



Land-use conflicts in coastal tourism and the quest for governance innovations

Anne-Mette Hjalager

University of Southern Denmark, Department of Entrepreneurship and Relationship Management, Universitetsparken 1, DK-6000 Kolding, Denmark



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ABSTRACT

Based on media content analysis this study examines 213 land-use conflicts in Danish coastal tourism to understand the formats of land-use struggles and the methods used to manifest discontent. It contributes to emerging, but still under-investigated risks of overtourism and spatial degradation and it addresses who is active in conflicts, with what means they communicate, and with what results. A typology of issues that kick off conflict includes “Construction and rebuilding”, “Change in land-use”, “Infrastructure alteration”, “Illegal activity”, “Landscape modification”, “Climate change” and “Access permission”. These are issues raised most frequently by neighboring residents and holiday home owners, followed by nature associations and public authorities. Institutionalized channels of complaint are most often used, while more radical forms, such as demonstrations, protest movements and vandalism, are rare. However, successful multi-modal campaigns and national energy planning are affected by tourism-related protests. Overall, the Danish planning system proves capable of accommodating most tensions, and the settled power balance in the planning systems largely continues, although planning is a target for remonstrance and activism. The article discusses the participatory deficits observed. It informs protesters and government bodies alike, and contributes to the ongoing scholarly discussions about the nature of spatial development.

1. Introduction

Economic activities in tourism are notably place-bound and place-dependent. But touristic developments are also objects of dispute, particularly if there are competing claims for land and space (Bartels, 2016; Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Dredge, 2010; Roehl and Fesenmaier, 1987). Land-use conflicts are widely seen in all parts of the world and for a large number of reasons (Hales and Larkin, 2018). Preventing, mediating and resolving conflicts are prime ingredients in policy measures, public land governance and planning (Clavé and Wilson, 2017; Halkier, 2014; Gualini, 2015; Healey, 2018; Viken and Granås, 2016).

The purpose of this article is to examine land-use conflicts in coastal Denmark. The contribution lies in a deeper understanding why conflicts arise, who are manifesting an opposition and with what implications. The background is an apparent change in the perception of tourism and a higher occurrence of critical opposition to specific projects or general touristic expansion from residents, established tourist users, business owners in sectors other than tourism and bodies working in the general public interest such as nature and environmental protection organizations (Almeida et al., 2017; Andersen et al., 2018). Threats related to climate change, such as flooding, storms and erosion recast land-use

issues, cause conflicts in new places and change overall land-use and planning agendas (Church and Coles, 2007; Landauer et al., 2018). Simultaneously, there is risk of disputes, when other touristic and non-touristic developments, experienced as non-complementary, expand in the vicinity of touristic property, thus challenging the value propositions and development trajectories otherwise well-embedded in space and place (Lindberg et al., 2019).

The assumption in this article is that the formats of land-use struggle and the methods used to manifest discontent and that privileges of initiative and balances are challenged. Consequently, there appears to be a demand for governance innovations, which rework existing and bring into use new collaborative modes and mechanisms.

The contribution of the article lies in the fact that it examines a larger number of conflicts and establishes an understanding of the topics addressed and of the touristic and other stakeholders involved. The article addresses methods of resistance and outcomes. The analysis of conflicts uncovers upcoming planning issues and seeks to uncover systemic malaise. Against this background and with regard to current academic advancements in the field, the article discusses the requirements for and potential directions of governance reform. In theoretical terms, it deals with the need to shift approaches in the system of land-use governance and in this context the quest for innovations in

E-mail address: hjalager@sam.sdu.dk.

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regulation and involvement. The understanding of conflict can facilitate the adjustment of planning paradigms. Thus, it is envisioned that the governance of land-use is not by any means permanent, but rather reflects the specific context and wider governance perspectives in operation in tourism (Dredge, 2010; Hall, 2008).

Firstly, the article presents a conceptualization of land-use conflicts and governance innovation in a general and Danish context. After outlining the media content analysis methodology, it analyses what the types of conflict are, who the protesters are, the offenders, the methods of protesting and the outcomes in 213 specific land-use conflicts. The discussion and conclusion raise the issues of how to understand land-use conflict in tourism and future perspectives.

2. Conceptualizing land-use conflicts and governance innovations

Over many years, the influence of tourism on economic development and welfare has been praised and expansive measures are included in governmental policies at all levels. Particularly in geographical peripheries, tourism is often the major, if not the last, opportunity to safeguard against depopulation and economic decline (Brida et al., 2016; Romao and Neuts, 2017). Massive investments from public funds are channeled into the purpose, for example through EU regional development and cohesion strategies (Estol and Font, 2016).

However, recent tourism research has started to articulate the power dimensions of touristic enlargement more clearly. Tourism space is potentially limited and therefore contested terrain, as recognized in the comprehensive research into residents' perceptions (Deery et al., 2012; Sharpley, 2014), and there is a need to examine more carefully why, how and with what implications conflicts not only arise but also aggravate (Almeida et al., 2017; Church and Coles, 2007). To the surprise of many policymakers, the embedded right to and decisive power over territory and the pursuit of growth are questioned by residents. Under the eloquent term "overtourism", the negative side-effects have been successfully publicized (Martín et al., 2018; Novy and Colomb, 2016; Hou and Knierbein, 2017). Simultaneously however, "under-tourism" is the case in many areas, where there appear to be no other development opportunities (Koens et al., 2018). The fear of overtourism is mainly confined to urbanized zones, but is spreading to densely occupied rural and peripheral coastal areas (Lorentzen, 2013). The piecemeal annexing of some protected zones, for example areas of natural beauty or value or the demolition of built heritage for seemingly more efficient and modern urbanization and coastal resorts, is a source of protests (Liburd and Becken, 2017).

