. (Key stakeholder #4, Hotel Director)

Dalen also has a bed and breakfast, and a few small cafes in the village centre. All its businesses are in relatively close proximity to the quay, and local people appreciate that both the canal and the hotel attract visitors to Dalen. Our interviews with Dalen's business owners, though, showed that there is unfulfilled potential at the interface between the host community and visitors. Again, how the infrastructure is organised is a focal point:

> And it's important that there's something for the boat tourists to do when they come off the boats. Somebody has to be there. The worst thing that can happen is that tourists get off the boats and immediately leave with the buses back to Skien […] If the bus left an hour later it would be different. Then maybe the tourists would visit the village centre. But it seems like they just want to go back once they get off the boat. (Key stakeholder #3, Jeweller)

Organizing the infrastructure along the canal route takes considerable effort, though, and there are many municipalities, business leaders, communities and conflicting interests involved (cf. Frisvoll, 2012). Time schedules and opening hours need to be coordinated across borders and interests, as one interviewee observed:

> The shops could stay open a bit later, or on certain days like Thursdays. Then people could adjust to that. However, it's been very tough. We have tried to make this happen … but it seems impossible. We hardly managed to get one bus. And for two years we had to pay for it.
>
> I: And who are they?
>
> Strong interests in Skien and Nome. It's no secret that we've had conflicts with them for some time to maintain our position as a stop on the canal boat route. (…) We've invested a lot of money in this. But the whole time, we've felt like they didn't really want to go this far up the canal and that they would rather stop further down. (Key stakeholder #2, Representative Tokke Municipality)

At Dalen, the actual benefits of the canal and its tourism are more indirect than direct:

> It's [the canal] enormously significant and puts the valley on the map. We have other tourist attractions nearby but it's the canal and the hotel that attracts the most tourists. (…) There are quite a lot of tourists on the boats both up and down the canal and if it stopped I think it would make a big difference. The canal and the boats are popular, and tourists come here just to see them and the hotel. If the boats stopped I think it would be very quiet here. (Business #7)

One interviewee at a small Dalen café also observed that non-local customers tend not to come from the canal boats:

> The tourists who arrive by the boats usually stay at the hotel, camping site or the bed and breakfast. They usually don't visit us. (Business #5)

As in the other local communities, there are a variety of views about what would happen if tourist boats stopped trafficking the canal. Dalen businesspersons seem to agree, though, that tourism opportunities should be better coordinated in space and time:

Fig. 5. Dalen hotel. Source: www.visitnorway.no.

I: Do you think businesses [at Dalen] would notice financially if the boats along the canal stopped coming?

No, I don't think so, most people just get on the buses once they're off the boat … […] When I've been sitting on the docks where the boats come in, I've noticed that quite a lot of the tourists get right on the bus. (Business #4)

7.7. The end of the canal tour

Thus, we arrive at the end of our excursion. During the 10-h journey from Skien to Dalen, we passed by idyllic woodlands, mountains, agricultural areas, and small communities. The boat passengers we interviewed said that they enjoyed the journey very much, and the historical environment, nature and the landscape viewed from the boat were highlighted as major experiences. Very few of those we met had stopped for an overnight stay, and those who had hoped to do so were not satisfied with the options for accommodation. From a canal boat visitor's perspective, the meeting points between local hosts and visitors were few – but even without these interactions, tourists enjoyed a great travel experience. Interviewees appreciated the industrial heritage of the Telemark Canal, and most emphasised the canal as a key to local identity and other indirect values. Community and business leaders along the canal's rural towns spoke about social and economic encounters between hosts and visitors largely in terms of unfulfilled potential. Several interviewees from the tourism and destination development sectors also emphasised that the long distances and low numbers of people living in rural communities along the canal were major challenges inhibiting growth.

8. Polyrhythms at the host-visitor interface

Rhythmanalysis is an analytical approach to, in Lefebvre's terms, "listen to" different spatiotemporal practices simultaneously without valuing one above others. Equally applicable to analysing relationships across individuals, institutions and society generally, rhythmanalysis draws attention to emergent as well as planned rhythmic patterns. As described by Edensor and Holloway (2008, p. 499), "rhythms are architectures of sensation, narrative and embodiment". Their analysis of the rhythms of a coach tour shows (similar to a Telemark Canal boat tour) that, "the tour is never purely repetitive, for despite taking passages of recognisable ordering and habitual tempo, other heterogeneous durations and refrains rise and fall, always becoming and shot through with potentialities". Likewise, tourism opportunities exist within a wider 'symphony' of related but differently-timed components, in a spatiotemporal pattern referred to by Lefebvre (2013) as polyrhythmia. In our study, polyrhythmia is seen in the host-visitor interface along the Telemark Canal.