Land-use conflicts are often intensively politicized (Healey, 2018). Many people are affected, not only

legitimate and entitled landowners and renters (Timothy, 2007), but also all those who use space for habitual transfers and gazing, even without trespassing. Tourism is *per se* an act of flow, and the tourists as well as mobile service providers occupy and utilize the space, and they will also have opinions on its organization and regulation. Controversies occur when the pursuing of one part's interest creates disadvantages for others. Advantages and disadvantages are not only economic in nature, but also social, emotional and cultural. As suggested by research and practice in participative multi-level governance, all such qualities may entitle people to participate and counter-fight. Schmitter (2002) finds that citizens are "holders" in various ways, all of relevance in land-use contexts. *Right-holder* privileges are attached to membership of and decision-making powers in, for example, community governance bodies. *Space-holders* are those who temporarily or permanently live in a demarcated territory. *Knowledge-holders* claim rights because of expertise or as guardians. *Shareholders* possess certain resources or ownership rights, possibly indirectly in corporate structures. *Interest-holders* consist of those who want to participate on their own behalf or on behalf of others and who express specific values. *Status-holders* are people with an honorable recognition and allowed voice for that reason alone. Hence, it is not necessarily self-evident who

can participate in disputes of land-use matters (Heinelt, 2002; Swyngedouw, 2005), and all categories of "holders" may be identified and considered in coastal tourism.

There is no consolidated typology for issues of and arguments in land-use conflict. Dunk et al. (2011) condensed the following categories: Noise pollution, visual blight, health hazards, nature conservation, preservation of the present, and changes to the neighborhood. With some overlap Roehl and Fesenmaier (1987) address, for example, environmental damage, economic change, property rights, aesthetic issues, equity and fairness, and costs.

The literature on urban regimes and policies also emphasizes a diversity of values, formulated under the headlines neoliberalism, environmentalism and localism that lie behind a number of specific conflicts in space. *Neoliberalism* embraces economic expansionism, which includes, for example, the competitive invitation to invest, the deregulation of norms, standards and rules, the creation of new markets of hitherto non-marketed assets, and the privatization of national/publicly owned assets (Davies and Blanco, 2017; Mosdale, 2016), and a dis-possession of resources for the purpose of accumulation (Fitchett, Lindberg & Martin, 2020). The *environmentalism*-related issues of land-use conflicts concern the priority to care for the environmental resource in all its variety, an accelerated discussion in the time of climate change and the appeal for individual and global response (Hall et al., 2015). The *localism* angle comprises ideas about the protection of existing values, identities, norms and privileges, and localism tends to reject hyped lifestyles and too-rapid modernization (Amore and Hall, 2017). It can be argued that localism is a counterweight against the external forces that tend to shrink local democracy (Hou and Knierbein, 2017), and this category of place and space approach may aim to reclaim power for the local communities and ensure an emancipation of the population.

Formats and expressions of conflict and the measures that the offended and offenders use to articulate their discontent are also essential. The offenders are actors who take land-use initiatives and support changes that, in this study, appear to trouble others land-users. The offended are the categories of actors who oppose and resist. Juris and Sitrin (2016) provide forms of resistance along three continua:

- *Intention*: Passive to active. Passive conflict is constituted by the roles of power and existing statutes. The opposition acts in compliance with this, although trying to find loopholes, dragging out action or passively non-complying with the settled outcomes of the conflict. Active conflict approaches include attempting to change roles and rules and to provoke power constellations.
- *Scale*: Micro to macro. The micro-scale is confined to the local place and space, while the macro scale raises the stakes, involving higher principles and actors far beyond the local scene and specific topic of conflict. The continuum suggests that the agenda at the macro scale may become wider and more collectively considered, for example containing planning policies or (tourism) strategies more generally in a trans-territorial sense.
- *Visibility*: Covert to overt. A conflict can be exercised and eventually concluded in an unpublicized manner and as the result of mitigations and negotiations between the partners involved and nobody else. In this case, the conflict is covert, even if many others have experienced the same. The overt conflict is communicated to a wider audience, for example through the media, not only in order to affect the outcome, but possibly also to demonstrate the principles of transparency.

Recent literature about overtourism suggests that land-use conflicts tend to become more active, inclusive and visible, where the offended not only use standard complaint procedures, but also mobilize the arguments in the urban space as banners, manifestations and demonstrations (Hou and Knierbein, 2017; Novy and Colomb, 2016). In any conflict there are dynamics over time, which may rescale and either

escalate or de-escalate (Yang et al., 2013).

The final focus point in this literature-based conceptualization of the field as regards the issue of governance innovation. Swyngedouw (2005) defines governance innovations as new government arrangements that rearticulate the state-civil society relationship and reposition the meaning of citizenship. Thus, new government structures are responses to changed socioeconomic and cultural conditions and tend to occur where there is an institutional or regulatory void. For some decades, the arena of governance innovations has been situated within a neoliberal conceptualization, adapting planning regulations in ways that stimulate investments and privatize responsibility for public space and infrastructures (Healey, 2018; Mosedale, 2016). Nowadays, the pendulum is swinging towards greater emphasis on how, in the planning system, to embrace and create value with multiple stakeholders in collaborative and co-creative formats (Fotino et al., 2018). The speed and nature of such governance innovation endeavors are also matters of controversy (Andersen et al., 2018), and can be good opportunities to escalate conflicts from the micro to the macro scale (Juris and Sitrin, 2016).

Turning to evidence about tourism, land-use conflicts are seen to emerge in connection with large-scale touristic development. Most studies deal with single locations, sometimes in places characterized by rapid growth or decline, or areas with distinct social or political unrest (Almeida et al., 2017). Research also examines the competition for land resources, such as for example in the case of mining (Hales and Larkin, 2018), fisheries (Førde, 2016), or agriculture (Bartels, 2016). The sources deliver insights into the particularities as well as the implications for those involved and the development of the locations in terms of their qualities. This is of value for land-use policy and tourism strategies. However, this article seeks to go beyond the specific case by more comprehensively investigating a larger number of land-use conflicts. Such approaches are underrepresented in academic literature, as stated by Novy and Colomb (2016), and this is where this article seeks to make a contribution.

3. Danish coastal tourism and dominant land-use issues

In Denmark, tourism is a priority on local, regional, and national policy agendas. Growth in tourism demand is a fundamental objective (Olesen and Carter, 2018; Regeringen, 2016). Governmental strategy is positive in its approach to this objective, supporting the modernization and targeting of marketing and branding, enhanced digitalization, support for innovations and changes in business framework conditions. The Danish planning system has a strong strategic and executive element in the local municipalities, but with governmental directions set in general planning frameworks (OECD, 2017). There are formalized opportunities for citizens and others to participate in planning processes and to protest against specific plans and developments. In the Danish planning regulation, coastal zones are traditionally areas with enforced protective measures. However, in order to ensure growth in coastal zones, planning laws have been modified so as to stimulate a better utilization of building and land capacities and to widen opportunities in the attractive locations in the immediate vicinity of the beaches (Andersen et al., 2018). More specifically, a liberalization of the planning regulations paved the way for the construction of up to 25 large coastal tourism facilities (hotels, attractions, etc.). It also encouraged municipalities to boost existing and planned holiday home areas.

The motivation for regulatory changes was the recent growth in tourism, a trend that is expected to continue. Tourism in coastal and nature areas accounts for 72 % of Danish tourism. During the period 2008–2017, tourism in the coastal areas increased by 9 %. However, urban tourism had a much steeper growth curve, increasing by 93 % in the same period (Det nationale Turismeforum, 2018). Policy agendas suggest a need to reinforce expansion in coastal areas, based on a number of arguments. Job creation for locals is a matter of importance,

and the peripheral areas of Denmark should not appear disadvantaged compared to urban areas in this respect. Another argument is that the coastal zones have a favorable surplus capacity to accommodate the growth, particularly in terms of extending the seasons. As noted by Andersen et al. (2018), however, processes implemented following the recent planning regulations have not taken any sustainability issues into serious account.

In short, tourism in Danish coastal zones is characterized by being a summer phenomenon, with only a modest expansion to other seasons. The primary means of accommodation are the privately-owned holiday homes, whose owners use them mainly for family holidays. Around 20 % of the holiday houses are also on the rental market and Airbnb, and they represent a popular self-catering product. Compared to the holiday home market, the commercial accommodation facilities (hotels, hostels, camping and resort), are modest. Visitors to coastal zones are mainly Danish, German, Norwegian and Swedish tourists.

According to tourist evaluations, nature is a focal attraction (Dansk Kyst- og Naturturisme, 2017). The beaches, dunes, plantations, forests, wetlands, etc. are in most cases openly accessible, a principle in the Danish spatial regulations. In recent decades, municipal and state land owners and administrators have worked on improving accessibility through trails and a variety of outdoor facilities. Gradually more attention is being directed to an appropriate management, allowing for sustainable tourism experiences. Business and private initiatives in connection with outdoor enjoyment require space for such purposes (Andersen, 2015; Kwiatkowski, Hjalager, Liburd & Simonsen, 2019).

The principles of the planning and management of the coastal zones are discussed on a regular basis, and issues about protection and sustainability arise, often brought up by the (in terms of the number of members and privileges in the planning system) powerful Danmarks Naturfredningsforening (The Danish Society for Nature Conservation). However, a prevailing opinion and background to the government's changes in planning laws is that, as the coastal zones are not by any means "over-touristic", room could and should be made for such types of expansion that can support the growth agenda without compromising the most unique features (Regeringen, 2017).

In conclusion, on the surface there is a fairly peaceful and optimistic political consensus about tourism development in the coastal zones, which repeatedly confirms the fundamental issues of nature protection and attention to obstructive developments of the built environment. This study will, however, go beneath the surface and assess what specific land-use issues are raised, and how they relate to the emerging concerns, for example of overexploitation, climate change, nature protection, etc. The aim is to question the logics in the planning system and discuss governance innovations.

4. Research approach

4.1. Research strategy

Most inquiries into land-use conflicts focus on one single location, for example a specific development scheme, a city or a rural district. This study embraces all coastal zones and large lakes in Denmark. Large urbanized zones are not included. The zones comprise belts of 10 km from the coast. Thus, the study addresses issues in nature and open spaces of major interest for the evolution of Danish tourism policy, and where coastal growth and development are expected to take place (Andersen et al., 2018; Halkier, 2014).

The research approach is a media content analysis (Altheide and Schneider, 2017). In order to identify and consider the largest possible number of conflicts across coastal Denmark, it examines the occurrence and representation of land-use conflicts in newspapers. The media are relevant sources, as they often enthusiastically report on controversies that occupy and arouse emotions among local people. Such stories often include land-use conflicts, which are good points of entry for analysis. Content analysis allows the study of human artifacts across time, and it

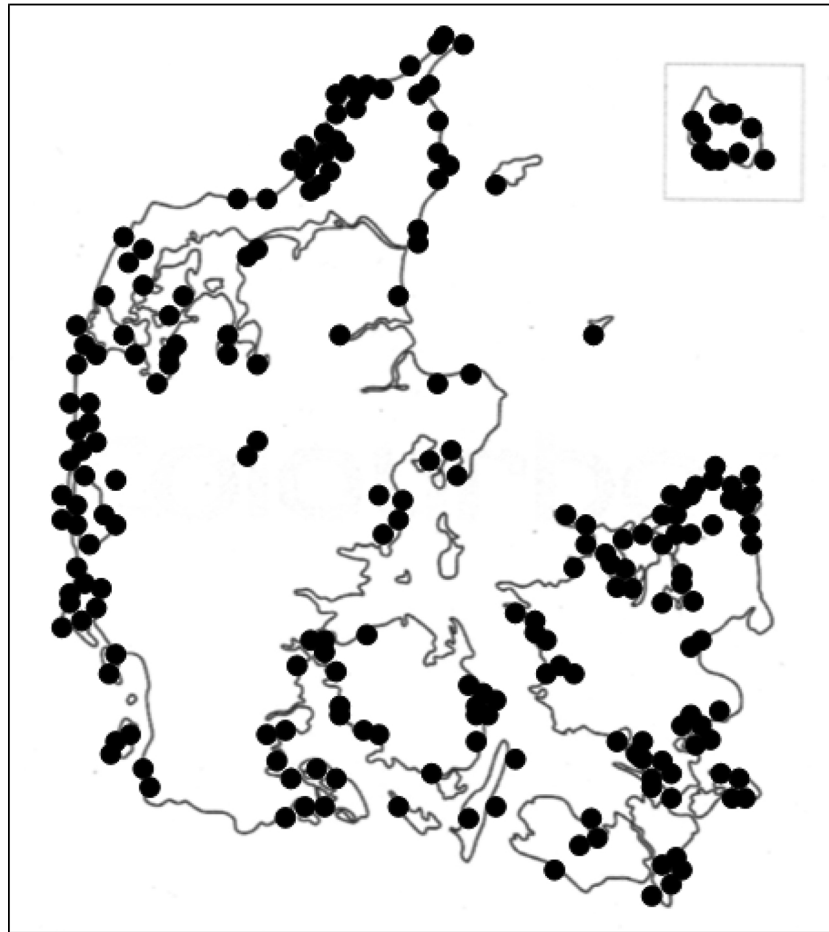


Fig. 1. The location of the 213 land-use conflicts in Denmark. Conflicts are identified in all parts of the country, but higher numbers are seen in some of the concentrations of coastal tourism.

permits the examination of large data sets of content (Riff et al., 2019).