The Telemark Canal, how it is managed and how both hosts and visitors engage with the canal, represent a series of interconnected rhythmic events. The waterway has its own rhythms directed by seasonal variations, weather and water flow, and it is an integrated part of how residents and business owners in canal-adjacent communities organise their everyday lives. Tourism along the Telemark Canal is also synchronized in time and space, and these *isorhythms* are practiced and experienced by visitors to the canal and region. The isorhythms of the Telemark Canal are shaped by *talea* such as timetables, opening hours and the operation of the locks, fostering the *color* – the potential performances and memorable experiences that comprise tourist visits. Though the route and timing of the canal journey is regularized, a visitor's experience differs by length of travel (the entire trip, or just a segment of it), mode of transport (independent boaters, or canal boat tourists) and related circumstances (weather, staff, other travelers, and so on). The *talea* also limits visitors' flexibility, directing visitors to experience the canal landscape in specific ways. Our data show that tourists experience the canal journey as a contrast to daily life: time slows as they move by boat through the locks system. Their experience is also one of passing through and viewing "typical" Norwegian landscapes from the boat. Thus, the canal boat experience and its associated rhythms produce specific kinds of tourism mobility and immobility (Sheller, 2014). In these, visitors are both passive and in motion over time and space, their experiences partly coordinated and managed by tourism providers (Cresswell, 2010), with some degrees of flexibility and variation emerging from individual experiences. In this way, "rhythm is an important component of mobility" (Sheller, 2014, p. 23) in the host-visitor interface along the Telemark Canal.

It is not only the canal boat visitors' rhythms, however, that are decisive forces in canal tourism. Central to all tourism is the meeting between visitors, tourism providers and host communities, and these entities have, as demonstrated, their own rhythms. To stimulate local development from tourism in terms of social, cultural or economic value creation, the rhythms of the visitors and the hosts need to be relatively synchronized such that the *polyrhythms* of the host-visitor interface are aligned. While hosts and visitors have their own separate rhythms and spatial arrangements, the empirical material demonstrates that opportunities for tourists to connect or engage with local people and communities along the canal route are scarce due to a prevailing asynchronicity with rhythms of the local communities. The flexibility determined by the *talea* of hosts' and visitors' rhythms, respectively, does not sufficiently support local development based on canal tourism. While visitors move *along* the canal in predictable spatiotemporal patterns, local hosts move *around* their respective communities and regions.

The stream of tourists *passing by* the communities, gazing at the landscape from a distance, also makes local development challenging, and may even contradict traditional notions of tourism development. The times and spaces in which hosts and visitors can meet are limited, and thus how to organise and regulate the intersections between hosts and visitors is as crucial as it is complicated.

Heritagization is a central theme of Telemark Canal tourism, but it should not be seen as merely a process of *representing* notable culture and traditions of a destination or region for tourist consumption (Inglis and Holmes, 2003). It is also a political process (Poria and Ashworth, 2009), investing sites and attractions with symbolic meaning, negotiating support by groups, communities and leaders for tourism development, and mitigating conflicting interests, desired outcomes and stakeholders with varying levels of agency to alter rhythms to fit their agenda (cf. Frisvoll, 2012). Traditional studies about visitor impacts of tourism development typically deal with objective, observable changes to community life and residents' attitudes toward those. Although these studies might examine dynamic processes such as heritagization, they are often not attuned to subtle development-related isorhythms and polyrhythms, especially those that are syncopated, asynchronous or have extended geographic range. Attention to the rhythms and polyrhythms of tourism systems can provide a better understanding of the fluidity, complexity and emergent entangled qualities of development contexts, not simply their objective qualities or dimensions (Pink, 2012).

9. Intervention through rhythms

Though the use of rhythmanalysis can aid in understanding the spatiotemporal features of the host-visitor interface in a regional tourism development context, the project should not be seen as only macro-structural in nature. Lefebvre (2013) pointed out that rhythms extend across biological, psychological, social and cultural contexts. Thus, interventions may be needed in various domains related to the interface of local hosts, regional organizations and travelling visitors. Lefebvre refers to "interventions through rhythms" and "rhythmanalytic therapy" to suggest how rhythmic adjustments can be applied as tools by managers and stakeholders to facilitate desired societal changes. Analysis of the polyrhythms of specific places is a first step in revealing arrhythmias; then, adjustments to one or more of the rhythmic elements constituting the polyrhythm can facilitate recalibration (Flemsæter et al., 2018).