4.2. Source

The source is Infomedia, a comprehensive full-text media archive containing material from all Danish media. The 17 national, 87 regional and 458 local newspapers were included after an initial search which showed that conflicts meaningful for this study were mainly featured in local and regional media, and occasionally they span-off and expanded into the national media. Most local media cover only one or two municipalities and are often only published weekly. The regional and national media are published on a daily basis. The media cover the breath of political observations. The study concentrates on conflicts that emerged over five years, 2014–2018. A sequence of years was chosen in order to follow conflicts that lasted over a longer period of time, and the most recent years cover an expansion of coastal tourism, which might be of importance for the occurrence of controversies.

4.3. Protocol development and data collection

For the search strategy, terms were selected to scrutinize the large number of articles contained in Infomedia. After extensive test searches on Infomedia, the protocol search terms were refined with the relevant Danish planning and land-use phrases. Inspired also by the research literature, the key terms were systematically selected as “Complaint”, “Protest”, “Resistance”, and “Conflict”, all words that have appropriate Danish translations. In order to target the results to tourism, a systematic approach was used to combine these terms with the following

relevant words relating to the built environment, again chosen and refined after substantial test searches: “Summerhouse”, “Hotel building”, “Camping”, “Visitor attraction”, “Visitor Centre”, “Outdoor”, “Museum”, “Hostel” and “Marina”. Intermediary issues, for example those related to festivals and events, are not included in the study. The study did not include restaurants, bars, etc. unless they were included in larger plans and projects.

The search generated 6470 hits, all of which went through a manual screening. It did not prove possible to automatize this process. In Infomedia, each search result is presented with the newspaper headline and 2–3 lines of content and a possibility to open a PDF-version of the full article. This information was the point of initial assessment for relevance. Subsequently selected articles were opened and reviewed, many of which turned out to be of no relevance and were discarded. 611 relevant articles embraced 213 specific and distinguishable land-use conflicts, which constitute the database for the study.

4.4. Data organization and coding

The protocol was constructed to catch data in a systematic way throughout the reading process. The articles were only consulted once, and therefore the entries in the protocol were only consolidated after several test rounds, which was an integral part of the research methodology. The protocol reflects the issues as they appear in the research questions.

After the Infomedia source had been exhausted, further coding was undertaken. All database entries were checked and consolidated. The coding reflected the categorizations that were found, for example all

entries were coded for the “stimulus” of the conflict, the actors noted as involved as protesters and opponents, the means of protest, and the “winners” of the dispute.

4.5. Data analysis

The data closes a clear knowledge gap by means of the descriptive presentation of the topics, people, means, modes and results of the land-use conflicts. The database was transferred to SPSS. The number of conflicts (213) is large enough to perform some further, albeit still statistically simple analysis in order to establish critical links between topics and outcomes.

4.6. Methodological limitations

The advantage of media content analysis is that it covers a large pool of information, and it works well in cases of conflict and controversy. However, there are also limitations. The media may not grasp the whole and the full truth of the conflict, and there may also be a bias towards the most communicative actors. In many of the cases, the results or the impacts of the conflicts were never reported, perhaps a signal that the media lost interest when situations normalized. The chosen research strategy did ultimately produce information on a large number of land-use conflicts, however, there might be cases that did not come to the surface, either because they never came to the attention of the media, or because they went under the radar of the search terms. Accordingly, the study cannot claim to be all-comprising, but it provides a quantitative insight, not previously seen, into who is involved in what conflicts and with what results. Case-based follow-up could be a way of supplementing the evidence given here (Fig. 1).

5. Land-use conflict topics in coastal tourism

The first area of interest in this study is simply to obtain an understanding of the topics of land-use conflicts. What do people disagree about? Table 1 provides a typology, where the incidences are clustered into the main issues that stimulate a conflict.

Construction plans raise concerns, for example the planning of new holiday home areas, auto-camper sites, hotels, visitor centers and attractions. Gradual change on a much smaller scale, such as the building of oversized holiday homes, or the change in building materials and styles, also spurs opposition. One concern expressed is the prospect of more noise and traffic. In addition, the supposedly negative effect on nature, including beaches, forests and other openly accessible areas is also a key concern, where complainers fear that their currently sanctioned use of recreational land will be impeded and that they will have to tolerate heavier competition for use of the available space. There are many references to particularly vulnerable places, where new buildings will get too close to flora or fauna habitats. Visual blights also cause alarm, for example some say that new buildings will become too

Table 1
Stimuli of land-use conflicts related to tourism.

Topics	Number of conflicts	%
Construction or rebuilding projects	95	44.6
Change in the exploitation of the space	39	18.3
Change in infrastructure, such as road, trails, harbors, wind power, etc.	32	15.0
Illegal use of space and buildings	19	8.9
Change in landscape, vegetation, and nature amenities	13	6.1
Change caused by nature, such as land erosion, flooding, etc.	9	4.2
Change in access circumstances	6	2.8
Total	213	99.9

Source: Infomedia.

dominant and will obstruct views for neighbors or visitors. A particularly remarkable case is the resistance to the building of a hotel in Blåvand. It may be that this project received extra media attention and created alliances widely outside the local area, as it was part of the controversial governmental initiative to increase coastal tourism with large developments in the immediate beach zone. Critics claimed it to be the “last nature spot” in a busy tourism destination, and it became a symbol of how land grabbing has reached an unacceptable level.