While some space-time relations (such as those provided by nature itself, or overarching structural preconditions) cannot easily be altered locally, others can potentially be adjusted by stakeholders at various scales and levels. Business managers, destination developers, land use planners and policy makers can all influence tourism development and heritagization processes. Regarding arrhythmia in the host-visitor interface along the Telemark Canal, we argue that leaders should aim to synchronize and enhance tourism development through *intervention in existing rhythms*. Limited adjustments in time-space arrangements such as time schedules, accommodation opportunities, landscape planning and architecture at the host-visitor interface might alter larger time-space structures, which in turn might strengthen the potential for local development and broaden the scope of desired tourist experiences.

For such interventions to be successful for host communities, the values that tourists attribute to their journey, and they ways they conduct their travel, must also be understood. When interviewees described their travel motivations, it was the slow boat travel and the canal's prominence as a cultural heritage site that people mentioned. On-board, passive nature and to a certain degree culture appreciation, was identified most frequently as the main experience travellers got – an experience that was indeed highly valued. But, these motivations and benefits reflect only the on-site aspect of a visit to the Telemark Canal. An aspect of slow travel, however, is also the opportunity to have time for a deeper engagement with the host communities. Moreover, canal tourism may be viewed as slow travel, but as Oh et al. (2016) explain, slow and non-slow travel can coexist in a complementary manner. Thus, host communities could deliberately broaden tourism offerings and market new experiences to enhance social and economic value creation, without neither conflicting with visitors' initial motivations nor necessarily with the slow travel experience.

Nevertheless, interventions are often applied by people in positions of power – people with funds, who direct programs, or who can access resources. In the case of the Telemark Canal, for example, the affluent owner of Dalen Hotel changed the routing of a tourist boat to bring visitors more quickly to the hotel – to the benefit of some, but at a cost for a particular rural community. Another example is the bus schedules, structured to return landed passengers directly back to Skien, setting a rhythm that reduces community entrepreneurial efforts oriented to canal tourists. In planning and decision-making processes, it is possible that development projects will not support positive collective ends, but may be stymied by those with power and resources. Yet, when even the alteration of one element can produce a new polyrhythm (Lefebvre, 2013), potentialities expand for the actors involved. These are critical issues, especially for rural communities.

It is also important to acknowledge others involved in this system. While this study focused on visitors travelling by Telemark Canal boats, other tourists include independent boaters and land-based tourists travelling by bus or by private boats, kayaks, bicycles and cars. Because many of these visitors control their own time schedules, travel routes, and patterns of interaction with local people and businesses, their tourism patterns may differ from those examined in this paper. The polyrhythmic intersections of these types of tourists, mobility choices, and host communities may also reveal unique interventions that could also inform canal boat tourism.

10. Conclusion

This paper used Lefebvre (2013) rhythmanalysis approach to explore the rhythms associated with visitor experiences of Norway's Telemark Canal as well as the polyrhythms that occur at the interface between visitors' experiences and the actions of host communities. In our study, we sought to detect how the contemporary rhythms of the Telemark Canal, and their interrelationships, affect the potential for local rural development. The sensory aspects of a place, its physicality, aesthetics and the "activity rhythm of public life" (Pinkster and Boterman, 2017, 460), are all affected when communities and places change. Along the Telemark Canal, heritagization processes form the basis for planned tourism development and for host-guest interactions across the region. Yet, connotations of 'heritage' vary across social actors (Ashworth, 2011), encompassing natural scenery along the canal, industrial features (canal boats, the locks, local history), and community cultural qualities, among others. Further, some aspects of cultural heritage are situated in place even while visitors are mobile across time and space: for tourists, the goal is to travel along the canal as an experiential journey, while local communities are interested in "capturing" visitors for economic and socio-cultural reasons. Lack of connections between visitors and host communities thus creates a significant arrhythmia in local and regional economic, social and cultural development. Our study demonstrates that rhythmanalysis aptly covers both the orderings and regularities of tourism provision, as well as tourists' performances and experiences. Moreover, rhythmanalysis is not only a suitable analytical approach to better understand spatiotemporal relationships; it also arguably has the potential to be a beneficial management tool.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Frode Flemsæter: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing, Project administration. **Patricia Stokowski:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing. **Svein Frisvoll:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing - original draft.

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