The second cause for conflict concerns change of the purpose and intensity of land-use. Coastal tourism businesses and owners of holiday homes “share” the space with other economic activities. Expanded pig farming can be intrusive with smells and insects. Gravel excavation creates dust and traffic. But touristic facilities are also problematic, an example being the generally intensified use of holiday homes as a result of platform marketing. The growing popularity of outdoor activities leads to rivalry for space, mountain biking being an example. Paragliding offends the holiday home owners who find their privacy challenged. Pollution that affect neighbors also includes excessive lighting and noise from music or crowds, emerging as a result of change in business models and operational modes in touristic or other enterprises.

When scrutinizing the number of times that each conflict appears in the media, the most high-profile conflicts were found in the infrastructure group. A particularly debated case relates to the governmental launch of building rights for sea-based wind-power plants as close as 4 km from the coastline. 16 locations were earmarked for this in 2012, and wind-power business corporations were invited to submit bids. Protesters feared aesthetic decline, noise, risks to marine wildlife and reduced property values. Other infrastructure plans that cause intense hostility are, for example, a flight strip and a heliport. Mobile masts are also found to be offensive. Changes in traffic layouts and parking areas are causes of alarm, particularly if close to private property.

Land-use that does not comply with planning concerns construction and renovations undertaken without official permission. Neighbors get upset when views or rights to trespass are blocked, but also if land-owners show disrespect for protected nature or building heritage.

The category of nature change in landscape, vegetation and nature amenities includes particularly the modification of dunes, but also the cutting of trees and other types of vegetation. Often construction and infrastructure projects as mentioned above create perceived symbiotic negative effects.

A much-publicized conflict that lasted for many years concerned the protection against coastal erosion on the North Sea coast, where the holiday home owners fought passionately, in particular against the national coastal authorities that systematically hindered attempts to establish private coastal protection measures. To the distress of land-owners, property is frequently lost in storms, and some have gone as far as illegally enforcing their individual coastlines with stones, sand, etc. The type of conflict is called “climate change”, as it illustrates how the natural forces provoke conflict raising behaviors of land owners.

Access issues arise in cases where landowners block beach or road access.

6. The protesters

The next issue to be uncovered through the media content analysis was to identify who took the first step in initiating the protest, and who were followers in the resistance campaigns. 198 conflicts allow a clear identification of the protesters, and on average 1.5 categories of protesters were seen to be present. The wind-power issue generated eight different categories of protesters, the broadest mobilization seen. Six different categories of protesters mobilized against the heliport and the same number against the Blåvand hotel complex (Table 2).

A majority of the protests are initiated and/or continued by the holiday home owners. This underlines the specificity of Danish coastal tourism, which is predominantly holiday home-based. The holiday

Table 2
Protesters in land-use conflicts related to tourism.

	Times mentioned	%
Neighboring holiday home owners	70	23.0
Local associations of holiday home owners	52	17.0
Residents	50	16.4
Danish Society for Nature Conservation	34	11.1
Other associations with an interest in tourism or leisure	22	7.2
Other neighboring tourism business enterprises	21	6.9
Municipalities	18	5.9
Other authorities	15	4.9
Other neighboring business enterprises	6	2.0
Tourists	6	2.0
Community associations	5	1.6
Experts	4	1.3
Others	2	0.7
Total	305	100
Number of conflicts where protesters have been clearly identified	198	

Source: Infomedia.

home owners are dissatisfied with the immediate neighbors' building activities and their treatment of the vegetation, as well as maintenance that does not comply with the regulations. However, they also involve themselves outside their immediate vicinity. Interventions such as municipally initiated sewage projects, road repairs or additional infrastructures as boat landing places and foot-trails create antagonisms. There are many examples of resistance to the exploitation of neighboring land for further holiday home developments, which might change the perception of the area. Tranquility is often mentioned as the main quality desired. The clear trend that emerges is that holiday home owners do not want too much hustle and bustle. They also react if they incur extra charges, such as for example in connection with sewage, drainage or coastal protection.

The associations of holiday owners can be said to be the "grass-roots" organizations representing the owners in confined local holiday home districts. Often individual holiday home owners voice their concerns, but sometimes an association will lead the protest on behalf of the owners.

Permanent residents are high in the list of complainants. In particular, they reject the expansion of touristic facilities that may cause noise and traffic. There was a general consensus amongst holiday home owners and residents with regard the controversial wind-power conflict.

The Danish Society for Nature Conservation (130,000 members) has the legal right to raise land-use cases and bring them before the Board of Appeal, even when none of the members are directly offended. The society is a considered a powerful organization with 95 local sub-groups, who are keen observers of land-use problems in their areas. The Society often participates in tourism-related land-use conflicts, particularly those in the vicinity of protected nature or beach zones. Other associations also choose to raise their voice, for example sports and leisure associations in the fields of kayaking, mountainbiking, boating, paragliding, angling and ornithology.

Both tourism businesses and other types of companies initiate or participate in conflicts. A considerable number of cases deal with tourism accommodation, where camping sites find that they will have to suffer tougher competition. Camping sites, holiday home intermediaries and their associations were also very critical of the wind-power plans and felt that the insensitive energy planning would have a negative impact on the tourism business. Some non-tourism enterprises attempt to protest proactively, for example a small fisheries and ferry harbor that was against the transformation of a restaurant into a hostel. Fishermen and shipping companies feared becoming overwhelmed by guests' complaints about noise, dust, smells, etc.

The municipalities constitute the main planning authorities, and

they intervene in small as well as larger issues, where the landowners do not comply with the planning regulations. Municipalities can raise cases as examples or to prevent escalated conflicts, and they often do so. Some actors are not happy with the interventions, for example when anarchic building extension work is suddenly halted and owners are asked remove illegal constructions. There are several other active authorities, particularly the Danish Coastal Authority, which has a decisive influence on all coastal adaptation measures. The agency raises cases against landowners who, without screening or permission, attempt to secure individual coasts. The Danish Ministry of Defense, the Nature Agency, the Danish Business Authority, and the taxation authorities are among other actors that are seen to stimulate land-use-related conflicts.

It is interesting to observe that tourists' opinions do not reach the media, unless, that is, we regard the holiday home owners as tourists. There are a few examples of dedicated tourists (Swedish and German) filing a formal complaint against building projects. On behalf of the tourists, the association of companies that lease holiday homes also raised concerns in the case of sea-based wind-power, which will affect the sea view of many holiday tenants and thereby the rental business.

7. The offenders

Who is on the other side of the barricades? The study reveals that the categories of offenders can be the same as those of protesters. Mostly, only one offender is targeted. However, in the wind-power case, municipalities, the governmental agencies responsible for energy planning and Vattenfall, the investor, were found to jointly compromise the interests of residents and tourism actors. Flooding and erosion protection are also complex issues when it comes to considering who the wrongdoers are (Table 3).

The municipalities responsible for planning are the target of sometimes quite aggressive resistance, when they, in the opinion of the protesters, change planning objectives and ambitions, bend the rules too much, neglect prior planning, or grant exemptions to specific building projects. When municipalities (and potential investors in the background) want to develop sizable touristic facilities, for example new summerhouse zones, sites for hotels, parking space, museum extensions, skepticism often surfaces. The municipalities are blamed if they are too willing to rely on claims about positive economic effects and job creation. Mistakes in procedural requirements are sources of complaint, and some municipalities lost trials in the Board of Appeal or Civil Court. The study demonstrates very clearly that the municipalities – politicians as well as public servants – are in the eye of the storm in escalating conflicts.

Tourism enterprises are also offenders in land-use clashes. They want to change and expand the tourism product and do things in new ways. Business owners find this consistent with official tourism strategy ambitions. A camping site started renting outdoor equipment, but the owner had not cleared how the tourists would use this equipment in the surrounding area. Generally camping sites are quite often seen among

Table 3
Offenders in land-use conflicts related to tourism.

	Times mentioned	%
Municipalities	98	38.1
Other neighboring tourism business enterprises	52	20.2
Neighboring holiday home owners	39	15.1
Other neighboring business enterprises	28	10.9
Other authorities	18	7.0
Other associations	16	6.2
Local associations of holiday home owners	3	1.2
Residents	3	1.2
Total	257	99.9
Number of conflicts where offenders have been clearly identified	203	

Source: Infomedia.

the offenders in this study, and they are blamed for illegally putting up huts and shelters, playgrounds, facilities for sports, etc. When a theater wanted to change the concept to a musical clubbing facility, complaints focused on noise issues. To illustrate the ambiguities in local areas, a camping site wanted, with the consent of some but far from all of the neighbors, to become a center for social and cultural activities in the local area.

Museums and national parks are also offenders. An art museum wanted to expand, and so did a historically important castle. Sharp protests come from experts as well as organizations that are custodians of nature and heritage values. In connection with the development of nature and national parks, the establishment of visitor centers created substantial opposition, which has taken these actors by surprise, as they normally regard their own activities as beneficial for the general public and as supporting protective ideas.

8. How resistance is communicated

As the source of the study is media content, protests are self-evidently expressed through the newspapers. Most of the articles are editorial in nature, where the actors are interviewed by journalists, or where journalists are present at events, but there are also letters to the editor. Hence, although use of the media is an important issue for protestors, it is not included in the table below (Novy and Colomb, 2016).

Table 4 lists the protest instruments, as they are reported in the media, and the list shows opportunities in terms of a gradual escalation. It can be observed that multiple ways of protesting can be used in the same project, on average 1.4.

The standard formal channels are by far the most used ways to express dissatisfaction. On a general level, the high number of complaints that used these mechanisms suggests that the Danish planning system can accommodate most of the protests adequately. Planning law procedures include the right of and an invitation to the immediately affected actors, mainly neighbors, to file objections to launched proposals. Some municipalities invite comments twice, first for preliminary draft plans, and later for planning proposals. In the initial phases, it is normal to extend the invitation not only to shareholders and close neighbors, but also to some extent to space-holders, knowledge-holders and interest-holders. This is a procedure used particularly in sensitive cases or large developments. The directly affected actors may file a complaint with the Environmental Board of Appeal. Such appeals will postpone a case, and for this reason business actors feel that they are

Table 4
Forms of communication in land-use conflicts related to tourism.

	Times mentioned	%
Use of formal and legally determined channels to comment and complain	109	43.6
Communication directly with the town hall/politicians	42	16.8
Participation in local meetings	21	8.4
Legal enforcement steps: police reporting, lawsuits, public commands	21	8.4
Petitions	18	7.2
Mediation meetings with the offending party	13	5.2
Establishment of a dedicated protest organizations, including the use of social media	10	4.0
Barricading, vandalism and offensive signposting	7	2.8
Demonstrations and marches	3	1.2
Joint inspection walks	3	1.2
Police reporting	3	1.2
Total	250	100.0
Cases where protesting methods (apart from media attention) can be identified	178	

Source: Infomedia.

inconvenient and a barrier to business accomplishment.

Coastal municipalities are small entities, and it is relatively easy and common to access politicians and civil servants and discuss issues with them.

Participatory measures are also employed to a significant extent, where municipalities organize meetings with citizens to inform them about plans or projects. However, the study also suggests that meetings can be arranged by the protestors. In particular, the associations of holiday owners have the infrastructure for such a grass-roots mobilization, but they seem to bring this into play relatively rarely. Participatory measures are more for residents than tourists, the latter being understood as both holiday home owners and visitors.

In case of a sustained illegal behavior, the public authorities may escalate the conflict and issue commands to make landowners comply with regulations. There are examples of very lengthy processes, predominantly around flooding protection, where landowners refuse to comply. Foot-dragging is seen regularly. But there are also episodes where landowners take public authorities to court, for example a camping site with a leasing contract with promised expansion possibilities, which were later withdrawn by the municipality after intensive resistance from neighbors and nature protection associations.

Large projects such as, for example, in coastal wind-power triggered significant support through a petition. However, petitions are also used in smaller cases. They seem to work well, when non-residents want to express their concerns. Petitions often express an imperative request to municipalities to increase the quality and transparency of planning. The most publicized protest action about sea-based wind-power also gave rise to the establishment of a dedicated association with the media-communicable name “Stop the Coastal Windmills”.

Inspection walks were infrequent. A speculative one included an invitation to a noise test in connection with a heliport, where both holiday home owners, tourism businesses and even tourists had expressed their concerns. A helicopter was leased to land in and take off from the location. The protesters were not convinced and continued their opposition.

Demonstrations and marches are rarely seen. However, the Danish Society for Nature Conservation orchestrated bonfire events on many beaches to rebel and protest against the government’s plans to increase the construction of major touristic facilities.

Barricading and vandalism are also very seldom observed. An example concerns holiday home owners jointly digging holes in the road to avoid trespassing.

9. Winners and losers in land-use conflicts

Of the 213 land-use conflicts in this study, information is only ascertained about the outcome of 118. Some conflicts remain unresolved for several years, and many of the most recent ones are still ongoing. The following analysis can give an indication of the power relations in land-use conflicts in tourism. Of these 118 cases, the protesters, i.e. those who initiated the protests and later followers were successful in 50, the offenders in 63, and in five cases, compromises were reached (Table 5).

The most convincing conclusion, taking into account the low numbers, is that if a municipality or another public authority initiates a conflict, it is likely that they will win the conflict or find a compromise. This is the case both when they initiate a conflict, and when they are regarded as offenders by others. The “right-holder” perspective is quite clear in the case of touristic land-use conflicts.

However, conflicts started with the participation of holiday home owners and their associations or other tourism enterprises are not necessarily a waste of time. The Danish Society for Nature Conservation, emerges as less successful in the cases in this study, but other associations seem to be more likely to launch fruitful resistance.

This analysis of efficient modes of resistance cannot be very conclusive, again as a result of the limited number of cases where the

Table 5
Winners, losers and compromises in land-use conflicts.

	Winners %	Losers %	Compromise %	Total no.
When on the opposition side				
Municipality	71.4	7.4	21.4	14
Other authorities	66.7	22.2	11.2	9
Residents	42.3	46.2	11.5	26
Holiday home owners	39.1	56.5	4.3	46
Associations of holiday home owners	37.0	55.6	7.4	27
Tourist enterprises	33.3	58.3	8.3	12
Danish Society for Nature Conservation	31.8	68.2	0	22
Other associations	46.2	46.2	7.7	13
When on the offender side				
Other associations	72.7	27.3	0	11
Municipality	64.9	33.3	1.8	57
Other authorities	55.6	33.3	11.1	9
Tourist enterprises	51.9	40.7	7.4	27
Enterprises other than tourism	43.7	56.3	0	16
Holiday home owners	33.3	63.0	3.7	27

Source: Infomedia.

outcome can be determined. However, none of the modes of resistance seem totally without effect. Many complaints in the formal systems seem to be turned down. Contacting the town hall directly and working with politicians and civil servants can produce favorable results, particularly in smaller communities. Escalated forms of protests, such as marches, demonstrations, vandalism, barricading and protest movements, may create visibility, but they are not necessarily effective in changing agendas. The participatory modes of involvement in, for example, meetings do not increase the success rate of the protesters, rather the contrary, although they are not necessarily an argument against collaborative formats in solving land-use conflicts.

Five of the 118 conflicts were settled with a compromise. The highly controversial coastal wind-power project was moved to a location further away from the coastline. It is implied in the media coverage that policy makers and energy corporations experienced the boomerang effect when they played the “sustainable energy card”, and they had to change practice in subsequent actions. Some expansions of the holiday home areas were reduced in size to meet aesthetical priorities or common recreational purposes.

10. Discussions

Based on media content this article examines 213 land-use conflicts in Danish coastal tourism. The purpose was to understand the formats of land-use struggles and the methods used to manifest discontent.

Predominantly, land-use conflicts emerge from the launch of smaller or larger construction projects in the vicinity. Protesters refer mainly to the particular qualities of Danish coastal tourism in terms of its (relatively) unspoiled nature and the tranquility, but there are also concerns about property values and, for tourism businesses, increased or unfair competition. The general rise in tourism prompts land-use transformations of various kinds, for example the conversion of accommodation towards more flexible, bigger and platform-marketable holiday homes, a maneuver that intensifies and changes land-use, with successive complaints about noise, trash, traffic and vegetation damage. Another topic concerns the expansion of outdoor tourism which leads to the contentious multi-functional exploitation of public and semi-public recreational space. There is an escalation of the transformation of the built environmental in coastal Denmark, and the study shows that it commands wider attention and a readiness to use available means to protest.

Recent changes in planning regulations in a neo-liberal direction

(Olesen and Carter, 2018) and active follow-up on this agenda by some municipalities have been issues for specific land-use tensions. The initiation of opportunities for a larger number of major developments in the close vicinity of the coast was, in a Danish context, a governance innovation. Despite the intended public transparency, both the projects and the new governance technique created massive debate and resistance (Andersen et al., 2018). This and some of the other 213 cases in the study suggest that the actors in coastal tourism tend to subscribe more to the ideas of localism in that sense. What emerges is that they appreciate the low-key utilization of coastal areas and they oppose rapid development, at least when it comes too close to their “own backyard”. The principal products in Danish tourism are the privately owned holiday homes, and the study reveals the many immanent conflicts. Municipalities often cause bitterness when they draw attention to illegal buildings or unauthorized coastal protection measures. The dilemma is that landowners find the disregard of individual freedom on their land plots hard to comprehend.

There is also a track observed in the study connected to the environmental concerns, although the argumentation about environmental protection appears to be by no means consistent or comprehensive (Andersen et al., 2018). Repeated claims are made that proper environmental assessments are either untrustworthy or completely lacking. The otherwise powerful Danish Society for Nature Conservation seems not to be fully in tune with the challenges in touristic coastal zones, including the potentials for alliances with other actors. The paradox about climate and environment emerges in the most frequently discussed and negatively received coastal wind-power plants, where the government was accused of misusing environmental argumentation and disregarding other land-use issues.

The study also maps protesters and offended parties in the land-use conflicts. Not surprisingly, the omnipresent holiday home owners and their organizations play a major role, but municipalities are also, as a result of their key role in the planning system, active on both sides of the barricades. Accordingly, the *shareholders*, the property owners and the *right-holders*, the authorities are particularly active. *Interest-holders* and *knowledge-holders*, for example nature protection or leisure organizations and heritage advocates, are only occasional participants. *Space-holders* are mainly seen on the offender-side, for example organizers of events accused of making noise and creating traffic jams. *Space-holders* are those who live temporarily in a demarcated territory, but in this study tourists are very seldom found to raise their concerns. There is no firm indication that mainstream privileges of initiative and balances of power are challenged, and we can see no evidence that *knowledge-holders* and *space-holders* are becoming more consistently mobilized pro or contra. When observing the emerging overtourism in urban areas, balances in conflicts may potentially be shifted by the gradual attainment of tourists’ sympathy (Novy and Colomb, 2016; Hou and Knierbein, 2017), but in coastal Denmark such developments are barely perceptible. Further and longitudinal studies in specific conflicts may illuminate changing “holder” involvement and power exertion over time.

Research suggests a gradual development from passive to active techniques, from micro to macro and covert to overt (Juris and Sitrin, 2016). In land-use contexts, escalations go from complaints to the authorities, through letters to the editors in the media, and further to demonstrations, sign boarding, barricading, or even semi-violent manifestations (Gualini, 2015; Hou and Knierbein, 2017). As a media-content analysis, this study self-evidently demonstrates the importance of the local media in the debate, but also shows that high-profile conflicts with an exemplary value tend to get into the national media. Such conflicts, represented in the study by the wind-power case, the flooding protection and the governmental growth initiatives for tourism, raise more multifaceted and confronting types of resistance. Social media studies may supplement the notions of micro to macro, and could also reconceptualize the understanding of what is overt and covert in land-use conflicts.

However, the majority of complaints are forwarded through the formal complaint system that is part of the planning regulation. This suggests that the planning system can accommodate most complaints. The Danish coastal tourism areas are not (yet) in a situation of over-tourism comparable to other parts of the world, a main explanation for the findings in the study.

This article demonstrates the benefits of examining a larger number of land-use conflicts in a comparable manner. From this point, further studies might compensate for the limitations of a media content analysis by adding other documental evidence, interviews and surveys. The picture will be more comprehensive and multifaceted if studies include space-consuming forms of tourism such as pop-up events.

11. Conclusions

The article was based on the assumption that there is then a quest for governance innovation, which can either bring into use new collaborative modes and mechanisms or rework known instruments. The study can conclude that opposition is not totally in vain. Some protests reach their goals in full or in part. However, the municipalities and other public authorities are winners in the majority of the conflicts. This can be interpreted as the robustness of the planning system, and perhaps it also indicates a low level of administrative dishonesty. Seen from this perspective, radical governance innovation might not be vital in the present situation, but the modes of protests may raise discussions in government bodies about the extent and measures of citizen and tourist involvement in planning matters. Thus, the study alerts some points of discussion for adjustments to be considered in order to address present and future land-use conflicts in coastal tourism.

Since the inauguration of the first planning law in 1970, community involvement and empowerment has been a distinct value and practice in Danish planning. However in this study, meetings, workshops, site visits and joint inspection walks, and other participatory events emerge as a remarkably infrequent part of conflict prevention and mediation. Collaborative planning and participatory interventions appear to be underutilized, even if these are known instruments in the toolbox of the municipalities. Hence, it is necessary to critically reflect on the notion of “community” and who belongs where (Timothy, 2007). Holiday home owners are tourists in the sense that they do not have an address of residence. Several times it is noted in the media that these land-owners never see invitations for meetings etc., as they do not read the local newspapers, and that they do not regularly open the snailmail box at the location.

Looking at the forms of resistance revealed in this study, there is more to be gained from increasing the involvement of not only stakeholders, but also space-holders (Healey, 2018; Lindberg et al., 2019). Their voice might even be more welcome in a situation of tourism growth and greater conflicting spatial pressures. The municipalities are at the heart of such an endeavor, but the administrations tend still to be of the impression that tourism areas have slow development trajectories. Nevertheless, emerging practice is available in, for example, the national parks established during the past decade in Denmark. Here, stakeholders have been obliged to invent and institutionalize participatory collaboration (Kwiatkowski et al., 2019; Liburd and Becken, 2017). Multi-stakeholder collaborations and in many types of outdoor activities are driven by a responsibility and ambition to protect the parks, and knowledge and inspiration in this regard may be transferred to other types of touristic space (Andersen, 2015; Hjalager, 2017; Tietjen and Jørgensen, 2016).

In accordance with the regulatory traditions in Denmark, the authorities possess many tools to prevent, mediate in and resolve land-use conflicts in coastal tourism. However, there might still be topics and locations where actors find it necessary to pursue a conflict and step up against passive authorities or against land-use practices found to be unfair, unsustainable etc., and where the enforcement of regulation is inadequate. The quest for governance innovations lies in rebalancing

the neoliberal versus the participatory elements of the planning system and finding ways to stimulate changes and development in the built environments and infrastructures that better accommodate the range of short-term and long-term side-effects, and which takes into account not only fast economic returns, but also the needs of the people. As remarked by Liberg et al. (2019), the pendula is swinging away from the purely market based approaches in tourism development. Particularly in a Nordic context, the population demands a wider interpretation of citizen welfare in planning, also when it comes to touristic installations. This is also what is observed in this study. Complying with such trends will probably imply an upscaling of professional capacity in the municipal planning offices, but also a more active use of consultations. There are no legal barriers in the planning system for such endeavors.

Well-organized protests that have a generally applicable ingredient for many locations may well ignite new discussions and changes in planning practice. It is critically interesting to consider the ways in which protesters – mainly the environmentalists and the localists – may in the future develop their competences and institutional structures with increased transparency and scale. The structures may address areas where the existing planning system is weakest, for example in the field of communication and involvement. Protesters will need not only to match the planning authorities, in terms of insight and competence levels, but also to have the measure of developers and major tourism actors and organizations found to be offensive.

The contribution of this study is that it clarifies the extent and nature of land-use conflict, and the modes and results of incidences of opposition. However, even as robust a planning system as the Danish one is challenged by people’s resistance. Growth in general in tourism and the trend towards increased multipurpose utilization of public space as a stage for touristic entertainment and experiences is likely to sharpen the conflicts. Another upcoming issue is the alliance and solidarity between residents and tourists and the link with the land-use issues. Future studies, for example case-based ones, will also examine in greater detail the escalation of conflict versus successful resolution methods.

Author statement

Anne-Mette Hjalager is the sole author of this contribution, responsible for all aspects and details.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary material related to this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2020.104566>.

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